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Aspects of Church Finance in the Seventh-Century Hermopolite According to P.Lond. Copt. I 1077

It is gratifying for a papyrologist to see that the historian J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz has introduced the section of his recent (perhaps unfortunately titled) monograph *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford 2001) entitled “The Position of Bishops in the East” (pp. 145–146) by making extensive use of the early seventh-century Hermopolite register of taxes in grain in P.Sorb. II 69¹. Documentary papyrologists in particular want to see their raw data utilised in the creation of historical syntheses. In this case, for this place and time, more data are available to be factored in. P.Sorb. II 69, which records amounts in grain, has a companion piece (often cited by Gasco in his edition), P.Lond. Copt. I 1077², which records amounts in money (gold *keratia* and *solidi*). Both documents are written in essentially the same codex format, in the same type of hand; both overlap in content, mentioning many of the same people and institutions. They are close in date. Gasco dates P.Sorb. II 69 to a seventh indiction that corresponds to either A.D. 618/19 or 633/34 (pp. 15–17). P.Lond. 1077 mentions many individuals as alive who are recorded in P.Sorb. II 69 as deceased: thus the London papyrus, which bears dates of a fifteenth and a first indiction, is the earlier of the pair. If P.Sorb. II 69 were from 633/34, that would place P.Lond. 1077 at 626/27–627/28, during the Persian occupation, which is unlikely. Therefore I take Sorb. II 69’s seventh indiction as 618/19 and accordingly place P.Lond. 1077 at A.D. 611/12–612/13, early in the reign of Heraclius.

Here I should like to single out some data from the London document that shed light on the temporalia of the Egyptian church at this eventful point in the eventful seventh century. By this time the Christian church and its institutions and personnel were deeply and firmly rooted in Egyptian society. These people and institutions interacted with their lay counterparts in many areas of life, and contributed to the creation of provincial wealth and its distribution within the empire³. Churches, monasteries, hospitals, hospices, charitable organisations, and clerical and religious men and women were integral parts of the scene, and they were recorded as such by imperial officials responsible for gathering tax revenue. Attested in P.Lond. 1077 we find five churches, five monasteries (one for women) with their superiors, the Hermopolis city *diakonia*, and five named hospitals (plus one unnamed) including the *κελυφοκομειον* of Apa Noki(o)s known from other documents (see below). There are twenty-one priests (including a physician), fourteen deacons, one (named) subdeacon, one *oikonomos*, one monk (who is also a hospital worker), and three nuns. Three of the priests and two of the deacons are married, as are the subdeacon and the *oikonomos*. All tax assessments for individuals and institutions are reckoned in sums of gold currency, whole and fractional⁴.

P.Lond. Copt. I 1077 proceeds in a month-by-month fashion, giving a month name and then successive days, at the left of each page, and then listing the name of the taxpayer (individual or institutional) followed

¹ J. Gasco, *Un codex fiscal hermopolite*, Atlanta 1994 (ASP 32).

² L. S. B. MacCough, *P.Lond. Copt. I 1077: taxes in money in seventh-century Egypt*, OCP 67.2 (2001) 385–436 with plates. Despite the designation, it is in Greek, not Coptic.

³ On the *zygostatai* so numerous in this document (though none are ecclesiastics) I would like to add to my earlier comments: see N. Gonis, *A symmachos on mission and his paymaster: P.Herm. 80 enlarged*, ZPE 132 (2000) 182 n. 1, stating that “texts ... show them acting as cashiers or treasurers of great landowners ... (cf.) P.Oxy. LV 3805.30, in which *zygostatai* make payments on behalf of the heirs of certain individuals”, which we find happening also in P.Lond. Copt. I 1077. Also J.-M. Carrié, *Les métiers de la banque entre public et privé (IV^e–VII^e siècle)*, in: *Finanza e attività bancaria tra pubblico e privato nella tarda antichità*, Naples 1998. 65–93, here 89–93. These officials helped in the negotiation of equivalents for the fractional gold amounts assessed as tax. Among the things a *zygostatês* could do was act as a person with whom gifts of money to a religious institution could be deposited, and then lend the money out at interest with the interest going to the same institution, *pro tem.*, until such time as it could take possession of the entire sum: see the introduction to P.Oxy. LXIII 4397 (p. 148).

