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A NOTE ON ΣΤΕΦΑΝΩΝ ΚΑΘΑΙΡΕΣΙΣ  
IN THE NEWLY PUBLISHED PAPYRUS ON THE THEADELPHEIA FESTIVAL

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A few months ago Elena Chepel published the *editio princeps* of an exceptionally interesting document recording in some detail the programme for the festival of the Alexandrian Theadelphia under the reign of Ptolemy III and Berenice II (probably to be dated to the early months of 242 BC).<sup>1</sup> The papyrus, unearthed by a Russian-Egyptian archaeological excavation at Deir-el-Banat in 2020, was reused as mummy cartonnage. Our text (the programme of the Theadelphia) is written on the verso of a document whose nature, as suggested both by the archaeological context of the find and by the few ill-preserved textual traces, seems to have been a petition to the king via the local strategos of Crocodilopolis.<sup>2</sup> This contribution aims at unravelling further the possible meanings of στεφάνων καθάρισις mentioned at l. 18 of the verso and its function within the festival's programme. As we shall see, multiple possible scenarios, with varying degrees of likelihood, can be envisaged. Whatever interpretation one chooses, a closer look at the possible realia underlying this elusive expression can help us to improve our knowledge of the overall nature and purpose of the document itself.

The portion of the text concerning us is the following (ll. 16–19):

θ βασιλίση[ε]  
Βερενίκης γενέθλια. ι ια [ ιβ ιγ ] ιδ ιε ις διάλοιπ[οι].  
ιζ ιη στεφάνων καθάρισις. [ ιθ ] . . . κρισις ποιη[τῶν]  
καὶ κλῆρος οἴκων. κ . . [ ±13 ] . . . . .

‘day 9 (of Audnaios): birthday of queen Berenice. Days 10, 11, [12, 13,] 14, 15, 16: vacant. Days 17–18: στεφάνων καθάρισις. [Day 19]: [...]tion(?)<sup>3</sup> of poets and drawing of lots of venues’

In the running commentary of the ed. pr. the expression στεφάνων καθάρισις is explained thus:

‘18 στεφάνων καθάρισις: This line is problematic. The fifth letter of the second word is probably a iota, although a rho is also possible. The next three letters can be read with more certainty. The noun καθάρισις, from καθάριω,<sup>4</sup> means ‘pulling down’, ‘taking and carrying away’. Perhaps, this was a procession during which the wreaths were moved from one place to another. The wreaths would be the prizes to be later awarded at the stephanitic games. Cf. carrying Delphic tripods (the prizes for the choruses), Panathenaic amphoras, and other prizes in the procession at the Ptolemaia, Athen. 5.27, 29. Alternatively, these could have been some other crowns of symbolic status, cf. golden crowns carried in the procession at the Ptolemaia, including those laid on thrones, such as the throne of Ptolemy I Soter, Athen. 5.34. The theoroi from the Greek cities brought crowns to the festival as diplomatic gifts for the royal couple and, perhaps, as the symbol of recognition of the stephanitic status of the games, see *SEG XXXVI* 1218.11–12.’<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chepel 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Chepel 2022: 160.

<sup>3</sup> In Chepel 2022: 169 two possible supplements are proposed: either διάκρισις (‘selection’, ‘examination’) or ὑπόκρισις (‘recitation’). Palaeography favours the latter, though the ensuing mention of allocation by lot of houses suggests a preparatory stage of events rather than the actual agonistic performance (ὑπόκρισις).

<sup>4</sup> A slip for καθάριω.

<sup>5</sup> Chepel 2022: 169.

The reading καθάρεις seems indeed unavoidable: καθά is very clearly legible and the same goes also for the sequence εϛ. Between these two strings there are traces of two verticals (the first in ligature with the preceding α), that, since the spacing suggests two and not one letter, can accommodate only very thin shapes: ι or ρ.<sup>6</sup> What actual event should we understand under this label? What does the ‘pulling down of crowns’ mean in our text? Are we dealing with crowns of foliage or with crowns of precious metal? Why are two full days (the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of Audnaios) needed for such an event? And what is its immediate context? Does it refer to the agonistic programme of the Theadelphia proper or is it more closely connected to the aftermath of the celebration of Berenice’s royal birthday?

