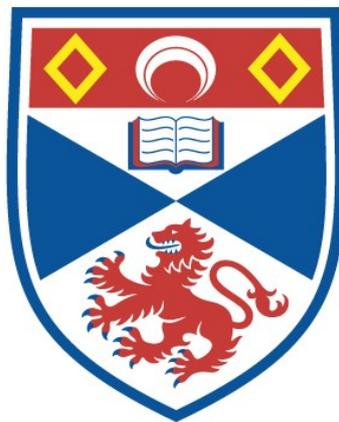


**LOCAL ADMINISTRATION IN EGYPT UNDER
ROMAN RULE, FOURTH TO SIXTH CENTURIES AD :
THE ELEMENT OF CORRUPTION**

A. H. Macnaghten

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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CONTENTS:

Declarations	page i
Contents	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Measurements	v
Chapter 1	
(1) Introduction	1
(2) Geographical background	4
(3) Historical background	11
(4) The Provincial Bureaucracy	17
(5) The Caste System and Social Mobility	22
(6) Taxation	34
(7) Corruption	45
Chapter 2	
(1) An Introduction to the Town Councils	49
(2) The Βουλή and its Responsibilities	54
(3) Tribes	71
(4) Guilds	77
(5) The Process of Election	83
Chapter 3	
(1) The Στρατηγός and Ἐξάκτωρ	92
(2) The Δογιστής and Ἐκδικος	107
(3) The Transition, Fourth to Sixth centuries	123
Chapter 4	
(1) The Village in Relation to the City	134
(2) Village Liturgists in the Fourth century	143
(3) Village Liturgists in the Sixth century	153
Chapter 5	
(1) Collection and Transport of the <i>Annona Civica</i>	160
(2) Collection of the <i>Annona Militaris</i>	171

Chapter 6	
(1) The City Police Forces	182
(2) The Military	189
Chapter 7	
(1) Great Estates	200
(2) The Church	221
Chapter 8	
(1) Patronage	231
(2) Peculation	251
Conclusion	263
Appendix	
(1) Language and Literacy	267
Maps	270
Charts	
(1) Explanation	272
(2) City Magistrates and Liturgists	273
(3) Village Liturgists	277
Bibliography	279

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MEASUREMENTS:

Land:

- Nome** - (νομός) a sub-division of a province in Egypt. In the Third century each was administered by a στρατηγός.
- Toparchy** - (τοπαρχία) a sub-division of a nome; this designation was replaced by the pagus when the provincial administration of Egypt was overhauled at the start of the Fourth century. Each had been under a τοπάρχης (cf. Lewis (1982), p. 49).
- Pagus** - (πάγος) a sub-division of a nome; in the Oxyrhynchite nome there were 24 (cf. P.Oxy. 2110, AD370). Each was under a πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου.
- Pagarchy** - (παγαρχία) these came to designate the standard administrative territorial divisions (on about the same scale as the nomes) in Egypt. Each was under a πάγαρχος.
- Iugum** - a tax unit, introduced in Diocletian's taxation reforms. It varied widely in assessment from province to province. In Egypt, land was rated according to the crop.
- Iugerum** - about 5/8 of an acre.
- Aroura** - the standard land measure in Egypt under Roman rule; it was about 2/3 of an acre.

Weights and Measures:

- Artaba** - a 'dry' measurement that varied in size over the period of Roman rule from about 25-40 litres; eg, cf. P.Oxy. 1910 (6th/7th Cent.) introduction for various sizes of artaba.
- Modius** - about 9 litres.
- Sextarius** - about 1/16 of a modius, it was used to measure wine among other commodities.

Coinage:

- Drachma** - the basic unit of currency; subject to frequent reductions in its silver content in the Late Third and Early Fourth centuries.
- Denarius** - in Egypt only this Roman coin was treated as being worth 4 drachmae. Elsewhere, they were valued equally.
- Talent** - in monetary terms, this designated 6,000 drachmae.
- Solidus** - the basic gold coin from Constantine onwards, it weighed 1/72 of a pound. Gold standards varied in Egypt, but taxes were handed over to government officials on the imperial

standard.
Carat - $1/24$ of a solidus.

CHAPTER 1:

1: INTRODUCTION:

This thesis sets out to examine the administrative function of the city councils (βουλαί) and the villages in Egypt in the Fourth to Sixth centuries AD. The councils will be studied both in terms of their duties as a body, and also as regards the identity of their individual members. Changes in the structure of the councils, the scope of their activities and in the titles of their personnel over the period will be noted and conclusions drawn as to what effect this had on local administrative life in Egypt. This descriptive process is necessary in order to establish what councillors were meant to be doing, so that illegal activities can be discerned. An attempt will be made to identify corruption in the deeds of the councillors and village liturgists from a contemporary perspective, and to ascertain when and in what ways it occurred. To provide a background for this material, a brief description will be made of the geography and the political history of Egypt, and of the organisation of the higher central and provincial bureaucracies. Furthermore, an outline will be made of the taxation system, the prevailing social conditions, and an introduction made to the operation of corruption in the administration of the Later Roman Empire. In the study, Alexandria will be largely excluded, barring occasional references. The reason for this is that Alexandria is worthy of a separate study in its own right, and there simply is not room to cater for it in this thesis. Its size and importance to Egypt and the Empire as a whole made it very different to the other much smaller cities in the diocese, and it played a far greater role in imperial affairs.

As regards terminology, I shall refer to members of local administrative bodies by their Greek titles, and those of the bureaucracy by their Latin ones. Reference to the Theodosian Code naturally leads to a clash between Latin and Greek terminology (eg: over the *defensor civitatis* and the *exactor civitatis*, Latin terms that were adopted into the Greek; δεφήνωρ and ἐξάκτωρ (for δεφήνωρ, P.Ross.-Georg v.27.1; more commonly

ἑκδικος in the papyri, see Chapter 3.2), and where possible I shall employ the Greek alternative. Some titles changed over the period being studied, since some new officials introduced into the cities initially possessed Latin titles, but were known by their Greek equivalents in local administrative correspondence until the Latin title was adopted into the Greek language. In such cases I shall try to trace the development and use the adopted title to avoid confusion with the earlier variations.

Sources:

The papyri and, to a lesser extent, ostraca provide the single greatest source of information. However, although the Fourth century boasts a good number of surviving papyri, and there are some collections to illustrate life in the Sixth, for some reason the Fifth century, an important period of change in local institutions, is covered by very few indeed.¹ The earlier centuries AD are considerably better covered than those of the later Empire, and examples will be drawn from them when it is deemed necessary. The papyri supply a view of everyday life from almost every angle, of practically all the mechanics of local government - tax collection, justice, liturgies - as well as providing an overall impression of the society. The papyri have not been found evenly distributed across Egypt, but in hoards, so some areas are better covered than others. Since this is the case, the survey which I intend to carry out will necessarily concentrate on those areas in which more papyri survived. Papyri from less well supplied areas will be used to supplement such collections, and perhaps to help fill in gaps left by them, but it must be noted that because of the consciously individualistic nature of cities under the the Early Empire, variations of titles of officials, and their functions may occur from one to another. The papyri at which I plan to look particularly closely are those from Oxyrhynchus, the Archive of Aurelius Isidorus from the village of Karanis in the Fayum, the

¹ cf. Rémondon (1966), Bagnall and Worp (1980). The Taurinos Archive, in B.G.U. XII, is Fifth century.

Abinnaeus Archive (the notes of a military officer in the mid-Fourth century) and those concerning Dioscorus of the village of Aphrodito, in the Thebaid (in the Sixth century).

One of the major sources of contemporary material is provided by the Theodosian and Justinian Codes. These give extracts from the imperial constitutions passed, in the case of the former up to the mid-Fifth century, and in the latter up to the mid-Sixth. These are supplemented by other collections of laws, such as the Digest of Justinian, and also by the *Notitia Dignitatum* (for the ranks and placements of imperial officials). The intentions of the Emperors are apparent, and documents such as Edict XIII of Justinian, which reformed the administration of all the provinces in Egypt specifically, are of great importance. By learning what the Emperor was trying to rectify, it is possible to establish what was perceived as going on illegally in the provinces, although we can not thereby determine the extent or seriousness of the abuse. Of course, the Legal Codices deal with the East as a whole, and it is difficult to know exactly to what extent these edicts, individually or as a whole, specifically affected the Egyptian administration. References to imperial laws in the papyri are few and far between, and it is not possible to judge how sophisticated the knowledge of them was at each social level.²

Other sources of information are available in the form of contemporary writers and historians. Although some of these, such as Libanius of Antioch, do not directly concern Egypt, they are valuable for the information they provide for the *βουλευταί* as a whole. Egypt is mentioned in other historians and commentators, such as Eusebius, while others, such as Ammianus Marcellinus and John the Lydian, are useful for their comments on, and perspectives of, their society.

² Some contain copies of imperial edicts to be posted around the *nomes*, while others cite laws to support petitions; Taubenschlag (1952), Thomas (1976).

2: GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND:

The dominant geographical feature of Egypt is the Nile. The rest of the country is predominantly desert; to the East of the Nile Valley lies the rough hill-country of the Eastern, or Arabian desert, and to the West the Libyan desert which ultimately merges with the Sahara. The Nile Valley is very fertile land, however, and although the area it covered was a thin strip in the centre of an otherwise barren country, a very large amount of grain was grown on it. Fed by the rains on the Ethiopian mountains, the Nile flooded annually, rising rapidly in July and peaking in August. The exact height the flood attained was crucial to the abundance of the harvest, and this was fully appreciated by the ancients.¹ Strabo mentions that the rise of the river was carefully observed by means of nilometres,² and not only do we possess a description of one at Elephantine, but its remains also survive. There was probably one at each city on the river. If the flood was too low, not enough land would be irrigated, and marginal land would suffer along with the size of the harvest. On the other hand, a high flood would reduce irrigation works, and remain too long on the land, interfering with its cultivation. The flood lasted for about two months, regulated by irrigation where appropriate, and during that time the Nile lowlands resembled a large lake.

While the Nile reached most of the land under cultivation of its own accord, irrigation was essential to maximise the benefits to be derived from the flood. Good irrigation works, such as those effected by Augustus,³ could also turn marginal floods into successful ones, and their upkeep was therefore of the greatest importance. Areas that were naturally inundated employed basin irrigation. The flood waters were caught and retained by the surrounding dykes, to be drained off when the

1 cf. Pliny the Elder, N.H. 5.10.57-58 - a discussion of the Nile flood. An optimum flood level, he claims, was seven metres.

2 Strabo, Geography, 17.1.48, on nilometres.

3 Pliny the Elder, N.H. 5.10.57-58; Strabo, Geography, 17.1.3.

flood began to recede. This allowed the standing water to deposit the rich alluvium that it had brought down with it, thus enriching the areas where it was precipitated. Higher and more marginal lands needed perennial irrigation, and this was accomplished by the use of such devices as the sakiyeh and the shaduf. Where the waters did not reach, such land could very possibly be lost to the desert. It was therefore important to maintain the dykes, to keep the channels clear of the silt left there by the floods, and to keep the machines in good working order, or the benefits they conferred would rapidly diminish. To this effect, the dyke corvée was instituted, a compulsory menial liturgy on the rural male population, apparently levied on villages by the στρατηγός (the official in charge of a nome in the Third century) and inspected by one of his deputies; other groups might also be required to do some similar work.⁴ Each village was required to do so much, and it was usually in their interests to do so since it would most likely be on or near their own land.⁵ Since water was such a valuable commodity, it was not unusual for villagers to divert water intended for other villages onto their own land. To guard against such eventualities, water-guards (ὕδροφύλακες), nominated by their village κώμαρχοι, kept a vigil by the flood gates pertinent to their village, but sometimes either these precautions were inadequate or their neighbours were too cunning or too strong.⁶ Land that did not receive water was noted as ἄβροχος γῆ in surveys taken of the land and it, rather than the acknowledged good land, was generally the object of inspection by surveyors. This was because it received an advantageous tax rate to allow for the fact that it was lying unused, and there was a tendency

4 P.Oxy. 1469 (AD298) administration of the dyke corvée. The *corporati* of Alexandria were responsible for the upkeep of waterways until relieved by Theodosius in AD436 (Cod. Theod. 14.27.2).

5 P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 222-8 (AD300) the procurator (ἐπίτροπος) of the Catholicus (Καθολικός) appeals to the rural population to notify the στρατηγός and the dyke inspectors (χωματεπέκται) of areas needing repair that had so far been neglected (issued in mid-February).

6 P.Theod. 16 (post AD307).

for landowners to overestimate just how much dry land they had.⁷ As regards the land area cultivated in Egypt, Butzer calculated that between about twenty-seven and twenty-eight thousand square kilometres, some ten million or so *arourae*, were in use, with about perhaps three fifths of that figure being in the Delta.⁸

In the western desert there were a few oases at some distance from the Nile Valley, connected with one another and the valley by caravan routes. That there were occasional raids by nomadic desert tribesmen is apparent in that not only were there desert guards along the routes, but also troops were stationed at the Great and Small Oases. The latter were clearly there in a defensive military capability, while perhaps the former merely served the role of customs-tax collectors along the routes. To the East there was rather more of interest; although the desert was mountainous and inhospitable, it was not very far across it to the Red Sea ports. The Romans particularly favoured Berenice as their access to the Eastern trade, although Myos Hormos was used as well. The route from Berenice to the Nile was twelve days travel, that from Myos Hormos about half the distance.⁹ Along the route were way stations, fortified outposts provided with reservoirs or water supplies in some form or other, thus making the crossing possible. The desert was also very rich in minerals, and references to the mines and quarries therein crop up occasionally in the papyri. To the South the Nile provided some form of defence for Egypt because of a series of cataracts in the river, the first being slightly to the south of Syene. Such natural defences made Egypt very secure, but also meant that there was very limited potential for expansion by occupying forces. This meant that Roman forces would be, on the whole,

7 cf. Wallace (1938), p. 9.

8 Butzer (1976), Table 4, p. 83, figures for 150BC estimate, and cf. p. 82; cf. also, Bowman (1986), p. 13.

9 For Berenice, cf. Pliny the Elder, N.H. 6.26.102-104; for Myos Hormos, cf. Strabo, Geography, 17.1.45; for the way stations of the Eastern desert, cf. Murray (1925), Meredith (1952-3), and see maps.

defensive, and that most enemies that they would be likely to face would be raiding nomadic tribesmen.

The Nile provided an extremely convenient and efficient means of communication and transport for almost all parts of the inhabited country. The current of the river flowed down to the Mediterranean while the prevailing wind was from the north (at least during the summer),¹⁰ and the river was relatively straight, allowing for uncomplicated passage in both directions. When there was inadequate wind, boats were towed up-river by their crews. Many of the boats on the Nile were either owned by the state, or requisitioned by it. Occasionally there appear to have been shortages of boats on the river,¹¹ and this could be attributed not least to the paucity of suitable trees in the country. Most transport occurred along the Nile, but it was necessary for villagers to take their crops from the fields to the threshing floors, from there to the granaries, and thence to the Nile harbours. This last leg was completed by the village's liturgical representatives rather than by the peasants themselves, though the latter had to pay for transport costs for the Nile journey as well.

Prior to the administrative adjustments made by Diocletian in the Fourth century, there were various land classifications; these determined the level of tax levied on property of each type.¹² These included several categories of state land, some private land, and municipal lands after Septimius Severus established the *μητροπόλεις* as municipalities at the start of the Third century. Under Diocletian or his successors, the old classifications, and their associated tax rates, were abolished. It seems that it was decided that taxes could be more successfully collected if the land was privately run, and so transfers by sale

10 Mediterranean climate, Pryor (1988), p. 15ff. Communication, Bagnall (1985a).

11 P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 43-50 (AD300) shortage of ships; στρατηγοί of the procuratorial district were to send others promptly, having their crews tow them if there was little wind.

12 Wallace(1938), pp. 1-6, Johnson (1936), pp. 25-29, Johnson and West (1949), pp. 94-6.

or gift from state to private tenure were made. This gave the impetus to private land ownership which enhanced the political and administrative power of owners of 'great estates'. As a result, more *coloni* became dependent on private owners instead of upon the state.¹³ The Emperor himself continued to own property, as evidenced by the presence of treasury estates, some managed by cities,¹⁴ and tenants of the 'divine house' (Θεῖος/Θειότατος οἶκος, as imperial property came to be known) in the Byzantine period, the management of which came under the *privata* (the treasury that dealt with the income of the lands of the Emperor). This could have been supplemented by property gained through confiscations or bequests, or perhaps the acceptance of the autopract village of Aphrodito under imperial protection counted as such. Johnson and West suggested that the transfer of state land may not have been all that it seemed, and that the theoretical new owners were technically still tenants of the state. The exact situation remains unclear, though private ownership, apparently without such ties, began to increase considerably over the Fourth century. The register at Hermopolis¹⁵ divided the land into private and public divisions, with no explanation of the latter term; it seems that it was taxed at a higher rate, but only constituted ten percent of the total at most. The public land may well have been land assigned as ἐπιβολή (a compulsory liturgy which distributed unfarmed land among locals and made them responsible for the tax on it), but if so there is no clue to the method employed in relation to the amount of private land owned. If it was assigned as ἐπιβολή, it was quite likely marginal land.

From the information above, it is clear that not all of the nomes enjoyed identical geographical circumstances. Those

13 Change in Oxyrhynchus, Fikhman (1976), pp. 334-5; 'colonate', Carrié (1984).

14 P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 365-8, 400-4 (AD298); the βουλή was responsible for appointing superintendents of the treasury estates; on the *privata*, cf. Millar (1980), pp. 126-132.

15 P.Flor. 71 (mid 4th), cf. Bowman (1985), Bagnall (1992).

nearer the Delta had less to worry about as concerned transportation to Alexandria, while those in the Upper Thebaid were at the extreme end of communications, and information from the Prefect and the Emperor reached them last of all. Similarly, the province of Libya was not even on the Nile, but predominantly stretched along the Mediterranean coast. In fact, it was so extended that the governor there had to appoint a deputy to administer the more extreme districts. Some nomes, such as the Arsinoite nome, suffered a loss of marginal lands as a result of inadequate irrigation,¹⁶ while lands closer to the Nile were safe from this problem. Furthermore, the Thebaid and, to a lesser extent, Libya and some other nomes, had the problems of having groups of raiding tribes being near them. The circumstances of each of the nomes differed, causing variations in the ways that they were affected by external agencies. However, much of the way in which the Egyptian provinces were governed by the bureaucracy will have operated without much regard for such niceties. What was true for the administration of one nome was probably very much so for the rest, with general considerations (eg: one of Diocletian's new taxes, the *iugatio*, to be exacted at graded rates depending on the nature of the crop) rather than specific geographical ones being taken into account.

Despite the loss of certain lands to the encroaching desert, such as some in the Fayum around the reign of Diocletian, Egypt kept on producing consistently large quantities of corn, as well as other goods, throughout the early Byzantine period. In the Sixth century and thereabouts, when some patrons controlled very large tracts of land, it is evident that several were prepared to grant large rebates to tenants despite no let-up in the tax demands by the state.¹⁷ The rural economy in Egypt survived, and the Emperor received his tax grain; the land of Egypt, blessed by the Nile, remained an inexhaustible

16 cf. Bagnall (1985) for the agricultural decline of this area.

17 Schnebel (1928), pp. 34-45.

source of grain to the Emperor despite its thorough exploitation.

3: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

After the battle of Actium, the capture of Egypt was effected under the auspices of Augustus with very little trouble. Upper Egypt - frequently in revolt under the Ptolemies - had to be conquered by the invaders, and this was left to the first Prefect, Cornelius Gallus, to achieve. He performed the task efficiently, and also made provision with the tribes on the southern borders of Egypt for their security. Over the Hellenistic period, Egypt had been proven a natural and convenient unit for separate administration. Largely surrounded by desert, it was far more defensible than most of Rome's other outlying provinces, and communications were facilitated by its natural position bordering the Mediterranean. Augustus regarded its tremendous wealth in grain and, reputedly, in treasure, as far too dangerous to place under the supervision of a member of the Senatorial class, and so he selected equestrians to head its administration. The province was effectively under his personal control, though he might choose to present the situation rather differently.¹ The Senators, nominal representatives of the people, were not consulted with regard to its government and, indeed, were forbidden to enter the province under Augustus without his express permission. An indication of how sensitive an issue this was can be seen by the reported reaction of Tiberius to Germanicus' impromptu tour of the country.² Egypt was part of the Emperor's patrimony, and he strictly regulated landholding by Roman notables there. The importance with which Augustus regarded Egypt is reflected in his initial placement of a garrison of three legions there, though this number was later to be reduced by his successors as the troops became needed elsewhere.

¹ Res Gestae, 27.1. Egypt was one of the provinces under the personal administration of Augustus and his control was renewed by the Senate for periods of five and ten years, Res Gestae, ed. Brunt and Moore (1967), p. 9.

² Tacitus, Annals: 2.59.

Throughout the duration of the Empire, Egypt was bothered by frequent internal disorders, particularly in and around Alexandria, and by raiders from outside its borders. Alexandria was a focal point for violence in the Early Empire, not due least of all to the racial mix of the city. The racial tensions between the Greeks and the Jews sometimes resulted in widespread violence, and the perceived Roman tendency to side with the Jewish minority created ill-will against them among the Greek majority.³ Egypt, and particularly Alexandria, which required a large proportion of the troops stationed in Egypt to police it, also featured in civil wars. Vespasian intended to starve Rome of corn by holding Alexandria, and in AD175 Avidius Cassius raised the standard of revolt there after quelling an uprising in the Delta. The Third century saw Alexandria devastated on several occasions; in AD215 Caracalla executed a number of Alexandrians, and the city suffered much ruin in AD261 and again in c.AD270.⁴ One of the major bones of contention between Alexandria and Rome had been the refusal of the Emperors before Septimius Severus to grant the city a βουλή, one of the essential identifying features of a city. This placed Alexandria (which was regarded as the most important city in the East until the appearance of Constantinople) lower in status than any provincial city that possessed one, a very damaging loss of civic face and pride much resented by its inhabitants.

Under the Later Empire the advent of Christianity to Egypt created more divisions and led to no decline in the levels of violence there. The persecution initiated under Diocletian and continued by Galerius and Maximin Daia was met head-on, with some of the more zealous worshippers either presenting themselves before the Prefect for execution, or at least giving

3 Claudius with Herod; B.G.U. 511, P. Cair. Inv. 10448, P.Lond. Inv. 2785 (Musurillo (1954), *Acta Alex.*, pp. 18-26) apparently an act of defiance by representatives of Alexandria to Claudius. Violence broke out in AD73, AD114, AD115-7, AD136-7.

4 AD261 suppression of the revolt of Aemilianus in Alexandria; c.AD270 Aurelian turned out the Palmyrenes.

him no alternative.⁵ The Athanasian controversy under the reign of Constantine caused a clash between Constantinople and Alexandria and was exacerbated under the Arian Constantius and pursued under Valens. Alexandria was the undisputed head of religion in Egypt; the rapid spread of monasticism in the Fourth century supported the patriarch, and obtained an immense following for him in the rural districts. As a result of this, there tended to be much greater support for the Alexandrine patriarch than for any imposed candidate or doctrine from Constantinople. This reached the point where the Alexandrians believed that they had the right to appoint their own patriarchs and even went as far as to reject a Monophysite candidate from Anastasius, himself of that belief. The grass-roots support that the Alexandrine patriarch could rely on countered the military assistance available to imperial candidates. The conflict between the patriarch Cyril and the Prefect Orestes resulted in much fighting and the murder of a notable lady, Hypatia, who was prominent in her support of the philosophical schools. Consequently, the Emperor tried, with only temporary success, to reduce the number of *parabolani* in Alexandria; they buried the dead and aided the sick, but were also militant supporters of the patriarch.⁶ Such conflicts and clashes served to isolate Constantinople further from Egypt, and although the tax was still regularly sent, spiritual control over its people was lost. Even Justinian could fare no better than his predecessors, though he was additionally handicapped by his wife, whose loyalties lay with the Monophysites.⁷

This religious altercation was the most insidious of the problems presented by Egypt to Constantinople, but there were others. Revolts and internal disorders persisted; that of Domitius Domitianus in c.AD297-8 was suppressed without serious difficulty, but that of Heraclius, represented by his

5 Christian martyrdoms; Eusebius, *Palestinian Martyrs*, 8.1, 11.1; *Ecc. Hist.* 8; 9. 4-5, 10. 4-10. Not all Christians were so stubborn and some avoided the need to take sacrifices - cf. P.Oxy. 2601 (early 4th).

6 *Cod. Theod.* 16.2.42-3 (AD416, 418).

7 cf. Milne (1924), pp. 109-111. Justinian's policy in Egypt, Hardy (1968).

general, Niketas some three hundred years later won the full support of the country, and proved ultimately successful. The gradual loss of control by the Emperor over the actions of his officials in Egypt also led to various insubordinate actions, such as the revolt of three brothers (all *πάγαρχοι*, powerful officials in charge of the nomes in the Fifth to Sixth centuries) under the Emperor Maurice, which eventually required the dispatch of an army to suppress it.⁸ However, the most serious threats to peace in the country came from beyond its borders. The desert tribes were restive, and to the south the Blemmyes in particular began to launch raids into the province. The raids had started in about the mid-Third century, and Diocletian decided to withdraw the Southern frontier from Hierasykaminos to Syene and place another tribe, the Nobades, in the way of the Blemmyes in order to keep the peace; the Blemmyes were also to receive an annual subsidy to deter their raids.⁹ By the reign of Theodosius II they were apparently raiding again, even as far north as the Great Oasis, and in response to this the Emperor restructured the administrative and military set-up of the Thebaid (see my section on the Bureaucracy for details). This proved successful, and after a brief campaign the Blemmyes were forced to conclude a peace.¹⁰ The conversion of the Nobades and the Blemmyes, under Justinian, albeit to Monophysitism as a result of the Empress Theodora's intrigues, effectively put an end to their incursions. More serious threats were posed to the north; the Persians took Alexandria and held it for ten years until their expulsion by Heraclius in AD630,¹¹ but this brief respite was

8 John of Nikiu, 97.

9 The Blemmyes and the Fourth century military situation in general, cf. Rémondon (1955), esp. p. 27ff. The Blemmyes, Kirwan (1977), Updegraff (1988), and Török (1989). Updegraff believes that Procopius (*De Bello Persico*, I.19) is wrong to introduce the Nobatai/Nobades this early - he agrees with other sources and places them later.

10 Synesius of Cyrene, Ep. 130, 132, 133 (early 5th), J.Bregman (1982), p. 61, n. 5.

11 Butler (1902), chs. 7, 9.

merely the harbinger of worse things to come. The Arabs invaded and by AD642 the Romans had made a treaty under Constans II, which was an undertaking by them to leave the country, and so Roman rule came to an abrupt end in Egypt.

The loss of Egypt was not the result of any one factor, but a combination of them. The efficiency of attackers largely determined the extent of their success; until the Seventh century, most opponents had limited objectives and resources. The state of much of the Roman military machine in Egypt testified to its relative lack of use and reduced capabilities on the battlefield. The role of the army had changed over the Byzantine period, from an army required for active defence of the borders to an urbanised one reduced to passive local defence. This process witnessed the gradual reduction in efficiency of the old *numeri* and their replacement as front-line troops by barbarian βουκελλάριοι. Members of the *numeri* were apparently still conscripted on a hereditary basis, but the βουκελλάριοι were recruited, often from outside the province.¹² A number of βουκελλάριοι were billeted on and supplied by the estate owners, and could be rapidly mobilised over considerable distances.¹³ Until they were required, they remained under the control of the estate owners. Despite the raids by the desert tribes, most of the violence in Egypt was caused by internal rather than external problems. Other than Alexandria, such outbreaks were generally localised and relatively easy to suppress. The presence of the soldiers in Egypt as a glorified police force led to their having a considerable influence on the administration of the province, and military commanders at all levels became effective dispensers of patronage.

Although commands were divided among the Roman provinces, it seems that control could be combined in times of crisis, but the mistrust between the soldiers and the people, for example because of recruitment methods and searching for

¹² Βουκελλάριοι, cf. Gascou (1976). The *numeri*, cf. Jones (1964), pp. 660-1, 669, Rémondon (1966a), Gascou (1976a). Recruitment, Haldon (1979).

¹³ P.Oxy. 150 (AD590), from Herakleopolis to Oxyrhynchus.

fugitive soldiers among the monks, may have limited co-operation with the latter and may have compromised the effective defence.¹⁴ Once the external defences of Egypt had been breached by a determined and powerful military force, the weaknesses inherent in the Roman ones were rapidly exposed and exploited; Egypt passed from Roman control almost as easily as it had been acquired. Such a loss can be attributed in part to the assigned tasks of the military and civil administrations, in that greater importance was assigned to the collection and delivery of taxes rather than to the defence of the province in the absence of any serious external threats.¹⁵ By the time that Roman armies were required to fight a serious war, they lacked the training and cohesion of earlier forces, such as that of Augustus, and contained a much higher proportion of auxiliary troops. They were very much a product of the tasks that they had been assigned, which largely did not include fighting well-armed and well-led opponents.

¹⁴ Combined defence of the provinces, Keenan (1974); monks and soldiers, Rémondon (1955), pp. 21-38, Johnson and West (1949) p. 71.

¹⁵ Military strategy in Lower Egypt, cf. Price (1976).

4: THE PROVINCIAL BUREAUCRACY:

Over the near six hundred and fifty years of Roman rule in Egypt, the higher administrative structure was altered only occasionally, and then generally when the Emperor reacted to perceived or real internal crises or external threats concerning the province. Under Augustus an equestrian Prefect was in charge of the whole province; he was responsible for finances and taxation, the judiciary and the military. Beneath him, to assist in the application of such authority, were various officials and office staffs. Among the former were, for example, the ἕδιος λόγος, the διοικητής (both concerned with finance), and the ἀρχιδικαστής (concerned with the law).¹ The province itself was divided into three, each section being placed under an ἐπιστράτηγος - the Thebaid, the Heptanomia and the Arsinoite nome, and the Delta - and these officials selected municipal liturgists and were delegated judicial power, but apparently had little part to play in fiscal administration.² These sections of the province were made up out of nomes, each one headed by a subordinate of the ἐπιστράτηγος, the στρατηγός, who was assisted by a so-called royal scribe (βασιλικὸς γραμματεὺς). The στρατηγός was the head of local civil government, having the responsibility for law and order, finance and requisitions, as well as some of the more menial liturgies, such as the dyke corvée.

Local administration underwent a number of changes during the Early Roman Empire. The trend towards municipalisation was confirmed by Septimius Severus, who established a βουλή in each city in about AD200/1; Phillipus Arabs tried to make the task of the βουλαί easier with a number of changes half-way through the Third century.³ Diocletian in his turn made a much more drastic series of alterations; as the Empire began to require a guaranteed income to maintain its defences and services, ventures on the part

¹ The διοικητής, Hagedorn (1985); cf. Bowman and Rathbone (1992), p. 110, n. 15.

² Possibly four ἐπιστράτηγοι, two being in the Delta, Bowman (1976).

³ Municipalisation, Bowman and Rathbone (1992); Philippus Arabs, Parsons (1967).

of the central government to achieve this became more and more frequent. On the civil side of provincial bureaucracy, a number of changes were made; Diocletian brought Egypt further into line with all the other provinces. He divided civil and military responsibility between two officials (the army was placed under a *dux*), and split the province into two - Aegyptus and the Thebaid. This was presumably as much in a drive for efficiency in coping with tax collection and the huge number of cases each governor faced, as to ensure that provincial officials were less well placed to start revolts. Under Constantine Egypt proper was split into three provinces - Aegyptus Iovia, Aegyptus Herculia and Thebais - which were probably more or less equivalent to the areas that had been supervised by the ἐπιστράτηγοι. Libya was divided into two and placed under the Prefect's authority. *Praesides* were placed in charge of Herculia and Thebais at least, and though technically subordinate to the Praefectus Aegypti,⁴ they seem to have possessed independent jurisdiction. The governors had two functions; as judge,⁵ and as financial manager.⁶ To assist them they had various *scrinia*e under them, such as the *commentariensis*, which dealt with legal matters.⁷ The ἕσσιος λόγος and διοικητής disappeared, and their functions as directors of finance passed to the Catholicus. There is evidence for his existence in the Third century, in which the official appears as a short-term financial commissioner. Under Diocletian the post was became a permanent fixture, and appears to have gained in power. The Catholicus was in charge of financial affairs in Egypt,

⁴ P. Flor. 33, ll.16-19; an appeal from the court of the *praeses* of the Thebaid goes to the Vicar's tribunal and not the Prefect's, Lallemand (1964), p.142, n. 1. Praeses Ioviae, cf. P.Oxy. 3619 (c.AD314-324/5), 3756 (AD325).

⁵ Cod. Theod. 1.16.1 (AD315), 4 (AD328?), 6 (AD331); eg: Prefect, P.Oxy. 3129 (AD335), 3767 (AD329/30); *praeses*, P.Oxy. 3775 (AD342), P.Ant. 34 (early 4th).

⁶ Cod. Theod. 1.14.1 (AD386), P.Oxy. 895 (AD305) the κώμαρχοι of the village of Tampeti submit their accounts to the λογιστής on the orders of the Prefect. P.Oxy. 2666-7 (c.AD308/9, AD309)) - the λογιστής, and not the council, was responsible to the Prefect.

⁷ Lallemand (1964), pp. 72-75 for details of the functionaries of the *scrinia*e of the Prefect's office staff.

paying particularly close attention to matters concerning taxation.⁸

In the middle of the Fourth century there appear to have been several efforts at realigning the provinces: Herculia and Iovia were united to reform Aegyptus in AD325, and then the Eastern portion was separated and named Augustamnica about sixteen years later. The next major change seems to have happened in about AD380-2. Egypt, with Libya, was made into a separate diocese, the Prefect thence becoming known as the Praefectus Augustalis rather than a normal Vicar.⁹ The military command was split up, to guard the borders from marauding tribes (the Dux Thebaidis and the Dux Libyarum appear) and to maintain order, and to ensure the smooth running of the corn supply at Alexandria (Comes Aegypti). The Augustal could monitor the activities of the *praesides* and, presumably, having become ranked above a Vicar, would receive appeals from their courts; but he had no power to punish them, and he had to refer any nefarious activities of theirs to higher authority.¹⁰ Sometime between this and the start of the Fifth century, Aegyptus Herculia was renamed Arcadia.

The provinces were further subdivided into two, with the exceptions of Arcadia and Libya. The Thebaid was changed first of all by Theodosius II, so sometime before AD450, since the south was suffering particularly badly from tribal raids. Contrary to the principles espoused by Diocletian, the governor of the Upper Thebaid combined both military and civil power to help him in his efforts to deal with the incursions, and the governor of the Lower Thebaid was subordinated to him. Augustamnica probably preceded Aegyptus in the process of division, the latter possibly

⁸ The change-over, Hagedorn (1985), pp. 187, 197. The Catholicus 3rd Cent. - P.Lond. 1157v (AD246). His role, see Lallemand (1964), p. 81-83, Parsons (1967), pp. 138-9, Milne (1924), p. 147, and Millar (1980). P. Beatty Panop. 2 (AD300) gives a good illustration of correspondence received by a *στρατηγός* from the procurator of a Catholicus.

⁹ The provinces of Egypt, cf. Bowman (1986), p. 79, fig. 4, Hendy (1985), pp. 179-180; Not. Dign. Or. 22-27 (Seeck, Not. Dign. pp. 48-57) gave the Augustal a title inferior to the Count of the Orient, but superior to an ordinary Vicar.

¹⁰ Cod. Theod. 1.14.2 (AD394-5?).

not occurring until the reign of Justinian. In Edict 13 of AD538, Justinian completely abandoned Diocletian's policy and entrusted both civil and military power alike to the officials in charge of the provinces of Aegyptus, Augustamnica, Thebais and possibly Arcadia. All four were directly under the Praefectus Praetorio Orientis, being assisted on the civil side by *praesides*, one for each of the sub-provinces, or for the province if there was no division. Keenan has questioned whether there was a military commander in Arcadia, because of the lack of mention of any such until the mid-Seventh century. He presents as an alternative possibility that Arcadia may have fallen under the responsibility of the Dux Thebaidis, who appears there on several occasions.¹¹

In Libya the *praeses* could not cover all of the very strung-out territory, so he was instructed to appoint a deputy (a τοποτηρητής) to cover the more extreme districts, and was instructed to provide him with money and a portion of his staff; the presence of soldiers under his command shows that *praesides* were not completely without military authority.¹² The legislation combined the offices of *dux* and Prefect, so from then on that official was properly addressed as the Augustal Duke. The unity of the diocese suffered since each province (perhaps with the exception of Arcadia) was now governed by a *dux* or *comes* with full military and civil authority, subject only to the distant authorities at Constantinople. Such a reorganisation, partially a result of the Emperor's self-confessed lack of knowledge of what was going on in that country, may have weakened the diocese's overall defences in that he created a number of independent provincial forces. As had become the priority with the military in Egypt, this was primarily an effort to increase the efficiency of the tax collection process. However, the difficulties associated with having corrupt officials dismissed (πάγαρχοι, for example, could only be removed by the Emperor or the Praetorian Prefect),¹³ not least as a result of the

¹¹ Keenan (1975); eg: P.Oxy. 1920, 2046 (AD563) disbursements to the troops of the Dux Thebaidis, then in Arcadia.

¹² Just. Ed. 13; on the military capabilities of *praesides*, cf. Keenan (1975).

¹³ Just. Ed. 13, Liebeschuetz (1974), p. 164, n. 11.

problems generated by poor communications between Alexandria and Egypt, can only have made their positions more secure.

5: THE CASTE SYSTEM AND SOCIAL MOBILITY:

The troubles of the Fourth century and beyond stemmed not least from the legacy of the Third century. The plagues, civil wars and foreign wars had all taken their toll of the Empire's manpower, substantially increasing its dependence on those who remained.¹ Diocletian's reforms of the administrative and military structure of the Empire put further pressure on the depleted supplies; one contemporary alleged that he had more than doubled the size of the army, and his increase in the number of provinces and departments to manage and supervise them required many more civil servants.² The creation of a Senate at Constantinople by Constantine drained away some of the richest βουλευταί, depriving their cities of their wealth at a time when they could scarcely afford to lose it. Constantine's law exempting the clergy from *munera*³ prompted waves of genuine and rather cynical piety as men, and particularly the βουλευταί, rushed to join their local church. Despite the prompt withdrawal of this offer, the church continued to drain manpower from the classes the Empire could least afford to see being reduced.⁴

Habitual drop-out elements of society continued to exist - presumably the chaos of the Third century had led to a large rise in their numbers, and there is little to show that numbers of beggars, bandits and deserters declined in the Fourth century. In fact, with the advent of the monastic movement, the numbers of people opting out of mainstream society must surely have increased; Hardy guessed that perhaps as many as one in twenty of the Christian population of Egypt may have been ascetics in the Fourth century.⁵ By AD370 it was seen fit

1 cf. Boak (1955a) on manpower shortage after the Third century.

2 La ctantius, De Mort. Per., ch. 7.

3 Cod. Theod. 16.2.1 (AD313?).

4 cf. Momigliano (1963), p. 9f.

5 Hardy (1952), p. 92.

to issue a law on the matter, since so many βουλευταί were fleeing to the desert.⁶ Nevertheless, although the manpower of the Empire was stretched, and greater demands were being made on it than ever before, there were enough people to fill up the newly created posts, while leaving sufficient to man the local administrative services. However, it left the latter less numerous compared to earlier centuries, and also less prosperous, since the wealthiest members took advantage of the re-organisation to improve their positions.

The Emperors observed the general tendency of people attempting to escape their traditional vocations and improve their lot, and tried to fix them in their social classes, in their hereditary occupations and places of origin, in an endeavour to ensure that all the vital services of the Empire were catered for. Notwithstanding government restrictions, social movement between classes persisted; some became incapable of continuing to perform their designated functions, while a lesser number possessed sufficient wealth and power to be able to gain promotion into the ranks above. Extreme rags-to-riches cases took place in the Later Empire, just as they have at almost any other time in history, probably recorded with a degree of exaggeration to add spice to the tale. Macmullen cites various examples of this in the Fourth century⁷ to demonstrate that restrictions placed on social mobility in the Theodosian Code could be liberally transgressed. In an administrative system in which patronage played such a large part, it should not be surprising to discover that a few socially-disadvantaged men had obtained high rank. Good contacts might be all a man needed to drastically improve his lot, since employment in the bureaucracy offered opportunities of increased wealth and power. Such chances would have fallen to educated or wealthy men in cities than to the bulk of the population, the rural poor.

6 Cod. Theod. 12.1.63 (AD370); this law was particularly aimed at Egypt.

7 Macmullen (1964), pp. 49-50; Hopkins (1961) the rise of a professor, Ausonius, to the consulship.

With the Third century decline βουλευταί, because of the now disproportionately large sacrifices involved in undertaking magistracies and some of the liturgies, sought to escape from their obligations. The wide range of the councillors across the Empire incorporated immensely wealthy men from the greatest cities as well as those of very moderate means from towns that were no more than glorified villages.⁸ Opportunity for self-enhancement did not fall equally to such men, since the poorer ones lacked the power and influence of those with wealth. The use of patronage and money could buy a βουλευτής an honorary title, conferring immunity from liturgies, or obtain him a position in the Senate or the civil service, with the same effect. In one case a man complained to the Catholicus that his nomination to δεκάπρωτος was illegal; his rank exempted him from it, which was why he had obtained it from the Emperor.⁹ Colleagues of a man trying to depart upwards from membership of the βουλή might have been reluctant to try to summon him back, as was their responsibility,¹⁰ since they might have espoused the hope that he would assist them in any of their subsequent attempts to escape. Furthermore, the most important remaining βουλευταί would not wish to see men more eminent than themselves returned to the βουλή. This might mean that they would have less influence over the assignation of liturgies, which could only rebound to their disadvantage. The government often had to threaten councils¹¹ in an effort to make them try to recover their fugitive peers, as Libanius explained.¹²

8 Jones (1964), pp. 737-9, diversity in wealth and status of βουλευται. Cod. Theod. 12.1.53 (AD362) - rich plebeians were admitted to councils, an example of an Emperor broadening qualifying standards for service on the βουλή.

9 P.Oxy. 1204 (AD299).

10 Cod. Theod. 12.1.181 (AD416) clarifies the rights of councils seeking to regain illegally departed members.

11 Cod. Theod. 7.2.2 (AD385); 12.1.110 (AD385), 113 (AD386), etc..

12 Libanius, Or. 48; Or. 49.

The government retaliated by shutting down all the potential escape routes open to them as it became aware of the abuses;¹³ the very large numbers of laws concerning βουλευταί in the Theodosian Code repeatedly covered such areas such as the army, the civil service, the Senate, the Church, guilds, advocacy and patronage and titles.¹⁴ The restrictions became gradually more severe, which may reflect growing government desperation over the matter; however, at least in the Fourth century, if a βουλευτής managed to elude recapture for a given number of years in a particular service, his escape was occasionally acknowledged. Other than the usual administrative channels - often the same ones offering patronage to escaping βουλευταί - the government did not introduce new methods to enforce the restrictions. Instead, it contented itself with periodic purges of the service groups to try to restore escapees to their councils.¹⁵ To make councils run more efficiently, new government officials were assigned to them, reducing further the social status that ordinary membership entailed, and thus its incentives. As the rewards diminished and the burdens increased, those who could escape were inclined evermore towards that option. Those who were left behind were disunited, putting consideration for all else behind that for themselves, and requiring further direct controls.

Performance of all one's civic *munera*, in the correct order, allowed progression to equestrian offices of state, bestowing personal immunity to council duties, but the sons of βουλευταί were expected to replace their fathers on the council.¹⁶ Measures intended to ensure that numbers were maintained supplemented the restrictions on changing disciplines. By AD300 property of βουλευταί might be registered as surety against their default (a process called κατοχή); this method does

13 Boak (1955a) saw this as a reaction to reduced manpower to ensure that all the needs of the Empire were adequately staffed.

14 Cod. Theod. 12.1; cf. Libanius, Or. 48.7, 22, Eusebius, Ecc. Hist. 10.7.

15 eg: Cod. Theod. 12.1.38 (AD346).

16 eg: Cod. Theod. 12.1.184 (AD423).

not always seem to have been successful, since in another papyrus it appears that men under similar constraints had fled anyway, and caution was being exercised by the βουλή in nominating replacements lest they flee too.¹⁷ Subsequently laws were passed in order to restrict the transfer of land from βουλευταί to non-βουλευταί,¹⁸ and certainly by the time of Justinian,¹⁹ duty on a council was a servitude on land owned by the βουλευταί there. This seems to be the case in Egypt, where owners of great estates undertook the liturgic duties imposed on those whose owners had died, apparently without heirs.²⁰ Councillors were bound to serve in their town of origin as well as any other to which they might move²¹ - another law intended to restrict their movements. These laws were all aimed at bolstering the strength of the councils as a body, but restraining the actions of the individuals within the group. Unfortunately, the Emperors seem to have placed too much faith in the spirit of community, which had been overtaken by self-interest in the Fourth century with the higher expense of liturgies and magistracies, which offered liturgists a diminished return as compensation for their contributions. While men still took considerable pride in their cities, they were less capable, and thus less willing, to contribute to it freely either independent of or through their civic duties. Without the co-operation of the councils the central government was forced to greater and greater extremes, until the councils became eclipsed by the measures introduced to help them operate more efficiently.

17 P.Oxy. 3188 (AD300); P.Oxy. 1415 (late 3rd).

18 Cod. Just. 10.19.8 (AD468).

19 Nov. Just. 101; cf. Cod. Theod. 12.1.52 (AD362).

20 P.Oxy. 2780 (AD553), S.B. 11079 (AD571), cf. Gascou (1985).

21 Cod. Theod. 12.1.12 (AD325); P.Oxy. 1119 (AD254) Antinoites were exempt from this.

Guilds, such as the *pistores* and the *suarii* detailed in the Theodosian Code, also came under more rigid controls;²² their movements were governed, and it was assumed that their relatives would succeed them - even sons-in-law. The obligations lay on the property, and purchasers were responsible for the guild duties that went with it, and their sons after them.²³ Less prestigious occupations were also compulsory - such as work in the state factories set up by Diocletian.²⁴ As in the case of the guilds mentioned above, anyone buying into the theoretically inalienable property of such people was also liable to the services to which the previous owner had been subjected. The exact status of all eastern guilds is not entirely clear; Cod. Theod. 13.4.2 (AD337) exempts a list of guildsmen from compulsory public services in order that they might have time to teach their sons their trade, so evidently it was expected that sons would follow fathers into their professions even if it was not compulsory. Irregularities occurred; in one case there is a hearing over which guild a trainee weaver should belong to, since he had suddenly been inducted into the builder's guild. From the papyri in Egypt it is possible to see various classes of people, not just tradesmen, forming groups for mutual benefit; this also served to assist the authorities in keeping a tighter control on them.²⁵

Military service seems to have been made hereditary in the Empire by Constantine in about AD313,²⁶ if it was not already the case. Sons of soldiers, who would most likely be brought up in or near the camp, were probably easy enough for the army to lay hands on; those of veterans, retired and living in the

22 Rickman (1980), pp. 226-230.

23 *origo*, Cod. Theod. 14.3.14 (AD372); relatives, 14.3.2 (AD355), 3 (AD364), 21 (AD403); 14.4.7 (AD397); property (for *navicularii*), 13.5.3, 17, 19, 20 (AD314-392); 13.6.1, 4, 6-8 (AD326-399).

24 Cod. Theod. 10.22.4 (AD398); cf. Jones (1970).

25 The weaver, P.Ryl. 654 (first half 4th); cf. my section on Guilds.

26 Cod. Theod. 7.22.1 (AD313).

country (though frequently on frontier lands), would be less so. If they declined to follow their father's career, or were in some way physically unfit, then they would be seconded to their local βουλή, and purges were made to remove them from civil office staffs.²⁷ Military service in Egypt in the Fourth century was not popular - recruits had to be guarded to prevent desertion - and this may have been because there was a real prospect of service abroad, away from domestic interests. Frontier provinces such as Egypt employed hereditary conscription for the urbanised *numeri* in the Sixth century; their reduced (and localised) military role made the positions less arduous than earlier centuries, and tenure seems to have been regarded as a privilege.²⁸ In the Fourth century, in addition to finding the reluctant recruits, a tax (the *aurum tironicum*) was levied for their equipment; by the Sixth century the front-line troops were hired (and armed) without the need for force, some by the owners of great estates.²⁹

The civil service had become a very popular career with men from all classes since it carried the benefit of immunity from civic *munera*, and much money could be obtained in the form of gratuities - the greater the favours one could bestow, the larger the sum of money that would change hands. The increased size of the bureaucracy made it easier to disguise graft, and the Emperor had to resort to the occasional bloodthirsty investigation to intimidate the survivors. Just as among the βουλευταί, there were vast social gaps between the highest and the lowest, not just within each *officium*, but between the officials themselves, depending on to whom they were responsible. The palatine ministries were apparently most popular, while the *cohortales*, at the bottom end of the scale, were supervised more closely, and the status of

27 βουλή ; Cod. Theod. 7.22.2, 4, 5, 7 (AD326-365); 7.1.5 (AD364). Office staff; 7.22.3 (AD331), 6 (AD349), 7 (AD365), 8 (AD372), 9-10 (AD380).

28 4th Cent.: P.Abinn. 19 (AD340s), P.Lips. Inv. 281, cf. Lallemand (1964), p. 164, n. 3; 6th Cent.: Haldon (1979), p. 21, n. 5, Jones (1964), pp. 669-70.

29 cf. Carrié (1981), pp.436-7. Estates, eg: P.Oxy. 156 (6th).

accountants both military and civilian was reduced to allow them to be tortured;³⁰ naturally enough, many *cohortales* sought to improve their lot by upgrading their positions to superior departments, but such movements were forbidden. Possibly in the light of a lower demand for positions that lay under the shadow of the threat of torture, membership of the *cohortales* was made hereditary.³¹

The Church was another potential refuge from the hardships of curial duty and from the oppression of tax-collectors. Under Constantine it received the benefit of a number of grants, such as property or exemptions from liturgical duty to its clergy.³² This made it more attractive to hard-pressed βουλευταί because of the benefits it conferred. But the rapid growth of the Church in size, numbers and wealth over the Fourth to Sixth centuries also made it one of largest organisations in Egypt, and its clergy could exercise a spiritual and moral hold over laymen in order to obtain their co-operation if they were unable to do so in their capacity as important landowners.³³ The growth of the Church included that of monasticism, which speedily attracted adherents. Monasteries sprang up across Egypt, whether near holy men (to house their followers), on holy sites or as the result of benefactions.³⁴ Communities of monks received donations to some extent, but generally relied on working their lands in order to get by. Very often these monks were drawn from the *coloni*, who did not aspire to the clergy. They, as well

30 Cod. Theod. 8.1.1-17 (AD319-433).

31 Movement, Cod. Theod. 8.7.19 (AD397); heredity, 7.22.2 (AD326); however, 12.1.108 (AD384) men must not be attached to councils as a punishment, and laws on the torture of βουλευταί were all aimed at Egypt; Cod. Theod. 12.1.47 (AD359), 80 (AD380), 126 (AD392), 190 (AD436). *Cohortales* were exempt from the duties council-membership entailed.

32 eg: Cod. Theod. 16.2.2 (AD319), 8 (AD 343), 10 (AD353).

33 eg: P.Abinn. 32 (AD340s) a priest intercedes for a fugitive soldier with his commander.

34 cf. Rémondon (1972), pp. 255-257. In S.B. 8162 (AD340) a monastery is founded on Mt. Porphyrites in the Eastern Desert.

as others, might come to this as a result of flight or by choice, and emphyteutic leases, even on marginal land, offered security at a relatively low price, with the protection of their religious institution.³⁵

Coloni also attracted a considerable amount of legislation in order to keep them on the land, producing the tax wheat required by the government. The definition of the status of a *colonus* is not simple, since various types appear. According to Carrié, it retained the sense of 'tenant' as opposed to 'owner', though this was by no means its absolute definition.³⁶ Those living on a great estate appear as *ἐναπόγραφοι γεωργοί*, a term which apparently extended to some artisans resident on the estate, while those merely engaged in short-term economic contracts appears as *γεωργοί* or *μισθωταί* - contractors. The former mainly appear in connection with receipts for machine parts and deeds of surety pertaining to their release; both of these required declarations of responsibility and good behaviour to prevent loss of material, or flight.³⁷ The distinction between them and the latter on estates is signalled by papyri which demonstrate that not all tenures were necessarily hereditary or permanent. In one case a man is given notice that the use of an irrigation machine is to be leased to another man, while elsewhere *μισθωταί* appear to be undertaking one year leases of a vineyard on an estate.³⁸

Clearly the precise status of *coloni* on estates could vary. Carrié has argued that the position of *coloni* is to be distinguished from that of slaves, and agricultural slaves do not appear at all in Egypt in the Later Roman Empire.³⁹ To

35 cf. Wipszycka (1972), p. 36f.

36 Carrié (1983), pp. 226-7.

37 cf. Carrié (1984); for *μισθωταί*, eg: P.Michael. 47 (AD570). Artisans as *ἐναπόγραφοι γεωργοί*, P.Oxy. 2420 (AD610), Carrié (1983), p. 230.

38 P.Oxy. 1941 (5th?), P.Vindob. Sijp. 7 (AD462), cf. Carrié (1983), p. 232.

39 Carrié (1983), Fikhman (1974), chart p. 124.

illustrate this he has examined the terminology of the imperial laws, which differentiate between the two. However, the *coloni* were one of the groups that were most open to exploitation, and had fewer prospects than wealthier and more prestigious people of being able to protect their rights either in court or outside.⁴⁰ Laws issued by the central government tended to redound to their disadvantage, and in the legal interest of the landowners.⁴¹ The intention of this legislation seems to have been to try and ensure the production of the tax wheat required by the government, and the best way of doing this seemed to the Emperors to be the fixing of *coloni* to the land. There is little enough knowledge on what effect the legislation on the *coloni* had and what proportion of the rural population was affected. The concept of the 'colonnate' derived its origins not from the legislation of Diocletian, although that perhaps gave it a broader application, but is visible in private arrangements on estates, a situation which persisted in the Fifth and Sixth centuries on the estates of the great landowners. And this applied also to those working on Church estates, since the Church ran its estates in the same manner as other οἰκον of equivalent size. Some clergy in the Sixth centuries were themselves *coloni* on estates.⁴² Monasteries also became involved in land-ownership and paid taxes, the land either being worked by the monks or by their tenants.

Cod. Theod. 11.24.6 (AD415), making landowners responsible for the taxes of their tenants, did not create an entirely new situation. Evidence for such activities is available from the Third century, in which tax collectivities of tenants had been set up on at least one estate, and possibly more.⁴³ It is apparent that such taxes had to be paid by the unit responsible - be it estate, village or city - in case *coloni*

40 eg: P.Cair. Masp. 67279 (c.AD570).

41 eg: Cod. Theod. 5.17.1 (AD332), 5.19.1 (AD365), Cod. Just. 11.48.20 (AD529).

42 P.Oxy. 996 (AD584), P.Lond. 778 (AD568).

43 Rathbone (1989), pp. 166-7.

absconded. For example, on an estate, when the landlord seized the goods of one of his defaulting *coloni*; the latter tried to make terms with the landowner for his return after an absence of three years, his major objective being to avoid paying the taxes for the years for which he was a fugitive.⁴⁴ The same was true of villages: a couple had fled their land there, and the rest of the villagers, being responsible for the taxes on all the village lands, worked it and paid the rent to the fugitives, returning the land to them when they reappeared.⁴⁵ Not everyone seems to have been able to escape payments while absent; Dioscorus complained that while he was a fugitive from Aphrodito and his land had been confiscated, he was still being made responsible for their taxes.⁴⁶

Some years were inevitably worse than others, and *coloni* who fell hopelessly into debt, or who were suffering too much hardship from neighbours, tax collectors or their landlord might well resort to flight, whether temporary or permanent. This was an act of desperation, since the land was the source of their livelihood. The last people to take such an option would be those who had most to lose by doing so - such as those who owned some or all of the land on which they worked.⁴⁷ Efforts to reclaim fugitives could meet with rebuffs, presumably because they were keen either to avoid tax payments that year or they were satisfied with their new situations.⁴⁸ Sometimes returning fugitives discovered that they could not recover their property, as happened to two villagers who found that the local

44 P.Oxy. 2479 (6th).

45 P.Col. Inv. 181-2 (c.AD339-340), Kraemer and Lewis (1937).

46 P.Cair. Masp. 67002 (AD567).

47 Reasons for flight, eg: water shortages, P.Thead. 16 (post-AD307), tax collectors and natural disasters, P.Oxy. 2479 (6th), P.Oxy. 2235, P.Abinn. 27 (both AD340s). In Theadelphia, those who remained were probably the three largest landowners in the village, P.Thead. 16.

48 P.Thead. 17 (AD332); P.Cair. Isid. 126 (AD308/9) reward for the return of fugitives. P.Oxy. 2055 (6th) list of fugitive *coloni* and their current whereabouts.

presbyter had assumed possession and was not prepared to hand the property back.⁴⁹ Such a flexible attitude to personal tax payments can not have been appreciated by their fellows. To forestall such behaviour, landlords resorted to deeds of surety, which involved having one man guarantee on the surety of a sum of money, or his property, the presence of another, usually either an employee or a *colonus*, on the land, and to present him when so requested.⁵⁰

Despite all the government restrictions on social mobility,⁵¹ which could generally only have been enforced if it suited those to whom the task fell, the ties of tradition and custom played as great a role. Sons would tend to follow their father's profession, learning it as they grew up on the farm, in an urban guild, or wherever. The learned classes had the means and the motivation for social movement, so this was where the government tried to exert the most pressure. The decline in prestige, numbers and wealth of the councillors over the Fourth and Fifth centuries testifies to their failure to prevent the often voluntary disappearance of this class. The placement of the duty of obligations on the property rather than the person implies an anticipation of social movement, but the purpose here seems to have been the maintenance of numbers within each grouping, or at least the maintenance of resources. As the latter became concentrated within groups of diminishing numbers, and local men who had left the council enjoyed successful careers in the bureaucracy, so the power of some individuals rose until they had obtained sufficient power and wealth to merit separate consideration by the central government. In Egypt these individuals were the owners of great estates, and they acquired a considerable proportion of the powers and duties of the councils.

49 P.Wash. 20 (4th).

50 eg: P.Oxy. 136 (AD583); P.Oxy. 3479 (AD361?), P.Abinn. 61 (AD346), P.Wash. 25 (AD530), P.Oxy. 3204 (AD588), P.Oxy. 2478 (AD595/6), P.Merton 98 (late 6th).

51 Cod. Theod. 8.4.28 (AD423); Nov. Maj. 7.1.7 (AD458) 'the trickery must continually be prevented of those persons who are not willing to be what they were born to be'; tr. Pharr (1952).

6: TAXATION:

Taxation was an extremely important feature of everyday life in the Late Roman Empire. Unlike some other societies, where such administrative details remain obscure, the subject occurs frequently in a large number of contemporary sources, showing the high profile and importance that it had attained. Many of the surviving papyri are tax receipts, tax registers, or in other ways related to the payment or assessment of taxes since the matter required careful and almost exhaustive documentation. Everyone in the Empire was involved in the process, whether legally or illegally. The bureaucracy passed on the rates to local councils, whose job it was to collect the taxes in their area. The rural population had to pay the largest part, mainly because the most important taxes were levied on farm land. Being at the lowest end of the scale, they would have also suffered the worst of the extortion and oppression practised by their seniors in rank, as lower officials sought to recover that which higher ones had already taken from them. Although the days of the tax-farmer were gone, when a man would pay a sum to collect the taxes in a given region, and then try to collect more in order to make a profit (at the expense of the tax-payers), extortion persisted. Lowly collectors might have had to pay over the required taxes to those above them before they could collect them from their assigned districts, recalling the circumstances of the tax-farmers.¹ Surcharges were pretty much established on all forms of taxation by the Fourth century, and many collectors sought to increase their percentages by any means possible.² Forms of direct, non-violent cheating involved rigging weights and measures and collecting taxes before the rates had been published.³ Violence,

1 eg: P.Oxy. 3393 (AD365).

2 Using gold standards to their advantage, P.Oxy. 1915 (c.AD560); exploiting surcharges for purification and adjustment of weight (eg: ῥοπῆ), cf. Hendy (1985), pp. 346-9, Johnson and West (1949), p. 315-6

3 Cod. Theod. 11.5.3,4 (AD436) tax rates must be published before collection. 12.6.19 (AD383), P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 229-244 (AD300)

of course, was used by both sides, though more often by the collectors, who had a widespread reputation for brutality.⁴ Tax collections could drag on for years before they were finally completed, and loss of tax receipts was a cause for serious concern, since without them it might be difficult to prove that the taxes had been paid.⁵

There were several financial departments dealing with the income from the Empire. Revenues from imperial lands were dealt with by the *privata*, run by the *comes rei privatae* from c.AD340 onwards; this department dealt with rents on imperial estates, and in the provinces the *Catholicus* and his procurators were the main officials.⁶ The *comes sacrarum largitionum* was responsible for the mines, some imperial factories, the mints and taxes levied in precious metals. It was his department's responsibility to obtain bullion for the Emperor, by compulsory purchase if necessary, and to produce enough of the debased *denarii*.⁷ However, the taxes in kind, including the rations issued to the military, were collected through the main network of officials, with most of the work being provided by the cities.

From the early Fourth century the Emperor issued a *delegatio* (διατύπωση), showing how much taxation he required from the Empire that year. Subtotals of this sum were sent to each Praetorian Prefect, proportioned to the size and ability to

standards of weights and measures to be posted publicly; also, 12.6.21 (AD386).

4 eg: P.Oxy. 3028 (early 3rd), claims that a tax collector (πράκτωρ σιτικῶν) had been reckless, unjust and had used troops. He riposted that he had been diligent and had acted within the law.

5 Protracted tax collection, P.Cair. Isid. 13, 16, 17 (all AD314); lost documents, P.Lond. 1651 (AD363), 1677 (AD566-7).

6 Millar (1980), pp. 125-140 on the *privata*. P.Beatty Panop. 1, 2 (AD298, 300) correspondence between the *Catholicus*, the procurators and the στρατηγός. The structure of the fiscal administration from Diocletian onwards, Henty (1985), pp. 371-8.

