



Review

Reviewed Work(s): *La Papirologia* by Orsolina Montevicchi

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REVIEWS

Orsolina Montevecchi. *La Papirologia*. Società Editrice Internazionale, Milan, 1973, pp. xvi, 544; 104 plates, 2 maps. Lire 20,000.

This substantial work, designed as a university manual, is the most ambitious introduction to papyrology to appear in the last six decades. It embraces virtually every aspect of the papyrologist's work, providing an introduction to both methodology and the substance of the discipline. This book is thus of great potential utility, and a careful examination of the merits and limitations of each of its parts is in order.

The introduction (pp. 3-43) discusses first the nature and definition of papyrology, its relationships to and distinctions from other branches of learning (both in classical studies and otherwise), and the connection between documents and literary papyri. Montevecchi quotes Wilcken's exclusion of literary papyri from the realm of papyrology except in external aspects like handwriting, but declares that she has not found it suitable to follow Wilcken's example. Certainly the information that literary papyri provide about the culture of their possessors belongs to the history of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, and it is hence doubtful whether exclusion of this information from papyrology would be justified on any definition. Montevecchi's stand on this question certainly is in keeping with that of most contemporary papyrologists. From the standpoint of delimiting a coherent body of knowledge, Wilcken's definition (or some modification of it) seems to us preferable to that of Montevecchi or most other scholars of the present day; but definitions are by their nature somewhat arbitrary.

The second part of the introduction describes the papyrus plant, its treatment and uses, especially, of course, as a writing material, and the nature and employment of other writing materials; there follows a discussion of the reasons why papyri have been preserved where they have been, both in Egypt and outside it. The next part details the history of papyrology in the modern world, with a list of the papyrologists of each country and where they have worked. More of an attempt to delineate the lines of scholarly descent would have been rewarding, we think. The North American section is less accurate and informative than those dealing with European countries. The omissions often seem capricious. The last part of this section discusses some of the generally useful scholarly aids in papyrology.

Part I deals with reading papyri: palaeography, systems of chronology and measures, language and (in outline, preparatory to Part III) a summary of types of documents. The handwriting of Greek and Latin documents and literary texts is characterized concisely but intelligibly, and taken in conjunction with the plates (see below) this section offers a useful introduction to the subject. Brief remarks on shorthand, drawings, and symbols and abbreviations are followed with a summary of the nature and conventions of text editing.

The discussion of chronology outlines changes in dating practices from the Ptolemies through the Arabs. A table lists the Egyptian, Macedonian, honorific and Julian months and their dates. Only two pages are devoted to the intricacies of linear, areal, and cubic measures (and their metric equivalents), and these two pages also include the too brief treatment of Egypt's peculiar monetary system from Alexander to Diocletian.

The last section of Part I concerns language: the development of the forms and use of Greek across ten centuries, treated perhaps too briefly. For the beginning student this brevity will not be a problem, no doubt, but the section will not be of much use to others.

Part II introduces the geography, history and administration of Egypt under the Ptolemies and Romans. This is mostly a summary, with no claim to presenting an original viewpoint or insights. The reference material is useful, and one may single out the bibliography on the individual Egyptian localities on pages 102–103 as being particularly helpful. The section on Ptolemaic history is less successful: it is full of misstatements and out-of-date bibliography; it would

be tedious to analyze it in detail. The most notable feature of the section on Roman history is a pair of lists, one of documents concerning the reign of each emperor and one of the writings of each emperor (constitutions, rescripts, etc.) to Egypt. A list of prefects, on the other hand, with little or no bibliography for many, is of doubtful utility. Byzantine Egypt receives only four pages of text and bibliography.

The description of the administration is necessarily brief, but even this brevity might have allowed a discussion of Ptolemaic nome officials with more chronological distinctions and hence less misleading than that given on page 140; the situation of the third-century bureaucracy is totally scrambled. The archidikastes is *not* a local magistrate of Alexandria (p. 147). This section will give a student a general notion of what these officials did, but it does not go beyond this.

