

Derda, Tomasz

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Tomasz Derda

**TOPARCHIES IN THE ARSINOITE NOME:
A STUDY IN ADMINISTRATION OF THE FAYUM
IN THE ROMAN PERIOD***

INTRODUCTION

IN GRAECO-ROMAN EGYPT, from the IIIrd century BC onwards, a toparchy was an administrative unit, a subdivision of a *nomos*. Among the ancient authors only Strabo mentions the Egyptian toparchies; in his somewhat misleading account he wrote:

ἡ δὲ χώρα τὴν μὲν πρώτην διαίρεσιν εἰς νομοὺς ἔσχε, δέκα μὲν ἡ Θηβαῖς, δέκα δ' ἡ ἐν τῷ Δέλτα, ἑκκαίδεκα δ' ἡ μεταξὺ· ὡς δέ τινες, τοσοῦτοι ἦσαν οἱ σύμπαντες νομοὶ ὅσαι αἱ ἐν τῷ λαβυρίνθῳ αὐλαί· αὗται δ' ἐλάττους τῶν τριάκοντα [καὶ ἕξ]: πάλιν δ' οἱ νομοὶ τομὰς ἄλλας ἔσχον· εἰς γὰρ τοπαρχίας οἱ πλείστοι διήρηντο, καὶ αὗται δ' εἰς ἄλλας τομὰς· ἐλάχισται δ' αἱ ἄρουραι μερίδες.

The country was first divided into nomes, the Thebais containing ten, the country in the Delta ten, and the country between them sixteen (ac-

* The present article was written partly in spring 2001 during my fellowship in the Departement Klassieke Studies of Katholieke Universiteit Leuven when I was involved in the Fayum Project directed by Willy Clarysse.

cording to some, the number of the Nomes all told was the same as that of the halls in the Labyrinth, but the number of these is less than thirty [for thirty-six?]); and again the Nomes were divided into other sections, for *most* [italics – TD] of them were divided into toparchies, and these also into other sections; and the smallest portions were the arourae (XVII.1.3).¹

It is not our aim to discuss all the peculiarities of Strabo's account; let us point out one of his errors, especially surprising to a papyrologist: he wrote 'the arourae' apparently instead of *kômai*! Or should we imagine the aroura as a division within a *kômê*? On the other hand, Strabo seems to be accurate in another place where he says that not all but 'most' of the nomes were subdivided into toparchies. In the very beginning of the Roman rule in Egypt there were no toparchies in the Fayum. Was it the Arsinoite nome that was hidden behind this word?

Strabo was not particularly interested in details of the administrative division of Egypt, which does not surprise given his attitude to countries he described;² it is, however, more remarkable, that contemporary papyrologists and historians of Roman Egypt, with few exceptions, seem to neglect this issue as well. For the general history of Egyptian toparchies and toparchs we have at our disposal only an outdated study by Ludwik Piotrowicz;³ a historian of Ptolemaic Egypt can consult Edmond Van't Dack's study published in 1948.⁴

The toparchies in particular nomes drew the attention of several scholars including Marie Drew-Bear and Jennifer A. Sheridan (Hermopolites), Maria Rosaria Falivene (Herakleopolites), Paola Pruneti (Oxyrhynchites).⁵

¹ The translation is by H. L. JONES (*Loeb Classical Library*). For the French translation with a parallel commentary, see Strabon, *Le voyage en Égypte. Un regard romain*, Préface de J. YOYOTTE. – Traduction de P. CHARVET – Commentaires de J. YOYOTTE et P. CHARVET, Paris 1997.

² For the method applied by Strabon, see G. AUJAC, *Strabon et la science de son temps*, Paris 1966 and Strabon, *Le voyage en Égypte* (cit. n. 1), pp. 15–57. See also J. BALL, *Egypt in the Classical Geographers*, Cairo 1942, pp. 53–70.

³ L. PIOTROWICZ, "De toparcharum Aegyptii Ptolemaeorum et Romanorum aetate condicione", *Eos* 19 (1913), pp. 134–153.

⁴ E. VAN'T DACK, "La toparchie dans l'Égypte ptolémaïque", *CE* 23 (1948), pp. 147–161.

⁵ Hermopolites – M. DREW-BEAR, *Le Nome Hermopolite. Toponymes et Sites* (= *American Studies in Papyrology*, vol. 21), Missoula 1979, pp. 45–49 (section IV: "Géographie administra-

Their studies, however, focus on the administrative borders of toparchies inside the nomes in question and offer no help to a reader interested in the function the toparchies played in the economic life of Roman Egypt. A starting point for a study of such a broad character can be provided by some monographs on particular offices of Roman Egypt, especially those organically connected with the toparchies.⁶

None of the studies quoted above focus on the Fayum. Considerable progress was made some years ago by Willy Clarysse⁷ who suggested that toparchies have replaced the former nomarchies. My study intends to go further in this direction. Its aim is to discuss the evidence for the toparchies in the Roman Fayum with the possible result that one day we both will prepare a study on the toparchies in the Fayum from their beginning until their end.

THE TOPARCHIES IN THE FAYUM. THE CASE OF DOUBLED TOPARCHIES

In the documents of the Roman Fayum the toparchies are usually (but not always) numbered, whereas in the rest of Egypt they are named either

tive du nome h ermopolite"); J. A. SHERIDAN, chapter "The administration of the Hermopolite nome" in *P. Col.* IX, pp. 107-134.

Herakleopolites - M. R. FALIVENE, *The Herakleopolite Nome. A Catalogue of the Toponyms, with Introduction and Commentary* (= *American Studies in Papyrology*, vol. 37), Atlanta 1998, pp. 7-12 (chapter 2: "Toparchies and Pagi"); see also Falivene's paper presented to the Congress of Papyrologists in Copenhagen, "The Heracleopolite Nome: Internal and External Borders", *Proceedings of the 20th International Congress of Papyrologists*, Copenhagen 1994, pp. 204-209.

Oxyrhynchites - P. PRUNETI, *I centri abitati dell'Ossirinchite. Repertorio toponomastico* (= *Papyrologica Florentina*, vol. IX), Firenze 1981 (appendix "Elenco dei centri abitati dell'Ossirinchite suddivisi secondo la toparchia e il π γος di appartenenza", pp. 235-237). The study has no section on administrative division(s) of the Oxyrhynchite; the geographical relation of toparchies and *pagi* is discussed in a separate article by P. PRUNETI, "Toparchie e 'pagi': precisazioni topografiche relative al nomo Ossirinchite", *Aegyptus* 69 (1989), pp. 113-118.

⁶ B. PALME *Das Amt des  παιτηγης in  gypten*, Wien 1989. Lewis's lists of compulsory services will be used in this study for extracting the services connected with toparchies.

⁷ W. CLARYSSE, "Nomarchs and Toparchs in the Third Century Fayum", in: *Archeologia e papiri nel Fayyum. Storia della ricerca, problemi e prospettive. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Siracusa, 24-25 Maggio 1996* (= *Quaderni del Museo del Papiro*. 8), Siracusa 1997, pp. 69-76.

after the main village, being, as one believes, their administrative centre or after the Nile course (toparchies ἄνω and κάτω) or after their position within the nome (τ. μητροπόλεως, μέση τ.). Even at first glance, the numbering of toparchies seems to be another specific feature of the Fayum,⁸ as are for instance the Arsinoite *merides* and many other administrative peculiarities.

Whenever a numbered toparchy occurs in a document of Fayumic provenance, it is accompanied by a standard commentary which reflects a *communis opinio* of the editors. Some general remarks of *P. Tebt.* II, p. 352 are referred to; according to Grenfell and Hunt “in the middle of the third century the three *μερίδες* are found subdivided into numbered *τοπαρχίαι*. (...) But whether this arrangement existed before the changes introduced by Septimius Severus is very doubtful.” The editors dealing with toparchies with double numbers usually quote Eric G. Turner, *JEA* 22 (1936), p. 8 (after Jouguet on *P. Thead.* 26): “In the Fayyum, in the *merides* of Heraclides and Themistes, toparchies are paired off together (odd and even numbers together in Heraclides, even and even or odd and odd in Themistes).” No one seems to have explored this issue, although a certain “naïvety” in Jouguet’s opinion is striking: why to pair off the toparchies in a way and so strange and varied, depending on the *meris*? What is more, all these remarks describe the phenomenon without attempting to understand the system behind it. As far as we know, no editor of Greek documents ever discussed the unusual fact that for instance Karanis seems to have belonged both to toparchy one and six and toparchy four and five of the Heraclides *meris*, see, e.g., *P. Col.* VII 137 (AD 301/2), lines 46, 91 and 96 vs. lines 23, 31 and 74 – (toparchy 1 + 6 and 4 + 5 respectively) and other Isidoros’ papyri.

