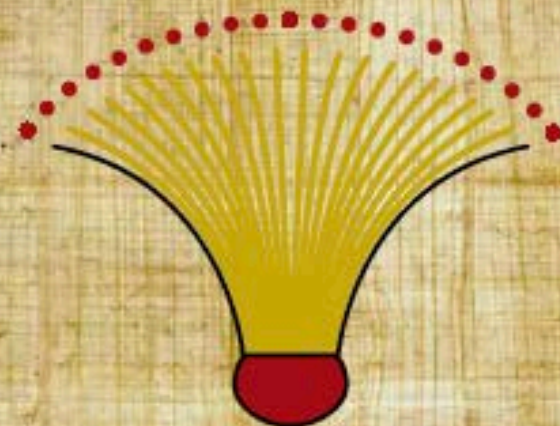


Les Flors del Faraó  
Las Flores del Faraón

Pharaoh's Reeds

IEMed.



# Pharaoh's Reeds

a **papyrus**  
journey up  
the Nile

Les Flors del Faraó  
Un viatge pel Nil a través dels seus papirs



Las Flores del Faraón  
Un viaje por el Nilo a través de sus papiros

INSTITUT EUROPEU DE LA MEDITERRÀNIA

**IE**Med.

Consorti format per



Empreses patrocinadores



Institucions col·laboradores



Pharaoh's Reeds.  
A Papyrus Voyage  
up the Nile



**Edition / Edició/ Edición**

European Institute of the Mediterranean  
(IEMed)

**Scientific Coordinator / Coordinació científica / Coordinación científica**

Sofía Torallas Tovar  
Alberto Nodar  
Raquel Martín Hernández  
Alba de Frutos García

**Scientific Coordinator Assistant / Asistencia de coordinación científica /**

Sergio Carro Martín

**Technical Coordinator / Coordinació tècnica / Coordinación técnica**

Carina Soriano (IEMed)  
Daniel Duran i Duelt

**Cover Design / Disseny de coberta / Diseño de cubierta**

bp disseny

**Production / Realització i producció / Realización y producción**

Sintagma, Creacions Editorials  
Sílvia Valls

**Design and Layout / Disseny i maquetació / Diseño y maquetación**

Carla Rossignoli

**Translations / Traduccions / Traducciones**

Hèctor Cesena, Pere Bramon, Neil Charlton

**Proofreadings / Correccions / Correcciones**

Daniel Duran i Duelt, Sílvia Valls, Sofía Torallas Tovar,  
Raquel Martín Hernández, Alba de Frutos García

**Authors / Autores de los ensayos**

José Luis Alonso (*Universidad del País Vasco*), Alberto Bernabé Pajares (*Universidad Complutense de Madrid*), Emilio Crespo Güemes (*Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*), Raquel Martín Hernández (*Universidad Complutense de Madrid*), Francesca Mestre (*Universidad de Barcelona*), Alberto Nodar Domínguez (*Universitat*

*Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona*), María Teresa Ortega Monasterio (*CCHS, CSIC*), José Domingo Rodríguez Martín (*Universidad Complutense de Madrid*), Emilio Suárez de la Torre (*Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona*), Sofía Torallas Tovar (*University of Chicago*), Jakub Urbanik (*Uniwersytet Warszawski*), Amalia Zomeño Rodríguez (*CCHS, CSIC*)

**Authors / Autores de las fichas**

María Jesús Albarrán Martínez (MJA), Angela Camara (AC), Sergio Carro Martín (SCM), Marina Escolano Poveda (MEP), Alba de Frutos García (AFG), Lluís González Juliá (LGJ), Felipe G. Hernández Muñoz (FHM), W. Matt Malczycki (WMM), Raquel Martín Hernández (RMH), Richard Neer (RN), Alberto Nodar Domínguez (AND), Irene Pajón Leyra (IPL), José Domingo Rodríguez Martín (JDR), Marco Antonio Santamaría Álvarez (MAS), Petra M. Sijpesteijn (PMS), María Victoria Spottorno (MVS), Sofía Torallas Tovar (STT), Luis Turell Coll (LTC), Alexandra Uscatescu (AU), Amalia Zomeño Rodríguez (AZR)

**Printing / Impressió / Impresión**

Agpograf Impressors

© Editorial Work / de l'obra editorial / de la obra editorial  
European Institute of the Mediterranean  
Carrer de Girona, 20  
08010 Barcelona  
<http://www.iemed.org/>

© Texts, authors / dels textos, els autors / de los textos, sus autores

First edition: april 2016 / Primera edició: abril de 2016 /  
Primera edición: abril de 2016  
ISBN: XXX-XX-XXX-XXXX-X  
Dipòsit legal: B-XXXXX-2016

**Fotografía de papiros**

Sergio Carro Martín, Alejandro Campos Bravo

**Photographic Credits / Crèdits fotogràfics / Créditos fotográficos**

© Album Archivo Fotográfico, S. L. ; Arxiu fotogràfic de Montserrat, Biblioteca de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Museu de Montserrat ; Arxiu Jesuïtes de Catalunya



## Summary

### Foreword

*Carles Puigdemont  
i Casamajó*

04

### Reflections of Daily Life in Greek Papyri

*Alberto Bernabé*

67

### Magic in Greco- Roman Egypt

*Emilio Suárez de la Torre*

89

### Presentation

*Senén Florensa*

12

### The Languages of Egypt

*Emilio Crespo Güemes*

66

### Coptic Egypt

*Sofía Torallas Tovar*

90

### Presentation

*Carlos López Rodríguez*

34

### The Administration in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt

*José Luis Alonso – José Domingo  
Rodríguez Martín – Jakub Urbanik*

76

### Fustat: Islamic Egypt

*Amalia Zomeño Rodríguez*

98

### Royal Reeds: a Papyrus Journey up the Nile

*Sofía Torallas Tovar  
Alberto Nodar Domínguez*

45

### Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt

*Francesca Mestre*

78

### From Past to Present

*María Teresa  
Ortega-Monasterio*

89

### The Library of Alexandria

*Alberto Nodar Domínguez*

36

### The Funerary World in Egypt

*Raquel Martín Hernández*

89

### Catalogue

121



The holding in Barcelona of the exhibition “Pharaoh’s Reeds. A Papyrus Voyage Up the Nile” is an unbeatable opportunity to discover one of the least known aspects of Catalan heritage: the papyrological collections held at the Abbey of Montserrat and the Historic Archive of the Jesuits in Catalonia.

Initiatives such as this exhibition and the accompanying catalogue, sponsored by the European Institute of the Mediterranean, allow us to grasp the rich cultural legacy possessed by our country, a heritage that often goes beyond the strict ambit of Catalonia and reaches other peoples and territories, such as Egypt in this case. This clearly international dimension is unequivocal proof of the country’s centuries-long ties with the Mediterranean area and also of its capacity to project itself abroad.

It is a desire and priority of the Catalan institutions to promote the rich heritage held in Catalonia and to make it available to everyone, from the general public to specialists. In this respect, the holding of the exhi-

bition coinciding with the 28th International Congress of Papyrology, organised by Pompeu Fabra University and the IEMed, also clearly shows the commitment of Catalan scientific and political institutions to high level research in all fields of knowledge. Based on an already solid tradition, initiatives like this show the potential of this research but also the goals it has achieved in Catalonia and its presence in international forums.

In a key political moment for Catalonia, the assertion of its historically Mediterranean – and European – dimension, as well as its cultural and scientific potential and capacity, must not be limited to the strictly intellectual field but must also become, as in fact it is, a key political reference in the construction of the country and its aspirations.

*Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó*  
*President of the Government of Catalonia*

The history of Egypt is a clear example of the richness and complexity of centuries of exchanges, contacts and also confrontations between peoples and civilisations, as well as the cultural and heritage wealth these interactions have created in the Mediterranean. The Egyptian lands, cradle of one of the most ancient and influential civilisations in the history of humanity, have witnessed the presence of Greeks, Romans and Arabs, among others. Each of them has left a rich deposit that, together with a fertile and original autochthonous substrate, has resulted in highly interesting cultural phenomena, as clearly reflected by an impressive and varied artistic and historical heritage and how it is still seen today in a society rich in nuances and diversity.

Given its historical and cultural significance over the centuries, Egyptian cultural heritage has become universal heritage, thanks to the strong attraction it has awoken among diverse peoples throughout the centuries and the influence it has exerted. Especially from the 19th century and following the Napoleonic campaigns, which helped Egypt's distant past to be rediscovered, the scientific interest in the country's past, especially the pharaonic, Hellenistic and Roman periods, stimulated archaeology and collecting but also the development of disciplines such as papyrology. Catalonia was no stranger to this phenomenon, although it awoke later and with less force. Figures such as Father Ubach and, later, Roca-Puig and O'Callaghan were essential in the creation of the most important papyrological collections in our country, collections that are also at the root of the development of papyrology studies in Catalonia and Spain, an incipient discipline but growing strongly in the international panorama, as shown by the holding in Barcelona of the 28th International Congress of Papyrology, under the patronage of the International Association of Papyrologists. This scientific meeting is accompanied by the exhibition "Pharaoh's Reeds. A Papyrus Voyage Up the Nile" and the publication of its catalogue, both sponsored by the European Institute of the Mediterranean.

The current exhibition is also the result of the collaboration between the IEMed and the Abbey of Montserrat that began in 2011 with the exhibition "Journey to the Land of the Bible", focused on the journeys of Father Bonaventura Ubach, member of the Benedictine community and creator of one of the two collections of papyri held at the monastery. Let us hope that these collaborations continue over the coming years and help to promote the value of the great

heritage held by such a distinguished institution over its history, of great value not only for Catalonia but also for the Mediterranean, given the richness and variety of its collections.

The main objective of the IEMed is to foster the initiatives and projects that contribute to mutual awareness, exchanges and cooperation between the different Mediterranean countries, societies and cultures, and to promote the gradual construction in the Mediterranean of an area of peace and stability, shared prosperity and dialogue between cultures and civilisations, all objects of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. In this respect, the exhibition "Pharaoh's Reeds. A Papyrus Voyage Up the Nile" and the catalogue the reader is holding are part of a series of initiatives that the European Institute of the Mediterranean has organised in relation to Egypt, which has always been a focus point for the Institute, an interest that shows the importance of this country in the Mediterranean, but also the important cultural ties that link us to it. In 2002 the Institute, then under the name Catalan Institute of the Mediterranean, organised the exhibition "Written Jewels. The Arabic Bibliographic Sources of Catalonia" at the Library of Alexandria, which was presented in the same year at the Pia Almoina in Barcelona. In 2004, in the framework of the exhibition "Mediterraneum: Splendour of the Medieval Mediterranean", the IEMed managed to bring to Barcelona a symbolic work of great historical significance: the altarpiece of Saint Catherine, offered in the late 14th century by the Consul of the Catalans in Damascus to the monastery of the same name in Sinai. More recently, in 2012, the Institute collaborated on the catalogue for the photographic exhibition "The Soul of the World", which focused on the protagonists of the popular movements that, in Tahrir Square, shook Egypt and led to the regime change in the country.

*Senen Florensa,  
Executive President of the European  
Institute of the Mediterranean*





The General Archive of the Crown of Aragon, at its historic headquarters in the Palau del Lloctinent, is pleased to host the exhibition "Pharaoh's Reeds. A papyrus voyage up the Nile", organised by the IEMed on the occasion of the 28th International Congress of Papyrology, held in Barcelona in 2016. It reveals once again the collaboration and good relations that the two institutions have enjoyed for years. In this case, there is also a close affinity that makes our centre the ideal place to hold this cultural event, as for almost seven hundred years this Archive has endeavoured to preserve the written testimony of our most distant past.

This is no easy task, and less so to achieve with such undeniable success, given its uninterrupted centuries-long existence and without great upheavals or damage to the documentary heritage it holds. Writing – a system of signs drawn on mediums usually as fragile as papyrus, parchment or paper – has been the basis of the General Archive of the Crown of Aragon since it was founded by King Jaume II in 1318 in the antechamber of the palace chapel of Saint Agatha in Barcelona, a few metres away from its headquarters today. Indeed, thanks to the longevity of the General Archive of the Crown of Aragon, the voice of the societies of the past can speak to us today, on occasions quite clearly thanks to the painstaking work of scholars, such as papyrologists.

But in this case there are other important reasons. Our Archive holds two of the ten papal bulls on papyrus currently in Catalonia, which are also highly significant among the twenty-five held throughout the world. Previously kept in the Monastery of Sant Cugat, they were granted by Popes Sylvester II (in 1002) and John XVIII (in 1007) and entered the Archive's collections in 1835. They very soon attracted the attention of historians. In 1885, Dr. Harry Bresslau, from the University of Berlin, was authorised to photograph them and was very appreciative of the help he was given by Manuel de Bofarull, the director at the time. In 1914, the great scholars Antonio Ballesteros and Zacarías García Villada arranged for these bulls to be studied and photographed by another renowned palaeographer, Agustín Millares Carlo, who edited them in 1918. In 1927, under Pope Pius XI, all the bulls conserved in Catalonia were transferred by Royal Order to the Holy See to be restored and published. This was an initiative of the great scholar Paul Kehr, director general of the Prussian State Archives and also of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. The delicate diplomatic actions were carried

out by the Apostolic nuncio himself with the ministers of justice and education, without consulting the Archive. This caused some distrust in Barcelona, where, in the words of Miguel Agelet, its director, they feared that "the 11th century papyri we had preserved with so much care would, once they had been patched, become 20th century papyri." This did not happen. The bulls returned in July 1928 with excellent restoration that survives today and were placed in the Archive hall, so they could be examined by scholars. They remained there until the transfer of the documentary collections to the new headquarters at number 77 Almogàvers Street, where they are appropriately conserved. They were later edited once again.