7 King (1980) on the *largitionalia*; pp. 146-151 for the revenues.

pay of his praefecture, and he in turn divided it among the dioceses under him. The vicar, or Augustal (after Egypt and Libya had been made into a diocese on their own), divided it up among his provinces, the *praesides* in turn among the cities, and the ἐξάκτωρ split it up between city and pagi. In each pagus, a subsection of a nome, the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου then shared this out among the villages, and in them local officials broke it down to rates for individuals. Each *indictio*, or annual assessment, fitted into a fifteen year cycle; the 'indiction' became the normal basis for dating and the start of the first fifteen-year one was dated from AD312.⁸ At city level and below liturgists were elected annually to make collections of taxes, not only for the corn to be sent to Alexandria, but also for the supplies for the soldiers based in the province (the *annona militaris*). These were the provincial taxes, but there were many others, such as those on transport, sales, trades and even for some time on prostitutes,⁹ to name but a very few. Sometimes officials appear geared to the collection of one particular type of tax, on other occasions the taxes were presumably paid through one institution (eg; customs taxes). In villages, the situation was similar, though town collectors would be involved there as well.

When taxes were paid over, it was the normal practice for the collector to issue a receipt for payment to the person or institution (guild, village or whatever) concerned. A standard receipt would carry the date of payment, the identity and rank of the collector and tax-payer, a description of the tax and, at the end, a date and total of each payment. The formula of receipts varied depending on local custom, the collector and the tax (they also changed somewhat in format and content over the period), but the basic information was important to both collector and payer alike because both would need the receipts

8 Dating the first indiction cycle, P.Princ. Roll, Kase (1933), pp. 25-31, Thomas (1974), Worp (1987).

9 The tax on prostitutes was abolished in Cod. Just. 11.41.7, cf. Jones (1964), p. 976, n. 83, previously paid into the *largitionalia*, cf. King (1980), Jones (1964), pp. 427-437.

for proof of payment, the former to support the details in his report to his superior, the latter to avoid being required to pay the tax again through lack of proof of payment. Collectors handed over their collections and reports at regular intervals, and such reports went to compile a ledger for the pagus, nome and province. Tardiness in presenting a report entailed a fine for the delinquent official,¹⁰ and collectors were responsible for any shortfall themselves. Arrears in tax collections were apparently not uncommon and payment was to be made over subsequent years, in kind or in money; the latter situation, called *adaeratio*, was employed if there was little prospect of payment of the tax in its intended form.¹¹

Of course, in reality, tax payment never ran as smoothly as this all of the time. The influence of rich landowners, or perhaps their local military might, or both, might secure them exemption from tax payment.¹² Only small instances of this appear in the papyri, as in cases when men tried to force others to pay taxes on land allegedly owned by the former; if larger scale cases of fraud happened, it is unlikely that they would have been recorded in writing.¹³ More powerful men were better able to resist any excessive demands by tax collectors; not only would they have had a better knowledge of the rates, but they were better able to protect themselves from local officials. Co-operation was possible; an example from the

10 P. Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 61-67 (AD300).

11 P.Cair. Isid. 16, 17 (AD314) chaff collectors for AD310/311 finally deliver arrears, mainly in kind but also in money. *Adaeratio* was open to abuse, cf. P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 229-244 (AD300), Schuller (1982), chapter by F.Kolb.

12 cf. Salvian, *On the Government of God*, 7.21; claims that only the poor paid taxes and obeyed the laws. Although he exaggerates, more powerful people could more easily acquire exemptions or avoid inconvenient laws. Cooperation with officials on tax payments and liturgical duties by estate owners in the Third century, Rathbone (1991), p. 20, n. 26, and pp. 133-5; influence could prevent local administrative abuses in relation to the estate, p. 21.

13 P.Cair. Isid. 69 (AD310).

Third century shows an εἰρηναρχος agree to grant extra time for some tax payments to the owner of an estate.¹⁴ Less fortunate people had less protection, and were most likely forced to pay tips to officials on top of the taxes. Given the fertility of Egypt and the low tax rate, it was probably the amounts demanded in excess of the standard rate that the tax payers had problems meeting. Presumably, the better one's social position, the more favourable the tax rates because the collectors appreciated that they could successfully demand less from more powerful people. Well connected people who received excessive demands could ensure that they did not have to pay them - even going so far as to petition the Emperor over the matter.¹⁵

In some areas the system of uniform-rate tax allocation caused greater problems than in others; the troubled areas of the Fayum at the start of the Fourth century found it harder to meet the demands than other more fortunate areas.¹⁶ However, hardship seems generally to have been caused not so much by the rates of taxes levied as by the excessive demands made and the ruthless methods employed by the tax collectors, who were themselves personally liable for any shortfalls in the amounts obtained. Some peasants could not endure the oppression; their debts rose, their lot worsened, and their existence was rendered unbearable. As a last resort, a number of them turned to flight.¹⁷ In villages, efforts were made to recapture such fugitives, since those who remained had to pay their taxes as well as their own and, to achieve this, they probably had to work the land of any absentees.¹⁸ Other

14 P.Flor. 128, Rathbone (1991), p. 133.

15 P.Ryl. 617 (AD317?).

16 P.Thead. 17 (AD332); cf. Bagnall (1985).

17 P.Mert. 91 (AD316), P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll.149-152 (AD298), P.Ant. 189 (6th/7th); examples of fugitives. P.Thead. 17 (AD332), P.Cairo J.d'E. 57102 (AD308/9?), Boak and Youtie (1957), 57026 (AD314), Boak (1951), attempts by villagers to recapture fugitives.

18 P.Col.Inv. 181, 182, Kraemer and Lewis (1937) - villagers had worked the land of fugitives.

burdens which might be inflicted upon them included the ἐπιβολή, the system by which unworked pieces of land were assigned to landholders for them to pay the taxes - whether they worked the land or not. The ἐπιβολή, however, does not seem to have amounted to much, but it was another encumbrance for the rural population.¹⁹ Bad floods, or other natural disasters, contributed greatly to hardship, especially if taxes and rents were not lowered to make allowances for the reduced yield. To be added to this list are such incidences as intra- and inter-village violence, and reprisals taken by officials with or without reason, which led to loss of life and property. Reaction to such adversity varied according to status, but responses included flight - following those who had gone earlier and taking the situation full-circle - seeking a patron for protection, or enduring such troubles stoically.

Egypt was included in the general reorganisation of taxation under Diocletian. From AD297 there survives a record of an edict made by Prefect Aristius Optatus, in association with an imperial edict, notifying the provincials of the changes.²⁰ On the appended schedule is the amount to be levied on each land unit (*aroura*), taking into account the character of the land, and the capitation charges for men within the requisite age brackets. The taxes were the *capitatio* and *iugatio*, but with some notable differences from those imposed on other provinces. As Jones indicated, although the land of Egypt was assessed in *iuga* in the books of the Praetorian Prefect of the East, the term *iugum* is not found in the papyri.²¹ Indeed, it is clear that assessments continued to be made on the *aroura*, a

19 cf. Jones (1953), census records.

20 P.Cair. Isid. 1 (AD297); cf. Piganiol (1935), pp. 1-2.

21 cf. Jones (1957), pp. 88-94; a *iugum* was a measurement of *iugera*, usually involving a consideration of quality to determine its size. Bagnall (1980) p. 195 presents one explanation, that the higher bureaucracy used one system that was translated into others before being used locally (the *aroura* in Egypt). *Iugera* do appear; eg: a latin papyrus, P.Lond. Inv. 2506 (AD211), Bowman and Thomas (1977), pp. 63-64, n. 7.

type of land measurement peculiar to Egypt (elsewhere, other terminology might be used; eg, the *centuria* was a measurement of land in Africa).²² Jones further opined that the papyri show no evidence that the taxes were levied in combination (or were interchangeable) as they were elsewhere. However, Carrié differs from this, preferring to see them as a whole, upon which other taxes could be assessed, although he also believed that it was possible for them to exist together in the same province, being used as a means to levy different taxes.²³ These taxes at any rate were the basic assessments of the Empire, the land tax being of much greater importance as far as Egypt was concerned, because of the fertility of the Nile valley.

The tax systems of Later Roman Egypt are very complicated and have not yet been fully understood. Straight fixed-rate capitation taxes have to be separated from the system of assessment on people proportionate to property as a measure of landed wealth. At village level, the latter were distributed by village officials, who used the κεφαλή as the means of distributing shares. The κεφαλή was an abstract measure of landed wealth, representing not an individual but a share of the village payments. A number of them was assigned to a village on the basis of its perceived ability to pay, and these were split up among the villagers on similar principles. Much depended on the goodwill and honesty of the officials - in one instance village officials allegedly colluded with the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου to distribute them without regard to wealth or income. Also, the allocation of the taxes from higher authority was done by records of the region, so that in times of mass desertion, very few people might be left to pay the region's taxes.²⁴ Some papyri show lists of villagers followed by

22 Cod. Theod. 11.1.10 (AD365) - cf. Pharr (1952), p. 292, fn. 26 to this law. Cod. Theod. 7.6.3 (AD377) an example of an *arouratio*-based levy. A *centuria* equalled about 200 *iugera*, cf. Jones (1974), p. vii.

23 Carrié (1981), p. 437.

24 P.Cair. Isid. 73 (AD314) for allegations of corruption. P.Thead.17 (AD332), 3 men must pay 25 tax units for the village of Theadelphia. The

fractions, denoting the amount of a κεφαλή that they had to pay, while in another case a village had to supply half a workman for three months to a supervisor as their contribution.²⁵

Records of land owned and of people were kept both locally and centrally, and were adjusted according to notifications of sales and bequests, births and deaths.²⁶ Those records consisted of land surveys and censuses, the bulk of the evidence for which occurs in the early part of the Fourth century, particularly for the latter.²⁷ It seems that after an initial burst of administrative zeal under Diocletian, in order to set the new assessments in motion, the system settled down to being one that made changes to the registers when so advised of them, rather than seeking them out itself, though these would probably become apparent as the tax collectors made their records. When patrons became responsible for the taxes of their tenants, the keeping of records for their land became their responsibility, easing the burden of the local authorities.

Other irregular or supplementary levies were apportioned to individuals using the records for the main taxes as a basis for their proportional distribution. Land taxes were more important than capitation taxes, and most taxes were allocated on the basis of landed wealth. In the papyri, more records survive of payments for the land tax as opposed to those for the capitation taxes, much as one would expect. One important tax that seems to have been assessed based on the size of land-tax payments was that in gold and silver. Since most people

κεφαλή was still in evidence in the Sixth century, P.Lond. 1793 (AD472), P.Oxy. 1912 (late 6th).

²⁵ B.G.U. 21, P.Cair. Goodspeed 12 (both AD340), Rémondon (1970). Workman, P.Thead. 34 (AD324).

²⁶ P.Cair.Isid. 6 (AD300-5) an incomplete register of the land of Karanis. P.Oxy. 2473 (AD229) petition to the στρατηγός to make the βιβλιοφύλακες έγκτησεων register a sale they had failed to acknowledge. P.Oxy. 3141 (AD300) notification of a death to the συστάτης.

²⁷ Informers might hope to obtain part of the property on which they reported tax evasion, cf. P.Princ. 119 (4th), cf. Hanson (1971), p. 15ff.

probably did not have the requisite amounts demanded, they had to buy the bullion required and then sell it at rates set by the government - usually considerably lower. This essentially constituted a tax, since the requisition was being made on terms disadvantageous to the tax-payer. The Emperor was aware of this, but his protests against it and his efforts to prevent this (cf. S.B. 9253) failed since inflation in the Fourth century, and thus market prices, continually outstripped those set by the government, as in Diocletian's Edict of Maximum Prices.²⁸ Receipts for capitation taxes date from the early Fourth century (there are various receipts from previous centuries for the λαογραφία, an earlier version of a capitation tax), but thereafter there are few examples. This position is not improved by the fact that variations of the tax seem to crop up (eg; the ἐπικεφάλαιον πόλεως in the early Fourth century in Oxyrhynchus to the διάγραφον and ἀνδρισμός in the Sixth century).²⁹ The capitation tax was levied only on adult males in Egypt - in other provinces women were liable to pay some or all of the rate.³⁰ Various classes of people were exempt from the tax, placing the bulk of the duty on the peasantry. The lack of clear evidence in Egypt after the early Fourth century for the payment of a fixed rate tax on males levied in the debased coinage may suggest that it was soon discontinued when the sums it realised ceased to be worth collecting as a result of inflation, despite efforts to increase the rates (as at Oxyrhynchus).³¹

The *annona militaris* comprised a number of taxes, levied for the soldiers stationed in the province as a general rule.

28 Rea (1974), Bagnall (1977a), Bowman (1980), pp. 31-2.

29 cf. P.Oxy 3789 intro. (AD320) for ἐπικεφάλαιον examples. This tax is only known in Oxyrhynchus, cf. Carrié (1981). For λαογραφία, Bowman and Rathbone (1992), pp. 112-4.

30 eg: Cod. Theod. 13.11.2 (AD386); cf. Jones (1964) p. 63, n.46. Bagnall (1980) uses this as proof to dissociate the capitation taxes from the κεφαλή, since in S.B. 7756 (AD359) a woman pays.

31 cf. Carrié (1981), pp. 443-445.

Diocletian had changed the tax from that of the Third century so that much of it was levied and paid in kind. Money payments were also made, for anniversaries and when required commodities were not available.³² The taxes supplied basic essentials such as food, and other items such as clothing. It was incumbent on the civil officials to deliver the required goods - be they clothes, food, wood or other supplies - to the military accountants in return for receipts. In some cases, these receipts were redeemed for cash by a treasury official at a rate fixed by the Emperor; this was often at a disadvantageous rate since the central government persisted in its obstinacy in setting low market rates that ignored the consequences of inflation (which was particularly high in the early Fourth century). Since individuals might be assessed, for example, at a fraction of a military cloak, or for some foodstuff that they did not produce, much of the tax must have been taken in specie, and the goods obtained with this. Cod. Theod. 11.7.16 stated that military collectors were merely to receive the rations, and not to interfere in their collection, but it appears that they did at certain levels.³³ By the late Fifth century in the Eastern half of the Empire, rather later than in the West, collection of taxes for the *διατύπωσις* came to be made in gold rather than in kind, and the officials and troops obtained their rations with it. The tax corn continued to be collected in kind in Egypt and transported as before.³⁴

Taxation appeared in myriad forms. It was difficult for peasants to know the going tax rate, or when they were being

32 P.Beatty Panop. 2, 1.39 (AD300) for *stipendium* and on account of goods not available in kind; II. 186-196, 266-70, donatives for anniversaries.

33 P.Abinn. 13, 14, 15 (all AD340s). Carrié (1981), pp. 434-5, adds that the *vestis militaris* operation had two parts; collecting the money and having the village and city weavers make the clothes. Reimbursement for government requisitions is almost entirely restricted to *vestis militaris* payments, Bagnall (1988) p. 162, first quarter of the Fourth century.

34 cf. Hendy (1989), pp. 15-17.

cheated. Although the government-issued rate of taxes seems to have remained fairly steady throughout the period, officials invented some taxes or demanded in excess of the central government rate.³⁵ Each year the peasant faced the tax collectors; in a good year, with a flood of average level, he would probably manage a small surplus. In a very bad year he might well go into debt, while those most affected might have to resort to theft or take to flight. Until great estate owners invested rents back in the land on agricultural improvements, the peasants gained no advantage from the taxes they paid. It was useless for the government to issue laws ordering extortion by tax collectors to cease while both raising the permitted levels of gratuities,³⁶ insisting on the payment of the full quota of taxes and retaining the mechanism of collective responsibility.³⁷ Their cumulative effect made life harder for those who could pay their taxes after those who could not had departed; it is not possible to quantify just how many people suffered in the Fourth century - no tax collectors are represented favourably, not even in the Theodosian Code - but at least in the Sixth century Justinian was receiving a healthy tribute of corn from Egypt.³⁸ This implies that despite the reported brutal tactics and extortion of collectors, Egypt was still economically and demographically a viable entity.

35 Rathbone (1989) pp. 172-3 on tax levels. Cod. Theod. 7.4.12 (AD364?) soldiers exacting bogus taxes; P.Lond. 1674 (c.AD570) raising the tax levels.

36 Nov. Maj. 7.1.16 (AD458) an increase in the tax rate entirely for the purpose of gratuities to the officials concerned.

37 cf. Rathbone (1989) for estates this was less of a problem than for villages; villagers were under less obligation to their fellows and under less control.

38 Just. Ed. 13.8; cf. Rickman (1980), pp. 232-233.

7: CORRUPTION:

Corruption is a very awkward word to define.¹ I used the word in the title with reluctance, but it is a general term extensively employed by ancient historians and the Emperor in relation to perceived ills in the Empire. Identifying definite incidences of corruption is not easy because it is often difficult for us to know the details; few people wished to record details of their own crimes in writing. Furthermore, in such a complicated administrative system as that of Egypt in the Later Roman Empire, things would go wrong. Whether contemporaries affected by such errors could perceive the difference is uncertain: what is beyond doubt is that people alleging corruption would give their perspective of the incident, and this would not have been objective or free of bias. As the system of local administration underwent change in Egypt in the Later Roman Empire, so the opportunities for and forms of corruption may have been changed, too. The word 'corruption' covers different activities in different societies and political systems. It operates at both an individual and an institutional level. In the context of the Later Roman Empire, I intend to divide it into two sections in order to facilitate definition; those of patronage and peculation. The former deals with the promotion of self-interest and the organisation of appointments in the various levels of the administration. The latter covers the over-exaction of taxes and perquisites by the officials thus appointed.

The Roman Empire ran on a system of patronage; ultimately, all power of appointment stemmed from the Emperor, but the sheer size, scale and complexity of operation of the Empire forced him to delegate some such duties to his senior officials. Selection of appropriate candidates for office depended on the knowledge of who was interested and how they would benefit the selector. Such a system was open to abuse; personal favouritism and bribery must generally have been deciding factors. Men would have been selected for their personal ties,

¹ cf. the collection of papers on corruption edited by Schuller (1982).

their loyalty and their co-operation as higher considerations above ability. In the Later Roman Empire most bureaucratic officials, such as governors, had staffs to guide and advise them, so that an active knowledge of the running of a particular post was unnecessary. Further evidence that this was not an essential criterion is provided by the fact that many senior posts, at least in the Fourth century, were held for relatively short periods of time, leading to the appointment of a large number of men to such posts. In a system based on patronage, men holding the highest posts had greater power to make appointments and greater influence to use on their friends' and clients' behalf; as the seniority of officials diminished down to that of the most humble, so did their relative power.

Peculation and extortion occurred throughout the Empire, but without comprehensive documentary evidence for it, its prevalence is impossible to quantify. Officials were often entitled to exact perquisites in order to supplement their low pay. Many must have taken advantage of their positions to exact more than was legally permitted, or to invent or establish new fees. Since methods of legal redress were generally expensive and under the control of officials also involved in the process of tax collection, the lower classes may have had little alternative but to put up and shut up; only by chance will any such instances of minor extra payments have survived in personal financial accounts. Men of sufficient local standing might well have contested illegal efforts to extract more than the required rate from them and their dependents, though the judicial process may have been more costly than the demands. The reason may have been that once responsibility was acknowledged for certain payments, there were fewer methods of preventing the recurrence of subsequent demands in later years; previous payments would have weakened claims of immunity.

As regards the levels at which such matters operated, the existence of legalised gratuities demonstrates that such payments, and therefore requests for them, operated across the board. However, in each case, it was up to the individual to

decide to what extent he would be insistent on the payment of gratuities, legal or otherwise. The ability to ensure that the exactions were made at a minimum of personal risk, and the personal greed of the individual, may have determined the extent of the demands. Officials connived with each other to maximise profits and to cover their tracks. This is not to say that all officials were corrupt; they would have regarded many of the gratuities as perquisites of the job, and money made in the course of their duties from gifts to assist petitioners was quite acceptable. The application of custom to many payments gave them a sort of legal force, whether they were publicly condoned or not. Taubenschlag places the origin of *συνήθεια* - salary payments to public officials - in custom.² And once the individual payments had acquired this tag, it was easier to extract them under a veneer of legality; in time, some became legal exactions. The use of force in order to acquire what they regarded as theirs by law or by custom would again be seen as perfectly fair. On the other hand, those from whom such payments were extracted may have had a very different view of the matter, and this is where definitions of peculation and extortion can become complicated.

Macmullen (1988) covers the bureaucracy, where incidences of corruption were most spectacular. He did not address the subject of the local administrators, at village and city level, to whose services the Emperors attached great importance. Although I will make references to the corruption of bureaucratic officials, this thesis is mainly preoccupied with local ones; at all levels the nature of the practices was relatively similar, but there was a large variance in scale. It is very difficult to assess corruption in the case of each local official without first ascertaining their function. I intend to examine the appointed tasks of each magistrate and liturgist, so far as they can be discerned, and then attempt to draw conclusions, illuminating instances of corrupt practice as they are encountered. Such instances are merely pieces in a huge jigsaw - they give a very limited view of the whole, but are essential nonetheless. After the organisation of the local

² Taubenschlag (1945) p. 47f.

administration has been explored, I will then have a more thorough look at the element of corruption.

CHAPTER 2:

1: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TOWN COUNCILS:

Civic authorities under the Roman Empire were employed to collect the local taxes. Under Severus and Diocletian, when they obtained a theoretically larger measure of autonomy, they were required to perform various other services for the central government. The cities also ran their own institutions under the close scrutiny of the provincial administration, and boards of magistrates were constituted to ensure that they ran properly and efficiently in the Third to Fourth centuries. This involved more than the generosity of individuals in putting on games or in erecting new buildings; γυμνασάρχου, for example, were responsible for providing oil for athletes in the gymnasium and for heating the baths. During the troubled years of the Third century, when duties became far more onerous, and beyond the means of most individuals, boards of magistrates (κοινά) shared the duties between them. Magistracies were merely the most prominent council positions and there were many other duties of lesser status to be performed (λειτουργία). The least important ones were allotted by tribe in the Third century and beyond, chosen by an annually elected tribal official. This system of election by tribe was by rotation, and the artificially created urban tribes took it in turn to perform the liturgies required.

Most of the nominations to positions, made either by the predecessor in the position or more usually through the πρύτανις (the head of the council) had to be referred to the ἐπιστράτηγος or to the στρατηγός, in the Third century, of whom the former had the power to decide by sortition between candidates if there were more people than positions, or just appoint them if there were not. Once a man had been appointed, he had to perform the position diligently for the appointed duration; this had been for a year before the troubles of the Third century, but became as little as a month or a few days when the demands of the positions outstripped the resources of individuals. The Fourth century saw a transformation in the

identity of the magistracies. The introduction at city level of powerful centrally-appointed officials, the λογιστής, ἐξάκτωρ and later the *defensor civitatis* / ἔκδικος, undermined the roles of the old magistracies, and they disappeared before the Fifth century. The ἔκδικος endured well into the Sixth century, though with a loss of status and authority after the Fourth century relative to other sources of power in the provinces; the λογιστής and ἐξάκτωρ suffered this even more acutely.

Magistracies carried the prestige of office but, like liturgies, they entailed the performance of certain duties. Those of magistrates usually required more money than those of liturgists, and incumbents were generally expected to be as generous as possible, such magnanimous behaviour being in accord with their positions. Liturgies were far more varied, ranging from the expensive to those requiring physical labour (of which the most menial were known as the *munera sordida*, or λειτουργίαι σωματικάί). Those requiring physical activity on behalf of the liturgist are defined as 'personal' *munera* in the Digest by Hermogenian and Arcadius Charisius, while those involving a financial outlay by the nominee are called 'patrimonial'. Arcadius Charisius also lists a third class of liturgy, the mixed *munera*, which encompassed those requiring both physical effort and personal expense. Such permutations do not seem to have been common, and this term was probably discarded because it complicated the classifications; many liturgies might have been perceived as being partially included in it and partially in one of the main two categories.¹ Some liturgies were more demanding than others, and certain people were ineligible to perform some of them; for instance, women were exempt from those involving physical labour, while the most important citizens were free from the most menial liturgies. In times of financial hardship it was often a matter of some difficulty to find candidates for every vacant post, and such a failure usually necessitated an appeal to a senior official. The βουλή was responsible for the maintenance of its own

¹ Just. Dig., 50.4.1.1, 3 Hermogenian; 50.4.18.1, 18, 27 Arcadius Charisius.

numbers, and it needed at least as many people as were necessary for the performance of all its magistracies.

It is not uncommon for men to be found performing two liturgies concurrently, though this does not have to mean that the city was short of candidates. It is quite possible that the individual concerned was easily rich enough to afford both, or that both liturgies went well in combination together.² Of course, this was not always the case; men who felt that they had been saddled with a liturgy beyond their capabilities to perform might take legal action of some sort, or in truly desperate cases resort to flight. The wealthiest members could buy their way out of the performance of expensive council liturgies by elevation to a higher status that conferred immunity on them. Although it was the responsibility of βουλευταί to recall their illegally departed fellows, they might be reluctant for a number of reasons to do this. On the other hand, evasion of assigned duties placed the onus for their performance on the rest of the council; in one case in which conveyers for the *annona* had fled, the βουλή was reluctant to nominate new liturgists lest they flee, too, apparently preferring to seize the sureties of the defaulters. One form of evasion of liturgies was not to flee but to absent oneself from the city - on one occasion the πρύτανις appealed to the Prefect for help since βουλευταί were trying to avoid nomination to the duty of transporting the *annona* by staying away from town. As πρύτανις, he had a strong vested interest in seeing the duties performed.³ Occasional efforts were made to try to make people serve who were exempt from such service, and even those who volunteered once to perform a service for a needy council might find it difficult to regain their previously immune

2 P.Princ. 133 (AD303) nomination to a second post. P.Beatty Panop. 1, l. 276-331. (AD298) nominations of men to two posts for a military assessment. P.Oxy. 2110 (AD370) successful resistance of a second nomination.

3 For reluctance, P.Oxy. 1415 (late 3rd), cf. my section on Social Mobility, fnn. 10-12. Evasion, S.B. 9597 (late 4th), Bowman (1971), p. 81.

status.⁴ This does not so much underline the need of certain cities for individuals but rather for wealth since what outsiders or volunteers had to pay for, the city saved. There were numerous appeals against nomination on the alleged grounds of lack of means.

Certain liturgies could be performed by substitution - presumably these were mainly 'personal' ones. Such a situation had to be approved by the council, and a legal contract was carefully drawn up by the liturgist and the substitute. The usual terms were that the substitute would perform the duties while the liturgist paid for his expenses and any others incurred in the execution of the liturgy.⁵ A wage must have been involved as well. This system helped both parties since the substitute made money with no liability should the liturgist default, and the liturgist did not have to waste his time on a liturgy when he wished to be doing something more productive. The employment of contractors (μισθωτάι) by magistrates, who then supervised their work, relieved the latter of directly performing the duty themselves, but this was not substitution; rather it was the employment of professionals under contract for a fixed salary. One example of this activity was their use by ἐξηγητάι in connection with the water supply. The practice of hiring a professional to perform liturgical duty also appears in the Sixth century.⁶

4 P.Lond. Inv. 2565 (c.AD250) (Skeat and Wegener (1935)) one Apollonides denies responsibility for the appointment of villagers to city liturgies, claiming he had only been πρύτανις-designate at the time. cf. P.Oxy. 3064 (3rd). P.Oxy. 899 (AD200) a woman who voluntarily undertook a liturgy, although exempt, experienced very serious problems in regaining her previously exempt status over a matter of years.

5 Contracts with substitutes; P.Cair.Isid. 80 (AD296), 81 (AD297), P.Oxy. 2859 (AD301).

6 P.Oxy. 2569 (AD265) serving for a fixed term, not the entire year. In P.Oxy. 3173 (AD222) two request payment from the πρύτανις for work performed on the baths. Μισθωτάι seems to have been a general term for men performing contracts or undertaking loans: eg: tenant farmer in P.Michael. 47 (AD570), cf. Carrié (1984), p. 943f. Hiring professionals, cf. Gascou (1985), pp. 55-7.

Despite all these possible alternatives, it was frequently very difficult for councils to find enough candidates for all of the offices and liturgies. Some magistracies were revived briefly (for example, the εὐθηναρχία at Oxyrhynchus towards the end of the Third century) but could not be sustained, and at other times it was a problem getting men to serve in some liturgies.⁷ As councils experienced more difficulty in reaching their quotas, so more interference was necessitated from outside, until new magistrates were permanently imposed on the beleaguered cities to make sure they were properly run.

7 P.Oxy. 1417 (early 4th) non-performance of the εὐθηναρχία.

2: THE Βουλή AND ITS RESPONSIBILITIES:

Before the sweeping reforms of Diocletian, there were two grades of official at city level, the magistrate and the liturgist.¹ They were both tasks performed on behalf of the state, whether directly for its benefit or for that of the city, generally without recompense. Magistracies were performed by members of the municipality's upper classes, and entry to this, the gymnasial class, was vetted by *ἐπίκρισις*, in which a man's birth, and that of his parents, was traced back as far as possible in order to see if he was of the right origins. As a result, there was a hereditary nature to membership under this system. Liturgies were more diverse and numerous and there were various grades. Bouleutic liturgies were performed by *βουλευταί*, sometimes of the same social class as those performing the *ἀρχαί*. Other ones were performed in the city by non-members of the *βουλή*, while the most lowly were those requiring physical labour, the *λειτουργίαι σωματικά*. In order to serve in a magistracy it was necessary to pay an entry fee (*στεπτικόν*) in order to obtain the right to wear the crown of office, while liturgies required the possession of adequate property (*πόρος*) to guarantee that the cost of the task could be met.² Those possessing inadequate property (the *ἄποροι*) had to perform the lowest liturgies. That magistracies and liturgies became harder to bear by the end of the Third century is borne out by the fact that some of the magistracies either no longer existed in some cities, or did so with difficulty for only part of the year, while the more important duties were performed by groups of men, sometimes doing stints of as little as one day each in rotation to spread the load.³

1 The distinction between liturgy and magistracy, Thomas (1983), Drew-Bear (1984).

2 cf. Drew-Bear (1984), pp. 321-22.

3 P.Oxy. 1413 (AD270-5) problems finding candidates for the *ἐξηγητεία*. P.Oxy. 1252v col. ii (AD288-295) problems with the *εὐθηνιαρχία*.

In the early Fourth century magistracies and patrimonial liturgies continued to be a serious drain on personal resources. Some magistracies lapsed again when they proved too burdensome to perform. The boards of magistrates formed to deal with the greater expense of the city magistracies suggests that, as the pressure on councils became greater to provide more people for the tasks, they may have become more indiscriminate in their selection procedure. Nominations were made illegally of villagers and Antinoites; the latter had preserved papers from a similar trial ten years before, and both efforts failed on appeal.⁴ The barrier between liturgies and magistracies was reduced since wealth and not social origins was now of more importance.

Although more distinction was still associated with the magistracies, the λογιστής and the ἐξάκτωρ in the early Fourth century removed much of their power. They were reduced from being the most important positions in the city and superseded by the new and more powerful ones. The last of the old magistracies disappeared at some point in the late Fourth century; expense may have been one reason, but Christianity provided another spur, since many of them were pagan in origin and function. The γυμνασιαρχία, for example, must have perished along with the gymnasium. Furthermore, once the prestige and status to be gained from the performance of the more expensive liturgies and magistracies had visibly begun to diminish, despite their continued cost, so the incentive to undertake them must have largely perished. The disappearance of the old magistracies in the city was symptomatic of its gradual loss of status and importance in local administration.

I intend now to have a look at the old magistracies, some of which endured until the second half of the Fourth century, as well as the other civic operations for which the βουλή was responsible. The γυμνασιαρχία was probably the most burdensome magistracy; the γυμνασάρχιοι were responsible for the gymnasium and the associated baths, and they had to

⁴ S.B. 7696 (AD250), P.Oxy. 1119 (AD254).

provide oil for anointing in the former and fuel for heating in the latter. That this magistracy became expensive by the Third century is evident by the numbers of papyri containing appeals against nomination to it and those over the selection of days of duty for individuals from the τάγμα of γυμνασάρχοι.⁵ The assignation of particular days of service became a subject of debate for the whole βουλή - considerable bargaining and cajoling seems to have gone on in order to get men to serve. The old duration of the magistracy for a year was by now redundant. Most or all the γυμνασάρχοι in the τάγμα may have participated in service over the year, though the number of days served might have varied between individuals.⁶

The revival of the εὐθηνιαρχία in the late Third century at Oxyrhynchus apparently devolved upon the τάγμα of γυμνασάρχοι, since there would have been no τάγμα of εὐθηνιαρχαί as a result of the position having fallen into abeyance. In one papyrus they are found making nominations to the position, while in others the offices are seen to be combined.⁷ This was an unwelcome additional burden to a magistracy that seems to have been heavily laden already, but it appears that the εὐθηνιαρχία was allowed to lapse again early in the Fourth century. The γυμνασιαρχία, being the most senior magistracy, also persisted the longest into the Fourth century since, despite the gradual decline of the gymnasium, the baths were an important part of everyday life and were required for the entertainment of the citizens and visiting dignitaries. Individuals contributing to their great expense were particularly welcome and very

5 Problems over nominations, P.Oxy. 2130 (AD267), 1418 (AD247), 2854 (AD248). Selection for days of service, 3182 (AD257), 1413, ll. 19-24 (AD270-5), 1416, ll. 6-9 (c.AD299).

6 P.Oxy. 3507 (3rd/4th), 1416 (c.AD299), length of service was subject to βουλή debate.

7 P.Oxy. 1252v, col. ii (AD288-295) the τάγμα of the γυμνασάρχοι nominated only two names for the three positions for the εὐθηνιαρχία. The πρύτανις appealed to the Prefect to order them through the στρατηγός to take some further action. Other combinations of γυμνασάρχος, P.Oxy. 1418 (AD247), 2854 (AD248).

necessary to their upkeep. Van Groningen proposed that, based on the evidence provided by P.Oxy. 1416, that the *γυμνασιαρχία* may have been gradually performed less regularly - for example, on feast days and for the visits of notables - before finally disappearing altogether. It undoubtedly became harder to find candidates for the post, but whether a policy decision was taken (and this would presumably have been up to each *polis*) over when the magistracy would be performed, or whether the council tried to fill it as often as possible is very hard to say from the limited evidence at our disposal.⁸

The *εὐθηνιάρχης* was the supervisor of the food supply, particularly in association with the corn supply to the city. They ensured that the corn was prepared and made into bread for distribution, and presumably it was also up to them to look after the condition of the mills and bakeries.⁹ Whether the magistracy was, as Maclennan suggests, only employed in times of need, or whether it was a regular occurrence like the other magistracies is an interesting point.¹⁰ The position seems to have been suspended at Oxyrhynchus in the second half of the Third century, up to about AD287, possibly as a means of relief to the beleaguered councils. It was revived in Diocletian's reign, an exercise that lasted about twenty years or so, and in that period the responsibility for making nominations to the magistracy and undertaking it appears to have been that of the *γυμνασάρχου*. Because of the lapse there was no *τάγμα* of *εὐθηνιάρχαι* to make nominations. If the position was only activated in time of need, it would be very odd to find a period of thirty-five years in Oxyrhynchus where there was no food shortage, especially taking the state of the Empire at large into account; it is of course possible that papyrus evidence of famine for such time is lost, but the papyrus noting the restoration of the position stated that it had been long in

⁸ Van Groningen (1938).

⁹ P.Oxy. 908 (AD199) six *εὐθηνιάρχαι* all agree to bear the expense of a mill grinding wheat for the city.

¹⁰ Maclennan (1968) Oxyrhynchus, p. 55.

abeyance. I prefer the idea that the revival of the εὐθηναρχία had more to do with some concept of restoring a façade of the old grandeur to the cities, by making them field a full complement of magistrates; if this was the initial notion, it merely caused hardship and was soon withdrawn.¹¹

Another magistracy that was suspended and revived over the same period of time was the ἀγορανομία. The ἀγορανόμος was responsible for the market, punishing traders who used false weights and measures, or who sold their wares at a rate higher than that fixed by the city. He could lease out market stalls on behalf of the council, and collected money from people who paid for the right to sell goods in the market-place.¹² The magistracy is not found after the Fourth century, and it is quite probable that it disappeared in the first half of the Fourth century. In AD363 the Emperor Julian created the ζυγοστάτης, an official whose duties encompassed the testing of weights and the verification of the purity of *solidi*, and to settle disputes between buyers and sellers in respect of *solidi*.¹³ His position seems to have been expanded to include the duty of inspecting that weights and measures in general were fair, and it would not be wholly unreasonable to regard him as at least a partial successor to the ἀγορανόμος.¹⁴

The ἐξηγητεία, like the other offices, is not found after the Fourth century. The office lasted past AD330, for in that year a

11 Problems nominating, P.Oxy. 1252v, col. ii (AD288-95), 2854 (AD248). Irregularities in its performance were to be investigated before the στρατηγός, 1417 (early 4th). In 1252 it is stated that the Prefect had revived both the εὐθηναρχία and the ἀγορανομία, 'which had long been in abeyance' (editors' translation). In the Fifth to Sixth centuries, there was a city corn-buyer (σιτώνης), whose election was transferred to the city notables from the βουλευταί, Cod. Just. 1.4.17 (Anastasius), Liebeschuetz (1973), p.40, n. 27.

12 P.Oxy. 3053 (AD252), 3054 (AD265?) very detailed registration of slaves made through the ἀγορανόμοι or their substitutes.

13 Cod. Theod. 12.7.2 (AD363).

14 P.Oxy. 1886 (5th/6th), 1897 (6th/7th) ζυγοστάτης as inspector of weights.

papyrus survives in which a man appealed to the λογιστής over his nomination by the πρύτανις to the ἐξηγητεία.¹⁵ The position was certainly connected with the management of the civic water supply and the baths. It involved some expense on behalf of the individual or the τάγμα; an instance is found where the τάγμα of ἐξηγηταί bore the cost of the work performed by one of their number.¹⁶ The ἐξηγηταί supervised work done on the baths and water supply, and sometimes the contract for the supply of water to the baths was put out to tender, and taken up by contractors (μισθωταί). Payment for their work probably came from the municipal bank on the order of the πρύτανις (at least in the Third century).¹⁷ Ἐξηγηταί also seem to be the civic officials most commonly associated with the guardianship of minors, though this was by no means their monopoly. The Prefect had the power to appoint guardians for orphans in cases where one was lacking, but this competence must usually have been delegated to lesser officials throughout the provinces. The ἐξηγητής was the one to whom this jurisdiction was often entrusted, but it could also be delegated to the στρατηγός, or even the γραμματεὺς πόλεως.¹⁸ In a very early case where there appears to have been no guardian for some orphan children, men wishing to lease the land applied to the ἐξηγητής and drew up a contract. He published the details of it for ten days in case a better offer was made.¹⁹ It is not

15 P.Oxy. 3350 (AD330).

16 P.Oxy. 891 (AD294) a πρύτανις writes to an ἐξηγητής to tell him that he has been appointed to a post (connected with the baths?). The ἐξηγηταί as a body will bear the expenses.

17 P.Oxy. 2569 (AD265) an ἐξηγητής made a contract with a μισθωτής to draw water for the baths of the Thermae for 9 months. 3173 (AD222) two μισθωταὶ βαλανείου request payment for work on the baths.

18 To the στρατηγός, P.Oxy. 898 (AD123), 56 (AD211), P.Tebt. 326 (AD266). To the γραμματεὺς πόλεως, P.Oxy. 487 (AD156). P.Oxy. 720 (AD247) refers to the *Lex Julia et Titia* (31BC), vesting the power in Prefects to appoint guardians. Here, on request, the Prefect himself appoints the man for whom the petitioner asked.

particularly obvious quite how burdensome the magistracy was; although there were problems making nominations for it at times, on several occasions the ἐξηγητεία is held in conjunction with other positions; twice men hold it alongside an ἐπιμέλεια, and once as a τραπεζίτης of the public bank.²⁰

The survival of the κοσμητής is attested at least until the mid-Fourth century,²¹ but this official is not found after the Fourth century. The κοσμητής was responsible for the good order of the city, and while they lasted until the Later Roman Empire, they supervised the rituals of the ἔφηβοι, as the young men of good birth continued to be called.²² As with the other magistracies, there were problems in obtaining enough nominees for the post, and it was already a considerable burden by the end of the Second century.²³ A board of κοσμηταί jointly performed the duties each year once the duties had become too much for just one man; they took it in turns to do a given period each, varying in length from a few days to a month.²⁴ What the 'good order' of the city involved is not entirely clear, since there were police officials to take care of public order. In one

19 P.Amh. 85, 86 (AD78); P.Oxy. 1269 (early 2nd) notification of the property left to orphans is made to an ἐξηγητής. 888 (3rd/4th) appeal to an ἐξηγητής to appoint a guardian.

20 The nomination, P.Oxy. 1413 (AD270-5); with the ἐπιμέλεια, P.Oxy. 2142 (c.AD293), P.Michael. 21 (AD285); as public banker, P.Princ. 133 (AD303).

21 P.Ant. 31 (AD347).

22 P.Oxy. 42 (AD323) the λογιστής gives notice of a performance to be given by the ἔφηβοι. This seems to be the last mention of them.

23 P.Lond. Inv. 2565 (c.AD250) (Skeat and Wegener (1935), pp. 224-247) illegal election of villagers; P.Ryl. 77 (AD192) a man is nominated to the κοσμητεία, but offers instead to take on the senior position of ἐξηγητεία, for which enough nominees had already been found.

24 P.Oxy. 3293 (AD262-5), 3297 (AD294?), P.Ant. 31 (AD347) - notifications of imminent service; these notifications were made, respectively, by the στρατηγός, the πρύτανης and the λογιστής.

instance the κοσμηταί were apparently responsible, as part of their duty, to make a payment for a public work of unspecified nature,²⁵ and if they had to finance the ephebic games, that would have been another considerable expense.

The ἀρχιερεύς was one of the least important of these officials, ranking alongside the ἀγορανόμος. His was a religious function and, as the title implies, he was high priest of the city, mainly responsible for carrying out ceremonies prescribed for the cult of the Emperors and members of the imperial family. Since the magistracy little affected the running of the city, not much is known about it, but it was possible to combine it with other posts.²⁶ On one occasion, the property of a man about to become ἀρχιερεύς is registered specifically as a surety against his defaulting, implying that the position, like the others, was quite burdensome for some people, even if not on the same scale.²⁷ A seventh official also appears in connection with this group, the ὑπομνηματογράφος, or recorder. There is not much evidence for his activities in office, but Grenfell and Hunt tentatively placed him above the others in importance, while Whitehorne more recently suggested that this official should be regarded as Alexandrian, at least until the end of the Third century.²⁸

This set of officials concerned themselves with the basic requirements of their city - the corn and water supplies, and the upkeep of amenities, such as the gymnasium, baths and the market. While they paid the costs themselves, the rest of the population was involved in its various occupations and the need to collect, pay and transport taxes to the central government. The increasing inability or unwillingness of the boards of magistrates to meet the demands placed upon them

25 P.Oxy. 1413 (AD270-5).

26 P.Princ. 133 (AD303), P.Oxy. 1415 (late 3rd) on both occasions an ἀρχιερεύς became a public banker.

27 P.Oxy. 3188 (AD300).

28 B.P.Grenfell and A.S.Hunt (1916), *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* vol. 12; papyrus 1412, (AD284) fn. to ll. 1-3. Whitehorne (1987), pp. 113-4, Bowman and Rathbone (1992), pp. 116-7, 122.

led to a decline in their contribution to the upkeep of the civic amenities. Eventually, the magistracies disappeared altogether, and they were superseded by officials whose duties were more concerned with imperial requirements than with local civic ones; the λογιστής, ἔκδικος and ἐξάκτωρ. The importance of the city could not compete with the greater concerns of the Empire, and when it became impossible to cater for both, the maintenance of the former was subordinated to its function; collecting taxes for the Emperor.

The council, at least at Oxyrhynchus, possessed an internal fund which was run by an official called the ταμίας βουλευτικῶν χρημάτων in the Third century. This liturgist was apparently in charge of a fund composed of entrance fees paid by βουλευταί. In another instance, this official is seen collecting interest on entrance fees that were still owing to the βουλή.²⁹ This appears to have been different from another fund, run in the Third century by the ταμίας πολιτικῶν χρημάτων, which seems to have had rather wider scope. It was responsible for civic funds, and in the Fourth century came under the control of the λογιστής. At about the same time, if not as a direct consequence of the changes made to local administration at the start of the Fourth century, the title of the official changed from ταμίας to τραπεζίτης.³⁰ This fund could make payments on demand for civic expenses, such as salaries and costs for the maintenance of public works, and received payments for local dues.³¹ This shows that the βουλή had some control over its own finances in connection with public works, and could authorise minor repairs to the baths and other buildings. In the Fourth century, when the λογιστής has assumed control of the city finances, payments for such restorations had to be made through him.³²

29 P.Oxy. 1501 (late 3rd), P.Oxy. 3175 (AD233). Ταμίας, Lewis (1982), p. 49.

30 P.Oxy. 1104 (AD306), P.Oxy. 3193 (AD308?).

31 P.Oxy. 3566 (AD246), P.Oxy. 1104 (AD306); P.Oxy. 3189 (3rd/4th).

32 P.Oxy. 896 (AD316), P.Oxy. 1104 (AD306).

By the Fourth century, it is possible that this fund absorbed that for the collection of entry fees - especially since the latter would have been much depreciated in the high inflation of the early Fourth century.

A more important institution for which the βουλή provided liturgists was the public bank. Of the nominations that survive to this post, those that we have show men holding magistracies being proposed. In one of these the πρύτανης is recommended to nominate a richer man than the predecessor; his selection claims not to have enough wealth, but is pressured into acceptance.³³ This was the bank of the nome and it received the state revenues in specie. Since it dealt with taxes, it came under the supervision of the στρατηγός and ἐξάκτωρ who could authorise payments from it, for example, for requisitions of *annona militaris*.³⁴ In P.Beatty Panop. 2 the Catholicus decreed that sums made under the heading of βαλλαντίον, being paid to the bankers, were being done so at the expense of the tax payer, and were no longer to be continued. It is unknown exactly what βαλλαντίον constituted, but evidently the public bankers, just like most other officials, were happy to take supplementary payments where and when possible. That the practice was deep-rooted is implied by the appended order that the στρατηγός was to recover any sums he had handed over under this heading, through his subordinates.³⁵ By the Sixth century, the role of councillors in such public financial institutions was much diminished. The emergence of the πάραρχος as the dominant official in the nome gave him the responsibility for local finances, and that official employed his staff for that purpose.³⁶

33 P.Oxy. 1415 (late 3rd), P.Princ. 133 (AD303). In the former the nominee is an ἀρχιερεύς, in the latter they are ἐξηγητής and ἀρχιερεύς.

34 P.Cair. Isid. 54 (AD314), P.Ant. 39 (AD323); also P.Oxy. 3194 (AD323).

35 P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 92-99 (AD300).

36 eg: P.Lond. 1665 (6th), P.Cair. Masp. 67046.

Another important duty that devolved upon the city was the need to ensure that the transport system was operating in the approved manner. Not only had the city to ensure that tax grain, amongst other commodities taxed in kind, was safely conveyed to the appropriate destination (in the case of the tax grain, this was to the Nile ports and thence to Alexandria), but also animals had to be provided for the stables of the public post (δημόσιος δρόμος), and provender and money for their upkeep. This could be a considerable expense to the individuals whose duty it was, particularly when unscrupulous officials demanded in excess of what was supposed to be provided.³⁷ As well as having to perform the patrimonial liturgy of providing animals for the public post, there was the personal liturgy of acting as an animal driver, to take tax grain from the city to the ports. People so selected might be expected to provide animals for the duration of the liturgy.³⁸ It was also a personal liturgy to look after the transport system, including such activities as maintaining roads and bridges. Although sometimes classed as a menial liturgy, the upkeep of the highways became sufficiently important for the Emperor to decree that no-one, and no property, be it that of the Emperor himself, an *illustris* or belonging to the Church, should be exempt from the duty.³⁹ Other liturgies in the field of transportation are those that concern shipping, whether involving the repair of the ships or the shipyards, or the provision of sailors for the ships of the *cursus velox*.⁴⁰ Such activity in the field of transportation was

37 cf. Cod. Theod. 8.5; provision of post horses as a patrimonial liturgy, cf. Just. Dig. 50.4.18.21.

38 Just. Dig. 50.4.18.3, 11 a personal *munus*. P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 153-5, AD300; return of carts and cattle to the men who had provided them to the quarries at Keneh.

39 Just. Dig. 50.4.18.4 the care of the public transport system was a personal *munus*. 50.4.1.2, 50.4.18.15 upkeep of the roads. Cod. Theod. 15.3.6 (AD423) voids exemptions.

40 Just. Dig. 50.4.18.10. Repairs to ships, P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 250-255, 271-3 (AD300). Ναύται and ἀλιεύται, eg. P.Oxy. 2675 (AD318), 3623 (AD359), 2715 (AD386). The *cursus velox*, or δῆυς δρόμος, was the express post, a subsection of the public post. Public post, cf. Hendy (1985), p. 603f.

almost entirely for the benefit of the government, in order to facilitate the carriage and shipment of tax grain, but the city would have benefited in part from the sustention of the condition of the roads and shipping concerns.

The city had also to provide various services to the military, besides the collection of the military *annona*, a group of taxes that provided the various commodities that the army in Egypt needed. One of the duties that Egyptian cities may have occasionally incurred was the need to provide billeting for the soldiers and their officers. Although it seems that resident soldiers actually lived separately from civilians in some cities such as Hermopolis and Oxyrhynchus, those passing through would no doubt require lodgings.⁴¹ Egypt was not a very heavily militarised province, and probably suffered a good deal less from billeting than other ones, though incidents occurred; in one case Dioscorus was informed in reply to a petition that the soldier lodged in his house was there illegally and is to leave.⁴² The *annona militaris* taxes probably formed the bulk of the duties the Egyptians had to devote to the military. However, soldiers often tried to requisition items and animals to supplement their meagre pay. In resisting such efforts, townsfolk would have been acting quite legally, but it was hard for an unarmed man to dissuade an armed one intent on the appropriation of the former's property.⁴³ In times of active

41 Hermopolis, cf. Lesquier (1918), p.406 - papyri mention two sections of Hermopolis, the 'City' and the 'Castle'. Oxyrhynchus, cf. Turner (1952) some areas had military names; P.Oxy. 2131, l. 8 (AD207) 'Camp Quarter'. Also, Macmullen (1963), p.77f. Billeting, P.Herm. Rees 17 (5th/6th) in a widow's house. In the Abinnaeus Archive the soldiers live in a camp, and it is not clear where Diocletian's army is to stay in Panopolis in P.Beatty Panop. 1 (AD298) - in ll. 256-263 four men, each in charge of a *mansio* or palace, are designated superintendents of bedding (or of roads?).

42 P.Cair. Masp. 67067.

43 P.Abinn. 18, 28, 48 (AD340s) all deal with the depredations of soldiers.

military operations extra demands for the collection of provisions were made on the cities to supply the requisite amount of stores.⁴⁴ But such occasions were the exception rather than the rule in Egypt.

Communications with superior officials were also an expense the city had to bear. When a new Emperor acceded to the throne, or on an imperial anniversary or some similar occasion, cities sent a votive offering as a mark of respect. The usual method of conveying congratulations was through the dispatch of an embassy and also of crown gold (*aurum coronarium*, or στεφανικόν). Crown gold was made an annual payment in the late Second century, and some Emperors also demanded or received payments at important times in their reigns as well. Later laws restricted the payment of crown gold to βουλευταί, and also made the point that crown gold payments were (at least in theory) voluntary. Before the λογιστής assumed control of the city's finances, the council apparently had control over this matter.⁴⁵ Embassies were often employed by the councils to greet the Emperor, and sometimes to ask a favour of him. Trips to the imperial capital were not cheap, and it was a matter of pride for cities to make their embassies (and, presumably, their golden crowns) appear as opulent as possible, to serve them the greatest favour and make them look superior to their neighbours. This was a tremendous financial drain. In the Fourth and later centuries, embassies were occasionally used by participating individuals as opportunities to make personal appeals as well; if a man had to go to Constantinople, or wherever the Emperor's court was located, he might well assist

44 Much of P.Beatty Panop. 1 (AD298) concerns the desperate efforts of a στρατηγός to organise supplies for the imminent visit of Diocletian and his army to the Thebaid.

45 cf. Wallace (1938) pp. 281-4 on crown gold. P.Fay. 20 is a copy of an Edict, possibly from Severus Alexander, concerning the remission of some payments of στεφανικόν. Cod. Theod. 12.13.3 (AD368) only councillors were liable. 12.13.5 (AD384) crown gold is voluntary. P.Oxy. 1413 (AD270-5) a discussion in the βουλή over the payment and preparation of a gold crown. P.Oxy. 3791 (AD318) the council commissioned an imperial portrait.

friends, or those prepared to pay, by taking their business with him as well.⁴⁶ The councillors also had to lay on spectacles and games for the city. Although assistance might be forthcoming from private sources, most of the cost must have devolved upon the city or the magistrates.⁴⁷ Imperial edicts sought to make them less ruinous, but as the Fourth century went on, shows seem to have diminished in quality or quantity where there were inadequate funds to finance them.⁴⁸ These were another serious drain of money, but were a measure of the prestige and pride in which the city beheld itself and wished to be seen by others. It also fell to cities to look after the needs of visiting high officials. Not only would accommodation of suitable character be prepared and provided, but food and wine too, as well as anything else that was felt to be necessary. It was most important to impress and earn the good will of the visiting officials of means and position since, if they were well satisfied, they might in future be well disposed towards the city in any appeal it should present before them. Laws trying to counter such behaviour were therefore liable to be ineffective, since the more lavish it was, the more impressed a visiting official was likely to be.⁴⁹

46 Dioscorus of Aphrodito attends to public and private business in Constantinople, cf. Salomon (1948), Martin (1929). P.Abinn. 58, 59 (both AD345) are contracts with a man going to Constantinople to acquire positions for the contractors.

47 P.Oxy. 705 (AD200-2) Aurelius Horion left 10,000 Attic *drachmae* for *ephebic* contests in the Oxyrhynchite nome. Cod. Theod. 12.1.169 (AD409) a private gift to Antioch of 600 *solidi* for public spectacles. Libanius Ep. 381 imperial assistance in the form of two teams of horses for a man in Antioch organising some games.

48 Cod. Theod. 15.5.1 (AD372) production of spectacles to be under the control of the councillors financing them, not the governors; also Cod. Theod. 15.9.2 (AD409). The gradual removal of the Syriarchy, 5th-6th centuries, Liebeschuetz (1959a).

49 Cod. Theod. 11.11.1 (AD368) against guest gifts. P.Oxy. 1431 (AD352) the citizens paid 2,250,000 *denarii* for a single carpet for the visit of the *dux*. P.Oxy. 1920 (late 6th) providing for the retinue of a visiting official.

Acclamations in the theatre before senior bureaucratic officials were the people's way of communicating their pleasure or displeasure with their magistrates and the running of the city. In Antioch at least a professional body (the *claque*) conducted such chanting, and their contributions more usually reflected the opinions of their backers than those of the people at large. Acclamations were to be reported to the Emperor as an indication to him whether his subordinates were governing fairly or not. The *βουλή* had no power over these proceedings, but the latter could have a considerable effect on the *βουλευταί*, since in essence the people were speaking direct to the governor, Prefect or whoever, and through them to the Emperor. The effect of a large mob yelling often gained the attention and compliance of the senior official in question, and his promise to accede to their requests. Such effects might be beneficial, and the magistrates might receive praise, or they might be malign, directed against individuals who were unpopular or perceived to be being inefficient. There were laws against seeking the plaudits of the crowd by over-lavish displays in the theatre by governors at the expense of the city.⁵⁰

Although the *συστάται* maintained tribal records, there was a central records department in each city. This recorded land ownership, and was responsible for the local property register. If a sale of land occurred, the purchaser gave notice of the transaction to the *βιβλιοφύλακες*, the officials in charge of the records section, and requested official recognition of the change of ownership. Apparently, sales of land had to be registered both locally and centrally at Alexandria.⁵¹ It is possible that

50 Libanius Or. 41.9, a *claque* of 400 in Antioch, allegedly employed by actors (cf. also Or. 56. 2, 16; 45. 20-23); Browning (1952), pp. 15-16. Cod. Theod. 1.16.6 (AD331), 8.5.32 (AD371) acclamations to be repeated to the Emperor. P.Oxy. 41 (3rd/4th) the *πρύτανις* receives plaudits in front of the Prefect; Libanius Or. 26, 5 a councillor not adequately heating the baths was ordered to be beaten as a result of the yells of the crowd.

51 P.Oxy. 1199 (3rd), 1200 (AD266) applications for recognition of a change in ownership. 2473 (AD229) petition to the *στρατηγός* of Oxyrhynchus to instruct the *βιβλιοφύλακες* to register a sale of land effected over a year ago.

there were two departments for record-keeping in the city; the two βιβλιοφύλακες ἐγκτήσεων who attended to land registry, and two others, the βιβλιοφύλακες δημοσίων λόγων, who seem to have dealt with official papers and financial statements of the nome. Besides attending to land registration, the records of the former were used to provide information to the council and officials of the property owned by individuals. On one occasion a βιβλιοφύλαξ was instructed by the πρύτανης to register a lien on the property of a man against default by him in the performance of his magistracy, and on another occasion, in a man-hunt, a βιβλιοφύλαξ was sent to its co-ordinator to show him relevant records and to insure the treasury against loss (presumably by securing the man's property in case he was not found).⁵² Most of the evidence, in fact, seems to refer to the βιβλιοφύλακες ἐγκτήσεων; a request for formal registry of ἀσυλία ('inviolability') and a notification of immunity from taxation were also directed at them.⁵³ The records were of importance not only locally but also for higher officials, who could demand knowledge about inhabitants and their property, and expect to receive an immediate answer. In a case where census irregularities were detected, for example, various officials including the βιβλιοφύλακες were to be presented before the Catholicus to explain.⁵⁴

The βουλευταὶ had to bear a lot of the expenses of local administration themselves; the old magistracies were early casualties and the βουλή was re-shaped. If the Egyptian cities suffered the confiscations of income under Constantine and

52 Two types of βιβλιοφύλαξ - cf. Bell (1948), p. 73, fn. 6. Examples, P.Oxy. 3188 (AD300), P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 192-201 (AD298). P.Oxy. 2848 (AD225) a section of βιβλιοφύλακες ἐγκτήσεων survey sheets, showing their attention to detail.

53 P.Oxy. 1264 (AD272) intro., B.G.U. 1073 (AD274). The exact meaning of ἀσυλία is unknown, but may be immunity to tax or some form of liturgy.

54 P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 86-91 (AD300).

Constantius (though granted a rebate by Valens), this would have contributed to the decline of their institutions despite the previous efforts of Diocletian to revive local administration.⁵⁵ Out of the βουλή emerged the most powerful and wealthy βουλευταί, who formed a group called the προπολιτευόμενοι (they seem to perform a similar function to the *principales* in the Western Empire)⁵⁶ which managed council affairs in a semi-official capacity after the λογιστής, ἔκδικος and ἐξάκτωρ had become civic magistrates in the late Fourth century. The rest of the βουλευταί performed the other liturgies as they were assigned to them, and the βουλή as such lost much of its character as it became streamlined towards the more efficient collection of imperial taxes and revenue.

55 Jones (1964), pp. 732-3, Liebeschuetz (1959).

56 cf. Geremek (1981), Bowman (1971), pp. 155-158 on the προπολιτευόμενοι.

3: TRIBES:

Wards (ἄμφοδα), administrative units into which each *polis* was divided, had been used for the management of such details as the registration of births and deaths. After the reforms of Septimius Severus, they were further employed for the appointment of minor liturgists. They had been organised and named on the basis of nearby geographical landmarks or after the trade practised in that quarter, among other things, but, depending on the number in each *polis*, they were adjusted in size and number to accommodate the new responsibilities delegated to them. These wards were, in their new forms, called tribes (φυλαί), and it fell to these tribes to provide liturgists for various civic functions in a fixed annual sequence. In the Third century the ἐπιστράτηγος determined the order of service, and the στρατηγός confirmed most of the nominations; in the Fourth century, the λογιστής made the appointments in the place of the στρατηγός. Such an organisation required a leader, and each tribe elected one annually, though only the one of the tribe on duty had to nominate any liturgists. The selection of the new φύλαρχος (the tribal leader in the mid-to-late Third century) had to be approved by the στρατηγός, and the position was itself liturgical.¹ This leader then nominated members of his tribe for liturgical positions, if it was their turn to serve, and acted as registrar for the tribe. At Oxyrhynchus it is possible to follow the evolution of the position through the Third century and into the Fourth. At first, the administrative head of the tribe was the ἀμφοδογραμματεύς, but this official was renamed the φύλαρχος in about AD245, despite there being no apparent change in his duties;² the alteration here obviously

¹ P.Oxy. 2763 (AD253/4) deed of surety to the στρατηγός over the performance of duty by a φύλαρχος. 1187 (AD254) the στρατηγός orders the nomination of a φύλαρχος.

² P.Oxy 1119 (AD254) two Antinoites request that the Oxyrhynchite στρατηγός notify the φύλαρχος in office that they are by origin exempt from municipal office outside Antinoopolis. They cite a case ten years ago when an ἀμφοδογραμματεύς had also nominated them. This approximates the time of the change (AD244-254), and other papyri put it closer to AD245-8.

reflects the technical nature of the change from ἄμφοδον to φυλή. In about AD285-7 the φύλαρχος was replaced by the συστάτης, whose responsibilities were apparently wider.³

Although the evidence focuses on the head of the tribe on duty, it must be assumed that other tribes elected interim officials, since people would still be born and die each year, and need to be registered, and the poll tax had to be collected. Rea, in the introduction to 'Oxyrhynchus Papyri', Volume 40, commented that the φύλαρχος of each tribe not liable for liturgical service still had to keep records of corn dole, and since this was the case they presumably kept records for all tribal matters as usual. Such men, in the Third century when the φύλαρχος was the tribal head, called themselves ex-φύλαρχοι; συστάται did not qualify their title. A group of tribal administrators was therefore operational in the city each year, and Rea presents evidence demonstrating collegiate activity outside Oxyrhynchus, and perhaps even in it.⁴ The evidence is more substantial for the συστάται, who succeeded the φύλαρχοι; they were also elected for each tribe at Oxyrhynchus, though only one had to make the nominations as before, and they also acted at times as a *collegium*.⁵ Aurelius Muses appears a minimum of four times over a thirty year period as a συστάτης in the later Fourth century. This prompts the suspicion that there were rather few men adequately qualified for the job (literacy must have been a prerequisite, despite his having assistants) who were not already serving as βουλευταί, or that it

³ P.Oxy. 3571 (AD286?) is possibly the earliest reference to a συστάτης. His appearance is well established in AD287 by other papyri. 3295 (AD285) contains an extraordinary address to 'the administrators of the affairs of the phylarchy' (τ[ο]ῖς διοικοῦσι τὰ κατὰ τὴν φυλ(αρχίαν)), perhaps suggesting that a change in titles was in progress and causing some local confusion as to which to use. One of his extra duties was that he was responsible for the ἐπικεφάλαιον πόλεως.

⁴ Rea, 'Oxyrhynchus papyri', Vol. 40 (1972), pp. 7-8. Collegiate activity, S.B. 7375.