TOPARCHIES IN THE FAYUM AND THEIR VILLAGES

The significant items of evidence for the toparchies in the Roman Fayum and the villages belonging to them may be tabulated as follows:

⁸ The numbers accompanying the Hermopolite “toparchies” in the IVth century documents are not a parallel since they refer directly to *pagi* (see below, p. 52).

Toparchies not numbered (in Roman period only)

<i>Name</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Date</i>
τοπ(αρ.) τῶν (sc. κωμῶν) περὶ Σεβέννυτον	SPP XXII 94, 4 ⁹	AD III
τοπαρχ(ία) Θεαδελφεί(ας) καὶ ἄλλων [κωμῶν]	P. Fay. 81, 4	AD 115
τοπαρχ(ία) Διονυσιάδος	P. Lond. II 295, 1	AD 118
τοπ(αρ.) τῶν (sc. κωμῶν) περὶ Ἡρακ(λείαν)	BGU III 755, 3 ¹⁰	AD 118

*Numbered toparchies**Meris of Herakleides*

Toparchies with a single number:

<i>No.</i>	<i>Village</i>	<i>Document(s)</i>	<i>Date</i>
2	Soknopaiou Nesos (?)	SB XVI 12833 ¹¹	AD 118 ¹²
3	Sebennytos(?) ¹³	BGU III 786, II 7	AD 161 ¹⁴
5	Kerkessoucha?	P. Strasb. II 216, 3	AD 126/7
5	Soknopaiou Nésos	P. Gen. II 100, 17 P. Gen. II 101, I 2 and 4	AD 128 AD 128-129

⁹ For this document, see below, p. 36.

¹⁰ For this document, see below, p. 36.

¹¹ For this document, see below, p. 40.

¹² For the date see H.-A. RUPPRECHT [in:] *Recht und Rechtserkenntnis. Festschrift für Ernst Wolf zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. D. BICKEL, W. HADDING, Köln – Berlin – Bonn – München 1985, p. 593 n. 65.

¹³ The papyrus comes from Soknopaiou Nesos, but the locality in the third toparchy could be Sebennytos according to the editor (F. KREBS).

¹⁴ For the date, see *BL VIII*, p. 34.

Toparchies with a double number:

No.	Village	Document(s)	Date
1+6	Karanis	<i>P. Cairo Isid.</i> 31, 3 (?) <i>P. Cairo Isid.</i> 39, 3 <i>P. Cairo Isid.</i> 3, I 3 <i>P. Cairo Isid.</i> 4, 3, 9, 20 <i>P. Col.</i> VII 137, iii 46, iv 91, 96 <i>P. Mert.</i> II 88, viii 4, xvii 3	AD 276 AD 296 AD 299 AD 299 AD 301/2 AD 298-301
2+3	Philadelphieia	<i>P. Wisc.</i> II 86, 1 ¹⁵ <i>BGU</i> VII 1611, 4	AD 245-247 ¹⁶ AD 283
2+3	Kerkesoucha	<i>P. Tebt.</i> II 368 <i>P. Tebt.</i> II 581 descr. ¹⁷	AD 265 AD 268
2+3	Psenyris	<i>BGU</i> II 578 (= <i>WChr</i> 279), 4	AD 263
4+5	Karanis	<i>P. Cairo Isid.</i> 32, 4 <i>P. Cairo Isid.</i> 38, 4 <i>P. Cairo Isid.</i> 2, 12 <i>P. Col.</i> VII 137, ii 23, 31, iv 74 <i>P. Mert.</i> II 88, x 4, xiii 3 and xviii 4 <i>CbLA</i> XLI 1203 i 5, 8, ii 43 <i>P. Mich.</i> XII 636, 5 <i>P. NYU</i> 20 (<i>SB</i> XII 10881), 6	AD 279 AD 296 AD 298 AD 301/2 AD 298-301 AD 299 AD 302 AD 302
4+5	Ptolemais Nea	<i>P. Corn.</i> 20, l. 3, 28, 47, 65, 84, 104, 127, 147, 169, 189 and 212 ¹⁸	AD 302
[7]+8	Psyta	<i>P. Strash.</i> III 153, 5 ¹⁹	AD 262/3

¹⁵ The edition has $\tau\omicron\pi\alpha\rho\chi\ \beta$ with a following stroke but the photograph (Plate XLI) clearly shows that instead of the stroke *gamma* should be read.

¹⁶ For the date, see *BL* X, p. 284.

¹⁷ For an edition, see T. DERDA, "P. Tebt. II 581: A *dekaprôtos* Receipt for Rent of Public Land", *JJP* 31 (2001), pp. 13-14.

¹⁸ The document contains eleven declarations of land for the census of AD 302 (the lines referred to are those containing the number of toparchy); the declarants are from Karanis, Arsinoe and Ptolemais Nea, but the plots declared are without exception in the village of Ptolemais Nea.

Meris of Themistos and Polemon

Toparchies with a single number:

No.	Village	Document	Date
2	Tebtynis	<i>P. Kron.</i> 31, 4	AD 128
4	Philagris	<i>PSI XII</i> 1236, 7	AD 128
6	Theadelphia	<i>P. Meyer</i> 4, 1	AD 161

Toparchies with a double number:

No.	Village	Document(s)	Date
[2]+4	Kerkethoeris	<i>SPP X</i> 91 ²⁰	?
[2]+4	Ibion Eikosi-pentarouron	<i>SPP X</i> 91	?
2+4	Andromachis	<i>P. Flor.</i> I 19, 2	AD 248
2+4	?	<i>P. Laur.</i> III 62, 4	AD 253-261
6+8	Theadelphia	<i>P. Fay.</i> 85, 5 <i>P. Lips.</i> 83, 5 <i>P. Sakaon</i> 11, 5 <i>P. Sakaon</i> 82, 6 <i>P. Sakaon</i> 12, 9 <i>P. Sakaon</i> 76, 6 <i>SB X</i> 10726, 6 (= <i>P. Corn.</i> 19) ²¹ <i>P. Sakaon</i> 86, 11	AD 247 AD 257 AD 296/7 AD 296/7 AD 298 AD 298 AD 298 AD 300

¹⁹ For *P. Strasb.* III 153, see below, p. 36.

²⁰ For *SPP X* 91, see below, p. 36.

²¹ The reedition is by H. C. YOUTIE, *TAPA* 94 (1963), pp. 331-335 = *Scriptiunculae*, Amsterdam 1973, pp. 383-387, who rightly corrected *περὶ κ]ώμην Θεαδελφίαν ἐκ τῆς ὀγδόης τοπαρχείας* of the *editio princeps* into *περὶ τὴν αὐτὴν κ]ώμην Θεαδελφίαν ἕκτης ὀγδόης τοπαρχείας*.

7+9	Herakleia	<i>P. Flor.</i> I 26, 7	AD 273
7+9	Dionysias	<i>P. Sakaon</i> 2, 7, 9, 22	AD 300
7+9	Philoteris	<i>P. Sakaon</i> 3, l. 5, 7, 21	AD 300

REMARKS
ON SOME DOCUMENTS

P. Erl. 28 ii 8 (no photograph available) – the edition of this fragmentary document has in line 8: δ⁻ τοπ(αρχία)ς τῆς μερίδος. The Arsinoite provenance is suggested by the numbered toparchy and the *meris* (see comm. on line 8). Given the palaeographical date (2nd century AD), the reading of a single number of the toparchy is acceptable. Unfortunately, no village name is preserved.

P. Kron. 36 (no photograph available) had in its *editio princeps* (line 3): Πα[ύ]νις σι(τόλογος) α τοπ(αρχία)ς [. . . ; in the reedition (*SB XIV* 11864) the line reads as follows: Παῦνις εἰς ἀρίθ(μῆσιν) Παχών.

