

CITIES AND ADMINISTRATION IN ROMAN EGYPT*

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(Demotic): [Year 18], 4th month of the winter season, 4th day, of Caesar the god, the son of the god, before Isis-Thermouthis the lady of [— who is on?] the dyke of the avenue of Hathor the lady of Iunt (i.e. Denderah), the eye of Ra, the lady of heaven, the mistress of all the gods, the lady of [?], Ptolemaios son of Panas, the *strategos*, the *syngenes*, the brother of Pharaoh, the prophet of Horus, the prophet of Hathor, the prophet of Ihy, the prophet of Isis, the prophet of the gods of the temple of Iunt-of-the-goddess, the overseer of the treasury of Hathor the lady of Iunt, Isis the great goddess (and) Horus of Behdet (i.e. Edfu) the great god, the lord of heaven for ever, (dedicated) the bare pieces of land which are on the south side of the shrine so that they may be used for the services of the place of Shai ('fate'). The width goes from south to north, and the length from west to east up to the canal of the avenue of Hathor.

(Greek): On behalf of emperor Caesar, son of a god, Augustus, Zeus Eleutherios, to Isis the most great goddess also called Thermouthis, the one by the dyke opposite the avenue of Aphrodite, Ptolemaios son of Panas, *strategos* and in charge of the revenues of the Tentyrite, (dedicated) the bare plots of land which are on the south of the temple from the west of the Soterion up to the canal. Year 18 of Caesar, Pharmouthi 4.¹

On behalf of emperor Caesar, son of a god, Zeus Eleutherios, Augustus, when Publius Octavius was prefect and Marcus Clodius Postumus was *epistrategos* and Tryphon was *strategos*, those from the *metropolis* and the nome (dedicated) the gateway to Isis the most great goddess and the gods of the same shrine. Year 31 of Caesar, on the Augustan (day) of Thoth.²

These two inscriptions come from the precinct of the temple of Hathor at Denderah (Tentyra), capital of the Tentyrite nome, just north of Thebes in Upper Egypt. The impressive remains of the complex are mostly late Ptolemaic and Roman (re)constructions, but they look Pharaonic and suggest social and cultural continuity across the centuries. The inscriptions, however, illustrate the radical changes in communal organization and administration which the Romans introduced. These changes form the subject of this paper. The first inscription dates to 12 B.C., but is almost entirely in the pre-Roman tradition. It is a trilingual dedication with the primary version in demotic (i.e. Egyptian). Augustus is god, implicitly Pharaoh, and lacks his Roman titles. The *strategos* (governor of the nome) Ptolemaios gives himself obsolete court titles and a string of local priesthoods. Ptolemaios came from a family which had hereditarily held local priesthoods (and probably continued to hold them after him), and his father Panas had preceded him as *strategos* of the Tentyrite nome, retaining office through the Roman annexation.³ On this occasion Ptolemaios' dedication was personal, but other dedications show him acting, like his father, as the head of local cult associations. Ptolemaios is last attested as *strategos* in 5 B.C. Five years later, our second inscription, which dates to 23 September A.D. 1, reveals a very different situation. The dedication was made on Augustus' birthday, and was finely inscribed in Greek only. The *strategos* Tryphon, whose name suggests an Alexandrian sent up to the Tentyrite nome, figures only as an element of the official dating clause standard throughout Roman Egypt; he is just a cog in the Roman administrative machine. The dedication was made corporately by the local community, structured, as we will see, on the new Roman model.

Evidence such as this does not mesh neatly with the traditional picture of overall continuity in administrative and social organization from Ptolemaic to Roman Egypt, and in

* Papyri and ostraka are cited according to the conventions of J. F. Oates *et al.*, *Checklist of Editions of Greek Papyri and Ostraca* (3rd edn, 1985). 'Acta Alex.' denotes H. A. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs. Acta Alexandrinorum* (1954); the same numeration was used by idem, *Acta Alexandrinorum* (Teubner, 1961). 'Gnomon' denotes the copy of the *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* published as *BGU* v. 1210 (cf. n. 31 below). We are grateful to John Rea, David Thomas, and members of the Editorial Committee for many valuable comments on a draft of this paper.

¹ W. Spiegelberg, *Die demotische Denkmäler* (1904),

III. 50044; A. Bernand, *Les portes du désert* (1984), no. 24. We are grateful to Penny Glare for translation of the demotic text; the hieroglyphic version is not quoted because it is almost identical.

² Bernand, *op. cit.* (n. 1), no. 25.

³ H. De Meulenaere, 'Les stratèges indigènes du nome Tentyrite à la fin de l'époque ptolémaïque et au début de l'occupation romaine', *RSO* 34 (1959), 1–25; A. F. Shore, 'Votive offerings from Denderah of the Graeco-Roman period', in J. Ruffe *et al.* (eds), *Glimpses of Ancient Egypt. Studies in Honour of H. W. Fairman* (1979), 138–60.

recent years the 'Romanity' of Roman Egypt has been achieving increasing recognition.⁴ The view that Egypt was an exceptionally peculiar province of the Roman Empire remains more tenacious, however. The main ancient source for this view, which lists almost all the exceptional features, is Tacitus' comment that Augustus had decided, since Egypt was 'a province difficult of access, prolific of grain, disturbed and divided by religious and other passions, knowing nothing of laws and ignorant of magistrates', to keep it under his personal control and to appoint an *equus* to govern it as viceroy.⁵ This paper focuses on the question of laws and magistrates. It is true that elements of centralized rule, derived from Ptolemaic and earlier practice, lasted into the fourth century A.D., especially the appointment of *strategoï* to govern the 'nomes', the traditional administrative divisions of Egypt. Town councils (*boulai*) were only formally constituted in Egypt in A.D. 200/1 by Septimius Severus, and it was only under later third-century emperors, principally Diocletian, that these *boulai* and their officers acquired important administrative responsibilities for their nomes. Since, therefore, the fostering of municipal institutions, or their creation in areas where the theoretically autonomous city-state was previously unknown, was a classic feature of Roman provincial rule, a lack of pre-Severan moves towards municipalization in Egypt would indeed make it an exceptionally peculiar province.⁶ We will argue instead that a process of municipalization was definitely and deliberately begun in the Augustan period with the creation of urban communities with 'Hellenic' landowning élites, who were put in a position of privilege and power over the 'Egyptian' population and given forms of communal self-administration, and that these communities, despite their lack of *boulai* (councils) and of the duties of providing local justice and of collecting direct taxes on land, were increasingly allowed and encouraged to behave and function like the older Greek cities in other provinces.

We are conscious that this compressed survey of the subject leaves many individual topics and arguments in need of further research, and new evidence, of course, will come to light. Indeed we hope that this paper will stimulate more work in this field. Even if some details require modification, however, we think that our main argument reinforces the view now gaining ground that Roman annexation led to changes which made Roman Egypt quite distinct from Ptolemaic Egypt despite elements of continuity. We also believe that these changes can usefully be compared, allowing for local peculiarities everywhere, with the subordination to Roman rule of the lands of other Hellenistic monarchies, where, incidentally, a basic continuity has again been the traditional picture. Egypt's main oddity is rather the unique wealth of detailed documentary evidence through which we can examine the process of transition.

I. THE PTOLEMAIC BACKGROUND

We begin with a brief statement, which itself is inevitably open to challenge and modification, about communal organization in the Ptolemaic period. The institutions and ideology of the city-state were not unknown to Ptolemaic Egypt. The new foundations of Alexandria and of Ptolemais (in Upper Egypt) both had a Greek-style deme-based citizenship. Ptolemais certainly had a *boule* (council) and an *ekklesia* (popular assembly) in the third century B.C., and the *boule* survived into the Roman period. The situation at Alexandria is a notorious enigma: it must originally have had a *boule*, but we believe that it lost it in the

⁴ N. Lewis, "'Greco-Roman Egypt': fact or fiction?", *Proc. XII Int. Congr. Pap.*, Am. Stud. Pap. 7 (1970), 3-14; idem, 'The Romanity of Roman Egypt: a growing consensus', *Acta XVII Congr. Int. Pap.* (1984), III, 1077-84. See further Section II below.

⁵ Tac., *Hist.* I.11. The idea that the inhabitants of Egypt were congenitally and culturally unsuited to civic self-administration goes back at least to Polybius XXXIV.14, a passage quoted by Strabo XVII.1.12. It is echoed in older standard works such as P. Jouquet, *La vie municipale dans l'Égypte romaine* (1911), 75; A. Stein, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Verwaltung Ägyptens unter römischer Herrschaft* (1915), 84.

⁶ cf. T. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht* (3rd edn, 1887), II.2, 859 n. 2: Egypt was not a proper province, even if Roman writers called it one; 'es fehlt hier auch die municipale Organisation, die Grundlage jeder Provinzialordnung'. Our model of full civic self-administration is the unit of town and dependent territory, run by a council drawn from the wealthy local landowners and headed by annual magistrates, responsible for supervising membership of the community and the council, for providing local amenities and law and order, and for collecting the tribute assessed by Rome on their community.

Ptolemaic period, perhaps at the same time as it lost its *ekklesia*. It retained, however, a set of civic magistrates, who must have run much of the socio-religious life of the city, and it had its own laws, based on Attic law, which were in theory administered by civic magistrates. Alexandria had a civic territory which was exempt from direct royal taxation, and outsiders were legally excluded from acquiring land in it.⁷ There were also the theoretically autonomous cities of Naukratis and Paraetonium. Information about their constitutions is scant, but Naukratis had at least the right to use its own laws (*nomoi*), perhaps derived, like its calendar, from Miletus. Outside these 'Greek cities' civic culture, if not political autonomy, was disseminated throughout Egypt: the nome-capitals, about which we are ill-informed, were now termed *metropoleis* (mother-cities), and villages, new or old, where Greeks settled tended to reflect civic values; the obvious example is the new foundation of Philadelphia in the Fayum which had a rectangular grid of streets, a gymnasium, baths and so on, and is often called a *polis* in the Zenon Archive.⁸

Whatever the strength of cultural urbanization, however, the tradition of centralized royal rule, based on the ideology of a direct link between ruler and individual subject, was preferred by the Ptolemies to development of a tradition of communal self-administration. From top to bottom of the system the theory and normal practice were that individuals were appointed or themselves contracted to carry out particular tasks for which they were individually recompensed by the crown (even if some grouping of people in functionally similar positions, such as military settlers or *basilikoi georgoi*, tenants of royal land, inevitably occurred), and there was no need for status groups with communal privileges and duties. Although 'associations' called *politeumata* and *koina* are found in the towns and villages, they were religious and cultural groupings, capable of attracting the patronage of powerful individuals but with no official role.⁹ Although there were status distinctions, such as Alexandrian citizenship and the designation of 'Hellene', which offered prestige and amenities and some personal administrative and fiscal privileges, there was no general structure of status-based communal privileges.¹⁰ Individuals presumably did try to acquire and pass on wealth and power. The lack of evidence for a hereditary wealthy Alexandrian élite may be misleading but it may indicate that the Ptolemies acted to suppress it; Alexandria, as their capital, could not be allowed real autonomy. The hereditarily powerful families which are known to us were Egyptianizing Greeks or Hellenizing Egyptians, like the family of Ptolemaios at Tentyra, who combined tenure of native priesthoods, held for life, with strings of royal appointments. They, it seems, were powerful and indispensable because they provided the missing link in the theoretically direct relation between Macedonian ruler and (mostly) non-Macedonian subject; in their home environment, as the Tentyra dedications illustrate, they acted not as representatives of the community but as local dynasts.

In the *chora* (country) of Egypt, furthermore, there was a serious juridical and economic obstacle to the emergence of a broad and stable landowning élite. While houses, boats and other movable property, and the small plots of garden- and vine-land which ringed each settlement could be privately owned, what we or the Romans would recognize as full private ownership of arable land did not exist. Of the main administrative categories of arable land, 'royal land' (*ge basilike*) and 'sacred land' (*hiera ge*) were rented out by the secular and religious authorities of the state in small plots to individuals for high and variable rents, while *kleroi* were 'allotments', subject to low fixed rates of tax, granted to individuals, mostly Greek military settlers (*katoikoi*), in return for military service. Admittedly hereditary tenure of individual *kleroi* and even their cession for cash became possible, and evidence of similar treatment of plots of 'sacred land' by Egyptian tenants is known, but the theory of precarious tenancy persisted and significant hereditary accumulation of landed wealth seems not to have been allowed.¹¹ More importantly, it remained impossible to define the public status and

⁷ P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (1972), 1, chs 2–3; A. Jähne, 'Die Ἀλεξανδρέων χώρα', *Klio* 63 (1981), 63–101. *Boule*: see n. 35 below.

⁸ Greek cities: see Section III.ii below. *Chora*: J. Bingen, 'Le milieu urbain dans la chôra égyptienne à l'époque ptolémaïque', *Proc. XIV Int. Congr. Pap.* (1975), 367–73.

