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GREEK PAPYRI AND COPTIC STUDIES 1990–1995

BY ROGER S. BAGNALL, New York

Because there was no bibliographic report on the Greek papyri of the Byzantine period at the last congress, I have covered the period from 1990 to early 1996 in this chronicle. It is thus necessarily very illustrative and selective: not to the point of excessive idiosyncrasy, I hope, but with the aim of representing as broad a spectrum of authors and subjects as possible. I have, however, taken a broad view of what is relevant to Coptic studies: chronologically, from the late third to the middle of the eighth century; substantively, the life of Egypt as a whole during late antiquity. I shall first describe those volumes of papyri appearing in these years which are entirely or substantially composed of documents dating to the period from Diocletian to the eighth century, then treat the monographic and periodical literature in a thematic fashion. I shall not give a listing of Christian literary texts which have appeared in volumes or articles, because a thorough survey of such texts is given periodically in the *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, the last one five years ago from the late Kurt Treu (1991), with a successor by Cornelia Römer to appear in a forthcoming issue (*APF* 43 [1997] 107–145). References are given by author and date to the appended bibliography.

1 Volumes of Papyri Containing Significant Numbers of Texts from the Byzantine Period

CPR XVIIA: The gathering of fourth-century Hermopolite archives by Klaas Worp continues in this fascicle of Vienna papyri. A sequel to his earlier publication of the Aurelia Charite papers, it includes the dossiers of her husband, Adelphios, and her son, Asklepiades. Both men held official positions, and many of the papers are connected with these, but there are some private texts as well.

P.Athen.Xyla I: Twenty-one documentary texts from the Hermopolite, almost all from the sixth century, constitute the first installment of the publication of the collection of the Greek Papyrological Society. They include contracts, accounts, letters, and orders, with a strong contingent of loans. There are a number of important links to the monastery of Apa Apollo at Titkois among the texts.

P.Col. VIII: Among the various documents from the later period in this diverse volume, I would mention particularly *Discourse* IV of Abbot Isaías, on the other side of a roll containing a sale of land. These were both published quite inadequately many years before.

P.Dubl. I: This mixed volume includes 15 documents from late antiquity. There are several interesting fourth-century documents and an interesting dispute settlement, but the most striking part is the little group of texts already published in *Tyche* 5 (1990) 67–94 and discussed in Gascou (1990), in which a monk who has switched from Melitian to orthodox

sells his cell in his former monastery to Melitian monks. A lease of a linen-weaving workshop published in McGing (1990) is also republished here.

P.Heid. V: Andrea Jördens' dissertation includes both a group of 19 contracts for labor and her lengthy discussion of labor contracts in late antiquity, a category she takes very expansively, stretching as far as loans for repayment in kind. This monograph is an extremely important contribution to our understanding of a central social issue, the relative roles of independent contracting, market purchases, and wage labor in this period.

P.Kell. I: The first installment of texts from the excavations at Ismant el-Kharab, in the Dakhleh Oasis, edited by Klaas Worp. This volume consists entirely of Greek papyri and tablets, mainly documents of the fourth century but with a few horoscopes and similar texts. Loans are common, and Worp presents a discussion arguing for the prevalence of very high rates of interest; by contrast, leases are absent. The outlines of this distinctive environment will come into clearer focus with the first volume of literary texts, by Iain Gardner, now in press, which is rich in Manichaean material; other volumes scheduled to appear in the next year are the wooden codex with three orations of Isocrates, the agricultural account book, and a volume of Coptic documentary texts.

P.Köln VII: Included among the documents from the Byzantine period is a remarkable roll (318–328), written on both sides transversa charta, from the Herakleopolite nome at the end of the sixth or seventh century. The recto includes a list of goods, a surety, the start of an unidentified contract badly preserved, an adoption, an antichretic loan, and the sale of a house. On the verso stand a metrological table and an account with fractions. The editor cannot offer an explanation for the overall composition of the roll, in which a number of hands are visible. One may wonder if it is the product of an advanced school for scribes.

P.Naqlun I: This first volume from the texts found in the Polish excavations of the hermitages of Naqlun includes six biblical papyri, lists, a letter probably written by a bishop, and two inscriptions on amphorae. Tomasz Derda adds to the edition an appendix on XMT, in which the reader will find a balanced and up-to-date account of the various theories and their strengths and weaknesses.