P. Köln VII 316, 4 (Karaniš, AD 302) requires a more detailed comment. Aurelii Serenos and Heron, both *bouleutai* of the city of Arsinoe and *dekaprôtoi* write to a certain Areios, ὑπερέτης τῆς τοπαρχίας (lines 1-4). His office is unknown but the editors convincingly suggest to identify it with βοηθὸς δεκαπρώτων τῆς τοπαρχίας known from some documents from Karaniš and Theadelphia (see comm. to line 4). The toparchy has no number because this is an internal document relevant to the activity of the office but not intended for external use, as were the receipts issued by *dekaprôtoi*, which are our main source for the numbered toparchies.²³

P. NYU I, 12 (Karaniš, AD 299–), so the editors, the documents should be dated to the period AD 299-302 if the editor's reading is correct (the *dekaprôtoi* and their toparchies disappeared between May and July of

²² The reedition (unfortunately without photograph): J. SHELTON, "P. Kronion 36 and the Naubion Katoikon", *CE* 50 (1975), p. 270. The DDBDP on CD-ROM (PHI 7) still follows the *editio princeps* whereas the Internet version quoted the reedition.

²³ The toparchies are rendered without their numbers also in numerous receipts on ostraca, see below, p. 49.

AD 302, see below). Perhaps there is enough space in the lacuna for the numbers of the toparchy that were originally there (1 + 6 or 4 + 5).

PSI Congr. XI 8, 5 (Ars, AD 138/9) – the number of the toparchy is in lacuna.

P. Tebt. II 368, 2 (AD 265) has δεκαπρῶτος β τοπαρχ(ίας) of the *meris* of Polemon (so the *editio princeps*); but the toparchy in question is the 2nd and 3rd of the *meris* of Herakleides where the same *dekaprôtos*, Aurelius Agathodaemon served his office. The scribe working for him in Tebtynis automatically wrote “of the *meris* of Polemon”; he committed the same mistake in *P. Tebt. II 581* descr.²⁴

SPP X 91 – this is a fragment of a document written in a literary hand typical of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. In the Vienna collection some other fragments written in the same hand can be found, perhaps belonging to a single document. The edition of *SPP X 91* reads as follows:

Ταλί

Ἡρακλείδης

Κερκεθουήρεος

Εἰβίωνος (Εἰκοσιπεντ)αρού[ρων ?]

5̄ καὶ δ̄ τοπαρχί[ας ?]

Μύσθης

It is clear that the toparchy (note that singular in line 5 is purely hypothetical) in question cannot be 6th and 4th, as Wessely's edition suggests, since the numbers of the paired toparchies never appear in descending order. What is more, the fac-simile of the document accompanying the edition leaves no doubt that the *sigma* is too far to the left to be connected with the following *delta*; most probably it originally belonged to the preceding column. The villages mentioned in connection with the toparchy x and 4 are located in the *meris* of Polemon; the system of the doubled toparchies as reconstructed in this paper suggests toparchy 2 + 4; the same toparchy 2 + 4 included the village of Andromachis. A century earlier Tebtynis belonged to toparchy 2 and Philagris to toparchy 4 — all these villages are located in the Gharaq Basin and they might have previously belonged to the two toparchies and then to the doubled toparchy 2 + 4.

²⁴ Cf. *supra*, n. 17. For the discussion of these two documents from Tebtynis, see my paper “Aurelius Agathodaemon, *dekaprôtos* of the second and third toparchy of the Arsinoite nome”, *JJP* 31 (2001), pp. 9–12.

The occurrence of the double toparchy dates *SPP X 91* to the second half of the IIIrd century. It is important for our study of literary hands of the Roman period, especially because the famous Potter's Oracle was written with a very similar hand.

P. Strasb. III 153 is a typical *dekaprôtoi* receipt. Of the number of their toparchy only an *êta* survived. The village mentioned in the receipt is Psya Ptolemaïou in the *meris* of Herakleides. *P. Strasb. III 153* is our only piece of evidence for toparchy 8; to fit the system of doubled toparchies (see table) we have to assume that the toparchy was originally 7+8. This was already suggested by Jacques Schwartz (see his comm. to line 3) on the assumption that the numbers should be combined according to the pattern: odd and even (see my introductory remarks to this paper).

SPP XXII 94 (Soknopaiou Nesos, AD 111) and **BGU III 755** (AD 118) should be discussed together. The first document is a letter, the author of which is (lines 3-4): Πτολεμαῖος γεγυμ(νασιαρχηκῶς) γενάμε(νος) σειτο-λ(όγος) (= σιτολόγος) τοπ() τῶν περὶ Σεβέννυτον; the latter is a typical *sitologos* receipt issued by (line 3): Ἡρα[κ]λείδης καὶ [μέ]τοχ(οι) σ[ι]τολ(ό-γοι) τοπ() τῶν περὶ Ἡρακ(λείαν). In both τοπ() was supplemented by the editors as τόπ(ων), probably because of the following article τῶν. *Topoi* (the word not abbreviated) are indeed connected with *sitologoi*, but only in documents dated to the IIInd cent. BC, e.g. in *P. Cairo Good. 7 i 4-6* (119/8 BC): παρὰ Κολλούθου τοῦ σιτολογοῦντός τινας τόπους τῆς Ἡρακλείδου μερίδος, similarly in *P. Hels. I 6* (Herakleopolite, 164 BC) and *P. Tebt. III 837* (Tebtynis, 177 BC), also *P. Oxy. XII 1447* of AD 44. But our two documents are dated to the early IIInd century AD when the toparchies started to appear again in the Arsinoite documents. Therefore we prefer to expand the abbreviation differently: τοπ(αρχία) τῶν (*sc.* κωμῶν) περὶ Ἡρακ(λείαν) and τοπ(αρχία) τῶν περὶ Σεβέννυτον respectively. Exact parallels can be found in: *P. Strasb. II 216, 3* (AD 126/7): τοπαρχ(ία) τῶν περὶ Κερκέσουχ(α) and *P. Kron. 31, 5* (AD 128): τοπαρχί(α) τῶν περὶ Τέπτυν(ι). See also *BGU IV 1189, 8* (Herakleopolite, 1st cent. BC – 1st cent. AD): τόπαρχος τῶν περὶ Βούσι[ρην].

If this reading is accepted, *SPP XXII 94* will be the earliest witness to a toparchy in the Roman Fayum.

TWO OR ONE?
A SINGLE TOPARCHY WITH TWO NUMBERS
OR TWO TOPARCHIES PAIRED OFF?

An important question arises in respect to the toparchies accompanied by two numbers: do they form a single toparchy which came into being as a result of unification of two separate (and presumably neighbouring) toparchies? or are there still two toparchies sharing officials and/or combined for other reasons?

From the period since AD 247 onwards when a new system of toparchies with double numbers started, no document mentions a toparchy with a single number. This would imply an affirmative answer to the first question. Although the lack of single-numbered toparchies is an *argumentum ex silentio*, we may reasonably assume that the doubled toparchies were administrative units in the Fayum in the second half of the IIIrd century.

In our documents the term *τοπαρχία* is usually, but not always, abbreviated to *τοπ()*. The following list includes all the occurrences of the term *τοπαρχία* accompanied by two numbers, not abbreviated and not in lacuna.

Singular

P. Cairo Isid. 2, 11-13 (AD 298): *περὶ τὴν προκιμένην [κ]ώμην Καρανίδα τετάρτης πέμπτης τοπαρχ[ί]ας Ἡρακλείδου μερίδος.*

P. Cairo Isid. 3, I, 3-4 (AD 298): [*παρὰ Αὐρηλίας Ἡρ*]ωίδος Χαιρήμονος ἀπὸ κώμης Καρανίδος πρώτης ἕκτης τοπαρχίας Ἡρακλείδου μερίδος [τοῦ Ἄρσινοῖτου νομοῦ; lines 9-10: Σύρου [βοηθοῦ δεκαπρώτ]ων τῆς τοπ[αρ]χίας; line 38 (signature): Αὐρήλιος Σύρος βοηθὸς δεκαπρώτων τῆς τοπαρχίας.

