

A FIRST-CENTURY RECEIPT
FROM THE RECEIVERS OF PUBLIC CLOTHING IN TEBTUNIS
(P.TEBT.UC 1607C)

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Abstract. — An edition of a first-century Tebtunis papyrus containing a letter from the receivers of public clothing, with analyses of both this liturgical office as well as the practice of compulsory sale for the supply of military clothing.

The Supply and Purchase of Military Clothing in Egypt

This papyrus takes the form of a receipt from the receivers of public clothing to certain weavers of the village of Tebtunis. The receipt, given its similarities to others concerning the supply of clothing to the military in Egypt, should be added to that particular group.¹ These documents possibly depict, in part, the system of requisition or, at least, a clearly regulated procedure, for military supplies in Roman Egypt, and furthermore illustrate the way in which the Roman army affected the provincial economy.² The

¹ See commentary on l. 2 below for examples, with N. Reggiani, “Tax Collection and Grain Measures in Roman Egypt: An Account Involving *paralēmtai* and a Receipt Issued by the *sitologoi* of Berenikis Aigialou, With Some Notes on Measure Standards (*paralēmtikon, epaiton*),” *APF* 63 (2017) 59–88, in addition to K. Droß-Krüpe, “Purchase Orders of Military Garments from Papyri of Roman Egypt,” in M.-L. Nosch (ed.), *Wearing the Cloak: Dressing the Soldier in Roman Times* (Oxford 2012) 13–18, K. Droß-Krüpe, *Wolle-Weber-Wirtschaft: Die Textilproduktion der römischen Kaiserzeit im Spiegel der papyrologischen Überlieferung* (Wiesbaden 2011) 176–181, and J. Sheridan, *Columbia Papyri IX: The Vestis Militaris Codex* (Atlanta, GA 1998) 81–86. On the supply of the army in Egypt and its bureaucracy see C.E.P. Adams, “Supplying the Roman Army: Bureaucracy in Roman Egypt,” in A. Goldsworthy and I. Haynes (eds.), *The Roman Army as a Community* (Portsmouth, RI 1999) 119–126, and generally C. Carreras Monfort, “The Roman Military Supply during the Principate: Transportation and Staples,” in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *The Roman Army and the Economy* (Amsterdam 2002) 70–89, and P. Herz, “Der praefectus annonae und die Wirtschaft der westlichen Provinzen,” *Ktèma* 13 (1988) 69–85. See also the excellent discussion of A. Jördens, *Statthalterliche Verwaltung in der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Stuttgart 2009) 164–262, for the role of the provincial governor in this context.

² On the notion of clearly demarcated orders for clothing for the military as opposed to a system of requisition, see Jördens (n. 1) 215–19, 241, and the comments of J. Lesquier,

organization of the supply itself, however, remains ambiguous perhaps because there do appear to have been changes over time, particularly with the formalization of the *vestis militaris* in later periods.³

Described as no less compulsory than liturgies,⁴ “requisitions” were demands made by the administration on the provincial population for a variety of goods and services. But these were hardly a Roman innovation, and there is evidence for requisition in Ptolemaic Egypt (as well as the Seleucid kingdom, and even under the Persian empire, particularly with respect to transport),⁵ and the state’s demands for grain continued into and through the Roman period.⁶ But purchases of clothing and textiles,

L’armée romaine d’Égypte d’Auguste à Dioclétien (Le Caire 1918) 369. Herz (n. 1) 77 suggests that orders for military supply could be met through the *coemptio*; while Herz’s discussion focusses mainly on the supply of grain, it is entirely possible that the same process could be used for military clothing. For discussion of the Roman army and the provincial economy in Egypt, see J.M. Carrié, “Le rôle économique de l’armée dans l’Égypte romaine,” in C. Nicolet and H. van Effenterre (eds.), *Armées et fiscalité dans le monde antique* (Paris 1977) 373–393; R. Alston, *Soldier and Society in Roman Egypt: A Social History* (London 1995) 102–116.

³ For further details and bibliography, see Sheridan (n. 1) 84–105, K. Droß-Krüpe, “Production and Distribution,” in M. Harlow (ed.), *A Cultural History of Dress and Fashion in Antiquity* (London 2017) 37–48 (particularly 45–56), and C.E.P. Adams, “Irregular Levies and the Impact of the Roman Army in Egypt,” in L. de Blois and E. Lo Cascio (eds.), *The Impact of the Roman Army (200 BC–AD 476): Economic, Social, Political, Religious and Cultural Aspects. Proceedings of the Sixth Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, 200 B.C.–A.D. 476), Capri, March 29–April 2, 2005* (Leiden 2007) 281–291.

⁴ J.D. Thomas, “Compulsory Public Service in Roman Egypt,” in *Das römisch-byzantinische Ägypten: Akten des internationalen Symposions 26.–30. September 1978 in Trier* (Mainz am Rhein 1983) 35, n. 3.

