

# The Administration of Sasanian Egypt: New Masters and Byzantine Continuity

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IT IS WELL KNOWN that Egypt was under the rule of the Sasanians between 619 and 629 A.D. Historical research into this short period of Egyptian history concentrates mainly on the chronology of the Persian invasion.<sup>1</sup> The focus on this important aspect does not surprise one at all. Even though Egypt can offer abundant material for administrative and socio-historical studies, we encounter specific problems—as far as ancient history is concerned—when dealing with the era of the Sasanians. The problems arise because Greek documents from the Sasanian period are difficult to identify. The documents in question lack, as do those from the Arabic period, essential dating criteria, such as the regnal year of the Byzantine emperor. The study of Sasanian Egypt is therefore left to a small number of scholars, who are either versed in deciphering Pahlavi documents or attempt to assess Greek (and also Coptic) documentary evidence with reference to onomastics and/or prosopography.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. A. J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1978) 69–92; R. Altheim-Stiehl, “Wurde Alexandria im Juni 619 n.Chr. durch die Perser erobert?” *Tyche* 6 (1991) 3–16; “Zur zeitlichen Bestimmung der sasanidischen Eroberung gyptens,” in O. Brehm, S. Klie (eds.), *Μουσικὸς ἀνήρ. Festschrift fur Max Wegner (Antiquitas III.32 [1992])* 5–8; and “The Sasanians in Egypt,” *BullSocArchCopte* 31 (1992) 87–96. The following will be cited here by authors’ names alone: C. Foss, “The *Sellarioi* and Other Officers of Persian Egypt,” *ZPE* 138 (2002) 171–172; P. Sanger, “Saralaneozan und die Verwaltung gyptens unter den Sassaniden,” *ZPE* 164 (2008) 191–201.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview on the Greek and Coptic documents dating from the Persian occupation see L. S. B. MacCoull, “Coptic Egypt during the Per-

In a recent study of the expansion of the Sasanian Empire at the beginning of the seventh century, Clive Foss attempted to shed new light on the way in which the Sasanians ruled in the Byzantine provinces that they conquered.<sup>3</sup> He came to the conclusion that the invasion of the areas in question required only brief military operations. After the attack the Persian occupying force quickly turned to the administration of the conquered territory and relied heavily on the structures of the Byzantine state already in place. Foss concluded that the period of Persian occupation had long-term consequences for the areas affected, as it resulted in an unconscious loosening of the ties with the former Byzantine rulers. It became obvious that the administrative machinery functioned well also under foreign masters. Thus, according to Foss, the Sasanians prepared the way for the success of the Arab campaign two decades later.

A few papyri from the period of the occupation allow us first-hand experience of administrative procedures of the Persians in Egypt. In the analysis of these documents that follows, the focus will be on the various forms of cooperation between Persian and (former) Byzantine administrative staff.

A Persian by the name of Saralaneozañ ( $\Sigma\rho\alpha\lambda\alpha\nu\epsilon\omicron\zeta\hat{\alpha}\nu$  / *Šahr-Ālānyōzāñ*) will serve as our starting point.<sup>4</sup> This person, who according to a Pahlavi papyrus carries the title of *karframan-i dar*, “steward of the court,” represents the highest Sasanian administrator in annexed Egypt known thus far.<sup>5</sup> The Greek evi-

sian Occupation: The Papyrological Evidence,” *SCO* 36 (1986) 307–313, and A. Gariboldi, “Social Conditions in Egypt under the Sasanian Occupation,” *PP* 64 (2009) 335–350, who also considers the Pahlavi papyri.

<sup>3</sup> C. Foss, “The Persians in the Roman Near East (602–630 AD),” *JAS* III.13 (2003) 149–170 (on Egypt esp. 164–168).