⁴ I have been greatly helped by J.-M. Carrié, *Économie et société de l’Égypte romano-byzantine (IV^e–VII^e siècles)*, AnTard 7 (1999) 350–352.

by his, her, or its money amount. The document appears to reckon with an indiction year beginning in Pachon: after Pharmouthi then comes Pachon again and so on in order. Thus Mecheir of ind. 15 leads into Pachon of ind. 1, and so on, in the lists. (I present the data in list form since having them written out in prose would be tiresome for the reader.)

A: Clergy

- διάκονος: Βάνος son of Ἰωάννης: 6 ker., Phamenoth 27, ind. 15
 Βίκτωρ⁵: x as agent, [Thoth?], ind. 15
 1 sol. 6 ker. as agent, Mecheir 27, ind. 15
 ½ ker. as agent, Pachon 21, ind. 1
 6 ker. as agent, Phamenoth 24, ind. 1
 Γεώργιος: 6 ker., Phamenoth 15, ind. 1; for wife
 Θεοδόσιος: 2 ker., Pharmouthi 12, ind. 1(?)
 4/8 ker., Pharmouthi 12, ind. 1(?), for wife
 † Κολλοῦθος⁶: 3 ker., Phamenoth 5, ind. 1(?)
 Κ..ιος: ½ ker., Pharmouthi 20, ind. 15
 Μ.: 1 sol. 6 ker. as agent, Epeiph 16, ind. 1
 Ταυρίνος: 16½ ker. as agent, Phaophi 3, ind. 15
 2 ker. as agent, Thoth 4, ind. 1
 ½ ker. as agent, Pharmouthi 12, ind. 1
 Φοιβάμμων son of Μίνος: x, Pachon 15, ind. 15
 Φοιβάμμων: 9½ ker. as agent, Phamenoth 4, ind. 1
 Χρηστόδωρος: 1½ ker., Mecheir 5, ind. 15
 1 ker., Thoth 30, ind. 1; for mother
 Χριστόδωρος son of Νιμρ()⁷: [x?]
 Χρῆστος son of Τιμόθεος: 9 ker., Thoth 30, ind. 1; for St. Mary's church
 5 ker., Mecheir 9, ind. 1; for mother
 Χρῆστος son of Φοιβάμμων: x, [Thoth?], ind. 15
- ἡγούμενος: Βασιλείδης⁸: 3¾ ker. as agent, Pachon 2, ind. 15
 8 ker., Mecheir 14, ind. 1
- μονάζουσα: Διοσκουρία⁹: 1+ ker., Pachon 7, ind. 15
 1¼ ker., Mecheir 19–24, ind. 1
 Ἄμα Ἡραΐς daughter of Ζαχαρίας¹⁰: 3/8 ker., Phaophi 7, ind. 1
 † Μαρία: 3 ker., Mecheir 16, ind. 15
 1¾ ker., Tybi 15, ind. 1
- μονάζων (?): Χριστόδωρος son of Θεοδόσιος, also νοσοκόμος: x, Pachon 17, ind. 1
 x, [?]
- οἰκονόμος: Γεώργιος¹¹: 5 ker., Phaophi 8, ind. 15; for wife
 πρεσβύτερος: † Βίκτωρ son of Παῦλος 3+ ker., Phaophi 11, ind. 1
 Βίκτωρ: ½+ ker. as agent, Phaophi 14, ind. 15
 Ἐπιφανέστατος: 5 ker., Phaophi 8, ind. 15; for wife
 3 ker., Phamenoth 12, ind. 15
 3 ker., Phamenoth 2, ind. 1
 Ζαχαρίας son of Πέτρος: 1/8 ker., Phamenoth 17, ind. 15

⁵ One such is attested in P.Sorb. II 69, 34 17.