These are more than enough reasons for the General Archive of the Crown of Aragon to be involved in organising this exhibition on the papyri of the Nile, which is also a pleasing journey to the universal origins of our culture.

*Carlos López Rodríguez*  
Director of the General Archive of the Crown of Aragon



## Royal Reeds: a Papyrus Journey up the Nile

Sofía Torallas Tovar  
Alberto Nodar Domínguez

"What belongs to the pharaoh", *p3 pr ̎3*, papyrus was the main medium for writing during Antiquity, from which our word "paper" derives. It was also called *byblos* in Greek and later *charta* in Latin, terms also frequently found in our vocabulary, while in Egyptian it was also called *nad*, which also means "green", or *dm̎*, "papyrus scroll".

Papyrus is a plant species, *Cyperus Papyrus*, belonging to the family Cyperaceae, whose natural habitat is mainly the Nile River Valley and also other areas of the Mediterranean such as Sicily or, according to the ancient writers, Syria. This species was commonly used in Antiquity to manufacture a writing material that was common until at least the 9th century CE. Its production even became the monopoly of the state in Egypt. Aside from the causes of the decline of papyrus as the writing material of Antiquity par excellence, if the papyri we conserve today from Antiquity come mostly from Egypt it is only because the climatic conditions there, especially the almost complete absence of humidity, have enabled them to be preserved for centuries under the sand. The extremely perishable nature of the material has caused its disappearance from the rest of the Mediterranean basin, where for centuries it was used as the main medium for written culture.

### From Trash to Treasure

The papyri that make up the modern collections today come from archaeological excavations and illegal digs or have been recovered from the sand by farmers. They have passed through antiquities markets, private collections, museums and libraries, until finally reaching the papyrologist's desk.

In the last third of the 19th century, the documents were purchased through European dealers who had acquired the material from Egyptian farmers, who dug up old sites in search of fertilising material. This is how the main collections of papyri in the world began to take shape, such as that of the Austrian National Library. Later, Europe sent its own excavators: the English archaeologist Flinders Petrie, and especially Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt, began looking for papyri on behalf of what was then called the Egypt Exploration Fund, followed in subsequent years by Germans, French and Italians in these kinds of campaigns. The Oxyrhynchus papyrus collection in Oxford is one of the largest in the world, together with those in Cairo, the Berlin museums, the Vienna Papyrussammlung and the Società Itali-

ana. They all began in the same way. The University of Michigan, in the United States, also carried out its own excavations in Egypt. Finally, well into the 20th century, on the initiative of several institutions, such as museums or universities, the purchase of papyri in the antiquities markets in Egypt began; an emblematic case of this kind is the papyrus collection of Cologne, in Germany. On private initiative, some of the papyri collections that today are among the best known internationally were also compiled in this period, including the Palau Ribes and Roca-Puig collections. Since 1970, it has been illegal to export any kind of antiquities from Egypt, which means that buying and selling papyri is restricted to the material of varying importance that already exists in private collections outside the country.

### Documents and Books: a Journey up the Nile

The areas into which this exhibition is arranged partly represent the types of documents that can be found in the aforementioned collections. Everything printed or written on paper today has a parallel in the papyri of Egypt: poems and novels, bank documents, family letters, contracts of sale, medical prescriptions, shopping lists and many other kinds of text. Thus, on our journey up the Nile we first disembark in Alexandria, the cradle of the first philological school, which established Homer's text just as we read it today, a system of punctuation and accentuation that would be the basis of future writing systems, and the first literary canon that we still read today. The journey continues to Naucratis, the first Greek settlement in Egypt. This extremely important trading centre is representative of the thriving economic activity so well attested in the papyri: delivery of goods, invoices, inventories and receipts, etc. We continue sailing up the Nile, until reaching Fustat, near what today is the capital, Cairo. Muslim troops commanded by 'Amr b. al-'As reached Egypt through the Sinai Peninsula, gradually occupying the Nile Delta, Faiyum and the southernmost areas in the years 639-643 CE. During the early years of the Islamic occupation in Egypt, the troops established themselves in the fortress built in Fustat (on the ruins of the fortress of Babylon), from which they began to administer the new province of the Caliphate. This administration produced a great deal of Arabic documentation on papyrus, a material that was gradually replaced, over the centuries, by the use of paper. The journey continues and changes course along the

Papyrus roll.  
P.PalauRib. with-  
out inventory  
number.  
Cat. 1.2

channel leading to Faiyum. This enclave illustrates the control of the population. The Faiyum Oasis was one of the areas notable for the mixed composition of its population during the Greco-Roman period. The veterans of the Ptolemaic armies received plots of land and settled near local populations. The documents that represent the interaction between individuals and their relations with the authorities concern fiscal activity, land control and private transactions between individuals on land cultivation and property rental, or letters addressed to the authorities, including the king, with petitions related to different affairs. Further south is Oxyrhynchus, which represents the theme of education. Learning how to write was fundamental in a society as bureaucratized as Greco-Roman Egypt. According to the most recent studies, the population's literacy level seems to have been much higher than believed. In this section of the exhibition you can see the different stages of learning how to write and the progress from very clumsy to highly skilled hands, from copying the alphabet and syllables to commenting on the texts of Homer. The first thing that comes to mind when we talk about Egypt is undoubtedly the funerary world. Perhaps this is why the Amarna section is the most striking, because of its mys-

tery and such characteristic artistic representations. The funerary world also produced many texts, from prayers on funerary linens to copies of the Book of the Dead, mummy labels, and declarations of death. The area of Hermopolis, together with the Thebaid, is notable for the great expansion of monasticism. The Christian communities, originally highly integrated within the melting pot of cultures and religions that was Egypt, were taking shape, adopting characteristics of the world around them. Not only the copies of the Bible but a great many other documents testify to the coexistence of cultures, languages and beliefs, from personal letters with invocations to administrative documents of monastic complexes as important as that of Apa Apollo in Hermopolis. The journey ends in Thebes, the source of one of the most important magical libraries. Magic is expressed in magical books, amulets and spells, often in arcane language that is very difficult to understand.

### From the Desk

This treasure from the sands, from the rubbish dumps of Antiquity, from abandoned homes, requires very special treatment. Its comprehensive management consists of inventorying, cataloguing, conserving and restoring,



digitisation and editing. If there is a characteristic common to practically all the documents exhibited here and, we would dare say, those of any of the aforementioned American and European collections, it is their fragmentary nature. It is true that papyri, as we call them, for brevity and to avoid saying fragments of documents written on papyrus, give us a direct first hand vision of the ancient world, like a snapshot, capturing reality in its most solemn and quotidian moments, but it is as if the photograph had been torn into pieces, some of which we know unfortunately we will never recover.

The papyrologist provides us with a fragment of ancient life, with its protagonists, who may or may not expressly appear in that portion of the document; in other words, the person who wrote it and the addressee, with the people they talk about, some of whom, real or fictitious, we know and others we do not... with an immediate purpose or, in contrast, with the intention of enduring in time...

Based on the little we have, we briefly describe the piece, which we identify with a number in the collection, which will be its *inventory* number; it will soon come to life, with its measurements, the layout of the text preserved on the surface, the language it is written in, the type of writing, the four or five key words that give us a clue to the general subject, perhaps the presence of a date or failing this – as in most cases – the papyrologist's boldness in suggesting one, by comparing it with other known documents... With this, we compile the record that we will include in our *catalogue* (<http://dvctvs.upf.edu>), which we intend as an invitation to researchers and the curious in search of new information. As archaeological objects, papyri are affected by the paradox that the history of their recovery (from our point of view) is the continuation of their history of destruction (from theirs). We have alluded to how, despite having been the main writing material of the whole of the ancient Mediterranean, only papyri from Egypt survived because its sand had sealed them in a kind of time capsule. Once we have removed them, their process of deterioration continues, which in many cases had been interrupted, curiously, in the moment they were thrown away as useless material. Without special care, the papyri in our collections would finally disappear, as they disappeared in their day hundreds of years ago in the Mediterranean. *Conservation* is, therefore, essential. Since the last decades of the 20th century, there has been a proliferation of *digitisation* projects of images of papyri from collections around

the world. Although the purpose was fundamentally to make the collections accessible to the international community, without the need for complicated consultations of catalogues and requests for photographs that result in long and expensive processes that slow down research, in the end they have proven to be one of the best allies in the preventive conservation of the material: now, owing to the increasing quality of the photographic archives, it is possible to study the text through its digital image, leaving the autoptic consultation for questions of detail. However, sometimes an intervention on the damaged surface is needed in order to help read one or two letters that can be crucial to understand the text. In the *restoration* of the document, the papyrologist and restorer work closely together paying painstaking attention to carefully handling the fibres that conceal such invaluable ink traces.

When the material examination of the fragment has been exhausted, it is time for the papyrologist's interpretation, beginning with the reading of the text, often hindered by the fragment's state of conservation, if not by the conventions of ancient writing. To a great extent, *editing* the text consists of this interpretation, as well as reconstructing, as far as possible, the lost sections. Once again we are helped in this by technological advances because when we look for similar documents that help us to better understand ours we no longer depend upon arduous searches in journal and book indexes that for decades have listed the edited papyrus texts; now, the digitisation of the texts themselves in *xml* allows searches by words or simple sequences of characters in the entire corpus of published papyri, as if we were searching in a digitised newspaper library. A useful comparison: a host of information about thousands and thousands of people who shared the same land for millennia.

The exhibition, whose catalogue the reader is now holding, is not only the result of the work immediately prior to the selection of pieces, the writing of this catalogue, the preparation of the papyri for shipping, their placement and the design of the exhibition in the hall. It has the decisive intention of sharing the work that not only we but the whole international papyrological community, meeting this year in Barcelona for the 28th International Congress of Papyrology, have been undertaking to open doors and windows to look out onto this surprisingly vibrant world so that the city and the public, who are the final inheritors of this precious heritage, can share it with them.



## The Library of Alexandria

Alberto Nodar  
Domínguez

### The Library of Alexandria: the Reality in the Myth

In 323 BCE Ptolemy son of Lagos, who then responded to that name, faced with the death of the great Alexander, stole a march on his colleagues, the generals who accompanied Alexander to India. With his men and Alexander's body he went to one of the Alexandrias that the great general had founded, the one in Egypt, and settled there, after paying funerary honours to his king. This was the first step in the process that would finally shape the vast territory conquered by Alexander into a series of independent and opposing kingdoms, of which three enjoyed greater stability and power: the Egypt of Ptolemy, the Persia of Seleucus, and the mother kingdom, Macedonia, which was finally governed by the descendants of Antigonus.

Especially at the start of this process, when the governors of the different sections into which Alexander's empire was divided could not even call themselves kings (including in Macedonia, as the intrigues of Alexander's successors finally put an end to the royal family itself), and also during the next generation, the new kingdoms and those who were finally their kings were forced to seek internal legitimacy with their subjects, but also external legitimacy faced with the new states that had become their rivals. Internally Alexander's successors (or *diadochoi*, in Greek) gradually assimilated the power that had controlled their respective territories: some of the portrayals of Ptolemy's children, Ptolemy and Arsinoe, in the style of the ancient pharaohs, are very illustrative in this respect, not to mention the fact that they married each other, following the royal tradition of Egypt. Externally, none of Alexander's successors in the different kingdoms resulting from the partition of his empire could present themselves as a blood heir, so legitimacy had to be sought by other means, among which the prestige of the new royal houses was by no means the least important. If the new kings could not be descendants of Alexander, they could rival one another by presenting themselves to the rest of the world as indisputable repositories of the values that Alexander had taken beyond the borders of Hellas with his conquests, which were the very essence of the Greek spirit.

The new kings, faced with their adversaries, could not rule barbarous kingdoms: ὁ Ἑλληνισμός; in other words, Hellenism, as the pursuit of the purest Greek culture, would prevail as the central plank of what today we would call cultural policies of the new states, there-

by giving a name to a new period in the history of the Greek world: the Hellenistic period. Thus, Ptolemy son of Lagos, who from 305 BCE would be Ptolemy I Soter, with the title of king, conceived the idea of consecrating a temple to the Muses, divinities protecting the arts and sciences. Poets, artists and wise men from all over the Greek-speaking world would gather around this temple under his patronage: the Μουσεῖον, or Museum. Tradition tells us that it was his son, Ptolemy II Philadelphus (or lover of his sister Arsinoe, who, as we have said, he married) who completed his father's project. However, the truth is that Ptolemy I had already brought to Alexandria the Athenian politician and intellectual Demetrius of Phalerum, after the turbulent politics of this city, so characteristic of the Hellenistic period, obliged him to leave it. Demetrius of Phalerum was the disciple of Theophrastus, in his turn the disciple of Aristotle, who had instructed Alexander himself.