<sup>4</sup> For the name *Saralaneozañ* see D. Weber, “Ein bisher unbekannter Titel aus spätsassanidischer Zeit?” in R. E. Emmerick, D. Weber (eds.), *Corolla Iranica. Papers in Honour of Prof. Dr. David Neil MacKenzie* (Frankfurt am Main 1991) 232–234. For this person see Weber 228–235 and “Eine spätsassanidische Rechtsurkunde aus Ägypten,” *Tyche* 17 (2002) 185–192; Foss 171–172; Sänger 191–201; and Gariboldi, *PP* 64 (2009) 341–348.

<sup>5</sup> The papyrus is A. G. Perikhanian, “Pekhleviyskie papirusy sobraniya

dence on Saralaneoan concerns primarily administrative matters. These emerge from two texts from the archive of the *σχολαστικός* Marinos, two from the archive of Theopemptos and Zacharias, and finally a certificate of debt which I have recently edited.

The archive of the *scholastikos* Marinos,<sup>6</sup> who is identified by his title as a person with higher education, comes from the Oxyrhynchite nome and contains several business letters and receipts. The official letter *P.Oxy.* 3637 deals with a tax payment which was demanded by Saralaneoan. Georgios, who was the *χαρτουλάριος* of Marinos and thus his accountant or office helper, delivered a sum of 3962 *solidi*, which represented the first payment (*καταβολή*) of the 12<sup>th</sup> indiction. The letter was issued in the month Phaophi, so October of 623. It is emphasized that the money is intended for the Sasanian supreme king, the *βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλέων*. The document was written or checked by the Persian Rasbanas, whose signature is on the verso at the end of the text.<sup>7</sup> This official therefore seems to

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GMII imeni A. S. Pushkina,” *VDI* 77 (1961) 78–93, no. 13. For an English summary of this text edition and a translation of the title *karfaman-i dar* see I. F. Fikhman, “Survey of Soviet Papyrology,” *JJP* 15 (1965) 423–424; for the latter cf. also Foss 171.

<sup>6</sup> For this archive see A. Claus, *Ὁ σχολαστικός* (diss. Cologne 1965) 155 with n.3; J. R. Rea, *P.Oxy.* LI 3637.20 n. (*BL* VIII 250), and LV 3797.1–2 n.; Sänger 196–197; Gariboldi, *PP* 64 (2009) 341–342.

<sup>7</sup> The signature of Rasbanas occurs also in the second line of the verso of *P.Oxy.* XVI 1843, a letter of 6 November 623 (so less than a month later than *P.Oxy.* 3637) concerning the receipt of 2016 *solidi*. The sum, which is raised in equal parts in the Oxyrhynchite and Kynopolite nomes, is again connected to the first payment of the 12<sup>th</sup> indiction and delivered by Georgios. It is obvious that *P.Oxy.* 1843 belongs with 3637 and 3797, which is discussed below; see J. R. Rea, *P.Oxy.* LI, introduction to 3637, p.102 n. (*BL* VIII 250), and *P.Oxy.* LV, introduction to 3797, p.75; Sänger 196 with n.30; D. Hagedorn, “Zu den Adressen einiger spätantiker Briefe,” *ZPE* 165 (2008) 131; Gariboldi, *PP* 64 (2009) 341. Additionally, I thank Amphilochios Papatomas for bringing to my attention the as yet unpublished *P.Vindob.* G 16459, which comes from the Arsinoite or Herakleopolite nome and seems to date to the Persian period: in line 17 probably the same

have been responsible for taking the delivery of the money.

A tax payment to the Persians is also documented in *P.Oxy.* 3797 (April/May 624). The amount concerned was 5040 *solidi*, which represented the third payment of the same 12<sup>th</sup> indiction, described as *χρυσικὰ δημόσια*, public cash payments. Once again the *scholastikos* Marinus was responsible for the settlement of the sum. Under his supervision the money had been raised in the Oxyrhynchite and Kynopolite nomes. The delivery of the money was this time carried out by a person named Menas bearing the title *χρυσώνης*. Officials called *chrysones* are known in the Byzantine administration.<sup>8</sup> They were responsible for a whole province and acted as a kind of ‘provincial banker’. Their tasks included the receipt of taxes paid in gold. *P.Oxy.* 3797 was issued by a person with the title *curator* or *procurator* of Saralaneozan,<sup>9</sup> “administrator of Saralaneozan.” Probably this administrator had the Greek name Thomas (*Θωμᾶς*).