⁵ L. Capponi, *Augustan Egypt: The Creation of a Roman Province* (London 2005) 78–79. For Ptolemaic examples, see BGU 8.1747 (63 BCE); 8.1748 (63 BCE); 8.1749 (63 BCE). *P.Tebt.* 3.729 (Second century BCE) contains a complaint regarding the seizure of 580 sheep and lambs, and 67 cows, bulls, and heifers by the military from a single village; *P.Ryl.* 4.562 = SB 5.7645 (251 BCE), from the estate of Apollonius, alludes to the provisioning (almost certainly requisitions) of cavalrymen attending the Penteteteris: the ἐλαιοκάπηλοι were to provide and deliver oil, while one individual apparently took up the μαγειρική. For further (albeit brief) discussion of this document, see M.I. Rostovtzeff, *A Large Estate in Egypt in the Third Century BC* (Madison, WI 1922) 121. Under the Ptolemies, as under the Romans, arbitrary requisitions of animals for the use of officials were forbidden: see A. Monson, *Agriculture and Taxation in early Ptolemaic Egypt: Demotic Land Surveys and Accounts* (Bonn 2012) 27 and n.180. See also P.Heid. Dem. inv. 46 r° 1.9 and A. Monson, “Landholders, Rents, and Crops in a Ptolemaic Village: P.Heid. Dem. inv. 46,” in A. Dodson, J.J. Johnston, and W. Monkhouse (eds.), *A Good Scribe and an Exceedingly Wise Man: Studies in Honour of W.J. Tait* (London 2014) 229–240, for the inclusion of a wagon in a Demotic text that suggests state requisition played a role here.

⁶ PSI 7.797 = SB 14.12155 (232 CE), G. Bastianini and J.D. Thomas, “PSI VII 797,” *ZPE* 27 (1977) 165–177; SB 14.12156 (late third century CE) and F. Mitthof, *Annona militaris. Die Heeresversorgung im spätantiken Ägypten. Ein Beitrag zur Verwaltungs- und*

at least as they appear in the earliest extant evidence from the second century CE, were fairly rudimentary (although the system appears to have changed in the third century CE).⁷ They take the form of compulsory sales, based perhaps on Republican or Ptolemaic precedents,⁸ between the consumer (in these cases, the Roman administration or the military) and the manufacturers. Our document bears a significant resemblance to the second-century evidence, but the hand, which we date to the late first century CE,⁹ makes it the earliest example of this form of receipt for clothing destined for the military.¹⁰

Heeresgeschichte des Römischen Reiches im 3. bis 6. Jh. n. Chr. (Firenze 2001) 348–349. The Roman administration did, however, provide an alternative means of payment for contributions of food; these could be converted into cash payments through the *adaeratio*. See C.E.P. Adams, “Adaeratio,” in R.S. Bagnall, K. Brodersen, C.B. Champion, A. Erskine, and S.R. Huebner (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (Oxford 2013) 1.63; Capponi (n. 5) 79.

⁷ The crux of the change saw the responsibility of supply falling on communities themselves, who would then assign the clothing orders to workers. For some evidence of the process, see *P.Oxy.* 12.1414 (270–275 CE), *SB* 6.9406 = *P.Prag.Varcl.* 2.1 (247 CE). See Sheridan (n. 1) 84–85.

⁸ Dominic Rathbone has noted that a system of compulsory purchase was created to satisfy the Roman administration’s material requirements; this was based on Republican precedent (“Military Finance and Supply,” in P. Sabin, H. van Wees, and M. Whitby [eds.], *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare: Rome from the Late Republic to the Late Empire* [Cambridge 2007] 2.171 and n. 45). On issues, circumstances, events, and the relevant *lex Hieronica*, see J.P. Roth, *The Logistics of the Roman Army at War (264 BC–AD 235)* (Leiden 1999) 225–226, P. Erdkamp, *Hunger and the Sword: Warfare and Food Supply in Roman Republican Wars (264–30 BC)* (Amsterdam 1998) 96–100, 108, and 121, and G. Rickman, *The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome* (Oxford 1980) 37–45, with, e.g., Polyb. 1.16–17; 1.52.8; Livy 23.21.4; 29.3.5; 32.27.2–3; cf. 43.6–9 for contributions of Lampsakos. For Caesar’s supply in Gaul, *B.Gall.* 1.23.1; 1.40.11; 1.48.2; 2.5.5; 3.7.2; 7.10.3; 7.17.2; cf. Vitruvius 2.9.15 on Caesar in the Alpine region and local supplies. During the civil war against Caesar, we are told that Pompey “gathered corn from Thessaly, Asia, Egypt, Crete, Cyrene and other districts” (Caes. *B.Civ.* 3.5). The *Bellum Alexandrinum* begins with the observation that when fighting in Alexandria flared up, Caesar ordered troops and corn from every quarter (*B.Alex.* 1); cf. Caes. *B.Civ.* 2.66 and 3.43; *B.Afr.* 24; *B.Alex.* 9; App. *B.Civ.* 3.11. For Scipio checking workshops and on the senate’s role in supply, see Polyb. 6.15, 10.20.5. See Cic. *Verr.* for the continuing operation of this in 70 BCE. That the system itself was based on an earlier Republican model may well be true, but the Ptolemaic precedents for requisitions are also surely relevant here: such activities were not unknown in Ptolemaic Egypt, either through high-level state diplomatic wrangling, for example when Rome sent envoys to Ptolemy IV to purchase grain at market prices at Alexandria (Polyb. 9.11a.1–2), or more locally where professional soldiers on campaign under the Ptolemies in the third century BCE received requisitioned fodder or barley as part of their wages (*BGU* 8.1747 and 1748 [63 BCE]; Capponi [n. 5] 79; C. Fischer-Bovet, *Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt* [Cambridge 2014] 260).

⁹ See pp. 74–75 below.

¹⁰ The earliest definitive date for these types of clothing receivers is 116 CE, in *P.CtYBR* inv. 1590, edited by Tasha Dobbin-Bennett, as yet unpublished.