⁶ Probably not the same as the Kollouthos deacon of St. Theodore's in P.Misc. I 124a 6: N. Gonis, *The Salaries of the Clerics in a Papyrus from Hermopolis*, paper at the VII Congress of Coptic Studies, Leiden, 2000 (I thank N. Gonis for sending me a copy of his paper).

⁷ See Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 231.

⁸ P.Sorb. II 69, 59 C 7 (where he pays 3 ½ art.), Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 235.

⁹ Presumably of the monastery of Shteh (q. v.): cf. Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), pp. 58, 85.

¹⁰ P.Sorb. II 69, 58 44 (where she pays 1 ½ art.).

¹¹ Of the South Church (q. v.), P.Sorb. II 69, 49 D 5 (where he pays 3 art.), Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 232.

- †Ζαχαρίας: x, [Thoth?], ind. 15
 3¼ ker., Mecheir 25, ind. 1
- Θεοδόσιος: x, [Thoth?], ind. 15; for wife
- Ἰακύβιος (?): 3 ker. as agent, Phamenoth 12, ind. 15
- Ἰσάκις: 19¼ ker.¹² as agent, Epeiph 16, ind. 1
- Ἰσάκιος: 1⅞ ker. as agent, Pachon 24, ind. 15
 2¾ ker. as agent, Phamenoth 5, ind. 1(?)
- Ἰωάννης: x, Phaophi, ind. 15
 3¼ ker., [Choiak] 17, ind. 15
 19¼ ker., Epeiph 16, ind. 1
 4 ker., Thoth 19, ind. 1
- Καλλίνικος: 8 ker. as agent, Phamenoth 26, ind. 1
- Κοσμᾶς, also ἰατρός: 9½ ker., Phamenoth 4, ind. 1
- Κυριακός: 9 ker., Mecheir 29, ind. 1
- Ἄββα Κῦρος: x as agent, Pachon 15, ind. 15
- Μηνᾶς: 2 ker., Pachon 28, ind. 1; for wife
- Ἄββα Μηνᾶς (same?): 5⅝ ker. as agent¹³, Mecheir 29, ind. 15
- Μόνιος, also σπιπουργός¹⁴: 3¾ ker. as agent, Mecheir 25, ind. 1
- Ἄπα Νόκιος¹⁵, also/or προεστώς of the “leper hospital” (see below) and always acting as its agent: 6 ker., Pharmouthi 6, ind. 15
 6 ker., Thoth 13, ind. 1
 4 ker., Tybi 7, ind. 1
- †Σαμουήλιος, also ταβελλίων¹⁶, father of Ἰωάννης νοτάριος: 1¾ ker., Pachon 7, ind. 15
 1 ker., Pharmouthi 14, ind. 1
- †Σαραπίων: 2¾ ker., Payni 21, ind. 1
- Χριστόδωρος¹⁷: 9 ker. as agent, Phamenoth 23, ind. 1
- προεστώς¹⁸: Βίκτωρ, of Aphous monastery (q. v.): 3 ker. as agent, Phaophi 7, ind. 1
 5½ ker. as agent, Choiak 22, ind. 1
- Ἰάκκωβος, of Abba Iakkōbos monastery (q. v.):
 1 sol. 12 ker., Pharmouthi 13, ind. 1
- †Σαραπίων, of Hermopolis διακονία (q. v.):
 2¾ ker., Phamenoth 1, ind. 1
- προεστῶσα: Αὐρηλία¹⁹, of monastery of Shteh (q. v.): 9 ker. as agent, Mecheir 19, ind. 1
- ὑποδιάκονος²⁰: Γεώργιος²¹ 13⅞ ker., Phaophi 9, ind. 1; for wife

¹² If this reading is correct, here and below on the same date are the only times we find a number of keratia greater than 18. For the most part our document appears to reckon with an 18-ker. solidus. Cf. J. Banaji, *Discounts, weight standards, and the exchange-rate between gold and copper: insights into the monetary process of the sixth century*, in: *Finanza* (s. n. 3), 183–202. I thank J.-M. Carrié for sending me copies of Banaji’s papers.

