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Franks in Sixth-century Egypt

Tafel 1–2

In a fragmentary papyrus-letter (P.Vindob. G 14307) from the „Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek“ at Vienna Franks, Φράγγοι, occur for the first time in the papyrological evidence. In the following article we present the *editio princeps*¹ of this papyrus including a discussion of the Franks.

The papyrus was found in Hermupolis², but internal elements in the text (see below) suggest that it may have been written somewhere else in the Thebais.

The hand of the papyrus is characteristic of the sixth century³; it has many marks of a well-trained professional hand, but it becomes less careful and „scribal“ as the letter goes on, both in the individual letters and in the overall ductus. It offers no very precise guide to a date. The name Belisarius for a subordinate of the *comes* does rather point to a date a generation or more after the 530s (see note to line 6), thus in the second half of the sixth century.

1. The Papyrus

The papyrus consists of two fragments, which do not join. The original margins are all at least partly present except at the right (looking from the orientation of the front side of the papyrus), where a small amount may be lost. The text on both the front and the back is written across the fibers. This is thus a strip cut along its longer dimension from a papyrus roll and rotated 90 degrees for writing, in a fashion familiar

¹We are grateful to Prof. Hermann Harrauer for offering us this text for publication and for providing an excellent photograph for Bagnall's use. Palme would like to thank the „Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften“ for the grant of an APART-fellowship, in the course of which his contribution to this article was written.

²The provenance of the papyrus can be deduced from its inventory-number: P.Vindob. G 13.000–15.999 were acquired from Hermupolis, cf. H. Loebenstein, *Vom „Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer“ zur Papyrussammlung*, *P.Rainer Cent.* p. 21.

³Characteristic are the overscale λ and κ, the use of δ in the Latin style (d) as well as in its triangle form. ε is written as a half circle with a middle stroke. Some letters (γ, π, φ, etc.) change between „uncial“ and, if connected with other letters in ligature, more cursive forms. Similar letterforms may be observed in, e. g., *CPR X 120* (Arsinoite, 523), *P.Lugd. Bat. I 10* (photo in: E. Boswinkel, P. J. Sijpesteijn, *Greek Papyri, Ostraca and Mummy Labels*, Amsterdam 1968, nr. 50; Oxyrhynchos, 591/2) and *CPR XIV 9* (Arsinoite, 607). The overall impression of the handwriting is very similar to that of *P.Rainer Cent. 78* (Hermopolite, 1st half 6th cent.) and 80 (Hermopolite, 6th cent.), but both papyri are dated only on palaeographical grounds as well.

for letters of this period⁴. The typical height of such rolls being 30–33 cm⁵, and the combined width of the two fragments being about 29 cm, the gap between them might in principle be anywhere from 1 to 4 cm. The most secure restoration of the middle lacuna seems to be that of line 8, where five letters and part of a sixth are lost. Because the same word is written in line 6, the missing space may be measured at 2.8 cm. The overall sheet would then have been 32 cm wide. In line 1, where 1 cm less is preserved in the left-hand piece, the loss should thus be 6–7 letters (at an average of around 1.8 characters per cm). This space allows restoring ἡ θαυμασιό[της ἀπο]-δοῦναι, as one would expect. Although it is just conceivable that the sheet was another centimeter or two wider, with another 2–3 letters to be restored, nothing pleads in favor of such a notion.

The continuation of the letter on the back is written on the right-hand fragment (again, oriented from the front). On the left-hand fragment there are faint traces of two lines of address on the back, written below the continuation of the letter and at right angles to it (i. e., with the fibers). The letter was folded once in the middle of its height (now lost) and then a second time in the middle of its width; thus all the text of the letter was hidden (and is therefore well preserved), while only the lines of address remained outside and faded. One letter, a φ (from Φλγ?), can be recognized in these traces.

2. The Affair of the Letter: a λόγος ἀσυλίας

The large loss in the middle of line 4 and smaller gaps elsewhere prevent complete and certain restoration of the text and full understanding of the events that form the subject matter of the letter, but a fair amount can be recovered with reasonable probability. The key is λόγος, which appears in lines 5 and 6. The λόγος in line 5 is something that one gets from an official, in this case the *comes*; in line 6 it is apparently a statement given by the Franks (on whom see below). The mention of a church in line 7, coupled with the fact that imprisonment is the central issue in the letter, strongly suggests that the first λόγος is the λόγος ἀσυλίας which forms such a central part of Justinian's *Edict* 13 (promulgated in 539 and addressed to Egypt⁶), particularly its chapters 9, 10 and 28⁷. Usually people took refuge in a church in order to escape punishment or to avoid paying money due to the treasury (whether one's

⁴For the practice of writing *transversa charta*, common from the sixth century onwards, cf. E. G. Turner, *The Terms Recto and Verso. The Anatomy of the Papyrus Roll*, Bruxelles 1978 (Pap.Brux. 16), 45–49.