The παραλήμπται δημοσίου ἱματισμοῦ, referred to in the first few lines of our text, appear to have been liturgical officials, at least as far as the second century CE parallels are concerned.¹¹ There were various liturgical “receivers” who collected a variety of goods and services from the communities of Egypt under the Romans,¹² but the earliest extant mentions of παραλήμπται are in recently discovered inscriptions from Berenike, dating to 49 CE and 112 CE, which place these officials in the context of goods and customs operations.¹³ The earliest date for individuals who could plausibly be παραλήμπται being compelled to provide these services is a document dating to 130 CE, where we have an oath sworn to Hierax, the βασιλικογραμματεὺς and acting στρατηγός, by Pekysios and Papontos who were nominated by the κωμογραμματεὺς of the village of Sephtha πρὸς παράληψιν ἰδιωτικῶν ὄνων.¹⁴ At least during the second century, the παραλήμπται of the sort that appear in our document were concerned with the collection of clothing supplies for the military.

The similarities between P.Tebt.UC 1607c and parallel documents suggest that organization of the system, or at least the use and the role of the receivers therein, was unchanged during the late part of the first century and the first decades of the second century CE. The extant receipts suggest generally, as Sheridan has noted, that the process of requisition and purchase was relatively simple: representatives for the state (in our case, the παραλήμπται) would place an order, make a payment to secure that order, then later pay the outstanding amount and collect the products.¹⁵ For instance, in one text, dating to 138 CE, the banker Herakleides is ordered by the ἱματιοπαραλήμπται to pay the weavers of the village

¹¹ N. Lewis, *The Compulsory Public Services of Roman Egypt* (2nd ed., Firenze 1997) 39–40, with Dominic Rathbone’s comments on the liturgical system (“The Romanity of Roman Egypt: A Faltering Consensus,” *JJP* 43 [2013] 84–85). Were our παραλήμπται liturgists? There is little in our document to suggest an answer either way, although clearly there were receivers who were. Rathbone’s use of BGU 3.747 = *W.Chr.* 35 (139 CE) to suggest that the πράκτορες therein were contractors may be mirrored by the individual in *P.Oxy.* 36.2760 (178–179 CE), considered briefly below at n. 26, who could very well be a private contractor. If so, it is entirely possible that P.Tebt.UC 1607c may represent a further link in the process between production, collection, and delivery.

¹² See C.E.P. Adams, “Supplying the Roman Army: *O.Petr.* 245,” *ZPE* 109 (1995) 124, n. 32, for a list (although not exhaustive) of other documents relating to military supply by both civilian and soldiers.

¹³ Reggiani (n. 1) 62.

¹⁴ SB 14.12168.9–10, H.C. Youtie, “P.Mich. Inv. 974: παράληψις ἰδιωτικῶν ὄνων,” *ZPE* 28 (1978) 245–248, and Lewis (n. 11) 39–40. If Rathbone is correct (n. 8 above) in respect to these appointments being liturgical and yet paid, one may consider the responsibilities outlined in SB 14.12168 too early to be a true liturgy.

¹⁵ Sheridan (n. 1) 84.

of Philadelpheia, represented by Herakleides, Heron, and Dioskoros, an advance for garments that had been ordered from them for soldiers based in Cappadocia.¹⁶ A second, dating to 128 CE, takes the form of a receipt to weavers of the village of Soknopaiou Nesos from Dionysios, the son of Sokrates and the other παραλήπται δημοσίου ἱματισμοῦ κουστωδιῶν.¹⁷

P.Tebt.UC 1607c is similar, but appears to add further levels to this process. We reconstruct its context as follows: the garrison's *curator(es)* request(s) supplies; the receivers in Tebtunis place the order with the local weavers, probably via their assistants; the weavers fulfill the order; the assistants take possession of the order, notify the receivers to issue a receipt; and finally, the receivers issue a receipt. This last stage of the process takes the form of our text: P.Tebt.UC 1607c.¹⁸

A complicating factor is the reality that, during the second century CE, military supply was not solely the purview of liturgical officials. There are instances of military personnel, in particular, the *optio*, taking delivery of supplies of clothing. In a declaration to the στρατηγός of the Herakleopolite nome, dated to between 119–124 CE, a group of cloth-dealers from Herakleopolis stated that they had delivered the blankets that had been ordered and received their remuneration; the money that was destined for the cloth-dealers was originally given to an ὀπτίων ἐπιμελητῆς ἱματισμῶν who, it appears, paid the cloth-dealers for their work.¹⁹ Another document from Oxyrhynchus, dating to the mid-second century CE, takes the form of a receipt from Claudius Germanus, an *optio* of the *legio III Cyrenaica*, to the κασοποιοί of Oxyrhynchus in recognition of the receipt of 55 large Syrian garments.²⁰ Although a junior officer, generally the *optio* was the centurion's adjutant,²¹ but in Egypt, *optio* was a title given to soldiers who

¹⁶ BGU. 7.1564 (138 CE). The same group appear to have applied to the στρατηγός in the next year in BGU 7.1572 (139 CE), claiming that because four of their number had been drafted for some form of work in Alexandria, they would be unable to finish the work.

¹⁷ P.Ryl. 2.189 = C.Pap.Hengstl 160.

¹⁸ Our document – like P.Ryl. 2.189 – would serve to relieve the weavers of their task and notified any official as to its completion, as Jördens has suggested; the receivers would then notify the authorities by a separate letter (n. 1) 216.

¹⁹ P.Oxy. 19.2230 (119 CE) and BL 8.255. For discussion of this text, see Sheridan (n. 1) 83.

²⁰ P.Oxy. 64.4434 (154 CE?), BL 11.173 and 12.154.