¹³ For the principal church of Hermopolis.

¹⁴ P.Sorb. II 69, 54 D 3 (where he pays 3¼ art.), Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1) p. 234.

¹⁵ On this name cf. Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), pp. 247–248; Brunsch, *Index Heuser*, 133; idem, *Index Crum*, 139, 151.

¹⁶ P.Sorb. II 69, 83 A 8 (where his heirs pay 3 art.), Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 241. This is probably the deceased father of John son of Samuel, *symbolaiographos*, Hermopolites 9.9, in Diethart, Worp, *Byz. Not.* p. 67, who wrote BGU XII 2209 (A.D. 614).

¹⁷ Is the Χριστόδωρος father of Θεόδωρος in P.Sorb. II 69, 43 5, 77 E 3 a priest (cf. Gascou, *Codex fiscal* [s. n. 1], p. 283)? Probably no identification here.

¹⁸ It is often uncertain whether the abbreviation πρ/ is to be expanded as πρ(εσβύτερος) or as πρ(οεστώς): e. g. in the case of Apa Nokios of the “leper hospital”.

¹⁹ See Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 85.

²⁰ Cf. E. Wipszycka, *Les clercs dans les communautés monastiques d’Égypte*, JJP 26 (1996) 150–151.

²¹ P.Sorb. II 69, 112 B 7 (where he pays 3 art.), Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 283 (index).

B: Religious institutions and foundations

διακονία ²² :	ἡ διακονία Ἐρμ(οῦ πόλεως) ²³ : 10¼ ker., Phamenoth 1, ind. 1
ἐκκλησία ²⁴ :	ὁ Ἅγιος Κολλοῦθος ²⁵ : ½ ker., Payni 12, ind. 1
	ἡ Ἁγία Μαρία ²⁶ : 5½ ker., Payni 30, ind. 1
	9 ker., Thoth 30, ind. 1
	ἡ (ἁγία) ἐκκλησία (Ἐρμοῦ (πόλεως)) ²⁷ :
	2 sol. 11⅞ ker., Mecheir 16, ind. 15
	13¼ ker., Phaophi 9, ind. 1
	ἡ ἐκκλησία Φο[ιβάμμωνος] ²⁸ : x, [Phamenoth] 6, ind. 1(?)
	ἡ νοτίνη ἐκκλησία ²⁹ : x, Phaophi 8, ind. 15
μοναστήρια ³⁰ :	Ἄμα Ἄννα ³¹ : 11½ ker., Mecheir 27, ind. 15
	16¾ ker., Tybi 2, ind. 1
	Ἄββα Ἀφοῦτος ³² : 5½ ker., Choiak 22, ind. 1
	Ἄββα Ἰακώβου ³³ : 2 sol., Pachon 15, ind. 15
	1 sol. 12 ker., Choiak 22, ind. 1
	1 sol. 12 ker., Pharmouthi 13, ind. 1
	τῶν Σαλαμιτῶν Θύνεως ³⁴ : 14 ker., Tybi 3, ind. 15
	Shteh (ωΤΕϩ) ³⁵ : 9 ker., Mecheir 19, ind. 1
νοσοκομεῖα ³⁶ :	νοσοκομεῖον Ἀχιλλέως ³⁷ : 1⅝ ker., Pachon 24, ind. 15
	2⅞ ker., Mecheir 25, ind. 1
	2¾ ker., [Phamenoth] 5, ind. 1(?)

²² For the list of two such see Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 77; also for an earlier period cf. E. Wipszycka, *L'attività caritativa dei vescovi egiziani*, in: *L'évêque dans la cité, du IV^e au V^e siècle: image et autorité* (Coll. École Fr. de Rome 248), Rome 1998, 71–80.

²³ See Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 77.