⁹ For examples and discussion see D. J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (1988), ch. 3.

¹⁰ J. Méléze-Modrzejewski, 'Le statut des Hellènes

dans l'Égypte lagide. Bilan et perspectives de recherches', *REG* 96 (1983), 241–68; cf. K. Goudriaan, *Ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt* (1988), though he overstates his case.

¹¹ J. Modrzejewski, 'Régime foncier et statut social dans l'Égypte ptolémaïque', in *Terre et paysans dépendants dans les sociétés antiques, Colloque Besançon 1974* (1979), 163–88. His argument for the existence of private property in Ptolemaic Egypt is sound, but he does not note the important difference between Ptolemaic *ge idioktetos* and Roman *ge idiotike*.

public duties of the individual in terms of his private landed wealth, which had almost from the beginning been a characteristic and crucial element of the socio-political structure and ideology of the Greek and Roman city-state.

II. THE AUGUSTAN PROVINCE

After its annexation in 30 B.C. Egypt became a province of the Roman people, subject to Roman officials, taxation, and law, and after 27 B.C. it was grouped with the so-called 'imperial' provinces whose governors were appointed by the emperor. Two peculiarities reflect Augustus' fear that Egypt might be used as a base for opposition. First, its governor was an equestrian *praefectus* rather than a senator. Second, Augustus banned senators and prominent *equites* from entering the province without imperial permission, which also will have made it difficult, if not impossible, for them to acquire property there.¹² But these, together with the other peculiarities of Egypt as a Roman province which were survivals from the Ptolemaic period, some more of form than substance, on closer inspection look less important historically than the Roman innovations, several of which were crucial to the development of Roman forms of communal self-administration.¹³

Even if Augustus did not prevent representation and worship of himself as Pharaoh, Egypt was no longer run as a kingdom. The Ptolemaic court was replaced by a Roman equestrian administration whose officers were normally outsiders on short-term appointments. The *praefectus* was in no sense a viceroy: the position was formalized by a *lex* which gave him the juridical status of a *magistratus Romanus*, in practice he operated like a *legatus Augusti*, and indeed the use of equestrian *praefecti* later spread to other, albeit less important, provinces.¹⁴ Most Ptolemaic court posts and titles simply disappeared. The title of *idioslogos* survived, but the character of the post changed, from that of Ptolemaic 'privy purse' to something very close to that of the patrimonial procurator found elsewhere. The title of *dioiketes* (finance minister) also survived, but the post was re-defined into obscurity. The prefect had two other civilian equestrian deputies. The *dikaiodotes*, a Roman innovation whose title simply translates the Latin (*legatus*) *iuridicus*, was introduced, following republican precedents, to share the prefect's burden of civil jurisdiction; this post was particularly essential in newly annexed areas where the Romans had to come to grips with indigenous local traditions, and seems in Egypt, as later in Spain and Britain, to have been associated with a drive towards municipalization. Some time before 4 B.C. the Ptolemaic post of *epistrategos* (governor) of the Thebaid was also made an equestrian appointment, presumably when the need was realized for an additional civil and judicial authority in distant Upper Egypt. These equestrian officials were equipped with the usual staff of slaves and freedmen.¹⁵ Finally, Egypt was garrisoned by a standing army of three legions (reduced to two by A.D. 23), three *alae* of cavalry, and nine cohorts of auxiliaries, whose equestrian commanders formed the prefect's corps of military subordinates, although they, and the centurions and other military personnel, were also used in administrative roles. As others have remarked, it is not so much the size as the character of the army which needs noting: in contrast to the Ptolemaic army, it was composed

¹² Tac., *Ann.* II.59. On the *ousiai*, sometimes regarded without justification as evidence for Roman investment, see p. 111 below.

¹³ These innovations are described more fully by A. K. Bowman, 'Egypt', *CAH* x (2nd edn, 1993, forthcoming), ch. 14b; cf. G. Geraci, *Genesi della provincia romana d'Egitto* (1983), ch. 4; O. Montevecchi, 'L'amministrazione dell'Egitto sotto i Giulio-Claudi', *ANRW* II.10.1 (1988), 412-71. Of the older surveys the best is Stein, op. cit. (n. 5).

¹⁴ Tac., *Ann.* XII.60; Ulpian, *Dig.* I.17.1. The only 'royal' relics of the prefect's position were his residence in the Ptolemaic palace and the taboo on sailing on the Nile when it was in flood (cf. the works cited in n. 13). Cf. P. A. Brunt, 'The administrators of Roman Egypt', *JRS* 65 (1975), 124-47, repr. as *Roman Imperial Themes* (1990), ch. 10.

¹⁵ P. R. Swarney, *The Ptolemaic and Roman Idios Logos*, *Am.Stud.Pap.* 8 (1970), ch. 2; see further p. 111 below. D. Hagedorn, 'Zum Amt des διοικητής im römischen Ägypten', *YCS* 28 (1985), 167-210; cf. n. 98 below. H. Kupiszewski, 'The Iuridicus Alexandriae', *JfP* 7-8 (1953-4), 187-204, stressing his role in civil jurisdiction; cf. S. S. Frere, *Britannia* (3rd edn, 1987), 183-4; N. K. Mackie, *Local Administration in Roman Spain, A.D. 14-212*, *BAR Int. Ser.* 172 (1983), 8-9. J. D. Thomas, *The Epistrategos in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, Part 2. The Roman Epistrategos*, *Pap.Colon.* VI (1982), 9-15, 185. Cf. H.-G. Pflaum, *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain* (1960/1), III, 1083-92, *Supplément* (1982), 133-41. Slaves and freedmen: Strabo XVII.1.12; cf. Philo, *Flacc.* 112; *Leg.* 166; *P.Oxy.* XLIV.3208.

almost entirely of non-natives of the province who were actually forbidden to acquire land in it during their period of service.¹⁶ Egyptians who went into auxiliary units or (occasionally) legions will normally have been stationed elsewhere.

Beneath the equestrian officials, one can point to an apparently significant degree of continuity between Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt in the administrative structure at the local level, especially in the titles and areas of competence of the officials in charge of the nomes, the *strategoï* and *basilikogrammateis*.¹⁷ But there were very important changes, most notably the introduction of a complex system of compulsory public services whose origins can be identified in the Julio-Claudian period. It is to be emphasized that, despite apparent continuity, the Roman system of compulsory labour was 'quite different qualitatively and conceptually', from anything which had existed in the Ptolemaic period, while the important category of *Amtsliturgie* (administrative posts), with liability based on property qualification, was wholly new. Liability to public service, based on *poros* (property or income qualification), eventually extended throughout the socio-economic range of the population.¹⁸ The evidence does not allow us to observe the existence of compulsory *praktoreia* (tax-collecting) before the reign of Claudius but it is inherently probable that some such liturgical offices existed from the Augustan period.

The financial organization of the province offers no justification at all for the notion that Egypt was in some sense a personal possession of the princeps.¹⁹ Egypt's revenues, like those of other 'imperial' provinces, were from the start theoretically paid into the *aerarium Saturni*, the treasury of the *res publica*, but in practice were mostly handled by direct agents of the emperor (equestrian officials and imperial freedmen).²⁰ Admittedly, Augustus personally confiscated patrimonial estates (*ousiai*), but he held none in his own name (they were put in the hands of friends and members of the imperial family) and he exerted no personal control over the rest of the land. Admittedly, too, the *patrimonium* in Egypt, represented by the *idioslogos*, soon acquired the exclusive right to *bona vacantia*, *caduca*, and *damnatorum* but this appears less anomalous if it is viewed as an early precedent for the general development of the powers of the *fiscus*.²¹

Some important details of Ptolemaic practice were retained but often modified. The closed currency system based on the Alexandrian silver tetradrachm was retained, but it was made compatible with the universal denarius standard.²² Traditional rates of taxation on land were retained, but the taxation system underwent major structural changes.²³ From an early date it is possible to make for Egypt the usual Roman conceptual distinctions between direct and indirect taxation (*tributum* and *vectigalia*), the former being subdivided into direct taxation on land and on the person (*tributum soli* and *tributum capitis*). The land of Egypt was from the outset subject to direct Roman taxation, the *tributum soli*, locally expressed as being subject to the administration of the *dioikesis*. Official documents soon, if sporadically, started making a basic distinction between *ge demosia* and *ge idiotike*, clearly the traditional Roman dichotomy between *ager publicus* and *ager privatus*, that is state and private land. State land

¹⁶ M. Speidel, *Roman Army Studies* 1 (1984), 317–21; idem, 'Nubia's Roman garrison', *ANRW* II.10.1 (1988), 767–98; S. Daris, 'Le truppe ausiliarie in Egitto', *ANRW* II.10.1 (1988), 743–66. Land: *Gnomon* §111; N. Lewis, 'Soldiers permitted to own provincial land', *BASP* 19 (1982), 143–8; and note his suggestion that the reversal of this prohibition owed something to the Ptolemaic precedent of soldier-cleruchs, 'A Roman law of Hellenistic origin?', *Symposium* 5 (1982), 281–9.

¹⁷ J. E. G. Whitehorne, 'Recent research on the *strategi* of Roman Egypt (to 1985)', *ANRW* II.10.1 (1988), 598–611; Montevecchi, op. cit. (n. 13), 440–2; G. Bastianini and J. Whitehorne, *Strategi and Royal Scribes of Roman Egypt*, Pap. Flor. xv (1987).

¹⁸ The categorization follows J. D. Thomas, 'Compulsory public service in Roman Egypt', in G. Grimm et al. (eds), *Das römisch-byzantinische Ägypten*, *Aegyptiaca Treverensia* 2 (1983), 35–9. See also Lewis, op. cit. 1970 (n. 4), 7 (from whom the phrase quoted is taken); idem, *The Compulsory Public Services of Roman Egypt*, Pap. Flor. xi (1982).

¹⁹ See further D. W. Rathbone, 'Egypt, Augustus and Roman taxation', *Cahiers G. Glotz* 4 (1993, forthcoming).

²⁰ Vell. Pat. II.39.2; D. W. Rathbone, 'The imperial finances', *CAH* x (2nd edn, 1993, forthcoming), ch. 8.

²¹ Estates: D. J. Crawford, 'Imperial estates', in M. I. Finley (ed.), *Studies in Roman Property* (1976), 57–70; G. M. Parássoglou, *Imperial Estates in Roman Egypt*, *Am. Stud. Pap.* 18 (1978). Note that the Ptolemaic *ge basilike* (royal land) did not become 'imperial' land (see below). *Idioslogos*: Swarney, op. cit. (n. 15). Cf. Rathbone, op. cit. (n. 19).

²² D. R. Walker, *The Metrology of the Roman Coinage* 1, *BAR Suppl. Ser.* 5 (1976), 155–6; cf. M. H. Crawford, *Coinage and Money under the Roman Republic* (1985), 271–2.

²³ S. L. Wallace, *Taxation in Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian* (1938); P. A. Brunt, 'The revenues of Rome', *JRS* 71 (1981), 161–72 (esp. 162–3), repr. as *Roman Imperial Themes* (1990), ch. 15. Our comments on land-categorization rely heavily upon the important work by J. L. Rowlandson, *Landholding in the Oxyrhynchite Nome 30B.C.–c.300A.D.* (D. Phil. Oxford, 1983; Oxford Classical Monographs, forthcoming); cf. M. Rostowzew, *Studien zur Geschichte des römischen Kolonates* (1910), ch. II.

included the Ptolemaic *ge basilike* and some other minor Ptolemaic categories of land. The land now in the general category of *ge demosia* mostly continued to pay rent on the traditional system of annually variable dues in kind according to the level of the Nile flood, though administrators tended, apparently, to apply a regular 'average' charge which was probably above half of the yield. This system of taxation, even if based on Ptolemaic practice, was not altogether unlike the old Roman treatment of *ager publicus*, and was probably quite similar to the arrangements for tithe-lands in Sicily and other eastern provinces.