Let us start from the last issue mentioned, the surrounding context. An excessively rigid distinction between the Theadelphia proper and the festivities of the royal birthday of Berenice is certainly unwise: the celebration of the royal γενέθλια was explicitly integrated within the festival. Yet the timeline of events should not be neglected: the mention of στεφάνων καθάρεις at l. 18, sandwiched as it is between the seven days διάλοιποι following the royal birthday and other preliminary stages of organisation of the contests proper (ll. 18–19: selection (?) of poets and allocation of venues), strongly suggests linking the ‘pulling down of crowns’ to the festivities (just finished) for the royal birthday rather than to the agonistic performances of the Theadelphia (still to come).<sup>7</sup> As a matter of fact, the main competitive performances (both stephanitic and νεμητοί, ‘allocated’) have not yet really started: at l. 7 we are told that before Berenice’s birthday only the (minor) contest of heralds and trumpeters (καλπικτῶν καὶ κηρύκων ἀγών) has taken place so far and all other major events (and consequent bestowal of victory prizes) are still ahead. The likeliest explanation for the seven ‘vacant’ days (διάλοιποι: that is, ‘vacant’ from the point of view of the agonistic events and their preparation)<sup>8</sup> is that the celebration of Berenice’s birthday was rather a large affair and lasted several days (as royal birthdays in Ptolemaic Egypt usually did).

After that, we have 2 full days dedicated to the ‘pulling down of crowns’. What exactly is happening? Are we to assume that we are dealing with crowns of vegetation or of precious metal (στέφανος can obviously mean both)? This issue is further complicated by two factors: (i) the possibility that the crowns mentioned at l. 18 might be later reused during the games proper (see below), and (ii) the fact that the Theadelphia included both stephanitic contests (usually, if not uniquely, rewarded by the hosting organisation with crowns of vegetation in this period: 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> BC) and νεμητοὶ ἀγῶνες, that is, contests rewarded by prizes quantifiable in cash terms according to the common orthodoxy.<sup>9</sup> That is, for the Theadelphia we have to entertain simultaneously the possibility that the crowns may be of vegetation for some contests and of metal for others.

If, as I have been arguing, the στεφάνων καθάρεις of l. 18 must relate in first place to what just happened (the celebration of the royal birthday), there is no shortage of evidence in Ptolemaic Egypt for crowns, both of foliage and of precious metal, sent as gifts to the reigning couple on the occasion of royal birthdays, anniversaries and/or festivals.<sup>10</sup> In particular, on the occasion of festivals involving also royal

<sup>6</sup> To emend it into καθάρεις (gloss of ἀγιασμὸς in Hsch. α 510 Cunningham; cf. *EGen.* α 122 Lasserre-Livadaras) will not do.

<sup>7</sup> This of course does not mean that the crowns offered to Berenice may not be then reused or redeployed in some way as victory prizes for the contests: see below.

<sup>8</sup> On the use of διάλοιπος in this context, see Chepel 2022: 159 and 168–9.

<sup>9</sup> The most recent updated critical assessment of the issue remains that of Slater 2012 (partly correcting his previous contributions of 2006 and 2007 with regard to *IvMagnesia* 16 ll. 28–9). Note that Slater 2012: 177 does not deny that in the second century BC there are cases of stephanitic winners rewarded with crowns of gold ‘in the form of foliage’ by the organizing city (and not by their home-town).