The archive of Theopemptos and Zacharias consists of approximately sixty ostraca in which these two persons are ordered to deliver grain.<sup>10</sup> The origin of the archive is not certain: one possibility is the town of Hermonthis in Upper Thebais. Saralaneozan is mentioned in *O.Petrie* 421 and 424 (with *BL* VIII 535 and IX 398), so the archive can be assigned to the Persian occupation.<sup>11</sup> In both cases Theopemptos and Zacharias are requested to deliver grain to the scribe (*γραμματεὺς*) of Saralaneozan.

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Rasbanas appears as in *P.Oxy.* 1843 and 3637; he is denoted here as *χαρτουλάριος* and (together with a *μειζότερος*),<sup>9</sup> addresses a business letter to the *κόμης* and *ἀντιγεωδχος* Sergios.

<sup>8</sup> For this office see Wilcken, *Chrest. Wilck.* I 164–165; A. C. Johnson, L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt: Economic Studies* (Princeton 1949) 174; J. Gascou, K. A. Worp, “CPR VII 26: réédition,” *Tyche* 3 (1988) 105 with n.14.

<sup>9</sup> For this new reading see Sängner 197.

<sup>10</sup> For this archive see J. G. Tait, C. Préaux, *O.Bodl.* II p.372; J. G. Tait, *O.Ashm.* p.79; J. R. Rea, *P.Oxy.* LV 3797.9 n.; Sängner 197.

<sup>11</sup> So K. A. Worp at J. R. Rea, *P.Oxy.* LV 3797.9 n. (*BL* IX 405).

The certificate of debt which I published might originate from the Arsinoite or the Herakleopolite nome. It was issued to a Persian named Chosroes, who has the title “*chartularios* of Saralaneozan” (χαρτουλάριος Σαραλανεωζάν).<sup>12</sup> The debt in question is *capitum* (κάπιτον), horse feed, which was owed by the εἰρήναρχος, the peace-keeper, of an unknown village. The full name of this person is lost; only the father’s name, Muei(s) (Μούει(ς)), is preserved. The *capitum* was in Byzantine times a standard ration of feed—such as barley and chaff or green fodder—which was used to sustain the horses of soldiers.<sup>13</sup> This component of a soldier’s pay must have been of great importance in the Persian army, which to a large degree consisted of mounted divisions. Since Justinian, this distribution to the soldiers had been in gold rather than natural produce.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the item on the certificate must be a sum of money. The capital of the Arsinoite or the Herakleopolite nome can be assumed to be the place of handover.

Along side the formal or official testimonies, two lists shed some light on the residence of Saralaneozan. In *BGU* II 377 the delivery of groceries to the kitchen of Saralaneozan is recorded.<sup>15</sup> In *Stud.Pal.* X 251A, an account of cash payments, Saralaneozan and his οἶκος are named among the recipients. The origin of these papyri is the Arsinoite nome. It appears that Saralaneozan visited or settled in this district, maybe in its capital Arsinoiton Polis.

The Greek source material about Saralaneozan leads us to believe that he was one of the highest authorities in Egypt.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Sängér 191–201.

<sup>13</sup> See F. Mitthof, *Annona militaris: Die Heeresversorgung im spätantiken Ägypten* (*Pap.Flor.* 32 [2001]) I 232–235.

<sup>14</sup> Mitthof, *Annona militaris* 266.