Philosophers, since their appearance around the 6th century BCE in Ionia, had developed the practice of *writing* their teachings and keeping their writings, not so much with the intention that they would endure over the centuries, like the historians, but for them to be used as the basis of their disciples' work. Of course there were exceptions, among them the illustrious Socrates, who, it is said, never wrote a word, but we have evidence that Aristotle's writings had already been compiled and inventoried and remained as a legacy of his school: it was necessary to keep the master's writings somewhere to continue developing the discussion on aspects of his doctrine. And that place is what was the βιβλιοθήκη, or, literally, the book deposit, or, as we can imagine it, the workplace of the scholars, the "workshop" where they could work with their instruments.

It matters little if Ptolemy I officially commissioned Demetrius to manage the Museum and its corresponding "book deposit", which in no case would have been conceived as the key piece of the project, or if the construction of the Library took place during the reign of Ptolemy II. What matters is the spirit with which it was born, which was to serve as a foundation for the work of the intellectuals that the Ptolemaic monarchy attracted to its court. It is true, as attested by ancient sources, that with the passing of the generations the dimensions of the Library as a building, as well as the number of books (βιβλία, in Greek, or *volumina*, in Latin, because, as we will see, the usual form of an ancient book until the 4th century CE was the papyrus scroll) stored there

reached unusual proportions in the ancient world, but in order to understand the true nature of the library, we must not forget its function.

In fact, there is little more we can know about the library with any certainty. We do not know where the *Museion* was located, so we do not know where the library annex was. Both were probably in the royal district, near the coastline and, therefore, at a depth of 6.5 metres in the city bay today, like the whole harbour area and the island of Pharos itself. A little above sea level in the city was the Serapeum, or temple dedicated to Serapis, whose ruins can still be visited today. The Serapeum, according to tradition, also had a library; whether it was a depositary of the collections that the Great Library discarded or its auxiliary library, open to the general public (in fact, the only library in the city once the Great Library disappeared) has been, like the history of the latter, the object of imagination of the ancients and, above all, the moderns. It would be excessive and beyond the objective of this exhibition catalogue to examine here the veracity of all the information about fires, sackings, enormous quantities of volumes accumulated and destroyed, thereby contributing to the mythical story of the Library; instead, we will look at the testimonies that we have of the activity of those who used it and who in their turn cared for and enriched it and that are the subject of this exhibition: the fragments of papyri that have preserved for us remnants of ancient literature just as the ancients, from the era of the first Ptolemaic kings until the imposition of Christianity as the single religion of the empire, knew it in Egypt.

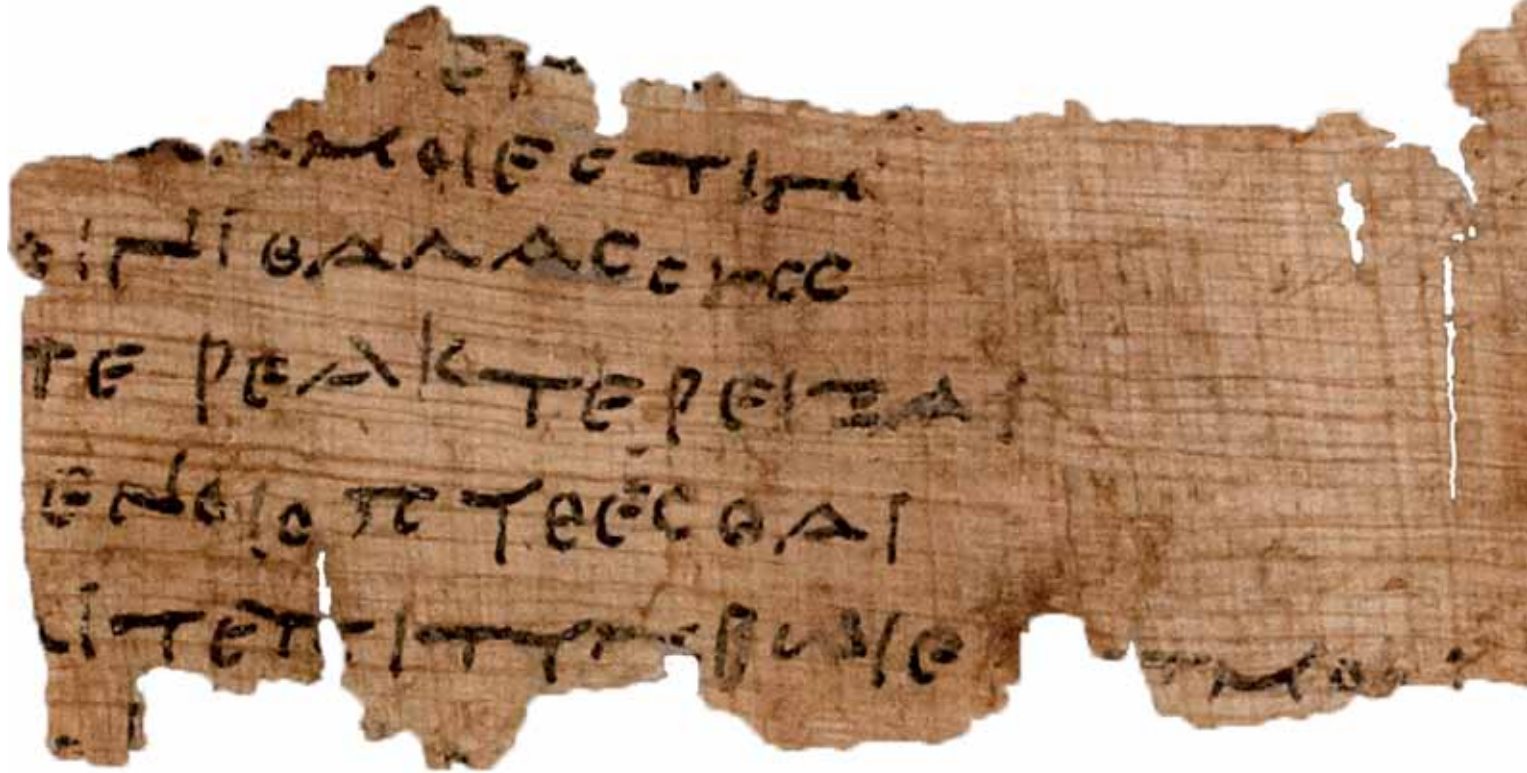
### The Warden of the Hellenic Treasure

Those ancients, in the era the Library was created, were precisely the Greek-speaking elite who had come to take power in the new kingdom and that, as well as competing in prestige and power with their rival neighbours, also adopted that *hellenismos* as the sign of identity of the closed and exclusive group that exercised power in that new land. We must also bear in mind that the successive generations of the Greek-speaking minority were not born in an area where the local language was Greek, and that the section of native population with aspirations to be included within the ruling class would be faced with the unavoidable need to *Hellenise*. All these factors contributed to the special attention paid by the authorities to that essence of Greek culture.

For them and for us, if there was a text that represented the quintessence of Hellenic culture it was the epic poems of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Homer was the poet par excellence, ὁ ποιητής, not only a literary but also a moral and even scientific authority as his texts had not only been models of poetic creation but also of values and behaviour, by portraying and extolling the moral excellence of their heroic characters. The text of those poems had been, and therefore would continue to be, the basis of education throughout Antiquity (see chapter *Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*), apart from having constructed the mythological imaginary and impregnated Greek religiosity itself. Hence the interest not only in preserving it but *possessing it* in its purest state, just as Homer himself (about whom, in addition, so little was known with any certainty) would have conceived it. This would be the great glory of the Library and the great prize of the Ptolemaic kings with which to present themselves as protectors and repositories of Greek culture before the rest of the Greek-speaking world, and this eagerness to approach the text in its purest form would represent nothing less than the birth of philology: the scholars of the Museum and directors of the Library would endeavour for generations to distil the purity of the text of the poems based on the comparison or *collation* of the copies available to them and on the reflection on the text.

Obviously, the Alexandrian philologists did not undertake this collation task systematically; that is, they would not have taken into account all the copies of the Homeric poems they could find, just as we modern philologists do not attach the same value to all the manuscripts of an author, but rather discriminate between more or less reliable manuscripts, according to age, provenance, formal characteristics, how they have been produced, and so on. Thus they talk about some copies, from such and such a city, the old ones, the "best ones", even of some of the scholars' of the museum itself, such as Zenodotus, Aristophanes, Aristarchus and others. Thus it seems more plausible to think that, rather than accumulating the largest possible number of copies of works and authors considered great treasures of Hellenism, the Museum scholars worked with some they judged to be of special value, and these would be the ones deposited in the Library.

Similarly, the librarians' efforts to store in the Library the quintessence of Greek culture led to an operation in which the acquisition of and work on the most se-



lect Greek literature would be prioritised: it is the birth of the famous canons of authors and works that have influenced classical literature studies for centuries, until today, as models of perfection and imitation in the different literary genres. It is curious to reflect on how the catalogue of the Library of Alexandria, the famous *πίνακες* (*pinakes*) or wooden tablets where the names of the different authors and works of the Library were written – and that Callimachus studied in the 3rd century BCE thus producing a work of the same name –, would also become, through their teaching and study, the quintessence of Hellenism for the West. Moreover, the phenomenon of the "canon", through the universalising effect of Rome, would become a way of understanding everything related to literature that still, to some extent, endures today, albeit as a counterpoint to modernity or post-modernity.

### Ancient Books and the Library

Naturally, we cannot be certain that none of the books stored in the Library have reached us; but it could be postulated almost with complete certainty that none of the remains of ancient books found in Egypt come from those copies, not so much because of the destruc-

tion (or destructions) the Library may have suffered as for the fact that practically no papyrus from the Ptolemaic or Roman period has survived from Alexandria, as the water level of the Nile and the fall of the ground itself (we noted that the ancient coast is now at a depth of ca. 6.5 metres) have made conservation impossible. However, given the renown of the Library and the scholars who worked there, which has even caused part of their commentaries to be copied in the margins of the medieval manuscripts, it is reasonable to think that the result of such work has gone beyond the limits of the Museum and has penetrated the *scriptoria* (or establishments where, by commission, copies of the classical texts were copied), the schools and also the houses of individuals who wanted to have a copy of such eminent texts at home. These books that transmitted the precious text of the ancient authors were called βιβλία in Greek. The word βιβλίον, *biblion*, book in the singular, is related to the material used to manufacture the object, the papyrus, which the Greeks of the archaic period knew as a product imported from Egypt, in the form of a scroll (and from this comes the Latin word *volumen*, from the verb *volvo*, to roll, with which the object is designated, as using it meant that it

Homer, *Odyssey*  
11.73-78  
P.Monts.Roca  
inv. 46: TM  
61221  
Cat. 2

Portrait of Ptolemy II and his sister-wife Arsinoe. Gold ochtadrachmon, c. 285-246 BC. Formerly Roger Peyrefitte Collection.

had to be rolled and unrolled). Therefore, many of the fragments of papyri that have reached us with more or less extensive passages of ancient literature belonged to papyrus scrolls, but not all: we must bear in mind the use of literature for learning reading, writing and grammar. In the context of the school, the format of the sheet, the reused scroll and even of other materials of a lesser quality than papyrus is standard. It is also important to differentiate between different types of books: a copy produced professionally in a *scriptorium*, where the scribe will have been paid for his work as a copyist of a complete work (or several), and will therefore have adhered to quality standards in the production of the book, including perhaps the revision by a corrector, will not be the same as the partial copy by an advanced student, or the private copy by a scholar who appreciates the book not so much for its value as an object as for the text itself.

In this way, when we talk of the Library's influence on the books that have transmitted ancient literature to

us, not only will we take into account the text they contain, but we will also relate it to characteristics that define the type of book to which the fragment in question must have belonged.

### The Most Ancient Greek Books of Egypt

At this point it is essential to consider the oldest copies we conserve of Homeric poems and, in general, of ancient literature, and see if we can find any indication of the work of the ancient philologists in them. Answering this question necessarily involves comparing the text of those fragments of papyrus with "our" text, which has been transmitted to us almost uniformly by medieval manuscripts, of which the oldest surviving ones do not predate the 10th century CE. Let us take the case of Homer; the text of those medieval manuscripts is so uniform that the scholars have denominated it Homeric *vulgate*, comparing the rigidity of its transmission with that of the Latin translation of the Bible of the same name, which was copied for centuries with meticulous faithfulness.