⁵ P.Oxy. 3622 (AD356) a συστάτης is in charge of a tribe just beginning to provide liturgists (νυνεὶ λειτουργούσης). 3137 (AD295) application to the κοινόν of συστάται to register a child. 3301 (AD300), P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 338-341(AD298) - cooperation of συστάται during man-hunts.

ceased to be elective and became a permanent assignation (no other Oxyrhynchite *συστάται* are known between AD356-AD387).⁶ It is also possible that peer pressure could have led to his retention of the position, since his tribe might have continually persuaded him to persevere, and have re-elected him each year, though there is no evidence for the many intervening years to say who held the position. The actual number of tribes at any time in any city is not easy to calculate. It seems that the number even in cities such as Oxyrhynchus was subject to change at various times over the Third and Fourth centuries, presumably in an effort to obtain the right balance of numbers and enhance efficiency.

Since the *συστάτης* is the official who appears in Oxyrhynchus in the Fourth century, it is upon him that I shall concentrate my attention. The matter of tribal records was a mundane but important part of the job, probably consuming most of the time of the *συστάτης*. Various birth declarations were lodged with the *συστάτης*, and he noted the child's age, name, social class and address, and placed this information in the records for the next indiction. When the child had come of age, if male, he had to pay the usual taxes in the manner of all the other citizens. On one occasion the *κοινόν* of *συστάται* was involved in an effort to register several children, and it is possible that another submission for registration to the board of the *λαογράφοι* was to the *συστάται* under an unusual title.⁷ A later application goes not to the *συστάτης*, as would be expected, but to the acting-*λογιστής* in AD320, but it is impossible to say from one example whether the office of the *λογιστής* usurped this function.⁸ The *συστάτης* was also responsible for the registration of deaths in his tribe. The purpose behind the acknowledgement of deaths, as a

⁶ Aurelius Muses appears in P.Oxy. 3622 (AD356), 3623 (AD359), 1116 (AD363) and 2715 (AD386). On each occasion he makes nominations.

⁷ P.Oxy. 3183 (AD292) application to a *συστάτης* to register a child. 3137 (AD295) to the *κοινόν* of *συστάται*. 2855 (AD291) to τὸ κοινόν τῶν λαογράφων; one of the *λαογράφοι* is known to be a *συστάτης* in the same year. The *λαογράφοι* had been responsible for the collection of the poll tax (*ἐπικεφάλαιον πόλεως*) which was now the responsibility of the *συστάται*.

⁸ P.Oxy. 3754 (AD320).

petitioner notifying the *συστάτης* of the death of his son-in-law explained in P.Oxy. 3141, was to have the deceased man's name struck off the tax register so as not to have to pay his poll tax (*ἐπικεφάλαιον*) and also to be free from any subsequent claims from his guild.⁹ Given all the information on births and deaths, and the accurate knowledge the *συστάτης* had of the people of his tribe, it should come as no surprise to encounter him receiving payments of the poll tax from the late Third to early Fourth centuries.¹⁰ In fact, the most important reason for the regular census maintained by the *συστάτης* was most probably for the capitation tax, though it did serve other state requirements, too. The poll tax was distributed evenly at a standard rate, and implemented through the Prefect, the *Catholicus* or some other senior official. Most of the signatories who received the payments were *συστάται*, although the *βοηθός* (assistant) of the *συστάτης* was also empowered to acknowledge the payments.

The function with which the office of *συστάτης* is most associated is that of the nomination of men for *munera* to the *στρατηγός* (in the Third century) or to the *λογιστής* (in the Fourth). The *ἀμφοδογραμματεὺς* and *φύλαρχος* before him had also had this duty. The *ἀμφοδογραμματεὺς* nominated people for various *munera*, including those to do with the collection of taxes in money and kind in the city.¹¹ No doubt such positions continued to be filled under the *φύλαρχος* and the *συστάτης*. Among other liturgies for which the *συστάτης* made nominations are those requiring service on the *cursus velox* (the express post) and other transport, for guard duty or police work and

⁹ P.Oxy. 3141 (AD300), 1551 (AD304) notifications of death to a *συστάτης*. The tribal responsibilities of the *συστάτης* concerning the *capitatio*, Piganiol (1935), p. 7.

¹⁰ P.Oxy. 3036 - 3045 (AD298-314/5) and introduction show capitation receipts. 2717 (AD294-7) the *βοηθός* (assistant) of a *συστάτης* signs for the payment. 3114 (AD267) petition to the *φύλαρχος* to be placed on the poll tax register by a city guard. This is the *λαογραφία*, not the *ἐπικεφάλαιον*; the latter is unattested outside Oxyrhynchus, cf. intro. P.Oxy. 3036.

¹¹ P.Oxy. 1119 (AD254), cf. n. 2. also, 3294 (AD271/2), 2764 (AD277) by the *φύλαρχος* to the *στρατηγός*. *Ἀμφοδογραμματεὺς* nominations: 81 (AD244-5), 1196 (AD211-212), 2131 (AD207).

one for an inspector of dues.¹² The *συστάτης* usually nominated the liturgists to the *στρατηγός* or the *λογιστής*, but in exceptional circumstances might receive direct orders from senior officials for nominations.¹³ In a papyrus of the Fifth century, the nominee pays the nominator (who may well be the *συστάτης* here) an agreed sum to relieve him of his burden. In return, the nominator now seems responsible for the task, but would probably pay a deputy to perform it in his place with the money so obtained. A *συστάτης* was certainly responsible when the captain of a public corn ship complained that a sailor had not been supplied to him despite several previous requests.¹⁴ There was also the potential for favouritism in the distribution of liturgies. Some liturgies seem to have been regarded as rather onerous, but on one occasion a *συστάτης* is thanked by a man who received, along with his son, the light liturgy of guarding the Temple of Thoeris. In return, they undertook to perform it for a full year instead of the agreed eight months.¹⁵ The *συστάτης* continued to operate in Oxyrhynchus throughout most of the Fourth century, if not all of it. In other cities the title of this official may have been different; Mertens called it an essentially Oxyrhynchite liturgy, and in other cities officials such as the *γνωστήρ* may have performed the duties.¹⁶

¹² *Cursus velox*, P.Oxy. 2675 (AD318), 3623 (AD359), 3796 (AD412) and P.Flor. 39 (AD396). Naval service, P.Oxy. 86 (AD338), 2715 (AD386); P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 167-184 (AD298) requires the nomination of two supervisors, a *συνοψιστής* (construction) and an *ἐπιμελητής* (finance), for some boats. Guard duty, P.Oxy. 3249 (AD326), 1627 (AD342), P.Princ. 122 (4th). Supplying men for a man-hunt as *ὑπηρέται*, P.Oxy. 1509 (early 4th), P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 338-341 (AD298). Inspector of dues at the Augusteion at Alexandria, P.Oxy. 1116 (AD363).

¹³ P. Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 338-341 (AD298) the *στρατηγός* relays the Catholicus' order to the *συστάτης* to provide *ὑπηρέται* for a man-hunt.

¹⁴ P.Oxy. 3796 (AD412) the latest known date for a *συστάτης* if one was involved. P.Flor. 39 (AD396), cf. Rea (1971). P.Oxy. 86 (AD338) failure to provide a *ναύτης*.

¹⁵ P.Oxy. 2131 (AD207) complaint about being wrongly assigned to the 'burdensome' duty of supplying donkeys. Temple duty, P.Oxy. 1627 (AD342).

¹⁶ Mertens (1958), p. 130.

Because of his knowledge of what people lived in his tribe, and where they lived, the assistance of the *συστάτης* was sought when a man had to be found for whatever reason. On several occasions the *συστάτης* was required to assist in a search, or carry one out, to find criminals or runaways. An early reference to the *συστάτης* gives the impression that, on the direct orders of the Prefect, he had to search the city for escaped mine-workers (*metallarii*); presumably he would have asked his colleagues for assistance and to help in a man-hunt.¹⁷ There is no way of telling if there was a standard procedure, or whether the official making the demands issued orders on the matter as he saw fit; after all, the first case requires one *συστάτης* to look for many men, and the latter several *συστάται* to nominate a number of men to look for one.

The tribe, an artificial designation for administrative purposes, was at the outset a group of people who lived in a designated area. What happened if people moved from one ward to another is not clear. Did they change tribes, or did they stay in their old one? The *συστάτης* had records for their domiciles, but for convenience it would certainly have been helpful if they all lived in one area. The concept of a tribe being a place where people lived as opposed to a people who lived or originated in a place is a somewhat unusual one, but it is put into perspective by the role of its leader. As the elected leader of the tribe, only he had a clear and detailed view of his own tribe - central records, presumably derived from his, comprised those of all the tribes and districts, and were less manageable given their greater bulk. However, by the end of the Fourth century, with the decline in status and responsibility of the *βουλή*, it is possible that the *βουλή* took upon itself the making of nominations that the *συστάτης* had previously assigned, reflecting its diminished position.

¹⁷ P. Beatty Panop. 1 ll. 192-201 (AD298); P.Oxy. 3571 (AD286?); P. Beatty Panop. 1. 338-341 (AD298) the *συστάται* as a group.

4: GUILDS:

Guilds were an active part of the city administrative structure. They were composed of artisans for whom they were responsible, and could co-ordinate their services in conjunction with the requirements of the council. They existed to perform various services required by the city or the provincial government, but unlike the βουλευταί they generally received payment for their services. They were independent of the βουλή, but subordinate to it - they never attained the importance that their medieval equivalents enjoyed. Besides providing professional skills and advice, they also assisted the council in regulating the market prices of products, and meeting the other needs of the city. While the βουλή administered and supervised the affairs and duties of the city, the guilds ensured that required specialised tasks were carried out in an organised fashion. By the Sixth century, when the role of the βουλή in local administration was much diminished, some guilds also became responsible for municipal liturgies.¹ Artisan guilds were officially recognised corporations, and receive a considerable number of mentions in the Codices. Earlier imperial concern about the potentially politically subversive nature of these organisations had given way to the demands of administrative expediency.²

The guild was an organisation which presented benefits to both its members and to the local and provincial governments; for members, it offered the power of representation and assisted them in meeting their obligations, whereas administrators found it easier to transmit their demands to a closely-knit group rather than to a scattering of individuals, and could use the body as an instrument for the payment of debts left by defaulting members. When members defaulted, their business companions would not scruple to appeal for

¹ P.Goth. 9 (AD564) two guilds have to provide an official for the ὄξυς δρόμος,
cf. Rémondon (1966a), Gascou (1985), p. 55.

² Pliny's suggestion of city fire brigades in Bithynia was firmly rejected by Trajan, Pliny, Letters, 10. 33-34.

assistance in making him fulfil his agreements.³ One of the services that the guild seems to have provided for its members was an easier method of paying the lustral tax (χρυσάργυρον), the tax on trades. Levied every five years, it was a very heavy burden, but guild members apparently could pay amounts more frequently to the guild, so avoiding the need of paying five years' tax all at once. Supervisors were to be selected from the guilds in order to effect payment, so the whole matter of the tax was resolved internally.⁴ Whatever its superficial attractions, the guild system had disadvantages to it as well for its members. The need for the services provided was very great, so to ensure that they were performed by an adequate number of people, guild service became fixed, hereditary and compulsory. Numbers of laws on the matter testify to the efforts of individuals to evade their duties and to throw off their status and to those of the Emperors to try to maintain their numbers. Immunity was granted to certain guilds from the performance of compulsory public services 'since indeed their leisure should be spent in learning these skills whereby they may desire the more to become proficient themselves and to instruct their children' (Cod. Theod. 13.4.2, tr. Pharr, 1952). These laws received the latent assistance of the tradition of fathers passing on knowledge of their trade to their sons. The need for armourers was sufficiently important to prompt the draconian measure of having them all branded to facilitate recognition and to foil ambitions of escape.⁵ Property of

³ Boak (1955a), p. 75, the advantages guilds afforded to the central administration. Appeal, P.Oxy. 1943 (5th).

⁴ Guild structure, Boak (1937). Group power: the breadmakers of Antioch fled *en masse* over efforts to set fixed low prices, Libanius Or. 1. 226-7; 29. 19, cf. Liebeschuetz (1972), pp. 222-3. Group responsibility: Nov. Theod. 6.1 (AD438). Concerning the trade tax, Cod. Theod. 13.1.17 (AD399); cf. also Johnson and West (1949), p. 154, n. 20, Sijpesteijn (1985).

⁵ eg: Cod. Theod. 14.7.1 (AD397), 12.1.162 (AD399), Nov. Val. 35.1 (AD352) over evasion. Change of status forbidden, to becoming office staff, Cod. Theod. 6.30.16-17 (AD399); knights, 6.37.1 (AD364); other status, 14.7.2 (AD412). Armourers to be branded, 10.22.4 (AD398). P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 342-6 (AD298) local craftsmen have to be rounded up specially to produce armour.

guildsmen became that of the guild in the event of unauthorised departures, so that in the event of flight, the guild did not lose out financially, only in terms of membership.⁶ Moreover, it was possible for guilds to increase their numbers, or at least maintain them, since men who married the daughters of guildsmen became members of the guild in question, and those purchasing land that had belonged to a member or the guild as a whole were liable to the duties ownership entailed.⁷

Not as much is known about the structure of guilds as it is about that of the βουλαί. However, it is known that, at least in the Fourth century, guilds were headed by monthly presidents (μηνιάρχαι) through whom most transactions with the λογιστής took place.⁸ On at least two occasions more than one monthly president is found acting at the same time on behalf of the guild or for certain people who may have guild members. The dealings with the λογιστής were comprehensive with regard to the state of the guilds' supplies and financial arrangements; each month the μηνιάρχαι submitted a declaration of prices to the λογιστής of saleable goods with which their guilds were involved.⁹ The guild μηνιάρχαι might also receive orders from him to make reports or inspections concerning public works, or to supply military or bureaucratic officials with provisions or recruits.¹⁰ Public works undertaken in order to maintain civic

6 Nov. Theod. 6.1 (AD438) armourers are not to change their profession; if one errs, the group is responsible. If one dies without heirs, the guild vindicates his property. Sons must follow fathers in their trade.

7 Cod. Theod. 14.3.3 (AD364), 14.3.14 (AD372), 16.2.39 (AD408).

8 eg. P.Oxy. 53 (AD316), 84 (AD316). 2579 (AD313?) poll tax payment by a μηνιάρχης on behalf of two members of the guild. Fikhman (1976), p. 337 on the structure of guilds.

9 More than one μηνιάρχης in a guild, P.Oxy. 3261 (AD324), 1139 (4th); in P.Harr. 73 (c.AD388? cf. Coles (1980) below) four μηνιάρχαι of an Oxyrhynchite guild appear together. Price declarations, cf. P.Oxy. 3765 (c.AD327) intro., Coles (1980),(1980a).

10 eg. P.Oxy. 896 (AD316) estimate of the work on the baths; 1139 (4th) order to supply vegetables to an official; *vestis militaris* collection, Youtie (1980).

institutions required the employment of the expertise of the guilds, and payment for such work had to be authorised by the λογιστής from civic funds.¹¹ Although most of this activity seems to have been done through the μηνιάρχαι, some occasions arise where individuals communicate directly with the λογιστής (or whichever official was in charge) in matters to do with their trades.¹² Essentially, the guilds were used by the higher authorities to organise the mechanics of the public services that βουλευταί lacked the technical skill to perform, while the βουλευταί assigned to the pertinent liturgies or magistracies supervised their work. In exceptional cases, members of guilds might be called upon to do specific tasks; until AD436, when the law was modified, the guilds of Alexandria were collectively responsible for keeping the Nile free of silt deposits left by the annual flood, and guildsmen were dispatched to repair military installations when the λογιστής received orders to that effect from military officials.¹³

As an afterword on the subject of guilds, the formation of confederacies was not restricted merely to urban trades. Appreciating the advantages of corporate association, other groups also formed themselves into representative bodies, though without achieving the same standard of legal recognition in the Codes. People combining for short-term contracts aside, these were by no means necessarily intended to be permanent, but might be deemed necessary to meet certain demands for an unspecified period. However, the objective was similar to that of the guild, that of forming a group for the facility of administration and execution of the required tasks, whether at village level or below. For example,

11 P.Oxy. 84 (AD316) the guild of iron and copper workers acknowledge to the λογιστής payment for wrought iron used for public works.

12 P.Oxy. 2718 (AD458) four ironsmiths acknowledge receipt of two *solidi* from a πολιτευόμενος (Geremek (1981)) for equipment for the construction of the new public bath. 3308 (AD373) oath of a stonemason to the λογιστής to travel as ordered and practise his trade. P.Mich. Inv. 4379 (6th) petition from a baker to a bureaucratic official, Keenan (1979).

13 Cod. Theod. 14.27.2 (AD436). P.Oxy. 3793 (AD340) repair of a fort.

shepherds formed local groups¹⁴ and these seem to have been on the same line as artisan guilds, in that they undertook duties and made tax payments as a group.

It seems that anywhere there were enough people to make an association viable and of benefit to them, then one was formed. Such gatherings should not be dignified with the title of 'guild'; they were neither guilds on the same scale nor with the same obligations as the urban ones, but the need felt earlier by the old magistrates to undertake their duties collectively had apparently communicated itself to other social levels. *Coloni* on the Apion estate, in the Sixth century, appear in one papyrus negotiating with their landlord as a group, and swearing an oath of corporate responsibility which would guarantee him against any loss. This group seems to have formed since the individuals were not members of a village, and therefore had no administrative body to represent them.¹⁵ Officials in cities and villages had formed *κοινά* of magistrates to assist one another. This tendency persisted through to the Sixth century in a rather uncertain form, but it seems, at least in the case of some villages, that all the officials, regardless of distinction in title or rank (if any), constituted the *κοινόν* in dealings with external forces, delegating some of their number to enter negotiations on behalf of the rest.¹⁶ The approbation of the movement to form representative groups is symptomatic of the tighter controls that the central government attempted to exert on people in all walks of life. As a group, they were much easier to administer and were theoretically more capable of keeping control over their individual associates. The persistence and development of this system throughout local administrative bodies, whether in the private or public domain, demonstrated that this progression enjoyed some success, from

14 P.Cair. Masp. 67001 (AD514), P.Lond. 1671 (early 6th).

15 P.Oxy. 2195 (6th); cf. also 1896 (AD577). Johnson and West (1949), p. 153 distinguish it from guilds in that it was a short-term grouping for mutual convenience rather than a permanent organisation.

16 P.Cair. Masp. 67001 (AD514), 67283 (pre-AD548); nominations by, P.Cair. Masp. 67281. P.Oxy. 133 (AD550) representatives of τὸ κοινὸν τῶν πρωτοκωμητῶν of a village transact with a landowner's representative. cf. P.Thead. 17 (AD332).

an administrative point of view and for the greater efficiency and the protection offered to each member. Complaints from bodies of men rather than just from individuals carried more weight, and as the breadmakers of Antioch demonstrated, the actions of a company had a greater effect than those of one member.

5: THE PROCESS OF ELECTION:

In studying the methods by which liturgists and magistrates were elected, it is necessary first of all to consider the role of the *πρύτανις*, whose main function was to ensure the smooth running of the city council. Each city had a *πρύτανις*, the head of the council, a position which was neither a liturgy nor a magistracy as such, but nonetheless entailed some risk and was potentially burdensome to perform.¹ In the Third century the *πρύτανις* was nominated by the council, and their choice went before the Prefect for confirmation; in the Fourth century, the method of his election is less well documented, but probably did not differ significantly. The *πρυτανεία* could be held concurrently with other positions in the *βουλή*. It was an office of greater importance in the centuries prior to the Fourth century, since the arrival in the city of the *curator civitatis* (*λογιστής*) deprived it of some of its powers. By the Fifth century, the *πρύτανις* appears much less frequently in the papyri (eg: P.Ant. 194). In the Sixth the position is no longer called by the same title, but appears as the *πρόεδρος*, and it is held, on two occasions, by wealthy ladies in connection with other bouletic posts. The functions of the post then are not specified, but given that it may have been held in connection with other posts (the *λογιστεία* and *πατερία*) it may have been much reduced in scope.²

The *πρύτανις* drew up the agenda for council meetings, summoned and presided over them, and was the person through whom communications were made to senior officials. He was in charge of city finances (all payments from the city funds were made through him) and was responsible to the central government. The *λογιστής* in particular took over some of these duties, such as the responsibility for city finances, in the Fourth century. Given the need for the nomination of liturgists and magistrates each year, so that the civic

¹ Lewis (1982), *πρυτανεία*, p. 46.

² *Προεδρία*, P.Oxy. 2780 (AD553), P.Vars. 30 (AD571); cf. P.Mich. Inv. 3780 (AD517), Sijpesteijn (1987a), p. 171.

institutions could operate and the taxes be collected, the most information available for the *πρύτανις* is oriented around his role in council meetings and his involvement in the selection of civic officials.

Since the council convened irregularly, it seems that the *πρύτανις* sometimes found it convenient to make nominations himself, and then to present his choices to the council for approval. More usually, he presided over meetings of the council when elections were made. It seems that there were various methods of nomination; often, the man who had just held office would nominate a successor, for whom he would have to act as guarantor. The nominee had to be of suitable means, and had grounds for appeal if he felt that he had too little wealth, if he considered that he had been maliciously nominated, or if he was legally exempt. Such a nomination had to be approved by the relevant official of the provincial bureaucracy;³ for most council elections in the Third century the officials concerned were the *ἐπιστράτηγος* and the *στρατηγός*.⁴ If the outgoing magistrates were reluctant to nominate replacements for themselves, since this meant that they had to stand surety for their successors, the *πρύτανις* could either refer the matter to the Prefect⁵ or make the nomination himself. Another system that appears at about the time when candidates were hard to find entailed the *τάγμα* (*ἄρχοντες* of the same grade) of a type of magistrate nominating officials for the coming year. If they proved incapable of submitting the names of enough candidates, then the other *βουλευταί* could apparently contribute suggestions.⁶ It seems that all the members of the *τάγμα* were responsible for a candidate proposed by them if the

3 P.Oxy. 1204 (AD299) a man nominated as *δεκάπρωτος* appealed to the Catholicus.

4 cf. Lewis (1969).

5 P.Oxy. 1642 (AD289) the Prefect orders an *ἀγορανόμος* to nominate his successor.

6 P.Oxy. 1413 (AD270-5) the *τάγμα* of *ἐξηγηταί* nominated insufficient candidates.

candidate was exempt from the office. The responsibility for making nominations also offered the *πρύτανις* opportunities for favouritism. In one papyrus, however, a *πρύτανις* declared that as regarded the nominations, he could not even spare his close friends.⁷ As the pressure built up on the councils, and groups of men undertook one liturgy or magistracy together, so this discretionary power must have been reduced, but the *πρύτανις* may still have been able to arrange less expensive and less arduous positions for his associates. By the start of the Fourth century there were difficulties in some situations in finding sufficient candidates, let alone allowing for selection among them, and this power may have become an onerous burden as the *πρύτανις* had to struggle to find them.⁸

When there were problems in discovering sufficient nominees, the *πρύτανις* could appeal for help to senior officials (usually, in the Third century, to the Prefect or to the *ἐπιστράτηγος*).⁹ The *πρύτανις* sometimes took the responsibility of nomination into his own hands - if he made a mistake, he was fully responsible, which often entailed performance of the liturgy or magistracy himself.¹⁰ Although some nominations were quite straightforward (the person being assigned to the liturgy need not be present to defend himself, but he had to appeal before a given date or he was elected by default), others involved considerable discussion. If the nominee was present, he could present reasons why he should not be nominated. The other *βουλευταί* tried to encourage him to stand if his position

7 P.Ross.-Georg. ii. 40 (3rd), Drew-Bear (1984), p. 328.

8 eg: P.Oxy. 1413 (AD270-5), 3350 (AD330), 2110 (AD370).

9 P.Oxy. 1415 (late 3rd) to the *ἐπιστράτηγος* over fugitive conveyers of military supplies, since replacements were just as likely to abscond. P.Oxy. 1252 (AD288-95), 2612 (AD285-90) to the Prefect over the election of *εὐθηνάρχαι*.

10 P.Oxy. 2110 (AD370) a second nomination for the same man is withdrawn on appeal. P.Oxy. 1414 (AD270-5) the *πρύτανις* announced to the council that he had convened a partial meeting of the *βουλευταί* to expedite a nomination, and presented a name, which the council approved.

did not have the support of a legal exemption, and this encouragement took the form of a concerted series of exclamations praising his loyalty to his town, his devotion to duty and his eminent suitability. Under such peer pressure it must have been very difficult to refuse, if indeed it was at all possible.¹¹ Men equally well qualified for a post would have yelled all the louder in an effort to ensure that someone else received that duty.¹² In most instances, people so nominated took the opportunity to protest, so elections were held well in advance of the time when office had to be assumed (that for *πρύτανις* was held six months in advance, cf. P.Oxy. 1414 (AD270-5)); if they did not protest, it would surely be presumed that such a burden was one that they could easily manage, and would result in further nominations over subsequent years.

Once nominees had been approved, and all their appeals were resolved or pending consideration, their nominations were submitted to the official in charge of making the appointments. In the Third century this was the *ἐπιστράτηγος* in almost all cases (the *δεκαπρωτεία* being one obvious exception, since it was a state liturgy), and in the Fourth century the *λογιστής* appointed the equivalent civic officials.¹³ Responsibility for the nominees now rested with the *βουλή* as a whole, but specifically with the *πρύτανις*. Should liturgists abscond, the *πρύτανις* could convene the council to appoint replacements, but if it turned out that they had been wrongly or illegally elected, then it seems the *πρύτανις* suffered the consequences for their unjust election.¹⁴ In an attempt to forestall wrongful elections

11 P.Ryl. 77 (AD192) a man is unable to refuse election to *κοσμητής*, despite his resolve, in the face of immense pressure from his peers.

12 P.Oxy. 1416 (c.AD299) for steward of the games; 1415 (late 3rd) a nomination despite protests; 1414 (AD270-5) for *πρύτανις*; the old *πρύτανις* is urged by the *βουλευταί* to stay on for another term.

13 P.Oxy. 3350 (AD330) a man appointed to the *ἐξηγητεία* through or by the *πρύτανις* appeals to the *λογιστής*.

14 P.Lond. Inv. 2565 (c.AD250) (Skeat and Wegener (1935)) a man argues that he was only *πρύτανις*-designate at the time when some

to civic office, the council employed a *σύνδικος*, a sort of legal adviser of quite high status, to vet candidates' suitability for the office to which they were being assigned. Of the few examples we possess, one shows the *σύνδικος* rejecting two selections proposed by the *τάγμα* of the *ἐξηγηταί* for nomination to the *ἐξηγητεία*, and another makes the point that he has much influence over the appointment of liturgists.¹⁵ In addition to this, the *σύνδικος* performed various other functions. In the Third century he appears in the capacity of the legal representative of the *polis* in matters between it and the Prefect, and his relationship with the Prefect was of considerable importance for the city.¹⁶ It is possible that there were in fact two at Oxyrhynchus, and possibly a *collegium*, rather than just the one.¹⁷ They were also concerned with council business, such as the preparation of the minutes and ensuring that magistrates performed their allotted tasks in the approved fashion. It was by no means impossible for a *σύνδικος* to be *πρύτανις* as well,¹⁸ and it seems that the two positions occupied a lot of common ground in relation to the *βουλή*. The functions of the *σύνδικος*, to a certain extent, seem to have been absorbed by the *defensor civitatis* (the *ἔκδικος* - see Chapter 3.2) in the Fourth century, a grander official based on similar lines. *Σύνδικοι* were not infallible, and their work involving advocacy before senior officials probably required their absence from

villagers were illegally nominated to the *κοσμητεία*. His predecessor, presumably having anticipated the furore, has disappeared.

15 P.Oxy. 1413 (AD270-5) the *σύνδικος* rejects one because he is already a *γυμνασίαρχος*, the other because he has yet to pay the *στεπτικόν* (an entrance fee paid to the municipal bank on entry to office, cf. P.Oxy. 3175 (AD233), 3177 (AD247)) for his previous office, a circumstance that disqualified him from further office (Just. Dig. 50.4.6.1). P.Oxy. 2407 (late 3rd) a *σύνδικος* allots liturgies to two tribes.

16 P.Oxy. 2407 (late 3rd).

17 cf. Rees (1952), pp. 78-79, nn. 41-2. In P.Oxy. 2665 (AD305-6) two *βιβλιοφύλακες* report to a *πρύτανις* and two *σύνδικοι*.

18 C.P.R. 135, Rees (1952), p. 78, n. 32.

their *polis* on occasion. It appears that when a mistake was made in the selection of candidates, it fell to the *πρύτανις* to take the blame.

In ideal times, there was meant to be a sequential basis for liturgies, with a rest period of three years between performances of duty. As the political and economic climate of the Third century began to affect the numbers of people capable of sustaining liturgies and magistracies, so this period of grace was shortened until, certainly in the case of the magistracies in the later Third century, groups of ex-magistrates were formed to jointly accomplish the tasks required for a year of service.¹⁹ Although the lower liturgies were assigned on a rotational system by tribes, it would not be hard to believe that one tribe might not be able to cope with all the liturgical demands made on it. Some classes covered by a general immunity to liturgies were imperial officials, soldiers and veterans, many guildsmen, the clergy (at least briefly) and local figures of past achievements in athletics or of present significance in the arts and sciences.²⁰ The Emperor was at pains to try to stress that those liable to service should not be allowed to escape them by the purchase of a title which conferred immunity to liturgies and other council duties.²¹ The power to grant exemptions had been transferred from the cities by Antoninus, except in the cases of physicians, teachers and philosophers, to the governors of the provinces, but clearly this had become an unsatisfactory state of affairs because

19 P.Oxy. 3182 (AD257), 3507 (3rd/4th), 1416 (c.AD299), P.Ant. 31 (AD347) assignation of days of service. Libanius bemoaned the reduced numbers in the Antiochene *βουλή* (Or. 2.33). P.Lond. Inv. 2565 (c.AD250) problems finding candidates in Arsinoe led to illegal nominations; it is further claimed that to hold office for only two days is to invite ruin.

20 Cod. Theod. 6.27.2 (AD363); 7.20.2 (AD320); 13.4.2 (AD337); clergy, 16.2.1 (AD313?) - later moderated by 16.2.3 (AD320); successful athletes, eg: P.Oxy. 3116 (AD275-6). P.Oxy. 40 (2nd/3rd) is an effort to establish whether a man is a doctor or not for purposes of exemption, Winter (1933), p. 95. Lewis (1964) concludes that exemptions became less effective from the First to the Third centuries.

21 cf. fn. 14 in the section on Social Mobility.

Constantine handed over the right to the imperial court and bureaus.²² Much of the imperial legislation was geared towards restricting the ways and means of evasion open to the βουλευταί, whether closing down potential avenues of escape to alternative careers or preventing people obtaining exemptions by any means; the intention was not to increase the suffering of individuals, but to reduce that of the whole class.

If a man had no legal grounds on which to refuse a liturgy, the standard procedure seems to have been an emotional appeal to his peers for whatever reason. That these seem to have been frequently unsuccessful did not prevent people from trying from year to year. A πρύτανις tried to claim ill-health to avoid re-election in one instance, while appeals from men claiming lack of means were not uncommon.²³ Often enough it appears that people either unsuitable for the designated post or with good reason for exemption were selected to perform tasks. If they had had no opportunity to present their case at the nomination, they would usually appeal to the council, or, if the nomination had been approved, to the ἐπιστράτηγος or λογιστής (depending on the century), or to one superior to them, such as the Prefect. Typical appeals involved claims of exemption, whether for the reason that their class or title conferred it, or because of their age or other concurrent duties.²⁴ Until they were resolved, the nominee was liable to serve in the position. Even men legally exempt from a liturgy might experience serious problems in having it respected by the council. Immunities enjoyed by men were only valuable when they could actually be upheld; numbers of imperial laws

22 Cod. Theod. 12.1.1 (AD313); cf. Just. Dig. 50.4.4, 50.5.2.7. Cod. Theod. 12.1.17 (AD329) grants of exemptions issued by cities are voided.

23 P.Oxy. 1414 (AD270-5) for the πρύτανις. 1415 (late 3rd), 1418 (AD247), 3286 (AD222/3), P.Ryl. 77 (AD192) claims of inadequate means. P.Amh. 82 (3rd/4th) a man selected to be official recorder at the Prefect's tribunal pleads illiteracy and unsuitability.

24 P.Oxy. 1119 (AD254) Antinoites were exempt from *munera* outside Antinoopolis. 3192 (AD307) a claim of exemption to the πρύτανις from a liturgy involving the supply of donkeys.

reaffirmed privileges granted to certain classes, and, for example, a letter of Constantine and Licinius in AD311 ordered that honourably discharged soldiers should receive documents establishing their immunity.²⁵

In cases where the nominee felt that his means were inadequate to cope with the burdens that he had been assigned, he could take the desperate step of *cessio bonorum*, forcing the nominator to assume the duty with the support of two thirds or all of the cessor's property for its duration. *Cessio bonorum* was not automatic; it had to be approved by the Prefect. In the earliest known instance, a man announced his intention to opt for *cessio bonorum* and submitted details of his financial affairs to the Prefect.²⁶ Most of the other examples that survive of *cessio bonorum* date to the early or mid-Third century, though at least one appears in the early Fourth century where a man threatens to resort to it.²⁷ The nominator who was unfortunate enough to have to perform the duty of the cessor was entitled to use the income of the ceded property to help towards the expense, but he was responsible for the payments of taxes due on it. He had to return it complete and in the condition in which he had found it at the end of the year (or however long the liturgy took to perform). While the case was awaiting the approval of the Prefect, the nominee had to perform the duty if the case had not been resolved before the magistracy or liturgy was due to start. It might be a month or more before a reply was forthcoming, and in some cases the duty might have been mostly performed before it arrived. The small number of examples probably testifies to the unpopularity of this act of last resort (though it is, as always, dangerous to argue from silence), and after all the effort it

25 'Ancient Roman Statutes', #301.

26 P.Oxy. 1405 (3rd).

27 Third century: P.Oxy. 2854 (AD248), 3105 (c.AD229-235); Fourth century: 1417 (early 4th). Diocletian abolished the practice, Cod. Just. 7.71.5, cf. Wegener (1948), p. 120, n. 142.

might not save the petitioner from performing the allotted duty.²⁸

With the coming of the Fourth century, the presence of the λογιστής and the subsequent appearance of the ἔκδικος brought the influence of the central government directly into the βουλαί, whereas previously it had been peripheral, only interfering in city affairs when so requested or when there was a perceived need. Appeals against nominations could now be dealt with on the spot by the λογιστής, and appeals against his decisions still went before the Prefect. The tribal nominations of the more lowly liturgies were also submitted to him by the elected head of the tribe, known from the AD280s as the συστάτης. Just as the cities had technically acquired more power and administrative responsibility from Diocletian, so they were subjected to more direct central control. This temporarily revitalised the system and the councils were transformed, the old magistracies disappearing as their responsibilities were absorbed by the newly imposed central officials.

28 P.Lond. Inv. 2565 (c.AD250) here the πρύτανις apparently forced the ἄποροι, the impoverished, to do their duties, owing to a lack of other suitable candidates; cf. Wegener (1948), pp. 124-5.

CHAPTER 3:

1: THE Στρατηγός AND Ἐξάκτωρ:

Although the ἔξάκτωρ appeared alongside the λογιστής in the Fourth century, the former's clear connections with the στρατηγός require that these two officials be treated together. The στρατηγός and ἔξάκτωρ were officials primarily concerned with taxation from the city and the nome. Essentially they performed similar functions, certainly with regard to taxation, under different titles at different times, although there was a lengthy period of transition over the Fourth century. The evidence for the στρατηγός is quite plentiful for the Third century, the most informative source being the Chester Beatty papyri from Panopolis at the end of that century. These (P.Beatty Panop. 1 (AD298) and 2 (AD300)) are collections of correspondence, the first originating with the στρατηγός and concerning emergency measures to prepare supplies for the imminent visit of Diocletian's army, the second concerning the communication to the στρατηγός of more regular arrangements for various taxes and disbursements in the provinces. The evidence for the ἔξακτορία mainly appears in the Fourth century, with very little thereafter. This lack of evidence for the later centuries has caused considerable debate on the exact role of the ἔξάκτωρ in that period, but it seems that in the late Fifth century this city official was replaced by the πάγαρχος, an official also responsible for taxation within the nome, but with more power than his predecessor.

The στρατηγός of the Third century was not a council official, but the representative of the central government in each of the nomes in Egypt. In the bureaucratic structure, the στρατηγός, assisted by a royal scribe (βασιλικὸς γραμματεὺς; the title dated back to Ptolemaic times), was to be found below the ἐπιστράτηγος and the procurator (ἐπίτροπος) of the Catholicus. His prime concern was with the administration of taxation within the nome. Under Diocletian, local administration in Egypt was reformed. An initial tentative effort at this seems to have been attempted just before the revolt of Domitius Domitianus, at

which time officials called *πρωτοστάται* appeared. Lack of papyri evidence makes it difficult to conclude what their intended role was, but it may be that they were a prototype for the *πραιπόσιτοι τοῦ πάγου*. The latter appeared in the early Fourth century as subordinates of the *ἐξάκτορες*, in charge of subsections of the nome, called *pagi*. Arguments in favour of this are their association with the land economy and villages, the appearance of a board of *πρωτοστάται* and the appeal to a *στρατηγός* after a previous appeal to a *πρωτοστάτης* had been ignored. Militating somewhat against this is their frequently high rank.¹ A more decisive effort to reform the *στρατηγία* was effected in the early Fourth century, and the result of this was the appearance of the *ἐξάκτωρ* and the *πραιπόσιτοι τοῦ πάγου*.²

This adjustment was not as simple as a straightforward change in titles. The central and provincial bureaucracies seem to have rapidly adjusted to this - the last known references to the old title of *στρατηγός* by them were respectively P.S.I. 1125 (AD302) and P.Ryl. 654 (c. pre-AD307?).³ However, there are many Fourth century references in Egypt to the new *ἐξάκτωρ* as *στρατηγός ἦτοι ἐξάκτωρ* or simply *στρατηγός*. The former title appears as late as AD391 in one instance, whereas that of *ἐξάκτωρ* appears as early as AD314 and *στρατηγός* on its own as late as AD369. In one papyrus the *praeses* refers to the official as the *ἐξάκτωρ*, the villagers as the *στρατηγός*.⁴ The recurrent use of the old title, in conjunction with or without the new one, perhaps demonstrates a tardiness in adjustment on behalf of

1 *Πρωτοστάται*, P.Oxy. 2849, S.B. 9502, P.Lond. 958 descr. (all AD296), P.Oxy. 3184 (AD296-7), P.Cair. Isid. 64 (late 3rd), cf. Bowman (1974), pp. 48-51, Whitehorne (1986).

2 The *ἐξάκτωρ* is first recorded in P.Giss. 103r. (AD309), the *πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου* in P.Cair. Isid. 125 (AD308); both may have been earlier, cf. Bowman (1974), p. 45, Thomas (1985).

3 cf. Thomas (1960).

4 P.Ross.-Georg. v. 60 (AD391), C.P.R. 233 (AD314), P.Strasb. 272 (AD369), cf. Thomas (1959), p. 125, fnn. 1-3, Thomas (1989), p. 690, Lallemand (1964), pp. 118ff. Both titles, P.Mert. 91 (AD316).

the provincials (or a stubborn adherence to the traditional version), and strongly implies evident continuity between the two. Appearances of the title στρατηγὸς ἦτοι ἐξάκτωρ in the papyri are incontrovertibly to the city official, but as Thomas has pointed out, this is not necessarily true of all references to ἐξάκτορες. The lack of detailed knowledge of the city official in the later Fourth and Fifth centuries has fuelled speculation as to its fate, and to the possibility of the existence of other grades of ἐξάκτορες. The argument for a serious decline in the city official's role by the late Fourth century is endangered by clear references to them in their original status in two papyri; the alternative suggestion is that a lower grade of ἐξάκτορες existed as simple collectors, whose role was much more mundane.⁵ Later references occur: P. Oxy. 1950 (AD487) makes reference to the delivery of wine for a festival by a church προνοητής to an assistant in the office of the ἐξάκτωρ, and in P.Oxy. 1887 (AD538) and P.Oxy. 126 (AD572) we encounter references to the ἐξακτορικὴ τάξις. It seems questionable whether simple collectors would have βοηθοί at their disposal - though given the suggestions as to the fate of the city official, it seems even less probable that the reference is to him. Gascou (1985) has endeavoured to explain the latter references in the context of the public duty of οἴκοι in the Sixth century.⁶

The method of election of the city official seems to have been similar to the λογιστεία as well, although there is little evidence for it. The existence of a contract in which a man travelling to Constantinople is asked to carry an ἐπιστολή ἐξακτορίας by a senior βουλευτής provides some welcome information; if the letter was a request for appointment to office, it was indicative of the need for imperial approval. On the other hand, it may have been an effort to gain the honorary title while circumventing the need to perform the post, and since the letter was dispatched on a private initiative (albeit by the πρύτανης) rather than by the council as a whole, the

⁵ P.Oxy. 2408 (AD397), P.Ross.-Georg. v. 60 (AD391), cf. Thomas (1989).

⁶ Wipszycka (1972), p. 145, Gascou (1985), p. 41ff.

uncertainty remains. If this was an effort to acquire the position, then the implication of the petition (P.Abinn. 58) is that the *ἐξάκτωρ* came from within the city, though not necessarily by council selection. Some laws of the early Fourth century refer to *ἐξάκτορες* as being of equestrian rank, but none of these seem to refer to Egypt.⁷ In AD386 the method was changed by imperial decree; *ἐξάκτορες* were thenceforth to be nominated by the councils, the names of the nominees to be presented to the *praeses*. For example, in P.S.I. 684 it was recorded that a certain Taurinos had been nominated to the post of *ἐξάκτωρ*, a process that had not conformed with the law that such an action must be taken by the *βουλή*.⁸ The question of tenure of office is uncertain for *ἐξάκτορες*, although it may have been the same as for the *λογιστεία* - one Aurelius Gerontius was *ἐξάκτωρ* in the Arsinoite nome in AD323-4 and AD326. An imperial law sent to the Augustal Prefect stated that the position of *ἐξάκτορες* was not to be considered permanent, but was to be limited to one or two years, implying that previously longer terms had been held.⁹ But Thomas (1989) believes that if there were two grades of *ἐξάκτορες* in existence then (the law is dated to AD386), it referred to the lesser grade, and therefore is of little help in determining the length of office of the city official.

The *στρατηγός* and *ἐξάκτωρ* were both primarily responsible for the levying of taxes in the nome, and presenting accounts for them to their superiors. The pivotal role of the *στρατηγός* between the provincial bureaucracy and the *βουλή* is demonstrated in P.Beatty Panop. 1 and 2, in which he dealt with taxation demands on a regular and emergency basis. Orders for the collection of such taxes as those of the *annona*

7 P.Abinn. 58 (AD345), cf. Martin (1938). Laws: eg: Cod. Theod. 11.7.1 (AD313); though 11.7.9 (AD364) states that *ducenarii* (*equites*) must not collect taxes.

8 Cod. Theod. 12.6.20 (AD386); Thomas (1989) believes this may refer to minor *ἐξάκτορες* if they existed. P.S.I. 684 (4th/5th), cf. Geremek (1990).

9 Cod. Theod. 12.6.22 (AD386).

militaris were communicated to him, and he in turn apportioned the sum to be collected around the nome. The *ἐξάκτωρ* fulfilled similar duties - although he took his orders from the *praeses*, the replacement of the *ἐπιστρατηγός*. Orders for the levying of the year's taxes and for any extraordinary ones were passed on from the *praeses* to the *ἐξάκτωρ*, and the latter split up the demands between the city and the pagi. He had to organise the collection of tax grain for the *annona civitatis*, the taxes in kind for the *annona militaris* (whether collected initially in kind or in money), any further requisitions needed from the nome and even recruitment for the army.¹⁰ The *ἐξάκτωρ* authorised payments from the public bank to people who had fulfilled their obligations for requisitions.¹¹ Among the exceptional duties delegated to him were instructions to supervise the manufacture of requisitioned clothing (when the *ἐπείκτης*, whose duty it should have been, had left his post), and an imperial order for the repair of boats at Memphis and Babylon, which was passed down to the appropriate *ἐξάκτωρ* by a series of bureaucratic officials.¹² In his position as the organiser of the tax collection, he issued orders to and controlled the the collectors who had been assigned to the various duties throughout the nome. Evidence for this control manifests itself in several ways, whether in orders to receive the *annona*, in agreeing to the arrest of a supervisor or in dealing with abuses perpetrated by the collectors.¹³

Taxes collected had to be carefully listed and accounted for. The procurator wanted to know the details of every commodity in the nome, and it was the duty of the *στρατηγός* to send in

10 P.Oxy. 2113-4 (AD316) orders for tax transmitted to a *πραιπόσιτος* τοῦ πάγου; P.Oxy. 1190 (AD347) the *dux* ordered the supervision and organisation of the dispatch of troops to Babylon. P.Oxy. 60 (AD323) an order from the Prefect for meat for the soldiers.

11 P.Cair. Isid. 54 (AD314), cf. P.Ant. 39 (AD324).

12 P.Oxy. 1428 (4th); P.Vindob. Boswinkel 14 (4th), Thomas (1959), p. 128, n. 7.

13 P.Abinn. 26, 29 (AD340s); P.Thead. 13 (AD322/323).

regular reports which fell under three categories; taxes in money, taxes in wheat and taxes for the account of the *annona*. In addition to these regular summaries, the procurator could demand to know specifics about, for example, wine confiscated on estates. In one month a procurator can be observed demanding detailed information on at least five complicated issues that required much work, such as examining all the returns from vineyards and comparing them with the census records to root out people making false returns. It was the duty of the στρατηγός and his subordinates to check up the receipts and accounts for the relevant commodity, and then submit a report as soon as possible. And not only the procurator, acting for the Catholicus, but also the Prefect might require information on the stocks of a commodity in the nome. Given the amount of demands that a στρατηγός might receive, and his probable lack of appropriate specialist skills, he must have had a competent staff and an efficient filing system available to him.¹⁴ At any time the procurator could demand that accounts be presented to him, and this could cause problems.

One such incident, in P.Beatty Panop. 1, demonstrates the sort of problems that arose. The στρατηγός had just assumed office, and was sending to the Catholicus the money account and the *annona* account, as well as a table of letters and a memoranda of his business, but he could not despatch the corn account (σιτικὸν λόγον). The reason he gave for this was that the transfer of books from his predecessor had not been effected by the current incumbent's assistant (βοηθός). The στρατηγός instead sent a copy of notes of the proceedings made before him on the matter, while exhorting his own βοηθός to greater endeavour. On the same day another missive makes it clear that the accounts were incomprehensible or inaccurate, the actual 'ledger' never having been received from the predecessor. The penalty for failure to send in the accounts on time was a fine inflicted on both the στρατηγός and his βοηθός; the lack of full accounts from the στρατηγός meant that the

¹⁴ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 32-5, 76-9, 109-113, 145-152, 211-4. P.Oxy. 3243 (AD214/5) from the Prefect. Expertise, Whitehorne (1981), pp. 425-6.

provincial ones were also incomplete and delayed, placing the procurator in a similarly potentially embarrassing position as the στρατηγός.¹⁵

The ἐξάκτωρ was equally responsible for book-keeping and was also possessed of a staff which was largely composed of assistants of one sort or another (ὕπηρέται or βοηθοί), as well as having the πραιπόσιτοι τοῦ πάγου and the various collectors as his subordinates.¹⁶ Both the ἐξάκτωρ and στρατηγός received sworn declarations of accounts from the collectors which were compiled into accounts for the nome. From these was established a list of arrears for which, if the short-fall could not be collected, the ἐξάκτωρ at least was ultimately responsible for paying himself; he, of course, would be able to try to obtain this deficit from the relevant collectors who had failed to meet their quota, but if the money had to be in by a certain date there may not have been time for this until after the main sum had been handed over. They also had a land register, showing who owed what for the land they possessed, and they could furthermore carry out surveys to establish the true owner of property in disputed cases.¹⁷

The involvement of these officials with the army and its financial support was very close. An example of this association is the demand of the procurator that he be sent a backlog of registers from forts in the nome by the στρατηγός, and subsequent ones on a monthly basis.¹⁸ The στρατηγός and ἐξάκτωρ were responsible for the collection of the *annona militaris*, and they issued the donatives to the assigned

15 P.Beatty. Panop. 1, ll. 64-71, 90-107. Fine, P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 11-15, 61-67.

16 P.Abinn. 26, 29 (AD340s), P.Ryl. 657 (AD323/4); subordinates, cf. Thomas (1959), pp. 127-8, Rouillard (1923), p. 91.

17 P.Thead. 28 (AD320) declaration by σιτολόγοι of supplies in their village granaries. The ἐξάκτωρ; P.Michael. 33 (4th/5th), registering land. P.Amh. 142 (c.AD340), P.Cair. Isid. 69 (AD310), 70 (c.AD310) property ownership disputes.

18 P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 72-6, and see ll. 46-7.

representatives of the troops. The στρατηγός, along with the ἀποδέκται of money taxes in the nome, was responsible for the supervision of the distribution of various payments to the representative (ὄπινιάτωρ) of each body of troops in the area. These included not only regular pay, but also donatives for various imperial anniversaries, and the provision of such items as pickling equipment. The ἐξάκτωρ made similar payments to military agents.¹⁹ The payments made in P.Beatty Panop. 2 from the Panopolite nome are sometimes to quite distant units, and the not inconsiderable number of units receiving payment from there suggest a centralised system of disbursement in the Thebaid, something that is also true for the distribution of supplies.²⁰ The Abinnaeus papyri depict a rather different state of affairs. There the ἐξάκτωρ appears to be co-operating with the local commander in connection with the collection of the *annona militaris* for his camp; the soldiers seem to be actively involved in the collection of supplies for themselves, rather than relying on a centralised system of distribution for all their needs. The difference between the two regions may explain these circumstances: the Fayum was not as heavily militarised as the Thebaid, so the troops may have had more time for para-military activities, and the former region was more fertile and had less local demands for supplies given the lower amount of troops there.²¹

It was also expected of the στρατηγός that he would monitor the activities of the collectors in his nome. In the Panopolis papyri the procurator occasionally ordered the στρατηγός to submit accounts of the dispatch of a commodity, with details of the transportation, for comparison with the amounts received at the other end. If any discrepancies were discovered in the

19 P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 36-42, 57-60, 161-175, 180-207, 245-9, 259-270, 291-end. P.Giss. 103r. (AD309), Thomas (1985).

20 cf. Bowman (1978).

21 P.Abinn. 13-15 (AD340s) correspondence between the ἐξάκτωρ and the camp commander; their officials co-operated: P.Abinn. 26, 29 (AD340s), in the latter case over the *annona militaris*.

said accounts, the supervisors (ἐπιμεληταί) in charge of the journeys in question were to be sent to the procurator either to explain their activities, to make reparation or to suffer punishment.²² A public notice, which it seems the στρατηγός had to publish in his nome, condemned the extortionate practices of some collectors, and laid down measures which it fell to the στρατηγός to implement - such as standardising the size of baskets (weights and measures) and providing better security for commodities in stores after they had been weighed.²³ In another section of this papyrus, the procurator claimed that he had documentary evidence of financial mismanagement by the στρατηγός, and ordered him to imprison the δεκάπρωτοι (whose second survey had revealed discrepancies with that of the στρατηγός) and to await the arrival of the Catholicus, who would sort the matter out. The wide range of responsibilities of the στρατηγός gave him ample scope for the making of money illegally, whether by co-operation with tax-collectors for their mutual benefit or in other ways; one such instance arose in which a στρατηγός had illegally sold some reclaimed land at a fraction of its true worth, though his motive is unknown - perhaps he made the sale to a crony and intended to share the profits.²⁴ The ἑξακτωρ had similar duties and opportunities. However, it is not known whether the ἑξακτορία was a desirable position despite the obvious opportunities it presented for self-enrichment. The penalties for failure were costly and severe, and it is most probable that every region had its share of defaulters. The interpretation of the papyrus mentioning the ἐπιστολή ἑξακτορία (P.Abinn. 58) may be crucial for this. Instances of pluralities of ἑξακτορες in the same nome may suggest that they formed a group in order to share the burdens of office, or they may concern the collection of arrears, being addressed to

22 P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 117-127, fifteen days to complete the inquiry. P.Oxy. 3573 (c.AD300), P.Ryl. 657 (AD323/4) involvement with ἐπιμεληταί escorting *annona militaris* on ships.

23 P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 229-244.

24 P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 68-71, 229-244, 129-144.

the current official and a past one who had not yet fulfilled his obligations.²⁵ This problem and the dearth of evidence for the city official after the Fourth century, combined with the apparent existence of the lesser *ἐξάκτορες*, suggest that it was not an enviable position. On the other hand, it was still being held at the end of the Fourth century by one person, in Oxyrhynchus at least, and laws affecting Egypt over the rapacity of *ἐξάκτορες* may conceivably relate to the city officials. As always, much will have depended on status and influence of the incumbent and his ability to use the office to his advantage, but the reduction in the required social status of the holders by the end of the Fourth century suggests a decline in the potential of the office, or perhaps a need to widen the number of available candidates. Either explanation implies that the position was not really capable of working to the advantage of the person who held it.

The *στρατηγός* and the *ἐξάκτωρ* were both responsible for ensuring that imperial demands, particularly concerning taxation, were carried out at nome level. To this end their powers extended beyond the mere duty of supervising and accounting for the collection of the taxes. They were responsible for transport in the nome, though the *ἐξάκτωρ* may only have had to administer that to do with the taxes - the duties of the *στρατηγός* were wider. Since the *βουλή* was responsible for the movement of the commodities from the fields to the granaries and stores, and thence to the ports, the *στρατηγός* was mainly preoccupied with the ships on the Nile. In fact, it seems that state ships travelling on the river in his nome were his responsibility; an instance of this is shown in P.Beatty Panop. 2 in which the procurator demanded that a number of state ships were to be brought up-river as fast as possible. To this effect, the *στρατηγοί* were to supervise their progress and hand over the duty to the next one on the border of their nomes. Receipts were to be handed over to record the times of the hand-overs, and to reveal the culprits in the event

25 B.G.U. 1027 (late 4th); P.Lond. 1911 (early 4th) to the *ἐξάκτορες* of Herakleopolis, cf. Thomas (1959), pp. 133-4.

of any delays.²⁶ The accountability of the στρατηγός also extended to the discipline of the crews from his nome, and to those of state ships passing through it - he had to ensure that the boats moved as swiftly as possible, and that the crews received the wages to which they were entitled.²⁷ From P.Beatty Panop. 2 it appears that the captains and crews of ships carrying goods for the *annona militaris*, aided and abetted by civil and military representatives on the ships, loitered at river-side villages and may have engaged in business not concerned with their duties; naturally the στρατηγός was instructed by the procurator to prevent such activities.²⁸ Wider administration of river transport is shown in a papyrus in which he requisitioned a boat for the transport of corn.²⁹ The ἐξάκτωρ inherited this responsibility for ships in his nome, as can be observed in an order to supervise repairs to them.³⁰

The στρατηγός and ἐξάκτωρ both enjoyed some powers of jurisdiction within the nome. Petitions do not always seem to have been addressed to the στρατηγός by city-dwellers; they seem to have preferred to take their cases to a senior official, such as the Prefect. Villagers seem to have been happier taking their cases to the στρατηγός, although some of them also went to the *praeses* or to the Prefect. The στρατηγός was occasionally empowered by the senior official who had received the petition to settle the matter locally.³¹ In cases where there was an

26 P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 43-50.

27 P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 120-7.

28 P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 100-108.

29 P.Oxy.1197 (AD211).

30 P.Vindob. Boswinkel 14 (4th).

31 Delegation of cases to the στρατηγός; P.Ryl. 654 (4th) the Iuridicus Aegypti ordered the λογιστής and στρατηγός to establish to which guild a man belonged. P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 143-8, the governor of the Thebaid delegates a case involving men from different nomes to one of the relevant στρατηγοί. cf. P.Cair. Isid. 74 (AD315).

appeal from his decision, the *στρατηγός* had to submit a detailed account of the case to the next judge, before whom the case was going, so that a minimum of time would be lost in the continuance of the case. The *στρατηγός* furthermore possessed some police powers, which manifested themselves in a number of ways; for example, he could issue orders for arrests, assist in man-hunts, provide escorts for officials and supply information on the movements of fugitives.³²

The jurisdiction of the *ἐξάκτωρ* seems to have focussed more directly on matters to do with taxation, though whether he possessed it in his own right or only by delegation from the *praeses* is open to doubt. In one case the *ἐξάκτωρ* is required to carry out a land survey in order to decide the right of ownership on some property on the orders of the brother of a senior provincial official.³³ Jurisdiction over other matters for villages was now managed by the *πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου*, while much of that over the city was assumed by the *λογιστής*. Examples of cases which survive come from villagers and city-dwellers.³⁴ The former petitioned the *πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου* or the *ἐξάκτωρ* initially, so perhaps the *ἐξάκτωρ* had the power to sort out such cases himself. Alternatively, he might have to investigate them and then submit a report to the *praeses*, who might deal with the case himself or return it to the *ἐξάκτωρ*. In a case involving a *γυμνασίαρχος* and some villagers, the petition from the former went to the *ἐξάκτωρ*, with the stipulation that if the villagers did not cease from bothering him in the cultivation of his crops, that he would take the case before the *praeses*. This implies that the *ἐξάκτωρ* could resolve local troubles by arbitration, but not if both sides insisted on standing their ground.³⁵ Notions of the police power of the

32 P.Mich. 590 (3rd/4th), P.Lond. 1651 (AD363); P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 192-201, P.Oxy. 3301 (AD300); P.S.I. 1248 (AD235).

33 P.Amh. 142 (c. AD340).

34 From villagers, eg: P.Cair. Isid. 74 (AD315); P.Cair. Isid. 69 (AD310), P.Mert. 91 (AD316) all refer to the *στρατηγός* and concern taxation.

35 P.Cair. Preis. 4 (AD320), Thomas (1959), pp. 126 (fn. 9) - 127.

ἐξάκτωρ are less well defined than for the στρατηγός, but some instances suggest he still retained some power there. In one case he provides men to help a centurion collect arrears in clothing, and elsewhere an order is addressed to him as well as to elements of the city police force. In another he issues orders to an εἰρήναρχος.³⁶ This narrowing of responsibility from the Third to the Fourth century, with the emphasis on the role of taxation, must necessarily have reduced any legal or police role, and given the scant references to the ἐξάκτωρ or his powers of jurisdiction in the papyri towards the end of the Fourth century, his powers may have been transferred to another official.

The relationship that the στρατηγός enjoyed with the villages and councils changed somewhat as a result of Diocletian's reforms to local administration. With regard to the villages, the official who now approved nominations to liturgical office was the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου instead of the στρατηγός, though he was subordinate to the ἐξάκτωρ. For cities, too, the previous power of the στρατηγός to appoint officials was transferred to the λογιστής.³⁷ The ἐξάκτωρ may have had the ability to approve the nominations of collectors, but evidence for this is limited - in S.B. 4513 (AD369/370) a nomination for an ὑποδέκτης and for καταπομπού is submitted to him, and at least once he also received the nominations to an obscure office called the ἐμβολαρχία (to do with the transport of tax goods).³⁸ It is by no means obvious as to which official appointed the city collectors in the Fourth century; in one instance an ἀποδέκτης appears who was nominated by the council - he was a lessee, and possibly a landowner, at the village concerned - but this does not really clarify the matter. Lallemand (1964) makes mention of ἀπαιτηταί collecting in sections of cities who are known to be

³⁶ P.Oxy. 1428, S.B. 4524 (both 4th), P.Ross.-Georg. v. 60 (AD391), cf. Thomas (1959), p. 128.

³⁷ Lewis (1969), the powers of appointment between στρατηγός and ἐπιστράτηγος.

³⁸ P.Mert. 90 (c.AD310).

βουλευταί, but the method of election is unknown.³⁹ It may be that the collectors in the Fourth century were mostly supplied by the villages, and that the cities supplied the supervisors (έπιμεληταί). If this was the case, then the έπιμεληταί concerned with taxes, particularly the military *annona*, seem to come under the authority of the έξάκτωρ, while those dealing with city matters come under that of the λογιστής.⁴⁰ It would seem more than likely that the responsible official appointed his own subordinate representatives, though nomination was still by the βουλή.⁴¹

The duties of the στρατηγός and έξάκτωρ being what they were, a close relationship with the bureaucracy and the city council was inevitable. The official had its origins in the former and gravitated towards the latter in the Fourth century. The system of the Third century seems to have worked quite well even in times of stress. In P.Beatty Panop. 1, the council, at the persistent urging of the στρατηγός, managed to find enough liturgists to cater for the emergency provisioning necessitated by the arrival of Diocletian's army. As a member of the provincial bureaucracy, the στρατηγός had personal prestige and considerable resources to summon to his assistance. The more specialised role of the έξάκτωρ seems to have been an effort to reduce the burden and increase the operational efficiency of the στρατηγός, but only seems to have experienced limited success. The έξάκτωρ seems to have had fewer means at his disposal with which to enforce his will - less jurisdiction and less police power - and may have suffered further from not being the most important official in the nome in the Fourth century. This rank was initially assumed by the λογιστής, and then by the έκδικος in the second half of the Fourth century.

39 P.Mert. 30 (AD302); cf. Lallemand (1964), p. 209f; P.Lugd.-Bat. 13 (4th) the βουλευταί announce that they have selected a συναπαρτητής άχύρου to the στρατηγός ήτοι έξάκτωρ.

40 Tax, P.Oxy. 2114 (AD316), P.Abinn. 26, 28 (AD340s); city, P.Oxy. 892 (AD338).

41 S.B. 9597 (late 4th), P.Oxy. 2114 (AD316).

The ἐξάκτωρ does not seem to have survived into the Sixth century; instead, the head of taxation in the nome then was the πάγαρχος, an official with even greater powers than the στρατηγός. The exact causes and timing of this change are uncertain, but it is possible that the weakness of the councils and the strength of the emerging great estates necessitated it. The position of πάγαρχος was often assumed by great estate owners, and was part of the bureaucracy rather than the exhausted city councils. The weakness may not have been that of the position, but merely a symptom of the general malaise that gripped the councils and led to their own decline in the field of administration. In a time when a system of patronage was predominant, the effectiveness of an administrative post must often have been decided by the personal status of the official rather than the rank he held, and with the decline in the rank of the ἐξακτορία, it may have become difficult to attract men of suitable standing to the post.