P. Cairo Isid. 4, 3 (AD 299): *παρὰ Α[ὐ]ρηλίου Ἰσιδώρου Πτολεμαίου ἀπὸ κώμης Καρανίδος πρώτης ἕκτης τοπαρχείας (read τοπαρχίας) Ἡρακλείδου μερίδος; the singular is also found in lines 9 and 20.*

P. Corn. 20, 2-3 (AD 302): *Αὐρηλίω Ἀλεξάνδρω ἄρξαντι πρυτανεύσαντι (read πρυτανεύσαντι) τῆς λαμπρᾶς Θμουειῶν πόλεως ἀναμετρητῆ Ἄρσινοῖτου τοπαρχείας (read τοπαρχίας) τετάρτης πέμπτης Ἡρακλείδου μερίδος; the same addressing formula is repeated in the heading of each of the eleven columns of this roll. The location of each declared plot of land is*

given in the same way: *περὶ κώμην Πτολεμαΐδα Νέαν τῆς προκιμένης τοπαρχίας* (the term always in singular).

P. NYU 1, 12 (AD 299-302): [*Αὐρ(ήλιος) Σαραπίων βοηθὸς δεκαπρῶτων τῆ[ς το]παρχία[ς]*].

P. Sakaon 2, 7 (AD 300): *περὶ τὴν αὐτὴν κώμην Διονυσιάδα ἑβδόμης [καὶ ἐνάτης] τοπαρχίας Θεμί[στου μερί]δος; line 9: β[οη]θού δεκ[απρῶ]των τῆς τοπαρχία[ς]*; the same in line 22.

P. Sakaon 3, 5: *περὶ κώμην Φιλωτερίδα ἑβδόμης ἐνάτης τοπαρχίας Θεμίστου μερίδος τοῦ αὐτοῦ νομοῦ; line 7: καὶ Κοπρία βοηθοῦ δεκαπρῶτων τῆς [τοπαρ]χίας; line 21: Αὐρήλιος Κοπρίας βοηθὸς δεκαπρῶτων τῆς τοπαρχίας* (signature).

P. Sakaon 11, 5-6 (AD 296/7): *δεκάπρωτοι* (read *δεκάπρωτοι*) *ς καὶ ἡ τοπαρχίας* (read *τοπαρχίας*).

P. Sakaon 76, 6 (AD 298): [*περὶ τὴν αὐτὴν κ]ώμην Θεαδέλφιαν ἔκτης ὀγδόης τοπαρχίας* (read *τοπαρχίας*) [*Θεμίστου μερίδος*].

P. Sakaon 72, 5-6 (AD 296/7): *δεκάπρωτοι* (read *δεκάπρωτοι*) *ς καὶ ἡ τοπαρχίας* (read *τοπαρχίας*) [*τῆς Θε]μίστου μερίδος*].

Plural

P. Laur. III 64, 4 (AD 253-261): [*?*] *β καὶ δ- τοπαρχιῶν Θεμίστου μερί[δος?]*.

P. Lips. 83, 4-5 (AD 257): *δεκάπρωτοι ς καὶ ἡ τοπαρχιῶν Θεμίστου μερίδος*.

BGU II 578 (= WChr. 279), 4-5 (AD 263): *δε[κ]άπρωτοι β καὶ γ τοπαρχιῶν Ἡρακλί[δου μερ]ίδος*.

As is clear, the singular form prevails in our evidence, but the three exceptions coming from an unknown village in the 2nd and 4th toparchy of the *meris* of Themistos, from Theadelpheia in the 6th and 8th toparchy in the same *meris* and from Psenyris in the 2nd and 3rd toparchy in the *meris* of Herakleides demand caution. We decided to say “toparchy *x* and *y*” although the evidence does not allow us to totally exclude the possibility of “toparchies *x* and *y*”.

It is perhaps not coincidental that the three attestations of the plural form are of a relatively early date, while those of singular come from the documents dated to the very end of the existence of the toparchies system

in the Fayum. This could suggest that the doubled toparchies were introduced in the 240s as separate units for some reasons paired off. After fifty years the officials became so familiar with the system that they began to write of a single toparchy with two numbers. It must have been an important factor that the toparchies in the IIIrd cent. AD were *always* double-numbered and there was no practical reason to keep the old and perhaps formally correct way of saying "toparchies first and fifth" instead of "toparchy first and fifth".

CONTRADICTION WITHIN THE EVIDENCE

Our evidence is inconsistent in two points. According to one of the earliest documents mentioning a numbered toparchy, *P. Strasb.* IV 216 (AD 126/7) Kerkesoucha belongs to toparchy no. 5. The reading of the document is beyond doubt, as the toparchy number is written in full. A century and a half later, in AD 265 and 268, a man of the same village of Kerkesoucha delivers the grain to the granary of Tebtynis (sic!) and receives a receipt issued by Aurelius Agathodaemon, the *dekaprôtos* of toparchy 2 and 3 of the *meris* of Herakleides (*P. Tebt.* II 368 and 581 respectively).²⁵ This suggests that the village belonged to Agathodaemon's toparchy. On the other hand, according to *P. Gen.* II 100 and 101 (AD 128 and 128-129 respectively) toparchy no. 5 was that of Soknopaiou Nesos. The documents are almost contemporary with the Strasbourg document. It is unlikely to have toparchy no. 5 extending from Soknopaiou Nesos to Kerkesoucha, the latter very close to Karanis. The solution of this puzzle can be perhaps offered by the name of the *sitologos* and the name of his father. They undoubtedly point to Soknopaiou Nesos as his homeland. But why did he say "*sitologos* of toparchy no. 5 of the villages around Kerkesoucha"? This must remain unsolved for the moment; perhaps Stotoetis son of Panephemmis, as many of his countrymen, owned land outside his home village, in Kerkesoucha. He was appointed a *sitologos* there but in a document he automatically wrote the

²⁵ See my paper quoted in note 17.

number of the toparchy of Soknopaiou Nesos and not that of Kerkesoucha.²⁶

SB XVI 12833 (former SPP XXII 39) is another piece of evidence for Roman toparchies in the Fayum which is not clear to us. Soknopaiou Nesos is again in the middle of the case: Onnophris son of Onnophris complains about a nomination for the liturgy of *sitologia* in the second toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides. We do not know, however, where this toparchy was located; Onnophris may have been nominated as a *sitologos* of the toparchy where he owned his land, not necessarily in Soknopaiou Nesos.

THE OFFICIALS CONNECTED
WITH THE TOPARCHIES IN THE FIRST PERIOD
OF NUMBERED TOPARCHIES (AD 111–161)

Sitologoi and sitologia

P. Fay. 81, 3-5 (AD 115): Δίδυμος [καὶ μ(έ)τοχοι] σιτολ(ό)γοι] τοπαρχ(ί)ας Θεαδελεφεί(ας) καὶ ἄλλων [κωμῶν] — the document is a typical *sitologoi* receipt; the function of Didymos is supplemented, but probable.

P. Lond. II 295, 1-2 (AD 118): Πτόλλιδι κ(αὶ) μετόχ(ο)ις σιτολόγ(ο)ις τοπαρχ(ί)ας Διονυσιάδ[ος].

SB XVI 12833, 11-12 (AD 118): εἰς σιτολογίαν δευτέρας τοπαρχ[χί]ας Ἡρακλείδου μερίδος.

P. Strasb. II 216, 2-3 (AD 126/7): παρὰ Στοτόητις (read Στοτοήτιος) Πανεφρέμμεως τοῦ Τεσενούφεως σειτολ(ό)γου (read σιτολόγου) πέμπτης τοπαρχ(ί)ας τῶν περὶ Κερκέσουχ(α).

P. Gen. II 100, 17 (AD 128): εἰς σειτολογίαν (read σιτολογίαν) ε τοπ[α]ρχίας.

P. Gen. II 101, 3-4 (AD 128/9): Ἀρπαγάθης Σαταβούτος τ[οῦ] Μαρ[ε]-ιοῦς ἀπ[ὸ] Σ[οκ[νο]παίου [Νήσου] σιτ[ο]λ(ό)γος [έ] τ[ο]π[α]ρχ(ί)ας Σ[οκ-νο]παίου Νήσου; line 2: σ[ι]τολόγ[ο]υ ε τοπ(αρχίας).

²⁶ This would be to some extent a similar case to that of Aurelius Agathodaimon, *dekaprōtos* of toparchy two and three of the *meris* of Herakleides, who a century later issued two documents in which he (or rather a scribe working for him) wrote the wrong name of the *meris*; see my article "Aurelius Agathodaemon" (cit. n. 24).