⁵The standard measures of papyrus rolls are described by E. G. Turner, *The Typology of the Early Codex*, Philadelphia 1977, 44.

⁶R. Rémondon, *L'édit XIII de Justinien a-t-il été promulgué en 539?* CdÉ 30 (1955) 112–121.

⁷We owe the recognition of the λόγος here as that dealt with in *Edict* 13 to John Rea. The problem was not restricted to Egypt, as its appearance in *Edict* 13 might suggest; cf. also particularly *Edicts* 2 and 10, neither of which is specific to Egypt. On the practice of asylum in Egypt in this period see F. von Woeß, *Das Asylwesen Ägyptens in der Ptolemäerzeit und die spätere Entwicklung*, Munich 1923 (MB 5), 221–236, esp. 235–236 and generally P. Timbal Duclaux de Martin, *Le droit d'asile*, Paris 1939; L. Wenger, RAC 1 (1950) 840–844, s. v. Asylrecht, with further bibliography.

taxes or — more probably — those one had collected from others). If the fugitive was able to receive a λόγος, a „letter of asylum“⁸, from some authority he could leave the asylum without running the risk of being imprisoned. Abuse of λόγοι had evidently become a significant problem by Justinian's reign⁹. He ordered that only the praetorian prefect or his authorized subordinates could permit such λόγοι to be issued (at their own risk, in case of non-payment), and then only for a limited and non-renewable period, at the end of which the debt had to be paid¹⁰. Clergy were not otherwise to allow churches to be used for asylum. Absent a properly issued λόγος meeting these conditions, treasury debtors could be seized even inside a church. If our dating of this papyrus is correct we are presumably dealing with difficulties in the administration of λόγοι that persisted despite Justinian's legislation — not a matter for surprise: Several late sixth century deeds of surety for *coloni adscripticii* contain a clause against seeking the asylum of a church (προσφυγή) or λόγοι¹¹.

The situation in this papyrus seems to be the following (see the line notes for discussions of particular problems): A person whose name is lost (line 4), son of Horigenes, is in possession of a λόγος sealed with the finger-ring of the *comes*, intended to protect him from imprisonment as a result of problems arising from his tax obligations to the treasury, probably those related to activity as a collector or responsible official rather than simply as a taxpayer. Despite his possession of this λόγος, the

⁸For this meaning of λόγος see Just.Nov. 17.6 (535): ... τοὺς καλουμένους λόγους κτλ. Cf. S. Braßloff, *Zu den Quellen der byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte IV — Das kirchliche Asylrecht in Ägypten*, SZ 25 (1904) 313. λόγος has the meaning „letter of asylum“ also in P.Oxy. XVI 1944, 6, a sixth or seventh century petition complaining of oppression, and in the text quoted below, note 11. Such λόγοι could be written also in Coptic, W. Till, *Koptische Schutzbriefe*, Mitt. Dt. Inst. ägypt. Altertumskunde 8 (1938) 71–123, with the observations of A. Steinwenter, *Zu den koptischen Schutzbriefen*, SZ 60 (1940) 237–241. No examples in Greek have so far come to light.

⁹Problems with asylum in churches (but not with the λόγοι, which appear only under Justinian) go back much further, to be sure, at least as far as Theodosius II; see the series of edicts in CTh 9.45.1–5 (= CJ 1.12.1–5, between 392 and 432). These edicts are discussed in F. Martroye, *L'asile et la législation impériale du IV^e au VI^e siècles*, Mémoires Soc. nat. d. antiquaires d. France 75 (1919) 159–246 and A. Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere. Naissance du droit d'asile dans les églises (IV^e–milieu du V^e siècles)*, Paris 1994. For CTh 9.45.1 (= CJ 1.12.1, 397, addressed to the *praefectus Augustalis*) see also Braßloff, *Asylrecht* (note 8) 312–316 and W. Dautzenberg, *Die Gesetze des Codex Theodosianus und des Codex Justinianus für Ägypten im Spiegel der Papyri*, Jur. Diss. Cologne 1971, 29–31.

¹⁰See generally G. Rouillard, *L'administration civile de l'Égypte byzantine*, Paris 1928, 104–105. The legislation (Just.Ed. 2 *pr.* [535], Just.Nov. 17.6 [535], Just.Ed. 13.10; 28 [539] and Just.Nov. 128.13 [545]) seems specifically directed against issuance of λόγοι by bishops and local administrators, including the *Augustalis* and his τάξις, but even subordinate church officials like οἰκονόμοι seem to have been involved.