2: THE Λογιστής AND Ἐκδικος:

Diocletian's reforms restructured local administration in Egypt early in the Fourth century; the increased role of the city and council in tax collection and administration led to the creation of new officials. The position of the στρατηγός was reduced in importance and integrated into the city structure, *πραιπόσιτοι* τοῦ πάγου were established in *pagi* across the nome, and ^{the} λογιστής was made responsible for the finances and running of the city. Both the λογιστής and ἐξάκτωρ were directly responsible to officials of the bureaucracy - in the case of the former, it was to the Prefect. The role of the council was not augmented by the enlarged area of responsibility subject to the city because the powers of the λογιστής exceeded those of any municipal official. The new officials, the λογιστής, ἐξάκτωρ and later the ἔκδικος, were an effort to breathe new life into the flagging system of local tax collection through the city councils, making it more efficient; the concerns of the cities themselves were incidentally relegated beneath this consideration.

The λογιστής, also known as the *curator civitatis*,¹ was not a brand new position; there is considerable evidence for their existence in the earlier Empire in connection with the management of city finances, though this is attested only once in Egypt, and even there the title is not that used elsewhere. This was in the reign of Gallienus, in which one Aurelius Plution (as *procurator ducenarius*) had been assigned to Hermopolis.² Once into the Fourth century the official is still a representative of the bureaucracy, but is a permanent office rather than one assigned to administer the finances of cities in times of particular need. Knowledge of the position is good for the first half of the Fourth century, whereafter the evidence drops off sharply; this may reflect a reduction in the number of duties, some of which were absorbed by the ἔκδικος. The earliest

1 Cod. Just. 1.54.3 (AD239), P.Lips. 40, Lallemand (1964), p. 107, n. 1, Rees (1953-4), p. 84, n. 8.

2 C.P.Herm. 59; earlier λογιστάς, Rees (1953-4), pp. 83-4.

known appearances of the λογιστής after the re-organisation are about AD303-4.³ The position was made by imperial appointment, though the selection of candidates was based on the choice of the council.

A series of laws give a guide-line to the changing nature of the method of election to the λογιστεία, although none refer directly to Egypt. A law of AD331 made it clear that in order to be qualified for the position, a βουλευτής had to have performed the other compulsory services of the city, and the implication that patronage was being employed in order to circumvent this (by obtaining imperial letters of appointment) suggests that the position was a desirable one.⁴ The method of election changed over the later Empire; the power of election was transferred from the βουλή to an assembly of land-holders, *honorati*, bishops and βουλευταί. This may have occurred as early as AD505, and was certainly effective under Justinian.⁵ In the Sixth century at Oxyrhynchus the position appears to be being held by representatives of various οἴκοι as a civic liturgy, perhaps simultaneously with two other offices, the πατερία and the προεδρία.⁶ It is tempting to state that because these three particular offices appear together in addresses in three different papyri, that they were assigned together, but this is by no means definite. A case in which a member of the Apion οἶκος held the λογιστεία alone is known in the late Fifth century, and also late in the Sixth where one represents Flavius Apion in the matter of a deed of surety.⁷ It is not absolutely clear whether these positions were voted to an individual; it is

3 P.Oxy. 3727 (AD303), 2187 (AD304). The fullest list of Oxyrhynchite λογισταί is in Volume 54, pp. 222-9 (1987) of the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, ed. and trans. by Coles, Maehler and Parsons.

4 Cod. Theod. 12.1.120 (AD389).

5 Nov. Just. 75 and 128; cf. Rees (1953-4), p. 94, n. 76.

6 P.Mich. Inv. 3780 (AD517), P.Oxy. 2780 (AD553), S.B. 11079 (AD571), cf. Sijpesteijn (1987a).

7 S.B. 9152 (AD492), P.Vars. 30 (AD571).

conceivable that they were sustained on a rotational basis by the οἰκοί, as in the case of the ῥιπάριος. It is unknown how long a λογιστής remained in office. Although the office was by appointment, it would seem unlikely that the Emperor would arbitrarily designate λογισταί for irregular periods. It seems unlikely that the situation that arose with Flavius Abinnaeus in his assumption of command of the *ala* at Dionysias would have been matched in such matters, since the βουλή exercised some discretionary power over the election and, presumably, its regularity.⁸ The list of Oxyrhynchite λογισταί for the first half of the Fourth century demonstrates that several were in office for longer than one year, but no fixed pattern has emerged. Rees and Lallemand both prefer three years as the most likely solution, but terms of one and five years occurred, to judge from the current evidence.

The duties of the λογιστής centred around the management of the city and its finances. The control of the civic accounts fell to him, as well as those of the guilds and the market. The λογιστής was also in charge of the supervision of cultural and religious institutions, and the administration of the public records. He appointed liturgists for the city, nominated to him by the βουλή and πρύτανις, though the ἐξάκτωρ was possibly involved in those concerning tax collection. The control of the city finances necessarily gave him command over public works undertaken by the city, and he was also responsible for the efficient running of the public post. Furthermore, his elevated position in relation to the city and council made him the logical person to whom to address reports, and it was to him that the Prefect communicated his orders and complaints pertaining to the city. Such control over civic life, along with minor judicial power, made the λογιστής the dominant official in local administration for at least the first half of the Fourth century. There is no doubt that the λογιστής had a considerable number of subordinates - in cases before him two minor officials appear, a ὑπηρέτης and a πάρεδρος, and a secretary (ὑπογραφεύς), who may

⁸ P.Abinn. 1 (c.AD341).

well have belonged to his staff, handled declarations of stocks and prices from the guilds.⁹

The decline of the old magistracies in the face of the introduction of such a powerful official is not surprising. Their relative position of authority in the council had declined, and the prestige of the λογιστής as well as his wide-ranging competence far outstripped their own. His responsibility for religious institutions and for the market would appear to clash with the erstwhile duties of the ἀρχιερεύς and the ἀγορανόμος respectively - in the former's case, it is the λογιστής who makes enquiries into the status of a priest and announces a gymnastic display to be put on by the ἔφηβοι of Oxyrhynchus.¹⁰ The status of these positions can not have been improved by this interference in their areas of responsibility. The council had had some control over the maintenance of public works, though much reliance must have been placed on the money of magistrates to keep them functioning and on that of governors and like officials for new ones. The λογιστής acquired what power it had possessed; reports on public works that would have normally gone to the πρύτανις now went to him. This can be observed in connection with serious work, such as a surveyor's estimate for the cost of painting the baths, down to reports on the state of trees in the town.¹¹

The λογιστής controlled the authority for payment in connection with public works - in one case the πρύτανις had to apply to him for a sum of money for expenses on the public baths. In the Third century the πρύτανις had authorised such payments himself.¹² This was also the case when it came to

9 Subordinates, P.Oxy. 3758-9 (AD325), 3732-40 (AD312), P.Harr. 73 (c.AD338).

10 Culture and religion; P.Oxy. 1265 (AD336), P.Oxy. 42 (AD323). Guild price declarations, n. 19 below.

11 P.Oxy. 896, 53 (both AD316). Trees, P.Oxy. 2767, 2969 (both AD323), 2993 (AD323?), 2994 (4th?).

12 P.Oxy. 1104 (AD306), cf. 3193 (AD308?); in P.Oxy. 84 (AD316) the guild of iron and copper workers acknowledged payment for wrought

providing men for public works outside the city; in one case an individual stonemason, whose industry was required by the *praeses*, swore an oath of diligence to the λογιστής. Elsewhere the *dux* requested the provision of craftsmen by the λογιστής for work on a fort, and the latter was also responsible for the despatch of village labourers (in this case to Memphis). His responsibility in this capacity clearly covered the whole nome, and in cases where an inadequate number were furnished, he (along with the liturgists whose task it was) had to carry the blame.¹³ Such missives would have previously been sent to the πρύτανις and the council in general in the Third century. In line with this responsibility for public works, the upkeep of the public post was another task that the λογιστής had to organise. Complaints over the non-performance of liturgies in association with the public post were addressed to the λογιστής.¹⁴ However, the laws do not paint a clear picture on this matter; although one of AD400 attests his involvement, it is not directly aimed at Egypt, while one that is addressed to the Augustal Prefect declares that supervision of it should be assigned by the councils to individual members.¹⁵

The control over the finances of the city meant that the λογιστής received a large number of submissions, petitions and reports to do with the running of the city. Orders from the Prefect over financial matters concerning the city or the nome went to the λογιστής rather than to the city council (though the council might be jointly addressed) - for example, an order for the collection of gold in short order, and the λογιστής and a high-ranking magistrate were to convey it to Alexandria in

iron (supplied for public works) to the λογιστής. The πρύτανις authorising payment, P.Oxy. 3185 (3rd).

13 Stonemason, P.Oxy. 3308 (AD373); craftsmen, P.Oxy. 3793 (AD340); labourers, P.Oxy. 3727 (AD303); admonition, P.Oxy. 3794 (AD340).

14 P.Oxy. 900 (AD322); 2115 (4th) communications with the accountant of the contractors of the city.

15 Cod. Theod. 8.5.59 (AD400), 8.5.51 (AD392).

person.¹⁶ The Prefect occasionally interfered through the agency of the λογιστής. In one instance, in what may have been exceptional circumstances, the Prefect ordered the κώμαρχοι of the village of Tampeti to submit their accounts for two specific months to the λογιστής.¹⁷ The position he occupied allowed the λογιστής to instruct the city bankers to make loans, but the former was responsible for their repayment in the event that it proved impossible to regain the loans. The Prefect could also become involved in such matters, but it appears that the individual and not his successors or the office in general was responsible for repayment. In such cases of suspected financial impropriety, the Prefect could demand that accounts of the term of office of a λογιστής be sent to him; a letter from an unknown official source (possibly the Prefect) threatened the λογιστής (and the νυκτοστράτηγοι) with penalties if they failed to repay a loan.¹⁸ The λογιστεία had considerable potential for corruption in that the incumbent ultimately controlled and was responsible for the finances of the city, but the active interest of the Prefect in situations in which bad loans had been made with the city's money may have acted as a check on more excessive behaviour.

One of the activities of the λογιστής for which a large number of papyri survive is that of receiving and compiling price declarations from all of the guilds of the city. Each month the heads of each guild (μηνιάρχαι) submitted accounts to the λογιστής indicating the prices of their goods and their stock levels. These the λογιστής must have compiled into a list, and forwarded it to a senior official, since an accumulation of the commodity prices for the nomes of the province of Arcadia is also preserved. What the prices represented may well have served as a base for the tax-assessments of the next indiction, and also where

16 P.Oxy. 2106 (4th).

17 P.Oxy. 895 (AD305) village accounts normally went to the πραγμασις τοῦ πάγου, but the date (AD305) may be too early for them. However, this example may show cession of power from the στρατηγός to the λογιστής.

18 P.Oxy. 2666-7 (c.AD308-9, AD309); P.Ryl. 700 (4th).

stocks of one commodity were low and others were high.¹⁹ As already observed in the case of public works, the λογιστής had a high measure of control over the guilds in the city, and not only could he make the μηνιάρχαι make payments as required, but also submit reports on various matters. For example, the μηνιάρχαι of the vegetable-sellers' guild were ordered to supply an ἐξκέπτωρ with vegetables, doctors now handed reports to him on the health of patients who had petitioned the λογιστής (these had previously gone to the στρατηγός and πρύτανις) and builders on the state of houses.²⁰

The power and authority of the λογιστής were augmented by his being in charge of the appointment of liturgists. The συστατής now submitted nominations for liturgies to the λογιστής for the minor *munera* - those for naval service tie in well with his responsibility for the public post.²¹ The λογιστής also received nominations to the higher offices from the πρύτανις. Appeals could be made to the λογιστής against nomination; however, in an appeal against nomination to the ἐξηγητεία a request was made that the matter be forwarded to the Prefect since judgement in all matters rested with him. The λογιστής may also have assumed the duty of notifying magistrates of imminent service, which previously had mainly been performed by the council.²² The λογιστής received appeals concerning non-performance of liturgies, as in the appeal of a superintendent of the οἶκός δρόμος whose subordinates had failed to perform their duties as donkey drivers (ὄνηλασία).²³ The λογιστής

¹⁹ Guild price declarations, P.Oxy. 3766 (AD329) intro.; P.Oxy. 3628-3633 (5th) are lists of commodity prices for six of the nine nomes of Arcadia.

²⁰ Payment, P.Oxy. 1139 (4th); doctors, P.Oxy. 3729 (AD307), 896 (AD316), 52 (AD325); P.Mert. 89 (AD300), P.Oxy. 3245 (AD297); builders (and doctor), P.Oxy. 3195 (AD331).

²¹ The οἶκός δρόμος, P.Oxy. 2675 (AD318), 3623 (AD359); ναῦται, P.Oxy. 86 (AD338), 2715 (AD386); others, P.Oxy. 3249 (AD326), 1116 (AD363).

²² Appeal, P.Oxy. 3350 (AD330); P.Ant. 31 (AD347), notification of service to a κοσμητής by a λογιστής; cf. P.Oxy. 892 (AD338).

²³ P.Oxy. 900 (AD322).

received declarations from people confirming their assumption of liturgies, such as those giving oaths to escort men to the office of senior officials.²⁴ The power of appointment had potential for favouritism in that the λογιστής could theoretically have chosen to refuse to appoint his friends to council posts. It is not known to what extent this may have happened, or whether the influence on the selective process was brought to bear over nominations rather than appointment, thus placing this more at the disposal of elements of the council.

The λογιστής may have possessed minor judicial competence. The λογιστής appears to have been involved in a number of cases, but most of these seem to have been delegated to him by senior judges. As previously noted, the appeal against having to perform the ἐξηγητεία carried the request that this matter be placed before the Prefect. In two cases that came before him in which no mention was made of a higher court, one originated with a villager concerning the illegal activities of shepherds, and the other contained allegations of adultery and house-breaking. It seems extraordinary that such serious crimes be addressed to the λογιστής when much lesser ones, such as theft, were first of all referred to the Prefect and thence to the λογιστής.²⁵ The sorts of cases with which the λογιστής was often instructed to deal are not surprisingly ones associated with the city, often to do with property and inheritance - though the opening of wills had previously been done before the στρατηγός.²⁶ The λογιστής was in charge of the records of the city, and his access to these made him the obvious choice to hear such cases. The λογιστής apparently may have also acquired responsibility for the registration of children (previously that of the συστάτης), though the papyrus that provides an instance

24 P.Oxy. 3746 (AD319), 3127 (AD332), P.Harr. 65 (AD342).

25 P.Cair. Isid. 79 (4th), P.Ant. 36 (AD326?), P.Oxy. 3767 (AD329/330).

26 Property, P.Oxy. 3126 (AD328), 3758, 3759 (both AD325), 3775 (AD342), 3311 (c.AD373-4). Inheritance, P.Oxy. 3758 (AD325).

of this may illustrate an exceptional situation, a grand-parent rather than a parent submitting the application. The process of appealing to the Prefect and then going before the λογιστής when it was delegated to him was a laborious one, but one perhaps intended to restrict the considerable power of the λογιστής. Full judicial power would have given the λογιστής, a city official, virtually a free hand to do as he wished, particularly in combination with his financial and administrative responsibilities.

The duties of the λογιστής were many and varied, and made the official very powerful within the city. The role of the council was not so much diminished as overshadowed, and almost all their activities required the approval of the λογιστής. Most of the evidence for the λογιστής falls in the first half of the Fourth century; the establishment of the ἔκδικος as the most important city official deprived the λογιστής of some of his powers and this may explain in part the decline in references to that official. There has been considerable discussion over the identity of the πατήρ τῆς πόλεως since this official was involved with civic finance; it seems that it was another title for the λογιστής, but apparently only outside Egypt.²⁷ The extent of the functions of the λογιστής in the Sixth century is unclear, but it seems that only representatives of οἴκοι could perform it satisfactorily.

The first official mention of the *defensor civitatis* is in a law of Valentinian, who introduced the official to Illyricum in the second half of the Fourth century.²⁸ In Egypt the evolution of a like official was more gradual than a sudden imposition by the Emperor. This process is confusing since the position of *defensor* seems to be derived from not one but two earlier positions, the ἔκδικος and the σύνδικος. The former had no clearly defined role before the Fourth century, and seems to represent

²⁷ Jones (1964), p. 1312, n. 104, Roueché (1989), pp. 75-80, Sijpesteijn (1987a), Gascou (1985), pp. 43ff, 66.

²⁸ Cod. Theod. 1.29.1 (AD368).

individuals in the few papyri in which he appears.²⁹ The latter is better documented and was a sort of legal adviser to the βουλή. In the papyri he is found giving advice over the legality of nominations and representing the town before the Prefect.³⁰ The official that emerged from these two seems to be addressed by either of the two titles in the first half of the Fourth century. Subsequently the title ἔκδικος was used, although the official would seem to have owed more to the duties of the σύνδικος.³¹

The appearance of the λογιστής may have deprived the σύνδικος of some of his responsibilities; for example, the former communicated directly with the Prefect, perhaps reducing the need for the latter to do so. The presence of officials addressed as ἔκδικος or σύνδικος in the first half of the Fourth century, after the λογιστής but ahead of the ἐξάκτωρ in seniority, therefore strongly suggests a new role for them. Arcadius Charisius equated the title of σύνδικος with that of *defensor civitatis*,³² and although there were definite similarities between the positions of the Third century former and Fourth century latter, there must have some form of transition from the one to the other; unfortunately, evidence for the σύνδικος and the ἔκδικος is very poor in the first quarter of the Fourth century. The lack of evidence over this period is very unfortunate since it is not possible to tell how the position of σύνδικος evolved to rank alongside the λογιστής and ἐξάκτωρ. When it resumes, the σύνδικος or ἔκδικος had assumed an established position in the hierarchy, and most of the papyri that concern the official seem to deal with petitions and undertakings, rather than with council business or in communications with the Prefect. Although at this stage the official was subordinate to the λογιστής, he is seen

29 cf. Rees (1952), p. 80, n. 52.

30 P.Oxy. 1413 (AD270-5); 2407 (late 3rd).

31 Ἐκδικος, P.Oxy. 3195 (AD331), 3127 (AD332); σύνδικος, P.Oxy. 1426 (AD332), 3771 (AD336).

32 Just. Dig. 50.4.18.13 - a personal *munus*.

to be becoming involved in matters that had been the sole preserve of that official, such as receiving the reports of doctors and an undertaking to deliver men to the office of the Catholicus.³³

The fact that certain petitions were addressed to him imply if not the full possession of minor jurisdiction, then the responsibility for some such cases as regards reference to higher authority. An acting-σύνδικος received a petition over assault, while a σύνδικος was delegated a case by the Prefect over land-ownership; both of these could be related to the purpose of the *defensor civitatis* to protect the rights of the poorer citizens.³⁴ However, despite any similarities between the σύνδικος / ἔκδικος and the *defensor civitatis*, there is no definite mention of the δεφήνσωρ in the papyri before AD368. The best that can be offered is P.Ross.-Georg. v. 27, which contains an appeal to the δεφήνσωρ over alleged unfair collection of the χρυσάργυρον and asking for his protection, but this has not yet been safely dated within the Fourth century.³⁵ The title δεφήνσωρ, the Greek version of the Latin, does not seem to have been common, since provincials seemed to prefer the title to which they were used, ἔκδικος, and the higher bureaucracy would have used the Latin. The use of the title ἔκδικος apparently became the most common, assuredly among provincials, and was used down to the Sixth century at least.³⁶ This continuity suggests that the adjustment required by the transition from the official existing in Egypt to the *defensor civitatis* was not great. As happened on other occasions, this may be the imperial confirmation by law of an already existing

33 P.Oxy. 3195 (AD331); P.Oxy. 3127 (AD332) - here the ἔκδικος is addressed before the στρατηγός.

34 P.Oxy. 3771 (AD336); P.Col. Inv. 181/2 (AD339-40), Kraemer and Lewis (1937).

35 P.Ross.-Georg. v. 27 (4th), Rees (1952), pp. 84-5. The χρυσάργυρον was the gold tax assessed on trades every five years.

36 eg: P.Wash. 10 (6th).

practice, establishing official parameters within which the official was to operate.

The method of election of the *defensor civitatis* is preserved in various laws. That of Valentinian for Illyricum made it clear that βουλευταί were not eligible for the post, and that the choice had to be made from ex-governors, advocates and *agentes in rebus*. It is not clear whether this applied to Egypt as well; it cannot have affected the earlier elections of the σύνδικος / ἕκδικος, and unless the method of election had changed over the transition, these would still have been elected from the βουλή. At any rate the method of election was transferred to the cities in AD386-7, though some form of official approval for the nomination must have been required.³⁷ By AD409 there had been a further modification to the way in which the *defensor civitatis* was elected; this time the candidate was selected by the bishops, clerics, *honorati, possessores* and the βουλευταί, whose choice had to be ratified by the Praetorian Prefect. Finally, Justinian (Novel 15, AD535) made the position a liturgy which had to be held for two years in rotation by the leading citizens of the cities.³⁸ So much tinkering with the mechanics of the elective process of the most important civic official is indicative of the problems that faced the councils in this period. In the Sixth century in Egypt the *defensor civitatis* was treated in a not dissimilar manner to the other city liturgies, and was held by the *possessores* of οἴκοι or their dependents - in one case, in fact, Flavius Apion himself held the position, suggesting that it still bestowed some prestige on the incumbent - after all, he could have had a subordinate undertake the office.³⁹ Conversely, it may have required a man of high personal status in order that the office could be carried out efficiently at all.

The position underwent changes throughout the Later Empire as necessity compelled the Emperors to sacrifice the application of legislation reflecting active concern for the well-

37 Cod. Theod. 1.29.6 (AD386-7).

38 Rees (1952), p. 92f.

39 P.Oxy. 1886 (5th/6th).

being of his subjects in response to the the over-riding necessity of receiving taxes. Initially the position was intended by Valentinian for the defence of plebeians against the outrages of powerful men; this was still perceived as one of its functions in the middle of the Fifth century in Egypt. A man suffering oppression from a βουλευτής petitioned the ἔκδικος and reminded him of his duty to help the poor against the *potentiores*.⁴⁰ This entailed a degree of independent jurisdiction in order to make this role effective. This objective was difficult to attain since the ἔκδικος needed to be more powerful than the man accused for his decisions to be effective, something that would be unlikely if the ἔκδικος was a member of the council. If the ἔκδικος was more powerful, it is not unlikely that he sympathised with his colleagues rather than with the man submitting the petition. As a result it appears that the nature of the jurisdiction changed, so that instead of addressing social injustice the ἔκδικος became the main source of administrative power within the council, with sufficient judicial power to supervise and enforce most of the civil legislation. Novel 15 of Justinian augmented what judicial powers he possessed, and the papyri show considerable involvement in such matters. The reform limited the *defensor civitatis* to civil lawsuits of less than 300 *nomismata*; although in one case a lady of high rank considered submitting a petition to the *defensor civitatis* of Alexandria in a case of debt for a sum far in excess of the permitted amount.⁴¹ The ἔκδικος presided over matters to do with debts, disputed inheritances, and acts of violence to property or person, to name a few.⁴² In one case a petition over assault requests that he examine the case and send a report to the *praeses* so that the latter can judge it.⁴³ As

40 P.Oxy. 902 (c.AD465).

41 P.S.I. 76 (AD574/8), Keenan (1975a), p. 245.

42 Debts, P.Oxy. 1882 (c.AD504), 1883-4 (AD504); inheritance, P.Lond. 1709 (pre-AD570?); property, P.Cair. Masp. 67087 (AD543).

43 P.Oxy. 1885 (AD509).

in the case of the λογιστής, it is very likely that senior officials delegated cases to him.

The ἔκδικος had a staff - details of it are given in Novel 15 - which granted him the employ of various officials from the office staff of the *praeses*. In addition to them, he had the usual assistants (βοηθοί) and probably a deputy as well, if ἀντέκδικος can be so interpreted. A deputy also appeared in AD336, a διοικοῦντι συνδικίαν.⁴⁴ However, the post itself suffered a decline in importance in measure with that of the councils, although it progressively became stronger relative to them. Initially the ἔκδικος had been given orders to look after the interests of the poor in face of the *potentiores*, but holders of the post lacked the authority and ability to ensure that their orders were carried out that other sources of jurisdiction possessed - such as commanders of military detachments and bishops. The best evidence for this in Egypt is Cod. Theod. 1.29.7 (AD392), issued shortly after the power of nomination had been handed to the councils. It reminded them of their duty, and ordered that they put a halt to the protection of *potentiores* over criminals. A law not specifically aimed at Egypt enjoined certain city officials, including the λογιστής and ἔκδικος, not to deny people the right to bring cases due to favouritism.⁴⁵ The potential for corruption within the post therefore may have revolved around discriminating dispensation of justice, but the more powers that the ἔκδικος acquired over the city, the more opportunities he would have had.

As the city became less and less capable of managing administrative matters itself, more power was concentrated in the hands of fewer magistrates until by the Sixth century the ἔκδικος was by far the most important official. Duties were transferred to those who could successfully carry them out, and a number of laws increased the responsibilities of the *defensor civitatis*. In AD436, for example, the *defensor civitatis*, along

44 Assistant, P.Cair. Masp. 67087 (AD543); deputies, P.Oxy. 3771 (AD336), 1987 (AD587), P.Lond. 1709 (pre-AD570?).

45 Cod. Theod. 11.8.3 (AD409).

with the office staffs of the Augustal Prefect and the *praeses*, was made responsible for the publication of tax rates before collection was made. Other laws that conferred more duties upon him do not directly specify Egypt and may not have affected that diocese, but are at least symptomatic of the trend towards the bestowing of most administrative power in the hands of one official.⁴⁶ The creation of the *πάγαρχος* probably deprived the *ἔκδικος* of any role in taxation, and his duties probably concentrated on civil legislation, particularly after his powers in that field were augmented and confirmed in Justinian's Novel 15.

That there were problems in the administration of the councils had emerged in the Third century, when Philippus Arabs had made substantial reforms.⁴⁷ Diocletian's reforms added a greater element of active central control, executed through the *λογιστής* and *ἔκδικος*. However, although their powers were considerable, they were not adequate to solve the problems inherent in the system. The background of economic instability caused the internal politics of the councils to continue - and it is not improbable that the centrally appointed officials participated, since they would have had local origins and therefore local interests. As Julian discovered at Antioch, arguments of reason and the interests of the state came second to self-interest.⁴⁸ In times of plenty the local administration performed their duties willingly since the financial strain was bearable, and this coincided with the interests of the state. When competition was aimed at exemption from duty, both suffered alike, and it required the direct intervention of the central bureaucracy and willing liturgists (the *πάγαρχος* and the *οἴκοι*) to revive the local administration, measures far more sweeping than those of Diocletian. But by then its character had

46 Cod. Theod. 11.5.3 (AD436); other laws, Cod. Theod. 11.7.12 (AD383), 11.1.19 (AD384), 13.11.10 (AD399), 11.8.3 (AD409).

47 Parsons (1967), p. 136ff.

48 Libanius, Or. 1, 119-135, Or. 16.

so greatly changed as to be unrecognisable from that of the Fourth century.

Essentially, the fate of the *ἔκδικος* epitomises the decline of the councils in provincial administration, and although a number of council officials survived alongside him - such as the *λογιστής*, *ῥιπάριος*, *πατέρ τῆς πόλεως*, *πρόεδρος* and *σιτώνης*⁴⁹ - the council as a body was redundant and the positions were run by external agents, such as members of the *οἴκοι*. It seems appropriate to end on one such example; an *ἔκδικος* wrote a letter to the *διοικητής* of an Apion estate, in which he referred to the landlord's agent as their common master. The man was probably an official from the estate (a tenant appears as an *ἀντέκδικος* elsewhere) - this is a far cry from the original intention of protection of the poor from *potentiores*, and is telling with regards to whom the incumbent was responsible.⁵⁰

49 The *σιτώνης*, the corn-buyer, was an official for whom there is very little evidence. His election was transferred to the bishops, clergy and city notables at about the same time as that of the *ἔκδικος* (Cod. Just. 1.4.17 (Anastasius), Liebeschuetz (1973), p. 40, n. 27).

50 P.Oxy. 1860 (6th/7th), 1987 (AD587).

3: THE TRANSITION FROM THE FOURTH TO THE SIXTH CENTURY:

Seven Oxyrhynchites of the early Fourth century, finding themselves under similar circumstances as those of the famed Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, and not waking until the Sixth century, would no doubt have failed in equal measure to recognise their city. This is because Oxyrhynchus, as well as much of the rest of Egypt, had become covered with churches and religious institutions. The situation would have been the same for a similar number of councillors from the early Fourth century, who would have been staggered by the differences in local administration. The old magistracies of the Third century had all disappeared by the end of the Fourth century, and had been replaced by the λογιστής, ἑξάκτωρ and ἔκδικος, who ran most of the city's affairs between them. By the Sixth century there had been even greater changes than this, and the bureaucracy had more greatly encroached on the administrative duties of the city.

The βουλή had shown signs of weakness even in the Third century, which had led to the establishment of the new magistrates responsible not to the βουλή but to bureaucratic officials. The lack of sufficient evidence for the Fifth century does not permit us to chart the time-scale for subsequent changes, but by the Sixth century it is clear that the role of the βουλή had significantly diminished. Rémondon claims that AD370 provides the last set of reported minutes of the Oxyrhynchite βουλή, and the last written evidence of activity on behalf of its members is about fifty years later.¹ Geremek has more recently tried to argue that bouleutic activity persisted considerably longer, but it is very difficult to come to any sort of definite conclusion on the exact function and behaviour of the estate-held magistracies because of the restrictive nature of the evidence. It does not appear, however, that anything like

¹ P.Oxy. 2110 (AD370), B.G.U. 936 (AD426), Rémondon (1966), p. 141.

the old model of the βουλή persisted, which had witnessed rowdy nominations in the Fourth century.²

By the Sixth century it appears that owners of οἰκοί - great estates - were undertaking the most important magistracies, probably in proportion to the size of their property and their wealth.³ It seems that such arrangements were carried out without the complications of the nomination process of the Fourth century, which can only have made them more efficient. Furthermore, if the amount of liturgies sustained was in any way related to the capability to perform them, this would also have been a significant improvement on the competitive nature of nomination in the Fourth century. Even the mundane liturgies were being taken over by the estate owners - such as collecting taxes on their own lands - and the bureaucracy became more directly involved in tax collection. Thus magistracies had become an imposition no longer on people but on οἰκοί. While some offices, such as the ἔκδικος, continued to function, this was very much in the manner of bureaucratic offices, and the concept of a βουλή that took corporate decisions and elected magistrates was effectively redundant.⁴ The ἐξάκτωρ seems to have disappeared in the late Fourth or Fifth century, and was replaced with a more powerful official - the πάγαρχος - who was independent of the βουλή, and responsible only to the bureaucracy. Unlike the imposed officials of the Fourth century, the πάγαρχος retained this independence and consequently enjoyed greater power than any of his predecessors.⁵

The social hierarchy of the council seems to have undergone various changes over the Fourth and Fifth centuries. Geremek (1981) sees this in the appearance of πολιτευόμενοι in the Third century, and the subsequent greater frequency of this term

² Geremek (1990), cf. P.S.I. 684 (4th/5th).

³ P.Oxy. 2780 (AD553), P.Vars. 30 (AD571) - the λογιστεία, πατερία πόλεως, προεδρεία; P.Oxy. 1886 (5th/6th) ἔκδικος; P.Oxy. 2039 (6th) ῥιπάριος.

⁴ Fikhman (1975a).

⁵ Liebeschuetz (1973).

over that of βουλευταί in the Fifth and Sixth centuries.⁶ The new group, from their title, seem to have more in common with the city than the βουλή, meaning that they were perhaps not members of the council but of sufficient wealth to be susceptible to liturgies. The decline of the old magistracies and their replacement in the cities with the new magistrates must have contributed to the decline in fortune of the βουλή as a corporate body, while opening up better opportunities for individuals. This, combined with the law of AD415 that recognised the growing power and influence of landowners, and conferred upon them certain administrative rights, can only have detracted from the effective power of the βουλή.⁷ The real power was becoming concentrated in the hands of a more compact body around the city; the bureaucracy was still strong, but now encountered the growing power of the Church and private landowners; this was recognised by the Emperor, who gave them a greater hand in local administration - for example, the nomination of the ἔκδικος, among other magistrates.⁸ The local power and influence of these men must have had a great bearing on what happened in the βουλή.

As for the βουλή, it would be fairly safe to assume that it was composed of some men who were better placed than others. This may have been recognised by applying to the former the title προπολιτευόμενος to designate this status, just as that of πρωτοκωμητής was used in villages in the Sixth century.⁹ The title προπολιτευόμενος appears in the Third century.¹⁰ It seems to have been a way of denoting a councillor of prestigious status within the local administrative body at first, and this may have naturally developed to indicate a member of the council elite,

⁶ Geremek (1981), p. 236.

⁷ Cod. Theod. 11.24.6 (AD415).

⁸ cf. Rees (1952), p. 92.

⁹ eg: P.Cair. Masp. 67001 (AD514).

¹⁰ P.Oxy. 2343 (c.AD288), P.Cair. Isid. 1 (AD297); cf. Bowman (1971), pp. 155-8.

reflecting the great influence they had in running its affairs. Such a role would closely link the designation προπολιτευόμενος with the Latin *principalis*, and it is not difficult to find evidence for the enhanced status of the latter - for example, in the *ordo salutaris* at Timgad, the *principales* greeted the governor in the Third class, one ahead of the ordinary councillors. For Alexandria, the Emperor ruled that the five chief councillors were to be immune from corporal punishments.¹¹ However, the title does not occur very often in Egypt, although when it does it tends to support the view that προπολιτευόμενοι were of considerable importance within the city. Προπολιτευόμενοι held various important ranks in the city, and groups of them appear on occasion.¹² They could employ delegated judicial power - in one instance the Prefect acceded to a request from a man that a προπολιτευόμενος should be given jurisdiction over his case.¹³ Their position as leading men of the town and βουλή led to their wielding power even when not holding a magistracy, and it is easy to believe that they were essentially responsible for decisions taken by the βουλή.¹⁴ The προπολιτευόμενοι were clearly important men locally, probably wealthy landowners. It is possible that from such origins emerged the great estate owners of the late Fifth and Sixth centuries. They had a firm base in property and status, and the potential for social mobility into the bureaucracy, which was the real source of money and power.

The bureaucracy was re-organised in connection with the city. The ἐξάκτωρ seems to have been the main victim of this reshuffle, and is scarcely encountered after the Fourth century. At some point in the Fifth century the πάγαρχος, the new administrator of taxation for the nome, was introduced. The

¹¹ cf. Liebeschuetz (1972), p. 188, n. 4; Cod. Theod. 12.1.190 (AD436).

¹² P.Lips. 37 (AD389) ῥιπάριος, P.Abinn. 58 (AD345) πρύτανις; also, Bowman (1971), pp. 155-8. Multiples, P.Oxy. 3577 (AD342), 3794 (AD340).

¹³ P.Oxy. 67 (AD338); P.Oxy. 3579 (AD341-3).

¹⁴ Aetius, the προπολιτευόμενος delegated judicial authority by the Prefect, was not currently a magistrate, P.Oxy. 67 (AD338).

Fifth century offers its usual silence on this change in the administration - the origin of the *πάγαραχος* is therefore obscure, but it may have been a product of the reforms of Anastasius. The name of the office seems to have had its origins in the area supervised by the *πραιπόσιτοι τοῦ πάγου* - in P.Oxy. 2110 the administrative area of a *πραιπόσιτος* is called a *παγαρχία*. Gascou believes that this transformation was completed in part as a result of the evolution of separate methods of exacting taxation from those under city control - for example, on great estates after AD415; the area for which cities were responsible shrank, and the whole area was finally placed under one official.¹⁵ However, this official was very different from the *πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου*, not least in that he was in no way responsible to magistrates of the city, as the *πραιπόσιτοι* had been to the *ἐξάκτωρ*. Those who held the post seem to have held diverse ranks, the most important of whom was Flavius Apion, who had been consul.¹⁶ It is not surprising that owners of great estates should have held the post, given its and their importance in the provinces. It is quite possible that this post was held by them in much the same way as the magistracies of the city; after all, at one point it was assigned to a female estate owner to execute, and she carried it out through a deputy. In some instances two appear at the same time, clearly operating side by side. This may be two estates sharing the duty because neither was large enough to undertake it alone; there seem to have been no administrative difficulties arising as a consequence.¹⁷

The *πάγαραχος* was responsible for the taxes of the *παγαρχία* - an area roughly equivalent in size to the old nome - and was the next most senior official to the governor of the province. The office staff of the *πάγαραχος* was quite large, and seems to

¹⁵ P.Oxy. 2110 (AD370), Gascou (1972), p. 61.

¹⁶ Liebeschuetz (1973), p. 43, n. 48 gives a list of known *πάγαραχοι* from Antaiopolis, only one of whom has no other title.

¹⁷ Gascou (1972), pp. 61-2, 69-72; Flavia Patricia exercising the office through Menas, P.Lond. 1660 (c.AD553). Two *πάγαραχοι*, eg: P.Lond. 1661 (AD553), 1665 (6th), P.Flor. 298 (AD588).

have been carefully organised, especially in connection with tax collection. Central to it was the βοηθὸς λογιστηρίου, who ran the accounts bureau. This official signed and issued receipts for a variety of payments. A number of collectors worked on the staff of the πάγαρχος - ὑποδέκται and βοηθοί among others - while the διαστολεύς seems to have been involved in some measure with the accounts of payments by tax payers, perhaps of one of the divisions of the παραρχία (μερίδες)¹⁸. The size of this operation certainly gives the impression that the involvement of the city officials in tax collection was greatly reduced, if not entirely replaced. Taxes were still probably collected at village level, and then handed over to the collectors of the πάγαρχος at the threshing floor. The ἐμβολή was not the only tax collected, and it seems that almost all of them came through the office of the πάγαρχος.¹⁹ Even the autopract village of Aphrodito had to pay some taxes to the bureau of the πάγαρχος at Antaiopolis, and a watchful eye was kept on their payments in general.²⁰

One papyrus provides us with interesting insights into his role in financial administration in the παραρχία. Although he did not set the tax rates for the παραρχία initially, he seems to have been able to raise them at his discretion. When the πάγαρχος raised the rates in one instance, the village agreed to pay the sum provided that there were no further increases. However, the rates were thereafter heavily increased by the πάγαρχος Julian and violence was employed when payment was not forthcoming, because of a failed flood. An appeal to the *dux* had temporarily secured a remission, but the πάγαρχος had raised them again. These demands were well above the officially assessed rate, presumably going to line the pockets of the πάγαρχος among others. In another papyrus, a tax collector

¹⁸ cf. Wipszycka (1971); P.Cair. Masp. 67106 (AD539); P.Cair. Masp. 67046, 67228; P.Würzb. 19 (AD651/2).

¹⁹ Wipszycka (1971), p. 111.

²⁰ P.Cair. Masp. 67060 - the πάγαρχος wants to discuss late payment of taxes with two πρωτοκωμηῆται. P.Cair. Masp. 67045-6, payments of ἀστικά (the city dues of Antaiopolis, cf. Bagnall (1992), pp. 136-7) from Aphrodito to the office of the πάγαρχος.

promised to forward all the 'profits' made on tax collection to the πάγαρχος.²¹

Where the πάγαρχος had his power base was in the military support he could summon to force tax payers to meet his demands. Πάγαρχοι were quite prepared to employ this option if other means failed, but sometimes their βουκελλάριοι proved hard to control. On one recorded occasion it seems that the πάγαρχος of Antaiopolis was acting in the face of a raid by the Blemmyes. Either fearing that the tax wheat would not be loaded in time to escape the raid, or deciding that it was needed as supplies for the troops, he interrupted it in an effort to take it to a stronghold. Unfortunately, his troops seem to have gone out of control, and the upshot was a highly emotional appeal from Dioscorus of Aphrodito to the *dux* detailing the immense damage done to the village (which was apparently sacked), supported by the διακονητής in charge of transporting the wheat. It is possible that the allegations of intent on behalf of the πάγαρχος were true, and that he regarded it as an opportunity for plunder.²² Even more seriously, John of Nikiu reported the heavy-handed tactics of three πάγαρχοι, all brothers, who revolted in the reign of the Emperor Maurice. They had used their powers to sack a town without the authorisation of the Prefect.²³ On a more local basis, the πάγαρχος could flex his military muscle to effect; one was alleged to have reassigned the land of two men to shepherds from the village of Phthla, looted one of their houses and then jailed one of the petitioner's sons, to be held responsible for the debts of his uncle.²⁴ In this case, too, the troops may have exceeded their orders and looted the petitioner's house. There was no doubt about the efficacy of their police powers. This could be

²¹ Higher tax rates, P.Lond. 1674 (c.AD570); on profits, P.Lond. 1660, l. 12, κέρδος.

²² P.Cair. Masp. 67002 (AD567), cf. Rémondon (1971), p. 778.

²³ John of Nikiu, 97 - cf. Hardy (1931), p. 67, n. 3.

²⁴ P.Lond. 1677 (AD566/7) confiscation, imprisonment, and looting using local policemen; P.Cair. Masp. 67026 (c.AD551) for looting under similar circumstances.

used for more moderate matters - in one case a woman petitioned the *dux* to order the *πάγάρχος* to warn a man off some property she was donating to a monastery.²⁵

The power of this position was therefore very great. This was made more so by the status of the people who held it, being derived from the most important men in Egypt. If landowners or their dependents were holding the position as a liturgy for the state, then not all of them had the state's best interests first and foremost. How the position was assigned is unknown, and so is the length of tenure of the office. A *πάγάρχος* called Menas appears at Antaiopolis over a spread of about fourteen years, but it is not known for sure whether he held office there all this time.²⁶ In P.Cair. Masp. 67002 (AD567), however, he is referred to as only the ninth *πάγάρχος* of Antaiopolis which, if the office dated from Anastasius' reign, would mean a tenure of six years or more for each of the *πάγάρχοι*. This tenure was strengthened by the problems in dismissing one from his post. The provincial governor was not entitled to dismiss *πάγάρχοι*, but could only report their misdeeds to higher authority. The combination of length of tenure and security of position was a potent one. The *πάγάρχοι* possessed both civil and military powers and seem to have been given a large degree of independence to achieve their financial objectives; in the area of taxation this was a potential recipe for illegal profits and corruption, and Justinian conceded that the *πάγάρχοι* were one group that made a profit out of tax collection.²⁷

The *πάγάρχοι* could also rely on the complicity of fellows of their class in presenting a solid front against the people whom they were trying to exploit. In one instance it was alleged that, to the benefit of the *πάγάρχος* Menas of Antaiopolis, a private landowner had thrown some villagers from Aphrodito into jail.

²⁵ P.Cair. Masp. 67003 (AD556/7).

²⁶ If the identification is correct, he appears in P.Lond. 1660 (c.AD553), and P.Cair. Masp. 67002 (AD567).

²⁷ Justinian, Edict. 13. In B.G.U. 305 (AD556) one appears concurrently as *στρατηλάτης* (a military post).

In another case the villagers claimed that one Theodosius had embezzled the taxes of the village; he apparently resisted even the efforts of the Emperor to retrieve them, and the *πάγάρχος* proceeded against the villagers rather than Theodosius in an effort to acquire the required taxes.²⁸ The long-running feud between the autopract village of Aphrodito and the *πάγάρχος* of Antaiopolis is evidence of their local power - Aphrodito was under imperial protection, but it seems to have availed them little, and the only effective means that they seem to have employed was to acquire the assistance of men of high rank to see that the Emperor's ruling (on the autopract status of Aphrodito) was enforced.²⁹ The *πάγάρχος* had more than sufficient power and means to ensure the collection of the taxes with what appears to be rather loose supervision, and he and his staff benefited as a result.³⁰

Another official that appeared in the Sixth century as a result of the reforms of Anastasius was the *vindex*. Although this official was theoretically intended to be established in every city, evidence exists for his presence in Alexandria alone in Egypt. It is possible that only Alexandria was considered worthy in Egypt of having this official, the rest being placed under the *πάγάρχοι*, who were perhaps more associated with smaller cities and districts instead of one huge city. Knowledge of their existence elsewhere in the Empire survives, but is at best sketchy; their function seems to have been similar to that of the *πάγάρχοι* in that they were charged with the management of a city's finances. Liebeschuetz draws some distinctions between the two offices, ruling out the possibility that they were different titles for the same official.³¹ Both the *vindex* and the *πάγάρχος* were appointed by the Praetorian Prefect or

²⁸ P.Cair. Masp. 67002 (AD567), 67029 (AD548/9?).

²⁹ P.Cair. Masp. 67032 (AD551); this status dated back to the reign of Leo in the Fifth century, Liebeschuetz (1973), p. 38.

³⁰ P.Cair. Masp. 67057 (AD554-9) over 300 *solidi* in this account are set aside for the staff of the *πάγάρχος*.

³¹ On the *vindex*, cf. John the Lydian, 3.49; Liebeschuetz (1973), pp. 40-5, and Rouillard (1923), pp. 60, 109.

by the Emperor, though the latter official was apparently often resident in or near to the district which he administered.

The prospect in the Sixth century had greatly changed from that of the Fourth. The city council must have been a mere shadow of its former self, watching all the important duties being carried out by bureaucratic officials and estate owners. The Church and great estates also dominated the election of officials for the βουλή, and supplied all of the important magistrates. The cities (and guilds) probably continued to provide liturgists for mundane duties, whether salaried or not, but their councils no longer had a significant role in administration³². Where the cities failed was in a lack of sense of internal unity in the face of adverse conditions. People sought to look after their own interests, whether in deserting the βουλή for a more lucrative or preferred career elsewhere, or in jockeying for position in the council. Such competition and the emergence of small groups of men who effectively ran the councils can only have weakened them as a body. What is noticeable in the Sixth century is that the owners of great estates and the bureaucracy were not in competition with each other, and did not hamper each other's efforts to achieve their duties. This, and stable financial conditions, made their task much simpler. It must be added that they had greater facility to enforce their wishes - the πάγαρχος had troops and a fairly free hand (unlike earlier officials such as the στρατηγός), while estate owners had troops and the threat of jails. Both also possessed the status, power and influence in their areas to command respect - something that councils had signally lacked. Their greater powers and freedom to run their organisations without the central interference experienced by councils allowed them a greater flexibility to plan ahead rather than rushing to meet short-term deadlines every year. It is unlikely that the tax payer fully appreciated the benefits of the change in that organisations and officials with greater power also have greater facility for corruption. It appears that the πάγαρχοι at

³² Two guilds provide a liturgist, P.Goth 9 (AD564), Rémondon (1966a), Gascou (1985), p. 55.

least took advantage of their opportunities, with few checks on their behaviour.³³

³³ P.Lond. 1075 (7th) a *πάγαρχος* threatens a bishop, one of whose *coloni* has accused the former of extortion.

CHAPTER 4:

1: THE VILLAGE IN RELATION TO THE CITY:

Certain aspects of village life remained unchanged over the Fourth to Sixth centuries as they always had. The villager must have enjoyed a fairly monotonous routine of growing crops, praying for a good harvest and paying taxes. Nature gave and the tax collector took in fairly static measure, and the farmer used what was left to prepare for the next year. This must have been the case throughout most of the history of the ancient world, allowing for adjustments in belief. The villages throughout the Fourth to Sixth centuries were subordinate to the city which was the administrative centre in their nome. They had to collect the taxes on land in the village and in its territory (ὄριοδεικτῖα) and present accounts for this activity. Villages were also responsible for paying the taxes on land deserted in their area by their fellows.¹ However, the considerable changes that occurred in the way that the city itself was administered had an effect on that of the villages.

City involvement in villages went considerably further than supervising their tax collections. The troubles experienced by the βουλαί in finding candidates to undertake liturgies in the city led to them occasionally making illegal nominations of villagers. Instances of this occur as early as the Third century, and in each case the villagers appealed against their nominations.² Tax accounts make it quite clear that men from the cities owned land in Karanis in the Arsinoite nome, and this probably went for most other villages as well. From these accounts and the register of Hermopolis it appears, in these cases anyway, that most of the land was owned by peasant proprietors and that the amount owned by the town dwellers

¹ P.Cair. Isid. 11 (AD312), 12 (AD313/4) distinction is made between the village and its ὄριοδεικτῖα - which may have constituted areas outside the village under its administrative control. Taxes, P.Thead. 16 (post AD307).

² P.Lond. Inv. 2565 (c.AD250), P.Oxy. 3064 (3rd) and S.B. 7696 (AD250).

in villages was only a small fraction of the whole.³ At Karanis, the tax payers were separated into two grades; magistrates and citizens (ἄρχοντες καὶ πολῖται) and villagers (κωμηῖται).⁴ Estates of townsfolk and, indeed, villagers, were often fragmented, and just because a citizen of a city held land in one of these areas did not mean that he was in residence. More likely he was absent, living in the city, either having a manager look after his land or leasing it to villagers. In one papyrus a series of rent receipts appears for arable land in the village of Phthla to an inhabitant of nearby Aphrodito, which administered it; the landlords included two πολιτευόμενοι and three bureaucrats.⁵ There seems to have been little interference in the way that villages ran themselves from the urban-based landowners, except in situations when the property or the interests of the latter came under threat. For example, in one case a man tried to use influence in order to prevent one of his tenants having to perform a village liturgy.⁶

In the Fourth century the villages possessed their own officials, and they were responsible in their subdivision of the nome to the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου, a liturgist nominated by the council and approved by the Prefect.⁷ This liturgist is first recorded in AD308, presumably being part of the reform of the administration that occurred at about that time; just as the λογιστής and ἐξάκτωρ supervised the finances and elections of the city, so the πραιπόσιτος did so for the villages. His involvement with taxes extended to the inspection of lands to confirm the

3 P.Cair. Isid. 9 (AD309), P.Flor. 71 (mid-4th), Bowman (1985), Jones (1953), Bagnall (1992).

4 Bagnall (1992), pp. 132-6; P.Cair. Isid. 9 (AD309); 19 (post AD313/4) veterans are included among the πολῖται.

5 P.Cair. Masp. 67327, Keenan (1985a), p. 146, Bagnall (1992), pp. 136-7.

6 Influence, P.Oxy. 1424 (c.AD318); property disputes, P.Oxy. 2730 (4th), P.Cair. Preis. 4 (AD320), Thomas (1959), p. 126, n. 9.

7 P.Oxy. 2110 (AD370).

status of land declared to be dry for tax purposes (ἄβροχος γῆ).⁸ The πραιπόσιτοι were subordinate to the στρατηγός / ἐξάκτωρ, and allocated taxes to villages in their districts. Accounts of the taxes collected by the villages were submitted to him in detail by the village officials responsible for the collection.⁹ Each πραιπόσιτος had various assistants at his disposal, whom they used to collect taxes from villages and deliver them to him, with the customary exchange of receipts and accounts; these assistants had the support of armed guards should they experience difficulty in making the collections.¹⁰ Village collectors existed for the various taxes required by the central government in the early Fourth century, and it may be that they collected the taxes, and the assistants (βοηθοί) were only used as collectors of taxes in bullion, exceptional taxes and arrears, or that they gradually came to replace the collectors and receivers.¹¹ Notification of exceptional tax demands were made to the πραιπόσιτος by the ἐξάκτωρ, who passed on the orders of government officials.¹² The πραιπόσιτος had complete responsibility for taxes in his pagus; this is shown in one papyrus in which the *praeses* responded to an appeal over the violence of some collectors by replying that the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου was well aware as to who owed what for the imperial revenues.¹³ Such responsibility could lead to corruption. This could take shape in a variety of forms, such as colluding with

8 P.Thead. 20 (4th).

9 P.Cair. Isid. 9 (AD309), 11 (AD312) by σιτολόγοι. But cf. P.Oxy. 895 (AD305) to the λογιστής on the Prefect's orders.

10 cf. The Archive of Papnuthis and Dorotheus (Oxyrhynchus papyri, Vol. 48, P.Oxy. 3384 intro.). They apparently collected taxes by geographical area rather than by type, unlike the village collectors. Soldiers (and a prison), P.Oxy. 3409 (4th).

11 Bullion, eg: P.Oxy. 3415 (c.AD376?).

12 P.Oxy. 2113-4 (AD316) demands from a *praeses* and a procurator.

13 P.Ryl. 659 (AD322).

κώμαρχοι to extort money from other members of the village or perhaps defrauding collectors.¹⁴

His financial responsibilities, while his most important duty, were far from the only one the *πραιπόσιτος* had to perform. He was also in charge of the organisation of administration in villages. Virtually all of the village liturgical nominations were made by either the *κώμαρχοι* or by the outgoing functionaries. Although the former method survives more often in the papyri, the astonishing situation arises of both methods of election occurring in the same year in the same pagus for collectors of taxes.¹⁵ The nominators were responsible for their nominees, though the *πραιπόσιτος* might require extra men to stand surety for a man to guarantee performance of the liturgy.¹⁶ The nominations went to the *πραιπόσιτος* for his approval, and he dealt with complaints of malicious nomination. This further presented him with the opportunity to exempt men from service if so requested by their landlords.¹⁷

The power of the *πραιπόσιτος* in these areas was enhanced by the backing of a minor judicial authority, and some police capabilities. In the former capacity, a number of petitions were sent to him over matters concerning violence, theft and breaches of contract. At least a few of these petitions seem to have been submitted with the clear expectation that the *πραιπόσιτος* was capable of resolving them. Perhaps the *πραιπόσιτος* had a limited mandate to deal with minor village disputes, but in other cases the power to deal with such matters was delegated to him by a senior bureaucratic official. Not all petitions were initially sent to the *πραιπόσιτος*, though

14 P.Cairo. J.d'E. 57060 (early 4th), Boak (1940), P.Cair. Isid. 71-3 (AD314). P.Oxy. 3393 (AD365) a *πολιτευόμενος* defrauds his *βοηθεί* - he may have been a *πραιπόσιτος*; if not, *πραιπόσιτοι* could do likewise.

15 P.Oxy. 2232 (AD316) by village officials; P.Oxy. 2124 (AD316) by ex-collectors, both to the *πραιπόσιτος* of the 8th pagus.

16 P.Herm. Rees 21 (AD346) seven men stand surety for two liturgists.

17 P.Oxy. 1424 (c.AD318) request for release. P.Cair. Isid. 68 (AD309/10?) wrongful nomination.

they may have been delegated to him or the decisions implemented through him.¹⁸ The *πραϊπόσιτος* could issue orders for the arrest of men, and his physical presence might be sufficient to put an end to illegal methods of tax collection.¹⁹ He could also assist villagers in reclaiming fugitive members by corresponding with the *πραϊπόσιτοι* to whose *pagi* they had fled, and requesting their co-operation in the matter with village envoys.²⁰

By the Sixth century the changes in city administration had considerable bearing on village life. The emergence of great estates owned privately, and by the Emperor and the Church, meant that some villages situated on their property now dealt with them rather than the civic authorities. Villages had had patrons as early as the Fourth century, but those now entirely on estates dealt in equal measure with their administrators.²¹ Taxes were paid to estate collectors, and remissions of taxation were obtained from the stewards (*προνοηταί*). For replacement irrigation or other machinery, it was possible to go direct to the estate owner; this could also be the case in coming to financial contracts between the village and the estate.²² The position of such villages seems to be that they could rely on a greater degree of financial support and resources of equipment in which the estate could afford to invest. In return, they were heavily reliant on the owner of the estate, who issued contracts with them that often required them to put up their property as surety against default. The owner's increased resources against

18 Petitions, eg: P.Thead. 21 (AD318), 22 (AD342), P.Amh. 141 (AD350); delegation by the *praeses*, P.Cair. Isid. 76 (AD318); implementation of orders, P.Thead. 20 (4th), P.Ryl. 653 (AD320), P.Oxy. 3759 (AD325).

19 Orders for arrest, P.Cair. Isid. 131 (AD314?), P.Oxy. 1506 (early 4th). P.Abinn. 35 (AD340s) forceful exactions.

20 P.Cairo J.d'E. 57102 (AD308/9?), Boak and Youtie (1957).

21 Village patron, P.Ross.-Georg. iii. 8 (4th).

22 P.Oxy. 3804 (AD566) annual account of a *προνοητής*; contracts for machinery, P.Lond. 774 (AD582), P.Oxy. 1987 (AD587); loan, P.Oxy. 133 (6th).

those of villages and cities of the Fourth century were considerable; there was the threat of prison for defaulting *coloni*, βουκελλάριοι to maintain order, and an enhanced ability to discover where fugitives had gone.²³

The bureaucracy had greatly encroached upon the administration of the cities' taxes. The πραιπόσιτοι had disappeared by the Sixth century, and they had been replaced by the πάγαρχος in each city. It is possible that the Archive of Papputhis and Dorotheus may show a greater involvement in the collection of village taxes by city-based officials than had been the case in the early Fourth century, and thus the start of a transition from local collection to a more centralised base. Not enough is really known about villages in the Sixth century to know how a village's taxes were allocated; presumably it was still done by the village officials, now grouped under the heading of πρωτοκωμηται. The tax collectors in the bureau of the πάγαρχος would probably have received the tax in each village for which they were responsible and delivered it where it was required (to the Nile ports or to the city, often enough probably the same), handing receipts to the villagers and accounts to the πάγαρχος.

It is not entirely clear how nominations functioned in villages in the Sixth century. With the task of tax collection being performed by the office of the πάγαρχος, the number required may have fallen (eg: σιτολόγοι). If the πρωτοκωμηται formed a group in charge of the village, then it is likely that they made the nominations. Many of the tasks, such as those of the Fourth century κώμαρχοι, may have been undertaken collectively, so that the only tasks to assign would have been minor and mundane ones such as those of the φύλακες. At Aphrodito, where the autopract village seems to have had as much in common with cities as with villages, a nomination by the village κοινόν to the position of ῥιπάριος went to the *praeses*.²⁴ However, this was essentially a city position, and

23 Prison, P.Oxy. 2056 (7th); βουκελλάριοι, P.Oxy. 1903 (AD561); fugitives, P.Oxy. 2055 (6th).

24 P.Cair. Masp. 67281 (6th).

Aphrodito's unusual size and status may have granted it liturgies that no other village possessed. As always, the size of a village will have determined the number and type of officials required, and therefore making a rule to apply for them all is extremely difficult.

The major change from the Fourth to the Sixth century for villages in relation to the next administrative rank was essentially that the βουλή, with whose representatives they had dealt in the Fourth century, was missed out in the Sixth. Either dealing with estates or with the officials of the πάγρχος meant that they gained direct access to the next layer of the administration. There were pluses and minuses attached to this new arrangement. On the one hand, the administrative machine should have run more smoothly, in that the villages may have had to provide fewer liturgists and a level of administrators were missed out, but on the other hand it must have been a lot more difficult to refuse the demands of more senior officials. The greater relative power of the new administrators meant that they were less answerable to higher authorities, and it would have been much harder to gain restitution from them because of their seniority. The πάγρχος, for example, could not be removed from office by the provincial governor, the latter only being capable of reporting his misdeeds. Since they were both drawn from the same social group, this might have been even harder to achieve. That being said, the *dux* of the Thebaid received rescripts from the Emperor instructing ^{him} to look into matters concerning the activities of the πάγρχοι of his province, and also was the object of a number of petitions from villagers in Aphrodito on the same subject.²⁵ The problems experienced by as large a village as Aphrodito in asserting its rights suggests that humbler ones suffered even more.

The main complaint seems to be on the rate of taxes exacted. This is true of both estates and villages responsible fully or

²⁵ eg: P.Cair. Masp. 67024 (c.AD551); petitions, eg: P.Lond. 1674 (c.AD570).

only in part to the *πάγαρχος*. On estates there are signs of surcharges being demanded on taxes from villagers, and in another case it is alleged that the demands of a *προνοητής* forced a man to flee.²⁶ On one occasion a man had gone to court on the grounds that excessive payments were being demanded of him, and claimed that his opponents had used their influence to win the case.²⁷ The *πάγαρχοι* had the same ability to use their positions to collect the taxes at a profit. In one case a *πάγαρχος* more or less tripled the rates to be demanded. A petition from Aphrodito shows the problems the villagers had with this; on one occasion they actually agreed to an increase, presumably because paying it was less trouble than a court case, but subsequently they took the matter before the *dux*. He had previously ruled on the matter in favour of the villagers, so it is testimony to the power and relative independence of the position of the *πάγαρχος* that he should repeat the act.²⁸

The villages therefore experienced a considerable variety of more senior administration. The aspect of continuity in villages was that they performed the same tasks for the same master, even if they did so through the medium of different servants. The emphasis on the production of wealth, in kind or money, for tax purposes explains in a large degree why the administrative construction of the village changed as well. Greater efficiency was the objective, to avoid situations such as that in which one man claimed that he had been saddled with paying for all the unproductive land in the village.²⁹ The village had been supervised in the Fourth century by the *πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου*, and although there is evidence for their corruption, they were in turn under the supervision of the *ἐξάκτωρ* in the city.³⁰ Restitution of extorted goods must have

26 P.Oxy. 1915 (c.AD560), P.Oxy. 2479 (6th).

27 P.Cair. Masp. 67279 (c.AD570).

28 P.Lond. 1674 (c.AD570).

29 P.Cair. Isid. 68 (AD309/10?).

30 Peculation, P.Cair. Isid. 71-3 (AD314).

been easier to achieve than under the πάγαρχοι, and the wording of contracts on estates ensured that the owners were most unlikely to come out as losers in any deal. The price that the village had had to pay for the effective inability of the βουλή to fulfil all its duties was to come under the more central supervision inflicted upon the cities. The village still answered to administrative authority in the city, but no longer to the βουλή. That had been replaced by the owners of great estates, who performed many of the magistracies, and the office of the πάγαρχος.

2: VILLAGE LITURGISTS IN THE FOURTH CENTURY:

The Egyptian villages in the Fourth century, like the cities, possessed their own political infrastructure, and annually elected a variety of liturgists to administer the village's affairs and to collect the imperial taxes. These liturgists are not to be confused with the βουλευταί, despite the fact that some of them shared the same titles. The size of villages varied considerably, and this determined the number of liturgists and collectors required. It seems that certain villages incorporated smaller ones for financial management purposes.¹ The election process operated in one of two ways; either the κώμαρχον, the headmen of the village, nominated the liturgists (on occasion other officials did, too), or the retiring liturgists nominated their successors. The former method is the one for which more evidence survives, and it was the one that had to be used should a liturgist suddenly be needed for an exceptional duty.² Villages made the nominations to the στρατηγός in the Third century, and to the πραιπόσιτος when he assumed these duties.

The κώμαρχοι were the annually-elected headmen of the village, nominated by their predecessors and appointed by the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου.³ Literacy was not a requirement for the position, and many of the papyri from κώμαρχοι were written for them by the village scribes.⁴ They were essentially in charge of the running of the village, particularly being concerned with the more important duties of nominations and tax collection. The minor duties included those requested by senior officials - for example, orders for arrest often went to the κώμαρχοι as well as police officials in villages - and they were involved in efforts

¹ P.Cair. Isid. 22 (AD303/4); 12 (AD313/4) smaller villages managed through Karanis.

² eg: P.Oxy. 3788 (AD309) order for a camel driver (καμηλάτης).