<sup>10</sup> Royal anniversaries of various kind were often incorporated into festivals (e.g. the Basileia and the Ptolemaia): see Perpillou-Thomas 1993: 151–63. For crowns of precious metal (mostly gold), cf. the evidence collected by Rice 1983: 126 n. 268 quoting Preaux 1939: 394–95. For the fiscal and symbolic significance of (golden) crowns under the Ptolemies, originally ‘freiwillige Gaben’, with time ‘Zwangleistungen’, see above all Wilcken 1899: 295–302. For the dispatch of hundreds of crowns of vegetation on occasion of royal anniversaries, we have mainly two pieces of evidence: (1) *P.L.Bat.* XX 22 = *PSI* 5 489a = *P.Zen. Pestm.* 22 = TM 1853 (257 BC), a letter announcing to Zenon the dispatch of 400 crowns of vegetation (pomegranate leaves) for the king Philadelphos (ll. 1–3 ἀπεστάλακαμεν Ἀπολλωνίωι | τοὺς ὕ στεφάνους τῶν βαλωτρί[ων] περὶ ὧν ἔγραψεν ἡμῖν |

birthdays, θεωροί from the Greek οἰκουμένη outside Egypt sent precious crowns as gift for the royal couple.<sup>11</sup> The nature of the crowns is not always specified but it is difficult to assume that we are dealing with crowns of foliage as a default gift. Callixeinos' report in his fourth book of *On Alexandria*, famously quoted by Athenaeus, says as much for the Ptolemaia.<sup>12</sup> It is worth quoting in full the relevant passages of Athenaeus since they are not free from textual difficulties. They are two, (1) Athen. 5.203A (henceforth **T1**) and 5.203B (**T2**):

(**T1**) Athen. 5.203A ἐστεφανώθησαν δ' ἐν τῷ ἀγῶνι καὶ στεφάνοις χρυσοῖς (καὶ) εἰκόσι (χρυσοῖς εἴκοσι A: <καὶ> εἰκόσι Kaibel)· Πτολεμαῖος δὲ ὁ πρῶτος καὶ Βερενίκη εἰκόσι (Cobet: εἴκοσι mss) τριῖν ἐφ' ἁρμάτων χρυσῶν καὶ τεμένεσιν ἐν Δωδώνῃ.

'[?] at the contest were honoured with gold garlands and portrait-statues; Ptolemy I and Berenice were honoured with three portrait-statues carried on gold carts, and sacred precincts in Dodona.'

At 203A we have a very sudden change of subject: Callixeinos (or Athenaeus quoting/excerpting Callixeinos) moves abruptly away from the description of the parade of infantry and cavalry (202F) and launches into a section usually referred to as 'the crowning ceremony'.<sup>13</sup> The main textual difficulty presents itself in the first sentence:<sup>14</sup> the subject of ἐστεφανώθησαν is left undetermined and εἰκόσι is Kaibel's correction for the transmitted εἴκοσι.<sup>15</sup> Whatever textual solution one chooses to adopt, there is widespread consensus among scholars that the subject of ἐστεφανώθησαν is unlikely to be Ptolemy and Berenice (who are mentioned only in the next sentence). As observed by Rice, '[t]he subject is not specified, but this probably results from the fragmentary nature of this passage if Athenaeus began his quotation abruptly. Although Ptolemy I and Berenike could be understood as the subjects who were given honorary crowns in the ἀγῶν, this is perhaps unlikely linguistically since their names are, in this case, repeated in the following sentence. If they are not the subjects, the unspecified parties may be the agonistic victors who are honoured with crowns etc.' (id. 1983: 127–8). That is, 203A must in all likelihood belong to the report of the crowning of the victors at the isolympic agon of the Ptolemaia.<sup>16</sup> In other words, what Callixeinos would be saying is that at the isolympic (and hence most probably stephanitic) contests of the Ptolemaia<sup>17</sup> victors were rewarded with golden crowns (and statues). If this interpretation is correct, the passage of Athenaeus quoting

κατασκευάσαι ὅστε τῷ βασιλεῖ). On the possible occasion, see Winnicki in Pestman 1980: 111 'Das erste, was uns einfällt, ist, dass sie ein Geschenk sein mussten für eins der Feste, welche der König im Monat Dystros feiern würde: die Feier seiner Thronbesteigung am 25. Dystros ..., und am 12. Dystros ... sein Geburtstag'; (2) *PSI* 4.222 = TM 2027 (256 BC), another letter to Zenon announcing the impending dispatch of 300 crowns of pomegranate leaves.