When European scholars found the oldest papyri that transmitted Homer's text, from the 3rd century BCE, that is, just after the Ptolemaic dynasty was established in Egypt, they realised that in many cases they showed notable differences with the text of the *vulgate*, so much so that they gave them the name of "eccentric" or "wild papyri": it was not so much about an alteration in the plot or content of the epic poems but about the presence of verses absent in the *vulgate*, or the absence of verses present in the *vulgate*; in some cases there were also verses formed differently from their corresponding ones in the *vulgate*, but the verses in question added little or nothing to the development of the story; they were *formulaic verses*, or verses constructed using metric formulae that helped the recitation, and that before had helped the oral composition of the poems, as shown by Milman Parry in the 1930s. The phenomenon observable in these papyri was another example of the long oral tradition that had originated the poems: the verses whose presence was dispensable (and therefore, easiest to interpolate) were precisely formulaic verses, as they served as a transition between one episode and another, and were also easy to remember, due to their fixed metrical structure. In our exhibition, the papyri *P.Monts. Roca* inv. 46 (cat. 2) and *P.Monts. Roca* inv. 47 (cat. 3), both dated in the mid-3rd century BCE, belong to this group of eccentric papyri. Both have characteristics indicative



of books produced with great care: *P.Monts.Roca* inv. 46 (cat. 2) is written in well-crafted capitals and on the side of the scroll where the fibres run parallel to the direction of the writing; that is, the side intended for the text (see record cat. 11).

We observe indications that it was already restored in Antiquity by strengthening the most fragile parts with strips of papyrus stuck to the verso, which seems to indicate the quality of the book or, in any case, the esteem in which it was held by its owner. *P.Monts.Roca* inv. 47 is also written in the direction of the fibres. Moreover, the type of writing can also be linked to a quite early literary hand; that is, the writing follows a specific graphic style used to produce books, in this case the *epigraphic style*, so called because of the rigidity of the traces: at that time writing on a soft surface like papyrus and through the application of ink with a quill or reed pen had not progressed enough to have developed a style more in keeping with the new materials, which allow great speed, less rigidity in forms, and encourage letters to be joined up, just as we do when we write quickly on paper. These formal characteristics suggest a book produced, if not professionally, at least with quality standards. However, the texts featured in both papyri show notable differences with the text of the *vulgate*, which, as we see, cannot be attributed to the poor quality of the copy: in the first case, we have an "extra verse" after verse 75 of Book XI of the *Odyssey*; in the case of the second, verses 697 and 706 of Book IX of the *Iliad* are missing, and after 707 we have three verses that do not coincide with 708, 709 and 710. However, the most "eccentric" characteristic of these papyri is the fact that in *P.Monts.Roca* inv. 47 (cat. 3) Book IX of the *Iliad* does not finish in the same way as in the *vulgate*. In fact, there is nothing in the papyrus that enables us to conjecture that the scribe was aware of a change of book or canto. The question is of some importance, as it supports one of the two traditionally opposed postures on the work of Alexandrian philology: for some, the division of the poems into 24 books or cantos was due to the Alexandrian philologists, who would use the number of the letters of the Greek alphabet (which, by the way, also had a numeric value) to somewhat artificially divide such extensive poems. For others, the division into cantos would have already taken place in the Alexandrian period. Therefore, our papyrus seems to favour the posture of the former as, although we do not have the left-hand margin, which is where a mark separating one canto from another would appear,

it is not likely, with the ends and beginnings of each book already established, that the scribe would decide to insert different verses at this point from those that closed canto IX, eliminating those traditionally known.

Therefore, from these and other similar phenomena observable in the papyri of the same period we deduce that the text they represent predates the work of the first Alexandrian philologists. It is true that in the mid-3rd century BCE the Library was already carrying out its philological activity, and that Zenodotus of Ephesus had completed his work, but this activity would not have gone beyond the erudite circle of the capital, nor would the great work of Aristophanes of Byzantium and, above all, Aristarchus of Samothrace on the Homeric text have taken place.

### The Influence of the Library and the Consolidation of the Vulgate

From the second half of the 2nd century BCE the text transmitted by the papyrus fragments corresponds almost systematically to the version of the *vulgate*. The question of the origin of this standardisation of the text is still under debate today. Some have thought that the copy that the tyrant of Athens Pisistratus ordered to be stored in the city archives in the 6th century BCE is the origin of the *vulgate*, but because of the quotations that the authors from the classical period themselves make of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, we know that the Homeric text available to them was not that of our *vulgate*. Certainly we must suppose that in most cases these authors would quote from memory, which would create differences with the established text, but we have seen that there were different versions of these texts, suggesting a non-homogenous circulation: when the scholars of the Museum of Alexandria strove to recover the works of the poet in their pristine purity they had access to very different copies.

*P.Monts.Roca* inv. 48 (cat. 4) and *P.Monts.Roca* inv. 49 (cat. 5) are two other Homeric papyri in our exhibition: the first is dated between the late 1st century BCE and the early 1st century CE and the second, in the 2nd century CE. Both belong to the period when Egypt had become a Roman province, after the defeat of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra, the last queen of the Ptolemy family, by Augustus in the Battle of Actium in the year 31 BCE. Egypt was the last of the Hellenistic kingdoms to be conquered by Rome. As had happened with the others, the Romans, aware of the cultural superiority of

Homer, Iliad  
9.696-10.3  
P.Monts.Roca  
inv. 47: TM  
67369  
Cat. 3.

the Eastern Mediterranean, maintained Greek, together with Latin, which we must suppose would be spoken only in the first instance within the small group sent by Rome as representatives of the new authority, as the language not only of culture but also of the provincial administration itself. Greater literacy and the economic prosperity of the first centuries of the empire are fundamental factors for understanding the flourishing of a market of books as objects of entertainment or luxury, even as a sign of an elevated social status. In this period, writing for copying books professionally is clearly separated from writing used to draft documents, public or private, in the registers. The professional scribe of the *scriptoria* has to learn the different writing styles used to copy books, and is paid in accordance with the quality of his writing. Indeed, the *scriptoria* had copies of the works most in demand, and used them as a model to fulfil the commissions of their clients, who could themselves provide the scroll or scrolls for copying the work, normally already written on one side (and therefore re-used them), or pay for new scrolls, written on for the first time, on the side where the papyrus fibres run in the same direction as the writing. This is the case of the two Homeric papyri we are examining, but also of that of Demosthenes (*P.Monts.Roca* inv. 275) cat. 8, early 1st century CE, and, in the 2nd-3rd centuries CE, that of Apollonius Rhodius (*P.Monts.* inv. 122) cat. 10, and

Hesiod (*P.PalauRib.* inv. 24) cat. 7, in which, if not a *scriptorium* copyist, at least an advanced student could have produced his own copy of the text attempting to follow the professional canons.

All of them are, in fact, written following one of those standardised writing styles used in the production of books. Following the palaeographical classification commonly adopted by papyrologists, the three earliest papyri (the two of Homer and that of Demosthenes) belong to the *informal round* style, so called because of the general rounding of the strokes. Another characteristic of this style appreciable in our papyri is the uniformity in the size of the letters, and what is called *bilinearity*: that is, the characters follow each other regularly on the line without sticking out, except in the case of a few letters that feature long vertical strokes that go above or below the line. When the regularity of this style of writing is extreme, we talk about *formal round*: such is the standardisation of the writing in those cases that causes the effect of our modern printing characters (*P.Monts.Roca* inv. 1, in the exhibition, a codex with fragments of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, is an example of this style, from the 2nd century CE) (cat. 60). The papyri of Hesiod and Apollonius Rhodius feature the calligraphic style called *formal mixed*, or *severe style*, so named because of the angular shape of the strokes and also characterised by the contrast between a series of big broad letters, and others that tend to be smaller and narrower. It is what we call *modular contrast*.

As we have said, the papyri of the Roman era already fully adjusted to the state of the text of our *vulgate* in the case of Homer, and to that of our medieval manuscripts in the case of the other authors and, unlike the Ptolemaic papyri, only rarely do they feature exclusive differences with the text of the codices, or *unique variant readings*, unless we consider that orthographic variants or simplifications of the text (the so-called *trivialisations*) are so.

However, the papyri of the Roman era feature something new in comparison with the Ptolemaic ones. Even if before the Hellenistic period the Greeks knew and used the concept of word, in the graphic representation of the speech, which is what writing basically is, they did not separate them, just as we do not separate words when we speak. This is what is known as *scriptio continua*. Already in the Ptolemaic period we find some lectional signs in the text, helping the reader to articulate it. Scribes could indicate a pause in the recitation: and they did this not only through the mechanism itself of the line change at





the end of a verse but also by means of a dot (just as we do), above all when the pause occurred within the verse. Moreover, in the *scriptio continua*, they could also indicate the elision of the last vowel of a word when the next one began with a vowel, using the apostrophe. Apart from these marks, which help the correct articulation of the text in its oral performance, Alexandrian philologists are credited with the use of another series of signs that alluded to phenomena of a philological kind, and specifically Aristarchus of Samothrace, active in the first half of the 2nd century BCE, is thought to have organised them into a system: the obelus, a small hyphen placed in front of the beginning of a verse to indicate its suspicious nature; the *diple peristigmene*, the *stigma* and the *antisigma*, to indicate, respectively, the wrong place and the place where a verse should appear; and the asterisk with obelus, to indicate verses interpolated from another place of the cantos. These marks, called critical because of their relationship with the textual criticism developed by the ancient philologists, together with the dots that mark pauses in the text, already appear in books of the 2nd century BCE.

From the 1st century BCE onwards, we find the first apostrophes and, with increasing frequency, other more sophisticated marks appear in the Roman period, which seem not only designed to help the reader to correctly articulate the *scriptio continua*, but refer in many cases to the phonetic or prosodic characteristics of the words: accents, quantity signs (Greek vowels can be long or

short), spirits (the words that begin with a vowel in Greek can be preceded by a brief aspiration, which is marked using the so-called rough breathing). In this exhibition we can see them, above all, in the papyri of Hesiod and Apollonius, but we also have one in *P.Monts.Roca* inv. 48 (cat. 4).

The commentaries or *scholia* preserved in our medieval manuscripts of Homer's text and attributed to the Alexandrian philologists reveal that we must also attribute to the ancient philologists the introduction of these marks, known as diacritical, in the copies of the Homeric text. However, if this is so, it is reasonable to suppose that the text in which they appear in our papyri is also that of Alexandrian philologists. In other words, during the Roman period, the work that the Museum scholars (mainly Zenodotus of Ephesus, Aristophanes of Byzantium and Aristarchus of Samothrace) had undertaken on the epic poems in the Ptolemaic period would have already gone beyond the limits of the restricted circle of intellectuals of Alexandria, and would have penetrated the copies of the *scriptoria* and those of school teachers, displacing, because of their prestige, the "other copies" represented by the eccentric papyri, copies which the Alexandrian philologists themselves mention in their commentaries. Moreover, as we have seen, the text of these Roman papyri coincides with that of the *vulgate*. The conclusion seems clear: Alexandrian philologists, with their study of the Homeric poems, established its text (including the division into cantos) and created the *vulgate*.

However, the question is not so simple: among the commentaries of Alexandrian philologists are some that suggest that the text they used was not the one we have now (the *vulgate*). Thus, it is sometimes said that "Aristarchus reads x", when the *vulgate* has "y", or that Zenodotus athetizes a certain verse (that is, he considers it spurious and places an obelus in front of it). Modern philologists have endeavoured to show that the transmission of those commentaries could have misinterpreted them as readings or variants in the text of the ancient philologists when they were in fact no more than that, commentaries. The confusion would have originated because, in the ancient handwritten tradition, the content of the commentaries, which would have circulated in volumes separate from the text, would not have been preserved, but only the mark (critical or diacritical) that acted as a call upon the text itself. Thus the marks would have been interpreted as interventions in the text, or as indicators of different versions.

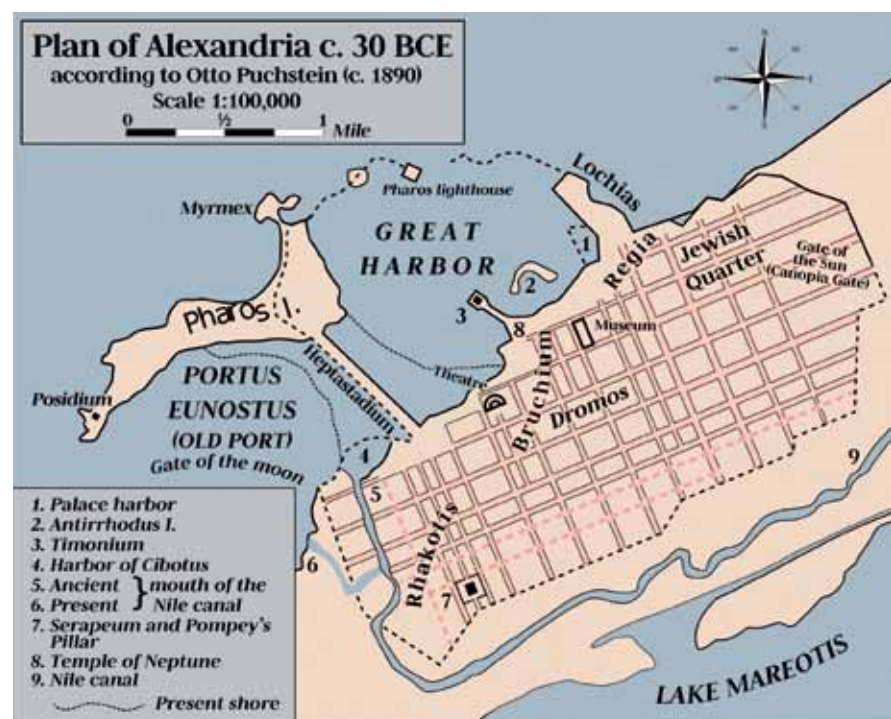
Homer, Odyssey  
5.113-122  
P.Monts.Roca  
inv. 48: TM  
61164  
Cat. 4

In the exhibition we have a sample of this other product of Alexandrian philology: a fragment of a commentary on the *Idylls* of Theocritus (*P.Monts.Roca* inv. 316) (cat. 13). If compared with the fragments of the books we have analysed, the non-formal character of its writing attracts our attention; the hand, although experienced, is *cursive*: it writes quickly joining letters, without raising the reed pen from the writing surface to separate the characters, unlike the practice followed by the so-called book hands. Moreover, the commentary is written on the side where the fibres run perpendicularly to the lines, so it is very probably a reuse of the writing material once the text written on the other side (which would have been prepared for this purpose) could be discarded. The content, however, is highly erudite, and reflects the same task we just alluded to in the case of the Homeric poems: the attempt to explain the text, to help the reader to understand it correctly, to resolve possible ambiguities and, finally, to establish it in its original purity. In this case, we have the handwriting of a scholar, and not of a professional scribe who is paid for his work, who writes for himself in the purest tradition of ancient philology.