¹¹E. g., P.Oxy. I 135.21–26 (579): ... ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπιζητούμενον αὐτὸν πρὸς ἐμὲ παρὰ τῆς ὑμῶν ὑπερφυείας ... τοῦτον παραφέρω καὶ παραδώσω ἐν δημοσίῳ τόπῳ ἐκτὸς παντὸς τόπου προσφυγῆς καὶ λόγου ἔνθα αὐτὸν καὶ παρείληφα, ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐνδόξου οἴκου. A similar clause may be found in P.Oxy. XXVII 2478.24–25; XVIII 2203.4; XLIV 3204.21; P.Mert. II 98.13–14 or, reduced to δίχα λόγου, in P.Oxy. XXIV 2420.16; PSI I 62.21; 52.28 etc. In all these cases, λόγος refers — as it does in our letter — to a λόγος ἀσυλίας, cf. Woeß, *Asylwesen* (note 7) 233 and J. Gascou, *Les grands domaines, la cité et l'état en Égypte byzantine*, T&M 9 (1985) 25.

Franks have arrested him, perhaps in a church. The writer has remonstrated with the Franks, but they have given him a statement in the church, perhaps under oath, that they are not acting improperly towards the detainee. The writer believes, however, that they have acted illegally in imprisoning the son of Horigenes despite his λόγος. He therefore has written a letter to the *comes*, asking him to intervene with his ἀδελφός, to be understood as „colleague“, to see that the imprisoned man is released. This letter (which we do not have, but of which the second sentence of the present letter is a kind of summary) he has sent to the θαυμασιότης of line 1, with the present letter as a cover, being concerned that his letter to the *comes* might not reach its proper destination without personal assistance from someone close to that high official¹². In the sentence that begins on the front and concludes on the back, the writer asks his correspondent (the θαυμασιότης) to join in seeking cooperation from the other high official (the ἀδελφός), who seems to be the person controlling the Franks or, at least, the one who is keeping the man in prison. The final sentence of the letter probably is added to explain why the writer is involved in the matter: He has been appointed to an office responsible for tax collection.

There is no direct information about the identity or status of the writer or of the imprisoned person. Although they are clearly well below the level of the *comes* (whose exact official position we cannot determine), and need intermediaries to reach his ear, they are still persons of importance: one does not obtain a λόγος from him without some influence. A good guess would be that they are both of the civic aristocracy (*honestiores*), with high-level liturgical responsibility for the collection of some tax or taxes.

3. The Franks

The question then is who the Franks, οἱ Φράγγοι, are. This is evidently the first appearance of Franks in the papyri¹³. It is difficult to see, given their apparent actions here as part of the official apparatus, that they can be anything except soldiers. Of course it would be hard to explain how a group of real Frankish tribesmen would have come to act in Egypt¹⁴. If they were some Franks recruited for the Roman army, *e. g.*

¹²For parallels to such requests to a middleman to involve the higher official in release from imprisonment, see *PSI VIII* 1344 (Antinoe, 6th cent.), *P.Oxy.* LVI 3870 (6th–7th cent.) and *P.Ath.Xyla 2* (Oxyrhynchus, 6th–7th cent.).

¹³Flavius Agamundus in the famous sale of a slave from Ascalon, *BGU II* 316 (359), is often referred to as a Frank since the *ed. pr.* by U. Wilcken, *Hermes* 19 (1884) 417–431, esp. 422, but he is not explicitly designated as such in the text and the name alone is not specific enough to exclude an origin from another German tribe. The same may be true for Πίγμερ στρ(ατιώτης) — rather than στρ(ατηλάτης) — on a gravestone from Edfou (Apollonopolis), G. Lefebvre, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Égypte*, Cairo 1907, nr. 559 (2nd half of the 6th cent.).

¹⁴One might, to be sure, think of the possibility that they were part of a private force, *i. e.*, *buccellarii*, for whom see now O. Schmitt, *Die Buccellarii. Eine Studie zum militärischen Gefolgschaftswesen in der Spätantike*, *Tyche* 9 (1994) 147–174, with bibliography. But the entire tenor of the letter looks rather to an official context than a private one, and if they were in the service of a large landowner discharging public functions, one would expect their employer or chief to figure instead. There is, moreover, no obvious

in the urgencies of the Third Blemmyan War (between 563 and 568), they could hardly be referred to as „the Franks“, as their ethnic identity would not be obvious any more. Much more probably Φράγγοι here refers colloquially to soldiers of a military unit which had *Franci* as part of its official name. This phenomenon is widespread in Byzantine Egypt: The *cuneus equitum Maurorum scutariorum* at Hermupolis and Lycopolis is referred to as Μαῦροι even in official tax-receipts, the Σκύθαι Ἰουστινιανοί in Antaiopolis and Apollonopolis are simply known as Σκύθαι, and the units that garrisoned Arsinoe are just called Λακοί and Τρανστιγριτανοί in the papyri.