²¹ Veg. Mil. 2.7: *Optiones ab adoptando appellati, quod antecedentibus aegritudine praepeditis hi tamquam adoptati eorum atque uicarii solent uniuersa curare*. See further Polyb. 6.36.9–38.4; M. Sage, “Optio,” in R.S. Bagnall, K. Brodersen, C.B. Champion, A. Erskine, and S.R. Huebner (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (Oxford 2013) 9.4914–4915; K. Gilliver, “The Augustan Reform and the Structure of the Imperial Army,” in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army* (Oxford 2007) 189; P. Southern, *The*

apparently carried out various administrative and supervisory posts, one of which was clearly concerned with commissariat of the army.²² There are also examples of other military officers involved in the ordering of clothing and textiles: three πρεσβύτεροι of Soknopaiou Nesos, for example, acknowledged that they have received the necessary payment from Antonius Sabinus, the *duplicarius* of the Antillian squadron in the Gallic cohort of veterans, for four goat skins.²³

The relationship, if there was one, between the military officials and those who performed liturgies as παραλήμπται then remains vague, as does whether (or how) the system itself was divided between the civil and military officials, if it ever was at all.²⁴ It is in this light that the restored mention of a garrison in P.Tebt UC 1607c is perhaps problematic. Any identification of the garrison is impossible without further details, which unfortunately this papyrus does not provide, though there certainly were soldiers attested in the Arsinoite nome during the period from which this particular papyrus dates.²⁵ A local garrison would strengthen both the interpretation of the text and the notion of local military supply, but there is no extant receipt of the παραλήμπται that suggests that clothing requested by these officials was used in the province itself: the documents containing both παραλήμπται and destinations support the contention that these orders could be, and were, exported to other Roman provinces.²⁶

Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History (Oxford 2007) 100; M. Sage, *The Republican Roman Army: A Sourcebook* (London 2008) 226; D.J. Breeze, "Pay Grades and Ranks below the Centurionate," *JRS* 61 (1971) 130–135.

²² See, e.g., *Rom.Mil.Rec.* 81.2.5–12 = *ChLA* 4.275 = *P.Oxy.* 4.735. For discussion on the *optio*, see D.J. Breeze, "A Note on the Use of the Titles 'Optio' and 'Magister' below the Centurionate during the Principate," *Britannia* 7 (1976) 127. See also *PSI* 5.465 (264–268 CE), and *BL* 8.398, where an *optio* of the *legio II Traiana* is informed by three individuals in Oxyrhynchus that they still owe a consignment of animal hides for the manufacture of armaments "on behalf of the metropolis" in respect to the years 10, 11, and 12 of Gallienus. For *optiones* carrying out similar duties at Vindolanda, see *Tab.Vindol.* 2.180, 2.213–215, 2.343, with Carreras Monfort (n. 1) 73–74.

²³ *P.Grenf.* 2.51 (144 CE); see also *P.Amh.* 2.107 = *W.Chr.* 417 = *Sel.Pap.* 2.387 (185 CE), with *BL* 10.4, 11.5. On the *duplicarius*, see E. Sander, "Zur Rangordnung des römischen Heeres: der Duplicarius," *Historia* 8.2 (1959) 239–247, and Y. Le Bohec, *The Imperial Roman Army* (London 2000), 47, 52, 210.

²⁴ One wonders whether there was a difference between the duties of the civil and military collectors. The question is explicit in Sheridan (n. 1) 84 and n. 84, but as noted therein, the evidence does not provide this information.

²⁵ See Alston (n. 2) 163–191; and on the later fortress at Dionysias, see *P.Abinn.*, pp. 19–21 as well as R. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton 1993) 174, J. Schwartz and H. Wild, *Qasr-Qarun/Dionysias 1948, Fouilles franco-suissees, rapport I* (Le Caire 1950) and *Qasr-Qarun/Dionysias 1950, Fouilles franco-suissees, rapport II* (Le Caire 1969).

²⁶ See, e.g., *P.Ryl.* 2.189 (Judea); *BGU* 7.1564 (Cappadocia). See, however, for an example of regional military supply, *P.Oxy.* 36.2760 (178–179 CE), a complaint from Dionysios Amyntianos, an ex-cavalryman of the *ala Apriana*, who had been ordered by the ex-

The appearance of assistants (χειρισταί) here is also interesting. Such figures are germane to the context of accounting – both in banking and taxation – in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, and reflect the two financial industries' relationship,²⁷ but they also appear in the context of liturgical appointments. Generally these assistants seem to have been hired by the liturgists themselves, and there is certainly nothing in our document to suggest otherwise.²⁸ Nevertheless the assistants here (a certain Philotas and Ploution) are evidently the intermediaries charged with executing the compulsory purchase for the παραλήμπται, named for the record (as in tax receipts) in light of the transaction's financial component: common to both requisition and tax assessment, after all, is their imposition by an external administrative authority. So, despite the likely appearance of πραισιδίων in the following line, Philotas and Ploution are certainly not soldiers, but are rather acting in the state's interest (specified, in this case, as the garrison).²⁹ But however clear their intermediary role may be, whether these two are the agents of the administration or an institution that was authorized to fund the garments' production is unclear, as are their actual responsibilities.

Two final issues require brief consideration and concern the weavers of Tebtunis here themselves. First, much has been made of the role of professional associations – groups of workers who joined together for a variety of social, economic, and religious reasons³⁰ – in the completion of orders from the state administration.³¹ But there are problems here,

prefect and the *praefectus castrorum* to transport 775 blankets, sent by the στρατηγός, from the Oxyrhynchite nome to the *legio II Traiana Fortis*. His destination was likely Alexandria, where this papyrus would have been written. The editor suggests that Dionysios may have been either a ἱματιέμπορος or more likely that he was performing a liturgy as a παραλημπτής δημοσίου ἱματισμοῦ. While there is nothing definitive in the text itself, one should consider that if he was one of the latter then this document may suggest that delivery, even outside one's nome, may have been another responsibility of the παραλήμπται (whether liturgists or not).