<sup>11</sup> See Chepel 2022: 169 with reference to *SEG* 36.1218 ll. 11–12 quoted above; cf. e.g. also *SEG* 1.366 (246/3 BC), a Samian honorific decree for Boulagoras, ἀρχιθεωρός of the Samian embassy to Alexandria: the city of Samos sent via Boulagoras crowns and sacrifices to the living royal couple (ll. 28–30: the festival is not specified; cf. Caneva 2016: 190).

<sup>12</sup> For the (widespread but not universally accepted) identification of the Ptolemaia with the Penteteris, see above all Thompson 2000: 381–3 and Caneva 2016: 195 (with n. 47 for further bibliography). Callixeinos' source are the official 'records of the Penteteric festivals' preserved at Alexandria (Athen. 5.197D 9–10 τὰς τῶν πεντετηρίδων γραφάς).

<sup>13</sup> See Rice 1983: 126 *ad loc.*

<sup>14</sup> In the second sentence (Πτολεμαῖος δέ ... ἐν Δωδώνῃ) ὁ πρῶτος is likely to be an interpolated gloss; see Keyser 2014 *ad loc.*

<sup>15</sup> Note that χρυσοῖς can agree only with στεφάνοις since εἰκών = 'statue' is feminine. The reading of A is retained by Rice 1983: 24–5 and Keyser in his *BNJ* edition and commentary of the fragment (Callixeinos of Rhodes *BNJ* 627, fr. 2). The numeral 20 may seem to be required to balance the τριῖν of the next line (Rice 1983: 128 'Kallixeinos is always careful to record the number of everything'); on the other hand the καὶ before στεφάνοις would then be redundant (both Keyser and Rice omit translating it). In favour of Kaibel's emendation is also the fact that στεφανώω, in agonistic inscriptions and literary texts alike, can be used as synonymic of 'to honour' (on this use of the verb, see Slater 2007: 34 with n. 99): hence the hendiadys στεφάνοις (καὶ) εἰκόσι. On the whole passage, see the detailed treatment by Rice 1983: 126–8.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Rice 1983: 126 '[t]he most likely suggestion is that this section belongs to the crowning ceremony attached to the agon of the festival.'

<sup>17</sup> The isolympic status of the Alexandrian Ptolemaia is explicitly stated in *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 390.20–21 καὶ ἀγῶνα τίθησι (sc. Ptolemaios) ἰσολύμπιον, γυμνικὸν καὶ ἰμουσικὸν καὶ ἵππικὸν (cf. also ll. 26, 39, 42) and *CID* IV. 40 (= *FD* iii 4.357) ll. 12–13, 15

Callixeinos at 203A would then be, to the best of my knowledge, the earliest evidence of golden crowns (almost certainly in the form of crowns of foliage) awarded as prizes to winners of an isolympic contest by the host city, against the commonly held opinion.<sup>18</sup>

(T2) Athen. 5.203B καὶ ἐγένετο τὸ δαπάνημα τοῦ νομίματος τάλαντα διςχίλια διακόσια τριάκοντα ἑννέα, μναί πεντήκοντα· καὶ ταῦτ' ἠριθμήθη πάντα τοῖς οἰκονόμοις διὰ τὴν τῶν στεφανούντων προθυμίαν πρὸ τοῦ τὰς θεάς παρελθεῖν.

'and the cost in coin was 2,239 talents and 50 minae. All this was counted out by the *oikonomoi* before the spectacle was over through the eagerness of those giving the crowns' (transl. Rice 1983: 25).

