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SB XVI 13050 RECONSIDERED

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SB XVI 13050 reconsidered

The first complete edition of this papyrus (P.Vindob.G. 23095 + 25770 verso) was given by P.J. Sijpesteijn in ZPE 54 (1984) 81-82, whence the republication as SB XVI 13050. The text is the following:

- (a) -----
 ἀνει ἀνεγνώσθη[
 λωσας ἐν τοῖς ἐπὶ το[] traces
 ὀνομασθεῖσι πλείστοις ἀνδράσι εἰς γυ(μνασιαρχίαν)
 ὑποβεβλήσθαι καὶ Σαραπίωνα πρυτα-
 5 νεύσαντα ὡς ἐνεχόμενον στέψει
 Ἄλεξάνδρου ἀρχιερατεύσαντος στεφέντος
 ὑπ' αὐτοῦ. βουληθεὶς φανερόν σοι γί-
 νεσθαι τὸν ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἄλεξάνδρου
 μήνα [ὁ] Σαραπίων ἀποδέδωκεν
 10]ει ὡς φανερόν σοι ποιῶ κα[ῖ]
]δικος τῆς πόλεως δ[
]ίου γ[

- (b) traces
 traces τὸν Σαρα-
 15 [πίωνα κα]τὰ μήνα Φαρμοῦ-
 [θι ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἄλ]εξάνδρου. ἐρρωσθαί
 [σε εὐχο]μαι.
 [(ἔτους) α Αὐτοκ]ράτορος Καίσαρος Γαί[ο]υ
 [Ἰουλίου Ο]υήρου Μαξιμίνου
 20 [Εὐσεβο]ῦς Εὐτυχοῦς Σεβ[α]σ[τ]-
 [τοῦ]θ⁻ ιζ^{X-}.

Sijpesteijn was really only concerned with Fragm.b (lines 13ff.), which had been published as long ago as 1887 by Wessely.¹ Wessely had considered Ἄλ]εξάνδρου in line 16 to be a reference to the emperor Severus Alexander and had read the month in line 21 π[α]λ ιζ. Hence the papyrus found its way into various studies of the chronology of this period as evidence for Maximinus as emperor on 17 Pachon of his year 1 = 12 May 235.² Sijpesteijn was able to demonstrate that the Alexander occurring in line 16 was not the emperor and his new reading of the date

¹ MPER 2-3 (1887) 19-20.

² E.g. X. Lorient, ZPE 11 (1973) 150; S. Daris, Aegyptus 63 (1983) 144 n.68.

as]θ⁻ ιζ^{X-} is undoubtedly correct.³ This fragment still poses problems, however, which we shall turn to in a moment. But before doing so it is necessary to attempt to explain what is going on in the first fragment.⁴

Lines 2-7 seem to be saying that among the many names submitted of persons nominated to serve as gymnasiarchs the name of Sarapion, former prytanis, had been [wrongly] included, on the grounds that he was liable to serve for Alexander, former high priest, who had been “crowned” by him.⁵ The sentence which follows seems to be a statement by the writer (the current prytanis?) to the effect that Sarapion was not liable to serve in place of Alexander as he had already served one month for him (and presumably was only liable for this one month); the month in question, Pharmouthi, is later specified. If this explanation is on the right lines, the problem is how to get it out of the Greek. At the start of line 10 we might well read ἀναγκ^αίως;⁶ instead of κα[ί at the end of this line one might think of κα[θάπερ, vel sim., and in the next line the restoration σύν]δικος looks to be inescapable.⁷ But all this does not take us very far and it seems impossible to construe the Greek without supposing some error by the scribe. One possibility is to suppose that ὅτι has dropped out after γίνεσθαι; another is to read ἀποδεδωκέν[αι at the end of line 9, reject the supplement [ό], and correct Σαραπίων to the accusative Σαραπίων(α). Both suggestions would give the same sense: “Wishing it to be clear to you that Sarapion has [already] contributed [to the city] the month [which he promised] on behalf of Alexander, of necessity I make it clear to you that, as the syndic of the city...”. This is of course not without its difficulties; in particular the repetition of the phrase with φανερόν is lame, the words in square brackets above are not in the Greek, and the sense cannot be produced without emendation. Nevertheless I feel that something along these lines must be what the writer intended.

We may now turn to the second fragment. The restoration required at the left is guaranteed by lines 2-9, which are complete, and is supported by the imperial titles in lines 18-20; the plate makes it clear that the two fragments have been correctly aligned. The restoration suggested in the ed.pr. for line 16 can therefore be accepted, but that suggested for line 15 is too short by some six or seven letters; in addition, the phrase κα]τὰ μῆνα makes no sense in the context. What we need here instead is a reference to a past month, which suggests we should read τὸν διεληθόν]τα

³ A plate of the papyrus accompanies Sijpesteijn’s article. Dr Hermann Harrauer, with his usual kindness, has supplied me with a photograph at actual size of the papyrus, both recto and verso, but it has not enabled me to advance to any appreciable extent beyond the readings given by Sijpesteijn. My thanks are due to Dr Harrauer not only for supplying this photograph but also for his further help, as indicated below.