### Epilogue: New Forms and New Times

In conclusion, let us now look at fragments of two books that, although sharing the same type of writing as the papyrus of Apollonius and Hesiod, feature a very new characteristic. *P.Monts.Roca* inv. 541 (cat. 6), with passages from Book XIV of the *Iliad*, and *P.Monts.* inv. 10 (cat. 9), with fragments of Book I of the *Histories* of Thucydides, are two papyri from the Roman period, from the 3rd century BCE, written in the hand we have called *formal mixed*, or *severe style*. In this century, this style practically replaces that of the *round hands* in the copy of the classical texts, which is further proof of how the conventions worked in the production of books in Antiquity. What calls our attention is that the fragments are written, following the same text, on both sides, *recto* and *verso*, we would say in papyrological terms, but also in codicological terms, as we will see next. Indeed, this excludes the possibility of a scroll being reused and written on the back with a different text, as we indicated above. Here, on turning over the fragment, we find the continuation of the text, exactly the same as in our books, because the format of the material has changed: it is no longer a scroll composed of a series of sheets stuck together and written on, but rather the scroll has been cut into a series of units, called *bifolios*, placed one

on top of the other and folded in half, thus producing the *folios* of a small notebook or quire. We call this book format, which is ours, a codex, which comes from the Latin *codex*, the more modern spelling for *caudex*, which means trunk of a tree, because this was the material from which the plates that were later combined to manufacture the book were originally made. The format of the codex for writing was, indeed, very old, but it was used for more humble purposes, such as school exercises, taking notes that could then be used for a composition, or even as the draft for a poem. It was in the 3rd century CE that the codex was extended to a literary format, under the influence of Christian literature that, whether as a reaction to pagan literature, written as we have seen in the format of a scroll, or because of its very roots, which we must also suppose humble, in the form of pamphlets that would circulate the words and deeds of Christ, would have taken the codex format as an identifying mark as opposed to the pagan scroll. One hundred years later, at the end of the 4th century CE with Christianity as the official religion of the whole Roman Empire, the codex would have definitively won the battle as the book format for literary works, until the present day. But this belongs to another chapter in the history of Antiquity: and by then the Library of Alexandria had disappeared.



## Reflections of Daily Life in Greek Papyri

Alberto Bernabé

### Introduction

Alongside the large number of papyri featuring literary texts by prestigious authors, Egyptian sites from the Ptolemaic and Roman eras have preserved many texts, written by completely unknown people, which deal with the endless needs of their daily routine and are a major instrument for getting to know their everyday lives. Here I do not intend to analyse such documents scientifically but rather to explain some personal affairs entrusted to the papyri that archaeologists have given us, like someone opening someone's letters and telling others about their contents. The usually reprehensible practice of snooping on other people's lives may in this case have a positive purpose. It can change the idea we give non-specialists about the ancients in general when seen only through literary, artistic and philosophical works. These portray them as people far removed from us, who were either entangled in perpetual battles covering many *parasangas* or spent the day at the agora in times of peace discussing issues such as the origin of the world, the definition of value or the destiny of man.

The time span of the Greek papyri we have is quite long, ranging from the 4th century BCE to the 8th century CE, although there is much more information for those from our own era. Therefore, we are going to look at the world of Hellenised Egyptians, later subjected to the Roman Empire. Documentary papyri, written for merely practical purposes, enable us to catch them in their daily activity, resolving bureaucratic tangles, looking for work, concerned about their children's education, trying to find a mason to repair their house or organising a party, thereby providing a more domestic rather than solemn and "cultural" portrayal of them, but no less authentic for that.

Yet I must clarify some obvious but nonetheless necessary aspects. Papyrus, as an imported material requiring complex preparation, is expensive and this means, first, that we are not going to find many written by the less well-off classes and, second, that it was normally used for important texts. Thus, there are many official documents, such as contracts, requests or title deeds, valuable both to their holders and to the scholar studying the administrative organisation of this area but less interesting for our purposes. The most appealing are the private letters, but we must also bear in mind that in that period, given the difficulties of the postal service, they are almost always functional and written for important affairs. Nevertheless, we have a great deal of less official

material, more suitable for the subject at hand, and it is this we will focus on.

I therefore present a small selection of documents, from a very wide corpus, chosen for their demythologising value or entertaining nature. To organise this introduction, I have followed the life cycle of an ordinary individual. I will reconstruct an "archi-life" out of bits and pieces of many lives of ordinary citizens and will first examine aspects related to childhood, work, the military, love, marriage, domestic life, leisure and some funerary customs.

### The World of Children

Most documents we preserve on the world of children are related to education. When a boy – from a wealthy class – living in a village or small town made progress in his studies, his parents sent him to the big city, with a teacher, attended by a slave and sometimes more servants. The parents' advice in the letters is not that different from what they might give now: they advise the boy to study and send him money. Let us have a look at quite a typical letter (*P.Oxy.* III 531, 2nd century CE). The sender and the addressee are on the verso: "To his son Hierax, from his father Cornelius."

*Cornelius to his sweetest son Hierax, greeting.*

*All our household warmly salutes you and all those with you. Regarding the man about whom you write to me so often, claim nothing until I come to you auspiciously in company with Vestinus and the donkeys. For if the gods will I shall arrive quickly after the month of Mecheir (26 January-24 February) is over, since at present I have urgent affairs on hand. Take care not to offend any of the persons at home, and give your undivided attention to your books, devoting yourself to learning, and then they will bring you profit. Receive by Onnophris the white robes which are to be worn with the purple cloaks, the others you should wear with the myrtle-coloured ones. I shall send you by Anoubas both the money and the monthly supplies and the other pair of scarlet cloaks. You won me over by the dainties, and I will send you the price of these too by Anoubas; until however Anoubas arrives, you must pay for the provisions of yourself and your household out of your own money, until I send you some. For the month of Tubi (27 December-25 January) there is for yourself what you like, for Phronimus 16 drachmae, for Abascantus and his companions and Myron 9 drachmae, for Secundus 12 drachmae. Send Phronimus to Asclepiades in my name, and let him obtain from him an answer to the letter which I wrote*

Seal of a document related to tax collection P.Monts.Roca inv. 713: TM 128359 Cat. 69

*to him, and send it. Let me know what you want. Good-bye, my son. 16 Tubi (11 January).*

Theon does not seem to be a very diligent student, judging by the spelling and grammar mistakes he makes in a letter to his father of the same name, and he is angry because his father has gone to Alexandria, the big city, without taking him with him. It is *P.Oxy. I 119*, 2nd/3rd centuries CE. On the recto we can read: "Deliver to Theon, from his son little Theon". The clumsy style of the translation is a pale reflection of the original letter.

*Theon to his father Theon, greeting.*

*It was a fine thing of you not to take me with you to the city! If you will not take me with you to Alexandria I will not write you a letter or speak to you or say goodbye to you; and if you go to Alexandria I will not take your hand nor ever greet you again. That is what will happen if you will not take me. My mother also said to Archelaus: "He makes me nervous, take him with you." What a fine thing you did! You sent me presents! Big chick-peas! And you tricked us when you sailed away on the 12th. Send for me later, I implore you. If you don't, I will not eat, I will not drink. That's it. I wish you good health. 18 Tubi (13 January).*

Not every boy was lucky enough to have his father pay the considerable cost of maintaining him away from home accompanied by servants. Others got a job as apprentices to learn a trade. We have many apprenticeship contracts, such as this one concerning a slave who was going to learn shorthand (*P.Oxy. IV 724*).

*Panechotes, also called Panares, ex-cosmetes of Oxyrhynchus, through his friend Gemellus to Appollonius, writer of shorthand, greeting.*

*I have placed with you my slave Chaerammon to learn the signs which your son Dionysius knows, for a period of two years since the present month Phamenoth of the eighteenth year of the Emperor Antoninus Caesar (25 February-26 March 155 CE), for the fee agreed upon between us of one hundred and twenty silver drachmae, with the exception of feast days; and of this amount, you have had a first instalment of forty drachmae, and you will receive a second instalment of forty drachmae when the boy has learnt all the commentary by heart. You will receive the forty remaining drachmae at the end of the period when the boy can write and read from prose of all kinds without fault. If you make him an expert before this period of time, I shall not wait for the aforementioned period*

*of time, but I will not be able to come for the boy before this period but he shall remain with you the days and months that he can be absent from work. Eighteenth year of the Emperor Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius.*

The "commentary" was a text featuring the shorthand abbreviations. Parts of some are preserved, giving us an idea of Greek shorthand (Torallas-Worp, 2006).

There is also room for errant sons, such as Antonius, who writes to his mother to ask for her forgiveness (*BGU III 846*, 2nd century CE. On the verso we can read: "To Neilous, his mother, from Antonius Longus, her son"). Karanis was a village in Faiyum, where the mother lived.

*Antonius Longus Nilus to Neilous his mother, many greetings. Continually I pray for your health. Supplication on your behalf I direct each day to the lord Serapis. I wish you to know that I had no hope that you would come up to the metropolis. On this account neither did I enter into the city. But I was ashamed to come to Karanis because I am going about in filthy rags. I have written to you because I am naked. I beseech you, mother, be reconciled to me. I know what I have brought upon myself. I have been taught a fitting lesson. I know that I have erred. I heard from (...) who found you on the Arsinoite nome, and he unreservedly related everything to you. Do you not know that I would rather be a cripple than be conscious that I am still owing any one an obolus? (...)*

Children played sports and competed, but sometimes not as fairly as might be expected. A contract survives (*P.Oxy. LXXIX 5209*, dated 23 February 267 CE) be-



tween the representatives of two children competing in a wrestling match (perhaps the final of the 138th Great Games in honour of Antinous in Antinopolis), according to which one of them agrees to lose in exchange for money. It is strange to find written evidence of fraud:

*Aurelius Aquila alias Sara[p – patronymic, high] priest of the splendid city of the Antinoites [and –], to Marcus Aurelius Lucam[mon patronymic of Hadrianic tribe and Olympian deme, and to Gaius Julius Theon(?) through Marcus] Aurelius Serenus [ ], both of them guarantors of Aurelius Demetrius...] wrestler, greeting.*

*Since he has agreed with [my son Aure]lius Nicantinous – (he being) [Aurelius] Demetrius, who has had himself guaranteed by you – when competing in the competition for the boy [wrestlers], to fall three times and yield, [... rec]eiving through you 3,800 drachmae of silver of old coinage free of risk, on condition that if – may it not happen – although he yields and does not [fail his part?], the crown is reserved as sacred, (we) are not to institute proceedings against him about these things, but if Demetrius contravenes any of the written terms and those he has agreed with my same son, likewise you are of necessity to pay as penalty to my [same] son on account of wrongdoing three talents of old coinage without any delay or inventive argument, according to the law of guarantee, because of the fact that we have made a contract on these terms. The agreement is binding, being written in two duplicate copies, of which I have a single one and you a single one, and when formally asked I agreed.*

*Year 14 of Emperor Caesar Publius Licinius Gallienus Germanicus Maximus, Persicus Maximus, Pius Felix, Augustus. 29 Mecheir.*

### Military Duties

We also know something about the life of boys in their military service through the letters they sent to their families, such as this one by someone called Apion, who writes to his father (BGU II 423, 2nd century CE):

*Apion to Epimachus his father and lord heartiest greetings. First of all I pray that you are in health and continually prosper and fare well with my sister and her daughter and my brother. I thank the lord Serapis that when I was in danger at sea he saved me. Straightway when I entered Misenum I received my travelling money from Caesar, three gold pieces. And I am well. I beg you therefore, my lord father, write me a few lines, first regarding your health, secondly regarding that of my brother and sister, etc.*



### The Labour World

When they were adults, they had to find a job so it was also useful to have a letter of recommendation, such as the following (P.Oxy. II 292, c 25 SD. Addressed "To Tyrannus, dioecetes"):

*Theon to his esteemed Tyrannus, many greetings. Heraclides, the bearer of this letter, is my brother. I therefore entreat you with all my power to treat him as your protégé. I have also written to your brother Hermias asking him to communicate with you about him. You will confer upon me a very great favour if Heraclides gains your notice. Before all else you have my good wishes for unbroken health and prosperity. Good-bye.*

We have a great deal of information on a wide variety of professions and trades. There are many contracts for nannies, farmhands or stonecutters, as well as papers related to their work. Let us look at a few.