P. *Kron.* 31, 3-5 (AD 128): Σαραπίων καὶ οἱ μέτοχοι(αι) σιτολόγοι(αι) β τοπαρχί(ας) τῶν περὶ Τεπτῦν(ι).

Other officials

PSI *Congr.* XI 8, 5 (AD 138/9): Ἀπίωνος γεναμ(ένου) σιτολογοπράκ(τορος) τοπαρχί(ας) followed by a lacuna.

PSI XII 1236, 7 (Philagris, AD 128): *praktôr argyrikôn*.

P. *Meyer* 4, 1 (AD 161) is addressed [Ἀσώ]πῳι λιμναστῆι (ἔκτης) τοπαρχί(ας) [Θε]μίστου. *Limnastês*, "supervisor of irrigation works", official subordinate to the *aigialophylax*.²⁷ Our document is the only evidence that the area of responsibility of this official was the toparchy.

BGU III 786, ii, 7 (AD 161): *epitêrêsîs* of the 3rd toparchy.

THE OFFICIALS CONNECTED
WITH THE TOPARCHIES AFTER THE REINTRODUCTION
OF THE TOPARCHIES IN THE 240S

In this period we find only few officials connected with this administrative unit.

Βοηθὸς δεκαπρώτων
(toparchy number never mentioned)

P. *Cairo Isid.* 3, i, 10 and 38 (Karanis; AD 299): Aurelius Syros (number of the toparchy not mentioned).

P. *Cairo Isid.* 4, 8 and 20 (Karanis; AD 299): Aurelius Syros (number of the toparchy not mentioned).

CbLA XLI 1203, 1, 8 and 2, 43 (Karanis; AD 299): Aurelius Sarapion.

P. *NYU* I 1, 12 (Karanis; AD 299-302): Aurelius Sarapion.

P. *Sakaon* 2, 9 and 26 (Dio; AD 300): Aurelius Koprias (toparchy in question is 7th and 9th of the *meris* of Themistos).

P. *Sakaon* 3, 7 and 21 (Arsnome; AD 300): the same *boethos*.

²⁷ For *limnastês* and *limnasteia*, see D. BONNEAU, *Le régime administratif de l'eau du Nil dans l'Égypte grecque, romaine et byzantine* (= *Probleme der Ägyptologie*, Bd. VIII), pp. 203-206; for *aigialophylax*, see *ibidem*, pp. 240-244; also P. *Meyer* 4 introd.

Hyperêtês of toparchy

P. Köln VII 316, 3 (Karanis, AD 302): Areios, *hyperêtês* of a toparchy (no number) as a recipient of a letter of Aurelius Serenos, agor(anom ...) and Aurelius Heron, former high priests, both councillors of the polis of Arsinoe and *dekaprôtoi* (no toparchy specified).

Dekaprôtoi

BGU VII 1611, 4 (Philadelphieia, AD 283): Aurelii Mysthes and Isidoros, both former high priests and former gymnasiarchs, *dekaprôtoi* of the 2nd and 3rd toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides.

P. Cairo Isid. 31, 3 (Karanis, AD 276): Aurelius Kastor, municipal title missing, *dekaprôtos* of the 1st and 6th toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides.

P. Cairo Isid. 32, 4 (Karanis, AD 279): Aurelius Euporas, former pryтанis and Aurelius Priscus, both of them *kom()*, *dekaprôtoi* of the 4th and 5th toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides.

P. Cairo Isid. 38, 4 (Karanis, AD 296): Aurelius Severinus, senator of Alexandria, Aurelius Sarmates, former gymnasiarch, Aurelius Andreias, Aurelius Philadelphos, Aurelius Sabinus former gymnasiarch, all five *dekaprôtoi* of the 4th and 5th toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides.

P. Cairo Isid. 39, 3 (Karanis, AD 296): Aurelius Heron, former gymnasiarch, councillor, *dekaprôtos* of the 1st and 6th toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides.

P. Col. VII 137, ii, 23 (Karanis, AD 301-2): Aurelii Horion and Philotas, *dekaprôtoi* of the 4th and 5th toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides.

P. Col. VII 137, ii, 31 (Karanis, AD 301-2): Aurelii Severinus and Andreias, former *exegetes*, councillor of Alexandria, and the heirs of Sarmates, and Sabinos, former gymnasiarch, (all) *dekaprôtoi* of the 4th and 5th toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides.

P. Col. VII 137, iii, 46 (Karanis, AD 301-2): Aurelius Didymos, former gymnasiarch, councillor, *dekaprôtos* of the 1st and 6th toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides.

P. Col. VII 137, iv, 74 (Karanis, AD 301-2): Aurelii Horion and Sarmates, *dekaprôtoi* of the 4th and 5th toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides.

P. Col. VII 137, iv, 91 (Karanis, AD 301-2): Aurelius Gerontios, *dekaprôtos* of the 1st and 6th toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides (repeated in line 96)

P. Fay. 85, 5 (Theadelphia, AD 247): Aurelius Horion, former *exegetês*, former *prytanis*; Aurelius Heras, former gymnasiarch; Aurelius Turbo, former *kosmêtês*, all three councillors and Aurelius Serenus, former gymnasiarch, all of the polis of Arsinoe, *dekaprôtoi* of the 6th and 8th toparchy of the *meris* of Themistos.

P. Flor. I 19, 2 (Arsinoite, AD 248): Aurelius Hermias, former gymnasiarch and councillor of the polis of Arsinoe, *dekaprôtos* of the 2nd and 4th toparchy of the *meris* of Themistos.

P. Flor. I 26, 7 (Arsinoite, AD 273): Aurelius Souchidas, former *exegetes*; Aurelius Apollonios, former gymnasiarch; Aurelius Heron; Aurelius Ischyron and the remaining *dekaprôtoi*, former gymnasiarchs, councillors, all *dekaprôtoi* of the 7th and 9th toparchy of the *meris* of Themistos.

P. Lips. 83, 4 (Soknopaiou Nesos, AD 257): Aurelius Ammonianos and Aurelius Kastor, both former gymnasiarchs; Aurelius Heraïskos former chief priest and the heirs of Melas, former gymnasiarch, (all) *dekaprôtoi* of the 6th and 8th toparchy of the *meris* of Themistos — the documents come from Soknopaiou Nesos but the *dekaprôtoi* receive the grain in the granary of Theadelphia and issue their receipt there.

P. Merton II 88, viii, 4 (Karanis, AD 298-301): Aurelios Didymos, former gymnasiarch, *dekaprôtos* of the 1st and 6th toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides; xvii, 3: Aurelios Didymos, former gymnasiarch, councillor, *dekaprôtos* of the 1st and 6th toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides.

P. Sakaon 11, 5 (Theadelphia, AD 296/7): Aurelii Heroninos, Athanasios, Philadelphos and Serenion, all former *exegetai* of Alexandria, *dekaprôtoi* of the 6th and 8th toparchy of the *meris* of Themistos.

P. Sakaon 12, 9 (Theadelphia, AD 298): Aurelii Heroninos, Philadelphos and Athanasios, all former *exegetai* of Alexandria, and Serenion, former gymnasiarch, *dekaprôtoi* of the 6th and 8th toparchy of the *meris* of Themistos.

P. Sakaon, 82, 5 (Theadelphia, AD 296/7): Aurelii Heroninos and Athanasios and Philadelphos and Serenion, former *exegetai* of Alexandria, *dekaprôtoi* of the 6th and 8th toparchy of the *meris* of Themistos.

P. Sakaon 86, 11 (Theadelphia, AD 300): Aurelii Heroninos and Athanasios and Philadelphos, all former *exegetai* of Alexandria, *dekaprôtoi* of the 6th and 8th toparchy of the *meris* of Themistos.

P. Strasb. III 153, 5 (Arsinoite, AD 262-3): Aurelii Kastor *agor*() and Senenion, both *dekaprôtoi* of the 7th and 8th toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides.

WChr. 279, 4 (Arsinoite, AD 263): Aurelii Agathodaemon, former gymnasiarch, and Athanasios, former gymnasiarch, and Sarapammon and Koprotes, the two being former gymnasiarchs and serving in place of one (i.e., *dekaprôtos*), and Souchammon, former kosmetes, all *dekaprôtoi* of the 2nd and 3rd toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides.