We know from the *Notitia Dignitatum* (ed. O. Seeck, Berlin 1876, p. 65–66) that there were already two units of Franks (or at least troops so designated) in Egypt in an earlier era¹⁵. *Notitia Or.* XXXI 51 lists under the command of the *dux Thebaidis* an *ala prima Francorum* at Contra Apollonos and *Or.* XXXI 67 a *cohors septima Francorum* at Diospolis (Thebes)¹⁶. Hermupolis, the provenance of this papyrus, was garrisoned in the fourth and fifth centuries by the Mauri mentioned above, who were replaced between 538 and 548 by the Νομίδαι Ἰουστινιανοί; both units are attested by a considerable number of papyrus documents¹⁷, while nothing is known so far about Franks in Hermupolis. This may indicate that our letter was not written in Hermupolis, but in either Thebes or Contra Apollonos — if the *ala* and *cohors Francorum* were still there in the sixth century. Although our papyrus comes from Hermupolis, nothing in the letter tells us where the son of Horigenes was detained, where the letter was written, or where the Franks were stationed.

reason why they would not be, as they normally are, described as *buccellarii* instead of Franks. Nor is there any evidence for groups of *buccellarii* with ethnic designations (see Schmitt 149–152 on terminology and 168 on the scanty information about recruitment of *buccellarii*). On the contrary: In *PSI VIII* 953, a sixth century account of the Apion estates in the Oxyrhynchite nome, some παιδάρια Γοθικά (lines 17, 32, 46 *et passim*) are neatly distinguished from the βουκελλάριοι (lines 29, 33, 35, 38 *et passim*). Without being quite able to dismiss the possibility, therefore, we think it is not likely.

¹⁵The terminus ante quem for the military organization in the *pars Orientis* of the *Notitia* is 394 (with some exceptions in Illyricum): D. Hoffmann, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum*, Düsseldorf 1969/70, 52–53. The terminus post quem for the Egyptian part of the *Notitia* must be the creation of the province of Arcadia (not before 383): R. M. Price, *The Limes of Lower Egypt*, in: R. Goodburn, P. Bartholomew (Eds.), *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, BAR Suppl. Ser. 15, Oxford 1976, 144–145.

¹⁶Although these units are listed in standard works, we have found no detailed discussion of them in the literature: D. van Berchem, *L'armée de Dioclétien et la réforme Constantinienne*, Paris 1952, 67–68 and idem, *L'occupation militaire de la haute Égypte sous Dioclétien*, Roman Frontier Studies 1967, Tel Aviv 1971, 123–127 cites the evidence of the *Notitia*; Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* (note 15) 140 treats the two Frankish units in Egypt only by implication (cf. Index in vol. II, 271; 273), as part of a larger pattern; A. K. Bowman, *The Military Occupation of Upper Egypt in the Reign of Diocletian*, *BASP* 15 (1978) 25–38 does not mention this *ala* and *cohors* and thus obviously considers them as post-Diocletian; but see below, note 18.

¹⁷G. Maspero, *Organisation militaire de l'Égypte byzantine*, Paris 1912, 145–146. For the Mauri cf. F. Mitthof, *Quittung eines υποδέκτης ἀννωνῶν ἐπὶ τόπων Μαύρων*, Proceedings 20th Congr. Papyrology, Copenhagen 1994, 260–262; for the Numidians: R. Rémondon, *Soldats de Byzance d'après un papyrus trouvé à Edfou*, *Rech.Pap.* 1 (1961) 82.

We do not have any direct evidence for the date at which Frankish units entered Egypt, and views on the general question of the date at which Germanic units appear there and in the East generally have varied¹⁸. Their designation by the traditional terms *ala* and *cohors*, however, suggests that they may well have been in place since the time of Diocletian¹⁹. In the other direction, we know nothing of the continued Egyptian presence of the Frankish units in the sixth century, and there is on any reckoning a gap of more than a century and a half between the *Notitia* and our papyrus. The documentation for most of the Thebaid in the intervening period is scanty enough²⁰ that this silence is not a significant argument against supposing that our „Franks“ are the successors of one of these units. And if they had stayed in Egypt from Diocletian to the late fourth century, there is no reason they could not have remained for another 150 years²¹. Nor would the use of such troops be out of line with Justinian's general disposition of Egypt's garrison²².

Our writer is certainly very displeased with the Franks' behavior, but there is no sign that he was aware of or trying to evoke their widespread reputation for lawless action, about which even their own king complained, according to Gregory of Tours²³.

¹⁸On barbarians in the Roman army of the period, see generally A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, Oxford 1964, II 619–623; on foreign soldiers in Egypt: Rémondon, *Soldats de Byzance* (note 17) 87–91 and J. Gascoü, *Militaires étrangers en Égypte byzantine*, BIFAO 75 (1975) 203–206. Recruitment of Franks into the Roman army is only exceptionally mentioned in the literary sources, but certainly took place nonetheless. The beginning of such recruitment has been put under Constantine, see E. James, *The Franks*, Oxford 1988, 39 and with more detail E. Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts*, Munich 1970, 15–17, 164. But Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* (note 15) I 140, 230, II 48 n. 73 argues (against views that the use of Franks in the East dates to the reign of Julian) that Germanic units entered Egypt under the Tetrarchy, perhaps with Diocletian's expedition, and some of them may have dated to the reign of Constantius Chlorus and even Aurelian.