P.Oxy. LVIII: John Rea publishes a large number of documents from the period 588 to 632, to which is prefixed a very important demonstration that Mauricius's consular count reckoned from a date in August, probably the beginning of the Egyptian civil year, rather than from 1 January like all ordinary consuls under the empire up to this time. It is even possible that a unified count, combining indiction, regnal year, and consulate, ran from Thoth 1.

P.Oxy. LIX: There are two relevant parts of this volume, a cluster of official documents (mainly fourth century) and a body of 12 private letters from the fourth to seventh centuries. No. 4003 exhorts the recipient to finish the building of a church.

P.Oxy. LX: Revel Coles publishes a body of mainly fourth-century documents, including several nominations to liturgy, price declarations by a guild, and most importantly two sizable accounts of stations in the Oxyrhynchite nome on the cursus publicus (4087–4088).

P. Oxy. LXI: Although most of this volume is devoted to literary and documentary texts of the Roman period, it includes a page from a sixth-century Menander codex, a number of letters and documents of the fourth century, particularly concerning liturgy, and a receipt for a donation of wheat to a hospital by Flavius Apion III, dating to AD 600.

P. Prag. II: Many of the texts in this volume date from the fourth to sixth centuries, including receipts, registrations, sales, leases, and accounts. Most are fragmentary, but some are still of considerable interest. I single out for mention an inventory of a monastery (178), not as extensive as the Leiden one I shall mention in a moment, but still very interesting.

P. Sorb. II: Jean Gascou edits a codex of 132 pages, mostly in very fragmentary condition and assembled with infinite pains, containing information about property-holdings collected by the authorities in connection with setting grain taxes. It comes from Hermopolis, dates to 618/9 or 633/4, and shows us a city with its Roman institutions surviving but above all a Christian institutional topography. A very large number of churches, monasteries, philoponeiai, and the like are attested, making the Hermopolite far the best-documented part of Egypt—perhaps of the entire Byzantine world—in respect of its religious institutions in the period just before the Arab Conquest.

P. Wash. Univ. II: A diverse, largely Oxyrhynchite, group of documents.

Pap. Lugd. Bat. XXV: Along with a wide variety of documents and several other literary pieces, one must signal particularly no. 13, a 60-line inventory of church property, including liturgical objects, vestments, other textiles, and above all books. The detailed commentary by Peter van Minnen (whose article of 1992 already published the presentation of it he made to the congress of Louvain-la-Neuve) is of enormous value for questions of the availability of Christian literature in this period, which he takes from the handwriting to be the late seventh or early eighth century.

O. Douch III: This is the latest installment of ostraca from the fourth–fifth century military installation of Kysis, at the southern end of the Khargeh Oasis, dominated by such genres as orders, receipts, and accounts.

O. Waqfa: From another site, not far away, comes this distinct but similar group of ostraca, also of the fourth century. Presbyteroi appear in some texts, along with many military personnel.

MPER n.s. XVII: This magnificent volume, finished after Kurt Treu's untimely death by Johannes Diethart, contains 81 Christian literary texts. It includes many genres from Old Testament manuscripts to liturgical fragments. It is analyzed in detail in Cornelia Römer's report on literary papyri to which I alluded earlier.

2 General, Political History

There has not been a great deal of recent work linking the papyri to the larger empire or to political history. A survey of the place papyrology has occupied in Byzantine studies and of the impact on papyrology of changing fashions in historical scholarship is provided by Keenan (1993). This is perhaps also the place to mention my book (1993a) on Egypt from the late third to mid fifth century, which deals with social, economic, administrative,

religious, and cultural elements of the life of Egypt in that period. A very important original contribution to the interpretation of the political and cultural history of late antique Egypt, only in small part papyrological, is Ewa Wipszycka's (1992a) definitive refutation of the nationalist—that is, Greek vs. Coptic—interpretation of divisions in Byzantine Egypt. At a less momentous but still interesting level, Stanley Burstein (1992) suggests that the drawing on P.Mich. inv. 4290 shows the arrival at Constantinople of an elephant and two giraffes offered in 496 to Anastasius by the ruler of Axum, in return for military assistance the latter has requested. In another attempt to link Egyptian evidence to the imperial scene, I have argued the case for the identity of the Ausonius who governed Augustamnica with the father of the poet (Bagnall 1992a). The extraordinary article of Diethart, Feissel, and Gascou (1994) is not only a work of palaeography and diplomatic, but links Egypt to Constantinople and the practices of the central government.