P. Tebt. II 368, 2 (Tebtynis, AD 265): Aurelius Agathodaemon, former *kosmêtês*, councillor, *dekaprôtos* of the 2nd and 3rd toparchy of the *meris* of Polemon (so the document; Aurelius Agathodaemon was in fact a *dekaprôtos* of the 2nd and 3rd toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides).

P. Tebt. II 581 descr. (Tebtynis, AD 268/9): the same Aurelius Agathodaemon with the same titles.

P. Wisc. II 86, 1 (Philadelpheia, AD 244-46): this is the beginning of a petition adressed to the *dekaprôtoi* of the 2nd and 3rd toparchy of the *meris* of Herakleides, their names not mentioned.

ἀναμετρητῆς Ἀρσινοῦτου
τοπαρχίας τετάρτης πέμπτης Ἡρακλείδου μερίδος

P. Corn. 20 is a long roll containing eleven declarations of land for the census of the year 302 AD. The declarations are made by different people from Karanis, Arsinoë and Ptolemais Nea but all plots are located in Ptolemais Nea. The documents are addressed ἀναμετρητῇ Ἀρσινοῦτου τοπαρχίας τετάρτης πέμπτης Ἡρακλείδου μερίδος i.e. to the land-measurer responsible for verifying the land described by the declarants as χέρσος or ἀδέσποτος.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Although the Arsinoite toparchies do not appear in the documents very often, given the quantity of sources from this area, the picture emerging from the data gathered in this paper is fairly clear and coherent. The toparchies are absent from the Fayumic documents from the beginning of the Roman rule until the second decade of the IInd century. The first ref-

erence appears in AD 111: this is “the toparchy of the villages around Sebennytos” (*SPP* XXII 94), followed in AD 115 by “the toparchy of Theadelphia and other villages” (*P. Fay.* 81). In AD 118 two more village-centered toparchies are mentioned in *P. Lond.* II 295 and *BGU* III 755 (“toparchy of Dionysias” and “toparchy of the villages around Herakleia” respectively). In all four documents the toparchies constitute the area of activity of the *sitologoi*.

In the same year AD 118, however, the earliest evidence for the numbered toparchies is found: a certain Onnophris son of Onnophris, a priest from Soknopaiou Nesos addresses to the *epistrategos* Iulius Maximianus a protest against nomination for the liturgy of *σιτολογία δευτέρας τοπαρχίας* Ἡρακλείδου μερίδος (*SB* XVI 12833).

In an interesting lot of documents from the third decade of the IInd century, the toparchies are at the same time numbered and named after a village. In Tybi of year 11 of Hadrian (December 126 – January 127) Stototetis son of Panephremmis, *sitologos πέμπτης τοπαρχίας* τῶν περὶ Κερκέσουχα addresses a complaint against a thief to Asklepiades, *strategos* of the *meris* of Herakleides. In AD 128 the Tebtynis *sitologoi* issues a receipt for Harphaesis son of Kronion (*P. Kron.* 31). Lines 4-5 of the document read as follows: οἱ σιτολόγοι β τοπαρχίας τῶν περὶ Τεπτῦνι appear. This is paralleled in the same year by *P. Gen.* II 101, line 4: σιτ[ο]λλ[ό]γος [ε’] τ[ο]-π[α]ρχίας Σ[οκνο]παίου Νήσου. Though the number of the toparchy is in lacuna, it seems certain since it appears in full in line 2.²⁸ The three documents seem to witness a turning point: the toparchies are still called after the name of their administrative centre but this is now accompanied with a number. In the case of both the Strasbourg text and the Kronion document, we may doubt whether the name is the official one; the name of the village following the toparchy number may have been a kind of explanation necessary at the time of introducing of the new system. The third document presents perhaps a similar case: first, in line 2, the toparchy is

²⁸ *P. Gen.* II 101 contains an extract of an official register (for a correction of the reading of line 1 see *ZPE* 67 [1987], p. 117) concerning the nomination of Harpagathes son of Satabous for the liturgy of the *sitologos* of toparchy no. 5, of Soknopaiou Nesos. Harpagathes son of Satabous is from Soknopaiou Nesos but resides in the village of Apias, where he cultivates five arourae of catocic land. For the close relation between the two villages, see D. SAMUEL, “The Village of Apias in the Arsinoite Nome”, *Aegyptus* 62 (1982) pp. 80–123, especially pp. 88–91.

introduced only with its number, which may already have become its official name; in line 4, however, the scribe adds an additional piece of information probably to avoid any misunderstanding. Even if this assumption goes too far, we may say that the new system was introduced in AD 118; for a few more years the people were not yet familiar enough with it and the name of the toparchy's administrative centre was still added by some scribes. Our conclusion could be more decisive if we had not had the documents of AD 118 where the toparchy is identified only by its number.

There is no doubt that the toparchies were introduced in the Fayum in connection with the *sitologia*. In the documents listed above, only sporadically is there a mention of officials other than the *sitologi* (only one before AD 130). One may ask whether the Arsinoite *sitologi* were *always* toparchy officials. In order to answer this question we have listed the *sitologi* documents from the Fayum, dated to the period between AD 100-130:²⁹

- AD 101: BGU III 988: "*sitologi* of Apias";
 AD 101: P. Grenf. II 44: "*sitologi* of Philadelphieia";
 AD 101/2: BGU III 908: "*sitologia* of the village of Bakchias";
 AD 104: P. Iand. III 28: "*sitologi* of Theadelphia";
 AD 105: SB VI 8976: "*sitologi* of the village (i.e. Soknopaiou Nesos)";
 AD 106: P. Mil. Vogl. III 197: "*sitologi*" with no further designation (document issued in Tebtynis);
 AD 106: P. Mil. Vogl. IV 245: "*sitologi*" with no further designation (document issued in Tebtynis);
 AD 106/7: P. Lond. II 291: "*sitologi* of Apias and other villages";
 AD 111-113: P. Tebt. II 470: "*sitologi* of Ibiôn Eikosipentarourôn";
AD 111: SPP XXII 94: "former *sitologos* of the toparchy of the villages around Sebennytos";
 AD 111/2: SB XVIII 13134: "*sitologos* of the village of Talei";
 AD 112: P. Fam. Tebt. 12: "*sitologi* with no further designation";

²⁹ Only documents exactly dated; the officials are styled as in the document, e.g. "*sitologia* of the village of Bakchias" translates the Greek text *σιτολογία κώμης Βακχιιάδος*. The dates of the documents where the *sitologi* are connected with the toparchies, are printed in bold type.

- AD 113: *P. Turner* 20: “*sitologoi* of Tebtynis”;
- AD 115: *P. Fay.* 81: “*sitologoi* of toparchy of Theadelphia and other villages”;
- AD 116: *P. Oslo* II 28: “*sitologoi* of Theadelphia and other villages”;
- AD 116: *SPP XXII* 118: “*sitologoi* of Soknopaiou Nesos”;
- AD 117-138: *SPP IV* 118 = *P. Fay.* 264: “*sitologoi* of Apias and other villages”;
(Hadrian)
- AD 118: *BGU III* 755: “*sitologoi* of the toparchy of the villages around Herakleia”;
- AD 118: *P. Lond.* II 295: “*sitologoi* of the toparchy of Dionysias”;
- AD 126: *P. Kron.* 30: “*sitologoi* of the village of Talei and other *kômaï* (but Talei is in lacuna);
- AD 126/7: *P. Strasb.* IV 216: “*sitologos* of toparchy 5”;
- AD 128: *P. Gen.* II 100: “*sitologia* of toparchy 5”;
- AD 128: *P. Kron.* 31: “*sitologoi* of toparchy 2”;
- AD 128/9: *P. Gen.* II 101: “*sitologos* of toparchy 5”;
- AD 129: *P. Mil. Vogl.* IV 246: “*sitologos* of Tebtynis”;
- AD 130: *P. Kron.* 32: “*sitologoi* of the village of Kerkesis”.