²⁴ For the Hermopolite list see Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), pp. 72–76.

²⁵ P.Sorb. II 69, 15 24 (paying 3¼ art. on behalf of a woman religious), Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 74; M. Drew-Bear, *Le nome hermopolite, toponymes et sites*, Missoula 1979, 145.

²⁶ P.Sorb. II 69, 106 B 22 (paying 1½ art.) et alibi (with its dependency), Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 73.

²⁷ P.Sorb. II 69, 32 B 11 (paying 41 art.) et alibi, Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), pp. 72–73. Cf. B. Kramer, APF 45 (1999) 273 for a mention of what may be the earliest attestation of the Hermopolite cathedral basilica.

²⁸ P.Sorb. II 69, 16 8 (paying 2 art.) et alibi, Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 75 (more than one; I assume this is the μέγας).

²⁹ P.Sorb. II 69, 19 A 24 et alibi, Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 73. On its finances see below. Grossmann and Bailey, *The South Church at Hermopolis Magna*, 64 give an attempt at the text of the inscription found in the baptismal tank. It is clearly not a “prayer” concerning “one Dorotheos the Blessed” but rather a dedicatory inscription of expected type. The text has now been republished and improved in E. Bernard, *Inscriptions grecques d'Hermopolis Magna et de sa nécropole*, Cairo 1999, 95–97 (no. 21 bis). For the phraseology cf. G. J. Cuming, *The Liturgy of St. Mark* (OCA 234), Rome 1990, 30, with ἁγίων. The nomenclature found in the inscription accords with a date earlier than P.Sorb. II 69 and P.Lond. Copt. 1077; I do not find a Dorotheos or a John the *oikonomos* of the South Church at our time period.

³⁰ For the Hermopolite list see Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), pp. 80–85.

³¹ See Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 84, Drew-Bear, *Le nome* (s. n. 25), 65. I would redate P.Lond. V 1758, with its *diastoleus* Phoibammon (as here) and dating to a first indiction, to contemporary with P.Lond. Copt. 1077.

³² P.Sorb. II 69, 58 32 (paying ½ art.), Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 81; Drew-Bear, *Le nome* (s. n. 25), 77.

³³ P.Sorb. II 69, 40 C 5 (paying 1 art.) et alibi, Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 82, Drew-Bear, *Le nome* (s. n. 25), 122. The grain amounts in Sorb. (3½ art. legible total) seem small as against the 5+ solidi here.

³⁴ See Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), pp. 83–84; L. S. B. MacCoull, *Lesefrüchte*, ZPE 123 (1998) 204–205; and, independently, R.-G. Coquin, *Note sur un toponyme peu connu du nome Hermopolite (Haute-Égypte) de l'époque copte: le μοναστήριον τῶν Σαλαμιτῶν*, in: *Études Coptes V*, ed. M. Rassart-Debergh, (Cahiers de la Bibliothèque Copte 10), Louvain, Paris 1998, 131–136.

³⁵ See Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), pp. 58 (a translation of ἀγορά [?]), 85; Drew-Bear, *Le nome* (s. n. 25), 336; St. Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden 1984 sqq., V, 2386.

³⁶ For the Hermopolite list see Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), pp. 78–79.

³⁷ Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 79; cf. P.Lond. III 1324.

v. Βασιλείου son of Θεολόγιος³⁸: x, Pharmouthi or Pachon, ind. 1
 Ἄμα Κύρα³⁹: 1½ ker., Epeiph (1–15), ind. 1
 Θωμᾶς⁴⁰: ½ + ker., Phaophi 14, ind. 15
 7⅞ ker., Phamenoth 27, ind. 15
 κελοφοκομεῖον⁴¹: 10 ker., [Thoth], ind. 15
 6 ker., Pharmouthi 6, ind. 15
 6 ker., Thoth 13, ind. 1
 4 ker., Tybi 7, ind. 1