The general category of *ge idiotike* obviously included previously private land, which means the small plots of garden- and vine-land found throughout Egypt; also, we presume, the 'ancient land' of Alexandria in its territory proper and the Menelaite nome, which a prefect confirmed in A.D. 68 would remain 'unmeasured' (i.e. not subject to direct taxation). This should not obscure the fact that the introduction of full legal ownership of private land as a substantive category was a Roman innovation of major importance. The development of estates such as those owned by Calpurnia Heraklia of Oxyrhynchus in the third century, whose origins can be traced back to the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, was simply not possible before 30 B.C.²⁴ Garden-land and the like, as under the Ptolemies, was liable to taxation in cash. On the whole the Ptolemaic rates seem to have been retained, but some garden-land in the Mendesian nome (in the Delta) in the late second century A.D. was taxed at specially low rates called 'the 2 dr. 3 ob. for Alexandrians' and 'the 3 dr. for metropolites', and the latter must have been a Roman concession since, as we will see, the status of 'metropolites' was a Roman invention.²⁵ Other private holdings were created or augmented by purchase of small plots of state land auctioned by the government, sometimes because they had gone out of production.²⁶ Much private land, however, belonged to the sub-category of 'catoecic' land, which comprised the *kleroi* (allotments) granted by the Ptolemies to Greek and other military settlers, on which, because of the military obligation on the holders, low fixed rents in kind in the range of 10 to 20 per cent of the yield were demanded. Although by the later Ptolemaic period these allotments had *de facto* become heritable and even alienable, transfers still took the legal form of cessions with implicit transfer of the obligation to perform military service; thus they remained largely in the hands of families of previous holders, and significant accumulation of them by individuals was not permitted. It seems that the Romans almost immediately made these allotments fully private property, with full individual title to ownership, no military obligation to the state, and the ability to sell them openly to a third party and hence, presumably, to accumulate them. The *terminus ante quem* for this change is January 27 B.C., the date of the earliest straightforward open contract of sale of a catoecic allotment in the Arsinoite nome. Since the old low fixed rate of tax was left in place while the theoretical military obligation had gone, catoecic land must have become a very desirable acquisition.²⁷

The major Roman fiscal innovation was the introduction of *tributum capitis* in the form of an annual poll-tax, in Egypt called the *laographia*. Again this was an almost immediate novelty; the earliest attestation is probably a receipt, from Thebes, for a payment due for the year 24/3 B.C. In Roman Egypt the poll-tax fell on all adult males, including slaves, aged fourteen to sixty-two. There were exempt categories: all Alexandrian citizens and their slaves, some holders of official posts, and some but not all Egyptian priests. The basic rate, curiously, varied from nome to nome: 16 dr. per annum was quite common, but other rates are known, the highest being 40 dr. in the Arsinoite nome; metropolites seem always or normally to have paid a lower rate. No convincing Ptolemaic precedent can be identified. Conceivably the exemption of women and of Alexandrian citizens and the local variations in the basic rate may have owed something to Ptolemaic fiscal practices, but the special low rates levied on metropolites must be related to the Roman invention of the status of 'metropolites' (see below). There is no reason to doubt that the *laographia* was a swift and dramatic Roman novelty. And this novelty was not at all peculiar to Egypt: it is now recognized that imposition

²⁴ Edict of Tiberius Julius Alexander (ed. G. Chalon, 1964), lines 59–61; cf. A. H. M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (2nd edn, 1971), 304–5; Fraser, *op. cit.* (n. 7), II, 114 n. 16. Innovation: cf. Modrzejewski, *op. cit.* (n. 11); contrast E. G. Turner, *CAH* VII.1 (2nd edn, 1984), 154, but our view does not preclude recognition of 'capitalism' and investment practised by the Greeks. Calpurnia Heraklia: *P.Oxy.*

XLII.3047 (we take the high anonymous regnal year numbers in ll. 25–6, 30–1 to relate to Augustus; the low 'year numbers' have been re-interpreted by J. L. Rowlandson, 'P.Oxy. XLII 3047, VII 1044, and the land tax in kind', *ZPE* 67 (1987), 283–91).

²⁵ *P.Ryl.* II.216.

²⁶ Rowlandson, *op. cit.* (n. 23), 47–53.

²⁷ *BGU* II.543; cf. Rowlandson, *op. cit.* (n. 23), 42–6.

of a poll-tax accompanied Roman annexation of other areas of the eastern Mediterranean world — it was a potent symbol of subjection to Rome.²⁸

The conduct of a census was normally the prerequisite for raising a poll-tax. It was also essential for the establishment of a liturgical system and the control of status distinctions which are discussed below. It has now been suggested that in Egypt under Augustus general censuses were held at seven-year intervals, beginning in 11/10 B.C., prior to the establishment of the cycle of censuses taken at fourteen-year intervals, of which the first fell in A.D. 33/4 or possibly A.D. 19/20.²⁹ We suspect, however, that if the poll-tax was up and running by 24/3 B.C., there must have been some sort of a census before that date, probably held soon after annexation. We might well suppose a substantial interval before the next census and the subsequent introduction of the seven- and then fourteen-year cycle — that is, a pattern of experimentation and adjustment. It should be noted that the function of the Roman provincial census in Egypt was to register liability to taxation on the person and to liturgic service. It was quite distinct from the land survey and, although status was recorded, control and registration of status were effected through separate procedures and reviews.

The question of status is central to our perception of the changes in Augustan Egypt and is intimately connected with the administration of the law. It is abundantly clear that, as in other provinces, a fundamental and novel determinant was the permanent presence of Roman citizens, soldiers, freedmen, and slaves. Roman criminal and civil law applied to all residents with Roman citizenship or Latin status, and was administered by the governor, other equestrian officials and their delegates. Law developed in the normal ways too: the introduction to the second-century copy of the *Gnomon of the Idios Logos*, for instance, describes it as the code established by Augustus with amendments made as a result of imperial *edicta*, *senatus consulta*, or decisions of officials. As elsewhere, the Roman law was an overarching structure, tolerating and accommodating the pre-existing mélange of Greek and Egyptian *nomoi*.³⁰

The *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* illustrates very clearly the connections between law and status. The revenues which it deals with are mainly fines and confiscation of property to which particular status groups were liable. Some of these certainly perpetuated Ptolemaic practice but others were equally certainly Roman innovations, reflecting, for example, the Augustan marriage and manumission legislation, especially concerning inheritance. The *Gnomon* also seems to operate on the assumption that the Roman practice that a freedman takes his ex-master's status was generally valid throughout Egypt. It is surely inconceivable that the distinctions of status between Romans, Latins, Greeks, Alexandrians, and Egyptians which appear in the *Gnomon* were not present from the earliest period of Roman rule.³¹ All this amounts to a system of social control operated by fiscal sanctions through a status hierarchy and property qualification, to which private ownership of property, including land, is crucial. It is quite different from anything which existed in the Ptolemaic period, a point reinforced by the disappearance, or change in significance, of the ethnics which were so prominent under the Ptolemies. Ethnics other than *Aigyptios* are used only to describe origin, without any status implication.³² The point is emphasized by the character of the new poll-tax which was officially

²⁸ See Wallace, *op. cit.* (n. 23), ch. VIII; J. A. S. Evans, 'The poll-tax in Egypt', *Aeg.* 37 (1957), 259–65; Rathbone, *op. cit.* (n. 19). Cf. *O.Bodl.* II.407 (earliest receipt); Lewis, *op. cit.* 1970 (n. 4), 6 (novelty); Brunt, *op. cit.* (n. 23), 161 (symbolism).

²⁹ R. S. Bagnall, 'The beginnings of the Roman census in Egypt', *GRBS* 32 (1991 forthcoming); cf. Brunt, *op. cit.* (n. 23), 163–6; M. Hombert and C. Préaux, *Recherches sur le recensement dans l'Égypte romaine*, *Pap.Lugd.Bat.* 5 (1952), 47–52.

³⁰ *Gnomon praef.* Our approach to this subject owes much to the work of J. Méléze-Modrzejewski, in particular 'La règle de droit dans l'Égypte romaine', *Proc.XII Int.Congr.Pap.*, *Am.Stud.Pap.* 7 (1970), 317–77, and 'La loi des Égyptiens': le droit grec dans l'Égypte romaine', *Proc.XVIII Int.Congr.Pap.* (1988), II, 383–99, repr. as *Droit impérial et traditions locales dans l'Égypte romaine* (1990), ch. IX.

³¹ The almost(?) complete text of the *Gnomon* published as *BGU* v. 1210 dates to the mid-second century A.D. and

therefore represents an accretion of regulations over almost two centuries; *P.Oxy.* XLII.3014 contains a fragment which has been assigned on palaeographical grounds to the first century; the edict of Tl. Julius Alexander, l. 44, refers to it as an Augustan indulgence. Augustan legislation is reflected particularly in §§9, 16, 19, 22–3. Also noteworthy in this respect is the Egyptian evidence for the scope and impact of the *Lex Papia Poppaea* and the *Lex Aelia Sentia* (*FIRA* III.2, 4).

³² The latest Ptolemaic-style usage of an ethnic appears to be *WChr.* 111 of A.D. 6. On this and what follows see the excellent survey by J. Méléze-Modrzejewski, 'Entre la cité et le fisc: le statut grec dans l'Égypte romaine', in F. J. Fernández Nieto (ed.), *Symposion 1982. Actas de la sociedad de historia del derecho griego y helenístico* (1985), 241–80, repr. as *op. cit.* 1990 (n. 30), ch. I; cf. O. Montevecchi, 'Aigyptios-Hellen in età romana', in S. F. Bondi *et al.* (eds), *Studi in onore di Edda Bresciani* (1985), 339–53.

called the *laographia*, that is 'the registration of the *laos*'; *laos* was therefore the proper technical term for the poll-taxpaying population, excluding Alexandrian citizens but including, it must be remembered, the metropolitans who were subject to the poll-tax, albeit at a reduced rate, even though many of them will have been of Greek ethnic origin. Alternatively poll-taxpayers are occasionally designated by another neutral term — the *entopioi*, that is 'the locals'.³³ But the term used most commonly in literary and official documentary texts (such as the *Gnomon*) is the *Aigyptioi*, that is 'the Egyptians', a term which now acquired connotations of administrative, fiscal, and cultural inferiority. We shall later argue that the complement of this is that the Romans aimed to demarcate a privileged urban-based 'Hellenic' élite, through whom and with whom they could rule and exploit the native population. This approach, of course, was not novel or peculiar to Egypt: it was what the Romans had done and continued to do in other eastern provinces. In Egypt its primary manifestation was in the dichotomy between Alexandria and the towns and villages of the *chora*. In the *chora* there came the further distinction between villages and the *metropoleis*; the metropolitans enjoyed a higher status than villagers and, within the metropolitans, the gymnasial group constituted a more restricted élite. These status distinctions, as we will see, were closely connected with the nature and development of civic administration.

III. CIVIC ADMINISTRATION

i. Alexandria

In initiating the developments in civic administration in the towns of Egypt, it will have been natural for the Romans, as it is for us, to look first to Alexandria, the Ptolemaic capital of Egypt and by far its largest urban centre. Alexandria, furthermore, was a proper Greek foundation. It had its own territory, its own laws and a defined, hereditary citizen body.³⁴ Although it lacked both a *boule* (council) and an *ekklesia* (popular assembly), which had already, we believe, disappeared in the Ptolemaic period, it still had civic magistrates and officials and some structure of self-administration.³⁵ Our analysis concentrates on three major topics: the definition and privileges of the citizen body and of the élite groups within it; the civic magistrates and officials and the areas of self-administration; the extent and nature of communal decision-making in the absence of a *boule*.

Alexandria was physically ordered into five districts labelled 'Alpha' to 'Epsilon', plus some suburban districts. These divisions took in the whole resident population, and were used for certain administrative purposes such as organizing the watch and the food-supply.³⁶ The citizen body was in theory exclusive, and may have had a theoretical *numerus clausus* of 180,000 (male) citizens. The main mode of entry was, as under the Ptolemies, through hereditary registration in a deme, for which applicants needed citizen parents on both sides. The many new demotics (names of demes) attested in the early Roman period suggest that the Romans reorganized the system of demes and probably increased their number; from the time of Nero, Alexandrian citizens also cite their tribe in documents, which implies that the tribes

³³ *Laographia*: cf. n. 28 above. *Entopioi*: *P.Lond.* II (p. 222). 192.94; cf. *SB* v.8334.

³⁴ Laws: attested for the Ptolemaic period in *P.Hal.* I and for the Roman in *P.Oxy.* IV.706 (we do not follow the view of Modrzejewski, op. cit. 1988 (n. 30), 387, that the *astikos nomos* is Roman law).

³⁵ The date at which the *boule* and *ekklesia* disappeared is still uncertain, but we regard the arguments for the second century B.C. (probably the reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes Physcon) as very much stronger than those for abolition by Augustus, despite Geraci, op. cit. (n. 13), 176–82 with n. 856. The statement of Dio LI.17.2 that Augustus insisted on civic government *aneu bouleuton* (without councillors) does not prove that he abolished the

boule and could equally refer to a refusal to accede to requests to re-establish it. We would stress the lack of any evidence for an Alexandrian *boule* in the latter half of the Ptolemaic period, and the failure of Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians to use abolition by Augustus as support for his refusal to accede to their request. See also A. K. Bowman, *The Town Councils of Roman Egypt*, *Am.Stud.Pap.* 11 (1971), 12; Fraser, op. cit. (n. 7), I, 94–5; D. Delia, *Alexandrian Citizenship During the Roman Period*, *Am.Class.Stud.* 23 (1991), ch. v.