3 Administration and Taxation

As one would expect of the papyri, much more of the scholarship concerns local Egyptian matters of civic and village administration and taxation. Marianne Blume's (1991) article tries to draw out various points on which the papyri can be linked with a particular literary source referring to a city outside but close to Egypt. Geremek (1990) argued for the continued life of the city council in Egyptian cities until the seventh century, in part on the basis of *P.Sorb.* II. The *meris*, a fiscal subdivision of the nome the character of which has long been discussed, is treated by Gascou and Sijpesteijn (1993), showing that it was not only an abstraction (rather than a geographical unit) but a fossilized abstraction, named after people long dead. In the area of administration and management, pride of place goes to Bernhard Palme's study (1994) of an *agens in rebus* attested in the Taurinos archive. Andrea Jördens (1991) has produced a supplement to her 1986 article on the *symmachoi*. Klaas Worp (1992) has sought to bring some order to the taxation terminology of the ostraca from late Byzantine and early Arabic Egypt.

In the domain of diplomatic and formulary, Worp (1993a) has contributed an update to our work on regnal formulas of the emperor Heraclius, and Katelijjn Vandorpe has produced an extremely valuable monograph on sealings in and on papyri (1995).

4 Military

Quite a lot of work is in progress in the domain of military affairs, particularly by Bernhard Palme. For the moment, I call attention to the studies by Keenan of the garrisons of Syene (1990), mainly based on the archive of Paternouthis, and of Hermopolis (1994), drawing heavily on the dossier of Flavius Isidorus, the Taurinus archive and the dossier of the family of Flavius Silvanus. There have also been several studies trying to identify place-names and units mentioned in the *Notitia dignitatum* with those found in the papyri: Worp (1991), Worp (1994a), and Zuckerman (1994).

5 Economy

It is a basic characteristic of the papyri that many existed to record or document rights and obligations of an economic character, and it is hardly surprising that the economy plays its usual leading role in recent publications. The largest part of the economy, of course, was agriculture, and texts related to the land form a considerable part of new publications. At a more synthetic level, I would mention the recent article of Peter van Minnen (1995) on the process through which some villages in the Arsinoite were deserted, but also sometimes reoccupied; these abandonments were not necessarily permanent. The distribution of land ownership, using not only the well-known Hermopolite land registers but also evidence from the Arsinoite, was the focus of one of my studies (1992b). The picture that emerges is one in which small holdings by local residents continue to be the most important part of the village economy; the valuable article of Gagos and van Minnen (1992) shows that type of village economy in operation in the fifth century.

The economy of processing and distributing the products of agriculture has also had some significant new evidence; examples are Harrauer's study (1991) of a pair of bakers in the Arsinoite nome, the publication and analysis by Mitthof and Papathomas (1994) of an oilmaker's archive, and Kruit's publication of three sales for future delivery (1994). The workings of markets, and particularly the setting of prices, are dealt with by Fikhman's article (1991–92) on the role of the state, Papaconstantinou (1994b) on gold/bronze ratios and monetary criteria for dating, and Russ (1992), publishing a text concerning problems with a public market. A wide-ranging study of the so-called guilds, the professional corporations, of late antique Egypt is given in a published lecture by Fikhman (1994), who has been concerned with crafts and guilds for decades and has contributed a great deal to that subject.

Finally, at a level which links Egypt to Constantinople, I may mention the article of Keenan (1992), an experiment in narrative history, tracing the course of a loan contracted in Constantinople by a resident of Egypt.

6 Social History

In the domestic sphere, Geneviève Husson (1990) has contributed a valuable survey of houses in the Patermouthis archive, which offers an unusual opportunity to see how a number of houses in the same community are described in documents. The use of that domestic space is explored in Joëlle Beaucamp's study (1993) of male and female roles in the running of households, based mainly on private letters. An interesting contribution to the history of food, not limited to the Byzantine period, is the article by the late Françoise Perpillou-Thomas (1992) on Egyptian porridge, *athera*.