The persons and institutions we meet in this document are of familiar types in the landscape of late antique Egypt. What if anything can we learn about prices and about the economics of church activities at this time? In a couple of cases we can compare the money paid by an institution in P.Lond. 1077 with the grain contributed seven or eight years later by the same institution in P.Sorb. II 69. For the Holy Church of Hermopolis, the principal basilica, its two-indiction total in money is 3 sol. 10⅞ ker., over 3½ solidi. Its grain total looks as though it comes to at least 106 artabas, but this figure comes from totalling only the amounts preserved in right-hand portions of the Paris document's leaves (many are lost): 30 art./sol. is much too low to correspond with known grain prices⁴². For the South Church, its sum in money is illegible in P.Lond. 1077, while for grain its total is at least 136⅞ artabas; for St. Phoebammon's Church as well, its money sum is lost. The monastery of Abba Jacob looks well-to-do as far as cash is concerned, while its recorded grain sum looks low, as noted above. Also, for both the Thomas hospital and the κελοφοκομεῖον it is hard to discern a relation between their money and grain amounts: for the latter institution, more money is paid in ind. 15 than in ind. 1, but its grain amount is not high.

In any case, what is visible is the involvement of all classes of society and both sexes in the support of Christian institutions in seventh-century Egypt. It is hoped that these data gathered from detailed government record-keeping will contribute to our picture of the late Roman state's "ability to make itself present to its subjects"⁴³. A document of this type would have been drawn up by an experienced and specialized scribe with competence in the drafting of itemized tax records. Phoibammon the *diastoleus*, accountant of this document, who names himself a total of six times in both indictions, did a thorough job for his employers⁴⁴.

³⁸ Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 79.

³⁹ For the (λαμπροτάτη) eponym, P.Sorb. II 69, 20 40 (where her heirs pay 52½ art.) et alibi, see Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), pp. 79, 213 giving stemma of her clarissimate family.

⁴⁰ P.Sorb. II 69, 43 3 et alibi, Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), p. 78; cf. 213–214 for the eponym.

⁴¹ This is the same as the νοσοκομεῖον τῶν κελοφῶν (κελεφῶν) of P.Sorb. II 69, 103 31 (called a ξενοδοχεῖον τῶν κελοφῶν in 13 9, 101 C 9), Gascou, *Codex fiscal* (s. n. 1), pp. 78–79, the superior of which seems to have been Apa Nokios (q. v.). An Apa Nokis/Nokios, superior, is also attested on fol. 1v of P.Lond. Copt. I 1075, which dates to a tenth indiction that may be A.D. 546 (in the plague period). The earlier Nokios seems to be the later one's father and predecessor in the position of superior. — The identification as a leper hospital seems to be made on the basis of the etymology of the word *chncheh*. I have also suggested the possibility that it was a hospital for plague victims, given the sixth-century plague pandemic. I further venture to suggest here that it might have been an institution for the care of sufferers from bejel or endemic non-venereal syphilis (M. S. Goldstein et al., *Pathology of Bedouin Skeletal Remains from Two Sites in Israel*, *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 45 [1976] 621–639, and B. M. Rothschild et al., *Treponemal Diseases Revisited: Skeletal Discriminators for Yaws, Bejel, and Venereal Syphilis*, *Clinical Infectious Diseases* 20.5 [1995] 1402–1408).

⁴² A. C. Johnson and L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt: Economic Studies*, Princeton 1949, 178; and now J.-M. Carrié, *L'arithmétique sociale de l'économie agraire. Prix de la terre, rente foncière et prix des céréales dans l'Égypte romano-byzantine*, in: *Prix et formation des prix dans les économies antiques*, Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges 1997, 121–146. Again I thank J.-M. Carrié for sending me a copy of his valuable paper.

⁴³ P. R. L. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity Revisited*, *Symbolae Osloenses* 72 (1997) 75.

⁴⁴ I thank Karen Lemiski and Roy Rukkila for their help, good questions, and computer knowledge. — As always, in loving memory of Mirrit Boutros Ghali ("If I quit now, they win": Mulder and Scully).