Part III continues a discussion of documentary papyri with a classification of texts into four groups: documents to officials from private individuals ("public documents"); documents between private parties; Latin texts; and aspects of daily life as revealed by the papyri. Under the rubric "public" documents, major document types are reviewed. These include census declarations; declarations of birth and death; epikrisis documents; documents related to ephebes; declarations of property; requests for the opening of wills and appointment of guardians for women or minors; requests for certain rights in various businesses (making papyrus, selling wool); and petitions to administrative officials. The discussion of each type deals with the intent and form of the document and includes published lists of the document type (if any), as well as bibliographies of pertinent examinations of the document type. Whenever possible, recently published documents of each type are noted. Anyone having occasion to edit a text of one of these types will find this section convenient. For eleven significant document types Montevicchi has thus provided comparative material in compact form.

This format continues throughout the next rubric, documents between private parties, where one finds discussions of manumissions, adoptions, marriage and divorce contracts, wills and inheritances, divisions of property, sales and cessions, *dationes in solutum*, leases, contracts of personal services, contracts for transportation, contracts of partnership (for the purpose of leasing land or collecting taxes),

loans, deposits, repayments of loans, private arbitration, renunciation of personal claims, contracts of exchange, suretyship, declarations of indemnity and delegation of duties. Although these two sections lack the magisterial discussions of the *Grundzüge* of Mitteis and Wilcken, the current bibliography of the standard types of documents will simplify the search for parallels to new documents.

Latin papyri, both documentary and literary, are treated briefly (pp. 234–239); one finds a list of edicts and other imperial documents in Latin and a discussion of the importance of Latin papyri to our understanding of the Roman army. Since literary Latin papyri are far less numerous than such texts in Greek, Montevicchi provides a list of Latin authors whose works appear in papyri and where these papyri are published.

The papyri have revealed the daily life of peasants and petty bureaucrats with disarming frankness. Although Montevicchi does not discuss the functional basis of daily life in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, she provides in the fourth section of Part III bibliographies pertinent to the following topics: medicine; crafts and craftsmen's guilds; sports; private houses; clothing; food and drink; personal letters; accounts; and domestic affairs. The information derived from papyrological sources can be applied to social and economic studies on longevity, population and class structure, and Montevicchi accordingly provides a bibliography on social and demographic patterns in Egypt.

Part IV is devoted entirely to papyrological archives, one of Egypt's most valuable contributions to our understanding of both administrative habits and family life in antiquity. Following a general discussion of the nature of archives of papyri and ostraca is a list of 96 public and private archives in chronological order beginning with the Zenon papyri. Each entry contains the name of the archive, its places of publication, and a bibliography. The references to documents belonging to a particular archive cannot always be relied upon (as in no. 38, the archive of the descendants of Laches, where in *P.Mil. Vogl.* I only no. 24 is cited, whereas in *P.Mil. Vogl.* II [1961] it was shown that 23–28 all are part of this archive). The roster is, despite incompleteness and inaccuracies, suggestive and useful.

Part V concerns religion. A list of festivals for Greek and Egyptian deities (pp. 267–268) is, though defective, of some interest. Curiously enough, the Christian section is much the largest part of this section

(50 of 70 pages). The long list of Christian texts (including the Old Testament) that occupies most of this section will no doubt be useful, but the space devoted to it seems grossly disproportionate to the aims of this book and could have been given more profitably to any of a number of topics (palaeography, language, administration—or pagan religion).

The sixth and final part of the text proper treats schools, literacy and culture as revealed by literary papyri. In the introduction to this part Montevicchi explains aspects of literary texts from Egypt: the Alexandrian editorial conventions; palaeographical significance; transmission of texts; and the literary preferences of persons in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt. Montevicchi lists the secondary works of ancient scholars writing commentaries, glossaries, or synopses of texts or biographies of authors, which supplement our knowledge of Greek literature. She then provides a list of authors (with references to the second edition of Pack) and their works preserved on papyri, with bibliographical references to each author for the last decade. There are four pages of tables showing the chronological distribution of authors and *adespota* from the third century B.C. to the eighth century, but there are no sums of the total number of papyri for each author. There follow roughly thirty pages of observations and remarks about the authors, the *adespota* and their transmission.