⁴ I am very grateful to Dr John Rea and Prof. Dieter Hagedorn for discussing the problems with me. Dr Harrauer informs me that there is no possible doubt that both fragments belong to the same piece of papyrus (as is indeed apparent from the photograph), but that the amount lost between the two fragments is wholly uncertain.

⁵ Wrongful nomination is not necessarily implied by the word ὑποβεβλήσθαι (cf. N. Lewis, *The compulsory public services of Roman Egypt* (Pap.Flor. XI; 1982), 63), but the context seems to imply that in this instance the nomination was incorrect (for ὑποβάλλω used of an incorrect proposal for office, cf. e.g., P.Oxy. XVII 2110.33). For crowning a person to a magistracy and the obligation which this placed on the person doing the crowning see P.Ryl. II 77.44-46.

⁶ Cf., e.g., P.Vindob.Worp 3.20-21 (321), ἀναγκάως φανερόν τῇ σῆ ἐπεικεία καθιστώμεν δηλοῦντες κτλ. ; P.Harris II 200.9-12 (236), κατὰ τὸ ἀναγκάιον ἐπιδίδ[ω]μι τάδε τὰ βιβλίδ[ι]α αὐτὰ ταῦτα φανερά ποι[ῶ]ν.

⁷ Sijpesteijn justifiably describes the restoration as “more than probable”; however, the occurrence of a syndic at this early date may occasion some surprise.

μηνα.⁸ This would then mean "... that Sarapion [has already contributed] the past month Pharmouthi on behalf of Alexander".⁹

We come now to the problem of the date. The month must be Thoth or Phamenoth. Year 1 was supplied by Wessely because he assumed that the papyrus was referring in the preceding lines to the reign of Severus Alexander. Now that we know this is to be rejected, there is no certainty that year 1 is correctly supplied.¹⁰ Fixed limits ought to be the following: (1) it cannot be earlier than the date at which Maximinus was known as emperor in Egypt, and (2) it is earlier than the date at which Maximus Caesar was associated with his father in dating formulae. We can therefore rule out 17 Thoth year 1, since it is quite certain that Maximinus was not emperor at that date. It has recently been argued by Peachin that he became emperor in about mid-March 235.¹¹ This is based on an inscription from Rome, but it is supported by the Egyptian evidence in that papyri are known which still date by Severus Alexander's year 14 as late as 10 Pharmouthi = 5 April 235 (SPP XX 35, from Herakleopolis) and 8 Pachon = 3 May 235 (PSI VII 733, from Oxyrhynchos).¹² This ought to mean that a date of 17 Phamenoth in year 1 of Maximinus = 13 March 235 is impossibly early for SB 13050 and therefore that we must reject the restoration "year 1" in line 18.

We come now to the second point, the absence of Maximus Caesar in the dating formula. Peachin dates Maximus' assumption of the title of Caesar to a date lying between about 7 January and 26 April 236.¹³ To the evidence to which he refers we can add P.Harris II 200 (published in 1985): this records Maximus Caesar in a dating formula (from the Fayum) on 14 Pachon year 2 = 9 May 236.¹⁴ On the assumption that news took about 30 days to reach the Fayum from Rome,¹⁵ he must have been proclaimed Caesar no later than approximately 9 April 236. This should mean that on historical grounds we must restore "year 2" in SB 13050; the month and day can be either 17 Thoth = 15 September 235, or 17 Phamenoth = 13 March 236. It is possible to try and decide between these two dates. If the text above were correct and του of Σεβαστοῦ had to be accommodated in line 21, there would only be room to supply Θῶ]θ ιζ after this. However, one would expect the writer to have put the whole of Σεβαστοῦ in line 20 and Dr Harrauer has confirmed for me that this is indeed the case.¹⁶ This means that there is sufficient room for [Φαμενῶ]θ ιζ in line

⁸ This is on the long side but a participle indicating a past month seems essential if the general interpretation of the text offered above is accepted. I should have preferred to supply τὸν (εἰσιόν]τα (with Φαμενῶ]θ in line 21), but the tense of ἀποδίδομι in line 9 would seem to rule out this possibility.

⁹ We should perhaps read ἀποδεδοκέναι before τὸν Σαραπίωνα in line 14, but nothing is legible on the photograph.

¹⁰ See the remarks by D.W. Rathbone in ZPE 62 (1986) 109.