³⁶ Fraser, op. cit. (n. 7), I, 34–5, 40. E.g. *P.Oxy.* XXII.2340 (A.D. 192): *hypostrategos* of Delta district; *OGIS* II.705 = *SB* v.8911 (A.D. 158): food-supply officer of Beta district.

too now had some administrative significance, apparently separate from that of the demes.³⁷ Within the citizen body there was the gymnasial group which was entered through the ephebate; in the Roman period at least this was in theory a hereditary group since candidates for the ephebate were required to show gymnasial ancestry on both sides.³⁸ Lastly, there was a *gerousia* (council of 'elders'), which may have had a theoretical *numerus clausus* of 173 members. Although there is no specific evidence for the method of entry to it, we suspect that it was recruited from former magistrates and officials, perhaps with some supplementary co-optation.³⁹ The *gerousia*, like the gymnasium, had presumably been instituted as a social and honorific institution, but both, as we will see, may have acquired more of a 'political' role in the absence of a *boule*.

The civic officials of Alexandria had the primary responsibility for controlling access to its citizenship and to the privileged gymnasial élite, and the city could apparently make honorific grants of citizenship to outsiders.⁴⁰ It is often held that there was a significant increase in the number of citizens of Alexandria during the Roman period, which may have been effected by entry via the *ephebeia* and gymnasial education for people who did not have citizen parents.⁴¹ This procedure may strictly have been irregular. In his letter of A.D. 41 to Alexandria, Claudius confirmed the rights of all ephebes who had been registered up to his accession except those of servile descent, probably in response to Greek Alexandrian complaints about infiltration by Jews and 'Egyptians'.⁴² Claudius' letter illustrates that these procedures were liable to Roman supervision, but actual interventions were probably rare. When Pliny asked Trajan to grant Alexandrian citizenship to his doctor Harpokras, Trajan acceded reluctantly, saying that following imperial custom he did not intend to make indiscriminate grants of Alexandrian citizenship.⁴³ The targets of the complaints of the envoys to Claudius, to which we will return later, are more likely to have been corrupt Alexandrian officials than Roman administrators.

If under the Ptolemies there had been a significant gap in status and privilege between Alexandria and the rest of Egypt, under the Romans it was widened into a gulf, symbolized in the official title of the Roman governor of Egypt — 'Prefect of Alexandria and of Egypt'. It can, admittedly, be difficult to decide whether privileges of Alexandrian citizens attested only in the Roman period are Ptolemaic survivals or new Roman concessions. The privilege, for example, revealed by Philo that Egyptians could be beaten with whips, but Alexandrian citizens only by other Alexandrians using a flat implement, recalls the Roman propensity to match punishments to status, but may none the less be of Ptolemaic origin.⁴⁴ A similar case is the ownership by Alexandrians of private landed property. The territory proper of Alexandria was not subject to direct taxation at all, and Alexandrian vineyards in the Mendesian nome paid a specially low rate of tax.⁴⁵ Furthermore, a number of clauses from the *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* reveal rules designed to keep this territory exclusively in Alexandrian hands: one clause, for example, prescribes that the children of a female citizen and a male non-citizen take the status of the father and do not inherit from the mother. Whether or not there is any residual and tacit influence of Attic law is difficult to say, but it appears that the Romans retained, and perhaps extended, Ptolemaic legislation designed to keep Alexandrian land in the hands of Alexandrian citizens, and even particularly in the male line; another clause rules that a citizen may not bequeath more than a quarter to a wife by whom he has no children, or, if he has children by her, a share not larger than that bequeathed to each of his sons. Since several of the

³⁷ Delia, *op. cit.* (n. 35), chs I-II; M. A. H. El-Abbadi, 'The Alexandrian citizenship', *JEA* 48 (1962), 106-23; Fraser, *op. cit.* (n. 7), I, 38-54, 76-8. The unsolved technical problems associated with the Alexandrian citizenship cannot be discussed in detail here and are, in any case, strictly irrelevant to our main point which concerns the privileges associated with full Alexandrian status. We follow El-Abbadi and Delia against Fraser in believing that there was only one grade of Alexandrian citizenship, which sometimes is denoted by the term *astos* in the *Gnomon*. Possible *numerus clausus*: *Acta Alex.* III.15; cf. Jones, *op. cit.* (n. 24), 474 n. 8.

³⁸ Delia, *op. cit.* (n. 35), ch. III.

³⁹ M. A. H. El-Abbadi, 'The *gerousia* in Roman Egypt',

JEA 50 (1964), 164-9; Delia, *op. cit.* (n. 35), 163; A. Momigliano, *JRS* 34 (1944), 114-15; cf. the notes to *Acta Alex.* III.

⁴⁰ e.g. Jos., *c.Ap.* II.32.

⁴¹ Fraser, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 77. Cf. Jos., *c.Ap.* II.69.

⁴² *C.Pap.Jud.* II.153.52-7; cf. *Acta Alex.* I.2-6 = *C.Pap.Jud.* II.150. *Gnomon* §44 prescribes a financial penalty for any 'Egyptian' who claims his son has become an ephebe.

⁴³ Pliny, *Ep.* x.7.1. *Gnomon* §40 also shows that at first the *idioslogos*, then later the prefect, had jurisdiction over cases of illegal acquisition of Alexandrian citizenship.

⁴⁴ Philo, *Flacc.* 78.

⁴⁵ See p. 112 nn. 24-5 above.

clauses in the *Gnomon* which are not relevant to Alexandrians reflect the tenor and aims of Augustus' marital and testamentary legislation at Rome, we should perhaps admit the possibility of cross-fertilization between Alexandria and Rome in the development of this legislation.⁴⁶

Some important privileges, however, are so intimately linked to Roman institutions as to be indubitably Roman. When the poll-tax was imposed, by the mid-20s B.C., Alexandrian citizens were exempted, and it is consistent with this that they were made exempt from liability to liturgies in the *chora*.⁴⁷ Another well-known privilege, which emerges from Pliny's correspondence with Trajan, is that only Alexandrians, not Egyptians, could acquire Roman citizenship; hence local recruitment to legions, as we know from other evidence, was initially, in theory, confined to Alexandrians.⁴⁸ In effect the citizens of Alexandria were not treated as conquered subjects (*dediticii*) but more like an allied state. This means that Alexandrian citizenship was not merely a matter of geographical origin and residence but of cultural identity and status; that is, it was broadly conceived in terms similar to those of the Roman citizenship — just as acquisition of the Roman citizenship was the aim of ambitious subjects of the Empire (for whom Rome was the *communis patria*), so the acquisition of Alexandrian citizenship will have been the aim of the socially ambitious among the Hellenized élites of the Egyptian towns. Some, if not many, of the Alexandrians who owned land in the *chora* and appear in the papyri with Alexandrian titlature will then have been not Alexandrians by origin, but upwardly-mobile metropolitan élites who obtained the Alexandrian citizenship.⁴⁹

The evidence for the main officials or magistrates and their functions is notoriously problematic. In describing the position as it was in the 20s B.C., Strabo listed four 'native *archontes*', all of Ptolemaic origin: the *exegetes*, who was, in a tradition peculiar to Alexandria, the chief magistrate of the city; the *archidikastes* and *hypomnematographos*, who had judicial and notarial functions; and the night-*strategos*, whose title in the papyri is *strategos tes poleos* and who presumably controlled a local watch-cum-firebrigade. Strabo may have singled out these four posts because they were identified as the leading *archai* (*honores*), but the main problem with his description is that it seems confused as regards the distinction between civic and central government offices. This may be partly because the civic officers were subject to royal appointment by the end of the Ptolemaic period, but it must also be a consequence of the nature of Alexandrian citizenship that 'civic' officials are found operating outside the city and in contexts which look more like 'central' administration.⁵⁰ There are other civic officials attested in the first century A.D., including the *kosmetes*, the gymnasiarch, the *agoranomos* and the civic priests such as the *neokoroi* of the great Sarapis and those of Divus Augustus.⁵¹

It has been argued that the magistrates of Alexandria and of the *metropoleis* were popularly elected (i.e. by the *demos*). There is, however, no positive evidence for popular election, or indeed popular voting of any kind, even if public opinion may have been informally expressed on occasion (see below). While the magistrates were almost certainly drawn from the gymnasial group, there is no evidence that they were elected by it. In fact, it is fairly clear that the prefect could exercise ultimate control over the appointment of civic magistrates. The prefect Flaccus is said to have almost ruined the Greek Alexandrian agitator Lampon by appointing him gymnasiarch despite his poverty, and the Trajanic prefect Maximus is alleged to have appointed two favourites as gymnasiarchs for ten-year periods. Judging by the later evidence for the *metropoleis*, it is likely that magistrates were normally nominated by their immediate predecessors in the office, and that these nominations were rubber-stamped by the prefect.⁵² The *gerousia*, since it probably consisted largely of former magistrates, may sometimes have played a role in the nomination of civic officials, as it apparently could do in the case of embassies (see below), but there is no specific evidence. One

⁴⁶ *Gnomon* §§13 and 6; cf. 5, 14, 38, 45. The provision in §13 may recall Athenian practice after the citizenship law of 451/0 B.C. (cf. Plut., *Pericles* 37). Augustan legislation: see n. 31 above.

⁴⁷ Poll-tax: see pp. 112–14 above. Liturgies: Edict of Ti. Julius Alexander, l. 34.

⁴⁸ Pliny, *Ep.* x.5–7, 10. Legionaries: *Gnomon* §55. We do not share the doubts of Delia, op. cit. (n. 35), 39–45.

⁴⁹ See n. 107 below.

⁵⁰ Strabo xvii.1.12; cf. Fraser, op. cit. (n. 7), 96–8;

Jones, op. cit. (n. 24), 474 nn. 8–9; Delia, op. cit. (n. 35), ch. iv; A. Calabi, 'L'ἀρχιδικαστής nei primi tre secoli della dominazione romana', *Aeg.* 32 (1952), 406–24; J. E. G. Whitehorne, 'The hypomnematographus in the Roman period', *Aeg.* 67 (1987), 101–25. See further pp. 117, 125 below.

⁵¹ See Delia, op. cit. (n. 35), ch. iv, App. 5.

⁵² Philo, *Flacc.* 131; *Acta Alex.* vii.ii.30–40. Analogy with *metropoleis*: see p. 122 n. 83 below.

other point worth noting here is that these magistracies were not necessarily annual but were frequently held for a number of years; this too tells against the theory of popular election.⁵³ Basically, then, the Alexandrian magistrates seem to have been a self-selecting and self-reproducing élite — a small group of men, drawn from the gymnasial élite, who nominated themselves and ran the city without the check of a *boule* of their peers.

Patently these magistrates and officials performed many of the functions we would expect of a city with self-administration. As we have seen, they had primary responsibility, albeit under Roman supervision, for access to its citizenship and, within that, to the privileged gymnasial group. Civic officials organized and financed communal life and ceremonies — the gymnasium, the civic cults, the markets and so on. The city apparently had its own finances: Strabo says that the *exegetes* had charge of 'the public services' (*chresima*) of the city; the magistrates must have paid 'crowning' fees and have spent them, and they are known to have supplied oil for the gymnasium; certainly by the early second century A.D. (and perhaps much earlier) Alexandria had an *oikos*, a corporate financial entity, with landed property in the nomes; even in the sensitive realm of food supply it seems that by the mid-second century each district of the city had its own *eutheniarches* (food-supply officer).⁵⁴ Slender though our evidence for the early imperial period is, the *exegetes* has a high profile which must be an indicator of the importance and prestige of the Alexandrian *archai*. By the second century the emergence of a corporate identity in the form of a board of magistrates (*archontes*), although there is no evidence that it was called a *koinon*, is indicated by the occurrence of the title *archiprytanis* (chief presiding officer), the use of the collective term *prytaneis* in addresses to individual magistrates and the '*Kaisareioi* and other *prytaneis*'.⁵⁵

It has been a matter of controversy whether Alexandria enjoyed judicial autonomy, one of the most important indicators of civic self-administration. We think it likely that the *archidikastes* and the *hypomnematographos* provided courts for Alexandrian citizens, and there is evidence for petitions and applications (from the *chora*) directed to the *exegetes* of Alexandria.⁵⁶ According to Strabo the *ethnarchos* (community leader) of the Jewish *politeuma* of Alexandria presided over separate courts for his community, and the *a fortiori* argument that, if the Jews had their own courts, so did the Greeks of Alexandria is a strong one. Alexandrians, it is worth recalling, could not be flogged but only beaten with a flat implement by other Alexandrians, and it seems that they were outside the jurisdiction of local officials, including the *strategoï*, in the nomes.⁵⁷ Part of the difficulty in identifying Alexandrian civic officers with jurisdictional powers springs from the fact that even in the Alexandrian papyri from the very early Roman period, the *archidikastes* has a role and importance which seem more than merely civic, as do the courts over which he presides (the *chrematistai* and *alla kriteria*). We see no obstacle to believing that he was in origin essentially a civic official (as Strabo tells us) and that his high profile, like that of the *exegetes*, was a result of the wider importance and spread of the Alexandrian citizenship throughout Egypt, transcending the civic boundaries. Of course Alexandrians were also subject to the courts of Roman equestrian officials, and the allegations of injustice found in the *Acta Alexandrinorum* suggest that the over-riding judicial powers of these courts was indeed a grievance.⁵⁸

As for communal decision-making, the only positive evidence consists of honorific decrees and the sending of embassies. Honorific decrees were certainly voted by or on behalf of the *polis* of Alexandria. The record, for example, of the audience of an Alexandrian embassy before Augustus and his *consilium* in A.D. 13 begins: 'Alexander (probably the *exegetes*) presented the *psephismata* and said, "The *polis* has sent me . . . to present the *psephismata* . . ."' So too the record of Germanicus' official reception at Alexandria in A.D. 19

⁵³ e.g. *C.Pap.Jud.* II.153.62–6.