³ eg: P.Cair. Isid. 125 (AD308), P.Amh. 139 (AD350); to the στρατηγός, P.Oxy. 2714 (AD256), 3178 (AD248).

⁴ Illiteracy; Youtie (1975), (1975a) argues that it extended only to Greek in many cases.

to regain fugitive colleagues.⁵ They were among the body of officials that checked to see if local declarations of marginal land were true or not, and they also were in charge of village accounts (using the γραμματεὺς κώμης where necessary); in one case when some problems had arisen in connection with the latter, the κώμαρχοι of the village of Tampeti had to submit their accounts for two specific months to the λογιστῆς for inspection. At any rate, the accounts must have been regularly passed on to the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου.⁶ Κώμαρχοι also seem to have acted on their own initiative at times - in one case those of the village of Tampemu had tried to cast out a foreign resident, against which action he promptly appealed.⁷

The κώμαρχοι were responsible for the taxes of the village, although they themselves did not collect them. The tax grain seems to have been channelled through the σιτολόγοι, who were in charge of the village granaries, but the *annona militaris* was delivered by the κώμαρχοι. They are found handing over requisitioned materials, be it for the *annona militaris* or for other purposes.⁸ They had to provide men when they were required for labour somewhere in the pagus or in the nome.⁹ The βοηθοί of the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου naturally dealt with them when trying to exact the taxes from the villages, and if they were either incapable or reluctant to deliver the required goods, armed force or incarceration could be employed.¹⁰ In one papyrus, it is proposed to release imprisoned κώμαρχοι and put their wives in jail, theoretically providing them with an

⁵ Arrests: P.Oxy. 64, 65, 3190 (all 3rd/4th), P.Cair. Isid. 129, 130 (AD308/9?), cf. Browne (1970). P.Mich. 590 (3rd/4th) order to an ἀρχέφοδος. Regaining fugitives, P.Cair. Isid. 128 (AD314).

⁶ P.Oxy. 895 (AD305).

⁷ P.Oxy. 3584 (5th).

⁸ P.Michael. 21 (AD285), P.Oxy. 3194 (AD323) for *vestis militaris*, P.Cair. Isid. 56 (AD315) wood for the military *cellarium*, P.Cair. Isid. 58 (AD315) barley for race horses.

⁹ P.Oxy. 3727 (AD303), P.Thead. 34 (AD324?), 35 (AD325).

¹⁰ P.Oxy. 3397, 3423 (4th).

incentive to pay quickly what they owed.¹¹ Their position in the village, allocating the tax quotas and handling the accounts in connection with the secretary, would have given them opportunities for corruption. In a papyrus of AD292, κώμαρχοι undertook to the στρατηγός not to remove wheat from the threshing floor before the government's share had been taken.¹² Collusion with the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου could prove profitable for those involved. In one case in a list of tax quotas the writer inserted an editorial, the gist of which was that the κώμαρχοι and the πραιπόσιτος were acting together, and that the former were assigning the tax quotas as they pleased without consideration of income or consultation of the γραμματεὺς κώμης; elsewhere, officials in the same village lodged a formal complaint with the Prefect and listed the illegal confiscations by the κώμαρχος and πραιπόσιτος.¹³ So the κωμαρχία presented opportunities for illegal gain, but also lay under the shadow of serious castigation should tax payments not be fully met.

The κωμαρχία was an annually elected position, and there is evidence that some families occupied it frequently. It may be that village politics and numbers dictated who was appointed to the post, and how often. However, in P.Col. Inv. 31 (AD287), the incumbent κώμαρχος makes an arrangement with his putative successor that he will only do so if the latter agrees to nominate the former's brother after the latter's term is over.¹⁴ In another papyrus two κώμαρχοι nominate their successors to the πραιπόσιτος, these apparently being brothers of theirs.¹⁵ The desire to keep such a position within family control presumably meant that it was of benefit to have a representative at the head of the village looking after the

¹¹ P.Oxy. 3409 (4th).

¹² P.Oxy. 1255 (AD292).

¹³ P.Cairo, J.d'E. 57060 (early 4th), Boak (1940), pp. 45-49, P.Cair. Isid. 71-3 (AD314).

¹⁴ Delia and Haley (1983).

¹⁵ P.Sakaon. 49 (AD326).

family interests, despite the considerable responsibilities it entailed. Being in control of most nominations also meant that the κώμαρχοι could avoid passing onerous duties onto their families (or themselves), while enemies could be given the most distasteful ones. For example, in P.Cair. Isid. 138 an old man complains that although his sons are already undertaking liturgies, the κώμαρχοι have nominated him for one as well; in P.Oxy. 2155 it is alleged that a κώμαρχος has illegally replaced a man in the guards with another.¹⁶ The breadth of the duties of the κώμαρχοι gave them opportunities to take advantage of their position, but also made them the focus for complaint from those senior and junior to them - as a result they might find themselves having to explain their actions to senior officials.¹⁷

The τεσσαράριος (*tessararius*), whose existence is confirmed by the papyri until AD341, seems to have been inferior in rank to the κώμαρχοι, despite appearing ahead of them in precedence in some papyri. He performed several duties that pertained to the κωμαρχία, sometimes independently but more often in conjunction with them. He occasionally nominated tax-collectors and other minor officials of the village, sometimes not in conjunction with the κώμαρχοι, and assisted in a party that set out to try to recapture fugitives from another village.¹⁸ The official from that village who dealt with the party was the τεσσαράριος. Besides such activities, this official also appears turning over taxes collected in the village to receivers, and in one instance they (a rare instance in which more than one is found) are discovered in possession of uncoined gold and silver, the bullion taxes for Karanis and its ὀριοδεκτία.¹⁹ Although his title was that of a military official of the Early Empire (cf.

¹⁶ P.Cair. Isid. 138, P.Oxy. 2155 (4th).

¹⁷ P.Oxy. 3064 (3rd), 1456 (AD284-6), P.Ryl. 658 (early 4th), P.Oxy. 3397, 3423 (4th).

¹⁸ Nominations, P.Oxy. 2232 (AD316), 3621 (AD329); nominates donkey driver on his own, P.Oxy. 1425 (AD318). P.Cairo, J.d'E. 57102 (AD308/9?), Boak (1951), pp. 324-5.

¹⁹ P.Thead. 32 (AD307); P.Col. 139 (AD308) for the bullion; P.Thead. 33 (AD312) a τεσσαράριος dealing with the *aurum tironicum*.

P.Oxy. 43 (AD295)), there is insufficient evidence to chart the exact duties of this village official, though the title implies connection with the collection and supervision of the military *annona*. The κουαδράριος (quadrarius) appears over about the same period as the τεσσαράριος, but there is even less information concerning his activities. Where he does appear, he is named after the κώμαρχοι, τεσσαράριος and ἔφορος, suggesting a lower rank, and is observed performing similar duties. In over half of the small number of papyri in which he appears, he is involved with taxes, more on the side of accountancy than on that of collection.²⁰ In another papyrus, he is one of two officials employed by the πραιπόσιτος in order to attempt to effect an arrest.²¹

Most villages would have had a secretary (γραμματεὺς κώμης) who must not only have been literate, but who also kept the village records. The γραμματεὺς assisted the κώμαρχοι in assigning the tax quotas, and his role is referred to in a complaint over the activity of the latter, where tax quotas were being allocated without consulting him and his records.²² His participation in the matter of taxation is further brought to light by an incident in which the petitioner claimed that the γραμματεὺς from a neighbouring village was trying to tax land owned by minors beholden to another village. In another papyrus a complaint is made that the γραμματεὺς κώμης (with some associates) had unfairly nominated a man as σιτολόγος in order to make him responsible for all the village's unproductive land.²³ From this it would seem that the κώμαρχοι and the γραμματεὺς allocated the ἐπινέμησις (parcels of land for cultivation - cf. P.Cair. Isid. 11 (AD312) and 12 (AD313/4) - the latter is another distribution, with considerable variance in the size of the allocations, though

²⁰ B.G.U. 21, P.Cair. Goodspeed 12 (both AD340), Boak and Youtie (1957), and P.Cair. Isid. 71-73 (AD314), P.Col. 141 (AD308-10). Boak (1947), p. 31, has proved that the κουαδράριος and τεσσαράριος were not identical.

²¹ P.Cair. Isid. 131 (AD314?); the other was the τεσσαράριος.

²² P.Cairo, J.d'E. 57060 (early 4th), Boak (1940).

²³ P.Oxy. 2235 (c.AD346); P.Cair. Isid. 68 (AD309/10?) - cf. P.Sakaon. 38 (AD312).

it is unknown how such calculations were reached). It would seem therefore that the γραμματεὺς had a more active role in village administrative life than being a mere accountant, though keeping the village property records must have been his main function. Another official who comes into this category is the γνωστήρ. His role does not seem to have been as important as that of the γραμματεὺς κώμης, but he is not infrequently found writing on behalf of illiterate liturgists.²⁴ He does play a part in tax collection, not only participating in it on several occasions, but in another papyrus he is found to be nominating suitable farmers to the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου for service as tax collectors.²⁵

Besides having a large number of collectors in each village, there were also police officials and guards. The ἀρχέφοδος had featured in the Early Empire, and survived in some villages into the Fourth century. He had been chief of the village police, and as such orders for arrest were often addressed to him.²⁶ They were meant to keep order in the village, and presumably had control over the various village guards. The εἰρήναρχοι appeared for police work at village level in the Fourth century. Their tasks were very similar to those of the ἀρχέφοδοι, and since the two do not appear together as village officials except in one badly damaged papyrus, it may well be that one succeeded the other, perhaps undergoing a similar period of transition in title as experienced by the στρατηγὸς ἦτοι ἐξάκτωρ.²⁷ The εἰρηναρχος could also make arrests, and one in a Hermopolite village is actually observed to make nominations for workers on dykes to the nome ῥιπάριοι - an apparently exceptional state of affairs, since the κώμαρχοι usually nominated liturgists to the

²⁴ P.Lond. 1248 (AD345), P.Amh. 139 (AD350).

²⁵ Tax collection, P.Amh. 140 (AD349), cf. Lallemand (1964), p. 135, n. 4. Nominations, P.Lond. 1249 (AD346).

²⁶ P.Fay. 161 (3rd), P.Mich. 590 (3rd/4th), P.Oxy. 1193 (4th), cf. Worp (1990), pp. 207-210.

²⁷ P.Cair. Isid. 141. Perhaps different villages used different titles?

πραϊπόσιτος.²⁸ One was held responsible and imprisoned when an army agent could not procure a recruit in his village, and another received a petition over a theft in his area; such activities hint at wider responsibilities than merely keeping the peace.²⁹ In a number of incidents in the Fayum, the son of an εἰρήναρχος perpetrated a number of crimes; in one case the victim petitioned a military πραϊπόσιτος instead of the εἰρήναρχος, presumably because under the circumstances he felt that the latter would not give a fair decision.³⁰ The men over whom they had command were the φύλακες, the guardsmen. The number of guards would have entirely depended on the size of the village and its ὄριοδευκτία. The most common sorts were field guards and water guards (πεδιοφύλακες, ἀγροφύλακες and ὑδροφύλακες), who guarded the land and the water supply. Nominations for the latter were submitted to the dyke inspectors (χωματεπείκται) by the κώμαρχοι.³¹ The men were poorly equipped, probably serving only to raise the alarm if aggressors were spotted; otherwise they might end up as the victims of assault. They were not always above suspicion themselves; in a case of a missing water-wheel, the local police were accused of wilful negligence.³²

In addition to providing their own officials, villages had to provide labourers of various sorts for work in the province. Ἐργάται, who seem to have been put to work on canals, were nominated by the village κώμαρχοι, as, I assume, were the ναῦται for the public boats.³³ Villages had to undertake to repair dykes each year as part of the dyke corvée. The χωματεπείκται

²⁸ Arrests, P.Oxy. 1505-6 (4th); nominations, P.Lond. 1648 (AD373).

²⁹ P.Abinn. 35 (AD340s), P.Cair. Isid. 141.

³⁰ P.Abinn. 48, 51, 52 (all AD346).

³¹ P.Lond. 1246-8 (AD345). On ἀγροφύλακες, Bonneau (1988); φύλακες, Lewis (1982), pp. 51-2, P.Oxy. 3184 (AD296/7), P.Lond. 1648 (AD373).

³² Assault, P.Mert. 89 (AD300); alleged complicity with thieves, P.Oxy. 2730 (4th).

³³ Ἐργάται, P.Oxy. 3727 (AD303), P.Thead. 34 (AD324?), P.Oxy. 1426 (AD332); cf. P.Oxy. 3814 (3rd/4th). Ναῦται, cf. P.Thead. 16 (post AD307).

distributed the amount of work required between villages in the area after a surveyor had established how much was needed. Between them, the villagers performed the work and were credited with what they had achieved against their set total by another official - in the Third century this was a deputy of the στρατηγός. The superintendents submitted accounts for the work done, probably to the στρατηγός in the Third century. In one case at least a village claimed that a subordinate of the στρατηγός had not credited them with all the work that they had done, a considerable portion of the work done having been ascribed by him (for whatever motive) to another village; they appealed to the Prefect over the matter.³⁴ Besides these duties, the superintendents received the names of the water guards from the κώμαρχοι and assisted the πραιπόσιτος (among others) inspecting allegedly dry land and in problems to do with irrigation.³⁵ Villages on canal systems seem sometimes to have availed themselves of more water than they were allowed, to the distress of villages further down the systems - the best known example was at Theadelphia in the Fayum. In such matters, the village probably united as a whole unless abuse of irrigation facilities inconvenienced various of its own members, as in one case in which a plantation had illegally been built over a canal, blocking it.³⁶

Other officials are mentioned in connection with villages; the ἔφορος, μείζων and the κεφαλαιωτής (*capitularius*) are only three of what was probably a wider range, but there is very little evidence for them in the Fourth century. From what can be observed of their activities in the papyri, they also seem to have actively participated in the running of village life; in the case of the ἔφορος, he seems to operate alongside the κώμαρχοι on

³⁴ P.Oxy. 1469 (AD298); In P.Mich. 596 (AD328/343) a ναῦτος χωμάτων (misspelt for ναύτης?) appears. Report, P.Oxy. 3475 (AD220), cf. P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 76-9, 222-8 (AD300).

³⁵ Nomination of ὑδροφύλακες, P.Lond. 1246-8 (AD345); inspections, P.Thead. 20 (4th).

³⁶ Theft of water, P.Thead. 16 (post AD307), P.Ryl. 653 (AD321): blocked canal, P.Thead. 24 (AD334).

every occasion on which he appears.³⁷ The exact administrative set-up of each village will have depended on its size, some of the smallest ones being financially managed by their larger neighbours and thus needing to provide fewer liturgists. There is confusion as to the seniority of officials, and the apparent similarity of many of their functions, as well as the inconclusive order of seniority in which they appear in the papyri. This may have been caused by the most powerful men not always holding positions appropriate to their social level, and thus the order of precedence in which different ranks of officials appear in papyri might have been determined by this; for example, Aurelius Isidorus of Karanis performed a number of liturgies of varying rank, with no apparent regard to sequence determined by seniority.³⁸ The κώμαρχοι emerge as the most important and best known officials; they usually communicated with senior officials, and were the ones who nominated almost all of the other liturgists, and they were financially responsible for the village and its ὀριοδεικτία, imitating in part the role of the λογιστής in the city.

Any objective analysis of the basic functions of village officials ignores the element of local politics, which may have determined much of the decision-making process in the villages. The problems encountered in trying to examine the structure of command suggest that far from being rigidly defined, it was subject to the vicissitudes of local politics, and relative power in the context of the village remained with the same people whatever their posts (if any), rather than being bestowed with them. This is not to say that the posts were in themselves irrelevant. They were not, and must have greatly facilitated the exercise of power and influence. Examples of

³⁷ *Ἐφορος, P.Cair. Preis. 18, P.Vindob. Sijp. 2, B.G.U. 21, P.Cair. Goodspeed 12 (all AD340), Bagnall and Worp (1981), p. 40f: μεζζων, P.Cornell 20 (AD302/3), P.Oxy. 1626 (AD325), P.Col. Inv. 181, 182 (c.AD334), Kraemer and Lewis (1937); P.Oxy. 3774 (AD341) named ahead of the τεσσαρῆριος and κώμαρχοι in a declaration to the λογιστής; κεφαλαιωτής, P.Thead. 22-23 (AD342).

³⁸ Whatever the criterion for the order of officials named in papyri - be it the local prominence of the person or the title, or the subject - the order varies considerably; cf. Lallemand (1964), p. 136, and the Archive of Aurelius Isidorus, intro., pp. 11-17.

men using their positions for allegedly corrupt purposes may be seen in the collusion of the κώμαρχοι and πραιπόσιτος for extortion, and the abuse of the position of γραμματεὺς κώμης.³⁹ The latter is a particularly good example of effective power; the γραμματεὺς abuses his position to have the petitioner elected to a costly liturgy, and then puts him into another in place of one of his associates; he is furthermore trying to save thirteen eligible candidates from election. Acotas was accused by Isidorus of pursuing their feud in the area of tax collection, probably as a collector; previously he had allegedly set fire to Isidorus' crops on the threshing floor.⁴⁰ This element of internal politics no doubt continued into the Sixth century, though the facility to use village offices for this purpose may have been reduced. It appears that villages came to be run by πρωτοκωμηῖται, and that administrative duties were carried out as a body. This would have been a logical progression and would have made sense of the rather confused nature of rank within the Fourth century village structure, where many of the liturgists appear to perform similar tasks. The result seems to be that the relative administrative efficiency of the village was little affected by internal politics, but personal fortunes may have benefited or suffered accordingly.

³⁹ P.Cair. Isid. 71-73 (AD314); P.Cair. Isid. 68 (AD309/10?).

⁴⁰ P.Cair. Isid. 69, 127 (both AD310), 65 (AD298/9), 66 (AD299).

3: VILLAGE LITURGISTS IN THE SIXTH CENTURY:

By the Sixth century, the structure of the village administrative body had changed considerably from that of the Fourth century. Many of the liturgists had disappeared - such as the τεσσαράριος, κουαδράριος and ἔφορος - and the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου had been replaced by the much more powerful πάγαρχος. The size of the village still determined the number of liturgists, if not the type. In addition to this, at least one autopract village is known, Aphrodito in the Antaiopolite nome. It is the village about which the most evidence is recorded, of which the organisation differs in several areas from those under the command of πάγαρχοι or on great estates.

Taking the more regular form of village first, the most notable feature is that they are run by a group of officials called the πρωτοκωμηῖται. In these villages, the word merely seems to designate a member of the governing body, and each πρωτοκωμητῆς retained his identity as an individual official. They were considered by the provincial authorities as representative of the village, and were dealt with accordingly. The κοινόν of πρωτοκωμηῖται assumed the role of the Fourth century κώμαρχοι, and although κώμαρχοι could still be part of the κοινόν, they were no longer the most senior representatives of the village. As a group, they appear to have had the power to assign public land to members of the village as a liturgy, and were probably generally liable for the village's taxes. Such power could lead to abuses, whether intentional or not; in one case a widow of the village of Sabbis in the Theodosiopolite nome appealed to the *dux* for relief when she had been illegally allocated land to cultivate.¹ Analogies can be made between the πρωτοκωμηῖται and the Fourth century κώμαρχοι; an order for arrest was directed to them and the εἰρήναρχοι instead of the κώμαρχοι, and they also ran the risk of incarceration when they fell below the requirements of a senior official. On another occasion the βοηθός of the πρωτοκωμηῖται received orders to entertain an official who was

1 P.Cair. Masp. 67006.

passing through, and to supply fodder for his animals.² Some village officials did not qualify as πρωτοκωμῆται, and it seems that the order of seniority may have changed, although differences in apparent rank might still be ascribed to social standing within the village.

In some villages the μείζων had emerged as the most senior official, behind him the κώμαρχοι and the village secretary.³ In matters where neighbouring villages had come to blows on great estates, the μείζων seems to have been the object of communications, whether from the victimised village or from an estate official; he issued them himself to senior officials and to his opposite number. In one case the μείζων of the village responsible for the raid is to be sent to the landlord's agent.⁴ The μείζων wrote on behalf of the whole village, in conciliatory or aggressive terms as befitted the situation; in P.Princ. 120 (6th Cent. - not necessarily on an estate) the μείζων wrote to another village telling them to restrain the attacks made on the writer's village by certain of their residents. If this did not happen the μείζων seems to make no reference to taking the matter to higher authority, but presumably intends taking independent action to resolve the problem. In an acknowledgement of a loan made to the village by the Apions, owners of a great estate, only the μείζων among the πρωτοκωμῆται is mentioned by his title.⁵ The κώμαρχοι, having been displaced from the leadership of the village liturgists, appear very little in the Sixth century papyri, and where they do it is often in a

2 P.Mich. 591 (6th), P.Oxy. 1835 (5th/6th); cf. P.Oxy. 64, 65 (3rd/4th), P.Oxy. 3409 (4th). Visiting official, P.Princ. 105 (6th). Πρωτοκωμῆται, cf. Gascou (1976b), pp. 204-5.

3 P.Oxy. 1835 (5th/6th) here the order is; μείζων, κωμογραμματεὺς, μείζων (two total), ἀρχιφύλαξ, then three κώμαρχοι. The κωμογραμματεὺς is probably the γραμματεὺς κώμης, since this would otherwise be his only mention after the Third century; secretary, P.Oxy. 133 (AD550).

4 Here the evidence pertains to great estates. From the other village, P.Oxy. 1831 (late 5th). Estate official, P.Oxy. 1867 (6th/7th). To officials, P.Oxy. 1866 (6th/7th). To another μείζων, P.Oxy. 1831. Sending the μείζων to the landlord's agent, P.Oxy. 1853 (6th/7th).

5 P.Oxy. 133 (AD550).

supporting role to the *μείζων*.⁶ The *γραμματεὺς κώμης*, numbered among the *πρωτοκωμῆται*, is still very much involved in taxation; he is observed issuing receipts for payment of the *ἐμβολή*, the corn tax for Constantinople, as well as various other accounts.⁷

At Aphrodito, a large village (it had been a *polis* in the Fourth century) with the privilege of *αὐτοπράγια*, the organisation was rather different; this may have been because of Aphrodito's size or because of its financial independence from the *πάγαρχοι*. There were three clear groups in Aphrodito, the *πρωτοκωμῆται*, *συντελεσταί* and the *κῆτορες*, who formed a *κοινόν* to deal with certain administrative requirements. These were to ensure that the village discharged its obligations, and to protect its wider interests thorough negotiation with other groups (such as the shepherds) or officials (the *πάγαρχος*) or by petition.⁸ *Συντελεσταί* seem to have been a flexible group of land-owners responsible for the collection and payment of their taxes, rather akin to the system of tax payment by *οἴκοι* in the Sixth century, while *κῆτορες* were landowners. Keenan is uncertain as to exactly what the terms signify - whether they designated rank or different socio-economic aspects and responsibilities of the senior inhabitants of the village. Dioscorus of Aphrodito and his father Apollos seem to have progressed through these categories in the order of *πρωτοκωμητής*, *συντελεστής* and *κῆτωρ*, but this progression is disjointed and, given the uncertainty surrounding the designations, it may be unwise to draw too many conclusions from it.⁹

6 P.Oxy. 1835 (5th/6th), 133 (AD550). Acting alone, P.Mich. Inv. 3716 (6th/7th), Sijpesteijn (1985a), pp. 75-84.

7 P.Oxy. 1997, 1998 (6th), 2021 (6th/7th), P.Lond. 1063 (6th/7th), P.Cair. Masp. 67058; P.Oxy. 1996 (5th/6th) a secretary, not necessarily that of a village. He could sign for illiterate officials.

8 P.Cair. Masp. 67001 (AD514) agreement with shepherds; P.Cair. Masp. 67283 (pre-AD548) petition to the Empress Theodora.

9 Apollos: P.Flor. 280 (AD514) *πρωτοκωμητής*, P.Flor. 283 (AD536), P.Ross.-Georg. iii. 36 (AD537) *συντελεστής*; Dioscorus, P.Cair. Masp. 67130, *κῆτωρ*. cf. Keenan (1980), (1984), (1984a), pp. 55-6, Gascou (1985), pp. 49-52.

Of these three categories, the πρωτοκωμητεία here designated the village officials, but there is no mention of a μείζων or of κώμαρχοι; the πρωτοκωμητεία was apparently a position, not just a member of the ruling body. The πρωτοκωμηται were responsible for the payment of taxes in the village, for imperial taxes to the *praeses* and for the village dues and those of the city (at Aphrodito these went to Antaiopolis) to the πάγαρχος. If the πάγαρχος felt that the πρωτοκωμηται were being inefficient over their tax payments, then he might take it upon himself to interfere in the process. He could apparently go as far as appointing a man as πρωτοκωμητής, which entailed direct responsibility for unpaid taxes, and confiscating his property when payment was not forthcoming.¹⁰ Πρωτοκωμηται were also held to blame for not exerting firm control over the collectors operating from the village; in one case the failure to prevent one Eudoxios from making exactions had reportedly caused great displeasure in high places, feelings that would no doubt soon express themselves more forcibly if remedial action was not promptly taken.¹¹

They furthermore kept a tight rein on the village finances, since two πρωτοκωμηται countersigned all payments from them.¹² The village treasury was managed by an official called the υποδέκτης. He transferred the taxes collected in the village to the provincial treasury, run by a χρυσώνης, and also made payments as ordered by the πρωτοκωμηται.¹³ The υποδέκτης may have been in charge of the accounts, although mention is made of λαογράφοι in one papyrus. The accounts would have formed the usual compilation of records of property ownership, individuals' tax liability and how much they had paid.¹⁴ Between them and the

10 P.Cair. Masp. 67060, P.Lond. 1677 (AD566-7).

11 P.Cair. Masp. 67290 (pre AD542).

12 P.Lond. 1667 (early 6th), P.Cair. Masp. 67052; also P.Cair. Masp. 67124, Keenan (1984), p. 959.

13 Tax receipts, P.Lond. 1664, (6th), 1668-9 (early 6th), P.Cair. Masp. 67042; from the πάγαρχος for δστικά (city dues), P.Cair. Masp. 67046, Bagnall (1992), pp. 136-7.

14 Accounts, P.Cair. Masp. 67057 (AD554-9), 67058.

πρωτοκωμῆται, the tax quotas for people in the village would have been assigned. There is some evidence for the interference of the ἐξπελλευτής, a bureaucratic official abolished by Justinian, in the management of the treasury, though such incidences were probably in exceptional circumstances.¹⁵

Each village still had its own police force, and this held equally true for villages on great estates, which had forces of soldiers to maintain or to re-establish order. The function of the φύλακες had changed very little if at all from their role in the Fourth century. The guild of shepherds could apparently double as field guards on occasion, though they were among the groups most responsible for damage to arable land and pastures.¹⁶ At Aphrodito, the head of the police force was a ῥυπάριος; in other villages elsewhere, this does not seem to have been the case; this may have been because of Aphrodito's exceptional nature, but the πάγαρχος was quite capable of using troops to enforce his will there. The ῥυπάριος was nominated by the κοινόν at Aphrodito, and appointed by the *praeses*, who seems to have had control over the police forces in the province.¹⁷ More often, ῥυπάριοι were city officials, under whose authority were the villages and their police forces, and such men possessed a considerable amount of power over the villages. This manifested itself most starkly in the papyri in an incident in which the ῥυπάριος threatened the κεφαλαιωταί and εἰρήναρχοι with the pillage of their property unless they took prompt action in the wake of alleged negligence by the ἀγροφύλακες. They had a limited amount of jurisdiction, but how much is not clear; it must have rated below that of the πάγαρχος, and probably that of the ἔκδικος, too.¹⁸ More normally, εἰρήναρχοι

15 cf. Johnson and West (1949), p. 98, n. 22; Rouillard (1923), p. 84, n. 4, pp. 92, 111.

16 P.Cair. Masp. 67001 (AD514), 67328 (AD521). Violence, eg. 67002 (AD567), Keenan (1985).

17 ῥυπάριος at Aphrodito, P.Cair. Masp. 67281; 67091 (AD528?), 67092-3 (AD553), 67328 (AD521). Use of force by πάγαρχος, 67002 (AD567).

18 Power over villages; threats, P.S.I. 47 (6th?) - cf. Rouillard (1923), p. 151, n. 5, pp. 203-4; Hardy (1931), p. 67. Jurisdiction, P.Amh. 146 (5th).

constituted the police chiefs of villages. Orders from senior officials were sent to them over matters concerning law and order.¹⁹ Κεφαλαιωταί appear as village police in some places, though this title was also used to designate heads of guilds and foremen.²⁰ It is unknown in what ways they differed from either the εἰρήναρχοι or the φύλακες. They were, however, equally capable of abusing their position; in one case they were responsible for the murder of a συκοφαντής (a false accuser) in their custody. The degraded status of εἰρήναρχοι (and κεφαλαιωταί) is demonstrated by the threats that accompanied some orders to them. However, elsewhere there is a hint that such men possessed some power - a fugitive cultivator, in hiding with a head physician, made a promise not to pursue an enquiry against the ἀγροφύλακες.²¹

The appearance of the πάγρχος overshadowed the local administrative power of the *poleis*, while that of the great estates encroached on their erstwhile areas of responsibility. Villages on estates dealt with the landlord and his subordinates, while Aphrodito communicated with provincial officials such as the πάγρχος and *dux*. Those elsewhere presumably continued to deal with representatives of city administration - most likely, such officials as they met were probably in the office of the πάγρχος. The size of the village would have continued to determine its relative importance and the number of its officials and obligations; Aphrodito had been a *polis* in the Fourth century, but had somehow been relegated to the status of village, albeit *autopract*, by the Sixth. Its members could travel to Constantinople to petition the Emperor, and they could enter into contracts with powerful

19 Orders for arrest, P.Lond. 1309 (6th/7th), P.Mich. 591 (6th). P.Amh. 146 (5th) order from a ῥιπάριος to settle a matter of theft, or to send the culprits to him if they denied any wrong-doing.

20 Head of guild, P.Cair. Masp. 67283 (pre-AD548); foreman, P.Wash. 7 (5th/6th).

21 Threats, P.S.I. 47 (6th?), P.Lond. 1309 (6th/7th). Κεφαλαιωταί murder their prisoner, P.Mich. 660-1 (6th), cf. Michigan Papyri Vol. 13, ed. Sijpesteijn (1977), cf. Gasco (1977). Fugitive, P.Lond. 1032 (6th/7th), cf. Bonneau (1988).

men (for example, two Counts) demonstrating resources and contacts probably not available to most other more humble villages.²² The evolution of the *πρωτοκωμῆται* may have reduced the element of competition within villages in that a group, rather than one or two men, now ran the village's administration. However, individuals could still be held responsible by provincial authorities for certain failures on behalf of the village, and the presence of ambitious men bent on expanding their own property (such as Aurelius Phoibammon, son of Triadelphus) may have led to friction.²³ Nonetheless, the organisation of the *πρωτοκωμῆται* seems to involve a greater sense of group responsibility, not wholly unlike that of the guilds, and external parties treated them as representative of and responsible for the village.²⁴ This system may have proved more efficient from everyone's point of view; problems within villages continued to exist (such as Dioscorus with the shepherds), but from the evidence we have at our disposal, most seem to have originated outside, from officials or bandits. Corporate responsibility would have reduced the potential for abuse of offices for personal benefit at the expense of others and contributed a greater sense of unity; this in turn would have made the village easier to run and easier to deal with for officials, who now had a group to deal with instead of a disparate assembly of individual officials.

²² P.Cair. Masp. 67283 (pre-AD548), 67032 (AD551).

²³ P.Lond. 1677 (AD566-7); Phoibammon, cf. Keenan (1980a).

²⁴ eg: P.Oxy. 133 (AD550) with a great estate owner.

CHAPTER 5:

1: THE COLLECTION AND TRANSPORTATION OF THE ANNONA CIVICA:

In this and the following section I hope to illustrate the involvement of the local administration with the business of tax collection. The *annona civica*, or ἐμβολή, was the most important and largest tax in Egypt. The wheat collected for it in Egypt travelled to Alexandria, and thence to Rome and subsequently, after its foundation in AD330, to Constantinople. The size and scale of such a tax required a huge input of financial and manpower resources, almost all of which were provided by the provincials in the form of surcharges and liturgists. The *annona civica* was the responsibility of the Praefectus Annonae in Alexandria, and it was his task to ensure that the ships carrying the correct amount of wheat sailed on time. This depended on the actions of those below him, in their efficiency in collecting and then transporting the tax corn to the granaries of Alexandria, mainly located in the Neapolis and Mercurium districts of the city. The logistical difficulties that this operation posed required a high degree of organisation at even the most humble level. That the bulk of the taxes generally arrived on time is testimony to this; that the system was alleged to be riddled with corruption by contemporaries is a matter of record. The best known example of excessive taxation applies to Gaul, where the Emperor Julian reduced the taxes then collected to what was required, from twenty-five *solidi* to seven.¹ While not as spectacular in Egypt, evidence of irregularities there appears at all levels.

Although tax rates for each year were meant to have been set through the agency of the Augustal Prefect, it appears that on occasion certain officials saw an opportunity for gain in exacting considerably more than was officially required. Two instances of this have been alleged in the ancient sources

¹ Amm. Marc. 16.5.14; corruption in taxation and other contemporary sources, Macmullen (1987).

relevant to Egypt. In the first, Synesius claimed that a governor had exacted twice the amount required in AD411, and was proposing to collect bogus ones that he was inventing in the next. The other, from Aphrodito in the Antaiopolite nome, deals with the exaction of gold on land and documents a series of increases in tax rates made by the *πάγρχος* on the village.² This illegal exaction of taxes, whether invented ones or making excessive demands, was not restricted to the higher echelons of the administration. It also happened at more humble levels, such as the village; here one man complained that another had extorted taxes from him for land of which he was not the owner, while another claimed that the *γραμματεὺς* of a neighbouring village was trying to tax the land of minors that did not come under his purview.³ There is no way of measuring the prevalence of such activities, but there seems to be little doubt that it occurred, and equally little that it was definitely illegal - the abuse of position for personal profit or, in short, corruption.

Irregularities also occurred in connection with the selection of collectors, the assignation of duties and the execution of the process of collection. Personal liability for shortfalls made tax-collection a thankless task, and a potentially expensive one. One collector, who had paid the taxes in advance himself and hoped to be reimbursed by successful collection, failed to do so and ended up in trouble with his debts, soliciting armed help for the collection of arrears.⁴ However, some people contrived to try to make a profit from it either at the expense of the tax payer or of their subordinates. In one case two *βοηθοί* appealed to a *δυναστικός* over sharp practice on the part of their superior, a councillor. He had employed them to collect the taxes from the village of Terythis, and as seems to have been the custom they paid over the sum, with six months interest, in advance, intending to regain the money from the collections. But when

2 Synesius, Ep. 79, Macmullen (1987), p. 751; P.Lond. 1674 (c.AD570).

3 P.Cair. Isid. 69 (AD310), P.Oxy. 2235 (c.AD346).

4 P.Oxy. 3419 (4th).

they had done this the councillor then employed two other βοηθοί to make the collections, one being his son. As a result, the councillor and his accomplices stood to make a profit equivalent to the sum of the taxes of Terythis, while the original contracted collectors were left very considerably in debt.⁵ Cases of wrongful nomination arose; those illegally inconvenienced could escape by appeal, and it is probably unlikely that all such nominations were intentional and malicious. Some were alleged to be so, while others betray considerable inefficiency if they were not; the case of a widow, nominated to a corvée from which she claimed to be exempt, is a case in point.⁶

The first stage of the collection procedure was to exact the tax due to the government at the threshing floor. The ἀπαιτηταί seem to have been associated mainly with the *annona militaris*, so it may have fallen to the παραλήμπται to perform this task - though regional variations in title may have occurred.⁷ A number of receipts issued by the σιτολόγοι to tax-payers suggest that they also played a hand in this matter, at least for the early part of the Fourth century; this had been a duty of the δεκάπρωτοι, their superiors, in the Third century.⁸ The threshing floor had its share of problems. Putting aside an instance of arson - a purely criminal action, presumably designed to cause a man problems in tax payments - one papyrus contains an oath from the κώμαρχοι of the village of Ision Panga to the στρατηγός, who declared that they would not

5 P.Oxy. 3393 (AD365).

6 Wrongful nomination, eg: P.Oxy. 1204 (AD299); widow, P.Cair. Masp. 67006. Claimed malicious nomination, P.Cair. Isid. 68 (c.AD309/10).

7 Παραλήμπται appear rarely in the papyri; one may be as late as the Sixth century, P.Lond. 1803 (6th). Connection with the έμβολή, cf. Sijpesteijn and Worp (1978), p. 253, Lewis (1982), pp. 41-42, παραλημπτής. Possibly subordinated to the σιτολόγοι in the Fourth century, Wallace (1938), p. 36.

8 P.Cair. Isid. 41 (AD310-12), 45 (AD307); P.Cairo, J.d'E. 57048 (AD306/7) Boak (1944-5); Bagnall and Lewis (1979), pp. 96-100.

remove the crops from their threshing floors until the δεκάπρωτοι had received the state's dues from all of the inhabitants.⁹

The δεκάπρωτοι had been responsible for localised tax collection under the στρατηγός in the Third century; their duties and their responsibility to the latter clearly indicate that the city liturgists who held these positions essentially did so for the state and not for the βουλαί. In the shake-up of the administration during the reign of Diocletian, they disappeared.¹⁰ They were by no means guiltless of applying considerable pressure in order to extract taxes. This can be observed in two cases in the late Third century; in the first one man complains to an official on the staff of the Prefect, claiming that he only acceded to the unreasonable demands of the δεκάπρωτοι in order to avoid physical violence, while the other is a petition over the aggression and theft of another.¹¹ In another case, the δεκάπρωτος obtained payment for inherited property out of only one of the inheritors, leaving her to go to court to try to regain the money from her recalcitrant relation. In later papyri, similar incidents at the hands of πάγαρχοι imply that people were not responsible for their relations' tax payments, since such actions were denounced in petitions, sometimes with reference to laws.¹² Failure to send in correct accounts risked severe repercussions. In one case when those of the στρατηγός and the δεκάπρωτοι differed, the investigation was to be led by the procurator of the Catholicus himself, showing how seriously such matters were taken.¹³ While some

9 P.Oxy. 1255 (AD292).

10 Two δεκάπρωτοι per toparchy, cf. Jones (1937), pp. 329-330. Issuing receipts from granaries, P.Oxy. 2872 (AD283/5), P.Thead. 26 (AD296), P.Mert. 88 (AD298-301). The transition, Lallemand (1964), pp. 206-7, n. 4 on p. 206, Thomas (1975, 1975a), who dates their disappearance to mid-AD302.

11 P.S.I. 807 (AD280), P.Ryl. 114 (c.AD280).

12 P.Thead. 18 (3rd/4th); P.Cair. Masp. 67026 (c.AD551), P.Lond. 1677 (AD566-7).

13 P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 68-71 (AD300).

of the above activities are not directly connected with the Fourth and later centuries, they are indicative of what the *σιτολόγοι* might have attempted when they replaced the *δεκάπρωτοι*, even accounting for their lowlier status.

The *σιτολόγοι* were in charge of the granaries and were subordinate to the *πραϊπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου*, who in turn answered to the *ἐξάκτωρ*. The number of *σιτόλογοι* that operated for each area depended on the size of their village and its *ὄριοδεικτία*. Village ones were nominated by the village *κώμαρχοι* to the *πραϊπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου*, and had to serve for a year.¹⁴ Although it would have been expected that those elected would have performed their duties as a *collegium* for the whole area, at least one instance arises in which it appears that the *σιτολόγοι* were only responsible for a part of it; this was possibly an exception.¹⁵ They were responsible for the grain tax from the village, a matter illustrated by an alleged rigged election of a man to the post, burdening him (or so he claims) with the liability of paying for the taxes for all of the village's unproductive lands. Assuming that normally there were other *σιτολόγοι*, the group as a whole would have shared the cost.¹⁶ They were responsible for the gathering of the *ἐμβολή* (and its various surcharges) at the granary,¹⁷ but that was not the end of their duties. They had to dispatch accounts of the deliveries and transmissions, with receipts as proof, to the *πραϊπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου*, or to the *ἐξάκτωρ* on demand, to show their progress. Until all the dues were paid the same men were responsible for them, and this could lead to the collection of arrears several years after they should have been completed.¹⁸ The accounts

14 P.Thead. 50 (AD324); in P.Amh. 139 (AD350) ten are nominated.

15 P.Cairo, J.d'E. 57394 (AD309), cf. Boak (1947); responsibility for Karanis and part of its *ὄριοδεικτία*.

16 P.Cair. Isid. 68 (AD309/310?).

17 P.Cairo, J.d'E. 57029 (AD324), Boak (1944-5), a transport charge paid in money and kind.

would have revealed, through the receipts, to where the tax corn had been sent.

The transport to the Nile ports and staging posts was another matter that fell to the *σιτολόγοι*. To this end they employed the services of donkey drivers to take the taxes to them. While there seem to have been occasional problems in getting men to fulfil such duties, generally this seems to have run fairly smoothly.¹⁹ It was a liturgy to provide animals to transport the tax corn to the ports, as well as for other purposes, and other liturgists were employed to take them there.²⁰ The *σιτολόγοι* seem also to have escorted these groups that travelled with the tax corn, though on occasion they delegated the task to the animal drivers.²¹ On arrival at the port, the tax corn would have been handed over, with any surcharges, to the appropriate receivers. Wheat was not the only commodity handled by the *σιτολόγοι*; the accounts of P.Cair. Isid. 9 and 11 show them handling barley and lentils as well. It is very probable that wheat for the military *annona* (as well as other goods) was also temporarily housed in their granaries. The close connection between the two major taxes is further implied by the fact that men sometimes served simultaneously as *ἀπαιτηταί* and *σιτολόγοι*, which presumably associated them with the collection of both *annonae*. Otherwise, it would have offered great opportunities for peculation if one man held two

18 P.Thead. 28 (AD320) to the *στρατηγός*; P.Cair. Isid. 9 (AD309), 11 (AD312) accounts for the same indiction, submitted to the *πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου*.

19 P.Oxy. 900 (AD322) here concerning the *ὄξυς δρόμος*.

20 P.Cair. Isid. 20 (post AD314) possibly a list of those liable to provide animals. P.Princ. Roll, Kase (1933), second group of receipts, concerns officials involved with transport. Another official involved with animals was the *ῥαβδοῦχος* (eg: P.Oxy. 2859 (AD301), 1750 (AD306), 1626 (AD325)).

21 P.Cair. Isid. 15 (AD309/310) *σιτολόγοι*; P.Cair. Isid. 40 (AD299) a *κεφαλαιωτής* (cf. Bagnall (1978a)) is instructed to deliver wheat to a bakery by a *σιτολόγος*.

adjacent posts in the administrative chain, one being able to cover the previous one's illegal activities.²²

Bagnall and Lewis have suggested that the role of the *σιτολόγος* in connection with the tax corn was markedly reduced after the first quarter of the Fourth century to organising transport to the harbours and collecting arrears. The only real problem I see in this is that if it had been deemed necessary to use the village granaries as a staging point in the past, it was probably still necessary to do so since transport had not been upgraded and technology remained just as it had been.²³ The removal of the village granary from the process must have caused weighing and measuring to be done at the threshing floor and subsequently at the port, with no check in between. Weights and measures afforded the *σιτολόγοι* with ideal opportunities to take more than the state's share and to pocket the excess; while such activities by them are nowhere attested in the papyri, this may be because their victims were unaware of the offence. The Emperors were certainly conscious of it happening, though not specifically in Egypt.²⁴

The system was made more ponderous by the need to make checks on the tax corn at various stages. There were quality checks to ensure that the corn was pure and unadulterated; to this end, sealed samples (*δείγματα*) may have been sent along with the cargoes as proof of quality, though evidence for this practice is poor in the papyri.²⁵ Schuman opined that the high standard of purity of wheat required was probably beyond most peasants given the crudity of winnowing methods. Elsewhere it appears that there was a charge for bringing

22 P.Mich. 643-6 (AD303-4), P.Thead. 50 (AD324) for the two posts together. P.Cair. Isid. 40 (AD299) a *σιτολόγος* delivers wheat to a bakery, very probably for military purposes.

23 Bagnall and Lewis (1979), pp. 96-100.

24 cf. fn. 3 in my section on Taxation. P.Lond. 1718 (later 6th) a checklist of measures, though local variances occurred.

25 P.Oxy. 708 (AD188) a cargo has failed the quality check; Rickman (1980), p. 122.

unclean wheat up to the desired standard (removing any earth and barley contaminating it) at the granary.²⁶ This provided tax payers with an opportunity to con the tax collector, since he would be responsible for making good any deficit in a cargo, which was no doubt made up of the contributions of a number of tax payers, making it hard to know exactly who was to blame.

Once the *σιτολόγοι* had transferred the tax corn to the *ἀποδέκται*, it was passed on to the *ναύκληροι* who took it to Alexandria. Once the *σιτολόγοι* had obtained receipts for the requisite amount of wheat, other than the quality of the sealed containers, the matter was now out of their hands. River transportation was by no means the end of opportunities to make illegal profits, as a number of complaints show; although these mainly concern the *annona militaris* and what seem to be private transactions, they serve to illustrate what could happen. In one case there is concern of theft by sailors if they are not properly supervised on the voyage, while in another a man is in good humour after having had to pay rather less than he expected for travel down the river. Given that standing tariffs did not vary, this may well refer to gratuities for officials. They presumably were able to take greater liberties over private than state transactions, but again it demonstrates what might have occurred.²⁷

In order to pay for all the transport and services, surcharges were made on the basic tax, to be paid by the tax payer. Chief among these was the *ναῦλον*, the transport charge for shipping commodities up the Nile. This was charged in either specie or kind, and the sum exacted seems to have depended on the size of the cargo and the distance of its destination.²⁸ It appears

²⁶ Schuman (1957). Charge for cleaning wheat, S.P.P. xx. 246, Johnson and West (1949), p. 242.

²⁷ *Annona militaris*, P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 100-8, 117-128 (AD300); Sailors, P.Oxy. 2732 (6th?); Gratuities, P.Oxy. 3864 (5th) - accounts of river travel and a range of tariffs, P.Oxy. 1651 (3rd).

²⁸ Pearl (1952).

that most tax payments included naulage payments, and its absence is noted where it has been paid separately.²⁹ Who received the payment depended on the form in which the tax was paid and on the commodity in which it was due. Simple money payments were collected by officials specifically concerned with the transport charge, while payments in money or in kind in direct association with the actual tax went to the collector of that product.³⁰ In the Sixth century, naulage was made the responsibility of the *dux*, and under him there was an official ἀποδέκτης ναύλων. The *dux* had staff and soldiers to assist in the collection, but it seems that most of this work was done at village and city level by local officials.³¹ The money obtained through the naulage tax was distributed to the ναύκληροι and to the ναῦται.³² Other surcharges were less significant than the ναῦλον, but there were a fair number of them; there seem to have been considerable regional variations in name and size. They were payments for transport by animals to the docks, for the measurer, for the ship's captain and for portage, as well as a basic percentage on certain types of goods.³³ Most of these levies were paid at the same time as the main tax was collected.

After the Fourth century, σιτολόγοι no longer appear in the papyri. The diminution of their role suggested by Bagnall and Lewis may have been a prelude to their disappearance since they no longer performed a worthwhile function. By the Sixth century, if not earlier, the ὑποδέκται seem to have assumed part

29 eg: P.Lond. 1759 (6th/7th).

30 Boak (1944-5).

31 Just. Ed. 13, Rouillard (1923), pp. 139-143.

32 P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 120-7 (AD298) - two unpaid crews threatened to petition the governor. P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 274-6 (AD300).

33 Porterage, the σακκοφορικόν, P.Oxy. 3395 (AD371), 3481 (AD442), cf. Worp and Sijpesteijn (1976). Ναύκληρος, οἱ ὄβολοί, τό δηνάριον τοῦ μοδίου and κούμουλοι (*cumuli*), Lallemand (1964), p. 196, Johnson and West (1949), pp. 295-321. P.Cair. Isid. 11 (AD312) 10% tax on wheat and barley. Variations at one port, P.Cair. Isid. 47 (AD309), cf. Boak (1947), p. 24ff.

of their role at least - they collected the tax in kind or in adaeerated form, passing the former on to the ναύκληροι and the latter on to the relevant treasury officials.³⁴ They probably performed such duties in their capacity as subordinates of the πάγαρχος, reflecting a greater level of bureaucratic involvement in the έμβολή collection process.³⁵ This increased concern of the provincial administration may perhaps be further observed in a nomination by a man to the position of the ύποδέκτης of a village - both he and the nominator appear to be officials associated with the έμβολή, the σιτομέτρης and the μεσίτης.³⁶ Other officials, such as the βοηθοί of the πάγαρχοι, had a hand in tax collection, and it is very difficult to know which officials undertook what tasks (assuming that we know the titles and relative seniority of each of them).³⁷ By the Sixth century, owners of great estates were also participating very actively in the collection and transportation of the έμβολή collected on and near their estates. There is no doubt that the tax corn continued to be shipped down the Nile in the same manner that it had been in the Fourth century (though there may have been a greater use of privately owned ships as more became available), but the exact hierarchy of supervisors concerned with the transfer of the tax corn from the threshing floor to port is more obscure. The greater involvement of the bureaucracy in the supervision of the process of collection to the exclusion of village officials such as the σιτολόγοι may have been part of a policy of greater central interference in local administration, so evident in the cities. This may have been induced for a number of reasons. One of these may be that the element of village politics, in the context of personal liability

34 P.Fay. 143 (6th) an ύποδέκτης issues a receipt for a wheat payment; an adaeerated έμβολή payment, Rouillard (1923), p. 131, n. 1.

35 P.Cair. Masp. 67046 the ύποδέκτης as an employee of the πάγαρχος; also, Rouillard (1923), p. 129, n. 3.

36 S.P.P. xx. 128 (AD487), cf. Johnson and West (1949), p. 327, n. 43; their exact functions are not known, cf. Rouillard (1923), p. 128, n. 3.

37 Βοηθοί, P.Lond. 1660 (c.AD553), P.Cair. Masp. 67049.

for short-falls sustained by the liturgist rather than the village as a whole, rendered the process less efficient than one supervised by an external and senior agent. But the obvious knock-on effect was that an official with greater ability to supervise collection successfully also had greater facility to collect gratuities and fees, perhaps above and beyond those legally his due. After all, the *σιτομέτρης* would not have undertaken the contract to be the *ὑποδέκτης* of a village if he did not stand to make a profit from it, and his title implies familiarity with the sort of work involved.³⁸

³⁸ Village politics making the task of the *σιτολόγος* very difficult, P.Cair. Isid. 68 (AD309/310?). The contract, S.P.P. xx. 128 (AD487), see above.

2: THE COLLECTION OF THE ANNONA MILITARIS:

Annona militaris is the term for the levies that provided the soldiers with the various commodities they required to survive. Under Diocletian, the system was transformed into one that required much energy and activity on behalf of the civil administration. The Praetorian Prefect, based on his knowledge of troop dispositions and unit sizes in his part of the Empire, issued a *delegatio* (διατύπωση) and informed the governors of the provinces how much was required. This was broken down through the provinces, cities and villages to individual assessments. When Egypt became a diocese, the Augustalis may have assumed responsibility for the provisioning of the troops in Egypt; the διατύπωση would have been communicated to him by the Praetorian Prefect for him to pass on to the governors there.¹ The commodities required for the troops were collected and gathered at the cities, and distributed from them. The advantages to communication and transportation conferred by the Nile meant that most military units must have been accessible without serious logistical difficulties. Garrisons were probably supplied locally, in so far as local supplies could fulfil all their requirements - such activity can be observed in the Abinnaeus Archive - but some areas had greater concentrations of troops than others and may not have been able to meet all of their needs. The Thebaid is one example; a front line province exposed to raiding from the south, supplies were probably transported in from down-river. On other occasions, a specific shortage might have to be addressed, such as a shortage of wine in one area.² The surpluses from each city were often transported very considerable distances; for example, from Hermopolis for 'the *annona* of Libya', from Oxyrhynchus down to Memphis or up to Ptolemais, and from Panopolis up to Syene.³

¹ Johnson and West (1949), pp. 218-222.

² P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 109-113 (AD300).

³ cf. Carrié (1977), Bowman (1978); P.Berl. Inv. 13943, S.B. 9875 (AD312), P.Oxy. 43r. (AD295), P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 245-9 (AD300).

The *annona militaris* taxes were largely delivered in kind to the troops in the Fourth century. This was a move to counter the effects of inflation on their pay, and although it was effective in assuring them their rations, it must have considerably reduced their buying power and thus the value of their wages in real terms. Soldiers received money donatives in addition to their rations, but the high inflation must have meant that their worth was fairly inconsequential. Donatives in gold were of more value though they were rarer, and it was not until their wages were regularly paid in gold that the lot of the officers, and subsequently the foot soldiers, improved. It is not known when this happened, but it might have been as early as the late Fourth century.⁴ Some taxes, such as the *aurum tironicum* (χρυσὸς τειρόνων) - the recruit tax - were exacted in gold, presumably in order to provide a fixed price for the cost of recruitment even in times of high inflation. In one case 238 *solidi* were collected for this tax, and the collector handed over only 61; when the rest were demanded, he claimed that they had been stolen. Elsewhere, new recruits tried to extort double their dues from the city by claiming that they had not received any.⁵

The smooth functioning of this system depended upon the civil administration. The στρατηγός was in charge at some level, responsible to the procurator of the Catholicus, a duty retained by the στρατηγός / ἑξάκτωρ in the Fourth century. The στρατηγός supervised the collections which were carried out by liturgists nominated by the cities. Relations were not always smooth between the two and were placed under particular stress at times when the Empire was at war. At such times the requirements for *annona militaris* were greatly increased, particularly if the campaign was being conducted in Egypt; even those outside the diocese might require the exaction of an

⁴ Carrié (1978). Henty (1989), pp. 15-17, places this later.

⁵ Carrié (1981), pp. 436-7; P.Lips. 24-5 (AD375); P.Oxy. 1103 (AD360).

extraordinary levy.⁶ The seriousness with which the tax was regarded may be seen in the language used by officials issuing orders to each other, even in times of peace. The procurator threatens the στρατηγός with punishment several times in P.Beatty Panop. 2 should he fail to carry out the former's orders; later in the Fourth century the *praeses* wrote to the ἐξάκτορες and προέδροι of Hermopolis over their failure to provide *annona militaris* for three whole years.⁷

Liturgists concerned with the *annona militaris* were nominated at both village and city level. The former were primarily collectors, whereas the latter covered a wider diversity. It appears that the officials were nominated by category, being responsible only for one of the various products required, such classification usually being made by appending the name of the commodity to their title, and for a given geographical area; for example, ἀπαιτηταὶ κρέως appear in villages.⁸ At village level collectors were generally nominated by the κώμαρχοι to the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου, though exceptions to this occur.⁹ It is probable that many of the villagers from whom they made the collections did not possess the commodity required, so its money value would instead be elicited, or it might occasionally be paid in another form of the tax in kind by the collectors or other officials. The collections were accumulated in the village, and then delivered to the appropriate staging point. If the goods were of inadequate quantity or quality the collector was personally responsible, and subsequently had to present satisfactory additions or

⁶ P.Beatty Panop. 1 (AD298) frantic efforts of the στρατηγός to prepare for the arrival of Diocletian's army. Cod. Theod. 7.6.3 (AD377) the Hadrianople campaign.

⁷ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 281-4 (AD300); B.G.U. 1027 (4th), Bowman (1971), p. 164.

⁸ P.Cair. Isid. 44 (AD305/6).

⁹ P.Oxy. 2124 (AD316) three collectors of the *annona* nominate successors to the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου. P.Oxy. 2232 (AD316) κώμαρχοι and a τεσσαρίσιος nominate collectors.

replacements or suffer some penalty.¹⁰ Collectors issued receipts to tax payers and received them when they discharged their duty, thus safeguarding themselves and the tax payers from liability. After the Third century, urban ἀπαιτηταί are less apparent than before since the task of collection of the *annona militaris* was largely achieved through the agency of villages.¹¹

At city level there is evidence for some disquiet at the prospect at having to serve as a liturgist in connection with the *annona militaris*. One tactic employed to some effect at Herakleopolis was to stay away from the city to avoid nomination; the πρύτανις had to appeal to the Prefect for help over the matter.¹² At Oxyrhynchus two conveyers of the *annona* had absconded, and there was a suspicion that anyone else nominated to replace them would follow suit.¹³ In a meeting of the βουλή, the πρύτανις wrongfully nominated a man to the ἐπιμέλεια of soldiers' woollen clothing; when the βουλή supported the nominee's appeal, the πρύτανις was forced to assume the liturgy himself.¹⁴ In P.Beatty Panop. 1, in which exceptional levies were being made prior to the arrival of Diocletian and his army, further reluctance to perform their duties can be observed on behalf of liturgists. For example, various ἀπαιτηταί and ἐπιμεληταιί claim that they cannot perform their assigned tasks because they are busy doing something else, and an ἐπίκτης, who may have been appointed by the βουλή, left his post without the authorisation of the στρατηγός. And throughout the papyrus the πρύτανις is uncooperative over making the nominations desired by the στρατηγός.¹⁵ From this it

¹⁰ P.Cair. Isid. 44 (AD305/6) pigs rejected as inadequate; P.Cair. Isid. 23 (AD303/4) making up the shortfall; commutation into another commodity, P.Oxy. 3790, ll. 4-5 (c.AD317/8), P.Cair. Isid. 16 (AD314), P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 281-4 (AD300).

¹¹ Urban ἀπαιτηταί, Lallemand (1964), p. 210, n. 1. Also, P.Beatty Panop. 1, l. 43 (AD298).

¹² S.B. 9597 (late 4th), Bowman (1971), p. 81.

¹³ P.Oxy. 1415 (late 3rd).

¹⁴ P.Oxy. 2110 (AD370).

¹⁵ P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 153-9 (ἀπαιτηταί), 217-220, 332-7 (ἐπίκτης), 167-

might be deduced that liturgies in connection with the *annona militaris* were particularly unpopular. However, such examples do not represent a significant proportion of liturgists in this area, and similar numbers of examples, relative to the obviously high number of liturgists annually required for this work, can be presented for other duties of the council. The popularity of the tasks may have been dependent on specific local circumstances and availability of the commodities - some tasks may have been harder (or potentially more expensive) to execute than others.

There were a number of officials nominated by the βουλή for duty with the *annona militaris*. Evidence for urban ἀπαιτηταί, as noted above, is not good, but the others, the receivers (ἀποδέκται and ὑποδέκται), supervisors (ἐπιμεληταιί) and distributors (διαδόται) are better covered. Receivers of goods appear at staging points, where they assumed responsibility for the goods that were handed over to them by the collectors. They also seem to have been in charge of a designated part of the *annona*, and their title furthermore often included their location. Areas where they appeared frequently in the early Fourth century were river ports, where they received the goods from and gave receipts to the village officials who delivered them.¹⁶ It seems that they held the position for a year. The ἀποδέκται and ὑποδέκται are both classed as receivers, and there is considerable difficulty in telling the two apart. The former seem to appear more often in connection with taxes in kind, while the latter more often with money taxes, though both collected either type on occasion. There is less evidence for the ἀποδέκτης later in the Fourth century and beyond, but the ὑποδέκτης appears both at the same time and thereafter; this establishes that this official was not the former's successor, and that the titles entailed

179 (πρύτανις) (AD298).

¹⁶ P.Thead. 32 (AD307) receiver of barley of the port of the city (ἀποδέκτης κρίθης ὄρμου μητροπόλεως); P.Mich. 647 (early 4th) receivers of barley at the port of Leukogion (ἀποδέκται ὄρμου Λευκογίου).

some distinction, whether regional, functional or whatever.¹⁷ Both appear in the Sixth century, though the different nature of their roles then to those of the Fourth century serves to illustrate the diverse range of activities that one title (if not the official) could cover.¹⁸

For almost all activities that could be classified as public taxation there were overseers to ensure that such matters were carried out in the correct manner. It should come as no surprise that it was here that much of the corruption was alleged to be happening. Ἐπιμεληταί supervised a variety of other activities, such as those of workmen, for the state as well as the process of tax payment for the *annona*.¹⁹ Nominated by the βουλή, they probably served for a year under the control of the ἐξάκτωρ, dealing with just one commodity each; two seems to have been the usual number for each category.²⁰ They were involved in the making of accounts, taking reports from the collectors and village officials, making notes of what they themselves received and then passing on receipts detailing the amounts that they passed on to the distributors. Such accounts not only demonstrated what quantity of a given commodity had been collected and transferred, but also served to monitor the supervisors' honesty. The ἐπιμεληταί presumably received from the ἀποδέκται the goods for which they were responsible, though on various occasions they are found receiving the goods where it would be expected that the ἀποδέκται would do so, or

¹⁷ cf. Jouguet (1911), p. 164, P.Thead. 31, l. 1n (AD319-20). P.Cair. Isid. 50 (AD310) ἀποδέκτης receiving money payments (surcharges, in association with the ναύκληροι).

¹⁸ Ἀποδέκτης ναύλων, under the *dux*, Justinian Edict 13, cf. Rouillard (1923), pp. 139-143. The ὑποδέκτης as village treasurer at Aphrodito, P.Lond. 1667 (early 6th), as estate manager, P.Cair. Masp. 67138-9.

¹⁹ P.Thead. 34 (AD324?), 35 (AD325), 36 (AD327), P.Oxy. 3727 (AD303) various types of workmen.

²⁰ P.Oxy. 1191 (AD280), 2114 (AD316), 2110 (AD370) - cf. Lallemand (1964), pp. 215-6. Diverse ἐπιμεληταί, cf. Lewis (1982), pp. 27-8, ἐπιμέλεια. Under the ἐξάκτωρ, cf. P.Abinn. 26 (AD340s), P.Ryl. 657 (AD323/4), O.Tait 2116 (4th/5th).

transporting them to ἀποδέκται.²¹ At this stage they could act as quality control agents, rejecting goods they regarded as sub-standard.²² The ἐπιμεληταί were then responsible for transporting the goods to the διαδόται, who took them to their destination and handed them over to the relevant military official. Quite how much transport was required depended on where the goods were to go. Trips by boats were often necessary, and if this was the case, the ἐπιμεληταί were expected to travel with the cargo, handing it over at the other end.²³ The διαδόται were sometimes missed out altogether, since the ἐπιμεληταί might receive direct orders to disburse provisions to troops, and sometimes representatives of the military unit collected the goods themselves (this is known in the case of cash payments and for pickling equipment).²⁴

There were numerous opportunities for corruption within this system. This started at the collection, where false measures might be used. This was strictly forbidden, and the στρατηγός was enjoined to regulate them to prevent such occurrences. The command specifies the city for this activity, and it must have been more difficult to enforce it in the more distant villages.²⁵ Extortion was also practised in the matter of adulterated payments. Collectors were accused of demanding too much for taxes paid in cash instead of in kind (usually permitted for arrears or when a certain commodity was not locally available). Apparently στρατηγοί might collude in such matters, perhaps authorising the bogus rate at which they were to be exacted.