²⁷ E.g., *P.Enteux.* 38 (221 BCE); *P.Tebt.* 3.874 (179 BCE); *UPZ* 1.29 (162 BCE); *UPZ* 1.30 (162 BCE); *P.Tebt.* 3.890 (182–183 BCE?); *BGU* 4.1207 (28 BCE); *BGU* 4.1207.17 (28 BCE); *BGU* 13.2291 (5 BCE); *P.Mich.* 12.640.1 (First century CE); *P.Tebt.* 2.348 (23 CE); *BGU* 7.1590a (26 CE); *P.Gen.* 2.90 (36 CE); *P.Mil.* 1.11 (56 CE); *P.Lond.* 2.181 (63 CE); *P.Mich.* 6.382 (87–103 CE). Bankers are also involved in the most important parallel text for the current one: *BGU* 7.1564 (138 CE). See further S.L. Wallace, *Taxation in Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian* (Princeton 1938) 306, 309–311.

²⁸ Lewis (n. 11) 105.

²⁹ Cf. *Rom.Mil.Rec.* 1.78.25 and 78.64 for χειρισταί in the context of the military.

³⁰ Most recently, and with particular relevance to Egypt, see P. Venticinque, *Honor Among Thieves: Craftsmen, Merchants, and Associations in Roman and Late Roman Egypt* (Ann Arbor 2016) 5–7 and nn. 11–15, and bibliography therein.

³¹ Following Herz's suggestion of *coemptio* perhaps (n. 1) 77. For the role of associations in completing orders see, for example, the still relevant A.C. Johnson, *Roman Egypt to the Reign of Diocletian* (An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome 2; Baltimore 1936)

too, and caution is to be advised.³² The weavers noted here, Anoubas and one other, were the representatives of a group of weavers responsible for filling the order. Nevertheless, in this case, a formal association of the weavers cannot be assumed: the receipt is addressed simply τῷ δεῖνα καὶ Ἀνουβᾶδι γερδίοις κώμης ..., without any mention of τοῖς λοιποῖς γερδίοις,³³ or any associative terminology.³⁴ Given the phrasing, and the apparent lack of specificity in the order,³⁵ there is no reason to assume that Anoubas and his colleagues were anything other than representatives of a group of tradesmen who were asked to fulfill an order made by the Roman administration.

Not all of these clothing requisitions were made through trade associations or groups of workers; individuals were also required to provide clothing or the material from which it could be made for the military, as a text from the Beinecke Library clearly suggests.³⁶ Moreover, and more significantly, the absence of associative terminology reflecting the formal collective nature of these groups means that it is difficult to state

393; and M. Gibbs, "Manufacture, Trade, and the Economy," in C. Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt* (Oxford 2012) 41. The view is perhaps more prevalent in the case of groups who worked in transportation, see e.g., M. Rostovtzeff, "Kornerhebung und Transport im griechisch-römischen Ägypten," *APF* 3 (1906) 219–220; M. San Nicolò, *Ägyptisches Vereinswesen zur Zeit der Ptolemäer und Römer*² (München 1972) 113; and the critique of C.E.P. Adams, *Land Transport in Roman Egypt* (Oxford 2007) 182–185. This is perhaps connected to *C.Th.* 13.4.2, which mentions exemptions of traders under Constantine.

³² For the issues in identifying these associations, see Venticinque (n. 30) 7–30 and nn. 37–38 below.

³³ In *BGU* 7.1564, Herakleides, Heron, and Dioskoros are to be paid, but the order implicates eighty-one other weavers in the production, as well (αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς γερδίοις ... πα).

³⁴ Cf., for instance, *P.Mich.* 2.121 r^o 4.6.2: γερδίοις τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς κώμης συνόδου, in reference to a συνόδος γερδίων of Kerkesoucha Orous.

³⁵ See further comm. on l. 7.

³⁶ See, for example, *P.CtYBR* inv. 1590 (n. 10), and perhaps *W.Chr.* 367 (14 CE). This seems to stand in opposition to the Ptolemaic system of military supply in several ways. That particular forms of textiles were produced for the Ptolemies' soldiers is implied by the governmental control and production of clothes made of "Syrian" cloth, and by *P.Hib.* 1.51 (Late third century BCE), which states that the government imposed the price at which they would be purchased from the producers; weavers were provided with the cloth from the Royal stores, and then were required to provide a definite quantity of them, and were paid by the Royal bank for their labor (see also *P.Enteux.* 1 [259 BCE], *O.Bodl.* 1.143 [249 BCE], *P.Hal.* 13 [Third century BCE]). This may have been a monopoly – although perhaps not absolute as Préaux suggests (*L'Économie royale des Lagides* [Bruxelles, 1939] 106–107, and *O.Wilck.* 1525 [124 BCE] for her reservations, with *P.Hib.* 1, pp. 195–196 and n. 3). It is notable, however, that *BGU* 7.1564 deals with an order completed by the weavers of the village of Philadelphia for one chiton, one blanket, and four "Syrian" garments.

definitively that these were associations in the formal sense;³⁷ perhaps they were loose collectives that were compelled to work together simply for the purpose of fulfilling the requisitions that were placed on communities by the state administration.³⁸ This is what appears to have happened in the case of the requisitioning of animals and perhaps of clothing later, in the second and third centuries CE.³⁹