We will start with a formula of deposit by a bank clerk, which shows us that in all periods a good command of stereotypical jargon is needed to draft documents. Instead of the names that should appear, there are cases of the term meaning "whoever", which here I have translated with X. Today, it would be a form with blank spaces left empty to write the pertinent details (P.Oxy. XXXIII 2677, 2nd century CE):

*X son of X, grandson of X, of such mother, from such place, to X son of X, grandson of X, of such mother, from such place, greetings. I acknowledge receipt from you by hand as a deposit of so many drachmae. They are so many drachmae. I shall repay you when you wish, without delay. If not, I shall pay a penalty in accordance with the law on deposits, with you having*

School exercise  
O.PalauRib. inv.  
4: TM 144299  
Cat. 40

Didymus the  
Blind, Commen-  
tary on the Book  
of Zechariah IX  
14, 3  
P.Monts.Roca  
inv. 421: TM  
59670  
Cat. 12

*the right to act against me and all my properties and according to the decision of a judge. The deposit formula, written by me X in my own hand, in duplicate, is valid wherever it is presented and whoever presents it to his benefit. Date.*

Next there is a list of luxury items shipped in a small boat, including oil from Hispania. The vinaigrette and salted fish may have the same origin. The trader worked for himself and the goods are few but expensive (*P.Oxy. XVI 1924*, 5th-6th centuries CE. The trader makes a considerable number of spelling mistakes):

*List of articles shipped. 3 Ascalon wine-jars, a pot of soap, 2 pots of cedar oil, 1 jar of fish brine (garum), 1 jar of oil from Hispania, 7 Gaza jars of salted fish, 5 empty jars, 1 empty Ascalon jar, 1 empty Gaza jar, 1 empty jar, a basket of papyri, 1 carpet.*

The Ascalon and Gaza jars that were shipped empty would be filled with other products in the port of destination.

All these activities involved considerable paperwork, even the practice of prostitution. In a document from Elephantine, the prostitution tax collectors authorise a woman tax payer to work as a prostitute (*SB VI 9545.33*,

2nd century CE. It is dated 23 September. A second hand (the boss) authorises what the civil servant has written: "I, Brasidius Valens signed it"):

*Ammonius and those who with him are collectors of the tax on prostitutes to Tinmarina, greeting. We allow you to practise prostitution, on 26 Thoth of the seventh year of Emperor Antoninus Caesar. 26 Thoth.*

Some traders from the time show that they were busier than modern executives, judging by the need to write down in a diary the many tasks they have to attend to in a day. As an example, let us look at Zenon's (*PSI IV 429*, 3rd century BCE):

*Ask Herodotus about the goat wool. Ask Aminias how much he sold the mine for. The letter to Dioscurides about the boat. Make an agreement with Timaens about the piglets. Draft the contract with Apollodorus and put it in writing to hand it to him. Load the boat with timber. Write to Jason to load the wool and Dionysius to take it, after having soaked it in soapweed. The fourth part of the Arabian wool. Bring the vinegar. Write to Meliton to plant the "bumastos" vineyards belonging to Neoptolemus, and to Alcimus to see if he grants his approval. To Theogenes about the twelve pairs of bulls (...)*



Soap weed was used to clean the wool. The "bumastos" was a large grape resembling a cow's udder, hence its name. On the verso we read:

*From Metrodorus to Athenagoras about the same year's produce. To Theophilus granting a favour and about the state of the work. To write about corn to Iatrokles and Theodorus before the water from the canal (...)*"

### Love Affairs

Love affairs are also reflected in the papyri. When someone was not very successful in such matters he resorted to love spells, such as the following (PGM IV, Faraone 1999):

*Magic spell. Smoke offering to the planet Venus: of a white dove, the blood and fat, raw myrrh and cooked artemisia. With all this make an ointment and burn it before the planet, on vine shoots or embers. Also have vulture brains as coercion when you burn it, and also have as an amulet a tooth from the right side of the upper jawbone of a female donkey or a coloured yearling calf sacrificed to the gods, tied to the left shoulder in an Anubic bracelet. Coercion in the practice: "If you, as the goddess you are, show any delay, you won't see Adonis emerging from Hades. I will run straight to it and tie him up in adamantine chains. Lying in wait, I will tie him up firmly to another wheel of Ixion and he will not come to light but will be tamed by this punishment. Thus, act, sovereign lady, I beg you. Bring me so-and-so, daughter of so-and-so, to come as quickly as possible and come to my door, that of so-and-so, son of so-and-so. She, bitten by a horsefly for love and longing for a yoke, under coercion of violent incentives, today, immediately, quickly. I therefore invoke you, Cytherea, noumillon biombillon Aktiophi, Erechigal, Neboutosuaeth, phroureuxia, thermidoche, bareone.*

A love spell had to be cast before the planet Venus, but it might not be easy to find most ingredients. The last expressions are "abracadabras", which should have had powerful magical strength.

Others seem to be luckier and do not need spells to be successful with ladies judging by the letters they receive from them, such as that of Thais to Apollonius, the strategus, seeking reconciliation after a tense situation. Affectation is not the preserve of any single era, as we can see in *P.Giss. I 17*, 2nd century CE. It is dated 20 July and addressed on the verso "To Apollonius strategos"):

*Thais to Apollonius, her lord, many greetings. First of all, I greet you, my lord, and I pray everywhere for your health. I was quite upset, lord, because I heard that you were indisposed, but, thank all gods that keep you free of illness! I beg you, my lord, please be kind and send someone for me. Otherwise, I will die for not seeing you every day. I wish I could fly and come beside you and kneel before you! I am upset about not seeing you, so be reconciled with me and send someone for me. Good-bye, my lord, (...) and that (...)*

### Marital Life

Finally, our hypothetical ubiquitous citizen got married. In the case of wealthy people, a marriage contract was drafted. By way of example, I have selected part of a very old papyrus (*P.Eleph. 1*, year 311 BCE. The month Dios goes from 29 August to 29 September):

*In the seventh year of the reign of Alexander, son of Alexander, in the fourteenth year of the satrapia of Ptolomeus, the month Dios. Marriage contract of Heracleides and Demetria. Heracleides receives Demetria of Cos as legitimate wife, being both free, from her father Leptines of Cos and from her mother Philotis, bringing clothing and jewellery worth 1,000 drachmae. Heracleides shall provide Demetria with everything pertaining to a free wife and they shall reside in the same place wherever Leptines and Heracleides jointly decide. If Demetria is discovered doing any evil to the shame of her husband Heracleides, she shall be deprived of everything she brought (to the marriage); but Heracleides shall prove whatever he sues Demetria for before three men on whom they both agree. Heracleides shall not be permitted to bring home another woman as an outrage to Demetria, nor have children by another woman, nor deal deceitfully in any way on any pretence. If Heracleides is discovered doing any of these things and Demetria proves it before three men whom they both designate, Heracleides shall return the dowry of 1,000 drachmae to Demetria which she brought and shall indemnify her in addition with 1,000 drachmae of the silver coinage of Alexander (...)*

This contract model is followed similarly by others in other periods, and the more goods that are involved, the more complicated they are.

The parents sent a formal written wedding invitation to their friends. We have many examples of papyri of this kind. Let us look at one (*P.Oxy XXXIII 2678*, 3rd century CE. 14 Mesore is 7 August):

*Dioscorus invites you to the wedding of her son, on 14 Mesore in the temple of Sabazeion, at 9 am. Good-bye.*

Home life brought some problems, such as troublesome renovations. We also have some interesting documents in this field, such as a painter's estimate. It is clear that he had shown a collection of samples (P.Cair.Zen. III 59445, 3rd century BCE):

*Memorandum to Zenon from Theophilus the... About the work in the house of Diotimus; for the portico, [I undertake] to have the cornice painted with a purple border, the upper part of the wall variegated, the lower course like vetch-seed, and the pediment with circular veining, providing myself with all materials, for 30 drachmae. For the dining room with seven couches, I will make the vault according to the pattern which you saw, and give the lower course an agreeable tint and paint the Lesbian cornice, providing all materials myself, for 20 drachmae. And for the dining rooms with five couches, I will paint the cornices, providing all materials myself, for 3 drachmae. The sum total is 53 drachmae. But if you provide everything, it will come to 30 drachmae.*

Another aspect of family life was food. However, there were cookery books to help and here is a recipe from one (P.Heid. inv. G 1701 Bilabel 1920, 3rd century CE). Undoubtedly, this predecessor of Julia Childs would solve the culinary problems of more than one couple:

*Salty meat. Raw meat in the same way. Salty meat is previously cooked only for it to lose its salty taste. Then, on the pan the following: four parts of wine, two parts of sweet wine, one part of vinegar. Toast dry coriander, thyme, anise and fennel, after having poured in everything together since the beginning. Cook it, and when it is well done, add honey and sweet cumin. Some people also add pepper, pour the broth onto a hot pan and add pieces of marrow and hot bread.*

Food undoubtedly attracted mice and this must have been a serious enough problem to turn to specialists on the subject (P.Oxy. II 299, 1st century CE. 24 Pauni is 18 June):

*Horus to his esteemed Apion greeting. Regarding Lampon the mouse catcher I paid him for you as earnest money 8 drachmae in order that he may catch the mice while they are with young. Please send me the money. I have also lent Dionysius, the chief man of Nemerai, 8 drachmae, and he*

*has not repaid them, to which I call your attention. Good-bye. 24 Pauni.*

After work and domestic chores, there was time to entertain. We have news of private parties, coinciding with religious festivals (P.Oxy. I 112, 3rd/4th centuries CE):

*Greeting, my dear Serenia, from Petosiris. Be sure, dear, to come up on the 20th for the birthday festival of the god, and let me know whether you are coming by boat or by donkey, in order that we may send for you accordingly. Take care not to forget. I pray for your continued health.*

Organising a party of this kind required artists or entertainers to be contracted. By way of example, let us look at a papyrus in which what we would now call a "flamenco group" was engaged, paid for in cash and in kind (P.Cornell 9. 206 CE. 24 Pauni is 18 June):

*To Isidora, castanet dancer, from Artemisia of the village of Philadelphia. I wish to engage you with two other castanet dancers to perform at the festival at my house for six days beginning with the 24th of the month Pauni according to the old calendar, you to receive as pay 36 drachmae for each day, and for the entire period 4 artabai of barley and 20 pairs of bread loaves; and whatsoever garments or gold ornaments you may bring down, we will guard these safely; and we will furnish you with two donkeys when you come down to us and a like number when you go back to the city.*

Together with private entertainment, we also have public shows, such as the circus, which aroused the same or more passion as football today. For instance, we have a circus programme that gives us a general idea of these shows, although some of their specific details are not very clear (P.Oxy. XXXIV 2707, 6th century CE). A second hand, the officer authorising the show, adds an approving "alright":

*For good fortune. Victories. 1st chariot race. Procession. Singing rope-dancers. 2nd chariot race. The singing rope-dancers. 3rd chariot race. Gazelle and bounds. 4th chariot race. Mimes. 5th chariot race. Troupe of athletes. 6th chariot race.*

Between races – the highlight of the programme – there was a supporting show. "Victories" seems to refer to the custom of erecting victory statues dedicated to the reigning emperors or to the victories of previous days.

The participants' procession preceded the races, like that of performers in modern circuses. The rope-singers are tightrope walkers who sang and played instruments.

Things did not always go well for married couples and they sometimes decided to divorce. Here is a sample of a deed of divorce (*P.Oxy.* XLIII 3139, 3rd/4th centuries CE). The insistence on not taking legal action tells us that disputes over the properties and goods of a couple may be quite virulent:

*Aurelius Thonis, alias Dioscurides, and his wife, Aurelia Serenilla, daughter of Syrion, alias Eustochius, former gymnasiarcus of the illustrious and highly illustrious city of the Oxyrhynchites, greetings. We agreed to dissolve our marriage and not to sue now or in the future, or to undertake any legal action at all, written or not written, in anything at all related to our marriage, and for any of us to be able to marry that any of us may choose, without having to account for it and without being bound to any legal lawsuit, given that each one of us has recovered their goods in full. Let the documents of divorce and guaranteeing that no legal action shall be undertaken be valid, written in duplicate, one for each party...*

### On Death

Many papyri provide information on the funerary customs of Egyptians from the Greco-Roman period, especially in relation to the mummification of their dead (see chapter *The funerary world in Egypt*). There are also wills, private letters, undertakers' documents or legal texts on sharing the inheritance. Among these documents, and to close this brief anthology, I present the text of a papyrus that clearly reveals the importance attached to properly honouring the dead. The text, which belongs to the accounting documents of a private gastronomy club (which existed), explains that the death of one of its members gave the others the opportunity to throw a party and share the expenses (*P.Tebt.* I 118):

*17 Hathyr (13 November). For the funeral feast of Kalatyis; 1 6-choes jar of wine, 2,000 drachmae, 6 dinner loaves 190 drachmae, total 2,190 drachmae. 22 persons, of whom 18 are members and 4 are guests, the latter being T... son of Numenius, Kames son of Harphaesis, Theos son of Petechon, Papnebtynis son of Sokeus. Total 4. Total 22 at 100 drachmae each one, 2,200 drachmae, a wreath 120 drachmae, total 2,120 drachmae. 18 members of the club, and (...) Nephoreges son of Kera, (...) and Sen, son of (...) and as guests Marres son of Pet..., Petesuchos son of Melas,*

*Chaeremmon son of Di..., total 23 at 100 drachmae, 2,300 drachmae. In the treasurer's hands, 180 drachmae. 25 Tybi (10 January): 1 jar of wine 2,000 drachmae, a wreath 120 drachmae, total 2,120 drachmae. Total 21 persons at 100 drachmae each one, 2,100 drachmae. Surplus 20 drachmae.*

Treatise on rhetoric  
P.PalauRib. inv  
155: TM 100188  
Cat. 46

Six choes amount to almost 20 litres and the 2,000 drachmae are copper, equivalent to 4 silver drachmae. The difference between the amount for bread and for wine is considerable.