⁵⁴ *Exegetes*: Strabo xvii.1.12. Oil: Philo, *De prov.* 46. *Oikos*: *P.Fay.* 87 (A.D. 155); cf. *BGU* IV.1182 (1 B.C.). *Eutheniarchs*: *OGIS* II.705 = *SB* V.8911 (A.D. 158); cf. *BGU* II.578 (A.D. 189); *P.Tebt.* II.397.18–19 = *MChr.* 321 (A.D. 198).

⁵⁵ P. Schubert, 'Observations sur la prytanie en Egypte romaine', *ZPE* 79 (1989), 235–42, shows that before A.D. 200/1 these titles appear only in the Greek *poleis* (i.e. not in the *metropoleis*).

⁵⁶ *Archidikastes*: *BGU* IV.1108 (5 B.C.), 1111 (15 B.C.); cf. n. 50 above. *Exegetes*: e.g. *P.Ryl.* II.119 (A.D. 54–67).

On the courts of the Ptolemaic period, see Fraser, op. cit. (n. 7), 112.

⁵⁷ Jewish courts: Strabo, ap. Jos., *AJ* xiv.117; cf. *C.Pap.Jud.* II, pp. 4–5. Punishment: Philo, *Flacc.* 78. *Strategoï*: *BGU* III.747 = *WChr.* 35 (A.D. 139), a complaint of a *strategos* about Roman, Alexandrian, and veteran *praktoures*.

⁵⁸ *Acta Alex.* ix.ii.8–iii.15; Philo, *Flacc.* 131–4. As the *Lex Irnitana* §85 (J. González, *JRS* 76 (1986), 147–243, at 176) now reveals for Spain, the local jurisdictional powers would in any event be subject to the over-riding powers of the Roman law and its officers.

begins: 'The *exegetes* gave the *imperator* both the *psephismata* . . .'⁵⁹ Presumably the *exegetes* had orchestrated some corporate civic action, but the texts do not reveal who had actually voted the decrees and (in the first case) chosen the envoys.⁶⁰

Certainly there were politically significant meetings on occasion, and these seem often to have taken place in the gymnasium. Philo tells us that the staged 'coronation' of the lunatic Carabas, a calculated insult to Herod Agrippa, took place in the gymnasium, and that Isidorus summoned a meeting there to provoke riots against Flaccus (and was later denounced by Flaccus before 'those in office' and 'the whole *polis*'), and he also notes that the gymnasiarch could and did cancel routine training because of 'civic needs' (*politikai chreiai*).⁶¹ During the prefecture of Flaccus a more informal meeting in the theatre attempted to achieve the installation of statues in the synagogues, and Josephus describes the Alexandrians 'assembling' (*ekklesiazontes*) in the amphitheatre in A.D. 66 to discuss a proposed embassy to Nero.⁶² Other evidence points to a role for the *gerousia*. One account implies that the embassy which went to Rome in A.D. 38 had been chosen from and by the *gerousia*. Similarly, we note, the Jewish embassies which Philo records seem to have been chosen from and by the Jewish *gerousia* which Augustus instituted around A.D. 11 to replace their *ethnarchos*. In another account the Alexandrian Greek 'martyr' Dionysios, bent on a showdown with Flaccus, is advised to consult the *gerontes* first.⁶³ Clearly the gymnasial group, and indeed the *demos* as a whole, could air their opinions at civic gatherings, but there is no specific indication that this amounted to more than informal pressure, even if it was persuasive. The analogy of the *metropoleis*, however, suggests that the gymnasial group, or an age-élite within it, will have been able to pass decrees on behalf of the *polis*. In Alexandria the *gerousia* too probably had this right, which may explain how Germanicus came to be presented with two *psephismata* from the *polis*. One or both of these groups may also have had the right to ratify the membership of embassies and civic grants of Alexandrian citizenship on the proposal of magistrates.

We turn, lastly, to the well-known and fruitless Alexandrian requests for permission to have a *boule* and to the effects of the absence of this institution. In the so-called 'boule'-papyrus, the case, probably presented to Augustus, outlines three functions for a *boule* at Alexandria.⁶⁴ First, to supervise the examination of candidates for the ephebate to prevent evasion of the poll-tax (the reason advanced for Roman ears and pockets) and so that no one unsuitable and 'uncultured' slips through (that is, as a check on the procedures of the responsible civic officials). Second, to prevent individual cases of fiscal maladministration by the *idioslogos* and *praktoreis* (tax-collectors), that is, to defend Alexandrian wealth and fiscal privileges in general. Third, to choose the members of embassies, so that wealthy men do not escape this duty and so that no disreputable people are selected; again we take the first reason to be designed for Roman ears, and the second to be the nub of the case, that is an attempt to limit abuses by factions. The silence of the speaker about the question of the election of magistrates is of a piece with his vagueness about the proposed *boule* itself: it is to be annually chosen and its *grammateus* (secretary) is to submit its *acta* for *euthunai* (scrutiny) annually, but nothing is said about who is to choose it or who will carry out these *euthunai*, nor is a number of *bouleutai* suggested. In fact, one of the main functions of a *boule* at Alexandria would of course, as elsewhere, be to control the nomination and behaviour in office of the magistrates. This delicate point could be taken as understood. The telling detail in the request is precisely the idea of an annually chosen *boule* on the Greek (Athenian) rather than the Roman model; the barely veiled criticism is of the current system of self-selecting magistrates with tenure which could be prolonged.

A similar picture emerges from Claudius' letter of A.D. 41. Two proposals to which Claudius assented were that the *neokoroi* (priests) of the cult of Divus Augustus in Alexandria

⁵⁹ *P.Oxy.* xxv. 2435 verso and recto.

⁶⁰ Any group could, of course, vote a decree (e.g. *WChr.* 112, 6 B.C.) but not on behalf of the *polis*.

⁶¹ Philo, *Flacc.* 36-9, 135-45; *De prov.* 44. Similarly, it was in the gymnasium that M. Antonius staged his crowning of Cleopatra VII and her offspring (the so-called 'Donations of Alexandria'), and that Octavian addressed the *demos* after entering Alexandria (*Plut., M.Ant.* 54.3-6, 80.1). Cf. A. Calderini, *Dizionario dei nomi geografici e topografici dell'Egitto greco-romano* 1.1 (1935), 107.

⁶² Philo, *Flacc.* 41; *Jos., BJ* 11.490-2.

⁶³ Embassies: *Acta Alex.*, III; Philo, *Leg.* 229, 240; cf. *Jos., AJ* xviii.257. Replacement of the ethnarch: Philo, *Flacc.* 73 (cf. Strabo, ap. *Jos., AJ* xiv.117). Consultation: *Acta Alex.* 11.ii.35-6 (taken by El-Abadi, op. cit. (n. 39), to indicate individuals rather than the *gerousia* as a body, which he thinks had a purely social function).

⁶⁴ *Acta Alex.* 1 = *C.Pap.Jud.* 11.150 (the argument for the proposed date of 20/19 B.C. is not strong; the text might better be dated around 10/9 B.C., the date of *P.Oxy.* XLII.3020).

should be elected by lot, as happened with the same cult at Canopus, and that the *politikai archai* (civic magistracies) should be made triennial in order, as Claudius himself says, to reduce abuses through fear of more regular *euthunai*.⁶⁵ Both proposals can again be interpreted as attempts to limit the scope for abuses of office, and again it seems that the request for a *boule* was presented as a separate matter with no overt suggestion that it might take over the nomination of magistrates.

Our argument, in short, is that the absence of a *boule* (and an *ekklesia*) in the early imperial period and the requests for a *boule* do not indicate that Alexandria did not enjoy self-administration. Alexandria, like most other cities, was run by an essentially self-selecting and self-perpetuating wealthy élite which was frequently split by intense personal and group rivalries.⁶⁶ The main peculiarity of Alexandria was the way in which, in the absence of the normal institution of a *boule*, this élite operated and worked out its internal conflicts. In comparison with other Greek cities the ruling élite was unusually narrow and closed and unfettered by formal institutions of peer control. The *gerousia*, if it had only 173 members who were mostly former magistrates, can only have reinforced the concentration of power and influence. Disputes within the élite thus tended to involve the Roman authorities and provoke intervention, often intensifying the acrimony between the rival cliques who alternately gained and lost the favour of successive prefects and emperors, and exacerbating the existing deep ethnic and social tensions in the city.

This is the context in which the Alexandrian embassies and petitions to first-century emperors, including those requesting the establishment of a *boule*, must be interpreted. Undoubtedly the Alexandrians desired a *boule* because it was, in the Graeco-Roman world, the most symbolically important institution of civic self-administration. On the practical level, however, the argument was not about the transfer of power from the Roman administration to civic authorities, but about the shortcomings of a system which did not have a *boule*. The groups behind the petitions to Augustus and Claudius apparently saw a *boule* as the means to create a wider and rotating élite, more on the traditional Greek model, in the hope it would control factional infighting and hence limit Roman intervention. The Romans, however, preferred to stick with the system of a small self-perpetuating élite, perhaps partly because it was more in tune with Roman traditions, and probably mainly because they did not believe that the feuding and public violence, for which Alexandria had long been notorious, would be tamed by a *boule* which might merely furnish another stage for it. After the refusals of Augustus and Claudius, the Alexandrian élite seems to have become resigned to the existing system. There were some consolation prizes: Claudius was liberal with grants of Roman citizenship, and a series of remarkable appointments under Claudius and Nero culminated under the latter with the prefecture of Egypt being held by two Alexandrians — the Greek Ti. Claudius Balbillus and the Jew Ti. Julius Alexander, representatives of different sections of the Alexandrian élite. And the career of Balbillus, we note, emphasizes that Alexandrians were not excluded from the network of aristocracies of the great eastern cities — the phenomenon which explains Antiochenes and Tyrians appearing on Alexandrian embassies.⁶⁷

ii. The 'Greek' cities

The evidence for the status and administration of the 'Greek' cities suggests both important similarities to and contrasts with Alexandria. Of Naukratis we know little except that its laws (probably originally Milesian) were transmitted to the Hadrianic foundation of Antinoopolis. A text of the second century may be addressed to its *archontes* and *demos*; if so the absence of a *boule* is significant (and the *demos* is not an attribute of the *metropoleis* until the third century). The Ptolemaic constitution of Ptolemais included a *boule* which survived through the Roman period and had a rotating membership and a college of *prytaneis*,

⁶⁵ *C.Pap.Jud.* II. 153.60–72.

⁶⁶ For the existence of factions at Alexandria under Ptolemy XII Auletes, see Dio of Prusa, *Or.* xxxii.70.