Second, we may ask whether this text relates to a possible liturgical service the weavers of Tebtunis were required to provide, that is, to supply clothing for the Roman military: were the weavers in our text compelled to complete this order as a liturgy? It is likely not: weavers were almost certainly exempt from such services since the mid-first century CE,⁴⁰ and this order for clothing then was a request made by an administrative official. Admittedly, our proposed date for this text is relatively close to the first known limitation of the weavers' liturgical exemption, which occurred at some point between 103 and 107 CE, when the prefect Vibius Maximus proclaimed that various groups who owned private land worth more than one talent were liable to compulsory cultivation of state land; a year later, a senior administrative official, either the ἐπιστράτηγος or the prefect himself, verified that the edict applied to weavers and to other groups who had presumably continued to apply for exemptions.⁴¹ Regardless, it is clear that the production and subsequent sale of this clothing was not a liturgy.

³⁷ Typically, formal associations – those with regulations and their ordinance dated and signed by the members – make use of one, or several, terms that illustrate their unity. The issue is one that appears in both the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. See M. Gibbs, “The Trade Associations of Ptolemaic Egypt: Definition, Organization and Their Relationship with the State,” in V. Gabrielsen and C. A. Thomsen (eds.), *Private Associations and the Public Sphere: Proceedings of a Symposium Held at the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, 9–11 September 2010* (Copenhagen 2015) 243–245; M. Paganini, “A Terminological Analysis of Private Associations in Ptolemaic Egypt,” in A. Di Natale and C. Basile (eds.), *Atti del XVI Convegno di Egittologia e Papirologia: Siracusa, 29 settembre–2 ottobre 2016* (Quaderni del Museo del Papiro 15; forthcoming); Venticinque (n. 30) 9–10.

³⁸ This particular issue is dealt with in more detail in M. Gibbs, “Collective Action, Trade Associations and the State in Roman Egypt,” in D. Rathbone and A. Wilson (eds.), *Documents and the Mechanics of Roman Rule* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

³⁹ See Adams (n. 31) 182–185 for animal requisitions, and *P.Oxy.* 12.1414 (270–275 CE) for clothing. One wonders why the situation, or at least, the administration of the situation, would be significantly different simply because clothing was involved rather than donkeys. For valid reservations on the notion of loose collectives in respect to the suggestions of Gibbs (n. 38) and Adams, however, see M. Paganini, “Private Associations and Village Life in Early Roman Egypt,” in M. Langellotti and D. Rathbone (eds.), *Village Institutions in Egypt from Roman to Early Arab Rule* (London, forthcoming).

⁴⁰ Lewis (n. 11) 91, 143–44. The date appears to be ca. 52 CE, provided the reconstruction of *P.Phil.* 1.43–44 is correct (Lewis [n. 11] 134, n. 34).

⁴¹ *P.Phil.* 1.18–34, 1–17; Lewis (n. 11) 143.

P.Tebt UC 1607c is a text that adds to our understanding of military supply and the mechanisms that appear to have underpinned it. The hand of our text reveals that it is likely the earliest extant example of military clothing supplied via compulsory purchase, and the process reflected therein generally supports what we believe happened in respect to one way of supplying the legions of the Roman army. But this document also presents us with several issues, in part because the actual process provided here appears to be more complicated than in other texts; given the involvement not only of *παράλμπται* but also their *χειρισταί* as well as a garrison and potentially its *curatores*, it is difficult to identify the most common method of procuring clothing, and while P.Tebt UC 1607c may not definitively help us in solving that conundrum, the questions its testimony raises prompt one to examine more closely several important aspects of civil administration and military governance in Roman Egypt.

Physical and Palaeographical Description of P.Tebt UC 1607c

This papyrus is the third of three fragments inventoried under the number P.Tebt UC 1607: the two others are a second-century loan and a tax receipt, both of which are unpublished. APIS records their provenance as a “house at Tebtunis,” which is to say that they are from town as opposed to the temple of Soknebtunis: they were therefore excavated in December 1899, before Grenfell and Hunt turned their attention to the town’s necropolis.

The two fragments of P.Tebt UC 1607c preserve twelve lines of text, framed by upper and lower margins of 1.5 cm. While the column’s height is evident, the papyrus is broken off at both left and right, and the document’s original width cannot be ascertained: a maximum of nineteen letters survive per line, and likely supplements (e.g., lines 3, 6, 10) suggest that at least four letters are missing at left. Towards the bottom of the fragment, in particular, abraded ink inhibits a reconstruction of the text, and the absence of a legible dating formula (or other documentary boilerplate) prohibits an estimate of the column’s original width.

In the absence of an internal date, the text’s palaeography is of crucial importance. The scribe wrote upright and semi-uncial capitals, typically 4 mm in height, using a pen with a wide tip. The epistolary attention to individual letter shapes results in a paucity of ligatures, and those that do appear rarely transform the letters’ appearances: there is simply a tendency, rather, to avoid lifting the pen, and the script is by no means cursive.

Two kinds of *upsilon* appear, one of which approaches the shape of *zeta* (i.e., line 5). *Alpha* and *kappa* are produced both with a single stroke or with two strokes: in the single-stroke *kappa*, the *ductus* descends vertically at first before ascending diagonally to the right and looping back down to make the lower leg. The care with which letters have been formed is clear from their ornamentation: the right legs of *pi* and *eta* are typically curved, and other letters (e.g., *tau*, *iota*, *kappa*, *nu*, *upsilon*, and even *delta*) are occasionally adorned with serifs, if not rounded. *Mu* and *omega* are drawn round and wide.