The evidence suggests that in the period of AD 118-129 the toparchy system constituted the only base for the *sitologia*. For only one document from this period, *P. Kron.* 30, the editor suggests to connect the *sitologoi* with the village of Talei. But the reading of line 3 including the name of the village is largely based on supplement: Ὀρίων καὶ μέτοχοι(οι) σι[τ(ολόγοι) Ταλεῖ] κ[αὶ] ἄλλ[ων κωμῶν]. The edition has no photograph; it is, therefore, difficult to estimate the size of the lacuna, but not too much space is needed for three letters, if we assume that the word *τοπαρχία* was abbreviated to *τοπ.*

Two *sitologoi* documents suggest that the execution of *sitologia* according to the division into toparchies started before AD 118. Should we take the date of the first, AD 111 for a *terminus ante quem* the new system was introduced? If so, the authors of the four documents (*SB XVIII* 13134, *P. Turner* 20, *P. Oslo* II 28 and *SPP XXII* 118) may have omitted the word *τοπαρχία* by mistake, which is quite imaginable in the first years of the new system. Except for Talei from the Kronion document, the villages mentioned in these receipts are attested by other documents as the centres of the

toparchies. We know that Talei was often connected with Tebtynis, which suggests that the lacuna could be supplemented in quite a different way: σι[τ(ολόγοι) τοπ(αρχίας) Τεβτ(ύνεως)] κ[αὶ] ἄλλ[ων κωμῶν].

SPP IV 118 = *P. Fay.* 264 mentioning “*sitologoi* of Apias and other villages”, can be dated to the part of the reign of Hadrian after abandoning of the toparchy *sitologia* in the Fayum, i.e., to AD 129–138.

After AD 129 the system of *sitologia* toparchies disappeared and *sitologoi* were again connected with particular villages. We know neither why the system was introduced nor why it was abandoned only after a few years.

In the following decades of the IInd century AD the Fayum toparchies appear only sporadically, four times in total. Three documents are of fiscal contents (πράκτωρ ἀργυρικῶν in AD 128, σιτολογοπράκ(τωρ) τοπαρχ(ίας) in AD 138/9 and ἐπιτήρησις in AD 161); the fourth (AD 161) is addressed to the *limnastês* of toparchy no. 6 of the *meris* of Themistos.

From AD 161 (the last appearance of a toparchy with a single number) to AD 247 when a new system of toparchies with doubled numbers starts functioning, there is an eighty-year-long gap. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that the system of numbering did not change during this almost century-long break. In AD 161 Theadelphia belonged to toparchy 6, in AD 247 it is in toparchy 6 and 8.

The starting point for paired toparchies falls in the period of AD 245–248, i.e. the reign of Philip the Arabian, and should be almost certainly connected with the reforms introduced by this emperor.

The dekaprôtoi and their toparchies

Sitologoi appear regularly in papyri from all over Egypt up to the fourth decade of the IIIrd century AD. As we argued before, in the Fayum they were connected with individual villages with a short but significant gap for the years AD 111–129. In the 240s the *sitologoi* were replaced by *dekaprôtoi*, first attested on 13 Pauni year 3 of the Philippi, i.e. 7 June 246 (*P. Lond.* III 1157 verso = *WChr.* 375). In the Arsinoite nome, they appear at the latest in AD 247 (*P. Fay.* 85) or perhaps even earlier (*SB VIII* 10208³⁰).

³⁰ See N. LEWIS' remarks in *BASP* 4 (1967), pp. 34–36

The position of *dekaprôtoi* appears to have been far higher than that of *sitologoi*. They were members of municipal élite as is clearly shown by their official and honorific titles. In the documents of formal character (on papyrus not on ostraca), their names are accompanied by their municipal titles. As a rule, they were chosen from among metropolitan councillors and magistrates. As far as we can judge from available evidence, their office was connected with the toparchy all over Egypt.³¹ Each toparchy was usually supervised by a college of two *dekaprôtoi*;³² the doubled toparchies in the Fayum have a college of four *dekaprôtoi*. Sometimes they issue their receipts acting by three, two or even alone. In short receipts on ostraca the *dekaprôtoi* are mentioned without the area of their responsibility – this, no doubt, is due to the less formal character of these documents.³³ This could lead us to a conclusion that the official name of toparchy included the number(s)

³¹ On *dekaprôtoi* see in general an old but still very instructive study by E. G. TURNER, "Egypt and the Roman Empire: the δεκαπρωτοι" in *JEA* 22 (1936), pp. 7–20. The way they conducted their duties in the last years of the IIIrd and first two years of the IVth centuries in Theadelphia and Karanis has been discussed by R. S. BAGNALL, "The Number and Term of the Dekaprottoi", *Aegyptus* 58 (1978), pp. 160–167.

J. DAVID THOMAS, "The Introduction of Dekaprottoi and Comarchs into Egypt in the Third Century A.D.", *ZPE* 19 (1975) pp. 111–119; J. DAVID THOMAS, "The Disappearance of the Dekaprottoi in Egypt", *BASP* 11 (1974) pp. 60–68. R. S. BAGNALL and J. DAVID THOMAS, "Dekaprottoi and Epigraphai", *BASP* 15 (1978) pp. 185–189.

³² *P. Oxy.* LIX 3980, 2–3 (AD 300–302): provides another of the few exceptions to this general rule first formulated by F. OERTEL, *Die Liturgie. Studien zur ptolemäischen und Kaiserlichen Regierung Ägyptens*, Leipzig 1917, p. 211; other exceptions are noted by TURNER, *JEA* 22 (1936), p. 8 n. 9.

³³ The usual pattern of the ostraca receipts issued by the *dekaprôtoi* contains the name of the village where a *θησαυρός* is located followed by the name(s) of the *dekaprôtos(-oi)*. The document was then quite clear without giving the area of responsibility of the official(s) although occasionally we find *dekaprôtoi* with the name of the village; this is the case of receipts issued for the donkeys' owners by the *dekaprôtoi* to acknowledge the use of the animals for transportation of grain from a granary to a harbour: *O. Berlin* 83 (AD 255) and 84 (AD 256) – in both δεκάπρωτοι Τεππύνεως Μαγδώλων; *O. Mich.* I 69 (no exact date) and II 885 (no date): δεκάπρωτοι κώ(μης) Διονυσιάδος; *O. Mich.* I 70 (no date): δεκάπρωτοι κώ(μης) Καρ(ανίδος); *SB XVI* 12789 (former *BGU VII* 1703, AD 260–282): δεκάπρωτοι κώ(μης) Φιλαδελφ(ίας). None of these documents mentions *thesauros* (there was no reason for that), none is located sufficiently in space and therefore the writers attached the name of the village to the name of the *dekaprôtos(-oi)*.

but it was not accepted for common use as probably too sophisticated and unpractical in everyday life.³⁴

The office of the *dekaprôtoi* seems to have been abolished between May and July 302; the collection of dues in corn was again attributed to the *sitologoi*.

The re-introducing of the numbered toparchies in the Fayum is then a part of the administrative reforms in Egypt.³⁵

At the period of doubled toparchies, in the joint *merides* of Themistos and Polemon toparchies nos. 1, 3 and 5 are absent from our evidence.³⁶ Therefore we have no idea how these three toparchies were combined with each other. We cannot even be certain that the number of toparchies in the joint *merides* of Themistos and Polemon was exactly nine, and eight in the *meris* of Herakleides. If we assume (purely hypothetically) that the *merides* of Themistos and Polemon were indeed divided into nine toparchies, we face the necessity of "creating" either a toparchy of three numbers or a combination of a single toparchy and a doubled one.

The disappearance of the toparchies and the introduction of the pagi

In AD 307/8, the toparchies disappeared from the administrative system of Egypt and were replaced by the *pagi*.³⁷ As a rule,³⁸ the *pagi* were

³⁴ Numbers are not comfortable as names in everyday life! A parallel of Paris quarters (*arrondissements*) can be quoted here. Officially introduced in the XIXth century, they entered the vocabulary of the inhabitants of the French capital after several decades only. The numbered streets in American cities are not a good parallel since the people there had no option to avoid the numbers.

³⁵ See P. J. PARSONS, "Philippus Arabs and Egypt", *JRS* 57 (1967), pp. 134–141. His conclusion is a personal summary of Roman history in the IIIrd century AD: "Third-century Egypt begins with the reforms of Septimius Severus, and ends the reforms of Diocletian. Philip's reform, midway between the two, seems to have been no less ambitious. All three faced the same problems. All three tried the same sorts of solution. All three failed." Perhaps this conclusion goes a bit too far?

³⁶ The *editio princeps* of P. Kron. 36 locates the village of Kerkesis in toparchy no. 1 but the reading has been changed (see above, notes on particular documents on p. 34).