<sup>15</sup> A reedition of this text will be published by P. Sängér, D. Weber, “Der Lebensmittelhaushalt des Herrn Σαραλανεοζάν/Šahr-Ālānyōzān. Zu drei Speiselisten aus dem sassanidischen Ägypten,” *Proceedings of the ISAP Vienna Conference 2009* (forthcoming).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Weber, in *Corolla Iranica* 232; *Tyche* 17 (2002) 191; and “The Vienna

He was in charge of levying taxes in gold which on the one hand, like the *chrysika demosia*, were intended for the Sasanian supreme king, and on the other, like the *capitum*, benefited the military machinery. According to a Pahlavi document, Saralaneoan also seems to have been responsible for issuing passes or cover letters.<sup>17</sup> Thus he was in control of persons or goods passing through the occupied territory. Among his duties we also find travel for inspection purposes, whose smooth progress was the responsibility of lower-ranking Persian officials.<sup>18</sup> Finally, we are also informed of a seal bearing the name of Saralaneoan which confirmed the validity of judicial documents.<sup>19</sup>

When dealing with raising the *chrysika demosia*, Saralaneoan had the help of a number of different officials. The Persian Rasbanas and a *curator* or *procurator* obviously were among the staff of Saralaneoan and collected the taxes in gold. They issued the receipts *P.Oxy.* 3637 and 3797 discussed above. It seems that Saralaneoan left the raising of taxes in the nomes to local dignitaries such as the *scholastikos* Marinos, who dealt with the collection of money in the Oxyrhynchite and Kynopolite nomes. Handing over the sums to the representatives of the Sasanian authorities was then carried out by various officials: like the *chartularios* Georgios they could be part of the staff of Marinos or like the *chrysones* Menas belong to the (former) Byzantine body of officials.

In addition, the certificate of debt shows that a *chartularios* of

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Collection of Pahlavi Papyri,” in *Pap. Congr. XXIII* (Vienna 2007) 727; Foss 172; and for the following especially Sanger 198–199.

<sup>17</sup> Heidelberg *P.Pahl.* 21 with the interpretation of Weber, in *Corolla Iranica* 231–232, and Weber and Sanger, in *Proceedings of the ISAP*.

<sup>18</sup> O. Hansen, *Die mittelpersischen Papyri der Papyrussammlung der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin* (Berlin 1938) no. 1, with corrections by Weber, in *Corolla Iranica* 230–231.

<sup>19</sup> The seal is mentioned in *P.Vindob.Pehl.* 373a, published by Weber, *Tyche* 17 (2002) 185–192.

Saralaneoan was employed to levy the *capitum*.<sup>20</sup> He had probably been entrusted by his superior Saralaneoan with procuring the money required for feed material, money which had to be paid by the population on a regular basis. In Byzantine times the various villages formed fiscal units, which paid a contribution to the tax demands, a system which probably was not changed by the Sasanians. The amount to be paid was therefore collected from within the village community and (in this case) entrusted to the *eirenarchos* for transport. As the *eirenarchos* was a liturgical official with ‘police’ duties and held a high social position in the village, he was without doubt a suitable agent for this task.<sup>21</sup>

Saralaneoan certainly is a key figure. Nevertheless one should not overlook the evidence for other officials, which is also important for the reconstruction of Persian rule in Egypt. Of particular significance is a group of officials who appear in the papyri of the seventh century under the Greek term *σελλάριος* and are to be connected with the Persian occupation of Egypt.<sup>22</sup> If one derives the title *sellarios* from a Latin root, *sella* ‘chair’ or ‘saddle’, the suffix *-arios* would imply a saddler or someone who deals with saddles or horses. From the study of the literary sources Clive Foss has put forward the theory that *sellarios* was instead a Hellenised form of the Persian *sālār*.<sup>23</sup> He invoked a source from the seventh century, the *Vita* of St. Anastasios who before his conversion to Christianity was a soldier in the army of the Persian supreme king Chosroes II (590–628). There we encounter *sellarioi* as higher-ranking Persian officers with some responsibility; one of them ranked directly below the

<sup>20</sup> For the supply of the Sasanian army see Sängér 199–201.