²¹ Receiving goods at harbours, and issuing receipts, P.Cair. Isid. 47 (AD309). P.Oxy. 2766 (AD305) an ἐπιμελητής undertook to deliver 450 *artabae* obtained from the ἀποδεκτῶν καὶ ἐπισφραγιστῶν θησαυρῶν (receivers and sealers of granaries, of a village and a quarter of Oxyrhynchus), and deliver it to ἀποδέκται at the Small Oasis.

²² P.Cair. Isid. 44 (AD305/6).

²³ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 100-8, 117-127 (AD300) transport by ship and then transfer to διαδόται.

²⁴ P.Oxy. 3115 (AD271), 1261 (AD325), P.Thead. 31 (AD319-20); soldiers, eg: P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 36-42, 57-60, 245-9.

²⁵ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 229-44 (AD300).

Excessive charges were also made for minor payments, such as for guard duty and fodder for animals engaged in transport of the goods.²⁶ It was forbidden for ἀπαιτηταί and ἐπιμεληταί to be the same persons. This may have been because although it may have simplified the collection process, the potential for corruption is manifest in having one person in consecutive positions in the chain, or having him supervise his own activities.²⁷ Tax payers might also be guilty of trying to defraud the military commissariat - for example, the στρατηγός was instructed to inspect the returns from vineyards and compare them with the census to find out if any were growing more than they admitted or paying less than they should.²⁸

Once the collections had been made, the goods still had to be transported, and here there were other opportunities for profit at the expense of the military commissariat. The supervisors seem to have been especially guilty of this, and without their connivance it is difficult to see how it could have been practised. In one letter to the στρατηγός the procurator is angered that he had not implemented a plan to try to catch the thieves; previous practice had been to send letters concerning cargoes with their supervisors, but in the light of inadequate quantities arriving, he had been requested to send them separately. Presumably the ἐπιμεληταί had been making adjustments to the contents of the letters and siphoning off some of the cargo. The new system of messengers was designed to catch those doing so without giving them the facility of covering their corruption.²⁹ Elsewhere it is apparent that everyone aboard certain ships were abusing their positions. The ship captains, sailors, soldiers and ἐπιμεληταί were not following orders but, despite previous reprimands, were taking the opportunity to waste time anchored at riverside villages

²⁶ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 229-44 (AD300).

²⁷ P.Beatty Panop. 1, l. 43 (AD298) - but in ll. 153-9 they appear together; Skeat believes that this may be a scribal error.

²⁸ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 145-152 (AD300).

²⁹ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 117-128 (AD300).

and cities, and apparently engaging in some form of business, perhaps using their transport advantages to trade up and down the river. The στρατηγοί are to place men down the river to drive them back off-shore should they try to land, to ensure the prompt delivery of goods.³⁰ In another instance, from whatever motive, an ἐπιμελητής engaged in the supervision of chaff petitioned the Prefect against his colleagues, and the Prefect demanded that they be sent to him.³¹

The *vestis militaris* was one of the taxes collected from provincials on behalf of the soldiers, but unlike the others there was reimbursement for payment in the early Fourth century. Collection was made in coinage, and was expressed in receipts as fractions of the specific items of clothing, since different ones were rated at different prices (eg: στιχάριον, χλαμύς).³² With the money so collected, the necessary materials were purchased and presented to the local weavers, who were to make the required items of clothing.³³ Distinction is made between the expense of the material and the manufacture in one papyrus (S.B. 7756 (AD359)), and in a law of AD423, when the tax was levied in gold and paid into the *sacrae largitiones*, it is specified that of the total one sixth should be apportioned to the weavers, the rest to go to the soldiers.³⁴ When the appropriate amount had been paid, the officials, whether from village or city, received a certificate of payment which could be redeemed at the public bank on the approval of an official, usually the στρατηγός or ἑξάκτωρ. Repayment was in coinage and was made at the official government rates, which seldom kept pace with inflation or the market prices. Furthermore, there was usually a reduction from the sum repaid of some six and a

³⁰ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 100-108 (AD300).

³¹ P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 347-352 (AD298).

³² P.Oxy. 1448 (AD314); cf. Carrié (1981), pp. 434-5.

³³ Carrié (1981), p. 435, very low repayments may reflect compensation for manufacture and not purchase of materials.

³⁴ Cod. Theod. 7.6.5 (AD423).

half percent.³⁵ The low level of repayment relative to the value of the items may be considered as another form of taxation. In one papyrus, the λογογράφος acknowledges receipt for payment for the *vestis militaris*, and appends a clause designed to protect the tax payer should the goods turn out to be substandard. Perhaps in previous such situations officials had tried to pass on such expenses to the tax payer, who was guiltless, not having been involved in the manufacture.³⁶

One extraordinary incident in the collection of the *vestis militaris* emerges in a case that went before the λογιστής (this may be to him rather than the ἐξάκτωρ because it involved a ruling by the Prefect); money having been extracted from a grade of people associated with the city (the παγανοί, or δημόται), a βοηθός was sent under the agency of the πρύτανις to purchase the requisite number of tunics (στιχάρια) in Tyre - a long way to go from Oxyrhynchus, and apparently ignoring the local weavers. The clothing was then declared to be surplus to requirements, and the πρύτανις, much to his displeasure, was made responsible for the repayment of the tax payers' money, while he could try to recoup his losses by means of the sale of the shirts. The vehemence of his arguments implies that this would not be easy.³⁷ The responsibility of the πρύτανις for the matter may indicate the importance of this tax, or be the result of an erroneous nomination which caused him to have to assume the office.³⁸ Whatever the reason, it is clear that a mistake had been made in the calculations at bureaucratic level and the πρύτανις was being made to bear the cost.

The *annona militaris* came to be paid largely in gold at some stage between the end of the Fourth century and that of the Fifth.³⁹ As more gold came into circulation this may have been

³⁵ Reimbursement for *vestis militaris*, Bagnall (1988).

³⁶ P.Ant. 40 (early 4th).

³⁷ P.Oxy. 3758 (AD325).

³⁸ P.Oxy. 2110 (AD370).

³⁹ cf. Carrié (1978), Hendy (1989), pp. 15-17.

less difficult for the provincials to obtain and afford. It offered financial security to the troops and also augmented their purchasing power. By the Sixth century it appears that many of the soldiers in the province were actually provided by great estate owners, who also supplied them with their rations, equipment and pay.⁴⁰ This circumvented many of the inherent inefficiencies and chances for corruption afforded to the city liturgists in the early Fourth century, though it did little to arrest the occasionally lawless nature of the soldiers.⁴¹ The *annona militaris*, born from Diocletian's determination that soldiers should not have to pay extortionate prices for basic provisions, initially stabilised their pay through provision in kind and later, when gold was introduced, probably worked to their advantage in relation to other social groups in the Empire.

⁴⁰ cf. Gascou (1976).

⁴¹ eg: B.G.U. 836 (AD530/8), cf. Gascou (1976), p. 148.

CHAPTER 6:

1: THE CITY POLICE FORCES:

The liturgists who performed police duties did so at nome, pagus and village level, depending on their seniority. Their function, as a general rule, was to maintain order and to investigate cases of criminal activity, either reporting what they found or taking steps to resolve the matter. It seems that even the more senior liturgists often did not take action until so empowered by the *praeses* or an official of like standing. Until the appearance of the *ῥιπάριος* in the mid-Fourth century, there is some confusion over the hierarchy of police officials in the early Fourth century. The *κοσμητής* had been responsible for the good order of the city, but this may have only been in a supervisory capacity, the active work having been left to police officials; *κοσμηταί* appear after the first mention of the *ῥιπάριοι*, which further suggests this. In the Third century, *εἰρήναρχοι* had been in charge of police operations in the nome, but thereafter they no longer appear at that level. In the Fourth century they are attested at village level, but in the Fayum one is addressed as *εἰρήναρχος πάγου*.¹ The transition from *εἰρήναρχος* to *ῥιπάριος* may not have been as straight-forward as Jones and Lallemand suggest, given the considerable gap between the disappearance of the former and the first mention in the papyri of the latter.² Several different titles appear in different areas; in the Arsinoite nome mention is made of *ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς εἰρήνης*, who gives orders to village officials and is therefore of higher than village rank, while at village level there is an *ἐπιστάτης εἰρήνης*.³ At Oxyrhynchus an official called the *ἐπόπτης εἰρήνης* is testified over two years (AD341-2). This official was definitely in charge of the nome; he received petitions and seems to have taken his

1 *Εἰρήναρχος πάγου*, P.Thead. 24 (AD334).

2 Jones (1937), p. 337, Lallemand (1964).

3 P.Cair. Isid. 130 (AD308/9); P.Thead. 17 (AD332).

orders direct from the *praeses*.⁴ Given that all the references are to the same man, he may have been a commissioner appointed under extraordinary circumstances, but his duties conform to those of the later regularly appointed police chiefs. Alternatively, this may have been a transitional official between the εἰρήναρχος and ῥιπάριος at Oxyrhynchus - he is nowhere else attested. The appearance of these different titles in the early Fourth century strongly suggests that there were regional variations in the title of the police chief of the nome between the time of the relegation of the εἰρήναρχος to village level and the appearance of the ῥιπάριος. Such a lack of uniformity is quite surprising, even in the context of the Greek East, given the relative importance of the position and, for example, the blanket imposition on Egyptian cities of such officials as the λογιστής. What they must have had in common was that the *praeses* approved their nominations.

The ῥιπάριος is first mentioned in the papyri in about AD346.⁵ There seem to have been two in each city, at least in the Fourth century. Nomination in the Fourth century was by the city council, and appointment was by the *praeses*. By the Sixth century, definitely at Oxyrhynchus, this method had changed. It seems to have been imposed on great estates in a system of rotation, though it seems that the selection still had to be approved by the *praeses*; this was certainly the case in the Sixth century at the large autopract village of Aphrodito when one was put forward by the landowner Count Ammonios.⁶ That it was a position of some importance is implied by the fact that,

4 Authority, P.Oxy. 1559 (AD341), 3821 (c.AD341-2); petitions, P.Oxy. 991, 3575 (AD341); orders from the *praeses*, P.Oxy. 3578 (AD342); escorting prisoners to the *praeses*, P.Oxy. 3576 (AD341).

5 P.Oxy. 897 (AD346); cf. Lallemand (1964), p. 163, n. 2, Rémondon (1974a), p. 21.

6 Nominations, Rémondon (1974a), pp. 22-3; estates and Sixth century, P.Oxy. 2039 (5th), P.Cair. Masp. 67281, P.Flor. 304; also Gascou (1985), p. 43.

among other magistrates, *ex-λογισταί* held it.⁷ In the cities, the commanders of the night watch (*νυκτοστράτηγοι*) were subordinate to them, as were the *εἰρήναρχοι* in the villages. They could order the dispatch of men to the city from prison or villages, and they could order local police officials to send them reports on outbreaks of violence.⁸ The *ῥιπάριοι* may have had some measure of jurisdiction; petitions were addressed to them and they were sometimes involved in implementing legal decisions. In one case the *ῥιπάριος* received an appeal from a man who claimed that the scribe of a neighbouring village was trying, illegally, to tax the land of the petitioner's grandchildren; the *ῥιπάριος* was asked to order him to desist. In another papyrus, two *βοηθοί* requested that the *ῥιπάριος* assist them in regaining money that they had paid in advance as the proceeds of tax collection to a councillor; instead of their being allowed to collect the taxes, the councillor had broken the contract and sent two other men (one being his son). Such petitions were certainly sent with the expectation of resultant action on behalf of the *ῥιπάριος*, implying the possession of jurisdiction.⁹

Wider powers are suggested by a Fourth century papyrus in which the *ῥιπάριοι* received the nominations for various village officials to duties on embankments and dykes.¹⁰ Their overall supervision of the police in the nome led to their being responsible for a variety of other activities, such as the escort of recruits across the nome to their appointed destination, and perhaps even assistance in tax collection.¹¹ If the experience of

7 P.Oxy. 1033 (AD392); 2235 (c.AD346); cf. *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. 19, (Lobel, Wegener, Roberts, Bell, 1948), p. 102, n. 1.

8 Orders for dispatch, P.Oxy. 2229 (AD346-50), P.Amh. 146 (5th); report, P.Oxy. 2233 (AD350).

9 Petitions; P.Oxy. 2235 (c.AD346), 3393 (AD365); assistance in enforcing decisions, P.Lond. 1650 (AD373?), P.Oxy. 1877 (c.AD488).

10 P.Lond. 1648 (AD373).

11 P.Lips. Inv. 281 (post AD381), Lallemand (1964), p. 164, n. 3, Rémondon (1955), pp. 27-8. P.Lips. 62 (AD385) assisting the *ὑποδέκτης* collect taxes, Johnson and West (1949), p. 329, n. 67.

a village εἰρήναρχος is anything to go by, the consequences of inefficiency could be quite unpleasant.¹² Though the rank of people undertaking this liturgy was quite high, they were not above scrutiny or misfortune. While an exhortation to a newly-elected δυνάριος to be honest and efficient or risk great perils might be a standard formula, the problems encountered by a substitute are evidence that the position was not without its pitfalls. The man for whom he was acting as substitute had not fulfilled his part of the pact, and as a result the petitioner was even suffering violence in the execution of his duties, and begged to be released from the contract.¹³ On the other hand, a δυνάριος was also capable of issuing stern ultimatums; in one case, when it was felt that the local police forces had been negligent and inefficient, they are threatened with the pillage of their property by the δυνάριος if they do not start to do as they have been ordered with greater enthusiasm.¹⁴ As with the owners of great estates in the Sixth century taking posts in the local administration, it may be that personal status had a bearing on how easy it was to carry out the assigned duties, men of higher standing having less trouble than those with less influence.

The εἰρήναρχοι suffered a reduction in status from control over the nome to that over a pagus or a village. More examples of the latter are known;¹⁵ they were nominated by the κώμαρχοι of their village to the πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου, and responded to orders from him and from the δυνάριος to make arrests.¹⁶ When

12 P.Abinn. 35 (AD340s).

13 P.Cair. Masp. 67281; P.Oxy. 904 (5th).

14 P.S.I. 47 (6th).

15 P.Thead. 24 (AD334) perhaps the only example of an εἰρήναρχος of a pagus. Wider responsibility, Third century, eg: P.Oxy. 2568 (AD264) requisitioning a lighter for transport.

16 Nomination, P.Amh. 139 (AD350); orders to arrest, from the πραιπόσιτος, P.Oxy. 1506 (early 4th), from the δυνάριος, P.Oxy. 2233 (AD350).

petitioned by victims, it seems that they among the village officials had the duty of apprehending the malefactors; failure to comply apparently resulted in their being brought before a senior official and being forced to do so, or facing the consequences. The εἰρήναρχος was in command of the local guards of the village, and although he received appeals from people who had suffered harm to themselves or their property, he does not seem to have possessed any power of jurisdiction.¹⁷ By the Sixth century, and probably earlier, there was more than one εἰρήναρχος in a village, and they in turn seem to have come under the command of a tribune, a military official of the provincial administration. The imperial order in AD409 to abolish εἰρήναρχοι cannot therefore have applied to the lowly officials in Egypt.¹⁸

Under the authority of the nome chief of police were the νυκτοστράτηγοι. From the information in P.Oxy. 1033, it is possible to establish that they were responsible for the guardianship of the city, having a number of guards under them, and as such had to produce people when so commanded by superior officials.¹⁹ These demands might run to a search for runaways, orders for arrest or the gathering of craftsmen for some task required by the governor.²⁰ Petitions were addressed to them, and although they could authorise investigations of crimes, it does not appear that they had any jurisdiction.²¹ Like the ῥηπάριοι, there seem to have been two of them at Oxyrhynchus, though individual ones and larger groups

17 Others held responsible for arrests; P.Cair. Isid. 78 (AD324), P.Abinn. 45 (AD343), and he is specifically named in P.Abinn. 47 (AD346). In charge of guards, Lallemand (1964), p. 166, n. 7.

18 Numerous εἰρήναρχοι, P.Amh. 146 (5th), P.Mich. 591 (6th), P.Lond. 1309 (6th/7th). Tribune, cf. Rouillard (1923), p. 160, fnn. 3, 8. Cod. Theod. 12.14.1 (AD409) banned εἰρήναρχοι.

19 P.Oxy. 1033 (AD392).

20 Fugitives, P.Oxy. 3571 (AD286?), P.Beatty Panop. 1.192-201 (AD298); craftsmen, P.Beatty Panop. 1.213-6, 342-6 (AD298).

21 P.Oxy. 3620 (AD326), P.Herm. Rees 52, 53 (AD399).

are encountered elsewhere.²² The liturgy was neither as powerful nor as glamorous as that of ῥιπάριος, and could be dangerous if under-funded. In P.Oxy. 1033 (AD392) the two νυκτοστράτηγοι claim that without the guards and inspectors that were standard aspects of the job, their duties were too dangerous, and request that either they receive adequate support or be relieved. There were city guards (φύλακες) in the same way that there were village guards. These were nominated by the συστάτης to the λογιστής, and undertook such duties as the guarding of temples (or prisons?). They came under the command of the ῥιπάριοι and the νυκτοστράτηγοι.²³

The city and village police forces performed relatively capably when coping with minor outbreaks of crime, and providing reports that served as the basis for a petition or a court case. On the other hand, it is possible that there was occasional complicity between the police forces and thieves; a number of papyri survive in which they are either accused of negligence or complicity.²⁴ Other than the ῥιπάριος, none of them seem to have possessed even a limited form of jurisdiction and so their functions dealt more with delivering those accused of crimes to the appropriate courts (when so ordered by senior officials) than independently taking firm steps to settle the matter themselves. When there were serious instances of violence, the assistance of troops might be required; the more obvious power of military commanders often led to civilians illegally appealing to them instead of the secular courts.²⁵ In a proclamation of the Prefect, ῥιπάριοι were meant to report such incidences, but in this matter they were fairly powerless since they would have been most unwise to offend the military πραιπόσιτοι on whom they depended for support,²⁶ and who had

22 P.Oxy. 3620 (AD326), 1033 (AD392); cf. Lallemand (1964), p. 165, n. 7.

23 P.Oxy. 3249 (AD326), 1627 (AD342).

24 eg: P.Abinn 48 (AD346), P.Oxy. 2730 (4th), P.S.I. 47 (6th).

25 eg: P.Abinn. 44 (AD342).

26 P.Oxy. 1101 (AD367-70); cf. Cod.Theod. 2.1.9 (AD397).

more power at their disposal. In the Sixth century, at Oxyrhynchus at any rate, it appears that the owners of great estates supplied both troops and ῥιπάριοι, and instances of violence and law-breaking may have been easier to resolve, at least to the satisfaction of the estate owners.

2: THE MILITARY:

Compared to many other provinces in the Later Roman Empire, Egypt was fairly untroubled by invasions until the Seventh century. Other than persistent raiding by nomadic tribes mainly to the south, the main disturbances were internal. In the Fourth century, provincial troops were of two main grades; front line troops and support units. Prolonged lack of exposure to battle took the edge off the combat value of such troops, and they turned to other supplementary activities to improve their incomes.¹ Flavius Abinnaeus was the ἑπαρχὸς εἰλησ, or πραιπόσιτος of the camp of Dionysias in the Arsinoite nome in the Fourth century, a unit composed of lower-grade troops.² Dionysias was established in order to defend the Fayum against incursions by Libyan raiders, but since the end of the Third century it appears that the Libyans had enjoyed a more peaceful relationship with their neighbours. As a result, the purpose intended for the force was largely redundant, and the troops engaged in para-military activities.³ In his *ala* the preoccupation of some of Abinnaeus' men with other matters is apparent; a relative of a recent recruit requests that he not be sent abroad, but rather released from duty to care for his lately widowed mother, while others clearly own cattle and other animals.⁴

The soldiers provided a more effective means of law enforcement than the local police, and their services were

1 A Constitution of Anastasius, AD501, on the Libyan administration (#321, in 'Ancient Roman Statutes'), aimed at reducing the gratuities required of soldiers for various officials and eliminating illegal ones. To meet these, the soldiers may have had to resort to non-military activities.

2 The Archive of Flavius Abinnaeus (Bell, Martin, Turner, Van Berchem (1962)) offers the best knowledge of a unit in Fourth century Egypt. These papyri date to AD341-351.

3 Price (1976), Rémondon (1965).

4 P.Abinn. 19; also, P.Abinn. 33, 34. Animals, P.Abinn. 60 (AD346), 80.

employed for a number of tasks. They could be used to make arrests, or to provide support for local police, such as trying to eliminate smuggling of state controlled goods in their area, or assisting in a man-hunt.⁵ Men, whether officials travelling through the area or craftsmen performing work required by senior officials, might need protection, this to be furnished by the commander of the local camp.⁶ In the early Fourth century, peripheral areas of the Fayum were under economic stress, with the result that there was considerable criminal activity. Although the forces at Dionysias should have been of great use under such circumstances, it appears that a number of the criminals were in fact soldiers.⁷ Villages took their own precautions, not only employing the traditional guards, but in some cases erecting watch-towers.⁸ The effect of the reduced levels of activity seems to have been to lower morale as well as efficiency; Abinnaeus found it difficult to recruit men, and desertions and absenteeism occurred.⁹ More time may have been spent on personal concerns than on military affairs - in one case this is certainly suggested by a letter to Abinnaeus which requested leave of absence until the writer's services were actually required.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the soldiers were still a potent force in the region in the Fourth century despite the apparent reluctance to serve.

The soldiers were dependant on local taxes for their rations. The collection of these was a responsibility of the βουλαί, and military representatives were restricted by laws to the collection of dues from land owned by soldiers, although soldiers were employed to collect taxes from those tardy in

5 P.Abinn. 9, P.Abinn. 42.

6 P.Abinn. 11, P.Abinn. 16.

7 Eg: P.Abinn. 48 (AD346).

8 P.Ross.-Georg. iii. 8 (4th).

9 Recruiting, P.Abinn. 18, 35; leave, P.Abinn. 32 (c.AD346), 34, 37.

10 P.Abinn. 33.

making payments. The system outlined in P.Beatty Panop. 2 (AD300) seems to have been the normal one, in which civilian collectors amassed the taxes and passed them on to the receivers and the *διαδότες*, who in turn transferred them to the military camp; in some cases the soldiers collected cash and some goods from the *στρατηγός* rather than having the payments distributed to them.¹¹ Whatever the laws said, soldiers were clearly active in the collection of some taxes. In the Abinnaeus papyri, several military officials were involved in the actual collection of various commodities for the *annona militaris*, working in close conjunction with subordinates of the *ἐξάκτωρ*. The *ἐξάκτωρ* was ultimately responsible for the process, but thereafter both sides seem to be involved equally in collection and accountancy.¹² It seems that this participation by the military officials was limited to a few villages around their camp rather than throughout the nome; this may have been the result of an agreement between the *ἐξάκτωρ* and the *πραιπόσιτος* to simplify the system with regard to the rations due to the fort at Dionysias. The connection between soldiers and collections is strengthened by the evidence presented by Gascou in O.IFAO inv. 12, in which a centurion appears as an *ἀπαιτητής*.¹³ Beyond this soldiers feature in papyri bearing testimony to their efforts to make requisitions, though whether these were legally condoned or not is uncertain in most of these cases - for example, in one case an official asks Abinnaeus whether soldiers bearing chits are entitled to receive goods from him.¹⁴ The ability of soldiers to make

11 Cod.Theod. 11.7.16 (AD401); 1.14.1 (AD386) land owned by soldiers. P.Abinn. 3 an order to provide soldiers to collect some imperial taxes. Soldiers collecting money and goods from the *στρατηγός*, eg: P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 36-42, 245-9 (AD300). P.Beatty Panop. 1 (AD298) shows the system for an exceptional collection.

12 P.Abinn. 13, 14, 15, 26, 29.

13 Gascou (1986), p. 74, 5th/6th; P.Laur. iii. 45, in which military collectors also appear.

14 P.Abinn. 4.

demands is exhibited by S.B.9207, in which payments are made to them at their request, and in P.Oxy. 1253 a report is sent to the Prefect of requisitions made by officers at Oxyrhynchus - the purpose may have been to indirectly solicit repayment from the Prefect since if the officers had paid there would have been no need to bring it to his attention.¹⁵

Recruitment for the army was an obligation of the civil administration.¹⁶ They had to furnish the prospective recruits to the local camps, in which the military *πραιπόσιτος*, after they had been approved by an imperial representative, apparently had the power to either retain them in the camp or to assign them to service further afield. Since recruitment was local, recruits may have had a vested interest in staying nearby so that they might have the opportunity to look after their own interests or for flight.¹⁷ It was the responsibility of the civil administration to ensure that such recruits did not escape during the journey to their destinations.¹⁸ If this was the case, it did not prevent Abinnaeus independently dispatching agents in order to try to obtain recruits. In one instance the men that he had sent to a village probably exceeded their orders by not only forcibly conscripting a number of men but also indulging in theft.¹⁹ Subsequent methods may have become more refined; in one case a man received a call-up notice for duty, which carefully notified him of the conditions which would render him exempt.²⁰ This may reflect the difficulties

15 S.B. 9207 (2nd); one payment is listed as *ὑπὲρ διασεισμοῦ*, 'for extortion', Lewis (1982a). P.Oxy. 1253 (4th).

16 cf. Carrié (1981) pp. 436-7, Segrè (1942/3).

17 P.Abinn. 35, problems recruiting. P.Abinn. 17, the arrival of an imperial notary for the enrolment of recruits. P.Abinn. 19, petition for a local assignment.

18 P.Oxy. 1190 (AD347) *πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου*; P.Lips. Inv. 281 (post AD381), cf. Lallemand (1964), p. 164, n. 3, Rémondon (1955), pp. 27-8 for a *ῥηπάριος*.

19 P.Abinn. 18.

20 P.Ryl. 609 (AD505).

encountered in acquiring recruits, evident not only in these papyri over recruitment but furthermore in the fact that escorts were required for new recruits lest they abscond before reaching their intended posts.²¹

There is considerable evidence for the ownership of property by soldiers in the papyri. Lewis gave evidence of soldiers in active service buying farm-land under the Principate despite imperial bans on such behaviour, and this trend appears to have continued under the Later Empire.²² Soldiers appear owning animals or land throughout the period, from the time of Abinnaeus to the Sixth century, from humble holdings to quite considerable ones, and with varying wealth and fortune.²³ Such ownership would have become more widespread with the decline in the military role of many of the troops based in Egypt. While it was not restricted to the senior ranks, clearly such people would have had a greater facility for purchase than those below them. The best example of military ownership of land appears in the Taurinos Archive, in which the property of a family of soldiers can be observed over three generations. Taurinos son of Plusammon was a soldier based near Hermopolis, and over a tour of duty he rose steadily through the ranks from soldier to *primicerius*. From B.G.U. 2137 (AD426) it appears that his property was modest, but it was very considerably increased by his son and grand-son. These men both enjoyed careers in the office staff of the military service of the Thebaid, but seem to have been able to take an active interest in the progress of their property as well. This they did as purchaser, lessor and lessee. Their property comprised houses as well as land.²⁴ The scale of their

21 eg: P.Lips. Inv. 281 (post AD381).

22 Lewis (1982a), B.G.U. 462 (AD155-6), P.Lond. 1157v. (AD246 etc.).

23 Animals, P.Abinn. 60 (AD346), 80. Property, B.G.U. 316 (AD359), B.G.U. 2160 (AD488), P.Michael.43- 44 (AD526, 527).

24 B.G.U. 2162 (AD491).

operations increased; for example, John the son of Taurinos, leased 18 *arouras* in AD476 (B.G.U. 2151).²⁵ The process observed here is akin to that of the expansion of land-holdings of the great-estate owners, though on a less grandiose scale. The limits of expansion were conditioned in relation to wealth, and high-ranking members of the central or provincial bureaucracy had greater access to this than those of modest military rank. Hence, although the progress made over a century by the family of Taurinos was impressive, it was overshadowed by the οἰκοί of the Sixth century.

The scale of ownership and purchase depended, much as would be expected, on the relative rank of the buyer. Carrié attributes the growth in purchasing power of soldiers to Constantine's commutation of their pay into gold. During a period of high inflation, this may have improved their position compared to the βουλευταί. He gives two mid-Fourth century examples of camp commanders who subsequently became landowners of note in the Fayum, one of them being Abinnaeus; the latter may have had no trouble picking up land locally since that part of the Fayum was at that time badly affected by lack of artificial irrigation, and people may have been happy to sell.²⁶ Soldiers owning land did not have everything their own way; some, more likely the poorer, experienced similar problems to their civilian colleagues - in the Sixth century, one hapless soldier progressively fell into debt and signed away most of his rights to his property in an effort to cover it.²⁷

To what extent the soldiers exerted greater and more effective patronage over the *coloni* on their land is open to question. In local terms the commanders of units could certainly apply sufficient force to ensure that their will was

25 cf. the Taurinos Archive, intro. pp. xix-xxvi.

26 Carrié (1976), pp. 168-9; cf. B.G.U. 316 (AD359), and the Abinnaeus archive. Fayum land, Bagnall (1992), p. 136.

27 cf. Keenan (1980a), P.Michael 43-44 (AD526, 527), P.Mich. 670 (AD526).

carried out, but it does not seem that Egypt was in the grip of the military. The troubles of Libanius concerning his *coloni* and the influence of a military commander seem to find some comparison in the papyri, but not to the same level of severity. In his Oration on Patronage, the commander manages (so Libanius alleges) to intimidate the judge so that he decides in his favour. In Egypt, when men of Abinnaeus were guilty of a number of crimes, there is no suggestion that the Duke of the Thebaid would be unable to set the matter to rights to the satisfaction of the petitioner. The πρύτανης Chaeremon had had his request for an investigation into the matter turned down by Abinnaeus, and was now threatening to go to his superior unless the men and goods that had been removed were restored, the implication being that he would rather settle the matter between them than go to the tedious lengths of a court case.²⁸ There is little evidence for the direct patronage of peasants by the military; in one papyrus a *centurio princeps* asks that one of his tenants be excused a liturgy to which he had been assigned, and the word 'patron' appears on several occasions in the Abinnaeus archive.²⁹ Carrié envisages a scenario in which the military and the βουλευταί were in competition for the man-power on the land; however, the situation in the Fayum in the mid-Fourth century was exceptional, and the loss and marginalisation of lands may have created locally a more mobile work-force. Although flight was a problem throughout the Later Roman Empire, I do not believe that a particular trend has been established from one classification of owner to another.

The πραιπόσιτος of each camp had a limited amount of jurisdiction over criminal cases involving soldiers and veterans. The use of a military court was required by imperial law in cases in which a soldier was the defendant,³⁰ though it seems that in Egypt, if not elsewhere, veterans and their relations also

28 P.Abinn. 18, Lib. Or. 47, cf. Carrié (1976), pp. 162-7.

29 P.Oxy. 1424 (c.AD318), cf. Rémondon (1965), p. 140.

30 Cod.Theod. 2.1.2 (AD355), 9.2.2 (AD365), Nov.Theod. (AD438).

took advantage of their status to petition a military court even when they were prosecuting.³¹ Petitions received by Abinnaeus exhorted him to arrest the men accused of whatever crime, restore any stolen goods or property, and then notify the *dux*, the military commander of the province, since he exercised jurisdiction in such matters. Once the *dux* had made a ruling, based presumably on the report transmitted by the local commander, no doubt that man was responsible for seeing that the decision was carried out. The obvious ability of a military commander to ensure this made the use of this system very attractive. Failure of a civil court in the execution of its decision meant that the relevant officials had to be petitioned once more, making the matter time-consuming and expensive.

As a result, civilians began to take cases before military tribunals that did not involve soldiers.³² This may have been because of the effectiveness of the process or because of their proximity to the camp, or a combination of the two. In one instance a man who had suffered the loss of eighty-two sheep in fleece through theft by a fellow villager petitioned both the *πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου* and the military *πραιπόσιτος*.³³ The matter may have been of such urgency to him that he wished to have it resolved as quickly and as decisively as possible, and by using the two options available to him simultaneously he hoped to avoid delays. In another case a man whose harvest had been stolen appealed to the camp commander at Hipponon to enforce the verdict of a civil court, which was being ignored.³⁴ The need for military courts was clear enough; soldiers with time

31 P.Abinn. 45 (AD343), 47 (AD346): veteran's daughter, P.Abinn. 51, 52 (AD346).

32 Cod. Theod. 2.1.9 (AD397) to the Augustal Prefect, expressly forbidding such activity; cf. a Praefectural Edict, P.Oxy. 1101 (AD367-70), in 'Ancient Roman Statutes', #316.

33 P.Thead. 22 to the *πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου*; P.Thead. 23 = P.Abinn. 44 (AD342) to the military *πραιπόσιτος* - *Φλαοῦίω Ἄβιννέω ἐπάρξω εἰλησ στρατιωτῶ κάστρων...*

34 P.Amh. 142 (c.AD340).

on their hands, finding themselves to be the the major means of law enforcement in the area, took advantage at the expense of local civilians. This took the form of theft, drunken and boorish behaviour and illegal conscription to name but a few examples.³⁵ An appeal to the military *πραϊπόσιτος* was the only way to obtain restitution of the stolen goods and punishment of the criminal; however, if they had done the actions with his knowledge or approval - tacitly implied in P.Abinn. 18, in which Abinnaeus declines to investigate various excesses committed by his men - then petitions, or threats of so doing, would have to be made to the *dux*.³⁶

The relationship between local administrative organisations and military camps was close as a result of a variety of reasons: their living in close proximity to each other, the latter being responsible for furnishing the former with their supplies and recruits, and in policing and the administration of justice. The example of the Fayum is conditioned by the prevailing situation of economic upheaval because of the problems with irrigation there, so it is not clear whether the violence and crime observed there between soldier and civilian is typical or, as I suspect, exacerbated by those conditions.³⁷ Whatever the cause, conditions in the Fayum favoured the military over the civilians since the former did not have to pay tax until they were landowners; when the latter had to sell because of inability to pay them, soldiers could step in and buy the land cheaply. Abinnaeus would have been able to acquire property quite easily. Elsewhere, the skills of an entrepreneur may have been required to achieve the same levels of success, as in the Taurinos archive.

The camp commanders had a considerable amount of power and influence, but this was tempered by other sources

35 P.Abinn. 48 (AD346); P.Abinn. 28; P.Abinn. 18.

36 P.Abinn. 18; this papyrus mentions other complaints made to the *πρύτανις* concerning Abinnaeus' men.

37 Rémondon (1965) cites evidence in the Abinnaeus Archive for this struggle between soldier and civilian.

available to petitioners. As I have indicated already, a *πρύτανις* hoped to obtain the compliance of a commander by threatening to refer a matter to his superior. Camp commanders could only exercise what authority they possessed locally. They were also responsible for the payment of certain dues to their superiors, as a constitution of Anastasius on the Libyan administration makes clear; it included a schedule aimed at reducing the size of gratuities required of soldiers for various officials, and eliminating illegal ones.³⁸ The Emperors were keen to stamp out any illegal methods of making money or exerting power by the military; one such effort was an order to the Praetorian Prefect to stop the Counts of the Egyptian border from issuing post warrants, something that they were not entitled to do.³⁹

Another source of power that rivalled the power of the military was that of the Church. Relations with the Church and its representatives seem generally to have been good. Incidents occur in which this was not the case - for example, the beating of Melitians by troops of the *dux* (P.Lond.1914 (AD335)) - but such examples seem to be exceptional. In the Abinnaeus archive, contact between clergy and Abinnaeus seems to have been regular; a priest, in three different papyri, asks him for nets to catch gazelles, asks to meet him on urgent business and requests that he let some camel-drivers go to a festival that they wish to attend.⁴⁰ In another case a deacon who has suffered a theft appealed to Abinnaeus for restitution of his property, and ended his letter by emphasizing his position, presumably because he felt that this would have the effect of galvanising Abinnaeus into action.⁴¹ Not only did members of the clergy seek to obtain the assistance of Abinnaeus, but also to stay his hand. In P.Abinn. 32 a priest wrote to him because

38 Constitution of Anastasius, AD501, #321 in 'Ancient Roman Statutes'.

39 Cod.Theod. 8.5.52 (AD393).

40 P.Abinn. 6, 7, 8.

41 P.Abinn. 55 (AD351).

he was unable to travel to him in person and interceded for a soldier who had deserted. The hold that the Church possessed over some soldiers is demonstrated by the assumption of office by an ex-soldier in the church of Hermopolis, where he held the position of *πρεσβύτερος*.⁴²

Nonetheless, it is clear that on a local basis, soldiers in the Fourth century had certain advantages over their civilian fellows - they enjoyed tax concessions, and often seem to have had a large amount of spare time. To be fair, they seem frequently to have spent this in business of their own rather than looting their neighbours, but there was little that civilians could do to prevent their making requisitions as they desired. The power of an individual commander may have depended on a number of factors - for example, the density of units in the area, and the proximity to his superior and any other sources of influence. At Dionysias Abinnaeus was out on a limb in what appears to have been a low priority area, with only one or two other units in the area.⁴³ He possessed police powers above and beyond those of the civil police forces, and had the ability to enforce immediately his decisions and those of the *dux*. The desirability of Abinnaeus' position is amply demonstrated by the number of men who had solicited letters of appointment to it,⁴⁴ and the status of the incumbent discernible by the fact that not only could he afford to travel to Constantinople, but is regarded as worthy of carrying petitions there for others.⁴⁵ The power of such men paled in proportion to the quality of their troops, and was eclipsed by the advent of the system of *βουκελλάριοι* on the estates of great landowners. Until then they had a marked effect on local administration, with the capability of discretionary use of the power at their disposal.

42 B.G.U. 2182 (AD510), S.B. 7369 (AD512).

43 cf. Abinnaeus Archive, intro. pp. 13-14. P.Abinn. 28 refers to a commander of soldiers in Arsinoe, cf. Rémondon (1965), pp. 134-6, Price (1976).

44 P.Abinn. 1 (c.AD341).

45 P.Abinn. 58-59 (AD345).

CHAPTER 7:

1: GREAT ESTATES:

The term 'great estate' is a rather vague one, but it is intended to refer to the large properties of wealthy men that developed in Egypt over the Fourth and Fifth centuries, and appear at their apogee in the papyri of the Sixth century. These estates fall under three categories - those owned by the state, those by the Church and those under private ownership.¹ Unfortunately, we are ignorant of the relevant proportions and number of each type. Some of the estates in question were very large, but it is difficult to estimate their exact size or boundaries because of insufficient information.² In the Sixth century, such large estates were not united as a single mass, but were spread out (following the example of their smaller predecessors of earlier centuries), and each component might differ greatly in size from the others. However, allowing for variations in the titles of personnel and the scale of operations, they all seem to have been run on similar principles. There is no easy classification of size for great estates, since they varied in magnitude in proportion to the wealth and power of the owner and until the Sixth century were apparently still in a process of expansion. As the estates grew and their owners began to play a more significant role in local politics and administration, so their nature changed and they acquired more public duties and responsibilities. In the Fifth century they began to assume a number of the compulsory public services of the cities. Service in the βουλή had depended on the ownership of land liable to sustain such duties rather than on the original owner; on this basis estate owners came to undertake city magistracies and liturgies in proportion to their relative wealth and property. In this

1 They were termed οἴκοι; private great estates were called glorious or noble houses - ἔνδοξοι οἴκοι, Gascou (1985), p. 4, n. 3.

2 The Apion estate, the best known, centred around Oxyrhynchus and had lands elsewhere (P.Oxy. 150 (AD590)); Johnson and West (1949), pp. 54-5, 274.

chapter I intend to examine the development of these estates and the role that they came to play in local administration.

The progression of the great estates can be traced back to the Fourth century, and perhaps even earlier. Private estates of considerable dimensions had existed previously (such as that of Calpurnia Heraklia), but they had been restricted in growth because of the jealously guarded existence of public land and because municipalities were still relatively capable administrative entities.³ Under Diocletian these restrictions were removed - public land was made available for sale and private ownership, and the cities were set up as the administrative unit of the nome; their subsequent weakness as a body left a power vacuum there. Individuals found it much easier to acquire land (and to be able to retain it within the family) at a time when land-ownership most reflected financial security in a time of high inflation. Since temporal power and wealth largely reflected relative importance within the hierarchy of the βουλή, landowners who bought more land and could sustain the taxes realized increased wealth and influence in the one purchase, and became a greater focus for local patronage.

Evidence for land speculators and entrepreneurs can be found in the papyri. In the Third century Maclennan has highlighted the activities of Aurelius Serenus of Oxyrhynchus,⁴ while for the Sixth century Keenan has done the same for a group of landowners in the village of Aphrodito.⁵ Other than a straight-forward purchase of public or personal property through the usual channels, other methods could be employed, such as some of those by the entrepreneurs. One example is a lease undertaken by one Phoibammon from a financially

3 Rathbone (1991), a Third century estate, subsequently repossessed by the Emperor. Others, P.Oxy. 3047 (AD245) for Calpurnia Heraklia, P.Oxy. 2240 (AD211). Gascou (1985), p. 28, private land advanced to the detriment of public and municipal land.

4 Maclennan (1968), pp. 42-3; but see Fikhman (1975), p. 787, n. 1.

5 Keenan (1980a, 1985a) - what happened here may reflect earlier developments elsewhere in Egypt.

troubled soldier; in return for loans he makes to the latter, in lieu of interest, he has the lessor lighten the terms of the lease. This process continued until, on taking another loan, he resigned any right of removing Phoibammon from the property until the debts had been repaid. Perhaps in the end the property, all or in part, was signed away to cover the debts.⁶ This was all perfectly legal, and failure to cover the debts of course left men like Phoibammon as the effective owners of the property.

More aggressive means of acquiring other peoples' land could have been employed. Intimidation was allegedly used on occasion in an attempt to force people off their own land: Aurelius Isidorus in the early Fourth century and Dioscorus in the Sixth both complained that such methods were being used against them by more powerful land-owners.⁷ On the other hand, it seems that *coloni* occasionally sought the help of wealthier men for protection from the depredations of tax collectors, and presented them with their land on condition that they became their tenants. The protection of a powerful man would probably have been enough to prevent any extortion, and the example of the tax collectivity in the Heroninus Archive shows that such organisations worked efficiently. Such agreements may have afforded a better, or at least more secure, standard of living to the tenants.⁸ The Church must have received much of its land through gifts and bequests to judge by its rapid spread. Wipszycka suggested that much of the land it had been given may have been of poor quality, and thus was offered to tenants under emphyteutic lease. Like other land-owners, the Church leased land as lessor and lessee, and acquired it as opportunity

⁶ Keenan (1980a); P.Michael. 43 (AD526), P.Mich. 670 (AD527), P.Michael. 44 (AD527).

⁷ P.Cair. Isid. 69 (AD310), P.Lond. 1677 (AD566-7).

⁸ Rathbone (1989, 1991). P.Hernals 16.1 (AD488), B.G.U. 304 (AD553) indefinite loans of property to landowners in return for their protection; Rouillard (1923), pp. 10-11.

presented itself.⁹

Evidence for the evolution of the great estates of the Sixth century is sparse in the Fourth century. They were still at a nascent stage, and the development seems to have been gradual rather than abrupt. The relative lack of evidence from the Fifth century complicates calculations of their progress. In his study of land-lists from Hermopolis, Bowman discovered a high inequality of distribution between the people on the lists, but this is not surprising since such an imbalance is typical rather than exceptional in the ancient world. His conclusion from the comparison of the two lists was that there was no evidence for the build-up of the great estates at Hermopolis in the mid-Fourth century.¹⁰ Evidence for large land-holdings emerges, but for nothing on the scale of some of the largest estates in the Sixth century. A list of estate owners appears in P.Oxy. 1747; Fikhman notes other papyri from Fourth century estates, including one (P.Oxy. 93 (AD362)) from that of a member of the city upper class.¹¹ Estate officials appear in the Fourth century, but such mentions seldom give indications of the size of the estates in question.¹² What evidence we possess from the Fifth century shows the estates rapidly approaching the structure of those of the Sixth century. That of Flavia Kyria provides some illustration, while the Taurinos Archive shows considerable gains of property in a Fifth century military household, but on a small scale. P.Oxy. 2039 (5th Cent.) is a table of assignments of the duty of supplying ῥυπάριοι for Oxyrhynchus, spread between the various great houses. Papyri from late in the century show the Apions occupying

9 Wipszycka (1972) pp. 35-8. P.Lond. 1686 (AD565) Dioscorus sells land to a monastery.

10 P.Flor. 71, Bowman (1985); also MacIennan (1968), Fikhman (1975), Bagnall (1992).

11 P.Oxy. 1747, ll. 58-72 (3rd/4th); Fikhman (1975), pp. 788-9.

12 eg: the προνοητής (steward), P.Oxy. 3514-5 (both 3rd), 3406-7, 3859 (all 4th), 3388 (AD342), P.Mert. 38 (mid-4th), 41 (c.AD406).

magistracies at various cities.¹³ Documentation for the Sixth century is good compared to that available earlier. The Apion estate is the best covered, but it would be unwise to judge the others by its standards: it was one of the largest, and its rise and apparent stagnation may not have been shared chronologically by the others. Both Gascou and Bonneau present evidence to suggest that it ceased to expand by the middle of the Sixth century, but stabilised until the invasions of the Seventh century.¹⁴

While the legal codes are a less accurate record than the papyri of what happened in Egypt, they certainly support this trend in laws aimed specifically at the provinces there. Laws against the giving of protection by patrons, presumably most often landowners with considerable possessions, to villages in Egypt, commenced as early as AD360.¹⁵ This suggests that already by the middle of the Fourth century some landowners were beginning to spread their influence, and four subsequent laws in the next forty years demonstrate that the Emperors were experiencing difficulty in dealing with the problem. In the Fourth century, the village of Euhemeria in the Fayum appears under the patronage of one Nechos, although not completely under his control to judge by the tone of the papyrus.¹⁶ Eventually, in AD415, the Emperors had to concede defeat and grant to the landowners the lands that had come under their control by a certain date on condition that they undertook to fulfil their proportional share of tax payments, obligations and liturgies.¹⁷ This last law granted them the right

13 cf. Fikhman (1975), p. 790, B.G.U. XII, intro. p. xxi-xxii, Gascou (1985), pp. 62-3. Apions, eg: S.B. 9152 (AD492) the λογιστεία at Herakleopolis.

14 Gascou (1972a), p. 248, Bonneau (1970), pp. 52, 62.

15 Cod. Theod. 11.24.1 (AD360).

16 P.Ross-Georg. iii. 8 (4th), cf. Johnson and West (1949), pp. 28, 45, and Rathbone (1991), p. 407.

17 Cod. Theod. 11.24.2-5 (AD370-399), 11.24.6 (AD415); the latter anticipated disobedience (section 2), and contained measures to counter it.

to collect the taxes on their own lands; judicial enforcement of the law was restricted to the court of the Augustal Prefect. Further evidence of the growth in power of estate owners is a law from the Fourth century aimed at Egypt, ordering that private prisons not be employed on pain of the penalty for high treason.¹⁸

The relationship of οἶκοι with the state has been the subject of considerable discussion. The older views of Hardy have been challenged by those of Gascou, who envisaged a far greater public responsibility for them in relation to the state than did the former.¹⁹ The private estates were private institutions with public duties to perform on behalf of the state (and the cities), and as such they must have fallen partially under state control because of its inherent interest. To what extent this influence manifested itself is uncertain, but the Emperor, as with all things in the Empire, had the right to avail himself of the goods of Church and private οἶκοι and to do with them as he wished: even the Apions encountered this power, temporarily losing their lands under Anastasius until the accession of Justin I.²⁰ The φόρος ('rent-tax') found on the estates seems to strengthen this sense of the οἶκοι having a strong public leaning; the problems distinguishing the true meaning of the word in this context, either rent or tax, is reckoned by Gascou to reflect the mixture of private and public elements in the estates. This is further supported by the appearance of such officials as the δημόσιος ναύτης τοῦ ἐνδόξου οἴκου - a public functionary directly associated with a private estate.²¹ As a result of this close relationship with the state,

18 Cod. Theod. 9.11.1 (AD388).

19 Hardy (1931), Gascou (1985).

20 cf. Gascou (1985), p. 33, Nov. Just. 7.2; the Apions, cf. Gascou (1985), pp. 62-3.

21 Gascou (1985), pp. 13-19; the public context of the collections on private estates; also MacCoull (1989), pp. 498-9: for the boatman, cf. P.Oxy. 136 (AD583).

Gascou has questioned whether the private οἰκοί enjoyed αὐτοπραγία as other historians have suggested. Αὐτοπραγία was the right to collect and hand over taxes on personal property to the provincial administration, by-passing the provincial financial organisation. But the close connection of the οἰκοί with these functions of the cities and bureaucracy suggests that far from being exempt from such a system, they actively participated within it.²²

Although the estates had these and other duties and connections with public officials, the owners were very much the dominant forces on them. They often took an active hand in their administration, and their managers (eg: ἀντιγεοῦχος, διοικητής) ran them as required in their absence. Contracts seem to have been made between the landowners personally and those on their estates - such as those for employment on the estate, for spare irrigation machine parts and deeds of surety.²³ Their power was augmented by the tenure of administrative positions within the central and provincial bureaucracies and the city. These official duties often conferred judicial power, and increased the power of the landowner on his own estate. It is thus very difficult to establish whether decisions taken were done so on the basis of formal jurisdiction conferred by position or office, or whether the owner's extra-legal influence and authority were responsible. Other than various rights over their tenants, the codes confer few legal rights on estate owners over other people on their estates. Wealth and power were a powerful combination, however, and if the required results could not be

22 Cod. Theod. 11.24.6 (AD415) formed the basis for the arguments for αὐτοπραγία on great estates, but it is only definitely found at Aphrodito in Egypt. Rémondon (1974a) perceived a difference between the αὐτοπραγία of Aphrodito and that of great estates. cf. Gascou (1985), pp. 38-9.

23 P.Klein. Form. 1094 (late 6th) the landowner Sophia from Arsinoe orders her notary to give money to a βουκελλάριος. Contracts: P.Oxy. 136 (AD583), 140 (AD550); P.Oxy. 2724 (AD469), 1985 (AD543), P.Oxy. 1979 (AD613).

obtained within the laws, they could be broken. In a petition to the Dux Thebaidis, a *colonus* alleged that his landowners had first of all perpetrated injustice against him in the matter of taxes and then, when he had taken them to court, that they used influence to win the case and had now taken away all of his possessions.²⁴ With soldiers and prisons on some estates, those landowners had an even more powerful position.

The position of the large estate owners was in some cases considerably enhanced by holding a position in the central or provincial bureaucracy. The Apions held several consulships and a number of high offices. Their high rank gave them tremendous influence within the provinces, especially since they must have out-ranked many members of the Egyptian provincial bureaucracy, and they held a considerable number of those positions, too.²⁵ Other less influential landowners could nonetheless hold positions such as the *παγαρχία*; this, for example, was held by the illustrious Patricia, who discharged it through a subordinate.²⁶ It is possible that this office could be held in combination between two *οἴκοι*, since there are instances of joint tenure.²⁷ Such positions bestowed considerable power within the provinces, including in some cases judicial and military authority. These supplemented that which the landowners possessed in their own right, and added a stronger legal aspect to activities they took on their own estates.

The great estates had gradually assumed control over the traditional functions of the cities, and by the Sixth century, although the façade of municipal organisation survived, they

²⁴ P.Cair. Masp. 67279 (c.AD570).

²⁵ Positions held by the Apions, cf. Hardy (1931), pp. 25-37. Consulships of Strategus Apion, Bagnall, Cameron, Schwarz, Worp (1987), p. 613, and Martindale (1980), pp. 110-112. P.Oxy. 2020 (6th), Fl. Anastasia had the title *illustris*, cf. Van Haelst (1966), p. 588.

²⁶ P.Lond. 1660 (c.AD553). The *παγαρχία*, cf. Liebeschuetz (1973), Gascou (1972).

²⁷ eg: P.Lond. 1660 (c.AD553), 1661 (AD553).

were basically run by the owners of the οἶκοι. In accord with this encroachment, the nature of the offices and the process of election to them had changed. There were no longer any elections to office, but many were performed on a rotational system based on the ability of each οἶκος to perform them. The same seems to have been true for the lesser liturgical functions of the city; the papyri give us instances of estate contributions to city institutions, such as the hippodrome.²⁸ When this change occurred in Egypt is not certain; in the legal codes, the election of the λογιστής was transferred to the *honorati, possessores*, the bishops and the βουλευταί in the Sixth century, while the ἔκδικος had apparently been elected this way about a century beforehand - later, Justinian made it a liturgy to be held in rotation by the leading citizens of the cities.²⁹ This need not have applied to Egypt, but laws occasionally confirmed what had been regular practice for some time in some provinces - for example, the οἶκος of the Apions in the Herakleopolite nome had assumed the λογιστεία as early as AD492.³⁰ The rotational concept of the performance of some of these liturgies dated back to the Fifth century. A papyrus survives detailing the supply of ῥιπάριοι to Oxyrhynchus; it seems that when a member of the rota died, the other landowners had to assume the duties of that οἶκος. This is also revealed in two other papyri in which the οἶκος of Gabriella and that of the Apions had to undertake the positions of πατήρ τῆς πόλεως, λογιστής and πρόεδρος on behalf of the defunct οἶκος of Timagenes.³¹ If three such positions were apparently quite

28 P.Oxy. 145 (AD552), 152 (AD618).

29 Λογιστής: Nov. Just. 75 and 128, cf. Rees (1953-4), p. 94, n. 76. Ἐκδικος: Cod. Just. 1.55.8 (AD409) the absence of this law from the Theodosian Code led Jones (1940), pp. 208-9, n. 104, to suggest that it may not have applied to the East; cf. Rees (1952), p.88; Nov. Just. 15 (AD535), liturgical service, Rees (1952), p. 92f.

30 S.B. 9152 (AD492).

31 P.Oxy 2780 (AD553), S.B. 11079 (AD571); the same combination appears in P.Mich. Inv. 3780 (AD517), Sijpesteijn (1987a). The ζυγοστάτης appears in P.Oxy. 2780 (AD553)

routinely assigned in a group, it shows to what extent they must have been devalued, and they may have been mainly honorific. It would seem likely that such liturgical duties were assigned according to the ability to perform them, as were lesser liturgies (for example, there were nine contributors towards the painting of the baths at Oxyrhynchus).³² This seems to have been done by rotation as well since, in the example given, there were nine contributors only, although we know of many other potential sources in that area elsewhere (in P.Oxy. 2020, approximately the same date, there are many more, some the same as those appearing in 2040). Gascou suggests that this was done by a system of shares, reflecting the percentage contribution required from each οἶκος that year, termed the μερίδος.³³ This may have varied according to each tax, and some οἶκοι were not presumably required to contribute each year.

The Church as a landowner also fulfilled such liturgical and financial obligations. In two papyri from Oxyrhynchus one church, presumably the largest there, provided nearly 10% of the barley and nearly 11% of the money required for the repainting of the baths.³⁴ Alongside its liturgical obligations, the Church also provided a number of services which were of indirect benefit to the state, under the heading of charities. The Church undertook to look after the very poor, travellers and those not in a position to help themselves. To this extent, some accommodation and distributions were made. In some instances such charitable institutions may have served a wider purpose for the benefit of the state - one hospital had a prison attached to it - and such expenses as the Church undertook was money saved by the state and cities.³⁵ There was a wide

32 P.Oxy. 2040 (c.AD580), cf. Gascou (1985), pp. 45-9.

33 Gascou (1985), pp. 40-1.

34 P.Oxy. 2020 (AD580s), P.Oxy. 2040 (c.AD580), cf. Wipszycka (1972), p. 48.

35 cf. Wipszycka (1972), pp. 109-118; P.Oxy. 2238 (AD551).

diversity in churches and monasteries and the amount of property they owned; only the largest would have contributed in the same manner as private οἴκοι, while some of the smallest were actually beneficiaries of the latter's charity, being located on their property.³⁶ Furthermore, church and private οἴκοι alike both provided a number of services for the state beyond the payment of taxes and the provision of members of the city administration.

The οἴκοι assumed a number of duties that had been inflicted on the cities in the Fourth century. Some of these pertained to transport, not only to that of taxes in kind but also, according to Gasco, concerning the ὄξυς δρόμος, the imperial post service.³⁷ Οἴκοι were no doubt made responsible for transport services on their lands, and perhaps also participated in payments for others on a liturgical basis, depending on their facilities and capabilities. They had to supply the salaries of professional men to administer the stables, and also contributed part or all of the necessary fodder and maintenance.³⁸ Most must have owned or had access to donkeys in order to get grain to the river ports, though it is quite possible that, with demands for horses being made from various sources that shortages may have occurred.³⁹ Some estates may have had their transport system for the facility of their own officials, but if this was the case it is hard to separate such an organisation from the imperial express post which they also administered.⁴⁰

36 eg: P.Oxy. 3804 (AD566).

37 Gasco (1985), p. 53f. He doubts whether there was a decline in the imperial service in favour of private ones.

38 P.Oxy. 2028 (6th), cf. P.Oxy. 2021 (6th/7th).

39 P.Oxy. 3804, ll. 237-8 (AD566) a salary paid to camel drivers. On contemporary transportation, cf. Bagnall (1985a). In P.Oxy. 1858 (6th/7th) a claim of shortages at one stable.

40 P.Oxy. 138 (AD610-611) it is unclear what the βαδίστικον στάβλον was, but a note of which estate officials could use its mounts is included. Only

An insight into the transport of taxes is granted in a contract between the estate owner and a steward (προνοητής), in which the latter acknowledges himself to be responsible for the transportation of grain to the δημόσιος ναύτης, who was in charge of the boats; internal transport was the direct concern of the estate. The provision of boats for transport of the tax grain down the Nile can only have fallen to those in possession of such means of transport, while those without could have supplied officials and money for the expenses involved.⁴¹ The use of those of the monastery of Metanoia, near Alexandria, is attested in the papyri, and its agents (διακονηταί) appear on the boats. There is disagreement as to whether the wheat they transported went to the monastery or was part of the έμβολή, however, which may cast doubt as to whether the service was liturgical or not.⁴² Presumably the duties were allocated on a basis of wealth and capacity, probably in a more fixed manner than other ones, given the personal interest of estate owners in the transportation of goods on their own properties.

Irrigation was another area of particular concern for estates. It seems that they were responsible for their own lands, and equipment available will presumably have depended on the relative wealth of the employer. Machines were sometimes placed under the control of tenants on their land, and guarded by them or others; in one case the designated guardian swears that he will not be party to any theft of it on pain of a 24 *solidi* fine.⁴³ Small-holders sometimes contracted with the owners for the use of the machines - a Fifth century lease of a piece of

very large estates might have had their own express posts, but cf. Gascou (1985), pp. 56-9.

41 Fl. Serenus makes a contract with a stable manager, which Gascou (1985), p. 55, claims is a public liturgy, P.Oxy. 140 (AD550). P.Oxy. 1871 (5th) the mechanics of a transport system, probably on a church estate.

42 On Metanoia, Hardy (1931), p. 58, Johnson and West (1949), p. 242, Rémondon (1971), Gascou (1976a).

43 P.Oxy. 139 (AD612) by a πρωτοφύλαξ.

land includes a clause permitting part use of a machine. On occasion it seems that landowners carried out irrigation repairs and works on not only their land but on others' as well, subject to some remuneration.⁴⁴ Ποταμῖται could be hired to work on the dykes by landowners; it is not entirely clear whether they had entirely replaced the liturgical service of the earlier Empire, which had been performed by local landowners and tenants.⁴⁵ While the responsibility for irrigation might be envisaged as a liturgy, the element of self-interest was strong, since improved irrigation can only have benefited the owners. Furthermore, this self-interest may have led them into considerable irrigation projects that benefited not just themselves but those in the vicinity. Payments received from other beneficiaries must have reduced their costs; for example, in P.Oxy. 1913 (c.AD555?) half of the salary of a workman operating on six sakiyehs is paid for by the landowner, half by the people who lived there. Here the interests of the state and the landowners directly coincided, and little direction or incentive was necessary to encourage them.

Οἴκοι were also directly involved in the administration of public order. This went beyond the provision of δειπάριοι and the duties that that position entailed. Landowners employed guards on their own lands as did villages and cities, but the most important had assumed a more important role in the military organisation of the provinces.⁴⁶ Βουκελλάριοι start to appear in Egypt in the Fifth century, and in the Sixth century they appear not only as soldiers under military commanders but also on great estates.⁴⁷ The βουκελλάριοι seem to have

44 Lease, P.Oxy. 3803 (AD411). P.Oxy. 3804, l. 133 (AD566) payment for use of an irrigation machine. P.Oxy 1917 (6th) contains a payment from a village; cf. Bonneau (1970) pp. 58-60.

45 P.Oxy. 1911, ll. 166-8 (AD557); for dyke works, P.Oxy. 1053 (6th/7th), P.Bad. 95 (7th), Schnebel (1928).

46 P.Oxy. 1913, l. 16 (c.AD555?) payment to two ἀγροφύλακες employed to guard two irrigation machines; also P.Oxy. 3804, ll. 241-3 (AD566).

47 Βουκελλάριοι, Hardy (1931), pp. 63-4, Rémondon (1974), pp. 25-9, Gascou (1976).

replaced the old *numeri* as front-line troops, and an unknown percentage were provided by the οἴκοι. Their relationship to landowners and the military commanders of the provinces is not absolutely certain; it seems that the estates hired and equipped them, and furnished their supplies, maintaining them on their land, and that in times of need they might be placed under the command of the provincial military official.⁴⁸ They fell somewhere between being private and public soldiers, and may perhaps be regarded as a liturgy on the οἴκοι for the benefit of the state, presumably taking the place of the *aurum tironicum* of the Fourth century.