⁶⁷ Balbillus: *Acta Alex.*, p. 131; cf. n. 98 below. Alexander: V. Burr, *Tiberius Iulius Alexander*, Antiquitas 1

(1955); E. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (2nd edn, rev. G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. D. Goodman, 1973–87), I, 456–7, III, 815. Embassies: *Acta Alex.* VIII; x; cf. *P.Oxy.* XLII.3023.

suggesting the Greek rather than the Roman model; in A.D. 160 it was concerned with its long-established right to appoint *neokoroi* at the temple of Ptolemy I Soter in Koptos. Of Antinoopolis, founded in A.D. 130, we know rather more. The fact that its citizens are called *Neoi Hellenes* is striking, the more so given the rarity of usage of the term *Hellen*. It too, had a citizen body (to which veterans and Arsinoite Hellenes contributed) organized in tribes and demes, and there is some evidence that some of its citizens did not live, or even maintain a residence there; if that is so there may be a significant comparison to be made with the Alexandrian citizenship which was obtainable by those whose *origo* was in the *chora*. It was endowed with *archontes* and with a *boule* with rotating prytanies — an organization again based on the Greek model. The list of privileges enjoyed by its citizens included a *siteresion* (grain-dole), exemption from poll-tax, and freedom from liability to liturgic service elsewhere. With all this, it has nevertheless been suggested that its constitution was basically of the Roman municipal type.⁶⁸

iii. *The metropoleis*

We turn now to the Roman development of the *metropoleis* into the *poleis* (cities) of Egypt, drawing on the model of Alexandria. We examine first the definition and privileges of the metropolite group and of the élite gymnasial group within it, then the officials of the *metropoleis* and the areas of self-administration, and lastly the extent and nature of communal decision-making. The first step in the development of the *metropoleis* was the creation of a distinct group called 'metropolitites' who were marked off from 'villagers' by the privilege of a lower rate of poll-tax, which also applied to their slaves.⁶⁹ From the mid-first century A.D. onwards a system of registration for metropolitites similar to that for Alexandrian citizens can be seen in operation: the *metropoleis* were formally divided into numbered or named *amphoda* (districts); registers for each *amphodon* were kept by local liturgical officials called, in different *metropoleis*, *amphodarches*, *amphodogrammateus*, or *grammateis poleois*; for boys approaching fourteen years of age (or slaves) to be entered in the metropolite registers, an application attesting that both parents (or the owners) were of metropolite status had to be submitted for examination (*epikrisis*) by a commission of local officials — at Arsinoe two former gymnasiarchs, at Oxyrhynchus two current magistrates.⁷⁰ All this was ultimately subject to Roman control, normally in the person of the local *strategos* or *basilikogrammateus*.⁷¹ Metropolite status was clearly intended to be hereditary and exclusive. The name of the group and their registration by *amphoda* implies that their *origo*, in the Roman sense of hereditary place of registration at the census, was the *metropolis*, and the group may originally have been defined as those registered as resident in the *metropoleis* in the first Roman census of Egypt, whenever that was held. Certainly 'metropolitites' had been defined as a group distinct from 'those from the nome' (i.e. villagers) by A.D. 1, the date of the second dedication from Tentyra

⁶⁸ Naukratis: Bowman, op. cit. (n. 35), 11; *P.Oxy.* III.473 = *WChr.* 33 should be referred to Naukratis rather than Oxyrhynchus, see N. Lewis, 'Notationes legentis', *BASP* 18 (1981), 78–80. Ptolemais: G. Plaumann, *Ptolemais in Oberägypten* (1910), 70–88; Bowman, op. cit. (n. 35), 11–14; *SB* VI.9016. Antinoopolis: M. Zahrt, 'Antinoopolis in Ägypten: die hadrianische Gründung und ihre Privilegien in der neueren Forschung', *ANRW* II.10.1 (1988), 669–706; citizenship: E. Kühn, *Antinoopolis, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Hellenismus im römischen Ägypten* (1913), 90–1; *P.Diog.*, pp. 19–33; H. I. Bell, 'Antinoopolis, a Hadrianic foundation in Egypt', *JRS* 30 (1940), 133–47; cf. Modrzejewski, op. cit. (n. 32), 255–6; *boule*: Bowman, op. cit. (n. 35), 14–15; privileges: P. Van Minnen and F. J. A. Hoogendijk, 'Drei Kaiserbriefe Gordians III an die Bürger von Antinoopolis', *Tyche* 2 (1987), 41–74, esp. 71–4; *siteresion*: *P.Oxy.* XL.2941–2; *P.Mich.* XII.629; municipal constitution: H. Braunert, 'Griechische und römische Komponenten im Stadtrecht von Antinoopolis', *JfP* 14 (1962), 73–88.

⁶⁹ See pp. 112–14 above. The earliest firm attestation of a lower rate for metropolitites comes from *P.Oxy.* II.288 of A.D. 22–5, but we believe this privilege was intrinsic to definition of the group. On the Roman definition of the metropolite and gymnasial groups, see F. Zucker, 'Verfahrensweise in der Einführung gewisser Einrichtungen des Augustus in Ägypten', *RIDA* 8 (1961), 155–64.

⁷⁰ We compress and simplify much evidence and modern comment. See e.g. C. A. Nelson, *Status Declarations in Roman Egypt*, *Am.Stud.Pap.* 19 (1979), ch. 11; P. Mertens, *Les services de l'état civil et le contrôle de la population à Oxyrhynchus au IIIe siècle de notre ère* (1958). On *amphoda* see e.g. H. Rink, *Straßen- und Viertelnamen von Oxyrhynchus* (Dissertation, Giessen, 1924); S. Daris, 'I quartieri di Arsinoe in età romana', *Aeg.* 61 (1981), 143–54.

⁷¹ The first- and early second-century applications for *epikrisis* from Oxyrhynchus are addressed jointly to these officials and the local magistrates.

quoted in our introduction. The system of registration by *amphoda* definitively established under Nero was almost certainly just a consolidation of similar earlier arrangements.⁷²

Each *metropolis*, like Alexandria, also had an élite male group defined by membership of the gymnasium, which was obtained by admission to the ephebate.⁷³ This too was essentially a Roman novelty. Gymnasia and gymnasial officials had existed under the Ptolemies, but the Romans changed their nature and function: gymnasia became the urban focus of Hellenization and local self-administration. Village gymnasia, probably quite common under the Ptolemies, were closed down — the latest attestation of one, from the Heracleopolite nome, dates to A.D. 2.⁷⁴ Only a *metropolis* could now have a gymnasium, and indeed it had to have one. It was a symbol of being a proper *polis*, a term which now, unlike Ptolemaic practice, was never used of any village, whatever its size or amenities. The gymnasial group seems to have been definitively constituted at Oxyrhynchus in A.D. 4/5 when special registers of its membership were drawn up; these lists were revised under Nero and again under Vespasian, until under Domitian a permanent rolling system of *epikrisis* (examination) was established. The formation of the group probably followed a similar pattern and chronology in other *metropoleis*: documents from Hermopolis Magna imply that registration of this group there went back to the reign of Augustus, and Neronian revisions of the lists are attested at Arsinoe.⁷⁵ To enter the group at Oxyrhynchus after A.D. 4/5 by being accepted as an ephebe, it had to be shown that direct ancestors on both sides had been recorded in the last register, and preferably in that of A.D. 4/5. Members of the gymnasial group were also, like other metropolitans, registered by *amphoda* for fiscal purposes, a process which one document may attest as early as 16/15 B.C.; the same document also refers to 'the mistake' of the records before 25/4 B.C., perhaps a significant date for the establishment of metropolitans registers by 'district'.⁷⁶ The hereditary and exclusive nature of this group, clearly intended by the entry requirements, is also evident from its official titles: at Hermopolis Magna and Oxyrhynchus it was the banal 'those from the gymnasium', but at Heracleopolis it was 'the *katoikoi*' and at Arsinoe 'the *katoikoi* from the total of the 6,475 Hellenic men in the Arsinoite'. These titles suggest that in first defining this group the Romans may have used the membership lists (if they existed) of the gymnasia in the Ptolemaic *metropoleis*, or alternatively the registers of holders of catoecic land. But the new ideology is clear enough: the gymnasial group was meant to comprise the descendants of the original Greek military settlers (*katoikoi*) of the Ptolemies, whose culture centred on the Greek and urban-based institution of the gymnasium. The Arsinoite title is particularly telling with its specific claim to Greekness and its Roman innovation of a nominal *numerus clausus* of *katoikoi* advertising the ideal of hereditary exclusivity. Again we see Roman simplification and exploitation of ethnic labelling. Within the primary model of 'Hellenic' Alexandria above the 'Egyptian' *chora* they created in the *chora* an urban-based 'Hellenic' gymnasial group above the 'Egyptian' villagers (and the indeterminate or mixed other metropolitans).

Various items of evidence, such as the contents of a fiscal register of A.D. 72/3 for an Arsinoite *amphodon*, and a pair of *epikrisis* applications of A.D. 127/8 from Oxyrhynchus, show that the gymnasial group was a socio-political élite within, not outside, the wider metropolitans group.⁷⁷ What other privileges, apart from the lower rate of poll-tax, the metropolitans group enjoyed is not altogether clear. The gymnasial élite must have contained most holders of the newly privatized and fiscally advantageous catoecic land, and possibly ownership of it was initially, at least in theory, restricted to them, although this is doubtful and certainly did not last.⁷⁸ The metropolitans generally will have been best-placed to purchase state

⁷² *P.Oxy.* II.288 seems to attest an *epikrisis* in A.D. 11/12; cf. Nelson, op. cit. (n. 70), 23 n. 70; see also the discussion below of *P.Oxy.* IV.711. Rink and Daris, op. cit. (n. 70), discuss the origin of *amphoda*.

⁷³ We do not accept the view of J. E. G. Whitehorne, 'The ephebate and the gymnasial class in Egypt', *BASP* 19 (1982), 171–84, that most attestations of ephebes in documents from the *chora* in fact relate to citizens of Alexandria.

⁷⁴ H. Braunert, *Die Binnenwanderung. Studien zur Sozialgeschichte Ägyptens in der Ptolemäer- und Kaiserzeit* (1964), 220.

⁷⁵ See O. Montevecchi, 'Nerone e l'Egitto. Postille', *Par. Pass.* 30 (1975), 48–58, at 51–2, 58; idem, 'L'*epikrisis* dei greco-egizi', *Proc. XIV Int. Congr. Pap.* (1975),

227–32; Nelson, op. cit. (n. 70), chs III–IV. Note that an *epikrisis* at Arsinoe in A.D. 37 is now attested in *P.Congr.* XV. 13.

⁷⁶ *P.Oxy.* IV.711.

⁷⁷ *SPP* IV, pp. 58–83; *P.Oxy.* XII.1452.

⁷⁸ cf. Braunert, op. cit. (n. 74), 131–4. The old idea that ownership of catoecic land conferred 'catoecic' status has been demolished: see Braunert, op. cit. (n. 74), 249 n. 224. Although separate registers of this land and its owners were still kept (see *P.Köln* V.227 (A.D. 12/13) with discussion), and sales still took the traditional form of cessions, the contracts no longer mentioned the status of the purchaser (e.g. *P.Mich.* V.252, A.D. 25/6). Villagers owning catoecic land are also now known (e.g. *P.Gen.* II. 91, A.D. 50/1, Philadelphia).

land auctioned off by the Romans, but it is unclear whether throughout Egypt they enjoyed privileges like the special lower rate of tax on their garden-land attested in the Mendesian nome. We would also expect metropolitans to have been exempt from village liturgies on the person.⁷⁹ Both metropolitans in general and the gymnasial élite in particular benefited from the amenities in the *metropoleis* and the gymnasia which were provided on a greater scale as the local administration gradually became more and more municipalized. The gymnasial group, we will shortly see, also had special political privileges.

A fairly standard structure of municipal magistrates and liturgic officials was introduced in each *metropolis*, including the posts of *exegetes*, *kosmetes*, gymnasiarch, and *agoranomos*, and various civic priests and officials responsible for controlling and registering membership of the local metropolitans and gymnasial groups.⁸⁰ Although *agoranomoi* and gymnasiarchs (some also with the title of *kosmetes*) had existed in the *chora* in Ptolemaic times, the nature and functions of these posts were altered, and the most striking innovation was the introduction of metropolitans *exegetai*, of whom the earliest known example is of 5/4 B.C. from Oxyrhynchus.⁸¹ The basic qualification for holding office was presumably membership of the gymnasial group. The minimum age for office-holding was probably twenty-two/three, similar to that in the cities of Bithynia. There is no evidence for a formal wealth qualification, but new magistrates had to pay a heavy 'crowning' fee on entering office which, along with the other expenses incurred in office, acted in effect as a timocratic bar.⁸² The expensive posts, such as *kosmetes*, seem normally to have been annual, but tenure was not necessarily limited to one year. From various documents it is clear that these magistrates and officials were not popularly elected, but were nominated, if possible from volunteers, by the current (and perhaps past) holders of the post for ratification by the *strategos*, who could decide whom to appoint in disputed cases.⁸³ It is reasonable to suppose that the structure of metropolitans officials had been based on the Alexandrian model (omitting, for obvious reasons, the *archidikastes*, *hypomnematographos*, and *strategos tes poleos*), and we therefore suspect that the *exegetes*, following the tradition peculiar to Alexandria, counted as the chief magistrate of each *metropolis*.⁸⁴ In the second century we find unspecified groups of metropolitans officials acting publicly under the joint title of 'the *archontes*' (magistrates), but, unlike their Alexandrian counterparts (at least of the later second century), there is no evidence that they formed any formal 'board' or *koinon* (association) before the Severan reforms.⁸⁵ In the mid-second

⁷⁹ Taxes: *P.Ryl.* II.216 (late second century A.D.). Liturgies: not specified by Lewis, op. cit. (n. 18), 72-3, although in n. 42 he cites the reverse rule that villagers were not liable to metropolitans liturgies.

⁸⁰ General: Jones, op. cit. (n. 24), ch. XI; Jouguet, op. cit. (n. 5); F. Oertel, *Die Liturgie. Studien zur ptolemäischen und kaiserlichen Verwaltung Ägyptens* (1917); F. Preisigke, *Städtisches Beamtenwesen im römischen Ägypten* (1903). Specific: E. L. De Kock, *Die kosmeten in Ägypten* (1948); B. A. Van Groningen, *Le gymnasiarque des métropoles de l'Égypte romaine* (1924); M. G. Raschke, 'The office of agoranomos in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt', *Akt. XIII Int. Congr. Pap.* (1974), 349-56. The earliest known reference to (some of) these officials as *archontes* (magistrates) occurs in *P.Mich.* XII.656 (mid-first century A.D., Arsinoe).