<sup>21</sup> For the social standing and the tasks of these officials see P. Sängér, “Die Eirenarchen des römischen und byzantinischen Ägypten,” *Tyche* 20 (2005) 160–161 and 166–168.

<sup>22</sup> The following treatment of the *sellarioi* and the *ostwars* and *vidarbadis* is based on Foss 169–172.

<sup>23</sup> Dieter Weber does not agree with this etymological derivation.

Sasanian governor of Palestine.<sup>24</sup> In an Arabic source, which deals with the history of the patriarchs of Alexandria and describes the Persian conquest of the city, the supreme commander of the troops is called a *sālār*.<sup>25</sup> According to Foss the term *sellarios* or *sālār* is therefore a non-specific label for officers or officials of different ranks. In the Persian language *sālār* normally makes up the second part of a composite title whose first part specifies the respective function of the officer.

Let us turn to the papyrological evidence for *sellarioi*. In a Coptic letter from a bishop to rebels in Upper Egypt a *sellares* (Ϣελλαρης) and Persians are mentioned (*BKU* III 338). The bishop emphasises that he is writing by order of the *sellares* who was responsible not just for the bishop's "own town" (probably Hermopolis) but also for Antinoupolis. Behind the Coptic *sellares* is obviously the Greek borrowing *sellarios*.<sup>26</sup> On the strength of his higher rank and the two towns under his command the officer in question could have been the *sālār* of the Byzantine province Thebais.

As to the Greek testimonies for *sellarioi*, once again the archive of Marinos and the archive of Theopemtos and Zacharias are of interest. *P.Oxy.* XVI 1862 and 1863 are two letters to Marinos from a *sellarios* named Rheme. 1863 can be dated to 623/4 (line 23: 12<sup>th</sup> indiction). The letters refer to the provision of supplies to a posting station situated in the village of Pinarachthis south of Memphis and the exchange of various goods. Rheme seems to have been in charge of this posting station. His function according to Clive Foss was probably that of a low-ranking officer who like the *paighansalar* "was in charge of detachments of infantry, such as served provincial administra-

<sup>24</sup> See B. Flusin, *Saint Anastase le Perse et l'histoire de la Palestine au début du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle* I (Paris 1992) 59 (ch. 17–18), 71 (ch. 28), 81 (ch. 36), 85 (ch. 39).

<sup>25</sup> B. Evetts, *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria* (Patrologia Orientalis 1 [Paris 1907]) 485–486.

<sup>26</sup> See also H. Förster, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Wörter in den koptischen dokumentarischen Texten* (Texte u. Untersuchungen zur Gesch. der altchristl. Lit. 148 [2002]) 721.



tions as gendarmes or executioners” (170). If this identification is correct, Rheme would be the Persian commander of a posting station. It is undisputed that control over these transit points for the exchange of goods and communication by the occupying force was a military necessity. Four ostraca of the archive of Theopemptos and Zacharias contain instructions to provide *καβαλλάριοι* and *sellarioi* with barley (*O.Bodl.* II 2125, 2126, 2127, 2131). We can assume that in this context *kaballarioi* were Persian cavalrymen.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, we can consider one Pahlavi papyrus<sup>28</sup> which is addressed by a higher-ranking authority to the *ostvars* and *vidarbad*s who were operating in the area between Oxyrhynchos (capital of the Oxyrhynchite nome) and the Aphroditopolite village of Tuphis in the Thebaid. The titles *ostvar* and *vidarbad* can be translated as “commissioner” and “street or road inspector.”<sup>29</sup> The text appears to be a sort of transit document for the boat owner Samuel who is given permission to buy and transport a large amount of wheat. The document accordingly shows communication between Persian controlling bodies operating at different levels and regulating the traffic of persons and goods along the Nile valley. The *ostvars* and *vidarbad*s evidently acted as local supervising authorities.