¹⁹In the time of the *Notitia Dignitatum* new military units occasionally still received these names (cf., for example, *ala Arcadiana* or *ala Theodosiana*), but such *limitanei*-units after Diocletian no longer received names of barbarian tribes. Since the time of Constantine units recruited from barbarians were classified as *vexillationes* or *auxilia* because of their fighting skill and were part of the field-army, cf. Hoffmann, *Bewegungsheer* (note 15) II 611.

²⁰Unfortunately, our evidence has not been significantly enlarged since the treatments of Maspero, *Organisation militaire* (note 17) 142–147 and Rémondon, *Soldats de Byzance* (note 17) 80–87. The handful of sources about Thebes, where we expect the *cohors VII Francorum*, is collected by J. Gascoü, *La garnison de Thèbes d'après O.IFAO inv. 12*, CRIPEL 8 (1986) 73–74. None of them mentions Franks.

²¹Bowman, *Military Occupation* (note 16) 31, n. 37 stresses the fact that the garrison of Egypt as established in the period of the Tetrarchy was preserved with only slight changes until the time of the *Notitia* and longer. The changes introduced by Justinian, like the replacement of the Mauri by the Νομίῃαι Ἰουστινιανοί, were probably more a re-naming than a real interchange of whole units. Rémondon, *Soldats de Byzance* (note 17) 82 speaks of a „changement d'étiquette“.

²²On the strategic situation of the Thebaid in the sixth century see Rémondon, *Soldats de Byzance* (note 17) 80–87.

²³*The History of the Franks*, trans. O. M. Dalton, Oxford 1927, 8.30; cf. introduction, 227–229. The Frankish troops had devastated some of the king's own property, along with

On the other hand, if our interpretation of the affair as λόγος ἀσυλίας is correct, we may doubt if the arrest of a treasury debtor was in fact illegal. In any event, if we are right to see in the Franks here the members of a military unit stationed in Egypt since the Tetrarchy or at least since the time of the *Notitia*, they were surely Franks in name only by the late sixth century. Like other units garrisoned over a long period in Egypt, the *ala* and *cohors Francorum* were no doubt kept up to strength by the enlistment of locals²⁴.

4. The Text

P.Vindob. G 14307
Hermupolis (Thebais)

second half of 6th century

- 1 [π](αρά)
 2 † καταξιώση σου ἢ θαυμασιό[της ἀπο]δοῦναι τὰ γράμματα τῷ δεσπό[τη]
 3 ἡ[μῶν τ]ῷ μεγαλοπρε(πεστάτω) κόμιτι. συ [- 5 -] μοι γὰρ ἢ αὐτοῦ με-
 γαλοπρέπ[ει]α
 4 ἐπ[ί τ]οῦ ἀδελφοῦ π[- - - ca 22 - - -] Ὀριγέν[ο]υς ἐκ τῆς φυλακῆς.
 5 λόγον γὰρ ἔχων ἐ[κ] τ[ῆ]ς αὐτο[ῦ] μεγαλοπρεπείας διὰ τοῦ δακτυλιδ[ί]ου
 αὐτῆς
 6 διὰ Βιλισαρίου, ἡσφ[ά]λισαν αὐτ[όν τιν]ες τῶν Φράγγων. λόγον δώσαντές
 7 μοι καὶ οἱ αὐτοὶ Φράγγοι ἐν τῇ [- 5 -] ἐκκλησίᾳ, ὅτι „οὐκ ἐπηρεάζωμεν
 αὐ[τῶν]“
 8 καὶ ἐποίησαν παράλογον καὶ τοῦτο[ν ἡσφά]λισαν· ἀλλὰ συνπαρακαλέση
 καὶ

Verso

- 9 ἡ σὴ ἀρετὴ [- 6 -]ο[]
 10 ἔασάν με οἱ ἄνθρωποι
 11 καθεσθῆναι εἰς τὴν

that of others, in the course of a campaign. Procopius (*BG* 6.25) calls the people τὰ εἰς πίστιν σφαλερώτατον ἀνθρώπων ἀπάντων.

²⁴During or shortly after the reign of Justinian barbarian recruitment was dropped in favor of local enlistment on a more or less voluntary basis and hereditary conscription in military families, cf. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* (note 18) 660–669, G. Gigli, *Formi di reclutamento militare durante il Basso Impero*, *Atti del Acad. Naz. dei Lincei* 8/2 (1974) 268–289 and J. F. Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription in the Byzantine Army c. 550–950*, Vienna 1979 (SB Österr. Akad. Wiss. 357), 20–28 with bibliography. Occasional recruitment of barbarians (Goths, Vandals, Perso-Armenians etc.) is referred to by some literary sources (collected in Haldon 22–23, n. 10 and 11), but these never mention Franks. Procopius stresses the Franks' lack of interest in dying for either Goths or Romans (e. g., *BG* 8.34.9, 18). On recruitment from the local populace in Egypt and hereditary military service — regarded rather as a privilege than as a burden — see Maspero, *Organisation militaire* (note 17) 52–58, who observes that many of the soldiers of the Mauri, Skythians etc. have typical Egyptian names. The same is true for the soldiers in the Syene papyri: J. G. Keenan, *Evidence for the Byzantine Army in the Syene Papyri*, *BASP* 27 (1990) 146.