Also for T2 different interpretations have been put forward and scholars have variously disagreed about what kind of costs were covered by the figure of 2,239 talents and 50 minae (the expenditure of the whole procession and festival? Or that of the crowns only?) and in which form (gold crowns? The equivalent in cash? A form of compulsory taxation?).<sup>19</sup> The most balanced discussion of this passage remains to date that by Rice, which I quote in full:

'Although this sentence does not provide much information, a few assumptions can be made. The sum of money appears to cover only the cost of the crowns and not the whole festival or Grand Procession, but it is not clear which crowns are meant. Thousands of crowns are mentioned throughout the text of the Grand Procession, some worn by participants, some carried along as divine offering, one magnificent one dedicated to Ptolemy I, and some used in the agonistic crowning ceremony; [...] on the grounds of narrative proximity, which is not decisive in this confused section of the text, *the sum may be intended to pay for the crowns used as prizes in the agon*, since, judging from the scale and scope of the Grand Procession, the agon probably included thousands of participants and required many crowns as victor's prizes. On the other hand, *it is possible that the crowns worn in the Grand Procession were reused as prizes in the agon*, and that the sum here was the cost of all the crowns in the festivals. More than 2,000 talents surely would have paid for thousands of crowns even of precious metal' (Rice 1983: 132; my emphasis).

Much remains uncertain but what counts for our purposes is that T2 clearly attests the presence of enthusiastic donors or sponsors of (presumably) crowns of precious metals (διὰ τὴν τῶν στεφανούντων προθυμίαν) for the Ptolemaia. As observed by Thompson, these crowns were probably not only 'internal gifts' from Egypt but also from overseas: '... what the passage seems to say is that to some extent it was the visitors who paid for the show with their contributions in the form of gold crowns they presented. Festivals then, we might argue, formed part of a large-scale system of international gift-exchange. Envoys attended from all over the Mediterranean world and, besides the income generated from their stay in Alexandria, the crowns

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and 19. The wording 'stephanitic' does not occur in these two inscriptions but that the Ptolemaia were automatically stephanitic *because* isolympic is a natural assumption shared by scholars at large (cf. Chepel 2022: 175).

<sup>18</sup> We do not know for which agon (gymnic, hippic or musical) victors were awarded the crowns (see above n. 9); we only know that all these games were of isolympic status. As to the nature of the μουσικὸς ἀγὼν of the Ptolemaia (see n. 16), we can only guess. Le Guen 2007: 97 n. 2 wonders 'si la partie musicale des Ptolémaia ne comprenait pas des épreuves dramatiques qui auraient décidé notre homme [i.e. the Tegean actor cum athlete of *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 1080] à se rendre à Alexandrie'. Kallixeinos at Athen. 5.198C mentions Delphic tripods as prizes (ἄθλα) for choral performances accompanied by the aulos (ἄθλα τοῖς ἀλητῶν χορηγοῖς: ἀλητῶν A); Rice 1983: 57–8 identifies these performances with dithyrambic choruses (boys and men; these performances belong to the νεμητοὶ ἀγῶνες in our papyrus on the Theadelphia).

<sup>19</sup> Equivalent in cash: Lorber 2020: 170 has proposed that these crowns either were a gift to the king or the term στεφανος is employed to indicate the monetary equivalent of a golden crown (Lorber reads εἰκοσι at 203A and not εικόσι with Kaibel; hence her argument relies on the premise that the crowns were only 20 and the price mentioned at 203B would be excessive for only 20 crowns). Tax: Dunand 1981: 36 n. 9 thinks that the crowns mentioned by Athenaeus at 203B are a form of taxation.

that they bought might also serve in part to meet the actual costs incurred in mounting the spectacle' (Thompson 2000: 380).

If we take stock of the evidence so far collected, we saw that both crowns of vegetation (see n. 10 above) and metal crowns (mostly gold) were sent as gifts to the reigning couple for anniversaries (including birthdays) and/or festivals. Since the Ptolemaia were strictly linked, chronologically and ideologically, to the Theadelphia in the Lagid royal propaganda,<sup>20</sup> one may be inclined to assume that as in the Ptolemaia (see T1 and T2 above) also in the Theadelphia golden crowns were sent as gift to the monarchs and then possibly redeployed as prizes for the coming games. This remains one possible option, but does not allow us to discard entirely other possibilities.