Here ends this gallery of ordinary people, whose actions did not pass into history and whose names are not in the textbooks, but who have given us a glimpse into the aspirations, satisfactions, fears and sadness of a people, far from us in time but with whom, extraordinarily, it is not difficult to identify.



## The Languages of Egypt

Emilio Crespo Güemes

### Languages Spoken and Written in Egypt

The most widely spoken language in ancient Egypt is known as Ancient Egyptian. Written texts survive ranging from approximately 3000 BCE to the period after the Arab conquest. Other minority languages were spoken there in several periods of Antiquity. The Achaemenid Empire, which used Aramaic as the official language, conquered Egypt in the decade between 530 and 520 BCE, and the Persians, who spoke Middle Persian, ruled with some interruptions until the last third of the 4th century BCE. Mostly Ionic colonisers founded the Greek colony of Naucratis in the western part of the Nile delta between the 7th and 6th centuries BCE and introduced the Greek language. Later, Alexander, king of Macedonia and leader of the pan-Hellenic alliance that embarked on the expedition against the Achaemenid Empire, conquered Egypt in 332 BCE, spreading the use of spoken Greek throughout the country. As a result of the wars between his successors, Ptolemy I Soter, governor of the Egyptian province of Alexander's Macedonian Empire from before his death in 323 BCE, proclaimed himself king of an area that embraced Egypt and other coastal areas and islands of the eastern Mediterranean in 305 BCE. In the Hellenistic period (323-30 BCE), Alexandria became a cosmopolitan city inhabited by several ethnic and linguistic minorities. Among them the Jews of the diaspora became important. They spoke Greek (cat. 61) and probably Aramaic, but Hebrew, which had been the language of the Jewish people centuries before, was now only the language of their holy texts. The Ptolemaic kingdom lasted just under three centuries and ended when in 31 BCE Octavius defeated the fleet of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra, the last queen of the Ptolemaic dynasty, in the sea battle of Actium, not far from the western coast of Greece, and turned the former Ptolemaic kingdom into an imperial province of Rome. After the conquest, the Romans introduced the use of Latin in Egypt, which remained the language of Roman citizens until the country was conquered by the Arabs.

### Ancient Egyptian

Ancient Egyptian is a language typologically and genetically related to the Berber and Semitic languages, with which it forms the so-called Afro-Asian family. Documented since approximately 3000 BCE, it ceased to be used in written documents after the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs, but continued to be spoken until after

1500. It later disappeared, replaced by Egyptian Arabic, which is currently the language spoken in the area. Ancient Egyptian is, therefore, one of the longest documented languages in the world (Loprieno, 2004).

There are several distinct periods in the history of Ancient Egyptian. Classical Egyptian is divided into Archaic, Ancient and Middle and ranges approximately from the third and second millennium before our era until the Amarna period (1353 BCE), but continued to be written until the end of Antiquity. The beginnings of Late Egyptian date back to the Amarna period but this stage of autochthonous Egyptian was particularly spoken between 1000-700 BCE. Demotic Egyptian encompasses the period between 700 BCE and 500 CE. The early written samples of Coptic date to the 3rd century CE and it was still spoken until the 16th century.

Several systems were used to write the ancient Egyptian language. The oldest is the hieroglyphic system, in which each of its several hundreds of signs represents, according to the contexts, a concept, a sound or a determiner that defines or limits the value of other signs. Hieroglyphs were used from the early stages of the written tradition, engraved on the stone of temples, tombs and other monuments. They are usually read from top to bottom and from right to left, although the reading orientation is not systematic. Hieratic script (cat. 51), commonly used by the priests of the ancient Egyptian religion, derives from them. Signs are mostly cursive and simplified versions of hieroglyphs. They are arranged from right to left in vertical columns or horizontal rows. Demotic writing (cat. 52) derives from Hieratic writing and gradually spread from the year 700 BCE. It is usually combined with hieroglyphs, as in the Rosetta Stone, which features a bilingual text in hieroglyphic and demotic Egyptian and in Greek containing fragments of a decree by Ptolemy V Epiphanes from 196 BCE. The bilingual nature of the document helped J.-F. Champollion to decipher ancient Egyptian writings in 1822. The Coptic alphabet began to be used to write down the Egyptian language at the beginning of our era. This alphabet is based on the Greek alphabet with the addition of some demotic signs that represent sounds from the ancient Egyptian language unknown in the Greek alphabet. Hieroglyphs gradually fell into disuse during Roman rule and finally disappeared in late Antiquity (cat. 57). There is evidence supporting the idea that in the Roman period only a few priests could understand them and this writing system disappeared as a result of



the gradual abandonment of the centres of the ancient Egyptian religion. The spellings in the documents written in Coptic enable us to establish the existence of five dialects. Out of them, southern Sahidic represents the classical literary form and Bohairic is still used by the Coptic Orthodox Church.

### Contacts between Greek and Egyptian before the Hellenistic Period

The contact between the Greek and Egyptian languages dates back to the 7th or 6th centuries BCE, when the pharaohs began to settle Ionians as mercenaries in Egypt. The Ionians also founded an emporium and later the colony of Naukratis in the Canopic mouth of the Nile, some 70 km south-east of the future Alexandria. Some Egyptian names inscribed in Greek by the mercenaries had already appeared in Abu Simbel, probably in 591 BCE. Herodotus (2.153-4) points out that the first settlements of foreigners permitted in Egypt were of Greeks in the 7th century BCE. The oldest papyrus written in Greek that has survived was found near Memphis, where the descendants of the Ionians who had settled in Egypt later moved. It contains the poem titled the *Persians* by Timotheus, composed in the early 4th century BCE, which indicates that Greek still survived in the area. Some other old Greek papyri (such as UPZ 1, 1) are written in the Ionian dialect spoken by the descendants of the ancient colonists (Torallas Tovar, 2010: 255). Apart from the above mentioned testimonies, the documents give no indication of contact of the two languages until Alexander's conquest of Macedonia in 332 BCE.

Macedonians and other Greeks who settled in Egypt after Alexander's conquest of the country spoke differ-

ent Greek dialects. In Alexandrian literature there are terms with unmistakably Macedonian phonetic features, for instance, κεβλήγονος (Euphorion 108), κεβλή (Callimachus, fr. 657) and κεβλήγονος (Nicander, *Alexipharmaka*, 433), which correspond to Ionian-Attic κεφαλή "head", which attest the confusion of β with φ, characteristic of Macedonian. In his turn, Theocritus (15. 90-3) introduces two Syracusan women speaking the Doric dialect in Alexandria. The old Greek dialects were soon replaced by the Attic-Ionic koine, which had served as a form of formal communication in the Macedonian kingdom since the time of Philip II, Alexander's father. Several modern sociolinguistic studies on cities founded by English-speaking colonisers in inhabited areas have shown that the new colonists lose their dialects in two or three generations and through a process of linguistic levelling create a new dialect which has features from all previous ones. Something similar happened in Ptolemaic Egypt.

### The Greek Language in Greco-Roman Egypt: More Abundant Documentation

The written documentation that has reached us from Greco-Roman Egypt is more abundant than that of the other areas of the ancient classical civilisation. Along with the inscriptions on stone, which include some of the most famous pieces exhibited in the museums (such as the Rosetta Stone or the Decree of Canopus, to which we will refer later), the aridity of several areas of the old Ptolemaic kingdom contributed to the preservation of many documents written in ink on sheets made with strips of papyrus, cut, pressed and joined together, which were produced almost exclusively in Egypt and exported to other zones of the Mediterranean ba-

Demotic-hieratic mummy label  
Museum of Montserrat SM6  
Cat. 52

Linen bandages  
with hieratic  
Book of the  
Dead. Detail  
L.Monts.Roca  
inv. 1483  
Cat. 51

sin. There must also have been documents written on papyrus in these areas, but the environmental humidity caused their disappearance, with the exception of rare cases in which the papyrus sheets, stuck together and forming a scroll, were carbonised in a fire and remained buried, as happened with the scrolls of the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum, which were covered under a thick layer of material from the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 BCE, or with the Derveni papyrus, which burnt in the funeral rites of a person who was buried in this town close to the current city of Thessaloniki in the mid-4th century BCE. In contrast, thanks to the dryness of the Egyptian subsoil outside the narrow strip of the Nile banks and the delta, there are many papyri written in Greek between 300 BCE and 600 CE that have survived. Many others were rescued because they were used as mummy cartonnages (cat. 54). Others were found in dumps where they were thrown away when they were no longer of use, while the origin of many is unknown.

Excavations in search of papyri, as well as finds, have multiplied since the last decades of the 19th century. Many papyri kept in American or European institutions, which in their time they had bought or rescued in archaeological excavations, are still pending publication. In many cases the papyrus scrolls or books were cut into sheets and sold to different buyers, which meant that parts of the same document were dispersed. Along with papyri, many fragments of ceramics (ostraca) inscribed with ink are still being found (cat. 42). Until a few years ago, it was difficult to study papyri and ostraca system-

atically due to the geographical dispersion of the modern collections of papyri and publications and because of the fragmentary nature of most documents. Only recently have the new information and communication technologies made it possible to gather together in several websites facsimiles or digital photographs of a large number of documents. This improvement in research conditions enables us to predict important advances in the near future (cf. Evans-Obbink, 2010).

### **Greek in Greco-Roman Egypt: More Varied Documentation**

The Greek documentation of Greco-Roman Antiquity found in Egypt is more varied than that of other areas. While the writings in Greek prior to the Ptolemaic kingdom (apart from the clay tablets written in linear B syllabary that has specific features) are mostly literary works transmitted through medieval copies or official and private documents written on stone stele, pieces of ceramics, sheets made of lead or other materials, Greek documentation written on papyrus or on ostracon found in Egypt reveals not only literary texts – generally fragmentary – but also official and private texts, which show levels close to the spoken language: letters (cat. 57), contracts (cat. 31, 35, 36, 37), census lists, receipts (cat. 16), requests, wills, birth certificates, invitations, school exercises (cat. 39, 40, 41, 42 and 43), magical texts (cat. 72, 73, 74, 75, 76) and individual or professional archives, among others. The same happens with the documents written in Latin, which also attest levels of spoken lan-



guage that outside the papyri are only attested by the wall inscriptions in Pompeii and the tablets written by legionaries in Vindolanda (England).

### Greek in Greco-Roman Egypt: Dialects and Registers

Most documentary texts written on papyrus and on ostrakon are in the koine of Attic-Ionic base that Macedonians took to Egypt as a form of written communication (Gignac, 1976; Teodorsson, 1977; Bubenik, 1989; Horrocks, 2010; Torallas Tovar, 2014). The spellings contrary to the norm show the changes in pronunciation. Thus, since the early 1st century CE, υ(ι), οι, ι, ει, η alternate. It is likely that the written form conceals characteristics of the koine spoken in Egypt different from those spoken in other Hellenistic kingdoms and, especially, the dialects spoken in the ancestral home of Greek culture. It is also likely that some spellings contrary to the norm are due to pronunciations that result from interference with Egyptian (such as the confusion between /l/ and /r/ or between voiceless and voiced stops). The language evolved in the almost one thousand years encompassed by the papyri written in Greek, but the existence of a canon written since ancient times conceals this evolution. In any case, the papyri reveal changes more often and at an earlier date than the inscriptions and attest changes unknown by the inscriptions (such as the loss of aspiration at the beginning of the word and the loss of the final -v).

The papyri of Egypt illustrate linguistic registers of Greek almost unknown in the earlier periods of the Greek language. On the one hand, some use spellings distanced from the norm for the Greek language. Thus, iotacism is frequent and in the 1st century CE it spread to all the vowels and diphthongs that evolved into /i/ in modern Greek. However, this does not mean that these documents feature vulgar and careless texts. Thus, the Letter of Emperor Claudius to the Jews of Alexandria (*PLond.* VI 1912; Pestman, 1990: 105-9) features an expression characteristic of the official language but at the same time many iotacistic spellings and confusions of voiceless and voiced stops. On the other hand, many papyri follow spelling norms slightly different from the Attic (with confusion of <EI> with <I> and vice versa) and use a non-literary formal register similar to that of public inscriptions, in which the technical vocabulary of requests, contracts, petitions and other administrative documents stands out. Some private letters feature



Receipt for weights and measures conversion tax  
P.Monts.Roca  
inv. 328: TM  
219246  
Cat. 16

a third register and present a poor expression, despite following the rules governing composition (greetings, brief information, farewell, address) with spellings that reflect a vulgar pronunciation. Late documents are characterised by a verbosity that seeks to be elegant but is vacuous. In recent years, there has been major progress in the study of the registers and the levels of language documented by the papyri and ostraca.