The sources on Saralaneoan convey the impression that the Persians aspired foremost to safeguard tax income and the provisioning of the troops. It appears self-evident that these administrative concerns were a top priority for the invaders immediately after the conquest of Egypt. In addition, one observes that the Persian occupying force tended to post their

<sup>27</sup> The provision of *kaballarioi* with barley by Theopemptos and Zacharias is also attested in *O.Bodl.* 2134, *O.Ashm.* 100, and *O.Petrie* 426; this last text is discussed below.

<sup>28</sup> Hansen, *Die mittelpersischen Papyri* no. 12; for the interpretation of the text see the reedition by J. Harmatta, “Laisser-passer en Égypte à la fin de l’antiquité,” in L. Kákosy (ed.), *Studia aegyptiaca I Recueil d’études dédiées à Vilmos Wessetzky* (Budapest 1974) 165–175.

<sup>29</sup> So Foss 171.

own officers and soldiers at strategically important points to keep the country under surveillance. It seems that *sellarioi* and possibly also *kaballarioi* were entrusted with these tasks. Of course the *ostvares* and *vidarbads* were part of these local supervisory authorities as well. A much higher rank has to be attributed to the one *sellarios* who was possibly in charge of the province of Thebais and who thus would have replaced the Byzantine governor, the *dux et Augustalis*.

As an analogy to the military character of the representatives of Persian rule we can probably assume that Saralaneozan was a high-ranking officer as well,<sup>30</sup> possibly a *sellarios* of the Persian army. His socially elevated position or professional rank is emphasized by the epithet *πανεύφημος* (*famosissimus*) which is attached to him in the Greek documents.<sup>31</sup> This title in fact served to identify the elite of the Byzantine empire, such as patricians, consuls, high-ranking officials and officers.<sup>32</sup> It makes sense to look at Saralaneozan's administrative area in order to be able to form a more accurate judgement of his rank.<sup>33</sup> His area definitely included the Oxyrhynchite and Kynopolite nomes as well as the Arsinoite or Herakleopolite, for the Greek papyri that inform us about his administrative activity concern these districts. This sphere of authority would correspond to the Byzantine province of Arcadia, the area of the former Heptanomia. If the ostraca of the Theopemtos and Zacharias archive indeed come from Hermonthis, that could perhaps indicate a responsibility for all of Egypt, that is, the Egyptian diocese. Accordingly Saralaneozan may have been placed—as an instrument of Persian control—alongside the

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Sängner 199.

<sup>31</sup> *BGU* II 377.1; *P.Oxy.* 3637.13–14, 3797.9; *O.Petr.* 421.5, 424.7; restored in *P.Vindob.* G 20.601.4 (Sängner 191–201).

<sup>32</sup> See O. Hornickel, *Ehren- und Rangprädikate in den Papyrusurkunden. Ein Beitrag zum römischen und byzantinischen Titelwesen* (diss. Giessen 1930) 30–31, and J. Banaji, *Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity: Gold, Labour, and Aristocratic Dominance* (Oxford 2007) 131.

<sup>33</sup> For Saralaneozan's administrative area cf. Sängner 198–199.

Byzantine *praefectus Augustalis*, the governor of the diocese, who perhaps continued to be entrusted with the civilian administration. If his authority was restricted to the province of Arcadia only, he may have monitored the civilian governor of this province, the Byzantine *praeses*, in the same way. On the other hand, it is possible that the Sasanians deposed the *praeses* of Arcadia, leaving the administrative unit solely under the control of a Persian officer. The observation of Bernhard Palme, according to which a *praeses* of Arcadia can no longer be verified after the period of Persian occupation, would accord with this scenario:<sup>34</sup> like the provinces of Aegyptus and Thebais after 539, Arcadia after 629, i.e. after the Byzantine recapture, was governed only by a *dux et Augustalis*, who combined civilian and military power in his person.<sup>35</sup>