The key element for understanding what is going on at l. 18 of our papyrus is to gauge the possible meaning of καθαίρεσις in the surrounding context (be the crowns made of foliage or of metal). Are these crowns simply removed from somewhere (temples? altars?) to a safer place for logistic and practical reasons (reuse as prizes for the games?) or something else is taking place?

The verb καθαίρω and its derivates nominal and adjectival formations refer to the act of 'pulling down'. Depending on the nature of the object involved in the process and the context, καθαίρω can mean simply 'to put/take down' in an unmarked way, as for instance in the case of *IG II<sup>3</sup> I 429* (337 BC), the law on rebuilding the walls of the Peiraeus, where at ll. 58–62 we are told that the labourers must 'unload' their stones by the work site as specified by the contractors, where there is access for an ox-cart (καὶ καθαιρήσονται ἰπρὸς τὸ ἔργον τὸν λίθον ἕκαστον οἷον ἂν οἱ τὴν ἐργασίαν μισθωσάμενοι κελεύσιν, οἷον ἂν ἦ ζεύγει πρόκολδος). Καθαίρω can also mean 'take down and carry off' and hence 'take possession', 'achieve' (cf. e.g. *Hdt. 7.50.20* *μεγάλα γὰρ πρήγματα μεγάλοι κινδύνοι ἐθέλει καταίρεσθαι*).<sup>21</sup> With reference to cities, armies and people, it often means 'to pull down forcibly', that is, 'to destroy' (*LSJ<sup>9</sup> s.v. καθαίρω II; καθαίρεσις I*), or 'to overpower' (ibid. *s.v. καθαίρω III, καθαίρεσις II*). Likewise, in the documentary evidence, when governing architectural items or utensils, καθαίρω and its derivates very often mean 'to demolish' (of inscriptions, roofs, buildings, walls, bath-rooms, vessels etc.).<sup>22</sup> In our case, a crown is an object which is not free-standing but must be hung on to something else: hence 'to pull/take down' a crown, literally or metaphorically, is in itself a pretty unmarked expression in most contexts.<sup>23</sup> Yet there is also a notable exception. A combined TLG and PHI search showed that there is only one other text in which exactly this syntagm (στεφάνων καθαίρεσις) occurs, and that is Demosthenes' *Against Androtion* 22. 69 (355/4 BC). Androtion, a wealthy Athenian who during his civic career had also been one of the members of the treasury of Athena, had some golden crowns from the treasury of the goddess melted down and recast into new cult items. Diodoros strongly criticises this behaviour as unpatriotic and as a means of appropriating civic money unduly. The passage, repeated verbatim in *Against Timokrates* 24.176,<sup>24</sup> is as follows:

τί γὰρ βούλεσθ' εἶπω; τὰ πομπεῖ' ὡς ἐπεκεύασεν, καὶ τὴν τῶν στεφάνων καθαίρεσιν, ἢ τὴν τῶν φιαλῶν ποίησιν τὴν καλήν;

<sup>20</sup> Chepel 2022, esp. 174–6.

<sup>21</sup> *LSJ<sup>9</sup>*'s lemmatization of the entry of *s.v. καθαίρω IV* is unsatisfactory: the main meaning is that of 'to achieve', 'to accomplish' (see the *Cambridge Greek Lexicon s.v. καθαίρω 19*); in *Plut. Pomp.* 8.6 ὡς περ ἀθλητοῦ πρωτεύσαντος ἐν ἀνδράσι καὶ τοὺς πανταχοῦ καθελόντος ἐνδόξως ἀγῶνας it is ἀγῶνας that is used metonymically for prize (of a contest): so while we can loosely translate it 'as an athlete ranking first among men and having carried off prestigious victories everywhere' given the specific context (a simile with a competitive athlete), the lemmatization of καθαίρειν as 'fetch down as a reward or prize' is at best imprecise. Amin Benaissa kindly pointed out to me the analogous metonymical use of καθαίρω in *P.Oxy. 5202* (= *TM 290109*) ll. 2–3 καὶ τρεῖς καθελόντα τὴν ἐν Ἄργει ἀπίδα.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. e.g. *IG II<sup>2</sup> 448*, Attica 323/2 BC (demolition of stelai); *P.Entreux. 6* = *TM 3283*, 222 BC (demolition of a gymnasium); *P.Entreux. 13* = *TM 3290*, 222 BC and *P.Lond. VII 1974* = *TM 1537*, 254 BC (demolition of walls); *P.PetrieKleon 91* = *TM 2914*, 245 BC (demolition of two bridges).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. e.g. *Septuag. (Jerem. 13.18)* καθηρέθη ἀπὸ κεφαλῆς ὑμῶν στέφανος δόξης ὑμῶν or *Plut. De cupid. div.* 523d καθελεῖν ἔδει τὸν στέφανον ἠωρημένον.