⁸¹ *P.Oslo* II.26.

⁸² Membership of the gymnasial group is implicit for gymnasiarchs, *kosmetai* and so on; cf. Bowman, op. cit. (n. 35), 30 (post A.D. 201). Age: see p. 124 below. Crowning fees: e.g. *P.Ryl.* II.77; cf. *P.Amh.* II.70 (costs of gymnasiarchy).

⁸³ See in particular *P.Ryl.* II.77 (A.D. 192, Hermopolis Magna). We do not agree with the interpretation of this text by A. H. M. Jones, 'The election of metropolitan magistrates in Egypt', *JEA* 24 (1938), 65-72, nor with the argument for popular election which he bases on it; cf. n. 93 below. See also N. Lewis, 'The metropolitan gymnasiarchy, heritable and salable. (A re-examination of CPR VII 4)', *ZPE* 51 (1983), 85-91, on two cases of A.D. 156 which show that the gymnasiarchy could be held for a number of years, that heirs of deceased gymnasiarchs were expected to fulfil the office, although heirs of gymnasiarchs-designate could sell their 'turn' to other

enthusiastic volunteers(!), and that the regulations for office-holding were subject to rulings by the prefect (cf. the ruling of Marcus Aurelius on the appointment of *exegetai* cited in *P.Ryl.* II.77.43-4).

⁸⁴ Some scholars have held that the gymnasiarch was the chief magistrate of Alexandria and of the *metropoleis*: see the works cited in n. 80; cf. Delia, op. cit. (n. 35), 109-13. We find this implausible; this is not the place for a full discussion, but note that Strabo XVII.1.12 puts the Alexandrian *exegetes*, on whom the metropolitans *exegetai* were modelled (cf. n. 88 below), at the head of his list of *archai* and does not mention the gymnasiarch, and that *P.Ryl.* II.77 shows that at Hermopolis the magistracy (*arche*) of *exegetes*, though less burdensome financially, was thought 'greater' than that of *kosmetes*.

⁸⁵ Joint public action of *archontes*: *P.Amh.* II.70 (c. A.D. 115) and *P.Ryl.* II.77 (A.D. 192), from Hermopolis Magna; *P.Oxf.* 2.ii (A.D. 141), from Arsinoe (with note to l. 27); cf. the less 'official' references in (e.g.) *P.Mich.* XII.656 (mid-first century A.D., Arsinoe); *P.Giss.* 19 = *C.Pap.Jud.* II.436 and *P.Amh.* II.135 (early second century A.D., Hermopolis); *P.Oxy.* VIII.1117 (c. A.D. 187, Oxyrhynchus). Although a 'group' of men sharing the burden of a single office could be called a *koinon*, such as the *koinon* of *kosmetai* in *P.Ryl.* II.86 (A.D. 195, Hermopolis), this is a quite separate matter. No *koinon* in the sense of a 'board' of the holders of the different metropolitans magistracies is known until April 201, when *P.Oxy.* 1.54 = *WChr.* 34 reveals a *koinon* of *archontes* at Oxyrhynchus; this, however, we interpret as a temporary arrangement connected with the introduction of a *boule*. No metropolitans *prytaneis* are attested before 201; cf. Schubert, op. cit. (n. 55).

century, however, the magistrates of Arsinoe and of Oxyrhynchus are known to have changed the designation of their *metropoleis* in their titulature from simple toponyms to 'of the city of the Arsinoites' and 'of the city of the Oxyrhynchites', which implies that they now saw themselves as the authorities of proper civic communities.⁸⁶

Self-administration of the *metropoleis* is better attested in the richer documentation of the second century A.D., but while civic self-consciousness clearly grew and metropolite officials acquired more responsibilities in that century, the process certainly went back to the Julio-Claudian period. From the beginning metropolite officials regulated membership of the metropolite and gymnasial groups, and the *agoranomoi* were turned into notarial officers. When the state record-offices were reorganized at the end of the first century, their liturgic keepers (the *bibliophylakes*) were drawn from ex-magistrates, and by the later second century ex-magistrates were appointed (in place of but still under the *strategos*) to validate the opening of Greek wills.⁸⁷ Local officials were responsible for the maintenance of existing buildings and the general running of civic cults and amenities, including baths, markets, and, above all, the gymnasium. In Hermopolis Magna around A.D. 62 the *exegetes* is known to have organized a grain-dole for the gymnasial group, which may have been a response to a particular emergency, but by A.D. 153/4 Arsinoe was appointing special officials responsible for its *euthenia* (food supply), and by A.D. 199 Oxyrhynchus had an annual set of eutheniarchs.⁸⁸ Around the same time comes the earliest evidence for a pair of ex-magistrates at Oxyrhynchus issuing seed-corn (again in place of but still under the *strategos*) to tenants of state land.⁸⁹ The growth of civic rivalry and the spreading ideology of euergetism led to a boom in new building projects in the second century, the period when most of the fine civic monuments of Hermopolis Magna were erected.⁹⁰ The background is neatly evoked in a letter of A.D. 127/8 from the prefect to Oxyrhynchus:

Flavius Titianus to the *polis* of the Oxyrhynchites, greetings. I congratulate you on your plan to beautify your *patris* (homeland), and I permit you to fit out the baths from the funds already collected, as you mention, and from those which may be contributed [by any individual seeking ?] honour(?). I pray you are well. (Date).⁹¹

This illustrates the fact that metropolite officials were in all their operations subject to the ultimate control of the governor, in Egypt often mediated through his local representative, the *strategos*. This was, of course, the case with the other (non-'free') cities of the Roman Empire, and more specifically this letter reflects the general imperial concern, best-known from Pliny's special mission in Bithynia in c. A.D. 110–13, that cities should not be allowed to bankrupt themselves through over-ambitious building programmes. It also shows that *metropoleis* already had their own finances, derived essentially from the private wealth of the local élite and sometimes external benefactors. Regular expenditures were presumably met from the 'crowning' fees of magistrates and their obligations in office, such as the supply of oil to the gymnasium by the gymnasiarchs. Extra expenditure depended on voluntary contributions, as mentioned in this letter and attested in other texts, including one from Oxyrhynchus which

⁸⁶ See J. F. Oates, 'Ptolemais Euergetis and the city of the Arsinoites', *BASP* 12 (1975), 113–20 (for the first-century designation of 'Arsinoe' as the *polis* of the Ptolemaeans' see p. 124 n. 95 below); D. Hagedorn, 'Ὁξυρύνχων πόλις und ἡ Ὁξυρύνχων πόλις', *ZPE* 12 (1973), 277–92, with E.-M. Grocholl, 'Bemerkungen zur Datierung von Bezeichnungen und Epitheta der Stadt Oxyrhynchos', *ZPE* 85 (1991), 268–70.

⁸⁷ See W. E. H. Cockle, 'State archives in Graeco-Roman Egypt from 30 B.C. to the reign of Septimius Severus', *JEA* 70 (1984), 106–22; Wallace, *op. cit.* (n. 23), *passim*; R. Taubenschlag, *The Law of Greco-Roman Egypt in the Light of the Papyri*, 332 B.C.–640 A.D. (2nd edn, 1955), 167–71. For wills see *P.Mert.* II.75 (A.D. 185) with commentary.

⁸⁸ Hermopolis: B. Kraut, 'Seven Heidelberg papyri concerning the office of exegetes', *ZPE* 55 (1984), 167–90 (now *P.Heid.* IV.336–342, plus 305); cf. Strabo's statement that the *exegetes* of Alexandria had charge of the

chresima (services) of the city. Arsinoe: *P.Tebt.* II.397.14–15, 27–8 = *MChr.* 321. Oxyrhynchus: *P.Oxy.* VI.908 = *WChr.* 426. The *siteresion* at Antinoopolis (n. 68 above) may have provided a model to emulate.

⁸⁹ *P.Oxy.* X.1262 and XLIX.3474 (A.D. 197); cf. *P.Oxy.* LVII, pp. 99–104. *P.Amh.* II.79 (c. A.D. 186, Hermopolis Magna) also implies some administration of grain and land.

⁹⁰ See A. Lukaszewicz, *Les édifices publics dans les villes de l'Égypte romaine: problèmes administratifs et financiers* (1986); A. K. Bowman, 'Public buildings in Roman Egypt', *JRA* 5 (1992), 495–503; D. M. Bailey, 'Classical architecture in Roman Egypt', in M. Henig (ed.), *Architecture and Architectural Sculpture in the Roman Empire* (1990), 121–37; idem, *Excavations at El-Ashmunein IV. Hermopolis Magna, Buildings of the Roman Period* (1991).

⁹¹ *P.Oxy.* XLIII.3088.

records an impressive number of large contributions made over two months around A.D. 169–73.⁹²

We come lastly to the question of communal decision-making in the *metropoleis*. The first points are negative: no *metropolis* had a *demos*, a *boule*, or a *gerousia* before the Severan reforms, and, as we have seen, metropolitane officials were not elected, but were nominated by their predecessors for appointment by the *strategos*.⁹³ On the positive side, however, honours were voted, petitions were framed, and embassies were dispatched in the name of *metropoleis*. The best evidence relates to Arsinoe, and reveals, we think, the group who took these communal decisions. We quote first the end of Nero's reply to an embassy from Arsinoe apparently sent to offer congratulations on his accession:

—] Out of the two remaining matters, I have declined both the temple of me, since it is to gods alone that this honour is rightly awarded by men, and the gold crown which you sent me as a gift, since I do not wish to burden you at the beginning of my principate. Whatever (rights) are held by you, the six thousand four hundred and seventy-five, which you have received from the emperors before me[—] both communally among you all and on the part of each individual, to preserve you inviolate and undisturbed, just as the god my father decided; and I commend and accept your testimony regarding all (the rights) which he conferred on the *polis* and on the six thousand four hundred and seventy-five. (Names of ambassadors).⁹⁴

It is striking that this *metropolis* had already under Claudius (at least) acquired the 'polis' habit of direct petitioning of the emperor for communal privileges, sweetened by the offering of honours. Perhaps the unknown requests to Nero on this occasion sparked off the revisions of registers of gymnasial groups and the changes to the system of *amphoda* and their officials which we know took place in Middle Egypt in the next few years.

Nero's letter implies that it was the 6,475 at Arsinoe, that is the gymnasial group, who formed the politically active élite of the metropolitane body, but evidence that actual voting may have been restricted within the gymnasial group comes from the texts of dedications (probably of statues) such as the following:

To Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus imperator, the saviour and benefactor of the world, the *polis* of the Ptolemaeans (i.e. Arsinoe) through the six thousand four hundred and seventy and all those who had become ephebes in year <1>2 of Tiberius Claudius ... (i.e. A.D. 51/2).⁹⁵

The ephebate was entered at the age of fourteen, so the sub-group specified here ('all those ...') consisted of men whose minimum age was twenty-two/three. Since in the cities of Bithynia Augustus had reduced the minimum age for office-holding to twenty-two, we would suggest that he had laid down a similar minimum age for office-holding in the *metropoleis* of Egypt.⁹⁶ The separate mention of this age-group in these public inscriptions implies that they were the group to whom the actual voting of honours and the like was formally restricted. Although the male members of the gymnasium aged twenty-two/three or over must have been about three times more numerous than those aged from fourteen to twenty-two, they were probably a minority of all metropolitane males, and so they look, as a group, like a sort of proto-'council'.⁹⁷ It may be that new texts will some day help to clarify the composition and role in the *metropoleis* of this group.

We hope that this selective survey of the evidence is sufficient to demonstrate that the Roman municipalization of the *metropoleis* of Egypt did not begin with Septimius Severus but

⁹² *P.Coll.Youtie* 1.28; cf. *P.Oxy.* XVII.2127 (late second century A.D.); *P.Amh.* II.64.1–9 (A.D. 107, Hermopolis).

⁹³ *P.Oxy.* III.473 = *WChr.* 33, which mentions a *demos*, does not relate to Oxyrhynchus (cf. n. 68 above). As its editors saw, *P.Ryl.* II.77.32–47 (cf. n. 83 above) is a copy of a record of proceedings before a *strategos*, not of a municipal meeting, and 'the men from the city' who are present and shout out are just interested or curious parties who have attended this public hearing. Note, however, that communal votes (*psephismata*) of honours to former magistrates are attested: e.g. *CPR* VII.4.13–14 (cf. n. 83 above).

⁹⁴ *SB* XII.11012, with *BL* VII.224.

⁹⁵ *I.Fay.* III.147 (note that 'the 6,475' of the papyri appear in inscriptions as 'the 6,470'); cf. *I.Fay.* I.25; *JGR* I.1125 = *SB* I.4277. A separate study of these texts by Rathbone is in preparation and will explain more fully the interpretation adopted here, including the emendation of 'year <1>2'.