12 ἀπαίτησιν. ἐρῶσθαί σε
13 εὐχομαι. †

Traces of address in two lines

6 Βελισαρίου 7 ἐπηρέαζομεν 8 ἀλλ'λα παρ. 10 εἴασάν με

„† Would Your Excellency please give the letter to our master the Most Magnificent Count. For His Magnificence should [assist?] me with his colleague, [asking him to release NN?] son of Horigenes from the jail. For, although he has a *logos* from His Magnificence (sealed) by His finger ring, through Belisarius, some of the Franks arrested him. The same Franks gave me their word, in the [holy?] church, that „we are not treating him improperly“, but they acted illegally and arrested him. But would Your Excellency please join in asking [on his behalf?]. The men allowed me to be appointed to the task of collection. I pray for your health †“.

5. Notes

1. The left end of the diagonal line drawn through π has survived, but the π itself is entirely lost. The abbreviation, very common at the head of letters from the Byzantine period, should probably be understood as $\pi(\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha})$, cf. H. Harrauer, J. M. Diethart, *Nochmals $\Pi/\rho = \Pi(APA)$ in den Papyri*, JÖB 36 (1986) 13–17; for a discussion of other interpretations see F. Mitthof, A. Papatomas, *Das Archiv des ἐλαιουργός Samba*, ZPE 103 (1994) 56–57 with bibliography in the notes.

3. At the start, the descender from the cross of line 2 passes through the remains of the η . The letter before the middle lacuna could be μ or ν . The sense wanted is perhaps „cooperate with“ or „help“, but perhaps rather something a bit more menacing, „put pressure on“, in any case most likely framed by the writer in the form of a polite request. (A simple statement that the *comes* is doing something is also possible, but the character of the entire letter, otherwise devoted to supporting a request, would be in that case harder to understand and what follows would be very loosely linked to what precedes.) Options for restoring might then include $\sigma\upsilon\nu[\acute{\alpha}\rho\eta\tau\alpha\iota]$ (perhaps a bit long), or (with more of the sense of pressure) $\sigma\upsilon\nu[\acute{\alpha}\psi\eta]$ or $\sigma\upsilon\nu[\acute{\alpha}\psi\eta\tau\alpha\iota]$. The sense would in the latter case be „Would His Magnificence please get on the back“ or „breathe down the neck“ of his colleague. (Properly one expects an object with the active, as in the $\sigma\upsilon\nu\acute{\alpha}\psi\alpha\iota$ ἀὐτῷ βουκελλαρίους of *P.Köln* V 240.8 (Antaiopolite, 6th cent., „bucellarii in den Nacken setzen“ as the editor translates it). In *P.Laur.* III 109.8 (prov. unknown, 6th cent.), however, the object, already referred to, is understood: please send me a *phrouros* ἵνα $\sigma\upsilon\nu\acute{\alpha}\psi\omega$ ἀὐτῷ. In *P.Michael.* 30.5–6 (Oxyrhynchos? 4th cent.?) ἐ]μοὶ $\sigma\upsilon\nu\acute{\alpha}\psi\tau\omega\nu$ is rendered „helping me“ by the editor, but there is loss before ἐ]μοί and one cannot be sure.) The exact sense will in turn depend on the restoration of line 4, but probably in neither case is complete certainty possible.

4. ἀδελφοῦ could in principle refer to the imprisoned man (*i. e.*, he would be the brother of the writer), but it would in that case be difficult to understand ἐπ[ι with it or to find a restoration of the lacuna that provides a suitable sense, because a verbal construction (meaning „to free“) is required there on which ἐκ τῆς φυλακῆς can depend. The traces of π before the middle lacuna, combined with the otherwise unmotivated use of the unusual verb $\sigma\upsilon\mu\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ in line 8, suggests restoring $\pi[\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\iota\nu$, followed by a construction in which the contents of the request (free from detention) are given, perhaps ἵνα ἄψῃ, leaving about six letters for the individual's name in the accusative. Parallels to the overall sense can be found in *PSI* XIII 1344.3–4 (Antinoe, 6th cent.: $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa[\alpha\lambda\acute{\omega}\ \sigma\upsilon\nu]$ τὴν ὕμε-

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τέραν λαμπρὰν φιλίαν παραγγεῖλαι τῷ στρατιώτῃ τῆς φυλακῆς ἔχειν [αὐτ]ὸν κτλ.); *P.Stras.* VIII 800.4 (prov. unknown, 6th cent.: ... ἵνα ἀπολυθῆ καὶ ὁ ἄθλιος ἐκεῖνος ἀπὸ φυλακ[ῆς] κτλ.); *SB* IV 7285 v. 20 (Arsinoite, 238/7 B.C.: διεγγυήσας αὐτὸν μονῆς ἄφες ἐκ τῆς φυλακῆς κτλ.).