Questions of personal status figure in several articles, including my study of slavery (1993b), rejecting Fikhman's arguments that it declined in late antiquity; the study by Diethart and Kislinger (1991) on information about prostitution in the papyri, a subject notable for its lack of documentation and the consequent difficulty one faces in trying to describe what must have been a commonplace of urban life. Also at the fringes of society there is much of interest in MacCoull (1992), who discusses a declaration concerning the

free condition of a female monastic. The relationship between slavery and the colonate is discussed by Fikhman (1991).

An important contribution to the social structure of village life in the fifth century is made by John Rea's discussion (1993) of *P.Haun.* III 58, the celebrated declaration about water use.

7 Religion

It is of course appropriate to give particular emphasis in a report of this sort to Christianity and the church of Egypt. The last six years have in fact produced a remarkably rich harvest in this domain. First, a number of studies have treated the development of Christianity in Egypt from the point of view of the papyri. Among these are van Minnen's paper (1994) from our last congress on the early history of Christianity in Egypt, Borkowski's article (1990) on the interest in the older local Panopolite cults as revealed in personal names, my counter-example of early use of Christian names as an indicator of upper-class Christianity at Hermopolis (1995b), and my more general argument about the decline of paganism in the third century (1992c). A different kind of study is Leslie MacCoull's synthetic treatment (1990b) of the state of Christianity in the late sixth-century Patermouthis archive from Syene and contemporary texts.

One thing from traditional Egyptian religion that certainly survived Christianization was devotion to the Nile, about the cult of which outside Egypt Danielle Bonneau wrote one of her last articles (1994). A hymn to the Nile from the late third or early fourth century has been republished with major improvements by Raffaella Cribiore (1995).

Egypt was most famous in the rest of the late Roman world for its extraordinary development of asceticism and monasticism, and there have been some valuable contributions in this area. Adam Łukaszewicz's paper at the Warsaw congress of 1984 just makes it into our chronological scope because it was published only in 1990. Bärbel Kramer's 1991 lecture, published in 1993, discusses particularly the archive of Nephros, from which we have not yet heard the last, as more documents remain unpublished. Klaas Worp has republished (1993b) the important Berlin papyrus of 367/8 which shows the monastery at Tabennese as landowner. And Robert Daniel's fascinating study of *Pap.Graec.Mag.* 66 (1991) argues that it comes from a Christian milieu, and perhaps a monastic one.

The regular church organization has not been neglected. Worp (1994b) publishes a new list of known bishops in Egypt, for the first time confronting the evidence of the lists with the documentation of the papyri; a small supplement concerning Oxyrhynchos has just been published by Arietta Papaconstantinou (1996). Royce Morris's Copenhagen congress paper (1994) also concerns bishops, particularly their secular functions. Ewa Wipszycka (1992b) reflects on the relationship between bishops and their clergy, combining Greek and Coptic papyri with the literary sources. The lower orders of the clergy receive their own study in Wipszycka (1993), also bringing the documents together with the religious literature. Two other items of great value are the attempt by Derda and Wipszycka (1994) to bring order out of the mass of evidence for the titles abba, apa, and papas, and the argu-

ment by Todd Hickey (1996) that a letter he edits attests a scholastikos on the staff of the Alexandrian patriarch.

Finally, a miscellaneous but very interesting group of articles: Wipszycka (1994) provides the first satisfactory study of *katholike* as an epithet for churches. Gasco (1993) identifies a pattern of double naming of churches, like “Heavenly and Vivifying.” MacCoull (1990a) argues that in sixth-century financial documents, *philotimia* means a fund of staple commodities or of money, out of which honoraria were paid to professionals or craftsmen for services rendered. Two further articles of Arietta Papaconstantinou deal with aspects of Christian praxis, that of 1992 discussing the use of *agape* to refer to feasts in honor of saints and martyrs, and a second (1994a) on the oracular consultation of the shrines of saints, particularly those of Philoxenos at Oxyrhynchos and Kollouthos at Antinoopolis.

