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Girgis Mattha

An early Ptolemaic bank-receipt from Elephantine.

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AN EARLY PTOLEMAIC BANK-RECEIPT FROM ELEPHANTINE

BY

GIRGIS MATTHA.

The following document is a receipt written in demotic on a potsherd in the collection of Egyptian MSS in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, n° 1031 and given by a certain Patow (Πάτωϛ), a bank-official at Elephantine, to a certain Apollōn, son of Kalhib(?), for the sum of one silver kite (= 2 drachmae), paid in two instalments of one drachma each, in respect of the tax on fruit-trees. In lines 2-3 of the text, Apollōn pays his tax on the 12th of Mesore(?) of the 2nd year *in respect of the 26th year*.

In lines 4-6 he pays the same tax on the same day *for the 2nd year*. By this it is to be understood that Apollōn paid his tax for two consecutive years: the first being the 26th year of the deceased king, and the next being the second year of the reigning king. Now, the 26th year can only be that of Euergetes I, as he is the only king who died in the 26th year of his reign; and according to BEVAN in October 221 B. C. The second year of Philopator was B. C. 221-220; and if Mesore 12 is correct, the date of the receipt is B. C. 220 September 23. Philopator's first year of reign only lasted a few days, it being reckoned from the death of his father till the next Thoth 1 (October 17th 221) when his second year began. This text is especially valuable as showing that Euergetes' 26th year and Philopator's second year were successive calendar years.