A lengthy appendix, occupying about a quarter of the entire book, is the work of S. Daris. It contains a number of lists which will mostly be of very considerable utility. The first is that of abbreviations of editions of papyri. This list is marred by idiosyncrasies and oddities (e.g. *P.Lewald*) and by a total disregard of the principle that an italicized abbreviation represents not a collection but a systematic publication (thus *P.Ibscher* is a solecism). It is much to be regretted that these are mixed together here without discrimination. Of the material supplementary to this list one may signal E. Bresciani's list of Demotic papyri, arranged by provenance, as very helpful.

The second list contains those periodicals devoted chiefly to papyrological concerns. Monographs and supplementary studies connected with these journals are noted by author and title. Also noted are several journals which frequently contain articles or bibliographies of interest to papyrologists. It is useful to find here a list of the acts from the first twelve papyrological congresses with full bibliographical information.

Next comes a list of published photographs of texts that can be dated with absolute security, arranged by date. This is one of the most useful parts of the work, particularly to students engaged in seeking approximate dates for undated papyri; Daris is much to be commended for its preparation.

The fourth appendix is a repertory of collections of papyri, gathered from information in publications of papyri. The list is full of problems and errors, and it would have been greatly improved by personal inspection or investigation through correspondence; but even as it is, it will certainly facilitate and encourage further investigation by others, and the general view it provides is certainly of great interest.

There are two lists of abbreviations found in papyri: a list of about 500 Greek abbreviations based solely on the documents in *P.Oxy.*, and a list of 300 abbreviations common to Latin papyri. Sandwiched between these two lists are two pages of symbols culled from *P.Lond.* III. This printing of the book unfortunately omitted the drawings of the symbols themselves, necessitating the addition of a loose sheet on which the symbols and their meanings have been printed. These lists are far too lengthy for their avowed purpose, to provide a general idea of the problems of abbreviation, while they are too spare to be, in their own right, useful reference tools.

There are seven indices: of documentary sources and literary sources; of persons; of geographical names; of subjects; of Latin words; of Greek words; and of modern authors. Because many pages of this book contain information in extremely compact form it is usually difficult to locate a reference from the last index on a given page. This is particularly true where one is confronted with several paragraphs of bibliography in smaller type, not in alphabetical order: the reader has no easy time. Nor does use of the index inspire confidence in its comprehensiveness or accuracy.

The plates, numerous and generally well-chosen, vary in quality according to the sources from which they were taken. They include pictures of a papyrus plant, Egyptian reliefs concerning the making of papyrus, samples of forms of papyri, ostraca, mummy labels, and wax tablets. Then come the papyri, arranged mostly in chronological order and providing a fine conspectus of the development of writing, with a text of each facing it. The plates are mostly clear, and the richness of the selection is very welcome. One might have wished,

however, that the author could have sought out equally interesting pieces of which photographs have not been published; the value of the collection would thereby have been much enhanced.

One may assert with confidence that this work is meant to be consulted rather than read; except perhaps for Italian students, the users of this book will treat it solely as a reference tool. In this regard, one will do well to regard it as a useful addition to our shelf of such works, a supplement to rather than replacement of other standard works. It does not pretend to the comprehensive and magisterial character of the two volumes of the *Grundzüge*, but it offers the student of today some signal advantages lacking in the older work: an up-to-date bibliography; photographic documentation (both plates and the list of photographs published elsewhere); and an introduction to non-documentary aspects of the subject. It is all the more unfortunate that the arrangement of the bibliography is such as to render it extremely difficult of access. The utility of the book as a work of reference is also marred by the extraordinarily large number of errors, mainly typographical; proper names in languages other than Italian are one of the most frequent sources of error. One may hope that a subsequent edition could remedy these mistakes.

Used with proper regard for its limitations, this work should benefit beginners in papyrology very considerably, and even more advanced workers in the field will consult it on occasion with real profit.

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Basil G. Mandilaras, *The Verb in the Greek Non-Literary Papyri*. Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sciences, Athens, 1973, pp. 493, no price stated.

In this book, an abridgement of his Oxford thesis, *Moods and Tenses of the Greek Non-Literary Papyri*, Basil G. Mandilaras offers a comprehensive study of the Greek verb as it appears in non-literary papyri from the end of the fourth century B.C. to the beginning of the eighth century A.D. The broad chronological scope allows the author to give full range to his interest in the history of linguistic development: within it, he is able to contrast the relatively static