¹¹ See M.Peachin, *Roman Imperial Titulature and Chronology, A.D. 235-284*, 26-27.

¹² Cf. Sijpesteijn, ZPE 54 (1984) 74-5, and Rathbone, ZPE 62 (1986) 108. As to the provenance of SB 13050, Dr Harrauer reports "aus dem 1. Faijumer Fund, Arsinoites, laut dem handschriftlichen Inventar von Karl Wessely".

¹³ Peachin, op.cit. 27.

¹⁴ The second figure of the day's date is not certain (see the note to P.Harris 200.21-6), but this makes no substantial difference to the point here under discussion. Peachin makes no mention of this text but does refer to P.Lond. III 947 IV (from Hermopolis), published by Sijpesteijn in ZPE 76 (1989) 213 n.2; this text dates from 24 Pachon year 2 [though both figures in the numeral of the day are dotted] = 19 May 236, and includes Maximus Caesar in the dating formula.

¹⁵ For this figure (30 days) see, e.g., Peachin, op.cit. 26 n.5, and E. Van 't Dack, ANRW II 1 (1974) 883 and n. 109.

¹⁶ Dr Harrauer reports: "Das Nachlesen des Textes unter dem Mikroskop hat für mich unzweifelhaft ergeben, daß Z. 20 mit Σεβ[στ]ο[ῦ] endet".

21 (though it is not impossible that the writer left a blank space before the month's name; he obviously left a space before $\sigma\epsilon \epsilon\upsilon\chi\omicron\mu\omicron\iota$ in line 17). If the month is indeed Phamenoth, it has implications for the date of the assumption of the title Caesar by Maximus, since on the face of it the papyrus would then prove that this event was not known in the Fayum on 13 March 236 (but see the next paragraph).

The date of SB 13050 ought therefore to be 13 March 236 or, less probably, 15 September 235; but it is only fair to point out that it is still possible to feel some doubts. This is because there are at least three anomalous documents from precisely this period.¹⁷ The first is P.Oxy. VI 912. This is dated to year 1 of Maximinus and in the ed.pr. Grenfell and Hunt read the month and day $\Phi\alpha\mu\epsilon\upsilon\lambda\omicron\theta \alpha$, though indicating in their note that they realized this date raised historical difficulties. Recently Peachin and Sijpesteijn have independently reconsidered the document and both argue persuasively that the reading must be $\Theta\omega\theta \alpha$.¹⁸ This date is of course quite impossible and we must presumably suppose that the scribe wrote year 1 when he meant year 2 (an understandable slip on the first day of a new year). The second document is P.Rein. II 91. It seems certain that it is year 1 of Maximinus which is written on the papyrus,¹⁹ even though Maximus Caesar is included in the dating formula. Again therefore we must suppose a scribal error (since Maximus was not elevated to the rank of Caesar during his father's first year).²⁰ The third text, which is the most serious for our present purposes, is CPR I 6 = SPP XX 47 (from Herakleopolis). This dates from 9 Mecheir year 4 of Maximinus, but does not mention Maximus Caesar in the dating formula.²¹ If Maximus Caesar could be omitted in this text, it is obviously possible that he could also have been omitted in SB 13050. In which case we ought still to reject the possibility that the text dates from year 1, but years 2, 3 and 4 all remain possible.

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¹⁷ SB III 6305 = IV 7329 (dated by Maximinus alone but with the month lost) is not an anomalous text: Sijpesteijn, ZPE 54 (1984) 75, and Rathbone, ZPE 62 (1986) 109, rightly point out that the year number (which is lost) could as easily be year 2 as year 1. Nor is CPR I 84 (from Herakleopolis) anomalous (cf. Rathbone, loc. cit.). Again the year number is lost; but since this text is now to be dated to Pauni (day lost), see ZPE 23 (1976) 146 n.10, and Maximus Caesar is not included in the dating formula, it ought to date from year 1 (but cf. below). If this is right, it becomes the earliest Egyptian evidence for Maximinus as emperor.

¹⁸ Peachin: ZPE 59 (1985) 75-7; Sijpesteijn: ZPE 54 (1984) 75.

¹⁹ See J.R. Rea, ZPE 9 (1972) 19.

²⁰ See X. Lorient, ZPE 11 (1973) 147-55; Lorient assumes that year 1 is a scribal error for year 2.

²¹ Lorient, loc. cit. (p. 154), argued that the reading $\epsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \tau\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\omicron\upsilon$ was wrong and that we should read $\epsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \delta\epsilon\upsilon\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\tau\omicron\upsilon$. But Sijpesteijn, who has consulted the papyrus, reports that the original reading must stand (ZPE 54 (1984) 75); and Dr Harrauer also confirms that the papyrus reads $\tau\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\omicron\upsilon$ (letter of 1 February 1991).