³⁷ In his fundamental study published almost a century ago, Michael GELZER deduced from the evidence then available that the crucial years for the changeover in political organization of Egypt were AD 307–310, i.e. the years following the abdication of Diocletian

more numerous than the toparchies, e.g. in the Oxyrhynchite 10 *pagi* vs. 6 toparchies,³⁹ in the Hermopolite 17 *pagi* vs. 11 toparchies.⁴⁰ Some Oxyrhynchite documents suggest that the new division was anticipated in the last decades of the old system by the introduction of a subdivision of toparchies into *μέρη* with *πρωτοστάται* as their governors.⁴¹

After the disappearance of the *dekaprôtoi* in AD 302, toparchies are attested in the Hermopolite, Oxyrynchite, Memphite and Great Oasis, but not in the Fayum. Apart from the *dekaprôtoi*, in the Fayum after AD 161 there were no other offices connected with the toparchies.⁴²

(*Studien zur byzantinischen Verwaltung Ägyptens* [= *Leipziger historische Abhandlungen*, Bd. XIII], Leipzig 1909, pp. 57–58). Since the earliest *pagus* is dated to 6 August 308 (*P. Cairo Isidor.* 125, 1) and there is no toparchy after AD 307, the date can be stated more precisely to the administrative year AD 307/8 (see J. DAVID THOMAS, “The Disappearance of the Dekaproti in Egypt”, *BASP* 11 [1974], pp. 60–61, esp. note 3).

³⁸ This rule cannot be applied to the Fayum where the number of *pagi* (12) is smaller than the number of toparchies if we take into account the toparchies of the Arsinoite as a whole. For the Arsinoite *pagi*, see T. DERDA, “*Pagi* in the Arsinoites: a study in administration of the Fayum in the Early Byzantine period”, *JJP* 31 (2001), pp. 17–32.

³⁹ J. LALLEMAND, *L'administration civile de l'Égypte de l'avènement de Dioclétien à la création du diocèse (284–382). Contribution à l'étude des rapports entre l'Égypte et l'Empire à la fin du III^e et au IV^e siècle* (= *Mémoires de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences morales et politiques de l'Académie Royale de Belgique*. Tome LVII. Fasc. 2.), pp. 97–98.

⁴⁰ For the discussion of the number of toparchies and *pagi* in the Hermopolite, see *P. Herm. Landlisten*, p. 9 and J. A. SHERIDAN, in *P. Col.* IX, pp. 107–134, chapter “The administration of the Hermopolite nome”.

⁴¹ So LALLEMAND, *L'administration civile* (cit. n. 39) p. 98. *Μέρη* as a subdivision of toparchies are also attested in other nomes (e.g., Herakleopolite), but not in the Fayum.

⁴² N. LEWIS in *The Compulsory Public Services of Roman Egypt (Second Edition)* (= *Papyrologica Florentina*, t. XXVII), Firenze 1997, listed, apart from *dekaprôtoi*, several liturgies the area of responsibility of which (point 4 of the Lewis' questionnaire) comprises all known cases of toparchy or in some cases concerns the toparchy. These are: *ἀνάδοσις* (p. 13), *ἀπαίτησις – ἀπαιτητής* (p. 14), *διάδοσις – διαδοτής* (p. 21), *ἐξαριθμησις θρεμμάτων* (p. 24), *ἐπιτήρησις – ἐπιτηρητής* (p. 28), *πρακτορεία – πράκτωρ* (p. 42), *συμβροχισμός* (p. 45) and *χωματ(ο)επιμηλητής* (p. 50). (Lewis also listed the office of *toparches*, discussed separately in our paper.) The list above comprises offices of different rank and different significance for our understanding of the Roman administration; some of the offices are known from a single document but other ones are quite well attested by documents from the Roman period. Unfortunately, Lewis did not provide the user of his catalogue with the provenience of sources but having examined the Fayumic evidence concerning the toparchies we can say that none of these offices are attested in the Arsinoite nome.

A similar conclusion can be drawn from a study of *apaitêtai*, officials of different rank and different range of competence, but always connected with tax collecting (B. PALME, *Das*

For unknown reasons, in the Hermopolite the term “toparchy” remained in technical vocabulary of local administration for at least 50 years after AD 307/8. It was used as a synonym for “*pagus*”; the two terms are often found side by side in the same document, as e.g. in *P. Harrauer* 39 (AD 317/8, 332/3 or 347/8). As far as we can deduce from the available evidence, the two terms are univocal. Outside the Hermopolite, not a single document attests this phenomenon.⁴³

CONCLUSION

The administrative division, at least as far as we can understand it, sheds some light on the general problem to what degree the Fayum was a typical nome in the Ptolemaic and Roman period. The system of numbered toparchies flourishing in the IIIrd century A.D. clearly shows the idiosyncrasy of the Arsinoites from an administrative point of view alongside the subdivision of the nome into three *merides* which also continues to function. The reforms introduced by Septimius Severus and Philip the Arabian did not, therefore, bring about the unification of governing in all Egyptian nomes, even if they were a step in that direction. The turning point on this way is the introduction of *pagi* and the abandonment of both the Arsinoite *merides* in AD 307/8 and the toparchies five years earlier. This was — at least in the Fayum, where the toparchies are not attested after AD 302 — not a simple replacement of one name by another, as it is sometimes suggested in modern literature.⁴⁴ As a result, we get, for the first time since

Amt des ἀπαιτητής [cit. n. 6]). The author presented the material in a detailed way from the chronological point of view (in historical part of his study, pp. 31–184), but only a few remarks can be found as for geographical disposition of the documents. The indices, however, show that none of the many *apaitētai* connected with the toparchies comes from the Fayum.

⁴³ Apart from *P. Harrauer* 39, the Hermopolite documents attesting this phenomenon include *P. Herm. Landlisten* (ca. 30 times in total); *P. Charite* 10, 12, 23 and 29; *P. Cairo Preisigke* 33 and *P. Strasb.* V 325 ii 3. For the correction of the last two documents as well as for an analysis of the phenomenon, see §3 of the introduction to *P. Herm. Landlisten* (“Die Toparchie im IV. Jh. n.Chr.”, pp. 9–10). The editors, however, did not point out the exceptionality of the Hermopolite terminology in this respect. Unfortunately, Drew-Bear’s book on the Hermopolite was published some years before the two volumes, *P. Herm. Landlisten* and *P. Charite*.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., PALME’S remarks in *Das Amt des ἀπαιτητής* (cit. n. 6), pp. 70–71.

the beginning of Ptolemaic rule, the administrative division of the Fayum identical with that of other nomes: a single nome divided into numbered *pagi*.⁴⁵

In the IInd century, the introduction of the toparchies as administrative units for the activity of the *sitologoi* may have been an attempt at the unification of corn collection for the *embolê*. We argued that the attempt was not successful and the government moved back after only a few years of the new system.

The reforms of Philip the Arabian were introduced within the Fayum more consequentially as far as the office of *dekaprôtoi* is concerned. In our documents, the officials are connected with the toparchies more frequently than the *sitologoi* were a century earlier.

Given the considerable amount of documents from the Arsinoite nome dated to the period AD 302-307, the absence of the toparchies is certainly significant. They never existed in the Roman Fayum as separate units of administrative division and were introduced only as a part of a reform of a single segment of economic life of the country. It is true that the segment was exceptionally important; the *dekaprôtoi* were responsible for collecting grain and transporting it to Alexandria where it would be shipped to Rome. The grain was collected all over Egypt according to clearly defined rules and the government at a certain moment decided to leave no space for local peculiarities. This is why the toparchies entered the Fayum, both in the IInd century and a century later.

PASSAGES CORRECTED

SPP XXII 94, 4 – instead of $\tau\acute{o}\pi(\omega\nu)$ we suggest to read $\tau\omicron\pi(\alpha\rho\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma)$;

BGU III 755, 3 – instead of $\tau\acute{o}\pi(\omega\nu)$ we suggest to read $\tau\omicron\pi(\alpha\rho\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma)$;

P. Strasb. III 153, 5 must have had toparchy [7] and 8;

P. Strasb. V 325 ii 3 – something wrong, either the date (AD 321?) or the reading $\tau\omicron\pi(\alpha\rho\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma)$;

P. Tebt. II 368, 2 – the toparchy is $\beta\gamma$;

⁴⁵ See my article "Pagi in the Arsinoites" (cit. n. 38).