<sup>24</sup> On the possible reason for this repetition, see Giannadaki 2020: 54–6.

‘What do you wish me to discuss? How he repaired the processional vessels and the melting down of the crowns, or the successful production of bowls?’ (text and translation after Giannadaki 2020: 102–3).

The same is repeated at 22.73: as a consequence of Androtion’s behaviour (melting down and recasting of golden crowns), the epigrams inscribed on these crowns and that inspired noble emulation and pride in the Athenian citizens have vanished into oblivion (ταῦτα μὲν τοίνυν, ἃ ζῆλον πολλὸν εἶχε καὶ φιλοτιμίαν ὑμῖν, ἠφάνιςται καθαιρεθέντων τῶν στεφάνων). Giannadaki’s comment on the expression στεφάνων καθάριεσθαι, translated by her as ‘the melting down of the crowns’, reads thus: ‘[t]his is the technical term to denote decasting of religious offering found in the specific inventories preserving examples of καθαίρειαι, “cleaning up” of presumably defective dedications to produce useful objects: cf. *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1539. 3,10; *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 839. 30–40, *IG II<sup>3</sup>* 1 1154 (third century).’<sup>25</sup> In the case of the Demosthenic passage there is no ambiguity about the contextual meaning of τὴν τῶν στεφάνων καθάριεσθαι: at 22.70 Diodoros accuses Androtion of having persuaded the Athenians to ‘melt them down’ (συγχωνεύειν ἔπειτεν). In the specific context evoked in *Against Androtion* Giannadaki is right: the phrase here clearly means that the gold crowns are to be taken down to be melted. Likewise, in inscriptions καθαιρέω and καθάριεσθαι in connection with metal votive offerings do mean ‘take down to be melted’: we find instances, among others, in the inventories of Delos with reference to silver and bronze offerings (*ID* 1442B),<sup>26</sup> and in some Attic inscriptions (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1537 fin. 3<sup>rd</sup> BC = Aleshire 1989: 337, VI 28 [– φιάλαι ἀργυρ]αῖ αἱ καθαιρεθ[εῖσαι –], *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 839, 221/20 BC, l. 54 [ἐ]ν τ[ῶ]ι τοῦ ἥρωος τοῦ ἱατροῦ τὰ καθαιρεθέντα | [εἶ]ς τὸ ἀνάθημα· νν ἀργυρῶ· ν).<sup>27</sup> Since, as we saw earlier, there is a distinct possibility that the crowns mentioned at l. 18 of our papyrus may be made of precious metal and they too are some sort of religious offerings, it is worth asking ourselves whether some kind of recycling of an analogous nature is taking place here too (precious crowns of metal could be considered as a form of bullion, for instance).<sup>28</sup> We have therefore various possible scenarios before us:

#### 1. Crowns of vegetation

- (i) a simple transfer of place for logistical purposes cannot be ruled out, but if we reflect that these crowns were already 7 days old by the time they were ‘taken down’, it is doubtful whether crowns of foliage left out under the sun for a week (in Egyptian spring: March–April) could then be stored up and reused in whatever form (prizes?) for the games to come. We do not have existing parallels for this practice but the fact that we do not have it does not mean that it did not exist. The duration of the process (two full days) seems however disproportionate even in the case of hundreds of crowns. But of course we cannot tell;
- (ii) a general ‘cleaning up’ (rubbish management) of the crowns of foliage given as a present for the royal birthday of Berenice before the starting of the games proper.<sup>29</sup> This too is unparalleled in the extant documentation of festival programmes (literary, inscriptional or papyrological) but it remains a possible scenario, even if two entire days to remove hundreds of vegetal crowns may seem a bit too much;