8 Law

There has been little large-scale synthetic work in the area of the law of the papyri published in the last half-dozen years, and this is particularly true for the period after Diocletian. A considerable amount of new legal documents has been published, however, above all in the area of disputes and their processing. A general study of the family disputes in the Patermouthis archive from Syene was published by Joel Farber (1990). An extremely interesting volume by Gagos and van Minnen (1994), both publishing a settlement from Aphrodito and offering a broad, anthropologically-based, approach to this genre of documents, inaugurates a new series of text studies from the University of Michigan Press. Further dispute-related documents may be found in Gagos and Sijpesteijn (1995) and Hoogendijk (1995); the latter offers the interesting spectacle of some soldiers suing village eirenarchs about a robbery they supposedly failed to investigate. The soldiers drop charges in return for getting their goods back.

The most substantial work otherwise is Beaucamp (1992a), a wide-ranging survey of the papyrological material for the legal and social status of women, following up a 1990 volume based on the late antique legal codes. A more specialized study by the same author (1992b) deals with family property.

Three contributions to the general subject of litigation also deserve mention: Allam (1992), on civil jurisdiction; Kovelman (1991), an interesting if problematic study of the rhetorical style in Byzantine petitions, of which the author takes a much more positive view than is normally found; and a revisionist view of the Aphrodito murder case by Keenan (1995).

9 Literature, Culture, Sciences

As I mentioned at the start, the largest part of what the papyri have to offer in this domain concerns Christian literature, and I will not give here an enumeration of those published or studied in recent years, referring instead to Cornelia Römer's comprehensive report which is forthcoming. But a sampling of the contribution of the papyri to other areas may be worthwhile. Classical literature, above all Homer, continued to play an important

role in the educational process, as Raffaella Cribiore's (1993) article shows. A comprehensive inventory of references to the production, use, and holdings of books in Roman and Byzantine Egypt is given by Harrauer (1995). Medical texts also continued to be in wide circulation; the study by Jean-Luc Fournet (1994) publishes two recipes. Technical knowledge also extended to other areas; interesting is the article of Hanson and Sijpesteijn (1991), concerning the technical vocabulary that one papyrus provides for the breeding of mules. Finally, the relationship of the visual arts, particularly sculpture, to the society documented in the papyri is treated in the important article of Thelma Thomas (1992), who shows that—not surprisingly—those able to commission art belonged to a wealthy and educated stratum in which pagans and Christians had a common cultural vocabulary.

10 Language and Lexicography

The papyri are of course a wonderfully rich source of information about the language as it was used in a variety of registers over a span of a thousand years, an aspect only fitfully studied with any systematic care. The last six years have seen a number of articles in this domain, particularly by Johannes Kramer (I list only a few) and Johannes Diethart (especially the extensive article of 1990; 1991). These studies reach across language divides to the western empire and the languages of Germany and the Balkans, and across time to look at Greek in a later period.

To describe a few themes running through this wealth of work—and I remind you that I have omitted a great deal—is beyond my powers and time. Let me just mention one thread that strikes me forcefully, the growing recognition of the complexity and yet unity of Egypt's late antique society, coupled with the abandonment of the old notion that characteristics like religion and language separated people into communities isolated from one another.

I shall end, however, by an example intended to remind you that new wonders await us every year. In *P. Oxy.* LXIII, to be published next year, is an extraordinary text (4397) from the Apion dossiers, which John Rea presented to a seminar in Oxford this year. It is an acknowledgment of payment and renunciation of claim, addressed to Flavius Apion II by the monastery of Abba Hierax. In 250 lines of almost perfectly preserved text, it records the monastery's embarrassingly aggressive history of moneylending, on the security of desirable garden land, to an Oxyrhynchite expatriate living in Constantinople. At his death, it was discovered that he had already mortgaged his property to Apion's father Strategios, leaving the monastery with worthless loans for 130 solidi. As an act of charity toward the monastery, Strategios agreed to pay the monastery what it was owed, a promise fulfilled by Apion. This text sheds light on many interesting aspects of late antique Egyptian life, including the relations of potentates with the monasteries and the monastic pursuit of top-quality land for their endowments.

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