5. λόγον γὰρ ἔχων is rendered here as if a *nominativus pendens*, where classical Greek would have required ἔχοντα to agree with the object. For the use of the signet ring, cf. *SB* VI 9139.10 (prov. unknown, late 6th cent.), ἐν τῷ δακτυλιδίῳ σου τῇ σῆ σφραγίδι κτλ.

6. On the name Belisarius, see *P.Oxy.* LVI 3872.3 (6/7th cent.), where it appears as the name of a *magistrarianus* (*i. e.*, *agens in rebus*); M. G. Sirivianou's note (citing other examples, including a banker of the early seventh century) points out that it „implies a date after the rise of the famous Belisarius“, *i. e.*, after the 530s, and indeed presumably at least a generation later. In fact, the *Onomastica* cite no example of this name on a papyrus securely dated before the middle of the sixth century. Belisarius' role here suggests that the detained person, like the writer of the letter, was not in direct contact with so high an official as the *comes*. In the middle lacuna τιν]ες provides the needed subject for ἡσφάλισαν and a suitable sense, but it clearly cannot be regarded as certain. The thematic aorist of δίδωμι is common enough in most of the moods (F. Th. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* II, Milan 1981, 386–387 notes the commonness of the subjunctive), but we have not found other examples of the participle. Only the last two letters are uncertain.

The use of the active ἡσφάλισαν here and in line 8 is striking; the middle is much more common for virtually all meanings of ἀσφαλίζω, including the specific meaning „to arrest“, common in the papyri; see *LSJ s. v.*, Preisigke, *WB* I and IV *s. v.*, and Lampe, *Patriotic Greek Lexicon s. v.* As the meaning „arrest“ is only a specific sense of the general meaning „secure“, however, and the active does occasionally occur with this meaning applied to people (Lampe, for example, cites Cyril ap. Procopius of Gaza, *Comm. Cant.* 2.5 [Migne, *PG* 87.1585D], τοῖς εὐαγγελικοῖς με ἀσφαλίσσατε λόγοις), the use seems unobjectionable.

The writer uses the term λόγος here with a different meaning from the technical sense used in line 5. Here it appears to refer to a statement, which may well have been given under oath; for oaths in churches see the example in *P.Heid.* VII 409.2 and commentary there.

6–7. On the Φράγγοι see the introduction.

7. The lacuna might have contained no more than αὐτῇ if a church was mentioned earlier in the letter, but this is in our view unlikely (see note on line 4). Otherwise ἀγία would suit very well. *Edict* 13.10 refers to ἅγια περιβόλα and ἀγιωτάτη ἐκκλησία in the course of describing the places of asylum in question there. The *v* ending ἐπηρεάζωμεν is clear on the original. ὅτι introduces direct discourse, as often.

8. παράλογον here apparently has the force of „illegal“ or „irregular“, as in *P.Cair. Masp.* I 67066.7 (Aphrodito, 6th cent.), οἱ γὰρ κληρικοὶ οὐκ ἐποίησαν παράλογον, δέσποτα (emphasizing that they had undertaken a lease without compulsion), or III 67295 (Antinoe?, 2nd half 6th cent.), a παράλογος προσέλευσις. The sense of irregularity also seems to be present in *P.Panop. Beatty* 2.150, ὡς μὴ παράλογόν τινα ὑπομείναι ἐνόχλησιν, translated by the editor as „endure any extraordinary inquisition“. No doubt something similar is at stake in the fragmentary *P.Berl. Möller* 13 v. 20 (*SB* IV 7350.31, Hermopolite, 3rd/4th cent.), π]ρᾶγμα παραλογώτατον. There may even be an allusion to the λόγος of line 6, in which case the sense would be more precisely „contrary to their promise“. It is not quite excluded that one should print παρὰ λόγον in two words, with specific reference to λόγος in the sense of the Franks' (sworn?) statement, but the hundreds of examples in the *TLG* of the oblique cases, comparatives, and superlatives of παράλογος strongly support reading it as a single word in contexts like this.

συμπαρακαλέω probably has here the sense of joining in someone else's plea, of classical origins but strongly represented in the patristic authors (see Lampe *s. v.*, citing, e. g., Origen, *de oratione* 10 (GCS 2, p. 320.22: συμπαρακαλῶν τοῖς παρακαλοῦσιν). The word does not seem to appear elsewhere in the papyri, although the simplex παρακαλέω is common; if we are right that it is to be restored in line 4, the use of the compound here is very apt. The syntax of the simplex is mostly with a complementary infinitive or prepositional phrase, but ὅπως and the subjunctive are found (e. g., *P.Flor.* III 303.2, 6th cent.). If the omicron at the end is rightly read, one might restore [ὑπὲρ αὐτ]ο[ῦ].