Parallel hands can be found throughout the first century CE: the best comparison is *P.Oxy.* 8.1124 (26 CE), which has similarly upright and carefully formed (but rounded) letters, also with occasional adornment – notably in the base of *tau*. It is more regularly bilinear than *P.Tebt.*UC 1607c, whose *tau* frequently drops deeper, as though the letter were hanging from a clothesline. Another good parallel is the second hand of *P.Mich.* 5.232 (36 CE) – also from Tebtunis – but others from across the first century can be added.⁴² On account of the hand and the text's contents (see further, above) we assign a date later in the first century.

*P.Tebt.*UC 1607c H × W = 11.2 cm × 6.8 cm

Late first century CE
Tebtunis

] Ἡρακλείδης καὶ Ἰσίδωρ[ος
]ογος παραλήμπται δημ[οσίου ἱματισμοῦ ca. ? τῷ δεῖναι]
 [καὶ Ἀν]ουβᾶδι γερδίοις κώμη[ς Τεβτύνεως
 δι]ᾶ Φιλώτου καὶ Πλουτί[ωνος
 5] . ἀμφοτέρων χειριστ[ῶν
 [πραι]σιδίων χαίρειν· παρε[ιλήφασμεν
] παρ' ὑμῶν τὰς στολὰς [
]α ἀνή[κ]οντα ἀγούσας [
] . . ὃν σταθμὸν καὶ τὰ[
 10 [πλεο]γασμοὶ ὥστε [. . .] τουκ . [
] . . . χα . [. . .] . εγβυ . [
]ταβ . [] . υ Μεχίρ [

3 read Ἀν]ουβᾶτι 5 read χειριστῶν

⁴² Cf. *SB* 16.12835 (6 CE); *P.Oxy.* 2.293 (27 CE); *P.Iand.* 6.105 (40 CE); *P.Col.* 10.250 (43 CE); *P.Mich.* 9.540 (53); *P.Oxy.* 2.249 (80 CE); *SB* 14.11847 (91 CE); *P.Mich.* 21.847 (96/97 CE). We are grateful to Amy Koenig for directing us to *P.Oxy.* 8.1124 (26 CE), another fragment of which papyrus she has edited for a forthcoming *P.Oxy.* volume.

“Herakleides and Isidoros ... receivers of public [clothing] ... to [N.N. and] Anoubas, weavers of the village of Tebtunis ... [through] Philotas and Ploution ... both of them assistants ... of the garrison, greetings. We have received ... from you the garments ... [the things?] pertaining/belonging ... weighing and ... surplus, so that ... (?) ... Mecheir (?) ...”

2 On the different kinds of receivers, see Lewis (n. 11) 39–40, and now Reggiani (n. 1) 60–75: e.g., παραλήμπται συναγοραστικῆς κριθῆς (*BGU* 2.381); παραλήμπται βιβλίων ἐκλογιστοῦ (*P.Bacch.* 9; *P.Sijp.* 20; *SB* 12.10883; *SB* 22.15821; *SB* 26.16725); ἀγύρου παραλήμπται (*O.Bodl.* 2.1653–1656; *O.Cair.* 118; *O.Stras.* 2.835, 2.848; *O.Wilck.* 1433, 1582). The name for such offices can also be formed as a compound: e.g., ἱματοπ(αραλήμπται) (*BGU* 7.1564, 138 CE); σιτοπ(αραλήμπται) (*P.Tebt.* 2.340, 206 CE); ἀχυροπαραλήμπται (*O.Heid.* 317, 177 CE).

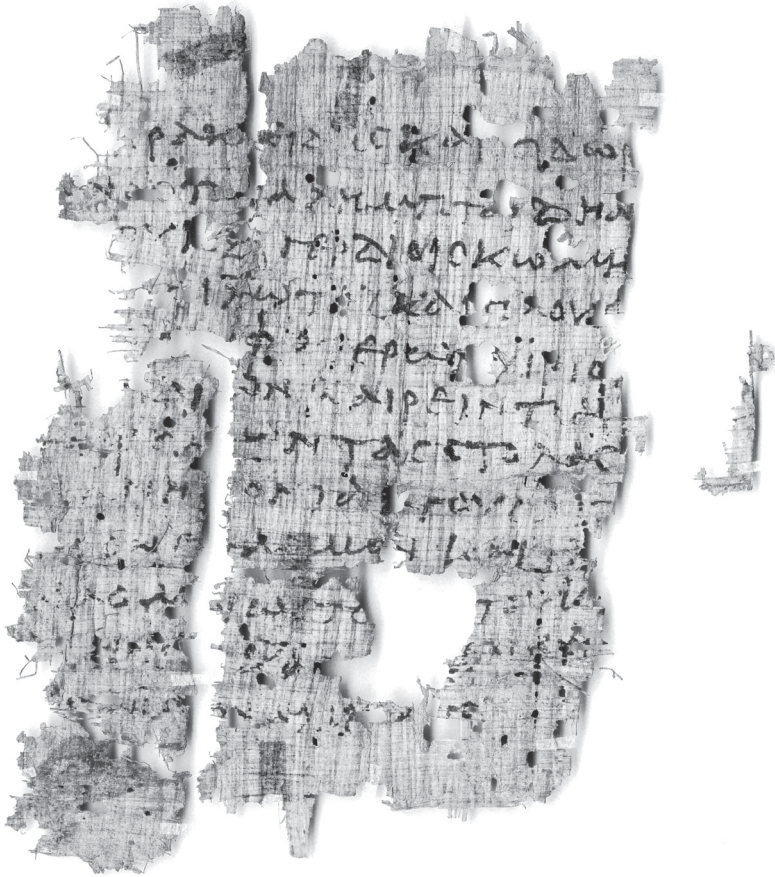
A form of δημόσιος in the genitive is called for so as to specify the receivers’ occupation. Given that the document is addressed to the weavers, the supplement παραλήμπται δημοσίου ἱματισμοῦ (e.g., *BGU* 7.1572, *P.Ryl.* 2.189, *P.Graux* 3.30, *P.CtYBR* inv. 1590; cf. *P.Lips.* 1.57, *BGU* 7.1564) is all but certain. On this particular liturgy, see pp. 68–69 above.