The estate owners were in charge of those on their estates in the interim periods, and made use of them to perform various duties. Such duties varied from the passive (escorting wheat to Alexandria) to the active (suppressing unrest on or near the estate).⁴⁹ In these capacities, they performed under the orders of the owner as private soldiers: this gave the estate owners a lot of local power, adding the power of compulsion to that which they derived from their positions and prestige. Their use on the estates could have been for private or public purposes, and it may have been extremely difficult to dissociate the two: in the normal manner of things their interests may have been broadly coincident with those of the state (ensuring peaceful conditions to facilitate tax collection). Βουκελλάριοι, many being of barbarian origin, were not always easy to control, and sometimes took the law into their own hands. Examples of this vary from the illegal acquisition of goods to widespread looting and assault in a village; the latter may have been ordered by their commander, a πάγαρχος, or the troops may have exceeded their orders.⁵⁰ Other types of

48 Gascou (1976) argues for this structure, citing P.Oxy. 1920, 2046 (both 6th) and 2480 (AD565).

49 P.Klein. Form. 1094 (late 6th), P.Oxy. 150 (AD590).

50 B.G.U. 836 (AD530s), P.Cair. Masp. 67002 (AD567).

soldier appear on estates, though not usually in such numbers nor as frequently - among these were σύμμαχοι, messengers who could be armed as swordsmen (σπαθάριοι), νεώτεροι and στρατιῶται.⁵¹ Βουκελλάριοι were not the preserve of lay οἴκοι alone; they appear in the employ of Church οἴκοι as well.⁵²

Prisons were banned on estates in a law as early as the Fourth century in Egypt, and subsequently by later ones.⁵³ And yet they are attested on a considerable number of estates in Egypt in the Sixth century in quite routine fashion, one papyrus being a list of those currently housed in a prison.⁵⁴ It is not easy to reconcile these apparently contradictory circumstances, the two obvious explanations being that the landowners regularly and persistently defied the state in this matter, or that the prisons, despite their appearance, were not private. From the papyri, it seems that they were most often employed for the temporary restraint of fugitive *coloni*, prior to releasing them again, with a deed of surety to prevent their resorting to flight once more.⁵⁵ This might tie in well with the increased rights granted to the landowners in relation to *coloni* over the Fourth to Sixth centuries; prison was not intended to be a form of punishment in its own right, but more of a staging post to the rehabilitation of the prisoners. However, the prisons could become very full, and the οἶκος was responsible for the provisions of the prisoners, so it was in the interests of

51 Σύμμαχοι, P.Oxy. 2045 (AD612); although 34 appear here, only 2 are described as swordsmen in 2057, cf. Sijpesteijn (1987); νεώτεροι, P.Oxy. 2480 (AD565/6), Fikhman (1970), pp. 130-2; στρατιῶται, P.Oxy. 2010-2011 (AD618).

52 eg: P.Lond. 1776 (6th/7th).

53 Cod. Theod. 9.11.1 (AD388), Cod. Just. 9.5.1 (AD486).

54 P.Mert. 98 (6th), P.Cair. Masp. 67002 (AD567), 67005 (6th); S.P.P. x. 252 (7th), P.S.I. 953 (AD538?). P.Giss. Inv. 45 private prison on the estate of Anastasia, Van Haelst (1966), p. 589.

55 Deeds of surety, eg: P.Oxy. 135 (AD579), P.Vindob. Sijp. 7 (AD462), Fikhman (1970), p. 129. Prisons, cf. Hardy (1931), pp. 68-70, Rémondon (1974a), Gascou (1985), pp. 24-5, n. 138.

the owner to empty the prisons as quickly as possible.⁵⁶ As with the βουκελλάριοι, the potential for abuse of this system was open to the landowners. The prison seems to have been used as a means of coercion; various cases arise where the wives of village officials or of *coloni* are locked up, not to be released until their menfolk have discharged their outstanding obligations. In other cases it appears that it could be used in order to bring pressure on people to accede to the landowners' demands; alleged cases include the use of terror tactics against a widow to force her to give up certain rights.⁵⁷

The estates had their own personnel. The type and number seem to have corresponded to the size of the estate, and variations occurred between them, notably on Church estates. Where an estate was large enough, it was split into districts administered by stewards (προνοηταί), who operated under the direction of a senior administrator (διοικητής) or the owner. Most estates possessed one such official at least, the largest very considerably more. The προνοητής was essentially responsible for the collection of taxes in his area, but seems also to have performed wider administrative functions.⁵⁸ This official could make customary disbursements (for example, to local churches situated on or near the land), pay salaries and pay for miscellaneous items in his area.⁵⁹ The position was apparently profitable, since in a contract for a year's tenure on the Apion estate, a deacon pays twelve *solidi*, puts up his own property as a guarantee of his fulfilling his contract and

56 The rights of *coloni*, Gascou (1985), p. 23-6. Full prison, P.S.I. 953 (AD538?). Provisions, P.Oxy. 1945 (AD517).

57 P.S.I. 824 (6th), P.Oxy. 1835 (5th/6th). P.Cair. Masp. 67005 (6th); also 67002 (AD567).

58 P.Oxy. 1931 (5th) 'it is the προνοηταί who collect'. Προνοητής called ὑποδεκτηίς, eg: on Count Ammonius' estate, P.Cair. Masp. 67138, 67139 (both 6th). For connections with the ἀπαιτητής, Wipszycka (1972), pp. 44-7, Gascou (1985), pp. 16-17.

59 P.Oxy. 3804 (AD566), l. 145ff; ll. 154-160, tax concessions κατὰ τὸ ἔθος; l. 151 salary to brick-makers.

forfeits certain legal rights.⁶⁰ Another papyrus shows how a profit might be made - surcharges of one and a half carats per *solidus*, collected on the weakest gold standard (thus increasing the number of units and therefore also the amount of surcharges collected), were divided between the land-owner and the collector.⁶¹ Elsewhere a *colonus* appeals to his land-owner, claiming that he only fled his land because of the oppression of the *προνοητής*, while in a Fourth century papyrus workers and a *προνοητής* complain about each other in connection with pay.⁶²

On larger estates there were financial bureaus of which the main officials seem to be *χαρτουλάριοι*. There seem to have been considerable variances in rank within this category of official; some simultaneously held high estate titles, while others were clearly of lower station - one papyrus even shows one starving in a prison of Herakleopolis, he and his colleagues having sold their cloaks for food.⁶³ They were involved with various financial aspects of the estate's organisation; they are found receiving reports of the height of the flood, dealing with supplies of horses and also supervision of and the collection of taxes.⁶⁴ The size of the estate will have determined the number and diversity of the officials dealing with estate finance. Large church estates were managed by *οίκονόμοι*, under whom can be found *προνοηταί* and *χαρτουλάριοι* among others; for example, an *ἐνοικιολόγος* dealt with rent collections on houses belonging to the church.⁶⁵

60 P.Oxy. 136 (AD583).

61 P.Oxy. 1915 (c.AD560).

62 P.Oxy. 2479 (6th), P.Mert. 38 (mid-4th).

63 P.Oxy. 1853 (6th/7th); P.Oxy. 3870 (6th/7th).

64 The flood and irrigation, P.Oxy. 1830 (6th), Bonneau (1970), p. 58; Horses and stables, Gascou (1985), pp. 58-9; taxes, P.Oxy. 1855, 1859 (both 6th/7th).

65 P.Oxy. 1900 (AD528) for an *οίκονόμος*; in P.Oxy. 2238 (AD551) this official is apparently called the *ἐπικεείμενος*; for the various officials, Wipszycka (1972), p. 134ff.

There are a mass of other officials that appear on estates; Hardy (1931) lists those appearing on the Apion estate, but it is unlikely that every estate had anywhere near as many. For example, the existence of an οἴνοχειριστής will have depended on the estate having a reasonable number of vineyards. No doubt the προνοητής would have performed the necessary extra duties on smaller estates. The estates were not self-sufficient either by intention or in fact. Beyond the demands of administration, the physical labour on the estate was done routinely by its occupants; oil presses and mills are often found on estates (and could be rented out), and many forms of labour must have been available - brick-makers, carpenters, potters and so on.⁶⁶ Perhaps more specialist work was contracted from outside the estate as it was needed - for example, replacement irrigation machine parts were usually obtained in cities - but there is at least one example of a specialist, a professional millstone cutter, engaged in a life contract on an estate.⁶⁷ Estates also employed messengers (σύμμαχοι), particularly if the estate was widely spread out. They were used for any sort of estate purpose, from checking up on the progress of work to passing on orders; however, anyone might be so employed if they could be spared, and expenses were paid by the estate.⁶⁸

The exact course of the early growth of the estates is not clear, but it is probable that the many of the owners were originally members of the city aristocracy who were able to exploit the economic conditions of the Fourth century. The rise

66 P.Giss. Inv. 33 Anastasia owns a brick-works on her estate, Van Haelst (1966), p. 589. P.Oxy. 3804 (AD566), l. 151 payment to brick-makers.

67 P.Oxy. 1982 (AD497), 1983 (AD535), receipts for replacement machine parts. P.Oxy. 3641 (AD544) long-term contract. Rathbone (1991), p. 174, not making long term contracts is reflected in evidence from a Third century estate.

68 P.Oxy. 2045 (AD612) a list of 34 σύμμαχοι. P.Oxy. 1858, 1861, 3869 (all 6th/7th) grooms and guards as messengers.

of the οἴκοι and their great power in the Sixth century led to their assumption of more duties and responsibilities in proportion to their advance. Despite this, estates suffered none of the financial duress experienced by the city councils in the Fourth century. This may be accounted for by a variety of reasons: for example, the financial conditions were more clement, and the liturgies were distributed with more consideration towards the ability to perform them and to meet the expense. Their occasional occupation of positions within the provincial bureaucracy cannot have harmed their prospects, giving them legal leeway not possessed by the cities. But a more important consideration must be that the landowners were performing a large number of duties that were of as much benefit to the state as they were to them. In contrast to the old city liturgies, those carried out by the landowners, such as irrigation and tax-collection, were made particularly upon their own land. Transport and *cursus velox* duties had fallen to landowners before, in proportion to their wealth, and so these need not be regarded as new and oppressive burdens assumed by them.

The new military and law enforcement organisation were the greatest sources of power to the estate owners. The prisons, and the management of the police from the ῥιπάριοι down to the φύλακες, gave the estate owners very effective powers of compulsion over their tenants, a threat their *coloni* had to live under on a daily basis. This power was augmented by the laws decreed by Emperors concerning the rights of landowners over their tenants and such measures as deeds of surety.⁶⁹ When and where defaults occurred, it is not unlikely that the landowner was entitled, with full legal right, to take over the property of the delinquent party. On top of this, the estate owners also had full access to troops, the βουκελλάριοι, a major advantage over the cities of the Fourth century which had then been in competition with the military for local power. The owners of great estates also assumed the role of patrons towards the local cities. No doubt they competed with one

⁶⁹ eg: Cod. Theod. 5.17.1 (AD332); deed of surety, P.Oxy. 135 (AD579).

another very much as had the councillors of the Second century - by making donations, laying on entertainments, and building monasteries and churches. These activities had always reflected glory on both donor and recipient, and the estate owners had the will and the resources to perform them - something Fourth century βουλευταί had lacked.⁷⁰

The real issue of corruption is very hard to identify within this setting. It is hard to tell the difference between the use of prisons and soldiers for state and for private reasons. As noted earlier in the chapter, both private prisons and private armies were illegal in the Empire, and therefore use of them as such would have constituted an illegal use of public means for private ends; in other words, corruption. However, the closeness of interests between state and οἴκοι may render such distinctions largely redundant and given the expense of such liturgies as recruiting and equipping the soldiers, a limited amount of discretionary use may have been allowed to occur. The landowners often had both their own power and that of provincial office at their disposal - distinction between the use of both positions may have been awkward, giving the landowners wider legal recourse for their actions. Laws were broken by the landowners, but their generally greater proximity to their estates than the Emperor may have raised the level of efficiency and better controlled peculation on them.⁷¹ Gratuities were still taken and no doubt peculation occurred, but the fact that the owners were easier to reach on appeal may have given administrators pause for thought.⁷² In terms of tax, therefore, estates may have witnessed less corruption than the provincial administration; the ambivalent position between public and private administration makes it hard to know whether they were illegally using certain institutions, but their considerable power and status in Egypt probably added a stamp of legality to their actions that was

70 cf. Rémondon (1972), p. 256.

71 P.Oxy. 136 (AD583).

72 P.Oxy. 1915 (c.AD560), 1862 (7th).

unlikely to be contested. Efficiency, exploiting their legal status and not causing serious disruption probably saved them from interference.

The result of all these advantages was that the οἴκοι were run in a very efficient manner. Unlike the cities, where there had been much self-interest at stake in the avoidance of burdensome duties, the estate owners could plan their budgets and execute them efficiently, making allowances for such eventualities as bad floods. With the more efficient running of the administration, such disasters could be anticipated and partly countered by the building of cisterns and improved irrigation works. In the city administration scenario, such plans would not have been financed by individuals keen to avoid any serious expense in the execution of their liturgies. This improved organisation can be observed in the accounts of προνοηταί, which bear witness to the improved facilities and centralised efficiency.⁷³ The result of all this was that the οἴκοι were much more capable of sustaining the liturgies placed upon them, and in the process acquired very great power not only over their own estates but also, because of the enormous wealth they could generate and their position as local patrons (by discharging the liturgies), over surrounding areas, such as villages and cities.

⁷³ eg: P.Oxy. 3804 (AD566). However, Rathbone (1991), p. 402, contrasts them unfavourably with those of the Heroninus Archive.

2: THE CHURCH:

The Fourth century saw the adoption of Christianity as the official state religion, and this event created a new source of power and influence in the Empire. The development of the Church over the Fourth century was rapid, and greatly increased its spiritual and temporal position in Egypt. The speed and the extent of this spread is still the subject of debate, but there is no doubt that by the end of the Fourth century most of Egypt had given up paganism for Christianity.¹ From its humble origins, the Church by the Sixth century was rivalling the great estates and the state in landed wealth and in influence. As the size and power of the Church as an organisation increased so its role in private and public life became greater. I intend to look briefly at this expansion before going on to discuss the implications for local administration in Egypt.

Spiritual advances were greatly assisted by the temporal acquisitions, and *vice versa*. The transfer of imperial favour from paganism to Christianity gave the movement tremendous impetus, and gave it the necessary financial muscle to expand. The Church received contributions from the Emperor and private sources in the form of gifts and bequests of money and land.² The landscape changed as churches and monasteries appeared all over Egypt; for example, a church is attested on Mt. Porphyrites in the Eastern desert region.³ The spread of buildings greatly assisted the spread of the religion, and new churches and monasteries were still being erected in the Sixth century - one at Oxyrhynchus was particularly impressive, while at Aphrodito private sources provided monasteries.⁴ Monasticism assisted the spread of the religion to Coptic-

¹ Wipszycka (1988) does not think that pagans numbered a mere 10% at the end of the Fourth century - cf. Bagnall (1982).

² cf. Wipszycka (1972), pp. 38, 58f. Bequest, P.Oxy. 1901 (6th).

³ S.B. 8162 (AD340), cf. Rémondon (1972), p. 257.

⁴ P.Oxy. 2041 (6th/7th); monasteries, cf. Rémondon (1972), p. 256.

speaking communities, and the first indications of such a spread may perhaps be found in the Third century.⁵ As the Church expanded, so it diversified its financial base, so that some monasteries and churches were deeply involved in commercial activity - the estate of the Church of Herakleopolis was run in a similar fashion to private οἶκοι in the Sixth century. However, not every church enjoyed such power and advantages, and there were tremendous variations in scale, from churches like that at Herakleopolis to small ones existing on great estates. The size of a given church and its holdings would have determined its financial objectives and organisation, which might be as humble as the making of ropes for an estate.⁶

The Church's spiritual appeal affected members of all social classes, who sought to join as clerics or monks - some urban groups not initially prepared to divorce themselves from worldly affairs formed religious brotherhoods (members were called οἱ φιλόπονοι),⁷ though these do not appear often in the papyri. The performance of Christians during the persecutions and the general awe with which ascetics and hermits were regarded initially helped to encourage belief. As the religion spread, more and more people were converted and more institutions were constructed. Most of the ground gained was at the expense of the pagans, who over the Fourth century were assailed by Christians and laws alike.⁸ The decline in pagan fortunes has been observed in the treatment of their temples - for example the Caesareion at Oxyrhynchus had become a church.⁹ Van Haelst further cites examples of the relative

⁵ cf. Roberts (1979), p. 65f - a Coptic reader in a church, P.Oxy. 2673 (AD304): but cf. Shore (1971), p. 397.

⁶ P.Oxy. 3640 (AD533); also P.Oxy. 147 (AD556).

⁷ Wipszycka (1970), p. 512.

⁸ Laws, cf. Croke and Harries (1982), pp. 16-27; they were not specific to Egypt, but the effects of some can be seen there.

⁹ P.Mert. 41 (AD406) - Rémondon (1972), p. 257, Van Haelst (1970), p. 501.

poverty of their priests - but this latter argument is not comprehensive, since wealthy pagans are noticeable in the Fifth century. The speed of the change was assisted by a tendency of some worshippers to combine elements of both religions under the heading of Christianity, but paganism as an independent religion was never fully eradicated in the diocese; evidence of its practice dates to Justinian's time at least.¹⁰ There were schisms in the Egyptian Church - for example, the Melitians formed one of the earlier factions, but although this division lasted until the Eighth century, it does not seem to have affected more than a small minority.¹¹ Although these differences in doctrine led to rivalries and even bloodshed between factions, they do not appear to have damaged the power of the Church in Egypt; most of the troubles seem to have taken place in Alexandria, and the rest of the diocese followed the lead of the patriarch.

The Church possessed various privileges conferred by the state. Many of these were financial in nature, whether concerning the non-payment of some extraordinary exactions, relief from certain public services, or advantageous status to do with commercial dues.¹² The Church became rapidly more powerful over the Fourth century, and obtained further advantages from its status. The main sources of consistent Church income were property-based, and with the gains in this area (in land and in buildings) and the privileges accorded by the Emperors to the Church, the Church rapidly acquired wealth and power. The bishops were endowed with tribunals at which they could arbitrate between parties who brought their cases before them, and in the Fifth and Sixth centuries took an officially endorsed role in local administration.¹³ Those

¹⁰ Van Haelst (1970), p. 501; Rémondon (1952) on the protraction of paganism and the social background of some of its adherents.

¹¹ Melitians, Barnard (1973), Hauben (1981). S.B. 5174-5 (AD512, 513) attest Melitians, Bell (1924), p. 42.

¹² cf. Wipszycka (1972), p. 35.

¹³ Nov. Just. 75 and 128; cf. Rees (1953-4), p. 94, n. 76.

churches owning property in measure to that of the owners of great estates gained the same advantages, and religious institutions could behave as land entrepreneurs in the same way as laymen. They leased out their property and episcopal churches at least might be subject to the liturgies sustained by οἴκοι.¹⁴ Furthermore, it appears that certain churches may have had their own weights and measures - in two cases an abbot and a priest use them.¹⁵ The wealthy Sixth century churches were very different from those of the Fourth century because of their temporal power and landed possessions; this gave them much more direct control over those on their property, and made them an even greater source of patronage.

The Church had fundamental responsibilities and duties, and it had to meet the expense of these out of its various sources of income. Beyond the payments to its clergy and for the necessary religious expenses, the Church had to pay for the upkeep of its buildings and any repair work performed upon them, for charitable works and of course, for its taxes. Of these the last two are the most relevant here. Charitable work catered for those largely unable to cater for themselves, widows, orphans and such like. Such people received distributions and perhaps also accommodation. Large churches also managed hospitals.¹⁶ The wealth of churches was unequal, the largest generally being the episcopal churches in the cities, and therefore the capacity to perform charitable works was also unequal. The episcopal church was the wealthiest not only because it was an obvious focus for donations, but also because it received annual contributions from lesser ones in the nome. Smaller, village churches probably often came under the financial jurisdiction of another unit, for example a large landowner or larger church, which would perform the

¹⁴ MacCoull (1989), pp. 498-9, eg: P.Michael. 41 (AD539 or 554). Lease of a bakery, P.Berl. Inv. 11821 (second half 5th), cf. Wipszycka (1968). Liturgies, P.Oxy. 2020 (AD580s), 2040 (c.AD580).

¹⁵ O.Amst. 91 (5th/6th); P.Princ. 100 (first half 4th), Van Haelst (1970), p. 500.

¹⁶ cf. Wipszycka (1972), p. 93ff. Hospital, P.Oxy. 2238 (AD551).

necessary charitable acts on their behalf. For example, an account of revenues of a district of an episcopal church, which comprised seven villages and the city of Apollonopolis Parva, was presented to the bishop - presumably all churches in that area were under his financial and administrative jurisdiction.¹⁷

The authority and power of bishops and their clergy was not merely based upon temporal power. If such had been the case, they would have been no different to the private οἴκοι. Their spiritual and religious authority set them apart from the secular administration, and the religious fervour which they encouraged boosted this position. Athanasius, despite his methods, received widespread support, and unpopular imposed patriarchs were given very short shrift: military adherents of Athanasius beat up some Melitians, and the bishop George was murdered by the mob in AD361/2.¹⁸ Despite such incidents, the generally high moral tone of their lifestyles gave them added power: they had the respect and trust of the people at all social levels. This can be observed on a routine basis - in marriages, standing as surety for *coloni*, acting as a witness in a sale and being entrusted with a man's finances: more simply, they might merely be required to pray for the petitioner, for example for recovery from a disease.¹⁹ They could act less specifically as spiritual arbitrators in disputes; in a family dispute over the wanton nature of a soldier's daughters, the priests intervene when the woman to whom their safe-keeping was entrusted tries to blame a third party for their behaviour.²⁰

There is little evidence in the papyri for the misdeeds of clerics; instances do appear, such as in S.B. 7449, in which a

¹⁷ Annual gifts to the episcopal church, Rémondon (1972), p. 258. Account, V.P.B. iv. 94 (5th), Wipszycka (1972), pp. 125-7.

¹⁸ P.Lond. 1914 (c.AD335?); Amm. Marc. 22.11.

¹⁹ Marriage, P.Ross.-Georg. iii. 28 (AD343/358); surety, P.Oxy. 199 (AD568), P.Vindob. Sijp. 4 (AD340); witness, C.P.R. i. 19 (AD330); guardianship, P.Oxy. 2344 (c.AD336); finances, MacCoull (1989), p. 499, Judge and Pickering (1977), Rémondon (1972), p. 263. Petition for prayers, P.Lond. 1926 (mid 4th), Bell (1924), pp. 108-110. Reverence for holy men, Brown (1971).

²⁰ P.Grenfell 53 (4th), cf. Winter (1933), pp. 156-9.

monk allegedly beat a woman who refused to marry her daughter to the monk's cousin, and P.Princ. 82 in which the bishop of Lycopolis had apparently appropriated goods from the church treasury for his personal use. Elsewhere can be found investigations into illegal entry into a convent, a deacon practising usury, the settling of a dispute over money and a deacon performing penitence.²¹ On the other hand, clerics were generally respected and well-treated by the lay authorities. However, several exceptions occur in the papyri. Soldiers under a *πάγαραχος* raged through a convent, Meletian monks were beaten by military adherents of Athanasius, and in a number of instances individual clerics were robbed or wronged, sometimes in their very presence! Even bishops could be the object of threats, as one was from a *πάγαραχος*, who had been accused of extortion by one of the former's *coloni*.²² It seems that this was exceptional behaviour, and that clerics could generally rely on their position to generate respect; the more senior the rank, the more likely that this would be the case.

The intervention of the clergy into administration was not just restricted to mundane matters. The Church was itself responsible for all internal matters of dispute, and in cases in which a cleric was the defendant. Episcopal tribunals were established by law,²³ and could be used in preference to the secular courts; for example, there is an arbitration over the division of an inheritance, and a case brought against a husband who has broken his oath of good behaviour.²⁴ The emphasis was more on arbitration than upon outright decision

²¹ S.B. 7449 (second half 5th); P.Princ. 82 (AD481); P.Oxy. 2419; S.P.P. xx. 194 (6th); P.Wash. 27; P.Giss. 55 (both 6th), Rémondon (1972), pp. 261-2, Wipszycka (1972), p. 157.

²² P.Cair. Masp. 67002 (AD567); P.Lond. 1914 (AD335); robbery, S.B. 9683 (end 4th), P.Amh. 142 (c.AD340-5), cf. Judge (1981), p. 618, Barns (1957), Judge and Pickering (1977), p. 49; threats, P.Lond. 1075 (7th).

²³ Cod. Theod. 16.11.1 (AD399), 16.2.41 (AD412), Const. Sirm. 6 (AD425) cases concerning clergy. Cod. Theod. 1.27.1 (AD318) may be preferred to secular courts. Cod. Just. 1.4.7 (AD398) both parties must consent to go before the bishop's tribunal, the emphasis being on reconciliation.

²⁴ P.Lips. 43, P.Oxy. 903 (both first half 4th).

in favour of one side. Arbitration formed a grey area in jurisdiction; the clergy might give advice whether formally solicited or not, and therefore it was not just bishops who could arbitrate between parties, but this was open to lesser clergy as well (on a more informal basis).²⁵ Quite to what extent the clergy became involved in all levels of administration - from the mundane to the business of the episcopal tribunal - is impossible to evaluate exactly, but their many appearances in the papyri in diverse capacities imply that they took a very active role and high profile in their communities.

Their actions were not merely reactive - the Church was a considerable source of patronage and could make appeals on the behalf of clients (either individuals or communities), but I shall cover this the chapter on patronage. Even lower clergy were conscious of the respect they considered their rank deserved - at the end of his petition over theft a deacon of a village church emphasized his rank, presumably expecting this to inspire immediate action.²⁶

As the Church acquired property, so the nature of some of its institutions changed. They became more worldly in outlook in order to exploit these advantages, a far cry from the original holy men living in isolation on the edge of the deserts.²⁷ The property acquired by the Church soon became so great that it required professional managers, οἰκονόμοι, to run them. These officials were only necessary on the larger church properties, and their presence allowed the bishop freedom to tend to other duties beyond the administration of the church property.²⁸ Deacons seem to have been particularly well adapted to financial matters, and are seen engaged in a variety of such occupations, from acting as a προνοητής on a private οἶκος to

²⁵ S.P.P. xx. 86 (AD330) priest arbitrates. B.G.U. 103 (6th/7th) abbot settles disputes in a monastery, Winter (1933), p. 178.

²⁶ P.Abinn. 55 (AD351).

²⁷ Such men continued to exist and have great influence, Brown (1971).

²⁸ cf. Wipszycka (1972), pp. 134-141.

working as tax collectors for the state.²⁹ This transformation is equally arresting in the case of monasteries, since they were more greatly associated with the renunciation of worldly goods. Not all monasteries were affected by the great influx of wealth into the Church, and monks who steadfastly renounced property will probably have left no mark in the papyri. Small monasteries may have been less likely to be a focus for patronage - that of Abbas Andreas is found in the Sixth century making very small transactions that imply subsistence industry, and in particular paid one and a half ropes for the use of an irrigation machine for only one day.³⁰ Other monasteries became full blown financial enterprises, such as that of Metanoia, which owned its own ships, and used its agents (*διακονηταί*) to manage them and their cargoes.³¹ Judge (1981) cites a number of Fourth century examples in which monks were involved in disputes of an often financial nature - in one case they are actually the object of an appeal for raising money to rescue a man overcome by debt.³²

The social origins of the clergy did not follow this worldly trend in any discernible fashion. The clergy was recruited from all classes from the start of the Byzantine period, and no doubt the requirements of a given job dictated the qualifications of potential employees. An imperial law for Egypt on *βουλευταί* becoming monks or hermits demonstrates that the middle classes sought religious positions - in P.Würzb. 16 (AD349), the son of an *ex-βουλευτής* is a hermit.³³ More usually they must have sought those of higher rank, in which there would have been a greater demand for their skills. Deacons and financial managers must have been drawn from the educated classes in order to fulfil their functions adequately. Rémondon argued

²⁹ P.Oxy. 136 (AD583), cf. B.G.U. 305 (6th), S.P.P. viii. 958 (5th-6th), P.Cair. Masp. 67325 (post AD585).

³⁰ P.Cairo Inv. no. 10079 (AD556), Sijpesteijn (1987b).

³¹ eg: P.Cair. Masp. 67138 (AD545/6), cf. Gascou (1976a), pp. 178-184.

³² P.Lond. 1915 and 1916 (c.AD330-340); Judge (1981).

³³ Cod. Theod. 12.1.63 (AD370); cf. Van Haelst (1970), p. 502.

that the papyri betray a high level of literacy among the clergy, and very few feature described as ἀγράμματοι.³⁴ Some of those brought into the Church never fully renounced their previous profession - be it working the land, a trade, or even working for the state. An example of the latter may be seen in P.Strasb. 154, in which efforts are being made to nominate a deacon as tax collector, in violation of an unnamed imperial edict.³⁵ Here again the spiritual aspect of the Church can be seen to be mingling with the more worldly side.

This mixture of temporal and spiritual power combined to make the Church virtually the most powerful single force in Byzantine Egypt. The possession of large properties ranked some episcopal churches alongside private great estates and the state, and they performed their share of the duties in conjunction with them. The Church also worked with the state in other ways; for example, the bishop having an active role in making nominations in the city, and the provision of boats by Metanoia for the transport of the *annona*. Evidence of clergy also working for other organisations, however legal this might be, demonstrates the links between them, and the wide variance in prestige and wealth between religious institutions allowed them to permeate and influence society at all levels. The wide spread of Church buildings permitted this influence to be a permanent presence, unlike the more centralised alternatives. Church estates had prisons and βουλευτήριον on their property, and this military facility was augmented by the use of some monasteries as defences against raiders.³⁶ The frequent appearance of the clergy in the papyri testifies to what extent they became an integral part in all aspects of the administrative life of the diocese and the considerable influence they had in it.

³⁴ Rémondon (1972); however, most surviving papyri concerning the Church would naturally have come from literate clergy in positions of responsibility.

³⁵ P.Strasb. 154 (4th/5th), Rémondon (1972), pp. 270-1.

³⁶ P.Lond. 1776 (6th/7th); Winter (1933), p. 177f.

The Church was an important intermediary between the state and those it governed. It could defend the interests of people at all levels, and was capable of arbitrating in disputes that varied from the serious to the mundane. The Church absorbed a not inconsiderable proportion of the wealth of the diocese - through bequests, donations and income from its property - and it would be optimistic to assume that none of it was peculated. Some members of the clergy did intend to enrich themselves by working with finance, and Church estates presumably presented the same opportunities for gain as secular ones.³⁷ The patronage of the Church was issued on a personal basis through its clergy, and thus was potentially open to bias. They could seek to use their rank in order to gain preferential treatment.³⁸ However, despite the flaws that must have manifested themselves in the structure, the Church was probably the least corrupt element in the administrative structure in the Later Roman Empire; there are few enough papyrus references to such practices in connection with the Church. The οἰκοί as a whole were more capable of regulating themselves than the Emperor his bureaucracy because of their leaders' presence in Egypt. Their direct interest in the way their estates were run contrasted with the mercenary attitude that governors and πάγαραχοί might bring to their posts. The Church was one of the few sources of assistance to whom their victims might turn for help, and petitions led by them were no doubt more effective.³⁹ In other words, while the Church and clergy were not entirely free of association with corruption, they were also one of the few checks on it.

³⁷ eg: P.Oxy. 136 (AD583), S.P.P. xx. 194 (6th).

³⁸ eg: P.Abinn. 55 (AD351), P.Oxy. 2344 (AD336).

³⁹ P.Cair. Masp. 67126 (AD541), 67295 (late 5th).

CHAPTER 8:

1: PATRONAGE:¹

Patronage is not always a definite term describing a fixed set of circumstances; the basic principle, that some men are in a better position to take advantage of the socio-economic resources of a state and are prepared for a price to assist those less favourably placed than themselves, is hedged about with a number of variables determined by the political nature of the state itself. The amount of control a patron had over his clients was dictated by their dependence on him as opposed to potential alternatives. Where there are none, the power of the patron over them is almost total; where there are options, the clients will seek the assistance of the one they perceive as the most advantageous to them. Under the Roman Empire, all patronage ultimately stemmed from the Emperor. His advisers and their friends and dependents all wielded delegated authority, the power to influence and achieve results declining the more tenuous and distant the connection with the Emperor became.² Patronage was only useful when it could be successfully implemented, and slow communications in the Empire limited the effect of centrally-based patronage in outlying provinces. So although the Emperor was the ultimate source of patronage, it was sometimes difficult for him to have his orders respected in Egypt if powerful men there were inclined to resist his will. Within Egypt, some people, even whole communities (patronage was not just limited to individuals), were committed to individual patrons, but they were not necessarily restricted to just one.³

The changing nature of the Roman central government also changed the nature of patronage. With the decline of the Senate

¹ cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1989).

² Brunt (1988), ch. 8, p. 439.

³ Patronage of a village, P.Ross.-Georg. iii. 8 (4th), Johnson and West (1949), pp. 28, 45. Multiple patrons (in the Republic), Brunt (1988), p. 398.

after the creation of the Emperor, the latter became the focus of patronage; the transition can be traced in the legal terminology.⁴ As various old ties were broken and the political role of the client diminished,⁵ ambitious men seeking honours or office began to solicit them from men who were in positions to assist them, providing gifts to induce them to do so. Some traditional ties were maintained, but the trend for buying influence rapidly developed. Bribery can be seen in effect in the Republic - for example, during the Jugurthine war Jugurtha employed it to induce Senators to vote against the interests of the state.⁶ In the Late Empire the payment of money to a man of power in an effort to secure a position of importance might be the sum total of the exchange. Furthermore, there was no neat split between patrons and clients. While a man might be the patron of one, he could be the client of another. The difference between patronage and the doing of favours for friends is a fine one, presumably governed by the social standing of the two parties; patronage existed predominantly between unequals. Anyone who was in a position to issue favours to social inferiors, and did so, could be called a patron. The scale of the favour depended on the standing of the patron, so that an average councillor could distribute minor favours, but could not hope to provide anything like enough to influence high provincial officials in their judgement.

Within the context of the Later Roman Empire in Egypt, there were changing patterns of patronage. The councils had had the power to administer the city in the Third and Fourth centuries, but such duties were transferred to members of the bureaucracy and the οἴκοι. As the administrative system evolved under the Later Roman Empire, and certain positions lost status and prestige, so such people were approached proportionally less and those emerging as new powers more so. After all, effective demonstrations of the use of patronage

⁴ De Ste. Croix (1954).

⁵ Brunt (1988), ch. 8, Saller (1982), p. 206.

⁶ Sallust, J.W. 13; cf. Scullard (1982), p. 47.

enhanced a patron's reputation and consequently increased the number of his clients, who naturally preferred a successful man when looking for assistance. In the context of council politics, the βουλευταί proved themselves worthy patrons; but as the administrative relevance of the council waned, so did their power. The new sources of patronage were much more powerful in every way; better connected, with more administrative power and a better means of enforcing it. Indeed, such was the localised power of the πάγαρχοι and owners of estates that it came to rival that of the Emperors in the formers' territories.⁷

The Emperors considered merit to be a prime requisite for selection, but it must have carried less weight than patronage in most cases.⁸ However, at council level, merit was much more relative. Qualification for the magistracies and some liturgies was not based on talent but on personal wealth. Even literacy was not essential for magistrates.⁹ The tasks required of the elected magistrates do not seem to have been too complicated to grasp, and given the generally hereditary nature of the rank (the same families will have had the wealth from generation to generation with few exceptions), sons may well have benefited from paternal advice and experience. The advantage for the council in having wealthy men perform the duties was that in case of default, the magistrate or liturgist was personally liable for the deficit.

There were different degrees of wealth and influence among the βουλευταί which determined the course of local politics. Each year the positions were assigned to members of the βουλή, circumstances that witnessed scenes of βουλευταί encouraging their peers to stand and hoping to avoid the most expensive duties themselves. While such acclamations often had the desired effect, it was often more productive to operate through

⁷ eg: P.Cair. Masp. 67029 (AD548/9?), 67024 (c.AD551).

⁸ Barnes (1974) pp. 288-291 the compatibility of patronage and merit in appointments.

⁹ P.Thead. 32 (AD307), Harris (1989), p. 314f, n. 144.

the officials responsible for making the nominations and appointments. A number of instances appear in the papyri. The most instructive is one from the Third century, in which the *πρύτανις* claims that times are so hard that he can not even exempt his friends from nominations.¹⁰ Similar sentiments are expressed elsewhere; one man wrote to another that he hoped to gain protection from nomination under a new magistrate, while one clearly important councillor informed another that his colleagues had not nominated his dependents in his absence and they certainly would not do so in his presence.¹¹ Some men obtained the liturgy that they had asked for, probably from the *συστάτης*, and in gratitude undertook to perform it for a full year, not the eight months agreed. Their relief suggests that they would have been put to much greater trouble had the *συστάτης* not looked on their request favourably.¹² When magistracies became so arduous that they could only be undertaken for very short periods, it was possible to try to influence who performed what; one man requested an *ἐξηγητής* to look after the interests of a *γυμνασίαρχος* in the assignation of days of duty.¹³ Villages sustained their fair share of local politics as well. In one case a man claimed that he had been saddled with the *σιτολογία*, while those who should have had to perform it had been illegally exempted. A longer-term request for protection came from a centurion to a man who was probably the *πραιπόσιτος τοῦ πάγου*, in which the former requested the latter not only release a tenant from duty, but also enable him to avoid subsequent nominations.

Sometimes nominations could be overturned as they were being made and debated in the *βουλή*. This happened in a case in which a man had been wrongly nominated to a liturgy, and he, and a number of high-ranking councillors notified the *πρύτανις* about this. On the other hand, this might not always

¹⁰ P.Ross.-Georg. ii. 40 (3rd), Drew-Bear (1984), p. 328.

¹¹ P.Oxy. 3645 (3rd), 3814 (3rd/4th).

¹² P.Oxy. 1627 (AD342).

¹³ P.Oxy. 3507 (3rd/4th).

work quite so well - when a man was nominated to be a public banker in addition to his office of ἀρχιερεύς, he and a friend appealed against it, but were overwhelmed by the pressure of their peers.¹⁴ When nominations were made that the nominee believed to be illegal, an appeal was made first to colleagues (who were unlikely to be sympathetic - if he obtained an exemption, one of them might have to perform the duty, and if they were interested in his avoiding it, they would have assisted earlier), and then to members of the bureaucracy, who could overturn illegal nominations. Unless they had a direct interest in the personal fortune of the nominee, it was likely that they would be impartial, deciding the case on legal merit.¹⁵ In one such case a man had obtained the rank of κράτιστος (a knight, *vir egregius*) for the express purpose of being exempt from council duties, but had been nominated to the δεκαπρωτεία. It appears that the Catholicus was more interested in finding out whether the appeal had been lodged sufficiently early to be admissible; the man had been absent when nominated, and it may have been the intention of the βουλή to try to catch him out in this way.¹⁶ Outsiders might also be illegally nominated in acts of desperation by the βουλή or πρύτανις in order to make up numbers - though such cases as are known, where right and wrong must have been easy to establish, were usually resolved in favour of the nominee.¹⁷

Patronage clearly had a significant role to play in local politics, and its effects were dependent on the prevailing financial conditions. In times of competition to obtain the best magistracies and to spend heavily on the city, it naturally favoured the best connected who were probably best placed to advance the reputation of the city. Those less well placed could probably reach such heights through the agency of acquiring

¹⁴ P.Oxy. 2110 (AD370), 1415 (late 3rd).

¹⁵ P.Oxy. 2130 (AD267), 1415 (late 3rd).

¹⁶ P.Oxy. 1204 (AD299).

¹⁷ B.G.U. 936 (AD426) outsider nominated by force, Rémondon (1974), p. 371; P.Oxy. 3064 (3rd).

friends high up on the council. In harsh economic conditions the opposite effect would have happened. Everyone was keen to avoid the heaviest duties, but only those with the best influence (again, probably the wealthiest) were likely to enjoy this advantage. As a result of this activity, malicious and illegal nominations were occasionally employed; more often the case must have been that councillors outside the most powerful clique were oppressed with liturgies at a time of financial insecurity when they were less capable of supporting them.¹⁸ This must have caused a greater number of liturgists to seek to escape their onerous duties by some means or other, whether by flight or by an abrupt change of career. Local politics had not changed, but the motive had. Whereas it had strengthened the councils in times of plenty, it weakened them in the context of the high inflation of the Fourth century. While patronage was an accepted fact of life in Roman society, and as such was not generally regarded as corruption, this is because it was usually employed in an acquisitive mode. In the councils of the Fourth century it was being used to acquire exemption from duty, but with the knock-on effect that other people suffered acutely from having to perform those very duties; as such this might be interpreted as corruption, in terms of the abuse of a position of social responsibility within an administrative body. Whatever the judgement, the change in use of patronage from purposes of acquisition to those of evasion did nothing to retard the decline of the βουλαί.¹⁹

The bureaucracy and the later magistracies of the cities were permeated with patronage as well. Given their wider administrative responsibilities, their capabilities stretched further than those of the βουλευταί. They were often in communication with senior administrators and consequently had the opportunity to perform favours for them as well as benefit from the acquaintance. A στρατηγός wrote in one

¹⁸ P.Cair. Isid. 138 an old man complains that he has been nominated to a liturgy although his sons are already doing some.

¹⁹ Schuller (1982), I.Hahn's chapter on 'Immunity and corruption of Curiales in late antiquity', Drew-Bear (1984).

papyrus to an official that he should come and avail himself of any supplies he wished. In another case the *praeses* requested that the λογιστής and ἐξάκτωρ should ensure that the wedding of one Apollonia should go ahead without any irregularities.²⁰ An official (ἐπόπιτης) of Oxyrhynchus commended a friend to an official in Herakleopolis and asked him to help him resolve a debt there; such a process no doubt smoothed the collection of the money owed.²¹

Members of the bureaucracy had a variety of advantages over the councillors, such as more effective power, contacts and information. An example of the last of these is a papyrus in which a government official takes advantage of advance knowledge of an impending devaluation to spend all his coinage through an agent, to whom he imparts this information. The latter would have followed the former's initiative, and may have tipped off some of his friends.²² Bureaucratic officials could prevent others extorting taxes from their friends - in one case one instructed another not to try to collect more than the stipulated amount from a woman; an attempt had already been made, and she had probably contacted the writer of the letter.²³ Πάγαρχοι had very great power at their disposal, and could use this to help or harm those in their area. Dioscorus' correspondence from the village of Aphrodito gives the impression that he believed himself to be the victim of a persecution; his lands were taken away, he claimed, and given to the shepherds, while he was still responsible for the taxes on them.²⁴

The Archive of Theophanes, a bureaucratic official in the first quarter of the Fourth century, helps to illustrate this. He was a σχολαστικός, based in Hermopolis, and associated with the

²⁰ P.Oxy. 3646 (3rd/4th), 3123 (AD322).

²¹ P.Oxy. 3821 (c.AD341-2).

²² P.Ryl. 607 (late 3rd).

²³ P.Lond. 1685 (6th).

²⁴ P.Cair. Masp. 67319, P.Lond. 1677 (AD566-7).

Prefect. He had good connections and lived very comfortably, as his personal accounts show. He went on a journey to Syria, for which he and his retinue were entitled to use the *cursus publicus*, and the meticulous accounts show that he and his retinue lived well and did not hurry themselves - they were two months in Antioch.²⁵ For the journey Theophanes had letters of introduction to very eminent men - one at least was written in Latin - and such introductions would have opened up all sorts of avenues for him in Syria, for then and subsequent visits.²⁶ He became involved in a case of alleged extortion; a woman had sustained collections of two to three times what she had been assessed, and she had petitioned the Emperor over it. That she was taking the matter so high is indicative of her importance and the lack of wisdom of the liturgist responsible. Theophanes may also have given lavish entertainment to a visiting στρατηγός - the visitor was entertained with mime and acrobats.²⁷ Access to such people meant that he had good connections should he require any favours, and was in a good position to do favours for people who required them of him. His personal wealth and lifestyle show that despite the meagre salaries that bureaucratic officials then received in inflationary times he, unlike the councillors, could afford to lead an untroubled and well-rewarded existence.

The saga of Flavius Abinnaeus is illustrative of how the system of patronage worked, and how it was not only essential to have good connections, but also to be able to put their influence to good effect. After performing good service in Egypt, he received an imperial letter of appointment to the command of the *ala* at Dionysias in the Fayum; however, when he arrived in Egypt and presented the said letter, he encountered other gentlemen with similar letters of

²⁵ P.Ryl. 629 (first quarter 4th).

²⁶ P.Ryl. 623 (AD317-324). Letters of commendation, Brunt (1988), ch. 8, pp. 394-5.

²⁷ P.Ryl. 617 (AD317?), 641 (first half 4th).

appointment to the same command also applying to the office staff of the Count of Egypt. His reaction was to send a petition to the Emperors setting out his case, reminding them of his past services, and claiming that the other letters of appointment had been obtained not by merit but by the corrupt solicitation of high officials, and he received the result in reply that he desired.²⁸ When he was displaced by Valacius, the Count of Egypt, in favour of another man about three years later, he travelled to Constantinople, presented his case again, and by May AD346, about two years on from the time of his dismissal, he had been reinstated.²⁹ The death of Valacius, a man trying to use his position to disburse military posts under his command, no doubt facilitated his return to the command of Dionysias, since the support of his rivals was undermined in one blow.³⁰ For his trip to Constantinople he was commissioned with two petitions from other men, one seeking an ἐπιστολή ἑξακτορίας and the other military promotion for his son.³¹ Both undertook to pay the necessary expenses involved, which presumably entailed the gratuities and bribes to the officials who could draft the appropriate letters of appointment. There may also have been some payment for Abinnaeus since both the contractors were saving on the price of a trip to Constantinople, though none is mentioned in the contracts. The episode shows that obtaining an appointment to a desirable post was simpler than actually obtaining the position itself; only with further petitions to the Emperor could Abinnaeus take and later retain possession of what was rightfully his. If

²⁸ P.Abinn. 1 (c.AD341).

²⁹ P.Abinn. 2 (AD344) letter of dismissal. Reinstatement, P.Abinn. 47 (AD346). Barnes (1985) suggests that the death of Valacius may have enabled Abinnaeus to obtain reinstatement without travelling to the Emperor's court.

³⁰ Barnes (1985), p. 372f; reference to the death is made in Athanasius' *Historia Arianorum*, 14.

³¹ P.Abinn. 58 and 59 respectively (both AD345); the purpose of the ἐπιστολή ἑξακτορίας, Martin (1938) and Thomas (1959), p. 132.

the other candidates had spent money in advance for their letters of appointment, it had been to no effect³².

The military, as with the bureaucracy, offered opportunities to its officers, and to a lesser extent the soldiers, for the improvement of their socio-economic position. The number of candidates applying for the command of the *ala* at Dionysias is testimony to the advantages offered by that post. Abinnaeus is known to have obtained a not inconsiderable quantity of land in the Fayum, and that a military career afforded the opportunity and the facility for land-ownership is shown by the entrepreneurial activities witnessed by the Taurinos Archive.³³ Men like Abinnaeus gained an additional advantage in that they had a certain amount of jurisdiction and the obvious means to enforce it. Secular courts lacked the same ability, and so some civilian cases were illegally brought before Abinnaeus.³⁴ Abinnaeus could also determine the workload of the troops under his command; he decided whether they were assigned posts locally or abroad, and could allocate leave, apparently at his discretion. As a result, appeals from his soldiers and interested parties on such matters occurred.³⁵

The bureaucracy and the military therefore enjoyed great advantages in the provinces. They had excellent connections and could use them to their advantage and that of their colleagues. Abinnaeus, a commander of a fort, could call on imperial patronage to protect his position, and was regarded as a sufficiently important person to carry petitions for appointments to the imperial court. Promotion into the bureaucracy was competitive because of the benefits it afforded; John the Lydian had to wait for promotion until a man from his home town was made Praetorian Prefect. Thereafter his rise was immediate. He also claimed to have

³² Jones (1964), p. 393.

³³ Carrié (1976), pp. 168-9; cf. my section on the Military.

³⁴ P.Abinn. 44 (AD342).

³⁵ Leave, P.Abinn. 33, 34 (AD340s); local assignment, P.Abinn. 19 (AD340s).

made an enormous amount of money through his post - in gratuities he took one hundred times his government salary in a year.³⁶ This image of the advantages of a career in the bureaucracy is augmented by the example of the lifestyle of Theophanes and his connections. The power of the bureaucracy is epitomised by the position of *πάγαρχον*; in the Sixth century they possessed tremendous power - job security, long tenure, soldiers and a large measure of independence from provincial governors.³⁷ This naturally had an effect on local administration, but was a relatively stable factor, whatever the financial conditions. The failure of the city councils should not be attributed entirely to the influence of members of the bureaucracy, though it was a contributory factor. In the end the bureaucracy assumed the tasks previously performed by the councils, bringing the effects of its patronage into more direct and regular contact with the cities.

The effectiveness of a court could be judged in its ability to enforce its decisions. This depended on the social prestige of the judge, the powers at his disposal and those drawn up against him. The use of patronage in courts was an accepted social fact, and imperial attempts to annul it were unrealistic. Only in those courts which the Emperor was directly capable of supervising himself could such an order be enforced - in First century Rome Tacitus was outraged over direct imperial supervision over some trials, allowing justice to take precedence over influence, branding it a restriction of freedom.³⁸ This knowledge caused some people to appeal to have their cases heard before the Emperor. Such an option was expensive because of the cost of travel and probably for gratuities at his court. The Emperor either made a ruling or

³⁶ Jones (1960), pp. 172-4 for John the Lydian.

³⁷ Governors could not dismiss *πάγαρχον*, but might appoint deputies, eg: P.Cair. Masp. 67003 (c.AD567); however, these were clearly distinct from the *πάγαρχον*; in P.Flor. 295 a man is both *πάγαρχος* and *τοποτηρητής*, Liebeschuetz (1973), p. 42ff.

³⁸ Cod. Theod. 6.4.22 (AD373) influence by powerful men in courts is to cease, and there is to be justice for all. Tacitus, De Ste Croix (1954), p. 42, n. 4.

instructed the governor of the province to investigate the matter and take appropriate action. Imperial rulings had to be enforced, a matter which does not seem to have been entirely straight-forward; in one case villagers from Aphrodito had to engage the services of two senior bureaucrats in order to ensure this, while Abinnaeus had to make more than one petition in order to obtain his position.³⁹

Since there were sometimes difficulties in enforcing imperial decisions, it is not surprising that provincial courts also experienced some problems. In some cases men ignored the rulings made against them, forcing the successful petitioner to return to the courts in order to assert his rights.⁴⁰ In one case a girl appealed against the actions of her paternal uncle who had appropriated her inheritance; he ignored the ruling and instead assaulted the petitioner. Two years later the uncle had now availed himself of all of her goods and those of her sister.⁴¹ In another case a woman managed to acquire through the courts some property due to her because of her inheritance; this was not the end of the case, because the losing litigants continued to harass her by starting a new case, alleging that she was responsible for the taxes on the property while they had had it in their possession. As a result she had to appeal again.⁴² As for the direct application of patronage to affect the outcome of cases - a regular and effective aspect of justice in the Republic⁴³ - cases of this also appear in the papyri. This seems to have taken two forms; influencing the judge or threatening the people intending to bring the action. In one example a woman alleged that the man who had beaten her son used influence to win the case, while in another landowners were

³⁹ P.Abinn. 1 (c.AD341), 2 (AD344); P.Cair. Masp. 67032 (AD551).

⁴⁰ eg: P.Cair. Isid. 69 (AD310), 70 (c.AD310).

⁴¹ P.Cair. Isid. 63 (AD296), 64 (c.AD298). Broken contract and theft, P.Mert. 91 (AD316), P.Col. Inv. 61 (AD316), 62 (AD318).

⁴² P.Oxy. 3302 (AD300/1).

⁴³ De Ste. Croix (1954), pp. 42-45.

taken to court by one of their tenants; he alleged that they used influence to win the trial and then appropriated all of his possessions.⁴⁴ To prevent a case coming to trial, a σχολαστικός threatened reprisals, citing a previous situation in the past when he had carried out his threat. Elsewhere a promise not to proceed against ἀγροφύλακες was extracted from a fugitive cultivator.⁴⁵ This is not to say that all court cases were decided on grounds of influence. There are a number of examples where no influence seems to have been used at all, but powerful men apparently did not hesitate to employ it in order to win their cases.⁴⁶ This gave them a tremendous advantage in secular and military courts, though probably rather less so in episcopal ones.

From the Third century onwards there was a significant growth in the power of wealthy landowners. Even in the Third century there is evidence of estate owners being able to use influence with collectors, and their employment of councillors as stewards would have increased their prestige.⁴⁷ In the Fourth century instances of local power appear; in one case a man claimed that men who had released animals onto his land were too powerful locally to be stopped, while a landowner was capable of preventing villagers recovering their fellows from his land.⁴⁸ Ownership of land in itself created a patron-client relationship between the owner and his tenants - some of them even made indefinite loans of their property to landowners in return for their protection.⁴⁹ The Emperors tried to prevent the growing influence of landowners over villages up to AD415,

⁴⁴ P.Oxy. 1120 (early 3rd); P.Cair. Masp. 67279 (c.AD570).

⁴⁵ P.Oxy. 1165 (6th); P.Lond. 1032 (6th/7th), Bonneau (1988), p. 313.

⁴⁶ Apparently a fair trial, P.Col. Inv. 181-2 (c.AD339-340), Kraemer and Lewis (1937),

⁴⁷ Rathbone (1991), pp. 133f., 389-390.

⁴⁸ P.Mert. 92 (AD324), P.Thead. 17 (AD332)..

⁴⁹ P.Hernals 16.1 (AD488), B.G.U. 304 (AD553); land patronage, Carrié (1976), pp. 159-160.

though it appears that such legislation had a limited effect and the timing of the concessions was made at a time when the councils were clearly struggling to meet their obligations.⁵⁰ By the Sixth century, many owners of great estates had tremendous power within the provinces: they had good contacts within the provincial and central bureaucracy, held positions within them and had soldiers available. Wealthy men had always had a large share of local power, where they could directly apply their influence, and their power grew in proportion to the growth of their estates. Such power was the greater for the presence of the owner, so that there was no need to acquire the assistance of others to ensure that their will was enforced. The application of this can be seen in a number of cases, such as a contract to be a steward on the estates of the Apions; here the applicant agreed to renounce some of his legal rights in order to get the job, these rights having been the subject of a recent imperial edict.⁵¹

A rival for the patronage and influence of the secular owners of great estates was the Church. Its power had similarly grown over the same period and it also enjoyed the advantage of proximity to the areas over which it employed its influence. The level of influence that a member of the clergy could wield depended on his rank and see; the Patriarch of Alexander had by far the most power, while some of the clergy on estates were actually tenants of the estate owners. Bishops were therefore capable of greater acts of patronage. In the Riot of the Statues at Antioch in AD387 the mob went to the abode of the bishop in an effort to obtain his leadership and to secure his support for their protest against a new tax, while in the Sixth century in Egypt, Dioscorus II, the Patriarch of Alexandria, led a delegation to plead for clemency after a riot in which the Augustal Prefect had been killed⁵². On a lesser

⁵⁰ Cod. Theod. 11.24.1 (AD360), 3 (AD395), 4 (AD399), 6 (AD415) for Egypt. P.Ross.-Georg. iii. 8 (4th) the Fayum village of Euhemeria appears under the patronage of one Nechos, Johnson and West (1949), pp. 28, 45.

⁵¹ P.Oxy. 136 (AD583).

⁵² Libanius, Or. 19.28, cf. Browning (1952), p. 15; for Dioscorus II, Hardy (1952), pp. 120-1, n. 12.

level, in an appeal to the Emperor from the village of Aphrodito over the behaviour of the *πάγαραχος*, the petition was headed by members of the local clergy.⁵³

More often it appears that the bishop and lesser clergy represented individuals. They received appeals and had tribunals in order to arbitrate between parties coming before them.⁵⁴ Assistance from bishops took various forms: in one case goods were handed over from estate stores to a person having problems supporting his family at the bishop's request, while in another papyrus the bishop admonished an official apparently guilty of peculation.⁵⁵ In a dispute in a monastery the abbot stepped in to settle the matter.⁵⁶ Other members of the clergy exercised what power they possessed in favour of others on occasion. This was sometimes in connection with soldiers, whether for their benefit or defending civilians from their excesses. A priest appealed to a commander to forgive a soldier who had fled on one occasion, but on another a petition was sent to one Apa John to intercede with a *τρίβουνος* on behalf of a widow in whose house camp-followers had been instated.⁵⁷ An appeal was made to a priest for help for a man who had fallen badly into debt, and whose creditors had taken his children and were holding them for ransom against the debt. The appeal to the priest was not so much to force them to directly restore the children, but to help in the payment of the debt.⁵⁸ Priests and holy men were therefore a valuable source

⁵³ P.Cair. Masp. 67126 (AD541), cf. Wipszycka (1972).

⁵⁴ Tribunals, P.Lips. 43, P.Oxy. 903 (both first half 4th), Van Haelst (1970), p. 500.

⁵⁵ P.Oxy. 1848 (6th/7th), P.Cair. Masp. 67295 (late 5th).

⁵⁶ B.G.U. 103 (6th/7th), Winter (1933), p. 178.

⁵⁷ P.Abinn. 32 (c.AD346), P.Herm. Rees 17 (5th/6th).

⁵⁸ P.Lond. 1915 (c.AD330-340).

of local patronage who could have some influence with a wide range of officials.⁵⁹

Members of the clergy used letters of commendation in the same manner as the bureaucracy, obtaining assistance for their friends and colleagues on their travels. These could be done between religious communities, or sent to secular authorities.⁶⁰ Clergy were conscious of the respect they felt that their positions deserved, and this is made clear as early as AD351, when a deacon petitioning Abinnaeus made sure to underline his rank in the Church.⁶¹ Some churches owned considerable amounts of property, and this naturally made them patrons of the tenants who worked the land. Such a relationship can be drawn between the Church and the beneficiaries of the various charitable institutions and donations administered by the Church. The strengths of the Church were founded on the power of belief, the enormous numbers of monks and clerics and the tremendous wealth it enjoyed. Some of its estates possessed βουκελλάριοι, and so the Church possessed not only the power of the reverence in which was held but also more tangible methods of carrying out its will and patronage.⁶²

The Church possessed all of the advantages of the owners of great estates and a lot more besides. Members of the clergy were clearly capable of exercising patronage on behalf of individuals or groups, but their motive seems to have been more to stave off misfortune rather than to seek self-aggrandisement. In other words, rather than seeking to gain promotions for people, they might seek to preserve them from punishments or provide them with charitable assistance. The general attitude of the Church towards local administration seems to have been one of arbitration, and the clergy frequently appear as mediators between the governors and

⁵⁹ Brown (1971).

⁶⁰ Harrop (1962); Martin (1954), P.Gen. Inv. 28 (6th/7th).

⁶¹ P.Abinn. 55 (AD351).

⁶² eg: P.Oxy. 1894 (AD573) a contract for the management of a village on Church property.

those they governed. As such they can have done relatively little to destabilise local administration by means of intervention; however, it appears that a not inconsiderable number of βουλευταί, or their sons, left their vocation and joined the Church, a situation that can only have weakened the βουλαί through draining off its numbers.⁶³

Patronage had a strong impact upon local administration and did much to determine the course it took in the Later Roman Empire in Egypt. Patronage is a rather general and misleading term in the context of the Later Roman Empire, since its effect was governed by a number of factors; the status of the user, his location and his motive or intention. Some forms are very different to others - a landowner-tenant relationship was not the same as that of a man seeking to purchase a rank or an exemption through the agency of another. All of these variations had some effect on local administration, though in different degrees. The political system under Roman rule was permeated by patronage and its use, and therefore much of what went on was accepted practice. The Emperor seems to have been undecided where the exact dividing line fell, but patronage was an integral part of, for example, the selection process of bureaucratic offices. The Emperor was chiefly concerned to prevent patronage where it encouraged injustice and illegality, but could do little to stem its use since most of the bureaucracy were involved in several of its permutations.

It was an accepted fact that men in positions to help friends and colleagues did so wherever possible. With the development of emphasis in payment of gifts or bribes for such favours, the clientele of important men became more indiscriminate, numerous and transitory, often entailing short-term transactions.⁶⁴ The duress under which the councils operated in the early Fourth century meant that instead of competing with each other, βουλευταί started to compete against each other, a matter which destabilised the council-based local

⁶³ eg: P.Würzb. 16 (AD349), Van Haelst (1970), p. 502.

⁶⁴ Wallace-Hadrill (1989), ch. 7, P.Garnsey and G.Woolf, 'Patronage of the rural poor in the Roman world', pp. 157-8.

administrative system and accelerated its decline. By the Sixth century patronage within the context of local administration had a different effect. The element of competition had gone, and it was wielded by much more powerful people. They were not engaged in competing against each other, and therefore had the opportunity to run their estates as fully co-ordinated businesses. Patronage was not used in order to escape duties, but on great estates was a relationship between the landlord and his tenants on the one hand, and external agencies of various ranks on the other.

So, was patronage corruption in any sense? This is a very difficult question to answer. Given that it was an accepted facet of the socio-political scene, it would appear that the answer must be in the negative; but this is not how it was universally perceived. In fact, perception seems to be at the heart of the matter. Those who were taking advantage of their connections must have believed that what they were doing was justifiable in a social context if not necessarily in a legal one - for example, the men who bought letters of appointment to the command of the *ala* of the camp of Dionysias were presumably entitled to assume the post unless one with a genuine or better supported claim came forward. The letters of appointment may have come from the same source - in other words a man selling the same position more than once.⁶⁵ In another case a man had bought an honorary title with the express intention of rendering himself immune to liturgical service. This was expressly forbidden by imperial laws, but the acquisition does not seem to be being questioned when he appealed against nomination.⁶⁶ Such men were merely taking advantage of the system. Those not fortunate enough to benefit as a result of the patronage of others, or perhaps suffering because of it, must have regarded the matter differently. When Aurelius Isidorus

⁶⁵ P.Abinn. 1 (c.AD341). The deceitful nature of some great men, Goffart (1970), Jones (1964), pp. 391-6

⁶⁶ P.Oxy. 1204 (AD299); imperial disapprobation, Cod. Theod. 12.1. various.

was nominated alone to the *σπιτολογία* at Karanis by a number of people including the *γραμματεὺς*, he claimed that his nomination was illegal and so was the exemption of thirteen other persons.⁶⁷ This is a straight case of patronage in village politics, but the officials may have over-stepped the mark in maliciously nominating Isidorus and exempting their friends - for example, they may have nominated an inadequate number of *σπιτολόγοι*, or illegally overturned nominations. People such as Isidorus on the wrong side of patronage clearly did not appreciate it as right or just.

Patronage did not necessarily entail illegality. Letters of commendation might merely require good treatment of friends. People applying for office might well be entirely suited and qualified for the position, with no other demands on their persons. In such cases there were no problems. Where it involved appointment to posts without adequate qualifications or exemption from compulsory duties, then it no doubt caused consternation among those disadvantageously affected. Because of social expectations, it is difficult to define as corrupt all uses of patronage that were technically illegal. Libanius betrays double standards in his works; he regularly assisted friends, pupils and clients in their ambitions, but in a letter he told his pupils not to use administrative positions for favour giving⁶⁸. Libanius might have been able to assume a higher moral stance than his contemporaries in that he does not appear to have demanded money for the use of his influence - and this may have been where he was trying to make the distinction between corrupt solicitation and social obligation. If so, he was in a very small minority, since the payment of bribes and gratuities was a regular feature of the Later Roman Empire. Patronage was a powerful rival to the regular legal processes to which its victims may have had to resort, and its effects on local administration must have been considerable. While the Emperor certainly regarded certain applications of patronage as

⁶⁷ P.Cair. Isid. 68 (AD309/10).

