

THREE REGNAL DATES ASSIGNED TO 310/311

The year 310/311 was the nineteenth regnal year of the emperor Galerius, the seventh of Maximinus Daia, the fifth of Constantine I and the third of Licinius. The normal regnal dating by this group of emperors in this year, therefore, is given in the papyri as to year 19-7-5-3.¹ A few dates in *P.Princ.Roll* (i.5, 13, 23) refer to the year only as 19-7-5; of these, however, only one (i.5) is contemporary (dated on 18.viii.311).² In retrospect, scribes wishing a shorter means of reference than the cumbersome four numbers used 19-7 or even just 19; but in every case the year of Galerius is mentioned, even if some of the junior emperors are left by the wayside. This is true even though Galerius died during the year in question, on 5.v.311. Occasionally, even after the death of Galerius, Egyptian scribes continued his regnal year count as a kind of era-building.³

One text presents a date to 19-7-5-3-1, i.e. the normal pattern plus a year 1: *P.Cair.Isid.* 51.7 (1.iv.311). The editors viewed the addition of year 1 as a blunder; A. Chastagnol, however, has recently argued that it is actually the regnal year of Candidianus, and he cites as parallel the references in the following year to 8-6-4-2, in which he takes the 2 again as being Candidianus.⁴ If this is correct, however, and Candidianus was really recognized in Egypt, one is puzzled that the great majority of documents from the years in question omit him.

1 See our *Regnal Formulas in Byzantine Egypt* (BASP Suppl. 2, Missoula [Mont.] 1979) 34 for references (cited below as *RFBE*).

2 Cf. *RFBE* 35.

3 See our *Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt* (Stud.Amst. 8, Zutphen 1978) 3 for details.

4 "Datation par années régnales égyptiennes sous Constantin," *Aïôn: Le temps chez les Romains* (Caesarodunum X bis, publ. par R. Chevallier, Paris 1976) 238. The three appearances of 8-6-4-2 in *P.Princ.Roll* have been verified for us very kindly by Ann E. Hanson.

Three texts, as published, present dates which are clearly anomalous by comparison to the standard form and its known variations, in that all of them omit the year 19, the regnal year of Galerius. On further inspection, all of these dates seem to rest on errors.

(1) *P.Oxy.* XXXI 2579.3 refers to a year 7 and 5, according to the editor's text. The editor took this to be either 312/3 (Constantine I and Licinius; but one expects 9-7-5, including Maximinus, the ruler of Egypt at this time) or 310/311. But the numeral 7 is restored, and on a photograph kindly provided by Dr. R.A. Coles, we observe that it is possible to restore instead [ιζ], giving year 17-5, or 308/9.⁵

(2) *P.Cair.Isid.* 146.4,6,8,10 gives us four supposed references to year 7-5 in a document dated by the consuls to 14.iv.311. The editors evidently supposed that the numeral of Galerius had been omitted, and this supposition is accepted by Chastagnol. It is curious to find this means of reference, and it is even more curious to find that payments for *adaeratio* on the crop of 310/311 were being made even before that crop was harvested. We therefore asked Professor H. C. Youtie to examine the photograph, and he replied that he considered it possible to read as follows:

- 4 τ]ιμῆ(ν) πῡρ(οῦ) ιζ καὶ εS
- 6 τι(μῆς) πῡροῦ ιζ καὶ εS/
- 8 τι(μῆς) πῡρ(οῦ) [ιζ] καὶ εS
- 10 [τι(μῆς) πῡρ(οῦ)] ιζ καὶ εS

From the photograph which he kindly lent us, we can agree that these are possible readings. The reference is thus, as one would expect, to year 17-5, 308/9, and the reference to *adaeratio* is perfectly normal.

⁵ The hole in the papyrus is probably only enough for one letter, but in lines 4 and 5 ink is missing at the start of the line in the place corresponding to where our iota would have been, although the papyrus is preserved. This text was missed by Chastagnol (*supra*, n.4) 235. Restoring the date as [6]-5 would give an improbably early date—by a goodly margin the earliest attestation of this tax.

(3) *P.Oxy.* XLII 3042.2 has a date, as published, to year 5-3, which the editor considered might be 308/9 with omission of Galerius' years, or 310/311, with omission of both Galerius' and Maximinus' years. He cites only *P.Oxy.* 2579 (above, no.1) as a parallel. In fact, however, the papyrus has 15-3, as Dr. Coles informs us (he and J. R. Rea had independently noticed this error). The papyrus therefore belongs to 306/7.⁶

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⁶ Chastagnol (*supra*, n.4) 238 offered the desperate explanation, "...probablement parce que ce papyrus a été recopié après la mort de Maximin; les années sont alors celles de Constantin et Licinius." On p.235 he lists two further texts for year 7-5 = 312/3; these, however, are perfectly explicable, for both were written in 314, after Maximinus was dead and Constantine was the ruler of Egypt. Cf. *RFBE* 37.