#### 2. Metal crowns

- (i) again, a simple transfer of place for logistic reason (space management). In this case, since the crowns are made of highly bankable material, its cautious removal and storage would make more sense and perhaps would be better compatible with the length of the process (two days).

<sup>25</sup> Further bibliography (quoted by Giannadaki) on this technical meaning of καθαίρειαι is found in Harris 1992: 638–41 and Aleshire 1989: 106–8.

<sup>26</sup> On this practice at Delos, cf. Prêtre 2014, esp. 38.

<sup>27</sup> I wonder whether also in *CID* 2.110 = *FD* III 5:78 (inventory from Delphi, 321/20 BC) one should read at l. 12 [καθ]αιρεῖν τὸ ἀργύρεον κρ[α]τήρ[ι]ον rather than [καθ]αίρειν.

<sup>28</sup> On the attested practice of Hellenistic rulers to have precious silver and goldwares (vessels, cups, plates etc.) melted down to be recasted, see recently Rosamilia 2020 with further bibliography.

<sup>29</sup> I particularly wish to thank Dorothy Thompson for this suggestion.

Was this done so that some of the crowns could be reused as victory prizes for some of the games (the stephanitic agones or the νεμητοί or both)?

- (ii) melting down of the offerings to forge new items, some of which to be used as victory prizes (tripods?) Or as bullion for new coinage?<sup>30</sup> Would this justify the length of the process (two days)?

Of the various hypotheses entertained so far, 1.(i) is perhaps the least likely. 2.(i) may seem at first sight the most straightforward but 1.(ii) and 2.(ii) are also worth considering. What *all* these possible scenarios have in common is that they are a startling *unicum* as an item in the list of a festival programme, especially if we entertain the possibility that our papyrus may be a copy of the original foundation inscription.<sup>31</sup> The fact that we have no mention (at least no explicit mention) of victory prizes also speaks against this possibility.<sup>32</sup> An event like the *στεφάνων καθαίρεσις*, be it management of garbage (1.(ii)), relocation of perishable (1.(i)) or precious items (2.(i)) or the recasting of them for other purposes (2.(ii)) would have not greatly interested either the spectators or the contestants, but it would certainly have been something that the organisers had to consider from a logistical and practical point of view. It thus seems more likely that our document was a private note, a customised and selective copy of the timeline of events and their practical implications. A private document, then, either written in Alexandria and sent down to the Fayum, intended for an official or some other person so that they could travel up to Alexandria for their favourite events – or to organise local celebrations to coincide with particular events in the city; or written in Alexandria by some local official, as a local diary, then later taken with a load of old papyri to the Fayum to be recycled as cartonnage.

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<sup>30</sup> We know that Ptolemaic kings did issue special gold and silver coinage in notable quantities not only for military purposes (warfare) but also ‘frequently in connection with royal ritual, and the celebration of grand festivals and victories’ (von Reden 2007: 299–300). On gold coinage under the Ptolemies, see ead. 2007: 48–57. The hypothesis of so-called *πανήγυρις* coinage (attested in Asia Minor but not in Egypt so far) seems less likely since this practice did not use gold but only bronze and silver and was mainly meant ‘to provide a common currency and facilitate transactions at fairs attended by buyers and sellers with different currencies, where money changers were needed’ (Psoma 2008: 239).

<sup>31</sup> Chepel 2022: 159.

<sup>32</sup> A comparison with the inscription of the foundation of the Demostheneia (*SEG* 38.1462), also with a day by day calendar of events, is quite instructive in this respect: for every day in which there is an agon the nature of the prize for the victors is always specified.

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