⁹⁶ Pliny, *Ep.* x.79.1–2, reduced from the minimum age of thirty laid down by the *Lex Pompeia*.

⁹⁷ A rough calculation based on Hombert and Préaux, *op. cit.* (n. 29), 157–9.

under Augustus with the creation of the metropolite and gymnasial groups as hereditary 'Hellenic' landowning élites. Already in the Julio-Claudian period the *metropoleis* were to a significant degree functioning and behaving like the Greek *poleis* of other eastern provinces, and by the later second century they were achieving comparable monumental ambitions and administrative responsibilities.

iv. *Cities, metropoleis and the chora*

The municipalization of Egypt which began under Augustus was closely linked with developments in the overall structure of the administration of the province. Again we sketch an outline to draw attention to the main issues. The relationship of Alexandria to Egypt, to begin with, was changed from the basic model of royal capital of the kingdom to, initially, that of city (*polis*) and administratively dependent territory (*chora*). From annexation through the first century A.D. the Romans relied heavily on Alexandrian citizens to administer the province. Particularly striking and unusual (in comparison with other provinces) is their employment in what either became or were from the start equestrian posts. In the former category Alexandrians are attested as *epistrategos* of the Thebaid initially under Augustus, and apparently as High Priest and as *dioiketes* in the Julio-Claudian period; in the latter category individual Alexandrians of equestrian status are known under Claudius and Nero as prefect, *epistrategos* of the Thebaid, *iuridicus*, and *idioslogos*.⁹⁸ Other central posts held by Alexandrians were controller of customs-duties (*arabarches*), a post sometimes held by Roman *equites*, and controller of allotments of catocic land (*ho epi ton katalochismon*), while civic officials such as the *hypomnematographos* and the *archidikastes*, whose office may temporarily have become a procuratorial post under Hadrian, and his subordinates (*chrematistai*) continued to have a judicial and notarial role outside Alexandria.⁹⁹ Above all, however, the key office of *strategos*, the direct representative of the prefect in each nome, was in the first century A.D. monopolized by Alexandrians, and should perhaps be regarded as an Alexandrian liturgy.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, the post of *basilikogrammateus* (royal scribe), the deputy of the *strategos* in each nome, was in the first century normally held by Alexandrians. The numerical involvement of the Alexandrian élite can be estimated roughly: since there were about forty nomes, average tenure of the post was three years and re-appointment was rare, over a thirty-year period some four hundred Alexandrian citizens must have held the post of *strategos* alone, and we must allow also for Alexandrian *basilikogrammateis* and holders of other posts in the *chora*. The effect of this policy on the *chora* is illustrated by the dedications from Tentyra. The Romans, through application of the *polis-chora* model to Alexandria and Egypt, set up a new system of direct centralized administration which helped to break the previous local structures of power.

In the *metropoleis*, meanwhile, new privileged civic groups had been created along with the first elements of civic self-administration. We would expect these groups to have had to pay for their privileges by playing a role in the administration of the nomes. Admittedly collection of direct taxes on land from the community and the provision of local justice, functions which elsewhere in the Empire were typically devolved onto local leaders, remained in Egypt

⁹⁸ *Epistrategos*: Ptolemaios son of Herakleides, probably an Alexandrian, in 20 B.C., the period when Strabo (xvii.1.13) says the official was concerned with 'unimportant matters'; from some date before 4 B.C. the post regained importance and was held thereafter by a Roman *eques*; cf. Thomas, op. cit. (n. 15). High Priest: established as an equestrian post under Hadrian according to M. Stead, 'The High Priest of Alexandria and all Egypt', *Proc. XVI Int. Congr. Pap.* (1981), 411-18; held by the Alexandrian Ti. Claudius Balbillus probably before he held equestrian posts under Claudius (we are not convinced by the arguments of K. J. Rigsby, 'On the High Priest of Egypt', *BASP* 22 (1985), 279-89). *Dioiketes*: most of the *dioiketai* attested before Hadrian's creation of a procuratorial post of this title are minor nome officials, but Claudius Herakleides in *P.Fouad* 21 (A.D. 63) looks like an Alexandrian with a more important role; cf. Hagedorn, op. cit. (n. 15). Individuals: Ti. Claudius

Balbillus, prefect A.D. 55-9; Ti. Julius Alexander, *epistrategos* A.D. 42, prefect A.D. 66-9; Norbanus Ptolemaios, *iuridicus* and *idioslogos* A.D. 63; Julius Lysimachos, *idioslogos* A.D. 69 (possibly his son too in A.D. 88); cf. the works cited in nn. 14, 15, and 67 above. Other Alexandrians as yet unrecognized may lurk in the *fasti*.

⁹⁹ *Arabarches*: J. Lesquier, *L'armée romaine d'Égypte d'Auguste à Dioclétien* (1918), 421-7; cf. Pflaum, op. cit. (n. 15), 1, 526. In charge of *katalochismoi*: cf. L. C. Youtie, *ZPE* 38 (1980), 273-4. *Hypomnematographos* and *archidikastes*: see nn. 50, 56 above. The list of known *archidikastai* in *P.Theon.*, App. B (with additions in *ZPE* 46 (1982), 224), reveals four holders under Hadrian with previous equestrian commands, but none such are known later, and Alexandrians, some apparently without Roman citizenship and therefore not *equites*, reappear.

¹⁰⁰ See the works cited in n. 17 above.

primarily the responsibility of the centrally appointed *strategoï*. It seems likely, however, that the metropolites were intended to play a significant role in the new liturgic system, and especially, since private landownership in the nomes had been developed mainly to their advantage, in the performance of duties such as those of *praktor* (tax-collector) which required a relatively high property-census. Certainly the *praktōres* responsible for collecting the poll-tax and the trade-taxes from metropolites were always themselves metropolites. The situation in the nomes is less clear, but our impression (there is need of a full and proper survey) is that in the Oxyrhynchite nome most *praktōres* and *sitologoi* (grain clerks) were metropolites, although in the Arsinoite nome several of the earliest attested liturgic officials were certainly villagers.¹⁰¹ We suspect that these fiscal liturgies were supposed to be filled by metropolites but that there were no hard and fast rules which automatically excluded richer villagers (compare the existence of metropolite *basilikogrammateis*), and it is probably no accident that most of the evidence for villagers as *praktōres* comes from the Arsinoite nome since it contained some exceptionally large villages where rich and ambitious villagers might be expected. The predominance of metropolites in these posts may indicate that in this period they were thought to confer prestige and power and perhaps even financial rewards. Metropolite officials, furthermore, became increasingly important for the paperwork of Roman administration. They maintained the membership and fiscal records for the metropolite and gymnasial groups; the *agoranomoi* and, later, *bibliophylakes* provided services open to village residents; presumably from these filing responsibilities there developed by the later second century the quasi-judicial and fiscal functions of supervising the opening of wills and the issue of state seed-corn.

We note, incidentally, that while the Romans imposed on the villages of Egypt too the concept of self-administration through liturgic officials, the villages were not encouraged to and did not develop a communal political identity. Of course new village élites rose along with the new administrative structure. A particularly informative case is the archive of Nemesion who was *praktor laographias*, that is liturgic collector of the poll-tax, at Philadelphia, a large Fayum village, for several years under Claudius and Nero.¹⁰² He was one of a small group of literate and propertied villagers (at least one of whom owned some catoecic land and vine-land) who monopolized local public offices. They maintained their dominance, painfully manifest to other villagers in the escorts of Roman soldiers they were granted to help them collect taxes, by cultivating close contacts with the central administration through means which included gifts to the staff of the *strategos* and a barrage of petitions to the *strategos* and even the prefect himself. They were aware of and interested in wider political events; Claudius' letter of A.D. 41 to Alexandria is preserved to us in the copy of it made personally by Nemesion and kept among his papers. Within two or three generations of the end of Ptolemaic rule some villagers of Philadelphia had done nicely by smart adjustment to the new world where power and prestige were conferred by private landownership and by public service under Roman rules and supervision. But the ambitions of such men were individual, and they did not try to advance the status of their community. They, like the Romans, looked to the *metropoleis*, where the civic ambitions of the *chora* were now concentrated.¹⁰³

Under the Julio-Claudians, we have seen, the Romans reinforced, or rather re-invented, the primacy of Alexandria as the *polis* of Egypt as their primary scheme for the administration of the province, while initiating a secondary scheme of municipalizing the *metropoleis*. Alexandria provided the model of cultural and physical urbanization and Hellenization for the development of the *metropoleis*, and, as Egypt's gateway to the Mediterranean world, would never lose its symbolic and cultural pre-eminence.¹⁰⁴ But in the second century A.D. the metropolites began to nibble at Alexandria's administrative primacy, most notably in the emergence of *strategoï* of metropolite origin, of whom the first certain case is the Apollonios from Hermopolis Magna who was *strategos* of the Apollonopolite Heptacomias nome in A.D. 113–20.¹⁰⁵ Other administrative reforms in the nomes probably gave further responsibilities

¹⁰¹ Thomas, *op. cit.* (n. 18); Wallace, *op. cit.* (n. 23), *passim*; for villagers see also the case of Nemesion discussed below.

¹⁰² A. E. Hanson, 'Village officials at Philadelphia: a model of Romanization in the Julio-Claudian period', in L. Criscuolo and G. Geraci (eds), *Egitto e storia antica dall'ellenismo all'età araba* (1989), 429–40.

¹⁰³ cf. Braunert, *op. cit.* (n. 74), 176–9.

¹⁰⁴ cf. E. G. Turner, 'Oxyrhynchus and Rome', *HSCP* 79 (1975), 1–24.

¹⁰⁵ Braunert, *op. cit.* (n. 74), 127 n. 96. Archive of Apollonios: *C.Pap.Jud.* II, pp. 225–54.

to rich metropolites. In the later first and earlier second century the number of equestrian officials was increased both by redefinition of the previously Alexandrian posts of High Priest, of *dioiketes*, and probably, if temporarily, of *archidikastes*, and by creating some new procuratorships, presumably in order to monitor the increasingly devolved administration of the province.¹⁰⁶ The foundation of Antinoopolis, a professedly 'Hellenic' city, many of whose citizens were recruited from the metropolite groups of Middle Egypt, must have been a psychological boost for the *metropoleis* as well as stimulating rivalry among them, and the building boom of the second century gave concrete expression to the success of metropolite civic ambitions. Metropolite families with large estates accumulated over generations and a tradition of office-holding now emerge, and the number of Alexandrian citizens now found in the *metropoleis* suggests that the distinction between the Alexandrian and the metropolite élites was being eroded.¹⁰⁷

With hindsight it can be seen that the watershed was the year A.D. 200/1 when Septimius Severus granted a *boule* not only to Alexandria but also to each *metropolis*, apparently (like the Flavian 'charter' for Spain) on a standard pattern for the whole province. With the Constitutio Antoniniana of A.D. 212 Alexandrian citizens lost the exclusive privilege of entry to Roman citizenship, and they lost another with the petering out of the poll-tax in the mid-third century A.D. Although outside Egypt Alexandria retained her reputation, within it she was now more 'prima inter pares', and in the later third century we find Alexandrian notables migrating to Oxyrhynchus and Hermopolis Magna.¹⁰⁸ By the mid-third century the metropolite *boulai* and their officers were being given greater responsibility for the administration of their nomes, for instance through the introduction of municipal liturgists (*dekaprotoi*) to collect direct taxes on land, and the process continued with the more radical reforms of Diocletian. In a sense these developments were the logical outcome of the policy of municipalization initiated by Augustus, but they also reflect the contemporary wider transformation of the Roman Empire and its government and so form part of another story.

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¹⁰⁶ Previously Alexandrian posts: nn. 98–9 above. New posts: Pflaum, loc. cit. (n. 15).

¹⁰⁷ *IGRR* 1.1096 = *SB* 1.176, an inscribed dedication to Marcus Aurelius, reveals an extensive office-holding family who were probably metropolites of Pachnemonis, though possibly Alexandrians (cf. the similar but apparently Alexandrian family in *IGRR* 1.1060 = *SB* v.8780, another dedication to Marcus Aurelius). It is often very difficult, if not impossible, to tell whether families with Alexandrian citizenship and offices and with large estates in a nome were in origin Alexandrians who were drawn to the *metropolis* by their estates or metropolites

who had acquired Alexandrian citizenship. At Oxyrhynchus the former are probably represented in the second century by the Ti. Julii Theones (see *P.Theon.*), the latter, it seems, in the second to third centuries by the Calpurnii (e.g. *P.Oxy.* iv.705 = *C.Pap.Jud.* 11.450; *P.Oxy.* XLII.3047, cf. p. 112 n. 24 above). Compare the Tullius Ptolemaios from Tentyra who achieved Alexandrian magistracies (Bernand, op. cit. (n. 1), no. 32).

¹⁰⁸ Braunert, op. cit. (n. 74), 238; D. W. Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society in Third-Century A.D. Egypt* (1991), 50–1.