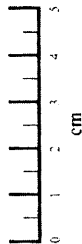
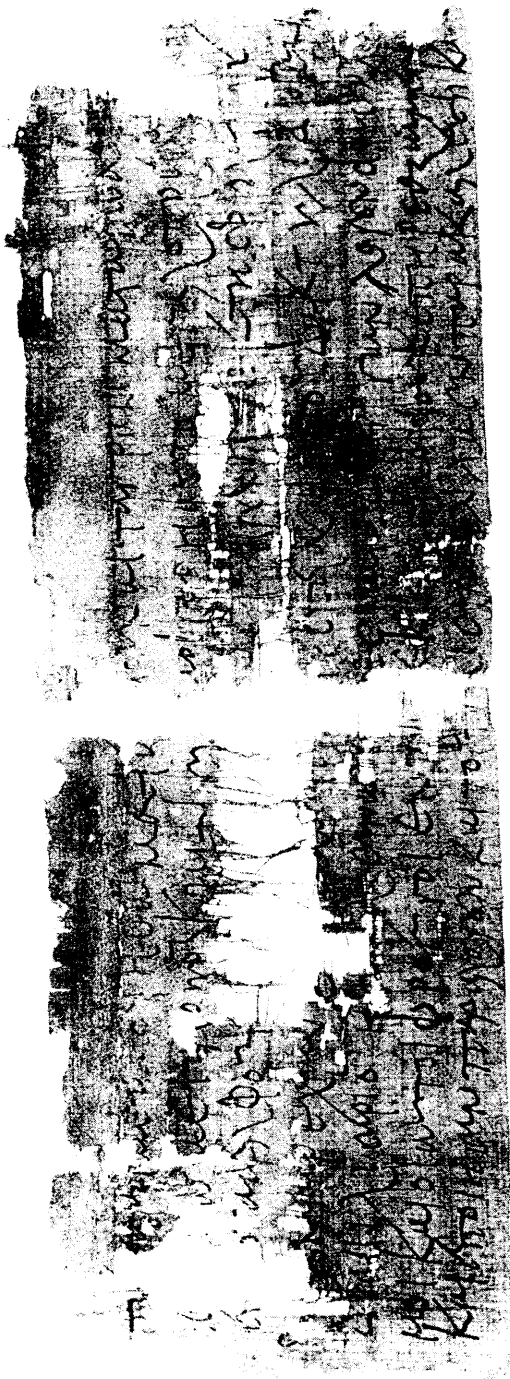
10. For the omission of augment in ἔασαν, cf. Gignac, *Grammar of the Greek Papyri* II 235 and B. Mandilaras, *The Verb in the Greek Non-Literary Papyri*, Athens 1973, 113 § 237. It is not clear if we should suppose that it was preceded by a negative; people did not usually want to get appointed to responsible tax offices. εἶασαν, therefore, should in this context be understood as „let it happen“ (Preisigke, *WB I s. v.*, 2: „zulassen, dulden, geschehen lassen“ with parallels from the 2nd to the 7th cent.). Neither is it clear if the ἀνθρώποι are the Franks or, more probably, some authorities from the local administration.

11. καθεσθῆναι should, in the context of appointment to ἀπαίτησις, be a form of καθίστημι. On καθίστημι in the Roman period see N. Lewis, *The Compulsory Public Services of Roman Egypt*, Florence 1982 (Pap.Flor. XI), 61 *s. v.*; the usage is classical, but it was never strictly technical. It is, however, an aorist passive infinitive of καθέζομαι, which replaces καθίζω in this system, common (both simplex and in various compounds) in the Roman period. It is not clear whether the writer intended the rare sense of „to appoint“ for καθέζομαι (never found in the papyri, as far as we can see) or thought he was using a form of καθίστημι. On ἀπαίτησις see B. Palme, *Das Amt des ἀπαιτητής in Ägypten*, Vienna 1989 (MPER n. s. 20), 15, showing that it is not a technical term for the office of ἀπαιτητής but refers to the role of collection at any level.

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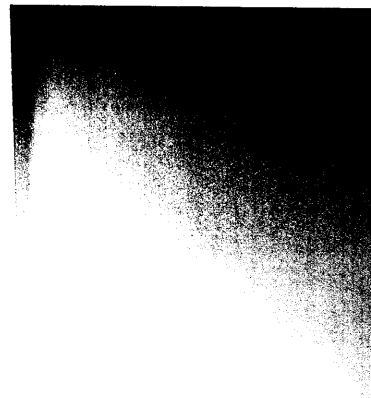
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