⁶⁸ Libanius, Ep. 696, cf. Liebeschuetz (1972), p. 194f.

illegal, it seems to have been too widespread to condemn in general terms as corruption. Patronage was ingrained in Late Roman society and therefore instances of its abuse were not always readily discernible; they would probably only cause an outcry when used aggressively counter to the interests of an individual or group. Therefore branding specific instances of patronage as corruption was most probably the resort of those immediately disadvantaged by its use or the reaction of the Emperor to what he perceived as being detrimental to the good of the state.

2: PECULATION:

Extortion and peculation were regularly practised in the Later Roman Empire, and numerous laws in the Theodosian Code testify to the Emperor's efforts to come to terms with them. The scale of corruption of this sort within the bureaucracy particularly, but more generally throughout the Empire, is impossible to quantify accurately, which makes an assessment of its effect on the administration and everyday life awkward. The problem is further complicated by the trouble encountered in identifying what was regarded then as illegal practice and what was not. There is no doubt that there was a perceived difference, no more clearly illustrated than in a papyrus in which a man lists a series of payments to a number of officials, mainly military, and in the middle of these appears a sum considerably larger than any of the others, simply headed 'extortion'.¹ It may be that the scale of the exaction determined how the matter was observed, but this would be to overly simplify the matter. In this section I intend to deal with the subject of peculation in two stages; the first concerns the fees and gratuities regularly received by officials, while the second will cover extortion.

Gratuities were an established fact of Late Roman administration. They were paid to officials for the execution of their duty, and became added on to the taxes;² officials expected to receive them and tax payers expected to pay them. Traditional and regulated emoluments were regarded as legitimate by almost everyone, but deciding what constituted one, and when, is more difficult. The initial payment may have started as a gift, and having been repeated once or more may have settled down to become a regular payment which both giver and receiver regarded as right and proper. Alternatively it may have had its origins in extortion, but once its origins

¹ S.B. 9207 (2nd) ὑπὲρ διασεμοῦ, cf. Lewis (1982), p. 143, (1983), p. 163, n. 7.

² P.Cair. Masp. 67057 (AD554-9) συνήθεια (gratuities) was one of the four categories of taxes listed for the financial bureau of Antaiopolis.

were lost in the past, the outlay may well have achieved the same status as one that commenced with a voluntary donation or was set up by law.³ As some gratuities became endorsed by custom they subsequently became established by law.⁴ But by no means all gratuities demanded by officials were condoned by laws, and a considerable number were expressly forbidden.⁵ Some changes were enacted; in the case of payments under the heading of βαλλαντίον to bankers, the στρατηγοί were instructed to ensure that they were curtailed and were ordered to get back any money that they themselves had handed over under this heading - clearly a serious change because the στρατηγοί were routinely used to making these payments to the bankers.⁶

The Emperor was keen to prevent the wholesale financial exploitation of tax payers and to ensure that the institution of perquisites was not abused. Appeals for the upkeep of traditional values and ancestral virtues must have been largely ineffective since the acceptance of guest-gifts and gratuities were themselves old traditions firmly established within the Roman administration and culture. The failure of Emperors such as Constantine to prevent the taking of certain fees resulted in later ones trying another approach. They tried to set limits for officials on how much they could acquire for given activities, but far from setting a maximum, this set a minimum which officials knew that they could legally demand.⁷ Unfortunately for the Emperor, the major beneficiaries of gratuities were the very bureaucrats who were intended to implement laws restricting them. In Egypt the

³ Macmullen (1988), pp. 136-7, 144-5.

⁴ Gratuities approved by law, eg: Cod. Theod. 12.6.3 (AD349), Nov. Val. 7.1 (AD440). Cod. Theod. 12.6.15 (AD369), 21 (AD386) on allowing *susceptores* to retain a percentage of the taxes they collected, Johnson and West (1949), pp. 290-1, n. 12.

⁵ eg: Cod. Theod. 11.11.1 (AD368).

⁶ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 92-99 (AD300).

⁷ Constantine on taking perquisites in court, Cod. Theod. 1.16.7 (AD331). Regulating fees, eg: Cod. Theod. 6.29.5 (AD359).

papyri show that some measures were taken to control the taking of gratuities - for example the Duke of the Thebaid tried to prevent his court officials taking more than two *κεράτια* as fees from people coming to his tribunal - though it is most unlikely that they regulated their own rates. In a law directed at Egypt the rapacity of Dukes of Libya and the Thebaid was to be restrained; they were to appropriate no more than a twelfth of the allowances of the border militia!⁸

The pay of bureaucrats was lower in the Later Roman Empire than it had been in earlier centuries because of inflation; in order to compensate for this a greater reliance was placed upon the receipt of gratuities.⁹ This must have been particularly important when men paid to enter into their office; this was apparently a feature of acquiring office in the bureaucracy where large sums of money changed hands, and it also happened on great estates. In one case a man wishing to become a *προνοητής* paid twelve *solidi* to enter the office and it can be seen elsewhere how they regained their money. A *προνοητής* made a surcharge on every *solidus* he collected, and collected in a weak standard in order to increase his fees.¹⁰ Gratuities were certainly regarded as very important and any delays in their payment induced demonstrations of the deep concern felt by the intended recipient. This varied from polite reminders to senior officials who were to disburse the payments, to peremptory orders to inferiors to pay those required, to detention by the official who had not received his gratuities.¹¹ That these payments were a regular facet of everyday life can be seen in the casual way in which they were listed in columns of expenses by those having to make them, such as for freight charges.¹² There also seems to have been a

⁸ Nov. Theod. 24.1 (AD443).

⁹ Jones (1960), p. 170ff.

¹⁰ P.Oxy. 136 (AD583), P.Oxy 1915 (c.AD560).

¹¹ Requests, P.Oxy. 1869, 1875 (6th/7th) for *καλανδικά*; orders, P.Oxy. 3358 (4th), P.Mert. 95 (5th); arrest, P.Abinn. 26 (AD340s).

¹² P.Oxy. 1651 (3rd) to examiners, clerks and a *βενεφικιάριος*.

variation between the amounts demanded; in P.Oxy. 3864 a man wrote that the cost of travel with his goods on canal and river had been lower than expected.¹³ Such variations must have been at the discretion of the officials rather than imperial policy, and presumably they charged what they felt they could get away with.

The Emperor was keen to control the exploitation of the tax payers whenever possible and this included the tradition of giving gifts to men in office. It seems that such gifts came to be regarded much as gratuities by officials, and this is implied by an imperial law that permitted the giving of 'voluntary' gifts provided that extortion, fraud and torture had been absent from the transaction.¹⁴ Such legislation can have had minimal success in its prohibitive measures, if any at all, and bans on freely made gifts merely serve to demonstrate the desperation of the Emperors. Gifts were a useful medium for cities and individuals to ingratiate themselves with senior officials, and might accompany petitions. After all, the principle of crown gold was much the same, and although it was made into a voluntary payment by the Emperors, cities must have felt constrained to meet it.¹⁵ Alternatively, gifts could be employed as part of the hospitality for a visiting dignitary. The more lavishly one was entertained, the more reason he would have to remember the place or person with favour, and the gifts might serve as tangible reminders of past generosity, such as the carpet bestowed on a visiting *dux* at Oxyrhynchus.¹⁶ Such entertainments are largely distinct from being categorised as peculation because cities were expected to provide rations for passing military and bureaucratic personnel. Their scale must

¹³ P.Oxy. 3864 (5th).

¹⁴ Against gifts, Cod. Theod. 8.15.1-8 (all 4th); permitted without coercion, Nov. Val. 32 (AD451).

¹⁵ Cod. Theod. 12.13.5 (AD384); P.Oxy. 1413 (AD270-5) making a gold crown.

¹⁶ P.Oxy. 1431 (AD352).

often have been determined by the donor; the giver was more likely to be more generous than required rather than the visitor make excessive demands because of the high value attached to patronage in Late Roman society.¹⁷ Of course, once a precedent had been set it must have been difficult to fall below it with the same person, potentially leading to an upward spiral of expense.

Extortion was practised at every administrative level, success and extent depending on relative position and means. Naturally laws and injunctions were issued against such practices, but it seems that such efforts did not prevent extortion continuing. At the lower levels the documentation could be used to discover if people had made false declarations, had purloined part of the taxes or goods for which they were responsible or were engaged in some illegal practice. One such case arose in connection with the transport of the *annona militaris*; the procurator demanded that the accounts be dispatched by messengers instead of with the supervisors, since it appeared that the latter were changing the accounts and removing the difference from the cargo. This had been ordered before, but had not been acted upon by the στρατηγός.¹⁸ Further evidence of a failure to curtail or stop illegal activities appears elsewhere - ships crews of the military commissariat were not being sufficiently diligent in the execution of their duties and carrying out private transactions instead, while in the Sixth century a πρωτοκωμητής was criticised by a member of staff of the *praeses* for not preventing a man from continuing to make exactions.¹⁹ If some of the most junior employees of the administration could not be controlled in their excesses, then those of senior staff must have been even tougher to prevent. P.Beatty Panop. 1 and 2 show how much work one

¹⁷ City providing for an official and his retinue, P.Oxy. 1920 (late 6th); village doing so, P.Princ. 105 (6th); Theophanes entertains a στρατηγός, P.Ryl. 641 (first half 4th).

¹⁸ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 117-128 (AD300).

¹⁹ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 100-8 (AD300), P.Cair. Masp. 67290 (pre-AD542).

official might be required to do, with his personal presence being required for a variety of tasks. If such was the rule, there can be little surprise that some were not dealt with as efficiently as the senior administration desired. As a result of this, whether rightly or wrongly, such officials were sometimes accused of complicity or extortion themselves, or both they and their subordinates were jointly held responsible pending an investigation.²⁰

Senior officials were not always the most satisfactory check on the excesses of their subordinates - sometimes they were implicated as well.²¹ This made it much easier for the collectors, since with the protection of a superior they could carry out their extortionate practices with relative impunity. Knowledge of this support seems to have resulted in their dropping any attempts at subtlety. Soldiers of Abinnaeus on a recruiting drive conscripted men, looted a house and drove off some cattle - Abinnaeus initially refused to launch an investigation into their activity, and was threatened by the *πρύτανις* (of Arsinoe?) that he would take the matter before the *dux* if restitution was not made of men and goods. Even a civilian with the same mission extorted money and threw an official in jail, leaving only when the *πραϊπόσιτος* τοῦ πάγου arrived.²² *Κώμαρχοι* colluding with a *πραϊπόσιτος* τοῦ πάγου - who was meant to supervise their activities - impetrated a variety of excessive demands, with the conspirators sharing in the spoils.²³

Attempts by the other village officials to put a stop to this by making appeals seem to have been subtle rather than open. In one case a message alleging indiscriminate assignation of taxes was slipped in between tax receipts, while they only mustered the inner strength to appeal to a senior official when

²⁰ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 68-71 (AD300).

²¹ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 229-244 (AD300) interdict against *στρατηγοί* colluding with collectors.

²² P.Abinn. 18, 35 (AD340s).

²³ eg: P.Cair. Isid. 71-73 (AD314).

the Prefect came through the district on his rounds. By then they had a lot of accusations to make.²⁴ At this level officials did not have an absolutely free hand but they could find willing accomplices. The system here was at fault since the more senior officials participating or encouraging extortion among their subordinates were the very people meant to be putting an end to it. In a public notice from the procurator, στρατηγού are to look out for corruption, and yet are warned themselves against practising it.²⁵ The relative status of the victims and their appellant may have determined whether the perpetrators escaped without reprimand, or whether reparations had to be made - the πρύτανις approached Abinnaeus directly, whereas the villagers waited until the Prefect was in their district.

At village and city levels there were a number of opportunities for peculation. Given the pressure of personal responsibility for payment of taxes in the event of a shortfall, it was particularly important to operate at a profit not a loss. One area of opportunity that came to the attention of the Emperor was the failure to publish tax rates before they were collected. It would have been difficult to reclaim any excessive amount demanded, and the sum might well not have been worth the expense of going to court.²⁶ Another law aimed at Egypt intended to make the tenure of ἐξάκτορες annual so that they might not have extensive capacity for harassing the tax payers.²⁷ Village and city officials found a number of methods for making a profit. This covered heavy overcharging to making demands for tax payments for land that the intended victim claimed not to possess.²⁸ On one occasion a πολιτευόμενος

²⁴ P.Cairo J.d'E. 57060 (early 4th), Boak (1940), and P.Cair. Isid. 71-3 (AD314).

²⁵ P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 229-244 (AD300).

²⁶ Cod. Theod. 11.5.3 (AD436).

²⁷ Cod. Theod. 12.6.22 (AD386).

²⁸ P.Ryl. 617 (AD317?); P.Cair. Isid. 69 (AD310), P.Oxy. 2235 (c.AD346).

employed two men as collectors, but once they had paid the taxes in advance of making the collections he then assigned two other men to make those.²⁹ In all of the above papyrus examples the victim appealed, which is why the cases are known. In the case of overcharging the lady concerned petitioned the Prefect and Emperor - she was evidently of high standing, and was more than capable of asserting her rights. The wrongly assessed men appealed, since it is possible that if they had not, having paid for the land once it might have become an annual charge. And the wronged collectors had lost a huge amount of money. The rule seems to have been that peculation could only be successfully practised against people with bad connections and for small amounts. If, as I believe, this happened often, few cases of complaint arise - and this may simply be that it was easier to tolerate mild corruption than to engage in time-consuming and expensive litigation.

With so many taxes, surcharges and gratuities in the Later Roman Empire, opportunities for making an illegal profit must have been widespread. A good place to start was the census, which determined who owned what land and therefore was the basis for tax assessment. In one case from the Fayum two men appealed to the Prefect claiming that there were irregularities in its management, to the loss of the treasury.³⁰ Weights and measures were a popular method of cheating the tax payer; efforts were taken to standardize them and have the weights stored under lock and key when not in use.³¹ In the Fourth century the policy of *adaeratio* was open to abuse. Collectors seem to have had the ability to decide what sum should be paid in lieu of goods, and could make an artificially high estimate, so pocketing the difference.³² The government, with its lower than market price reimbursements for requisitions,

²⁹ P.Oxy. 3393 (AD365).

³⁰ P.Amh. 83 (3rd/4th).

³¹ P.Beatty. Panop. 2, ll. 229-244 (AD300).

³² P.Beatty Panop. 2, ll. 229-244 (AD300); cf. Schuller (1982), F.Kolb's chapter 'Adaeratio as a Problem of Corruption in late Antiquity'.

hurt the tax payer as well. The surcharges called ὄβρυζα and ῥοπή entailed payment for the weighing and cleaning of coins, and extra charges were made in order to bring damaged coins up to the proper standard. Officials, such as the ζυγοστάτης, in Egypt took the opportunity to exact too much from the tax payers on this account, so much so that Justinian issued an edict banning the collection of ὄβρυζα there altogether and making its collection a serious offence. However, it reappears in Egypt again after this prohibition, which suggests that the legislation was not fully effective.³³

In all previous areas of activity it has been observed that if the βουλευταί could do something, then the bureaucracy could do it better. This was undoubtedly true of speculation. The bureaucracy was popularly viewed as being riddled with corruption, and such allegations appear in the work of contemporary writers.³⁴ Examples are not hard to find: in one case a man alleged that a τοποτηρητής was forcing him to pay taxes for which he was not responsible, while in another a man complained that taxes were being levied on him but that his land had been confiscated and handed over to other people.³⁵ After a murder in a village, a man, who may or may not have been an official (he seems to have no rank beyond his title of *illustris*) tried to collect a fine of three pounds of gold, but had to defend his actions in court.³⁶ However, bureaucrats also had the advantage of being able to secure their friends from suffering extortion, as is witnessed by one official making it abundantly clear to another that only a set rate was to be collected from one Eustochia, while in another case a man was 'congratulated' on exacting twice the amount owed and told to

³³ Ζυγοστάτης appears to be doing this in P.Oxy. 1886 (5th/6th), cf. Hendy (1969), pp. 304-5. Just. Ed. 11; cf. Hendy (1985), pp. 344-6, 350-6, Johnson and West (1949), pp. 312-3, 315-6. Reappearance, P.Oxy. 144 (AD580).

³⁴ Priscus, Fragment 11, ll. 436-510, Blockley (1983), pp. 269-273.

³⁵ P.Cair. Masp. 67279 (c.AD570), 67002 (AD567).

³⁶ P.Mich. 660-1 (6th).

refund the excess.³⁷ It was possible to be caught: an official appealed against his conviction by the *praeses* for embezzlement of gold taxes, a charge that had been brought by the πολυτευόμενοι of Hermopolis.³⁸

After the Fourth century, with the greater powers at their disposal and greater involvement in the tax collection process, examples of bureaucratic graft became more dramatic. In AD411 Synesius alleged that the governor of Pentapolis doubled the tax rate in his province, and then invented new taxes for AD412.³⁹ The πάγαρχος of Antaiopolis at least doubled and almost trebled taxes in his district, and used violence when payment was not forthcoming. Intervention by the *dux* had secured a temporary suspension of the prohibitive rates, but the villagers of Aphrodito claimed that unauthorised rises were soon resumed.⁴⁰ In a contract to serve as a deputy to a πάγαρχος, a man promised among other things to forward the profits on taxation (κέρδος) to the πάγαρχος. While tax collectors and their agents were never beloved of the population, it is interesting to observe an oath in the same papyrus by which the deputy swears to secure his superior from curses made against him (δυσφημία).⁴¹ Accusations of extortion could be met by violent threats, and it was not easy to regain money illegally appropriated from the officials responsible, as even the Emperor found out when one Theodosius availed himself of all of the taxes of the village of Aphrodito.⁴²

It is important to distinguish such activities from basic crime. Peculation was a criminal activity since the word implies that more was being taken than was legally permitted. The receipt of gratuities is rather more complicated, since it is

37 P.Lond. 1685 (6th); P.Sakaon. 55.

38 P.Lips. 34, 35 (c.AD375).

39 Synesius, Ep. 79, Macmullen (1987), p. 751.

40 P.Lond. 1674 (c.AD570).

41 P.Lond. 1660 (c.AD553).

42 P.Lond. 1075 (7th), P.Cair. Masp. 67029 (AD548/9?).

difficult to ascertain in the papyri when a gratuity constituted a gift, extortion, a traditional emolument or a legalised fee. Theft and other crimes, are much easier to classify, and are subject to a different definition. Theft seems not to have been uncommon, but perhaps we hear about it more since it was obviously criminal and generally practised by people of fairly low social standing, so it was easier to seek restitution in the courts.⁴³ Only officials with some definite financial responsibilities can commit peculation by the appropriation of funds or goods that were intended for another destination. Theft can be committed by anyone, although the objects purloined may be identical to those peculated and the same methods used. In other words, peculation is the breach of an administrative contract and responsibility, while theft is an offence against society. It can be practised by administrators, though the dividing line comes over whether the office is being employed to facilitate the offence.

Extortion was regularly practised throughout the administration in the Later Roman period. Almost certainly what is covered in the papyri represents merely the tip of the iceberg. Officials were not going to record their own financial misdeeds in their accounts, and where it is recorded in private accounts names do not seem to be listed.⁴⁴ As long as officials followed a number of fairly obvious guide-lines they could probably accumulate a fair amount of wealth over their term of office. These include not trying to extort too much from one person, not trying to extort anything from more powerful people or their dependents and probably colluding with superiors or their fellows. It is possible that a small bit of extortion was regarded as only fair and a perquisite of the job - here the categories of gratuity and peculation coincide - and for most people it was probably easier to satisfy their greed, founded as it was in a sense of traditional right, than risk the expense and uncertainty of court.

⁴³ Petitions over theft: P.Abinn. 48-50 (all AD346), P.Thead 22-23 (AD342), P.Lond 1651 (AD363); restitution after thefts, P.Oxy. 2058 (6th).

⁴⁴ eg: S.B. 9207 (2nd).

The facility for corruption and peculation grew greater in proportion to rank. There were more officials to whom appeals could be made over the misconduct of a κώμαρχος than there were over that of a πάγαρχος. And even if the decision went in favour of the appellant, it was quite another matter to be able to enforce it. As their powers grew greater no doubt officials found it easier to extort money. The πάγαρχοι had control over the whole tax bureau in their districts, and were relatively safe from dismissal. Furthermore, their apparently lengthy tenure of office, compared to the restrictions placed on ἐξάκτορες, gave them the freedom to pace themselves, to set precedents and to follow them up.⁴⁵ To judge from requests for κέρδος, the whole staff was working to a common goal of self-enrichment with rewards presumably proportional to rank.

Imperial legislation against bureaucratic corruption was therefore of limited effect. Senior officials moved against subordinates practising corruption independent of them which created a shortfall in their returns or endangered the position of the official concerned. It could not check the corruption of the senior officials themselves - that was not so much setting a thief to catch a thief as setting a thief to catch himself. Senior officials were looking to make a profit on the tenure of their office as a general rule, and at the very least to make some profit above any debts incurred in acquiring the position. As a result, the receipt of gifts, gratuities and payments for patronage were very welcome, probably bringing in the majority of the profits to an official, and this was supplemented with extortion to whatever level would offer a return they judged both sufficient and not liable to start any serious trouble.

⁴⁵ P.Cair. Masp. 67002 (AD567) the πάγαρχος is described as the ninth, apparently in office since P.Lond. 1660 (c.AD553).

CONCLUSION:

The Later Roman Empire witnessed huge changes in administration in Egypt, a process too irresistible to be stopped by imperial legislation. The councils that formed the cornerstone of Diocletian's reforms were superseded by powerful individuals who effectively ran the local administration of the diocese in the Sixth century. Full knowledge of the details of this transformation is lost in the mists of the Fifth century, but imperial legislation and the papyri that do survive for that period offer some indications of the process.

The huge financial pressures on the Empire towards the end of the Third and during the Fourth century had a profound effect on local the councils. With high inflation it became very expensive to perform magistracies and liturgies. For example, the huge increase in the price of commodities may have rendered it impossible to hold a magistracy, such as the γυμνασιαρχία (for which oil had to be supplied for the baths), for the requisite year. Indeed, even in the middle of the Third century, a claim was made that to hold a magistracy for two days was to invite ruin, and Philip the Arab had to introduce reforms.¹ This burden seriously destabilised the structure of the βουλή. Whereas there had been healthy competition between members in order to hold the magistracies of the cities, the greatly increased expense and the reduced status made them both unattractive and undesirable. Competition now centred around the avoidance of liturgies; men were so reluctant to hold posts that it was sometimes difficult to fill them, and many nominees had to be pressured into acceptance.²

The βουλευταί were potentially the most socially mobile class, since many of them had the benefits of education and wealth - a fact recognised by the Emperors in the weight of legislation they devoted to the matter - and some of their members moved to other careers and positions that offered more and

¹ P.Lond. Inv. 2565 (c.AD250), Skeat and Wegener (1935); Parsons (1967).

² P.Oxy. 1415 (late 3rd), S.B. 9597 (late 4th), Bowman (1971), p. 81.

demanded less. This included the acquisition of honorary titles to evade council duty and joining the Church in whatever capacity.³ The introduction of new officials, such as the λογιστής, during the Fourth century, responsible to the bureaucracy rather than the council, disguised and somewhat retarded the process of decline but did not arrest it. Eventually the Emperor was forced to turn to the large landowners and a more centralised system based in the cities so that the required duties could be performed.

The decline of the βουλευταί and the chance to purchase state land early in the Fourth century created the means for men to acquire influence and property. In order to benefit from the changing structure in society, it was necessary to have wealth, power and opportunity. An example

can be observed in the Taurinos Archive, in which over three generations a family greatly increased its property from very little indeed. The greatest opportunities existed in the bureaucracy, whether military or civilian. It was not difficult to acquire wealth and property in such positions, and intelligent entrepreneurial activity could extend this advantage even further. By the Sixth century, military and civil administration had been reunited in the hands of individual bureaucrats - such as the *dux* and the πάραρχος. This also seems to be true of the owners of great estates who certainly had soldiers available to them, and such a combination greatly enhanced the power of the wielder. The result was that by the Sixth century power was more polarised and concentrated. This meant that the competition and element of local politics that had detracted from the efficiency of the Fourth century councils was a thing of the past. Owners of great estates took it in turn to hold magistracies, and also held positions in the bureaucracy as well.

Throughout all these times of change, the equation that governed the effectiveness of patronage and corruption remained stable. The more senior the rank and power of an individual the greater his capacity for both, provided that he could ensure that what he ordered was carried out. This was

³ P.Oxy. 1204 (AD299), P.Würzb. 16 (AD349).

why the Emperor sometimes experienced problems in having his edicts obeyed in provinces such as Egypt despite his unequalled rank.⁴ In the Fourth century the relative power of members of councils was limited, being exceeded by that of members of the bureaucracy under whose supervision and growing participation they operated. By the Sixth century owners of estates and *πάγαραχοι* had almost no rivals and no-one who could exercise effective powers of supervision. The *πάγαραχος* was in the optimum position to extort, but owners of estates could exert more effective control over officials on their property. Their accessibility to their *coloni* must have made peculation easier to prevent and gratuities easier to regulate.

The gradual centralisation of power, from councils supervised by magistrates responsible to the bureaucracy to direct administration by the latter, led to a greater level of efficiency. This was true of estates as well; the *coloni* benefited from their greater resources and better equipment. There was a price. Greater power to administer also conferred greater capacity for corruption. Patronage became more irresistible locally; while Abinnaeus might be able successfully to invoke the Emperor's support in the Fourth century against the Count of Egypt, it proved a lot more difficult for Aphrodito, which was under the protection of the Empress, to resist a *πάγαραχος*. Peculation became harder to control and easier to execute - imperial prohibitions gave way to attempted regulation of excesses, a clear demonstration that the Emperor was incapable of stopping it. The administration of the Roman Empire was based on patronage, and the system that evolved in Egypt over the Later Roman Empire is a fine example of it, illustrating both its merits and its defects very clearly.

Corruption is hard to define in the context of the Later Roman Empire, not least because the changing nature of administration also changed the circumstances under which corruption operated. The Fourth century provided a layered system of corruption, with those at the top best able to exact more; in the Sixth century, while this is still much the case, it

⁴ Wallace-Hadrill (1989), ch. 6, D.Braund, 'Function and Dysfunction: Personal Patronage in Roman Imperialism', pp. 145-9.

happens within brackets of greater and lesser opportunity - the bureaucracy and the οἶκοι. The power to extort more than was legally permitted had limitations; many officials must have perceived these checks, and operated within them, and such incidences may have scarcely merited any mention in the papyri. A minority of cases, presumably mainly where such restrictions were exceeded, reached the papyri and have come to our notice, and it is those that present us with the most solid examples of corruption. Given the culture of the society and the differing perceptions of its people, it is even harder for us than it was for them to decide where the dividing line between acceptable demands and extortion fell. Each person seems to have had different standards depending upon whether they were giving, receiving or merely observing; until some pattern can be established the majority of such instances cannot be firmly defined.

APPENDIX:

1: LANGUAGE AND LITERACY:

The language of the high administration was in Latin, but from the Augustal Prefect downwards in Egypt, Greek was almost exclusively used.¹ Almost all of the papyri from Egypt are in Greek, though Latin sometimes occurs in correspondence with men of high standing; certain Latin judicial formulae were also retained, at least in the Fourth century.² The apparently high level of illiteracy in Greek at lower social levels suggests that Coptic was the spoken, if not the written, language of the countryside.³ The result of using a language for administration in which most of the inhabitants of Egypt were illiterate was the use of professional scribes at all levels of society. They wrote the text of contracts and agreements while the party concerned signed below.

Documentation was essential for almost any transaction.⁴ Spoken agreements were very dangerous since they carried much less weight in law; sometimes a man might be regarded as too powerful to cross, and payment might be rendered despite the loss of the paperwork.⁵ By the Sixth century, owners of great estates routinely used deeds of surety to guarantee repayment. The importance of documents in court, the ultimate contingency for which they were intended, is clear from the papyri; in one case the *praeses* favoured the side

1 Libanius, Ep. 1004, interpreter for Latin, cf. Liebeschuetz (1972), p. 247, n. 7. Amm. Marc. 15.13.1-2 rare to know both.

2 P.Abinn. 1 (c.AD341), 2 (AD344); a letter, P.Lond. 1792 (5th/6th). Formulae, eg. P.Abinn. 63 (AD350).

3 Interpreter, P.Thead. 14, ll. 23-4n. (4th). P.Cair. Masp. 67031 (c.AD547) Edict in Greek to be translated. Literacy, Youtie (1975), (1975a), and Harris (1989), pp. 289-90.

4 Harris (1989), ch. 8, levels of literacy and documentation in the Fourth/Fifth century.

5 P.Oxy. 902 (c.AD465); 1683 (late 4th); 1716 (AD333).

producing written evidence.⁶ Witnesses were used when there were none; on other occasions, both sides presented mutually contradictory documents.⁷

Tax payments were certified by receipts, transferred when the payments were made. Failure to retain them meant that there was no personal proof that they had been paid. The central records offices probably did not keep detailed tax records for very long. The sheer weight of documentation must have made it impractical for more than a few years, and old papyri were often reused. Land records were theoretically regularly maintained by βιβλιοφύλακες, but records of personal goods might have been the responsibility of their owner. The loss of documents was therefore a cause of great concern⁸. Some documents, such as those upholding rights in a court case, were retained for subsequent use.⁹ Concern with protecting oneself by documentation against malefactors caused the documents to become extremely detailed.¹⁰ There was no theoretical limit to the number of copies made; often one went to each party and one to the central bureaus. In private agreements, the latter might be omitted¹¹.

Heads of villages and occasionally even city councillors required the services of a scribe because of their illiteracy in Greek, and such a drawback was clearly no bar to office.¹² The need for intricate safeguards in all transactions and the devoted way in which men clung to their documents (although

6 P.Lond. 1650 (AD373?).

7 No documents, P.Oxy. 1164 (6th/7th); too many, 3757 (AD325).

8 P.Lond. 1651 (AD363), 1677 (AD566-7).

9 P.Oxy. 1119 (AD254).

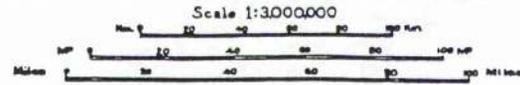
10 Detailed contracts, P.Oxy. 3053 (AD252), 3143 (AD305).

11 P.Oxy. 1638 (AD282) eight copies.

12 Illiterate κώμαρχοι, P.Oxy. 3178 (AD248), 3184 (AD296/7); ex-ἀγορανόμος, P.Thead. 32 (AD307), cf. Harris (1989), p. 314f, n. 144, Jones (1964) pp. 738-9.

they might well be unable to read them) may serve as a comment on the uncertain nature of the times and the rapacity of officials. The effect of acts of God on documents, however small, can be imagined.¹³

13 P.Beatty Panop. 1, ll. 389-391 (AD298) damage by a mouse.



The Roman Roads of the Eastern Desert.

Map derived from G.W.Murray (1925), J.E.A. 11, between pp.138-9.

CHARTS OF MAGISTRATES AND LITURGISTS:

1: EXPLANATION:

These following charts are intended to show how the face of village and city administration changed over the Later Roman Empire in Egypt. With few exceptions, a maximum of three papyrological examples are given to illustrate the frequency of each one's appearance over a given period of time. In many cases there are far more examples available, but reasons of space preclude using them all. These charts are not comprehensive of every published papyrus collection, and should be treated more as a rough guide than as definite evidence for the appearance and disappearance of village and city officials.

It is important to note that the charts can not indicate a change in role that may have occurred for some of the officials over the Fourth to Sixth centuries. Any such charts are, of course, limited in effectiveness by the papyri and other material available. A dash does not necessarily mean that the given official neither operated nor existed in that period of time, just that I have found no definite evidence for that official then at that administrative level. A question mark indicates that the identification of the official is uncertain. In cases where a title has been found but uncertainty remains as to whether that official was acting for the provincial bureaucracy or the city, the reference has not been included.

For a list of βουλευταί, cf. Calderini (1951), *Aegyptus* 31, pp. 3-41.

Also, cf. Diethart (1980) for the Arsinoite nome.

2: CITY MAGISTRATES AND LITURGISTS:

<u>Official</u>	<u>AD300+</u>	<u>AD325+</u>	<u>AD350+</u>	<u>AD375+</u>
Ἀγορανόμος	P.Thead. 32	-	-	-
Ἀρχιερεύς	P.Oxy. 2665 P.Oxy. 3188 P.Princ. 133	-	-	-
Ἐξηγητής	P.Princ. 133 P.Oxy. 2665 P.Oxy. 2187	P.Oxy. 3350	-	-
Ἐθνητάρχης	P.Oxy. 1417	-	-	-
Γυμνασιάρχος	P.Oxy. 1416 P.Oxy. 3507 P.Thead. 33	CPR i.246	P.Oxy. 2110 P.Mert. 36 P.Oxy. 1103	-
Κοσμητής	P.Oxy. 3573 P.Oxy. 1416	P.Ant. 31	-	-
Ἰκονηματογράφος	P.Thead. 18	-	-	-
Λογιστής	P.Oxy. 3727 P.Oxy. 3193 P.Oxy. 3746	P.Harr. 65 P.Oxy. 3127 P.Ant. 31	P.Oxy. 3623 P.Oxy. 1116 P.Oxy. 3311	P.Oxy. 2715
Ἐκδικος	-	?P.Col.Inv. 181-2	Cod.Theod. 1.29.1 P.Lips. 64???	Cod.Theod. 1.29.6
Ἐξάκτωρ	P.Ryl. 657 P.Cair.Isid. 74	P.Flor. 71 P.Abinn. 58 P.Oxy. 3794	P.Lips. 64 P.Lips. 51 P.Oxy. 2110	P.Oxy. 2408 Cod.Theod. 12.6.22 O.Tait 2116
Πραιπόσιτος	P.Cair.Isid. 125 P.Oxy. 2232 P.Oxy. 2668	P.Lond. 1249 P.Oxy. 3621 P.Abinn. 35	P.Oxy. 2110 P.Amh. 139 P.Oxy. 3479	?P.Oxy. 3415 ?P.Oxy. 3416
Πρότασις / Πρόεδρος	P.Oxy. 3188 P.Oxy. 3193 P.Cair.Isid. 70	P.Oxy. 3350 P.Abinn. 58 P.Oxy. 3758	P.Oxy. 2110 P.Mert. 36 P.Oxy. 1103	-
[Πάγαρχος]	-	-	-	-
[Ἐπελευτής]	-	-	-	-
Σύνδικος	P.Oxy. 41 P.Oxy. 2665 P.Oxy. 2673	P.Oxy. 3769 P.Oxy. 3771 P.Col. 175	-	-
Λογογράφος	P.Ant. 40	P.Oxy. 2115	-	-
Γραμματεὺς	P.Oxy. 2667	-	P.Oxy. 3400	-
Σκρίβας	P.Oxy. 1417	-	P.Oxy. 2110	-
Βιβλιοφύλαξ	P.Beatty.Panop.2,1.88 P.Oxy. 3188 P.Oxy. 2665	-	-	-
Ζηροστάτης	-	-	Cod.Theod. 12.7.2	-
Ταμίς	cf.Z.P.E.33,p.248	-	-	-
Τραπεζίτης	P.Princ. 133 P.Oxy. 3193 P.Oxy. 3194	-	P.Oxy. 3396	-
[Χρυσώτης]	-	P.Ant. 33	-	P.Flor. 95 P.Lips. 62

Official	AD300+	AD325+	AD350+	AD375+
Ἐπίσκοπος	-	P.Oxy. 2235 P.Oxy. 897	P.Oxy. 3393 P.Oxy. 2233 P.Lond. 1650	P.Lips. 37 P.Lips. 62 P.Oxy. 1033
Εἰρηναρχος	P.Thead. 16	P.Oxy. 3576 P.Princ. 99		-
Ἐπόπιος εἰρήνης	-	P.Oxy. 991 P.Oxy. 3575 P.Oxy. 3578	-	-
Νυκτοστράτηγος	-	P.Oxy. 3620 P.Ryl. 700		P.Herm. Rees 52-3 P.Lips. 39
Συστάτης	P.Oxy. 3141 P.Oxy. 1551 P.Oxy. 3787	P.Mert. 34 P.Oxy. 3249 P.Oxy. 1627	P.Oxy. 3622 P.Oxy. 3623 P.Oxy. 1116	P.Oxy. 2715 P.S.I. 1108
Ἐπιμελητής	P.Oxy. 2766 P.Thead. 32 P.Mert. 31	P.Thead. 36 P.Abinn. 4 P.Oxy. 1626	P.Lips. 45, 46 P.Oxy. 2110 P.Lips. 58, 59	P.Lips. 55 P.Flor. 75
Ῥαβδοῦχος	P.Oxy. 1750 P.Beatty Panop.2,1.274 P.Oxy. 2859	P.Oxy. 1626	-	-
Ἵσηλάτης	P.Oxy. 1425 P.Oxy. 3142 P.Oxy. 900	P.Oxy. 3859		-
Παραλημπτής Δεκάκρωτος	cf. Z.P.E. 32, p.253 P.Beatty Panop.2,1.69 P.Oxy. 1410 P.Thead. 18	-	-	-
Ἀποδέκτης	P.Oxy. 2766 P.Thead. 31 P.Mert. 30	-	-	-
Ἀκαιτητής	P.Princ. Roll, col. 1, ll. 2-3 SB 7621	-	P.Lips. 64	P.Lips. 55
Ἵποδέκτης	P.Thead. 31	-	-	P.Lips. 62 ?P.Oxy. 3147 P.Lips. 34, 35
Διαδότης	P.Beatty Panop.2,1.119	-	P.Lond. 1245 P.Lips. 58	O.Tait 2109-12 O.Tait 2114
Ἐμβολάρχης Σιτάνης	P.Mert. 90 -	- -	- -	- -
Πατήρ τῆς Πόλεως	-	-	-	-

Official	AD400+	AD450+	AD500+	AD550+
Ἀγορανόμος	-	-	-	-
Ἀρχιερεὺς	-	-	-	-
Ἐξηγητής	-	-	-	-
Ἐθνητάρχης	-	-	-	-
Γυμνασιάρχος	-	-	-	-
Κοσμητής	-	-	-	-
Ἵψουμνηματογράφος	-	-	-	-
Λογιστής	SPP iii 617 Cod.Theod. 9.2.5 Cod.Theod. 11.8.3	S.B. 9152		SPP iii 508 P.Vars. 30 ?P.Oxy. 2028
Ἐκδικος	Cod.Theod. 9.2.5 Cod.Theod. 11.8.3	P.Oxy. 902	P.Oxy. 1882-5 P.Cair.Masp. 67087	P.Oxy. 1987 B.G.U. 401
Ἐξάκτωρ	P.S.I. 684 P.Michael. 33	-	P.Oxy. 1886 P.Cair.Masp. 67058	P.Lond. 1014(Thomas, 1959,p.137)
Πραιπόσιτος	-	-	-	-
Πρύτανης / Πρόεδρος	P.Ant. 194		P.Mich. Inv. 3780	P.Vars. 30 P.Oxy. 2780 S.B. 11079?
[Πάγαρχος]	-	P.Oxy. 3865	P.Cair.Masp. 67019 P.Cair.Masp. 67283	P.Lond. 1661 P.Lond. 1677 P.Cair.Masp. 67094
[Ἐξελλευτής]	-	-	P.Lond. 1038 P.Lond. 1703 P.Cair.Masp. 67058	-
Σύνδικος	-	-	-	-
Λογογράφος	-	-	-	-
Γραμματεὺς	-	-	-	-
Σκρίβας	-	-	P.Cair.Masp. 67353v25	-
Βιβλιοφύλαξ	-	-	-	-
Ζυγοστάτης	-	P.Oxy. 1886		P.Oxy. 1897 P.Herm.Rees 80 P.Lond. 387
Ταμίης	-	-	-	-
Τραπεζίτης	-	-	-	-
[Χρυσώτης]	-	-		P.Oxy. 1919 P.Lond. 1664

Official	AD400+	AD450+	AD500+	AD550+
Ῥιπάριος	S.B. 9515	P.Oxy. 1877 P.Oxy. 904 P.Amh. 146	P.Oxy. 1885	S.B. 4666 P.Oxy. 2039
Ειρήναρχος	-	-	-	-
Ἐπίτης εἰρήνης	-	-	-	-
Νυκτοστράτηγος	-	-	S.B. 10287	B.G.U. 2201
Συστάτης	?P.Oxy. 3796	-	-	-
Ἐπιμελητής	-	P.Harr. 78	P.Oxy. 1996 P.Wash. 7	P.Oxy. 1919
Ῥαβδοῦχος	-	-	-	-
Ἵθηλάτης	-	-		S.B. 4496 S.P.P. viii 953
Παραλημπτής Δεκάπρωτος	-	-		P.Lond. 1803
Ἄποδέκτης	-	-		Justinian, Edict XIII, 1.7
Ἄπαιτητής	-	?P.Oxy. 3865	P.Cair.Masp. 67058	-
Ἵποδέκτης	-	SPP. xx. 128 S.P.P. viii 960	S.P.P. viii 1127-8 P.Oxy. 1919 P.Ant. 90	
Διαδότης	-	-	-	-
Ἐμφολάρχης Σιτώνης	-	-	-	-
Πατήρ τῆς Πόλεως	-	-	Cod. Just. 1.4.17 Cod. Just. 10.27.3 P.Mich. Inv. 3780	P.Oxy. 2780 C.P.R. x 127 P.Vars. 30

3: VILLAGE LITURGISTS:

<u>Official</u>	<u>AD300+</u>	<u>AD325+</u>	<u>AD350+</u>	<u>AD375+</u>
Κώμαρχος	P.Cair.Isid. 125 P.Oxy. 2232 P.Thead. 50	P.Oxy. 3621 P.Lond. 1246-8 P.Herm. Rees 21	P.Amh. 139	P.Oxy. 3415
Τεσσαράριος	P.Ryl. 653 P.Col. 139 P.Thead. 32	P.Oxy. 3621 P.Oxy. 3774	-	-
Κουαδράριος	P.Col. 141 P.Cair.Isid. 131	P.Cairo Goodspeed 12 B.G.U. 21	-	-
Ἐφορος	-	B.G.U. 21 P.Cair. Preis. 18-19 P.Vindob. Sijp. 2	-	-
<i>Capitularius</i> / Κεφαλαιωτής	P.Cair.Isid. 57	P.Thead. 22, 23 P.Oxy. 2229 P.Oxy. 3576	-	-
Μεζων	-	P.Oxy. 1626 P.Oxy. 3774	-	-
Σιτολόγος	P.Cair.Isid. 9 P.Cair.Isid. 11 P.Thead. 50	P.Amh. 140	P.Amh. 139	-
Ἄκαιτητής	P.Oxy. 2124 P.Oxy. 2232 P.Thead. 50	P.Herm.Rees 21	P.Amh. 139	-
Εἰρήναρχος	P.Thead. 16	P.Thead. 24 P.Abinn. 48	P.Oxy. 2233 P.Lond. 1648	-
Ἀρχέφοδος	P.Mich. 590 ?P.Oxy. 2577	P.Oxy. 1193	B.G.U. 909	-
Φύλαξ	P.Mert. 89	P.Abinn. 49 P.Lond. 1246-8 P.Oxy. 1627	P.Lond. 1648	-
Ἐργάτης	P.Oxy. 3727 P.Thead. 34	P.Oxy. 1426	P.Lond. 1648	-
Ναύτης/ Ἄλιαδίτης	P.Oxy. 2675 P.Mich. 596	P.Oxy. 86	-	P.Oxy. 2715
Γραμματεὺς	P.Cair.Isid. 68	P.Oxy. 2235	-	-
Γνωστήρ	-	P.Lond. 1249 P.Amh. 140	P.Amh. 139	-
Πρωτοκωμήτης	-	-	-	-
Ῥιπάριος	-	-	-	-
Βοηθός	-	-	-	-
Ἐπιμελητής	-	-	-	-
Ἐποδέκτης	-	-	-	-

Officials	AD400+	AD450+	AD500+	AD550+
Κάμαρχος	P.Oxy. 3584 P.Flor. 346		-	-
Τεσσαράριος	-	-	-	-
Κουαδράριος	-	-	-	-
Ἐφορος	-	-	-	-
<i>Capitularius</i> Κεφαλαιωτής	-	P.Wash. 7	S.B. 5175 P.Mich. 660, 661 P.Cair.Masp. 67283	
Μεζών	-	P.Oxy. 1831	-	P.Oxy. 1866 P.Oxy. 1867
Σιτολόγος	-	-	-	-
Ἄραιτητής	-	-		P.Lond. 1783 P.Lond. 1661 P.Cair.Masp. 67136 P.Lond. 1309
Εἰρηναρχος	P.Amh. 146			P.Mich. 591
Ἀρχέφοδος	-	-	-	-
Φύλαξ	-	-	-	P.Oxy. 1979 P.Ant. 189 P. Mich. 48
Ἐργάτης	-	P.Wash. 7		-
Ναύτης/ Ἀλιαδίτης	P.Oxy. 3796 P.Oxy. 2042 SPP viii 990		P.Oxy. 2003 P.Oxy. 2732 P.Cair.Masp. 67280	
Γραμματεὺς	-	P.Oxy. 1996		P.Oxy. 1997, 1998 P.Oxy. 2021 P.Cair.Masp. 67002
Γνωστήρ	P.Flor. 346	-	-	P.Lond. 1063
Πρωτοκωμήτης	-	-	P.Oxy. 1835 P.Cair.Masp. 67329 P.Cair.Masp. 67290	P.Cair.Masp. 67024 P.Oxy. 133 P.Lond. 1661
Ῥιπάριος	-	-	P.Lond. 1687 P.Cair.Masp. 67091	P.Cair.Masp. 67092 P.Cair.Masp. 67093 P.Cair.Masp. 67281
Βοηθός	-	-	P.Cair.Masp. 67117	P.Oxy. 1137
Ἐπιμελητής	-	-		P.Cair.Masp. 67280
Ἵποδέκτης	-	-	P.Lond. 1667 P.Lond. 1703 P.Cair.Masp. 67052	

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pp. 105-116.
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83, pp. 80-99.
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pp. 342-350.
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Papyri and Ostraca (plus abbreviations):

With few exceptions, these are the standard listings as found in 3rd Edn. Checklist of Editions of Greek Papyri and Ostraca, J.F.Oates, R.S.Bagnall, W.H.Willis, K.A.Worp(1985), Scholars Press.

* indicates a collection fully or partly researched.

B.G.U. = Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen (later Staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden, Berlin, 15 Vols, 1895-1983: Vol. 12 contains the Taurinos Archive.

C.P.R. = Corpus Papyrorum Raineri, I, by C.Wessely, Vienna, 1895.

C.P.Herm. = Corpus Papyrorum Hermopolitanorum, cf. S.P.P. V.

*P.Abinn. = The Abinnaeus Archive; Papers of a Roman officer in the reign of Constantius II, ed. H.I.Bell, V.Martin, E.G.Turner, and D.Van Berchem, Oxford, 1962.

*P.Amh. = The Amherst Papyri. Being an Account of the Greek papyri in the Collection of the Rt. Hon. Lord Amherst of

Hackney, F.S.A. at Didlington Hall, Norfolk, ed. B.P.Grenfell, A.S.Hunt, London, Vol. 2, 1901.

*P.Ant. = The Antinoopolis Papyri, London, 3 Vols: Vol 1, ed. C.H.Roberts, 1950; Vols 2-3, ed. J.W.B.Barns, H.Zilliacus, 1960, 1967.

P.Bad. = Veröffentlichungen aus den badischen Papyrus-Sammlungen, Heidelberg, 1923 &c.

*P.Beatty Panop. = Papyri from Panopolis in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, ed. T.C.Skeat, Chester Beatty Monographs #10, Dublin, 1964.

P.Cair. Goodspeed = Greek Papyri from the Cairo Museum, ed. E.J.Goodspeed, Chicago 1902.

*P.Cair.Isid. = The Archive of Aurelius Isidorus in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, and the University of Michigan, ed. A.E.R.Boak, H.C.Youtie, Ann Arbor, 1960.

*P.Cairo J.d'E. = P.Cairo Journal d'Entree, Papyri derived from A.E.R.Boak (and H.C.Youtie); references given to the secondary source in each instance; cf. Books and Articles above.

*P.Cair. Masp. = Papyrus grecs d'époque byzantine, Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire, ed. J.Maspero, Cairo, 3 Vols, 1911-1916.

P.Cair. Preis. = Griechische Urkunden des Aegyptischen Museums zu Kairo, ed. F.Preisigke, Strasbourg, 1911.

*P.Col. = Columbia Papyri, 7 Vols, 1929-1979; Vol. 7 = Columbia Papyri 7; Fourth century documents from Karanis, ed. R.S.Bagnall, N.Lewis, in A.S.P. Vol. 20, Scholars Press.

*P.Cornell = Greek Papyri in the Library of Cornell University, ed. W.L.Westermann, C.J.Kraemer jr., New York, 1926.

*P.Fay. = Fayûm Towns and their Papyri, ed. B.P.Grenfell, A.S.Hunt, D.G.Hogarth, London, 1900.

P.Flor. = Papiri greco-egizii, Papiri Fiorentini (Supplementi Filologico-Storici ai Monumenti Antichi), Milan, 3 Vols, 1906-1915.

P.Giss. = Griechische Papyri in Museum des oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins zu Geissen, ed. O.Eger, E.Kornemann, P.M.Meyer, Leipzig-Berlin, 1910-1922.

P.Grenfell = II: New Classical fragments and other Greek and Latin papyri, B.P.Grenfell and A.S.Hunt, Oxford, 1897.

P.Gron. = Papyri Groninganae: Griechische Papyri der Universitätsbibliothek zu Groningen nebst zwei Papyri der Universitätsbibliothek zu Amsterdam, ed. A.G.Roos, Amsterdam, 1933.

*P.Harr. = The Rendell Harris Papyri of Woodbrooke College, Birmingham, ed. J.E.Powell, Cambridge, 1936.

*P.Herm. Rees = Papyri from Hermopolis and other documents of the Byzantine Period, ed. B.R.Rees, London, 1964.

P.Hernals = cf. S.B. Vol 2, p.93.

P.Klein. Form. = Griechische Papyruskunden kleineren Formats, ed. C.Wessely, I (1904), II (1908); sections III, VIII of S.P.P.

P.Laur. = Dai Papiri della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, R.Pintaudi, Papyrologica Florentina, 1976- (Vol. 3 in 1979).

P.Lips. = Griechische Urkunden der Papyrussammlung zu Leipzig, ed. L.Mitteis, 1906.

*P.Lond. = Greek Papyri in the British Museum, London, 7 Vols currently, 1893-1974.

P.Lugd.-Bat. = Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava, Leiden, 1941-, ed. various.

*P.Mert. = A Descriptive catalogue of the Greek papyri in the Collection of Wilfred Merton, Vol 1, ed. H.I.Bell, C.H.Roberts, London 1948, Vol 2, ed. B.R.Rees, H.I.Bell, J.W.B.Barns, Dublin, 1959.

*P.Mich. = Michigan Papyri. At present 15 Vols. Each volume is individually listed, pp. 17-19 of 3rd Edn. Checklist of Greek Papyri and Ostraca, J.F.Oates, R.S.Bagnall, W.H.Willis and K.A.Worp, Scholars Press, 1985.

*P.Michael. = Papyri Michaelidae, being a catalogue of Greek and Latin papyri, tablets and ostraca in the library of Mr. G.A.Michaëdis of Cairo, ed. D.S.Crawford, Aberdeen, 1955.

P.Oslo. = Papyri Osloenses, Oslo, I (1925) ed. S.Eitrem, II (1931), III (1936) ed. S.Eitrem and L.Amundsen.

*P.Oxy. = The Oxyrhynchus papyri, pub. Egyptian Exploration Society in Graeco-Roman memoirs, London, currently 57 Vols, 1898-1990), ed. various.

*P.Princ. = Papyri in the Princeton University Collections, 3 Vols, 1931-1942.

*P.Princ. Roll. = A Papyrus Roll in the Princeton Collection, ed. E.H.Kase jr., Baltimore, 1933.

P.Ross.-Georg. = Papyri Russischer und Georgischer Sammlungen, Tiflis, 5 Vols, 1925-1935.

*P.Ryl. = Catalogue of the Greek papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester, Manchester, 4 Vols, 1911-1952. In Vol. 4, ed. C.H.Roberts, E.G.Turner, is the Theophanes Archive.

*P.Sakaon = The Archive of Aurelius Sakaon, compiled by G.Parássoglou, Habelt, Bonn, 1978.

P.Sorb. = Papyrus de la Sorbonne, H.Cadell, Paris, 1966-.

P.S.I. = Papiri greci e latini (Publicazioni della Società Italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto), Florence, 15 Vols, 1912-1979.

P.Strasb. = III = #126-168; Papyrus grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg, ed. P.Collomp et ses élèves, Paris, 1948.

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*O.Tait = Greek Ostraca in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, ed. J.G.Tait, C.Préaux, Vol. 2, Egypt Exploration Society, 1955.

*P.Thead. = Papyrus de Théadelphie, ed. P.Jouquet, Paris, 1911.

P.Vindob. Boswinkel = Einige Wiener Papyri, ed. E.Boswinkel, Leiden, 1942.

P.Vindob. Sijpsteijn = Einige Wiener Papyri, ed. P.J.Sijpsteijn, Leiden, 1963.

*P.Wash. = Washington University Papyri I, ed. V.B.Schumann, Missoula, 1980, in A.S.P. 17, Scholars Press.

P.Würzb. = Mitteilungen aus der Würzburger Papyrussammlung, ed. U.Wilcken, Berlin, 1934.

S.B. = Sammelbuch Griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten. Begun by F.Preisigke, Vols I (1915), II (1922), continued by F.Bilabel.

S.P.P. = Studien zur Paleographie und Papyruskunde, ed. C.Wessely, Leipzig, 1901-1924.

III, VIII = cf. P.Klein. Form..

X = Griechische Texte zur Topographie Aegyptens,
ed. C.Wessely, 1910.

XX = Catalogus Papyrorum Raineri. Series Graeca.
Pars I. Textus Graeci papyrorum, qui in libro "Papyrus
Erzherzog Rainer-Führer durch die Ausstellung Wien 1894"
descripti sunt, ed. C.Wessely, 1921.

V.P.B. = Veröffentlichungen aus den badischen Papyrus-
Sammlungen: IV = ed. F.Bilabel, Heidelberg, 1924.

VI = ed. G.A.Gerhard, Heidelberg, 1938.

Legal and Literary Texts:

Cod.Just. = Justinian Code, Corpus Iuris Civilis, Vol 2, ed.
P.Krueger, Berlin, 1915.

Nov.Just. = Justinian Novels, Corpus Iuris Civilis, Vol. 3, ed.
R.Schoell, Berlin, 1895.

Cod.Theod. = in Latin, Theodosiani Libri XVI cum
Constitutionibus Sirmondianis, T.Mommsen, P.Meyer, Berlin,
1905.

in English, The Theodosian Code and the
Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions, tr. C.Pharr, Princeton,
1952.

Just.Dig. = The Digest of Justinian, Latin ed. T.Mommsen,
P.Krueger, English ed. A.Watson, University of Pennsylvania, 4
Vols, 1985.

Not.Dign. = Notitia Dignitatum accedunt Notitia Urbis
Constantinopolitanae et Latercula Provinciarum, ed. O.Seeck,
1876, Minerva, 1962.

Ancient Roman Statutes = Ancient Roman Statutes, tr.
A.C.Johnson, P.R.Coleman-Norton, F.C.Bourne, Vol. 2 of Corpus of
Roman Law, gen. ed. C.Pharr, University of Texas Press, 1961.

Acta Alex. = The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs; Acta
Alexandrinorum, ed. H.A.Musurillo, Clarendon Press, 1954.

Amm. Marc. = Ammianus Marcellinus, The History of the
Later Roman Empire, AD354-378, tr. W.Hamilton, notes by
A.Wallace-Hadrill, Penguin, 1986.

Eusebius = Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History and the Martyrs of Palestine, tr. H.J.Lawlor, J.E.L.Oulton, London, 1927.

John the Lydian = John the Lydian, De Magistratibus Populi Romani, ed. R.Wuensch, Teubner, 1903.

John of Nikiu = The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu, tr. R.H.Charles from Zotenberg's Ethiopic text, Williams and Norgate, 1916.

Lactantius = Lactantius, De Mortibus Persecutorum, tr. J.L.Creed, Oxford Early Christian Texts, Clarendon Press, 1984.

Libanius = (Or.) Libanius Orations, (Ep.) Libanius Epistulae. Libanius' Autobiography (Oration 1), A.F.Norman, Oxford, 1965.

Libanius; Selected works, tr. A.F.Norman, Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, 2 Vols, 1969, 1977.

Libanii Opera, ed. E.R.Foerster, Teubner, 12 Vols, 1903-1923.

Pliny = Pliny, Letters and Panegyricus, tr. B.Radice, Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, Vol 2, 1975.

Pliny the Elder, NH = Pliny, Natural History, tr. H.Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, Vol 2.

Priscus = in Blockley, R.C. (1983) The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire, Vol. 2, Cairns.

Res Gestae = Augustus, Res Gestae Divi Augusti, ed. P.A.Brunnt, J.M.Moore, Oxford, 1967, 1984 reprint.

Sallust, J.W. = Sallust, Jugurthine War, tr. S.A.Handford, Penguin, 1963.

Salvian = Salvian, On the Government of God, tr. E.M.Sanford, Columbia, 1930.

Scriptores Historiae Augustae = Scriptores Historiae Augustae, tr. D.Magie, Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, 1932.

Sidonius = Sidonius Apollonaris, Poems and Letters, tr. W.B.Anderson, Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, Vol 2, 1965.

Synesius = Synesius of Cyrene: philosopher-bishop, J.Bregman (1982), University of California.

Strabo, Geography = The Geography of Strabo, tr. H.L.Jones, Loeb Classical Library, Heinemann, Vol 8, 1967.

Tacitus, Annals = Tacitus, The Annals of Imperial Rome, tr. M. Grant, Penguin, 1956, revised 1975.

Abbreviations of Periodicals and Collections of Articles:

Actes du V C.I.P. = Actes du Ve Congrès International de Papyrologie, held in 1937, Brussels 1938.

Actes du X C.I.P. = Actes du Xe Congrès International de Papyrologues, held in 1961 in Warsaw, printed in Poland, 1964.

Actes du XV C.I.P. = Actes du XVe Congrès International de Papyrologie, held in 1977, in Papyrologica Bruxellensia 19, Brussels 1979.

Aegyptus = Aegyptus, Rivista Italiana di Egittologia e di Papirologia, Milan, 1920-.

Akten des XIII I.P. = Akten des XIII Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses, held in 1971, Munich, 1974.

Anagennesis = Anagennesis, Athens, 1981-.

A.N.R.W. = Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, Berlin and New York.

Archiv für Papyrusforschung = Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete, Leipzig, 1901-.

A.S.P. = American Studies in Papyrology, New Haven; Toronto, 1966-.

Atti dell' XI C.I.P. = Atti dell' XI Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia, held in 1965, Milan, 1966.

Atti del XVII C.I.P. = Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia, held in 1980, Napoli, 1984.

B.A.R. = British Archaeological Reports, Oxford, 1974-.

B.A.S.P. = The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists, Illinois, 1963-.

B.C.H. = Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique, Ecole Française d'Athènes, Paris, 1877-.

BIFAO = Bulletin de l'Institut Français de l'Archéologie Orientale, Cairo, 1901-.

B.J.S. = British Journal of Sociology, London, 1950-.

B.S.A.C. = Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte, Cairo, 1935-.

- Byz. = Byzantion: revue internationale des études byzantines, Paris, 1924-.
- Byz.-Meta. = Byzantina-Metabyzantina, New York, 1946.
- B.Z. = Byzantinische Zeitschrift; Leipzig, München, 1892-.
- C.d'E. = Chronique d'Égypte: bulletin périodique de la Fondation Egyptologique Reine Elizabeth, affilié à la Union de la Presse Périodique Belge, Bruxelles, 1931-.
- Cl. Phil. = Classical Philology, Chicago, 1906-.
- Coll. Pap. = Collectanea Papyrologica, Texts published in honor of H.C.Youtie, Bonn 1976.
- C.Q. = Classical Quarterly, London, 1907-.
- CRIPPEL = Cahiers de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et Egyptologie de Lille, Université de Lille, 1973-.
- Dumbarton Oaks Papers = Dumbarton Oaks Papers, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1941-.
- Egitto e Storia Antica = the subject of the Atti del Colloquio Internazionale, Bologna 1989, ed. Geraci and Criscuolo.
- E.H.R. = English Historical Review, London, 1886-.
- Eirene = Eirene, Praha, 1960-.
- G.R.B.S. = Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies, Duke University, Durham North Carolina, 1958-.
- Harv. St. = Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, 1890-.
- Historia = Historia, Baden-Baden, 1950-.
- I.H.R. = International History Review, Burnaby, B.C., 1983-.
- J.A.C. = Jahrbuch für antike und christentum, Aschendorff, Münster-Westfalen, 1958-.
- JARCE = Journal of the American Research Centre in Egypt, 1962-.
- J.E.A. = Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, London, 1914-.
- J.H.S. = Journal of Hellenic Studies, London, 1880-.
- J.J.P. = Journal of Juristic Papyrology, Warsaw, 1946-.
- J.R.S. = Journal of Roman Studies, London, 1911-.
- Latomus = Latomus, Revue d'études latines, Brussels, 1937-.
- Mnemosyne = Mnemosyne, Leiden, 1852-.
- Opus = International Journal for Social and Economic History of Antiquity, 1982-.
- Phoenix = The Phoenix, Toronto, 1946-.

Pro. XII I.C.P. = Proceedings of the XII International Congress of Papyrology, held in 1968 at Michigan University, A.S.P. 7, Toronto, 1970.

Pro. XIV I.C.P. = Proceedings of the XIV International Congress of Papyrology, held in 1974, pub. by Egypt Exploration Society, London, 1975.

Pro. XVI I.C.P. = Proceedings of the XVI International Congress of Papyrology, held in 1980 in New York, A.S.P. 23, Scholars' Press, 1981.

Pro. XVIII I.C.P. = Proceedings of the XVIII International Congress of Papyrology, held in 1986, Athens, 1988.

Revue Historique = Revue Historique, Paris, 1876-.

Speculum = Speculum, The Mediaeval Academy of America, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1926-.

Studia Aegytiaca = Studia Aegyptiaca, Budapest, 1974-.

Studia Patristica = Studia Patristica, Berlin, 1957-.

Studia Papyrologica = Studia Papyrologica revista española de papirología, Enero-Junio, 1962-.

T.A.P.A. = Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, Boston, Mass., 1869/1870-.

Vestnik drevnej istorii = Vestnik drevnej istorii, Moscow, 1937-.

Y.C.S. = Yale Classical Studies, New Haven, occ., 1928-.

Z.P.E. = Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik, Bonn, 1967-.