Perhaps more problematic are references to a certain Asklepiades as a παραλήμπτης σίτου in *Rom.Mil.Rec.* 1.78.6, 1.78.7, 1.78.8, 1.78.10, 1.78.11 (see also Reggiani [n. 1] 61–62); the phrase appears to stand in apposition to ὀπτίων (Latin *optio*; on this military official and his role in the supply of clothing, see pp. 69–70 above). Why this is the case is unclear: was Asklepiades both a receiver and an *optio*? He is certainly named as a παραλήμπτης σίτου alone (*Rom.Mil.Rec.* 1.78.3) and, in fact, as a simple ὀπτίων (*Rom.Mil.Rec.* 1.78.2). For the suggestion that a *duplicarius* might function like this ὀπτίων παραλήμπτης σίτου, see *O.Claud.* 2.366 and p. 70 above.

3 The plural indicates that at least one other weaver in addition to Anoubas (TM Nam 2051) is addressed. The name is current in first-century Tebtunis: see *P.Mich.* 2.128 (45 CE) and *PSI* 8.901 (46 CE).

4 Both of the names Philotas (TM Nam 3276) and Ploution (TM Nam 5168) are attested in Tebtunis in the Ptolemaic and Roman period. The latter is especially abundant.

5 For the misspelling of χειρισταί, cf. *P.Oxy.* 48.3429.16. Given the intermediary role that they play, we restore διὰ before the series of genitives in line 4.



Courtesy of the Center for the Tebtunis Papyri, University of California, Berkeley.

– After ἀμφοτέρων and the title, we expect further details about Philotas and Plouton, such as a geographical indicator (i.e., *P.Kron.* 41) or an indication of kinship; in Tebtunite documents, ἀμφοτέρων most frequently specifies common parentage. We suspect, however, that further details pertaining to the requisition are lost in the lacuna; before the πραισιδίων which we read in the next line, one expects to find reference to one or more of its κουράτορες, whose duties include logistics of various types. For such logistics, see *O.Claud.* 2.365–367, 2.380 (esp. the discussion on pp. 193–194).

– Given the likely appearance of a garrison in the genitive at the start of the next line, we might restore *curator(es)* immediately before

(i.e., [ὑπὲρ τῶν κουρατόρων] | [πραι]σιδίων): cf. *O.Claud.* 1.48 (110–114 CE); *O.Claud.* 2.357 (II CE); *O.Claud.* 359 (98–117 CE), and *O.Krok passim* (early II CE). If the receipt also specified a role for the garrison’s *curator(es)* in the purchase, the mechanism for requisition witnessed by the text is increasingly mediated. See above for discussion, as well as comm. on l. 6, below.

6 The traces before the infinitive are most compatible with a word ending in -σιδίων or -τιδίων: πραισιδίων is the likeliest supplement. This garrison need not be located in the immediate vicinity (cf. *P.Ryl.* 2.189 – destined for Judaea – or *BGU* 7.1564 – for Cappodocia), and reference to the garments’ destination or the origin of the order, in any event, would not be out of place in a compulsory purchase of clothing. Any specification of the particular garrison in question would have to be in attributive position. The text, additionally, requires prepositional supplement (e.g., ὑπὲρ or περὶ) since the χειρισταί do not seem to be employed by the army, but are rather acting in its interest, at the behest of the receivers.

7 Unlike Latin *stola*, the Greek term can refer to men’s clothing (i.e., *P.Giss.* 20.16–18). In the best parallel for the current text (*BGU* 7.1564), the requisition is detailed with precision, including the style(s), measurements, weight, cost, and finishing details, not to mention the color and quality of wool and of weave. The bare reference to “clothes” (στολαί) is somewhat unsettling in contrast, even if the σταθμόν of line 9 refers to the weight of the fabric or finished garments. See further the comm. on l. 8.

8 Faint traces at the start of the line are consistent with the tail of an *alpha*. Given the separation of στολάς from its participle ἀγούσας, the nature of the order might here be further detailed: the construction could be something to the effect of τὰς στολάς ... [καὶ τὰ ἄλλα] ἀνή[κ]οντα ἀγούσας (i.e., “the garments and the other things pertaining [sc. to the order]”).

9 For ἀγούσας ... σταθμόν as “weighing,” see *WB* s.v. ἄγω 20.

10 Because an order for compulsory purchase is more likely to stipulate penalties for any deficits or inferior quality of product, for a receipt to mention a surplus is puzzling.⁴³

⁴³ An early version of this paper was presented at the American Society of Papyrologists’ panel at the 2017 SCS Meeting in Toronto. We are grateful to the members of the audience there (especially Rodney Ast and Todd Hickey), as well as to Colin Adams, Tasha Dobbin-Bennett, Dominic Rathbone, Nicola Reggiani, and Dorothy Thompson for their generosity.