Interference with the Byzantine civilian administration by the Sasanians cannot be established, which is not surprising given the short period of occupation. Thus a *chrysones* continued to administer taxes—probably on a provincial level. It appears that on a nome level the Byzantine *πάγαρχοι* also continued to carry out their duty without changes. As an example we can point to Flavius Menas, attested as *pagarchos* of Arsinoiton and Theodosiopoliton Polis in 622 (*CPR XXIV* 30). The *eirenarchos* who issued a certificate of debt to the *chartularios* of Saralaneozan furthermore demonstrates that subordinate liturgical officials also continued to perform their services. *O. Petrie* 426, another document belonging to the archive of Theopemptos and Zacharias, confirms this impression. In this ostrakon the two protagonists are denoted as *ἀπαιτηταί* and so as liturgical local tax collectors. They are to deliver a certain amount of

<sup>34</sup> B. Palme, *CPR XXIV* p.203, introduction to text 33.

<sup>35</sup> See also J. G. Keenan, “The Provincial Administration of Egyptian Arcadia,” *MPhL* 2 (1977) 202, who already supposed that “Arcadia may have been set up as a duchy, not in the (for Egypt, at any rate) relatively peaceful Justinianean period, but in the more turbulent years of the early seventh century, in the reigns of Phocas or Heraclius, perhaps during or in response to the Persian invasion.”

barley as rations for soldiers, who are identified as *kaballarioi*.<sup>36</sup> That may show that *apaitetai*—as in the time before the Sasanian invasion—were still responsible for the collection of the *annona*, the tax for the soldiers' supply, which now provided the Persian army.<sup>37</sup> The orders to supply *kaballarioi* and *sellarioi* with barley documented by the ostraca in the archive of Theopemptos and Zacharias mentioned above should probably also be seen in connection with *annona* payments.

The adaptability of the Sasanian administration is finally shown by the fact that Persian officials—as in the case of the debt certificate—documented dealings with the indigenous population in Greek, even where the documents were issued for their own security.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the Persians adopted the tax system and the relevant terminology of the Byzantines. *Capita* as feed rations appear—along side the *annonae* as soldiers' provisions—as the second component of the Roman-Byzantine soldiers' pay. Saralaneozan's identification as *paneuphemos* brings home in equally clear fashion the fact that Byzantine titles were used to express the social or professional hierarchy of officials in the Persian administration. An agent given the title of *chartularios* by the Sasanians probably had the same duties as his counterpart of the same name in the Byzantine administration.

As indicated above, we are given the impression that the main interest of the Sasanian administration in Egypt lay, not surprisingly, in collecting taxes and supplying the Persian army. Because the administrative structures of the conquered territory were working, greater changes (above all immediately after the occupation) seemed not to be necessary.

<sup>36</sup> Lines 2–6: *παρ(άσ)χ(εσθε) εἰς λόγ(ον) τροφῆς τῶν καβελλαρρ( ) (l. καβαλλαρίων) χορως . . κριθ(ῆς) μάτια τεσσαράκοντα γίνονται κρ(ι)θ(ῆς) μ(ά)τ(ια) μ(ό)να* (with *BL VII 296* and *IX 398*). For *καβελλάριος* instead of *καβαλλάριος* see also *O. Wilck. II 1605.2* (with *BL IX 417*; prov. unknown, 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> cent.).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. B. Palme, *Das Amt des ἀπαιτητῆς in Ägypten* (Vienna 1989) 108.

<sup>38</sup> For this and the following cf. Sängner 201.

As a summary I give a synoptic table of the attested structures of the Sasanian administration of Egypt discussed in this article.<sup>39</sup>

administrative area	Persian military officials	Byzantine civilian officials
diocese (all Egypt)	Saralaneoza (?)	
province	Saralaneoza ( <i>sellarios</i> of Arcadia?) <i>sellarios</i> of Thebais	<i>chrysones</i>
nome		<i>pagarchoi</i>
smaller areas / villages	<i>sellarioi</i> <i>kaballarioi</i> <i>ostvars</i> <i>vidarbad</i> s	<i>eirenarchai</i> <i>apaitetai</i>

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