Several archives of notaries (*agoranomoi*) give us an idea of the diversity of features of individual idiolects and of characteristics of the common professional register. Given that the text of the contract and the signature are usually written by the same hand, it is believed that the notary would have templates that the apprentices in the office would copy with their own hand. The result is that the syntax and vocabulary seem to derive from the notary himself but the morphology and spelling may be of apprentices with a level of bilingualism lower than the notary (Vierros, 2012).

### Communicative Functions of Languages in the Greco-Roman Period

Greek and Egyptian were the majority languages in Egypt during the Hellenistic period. The use of either of them depended on the speaker being Greek or belonging to the local population, on the communication being official and formal or private and familiar, and on the type of document. A great deal of data reveals that

Didymus the  
Blind, *Commen-  
tary on the Book  
of Zechariah IX*  
14, 3. Detail  
P.Monts.Roca  
inv. 421: TM  
59670  
cat. 12

Greek was used by the local population and for official communication and that Egyptian was used by the local population for informal communication. The documents related to the traditional religion are written in both languages, which probably shows a policy of mutual support (Thompson, 1995; Crespo, 2007).

Macedonians and the remaining Greeks who settled in Egypt constituted an ethnic and linguistic minority with respect to the local Egyptian population, who were the majority. In the second half of the 1st century BCE, Diodorus of Sicily (1.31) estimated that the population in the province amounted to 7 million and that of Alexandria to 300,000. In his turn, by the year 65 CE, Josephus (*The Jewish War* 2,384-5) estimated the total population at 7.5 million. Both based the calculation on the income from the salt tax, which concerned almost all citizens and that in the Roman period became universal, under the name of *laographia*. The local population was scattered all over the country, but the ruling minority mainly lived in Alexandria and on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, in the capitals of the provinces into which the kingdom was divided and on the lands below sea level of Faiyum, where Ptolemy II Philadelphus, who reigned from 284 to 246 BCE, and his immediate successors, had dried marshes and wetlands and allocated plots of cultivable land to Macedonians and other Greeks who agreed to settle in that area, previously depopulated, in exchange for doing military service in the royal army. It

has been estimated that 30% of the population of that province was Greek (Clarysse-Thompson II 156).

The Egyptian language and Greek language were used for different communication purposes. The Greek papyrus (*P.Rev.Laws*) containing the laws enacted by Ptolemy II Philadelphus in 259 BCE on public revenues indicates that the document was written "in Greek and local letters." Although the kings published their laws in bilingual version, it seems that they spoke only Greek (and, specifically, Attic-Ionic koine) as revealed by a famous passage from the *Life of Mark Anthony* (27, 5) written by Plutarch: "It is said that she [Cleopatra] had learnt the languages of many other peoples, although the kings of Egypt before her had not even tried to learn the Egyptian language, and some actually had given up speaking their own Macedonian dialect." Ptolemy IV Philopator harangued his troops before the battle of Raphia against the Seleucid king Antiochus III in 217 BCE through interpreters (Polybius 5, 83, 7).

The three royal decrees by the Ptolemaic kings concerning the temples of the traditional Egyptian religion, of all of which two or more copies are preserved, were published in Greek and in Egyptian (written in hieroglyphic and demotic characters). The oldest, called Decree of Canopus (238 BCE) records, on the occasion of the donations granted by the king to the temples, a solemn synod of priestly leaders in which, among others, a new calendar was adopted that included festivals in honour of Berenice, the daughter of King Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-222 BCE) and mother of Ptolemy IV Philopator (222-205 BCE), after his death, deification and identification with the constellation called "Berenice's Hair" (Pfeiffer, 2004). The third decree, published by the priests gathered in Memphis, of which the Rosetta Stone forms part, records the donations granted by the new King Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204-180 BCE) to the priests of the traditional Egyptian religion and sets up a divine practice in honour to the king, who has re-established his authority after having crushed an internal rebellion and has granted a tax exemption to the priests. The text (dated 196 BCE) is bilingual (Attic-Ionic koine and Egyptian) and is written in Egyptian (with the hieroglyphic and demotic scripts) and in the Greek alphabet.

The administration of the Ptolemaic kings regularly expressed itself in the Greek koine of Attic-Ionic base. Thus, Zenon's archive, which comprises over 1,700 texts written approximately in the middle of the 3rd century BCE, contains around 40 documents written by Ze-



non himself, more than 70 by Apollonius, Minister of Finance of the king, for whom Zenon acted as private secretary and property manager, and 46 by Amyntas, Administrator of the house of Apollonius, all of them in Greek.

The legal effects of the contracts differed depending on whether they were written in Greek or Egyptian. Contracts between Greeks or Macedonians were officially recorded in a registry office (*anagraphe*) run by the *agoranomoi* or *mnemones*, who had functions similar to notaries today. The practice of registering contracts probably already existed in the late 3rd century BCE (Montevecchi, 1973: 196). At least since the kingdom of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (284-246 BCE) contracts between Egyptians were written in Egyptian by native scribes from the temples who were called *monographoi* or *grammatodidaskaloi*, the latter a denomination probably derived from the fact that these scribes were the masters of other apprentices (Maehler, 1983: 196).

Probably in the year 146 BCE, as inferred from the content of a papyrus sent by an *agoranomos* to another colleague, Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-145 BCE) ordered the Greek notaries to keep a register in Greek of the contractual documents between Egyptians registered by Egyptian notaries in Egyptian (UPZ 1, 596; Memphis, 145 BCE). This papyrus presupposes that from that date Greek notaries had to add a note to the original Egyptian contract, which in fact they did with the expression  $\omega\acute{\epsilon}\tau\omega\kappa\epsilon\nu\ \epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\gamma\rho\alpha\phi\acute{\eta}\nu\ X$ , "it has been entered in the register X." Some of these registers have survived (cf. Montevecchi: 1973, Tav. 40 b). The private contracts in Egyptian (*cheirographa*, "handwritten"), generally copied by a scribe from a temple who did not have the status of public notary, were not entered in the Greek registers.

The administration of justice also segregated Greeks and Egyptians. A decree enacted by Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II in 118 BCE established that the competent court in civilian cases between Greeks and Egyptians would depend on the language in which the contract subject to litigation was written (Pestman, 1990: 85; *P.Tebt.* I 5, l. 207 ff.). The content of this decree means that in the previous Ptolemaic period there were three courts for private cases and that each one was competent for one ethnic group: the judges for cases between Greek citizens were called *chrematistai*, the *laokeritai* acted for the cases between Egyptians, and the third court, called *koinodikion*, "common court", judged cases between Greeks and Egyptians. In other words, private

justice was ruled by the principle that, with the exception of royal orders (*prostagmata*), which concerned all the people of the kingdom, the applicable law in each case was not determined by the domicile of the litigants but by the ethnic group to which they belonged. Moreover, the locals, on the one hand, and the Greeks and Macedonians, considered a unit (UPZ 1, 7), on the other, had specific legislations, called *enchorios nomos* "local law" and *politikoi nomoi* "civic laws", respectively (see chapter *The administration in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt*).

After the Roman conquest, the administration used Greek habitually, as in the other eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. The documents in Egyptian tend to become rarer with time. The use of Latin was limited to documents that attested rights of Roman citizens. The birth deeds and wills of Roman citizens had full legal effects if they were in Latin. As some documents written in Greek that are translations of Latin originals commissioned by Roman citizens have survived, it could be supposed that they – mostly garrison veterans – usually spoke Greek. There are translations of wills and birth certificates until the period of Emperor Severus Alexander (222-235 CE).

### Diglossia

The linguistic situation in Ptolemaic Egypt, as we have described it, features similarities with what current sociolinguistic studies call diglossia. This term is generally applied to societies in which two forms of the same language or two different languages are used for official and private communication, respectively (Ferguson, 1959; Fishman, 1970). The use of Latin in the Roman period would have led to a situation in which there were two languages of prestige, with Latin occupying a higher level than Greek.

### Bilingualism, Alternation of Code, Loans and Interferences in Greco-Roman Egypt

The texts written on papyrus and ostraca reveal the linguistic contact between Greek and Egyptian (Fewster, 2002; Adams, 2003; James-Mullen, 2012). There are references to translators, to people who study Greek or Egyptian (UPZ 1, 148) and translated documents (UPZ 1, 140). The archives comprising documents written in Greek and in Egyptian show that, at least partly, the language chosen depends on the content of the document. Egyptian is more frequent in receipts for payment of taxes, marriage and divorce deeds and oaths in the



Gospel of Matthew  
P.Monts.Roca  
inv. 1: TM 61783  
Cat. 60

temples, while Greek is more frequent in wills and sales or loan contracts. There are also archives containing personal letters written by the same people in Greek and in Egyptian, sometimes sent by a person who could not write and who probably opted for one or another language depending on the scribe who had copied the letter in each case (Vierros, 2012). The mixed hybrid words featuring a Latin element and another Greek, such as *σύγκελλος*, "cell-mate" (in general, applied to a monk), formed through Gr. *σύν* and Lat. *cella*, reveal a certain level of bilingualism (Filos, 2010). There are also documents written in Greek and Egyptian that attest diverse degrees of bilingualism, although we lack data to determine the number or percentage of the Greco-Roman and Egyptian population that was bilingual in each of the levels distinguished in the study of modern languages. Other documents feature interferences that attest an imperfect knowledge of one of the languages in contact. In many cases it is difficult to determine whether a document is bilingual or monolingual with lexical loans and expressions from the lending language that have been integrated into the borrowing language. This is the case of the documents from the Phatres archive in the town of Narmuthis (in Faiyum), written on ostraca around the year 200 CE. These documents are written in demotic Egyptian – something anomalous at that time – but feature interspersed Greek words, using the Greek alphabet – names and verbs, mainly –, which designate concepts related to legal proceedings or to the administration. They are traditionally interpreted as bilingual documents, but perhaps they rather reflect spoken popular Egyptian tinged with Greek technical vocabulary (Rutherford, 2010).

In general, code-switching (Egyptian and Greek) in the same document is rare. The salt tax censuses provide examples of alternation of code in different documents that formed part of the same collection process. The salt tax, implemented by Ptolemy II Philadelphus and documented since 263 BCE, concerned almost all citizens. The collection required written censuses – originally in demotic Egyptian – enabling the royal administration and the collectors to calculate the revenues. Many of the personal names that appear as subject to the payment of the tax in these censuses are Egyptian. The collectors issued receipts that they gave to the subjects who had paid. One of the results of the implementation of the salt tax is the growing use of Greek both in the censuses and in the receipts. As for the name of the Egyptians subject to the tax, the census offers the mere transliteration of the Egyptian name or its translation (or a transformation to adapt it) to the Greek language. The oldest censuses found are mainly in demotic. With time – undoubtedly affected by the scribes' education, who in an early stage wrote Egyptian in demotic – translation of the Egyptian names into Greek prevailed, with the addition of a case ending, sometimes incorrect, betraying the scribe's knowledge of Greek (Muhs, 2010).

There are documents that although written in Greek show that the scribe was unfamiliar with it. A famous example is a papyrus from the archive of Petaus, a scribe in a village in Faiyum for several years in the decade of the 180s CE. The papyrus reveals his very limited capacity to write Greek as he copied the sentence *Πεταῦς κωμογραμματεὺς ἐπιδέδωκα* "I Petaus, village scribe, have submitted [it]", the signature with which he submitted requests he received to his superiors, on a sheet 12 times one below the other, probably as a writing exercise. When copying the sentence, he missed out the initial vowel of the verb, writing *πιδέδωκα* on all the lines from the 5th, showing that he did even not know the signature he used to send the documents he received in his office.

In general terms, the local population who could read and write Greek was more in contact with the leading Greek and, later, Greco-Roman minority. While reading and writing were linked to the temples of traditional Egyptian religion, education spread in Hellenistic and Greco-Roman society and formed part of Greco-Roman culture (Maehler, 1982). It is also believed that monolingual Greeks were more numerous in Alexandria and other towns, and monolingual Egyptians in rural areas.

## The Administration in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt

José Luis Alonso  
 José Domingo Rodríguez Martín  
 Jakub Urbanik

### Introduction

Since the remotest times, the coasts of pharaonic Egypt were always a preferential destination for Greek traders, to the extent that even some cities of Egypt, which in the future would become urban centres of great importance, such as Naucratis, had emerged as small Greek settlements as early as the 7th century BCE. And yet, at that time the Greek presence was not strong enough to influence a culture of ancient roots such as the Egyptian, with a developed administration, a well-defined social and religious structure and a rooted linguistic substrate.

Everything changed with the incorporation of Egypt into the Empire of Alexander the Great in the last third of the 3rd century BCE. The successive victories of Alexander over the Persians put Egypt back at the core of a new and influential empire, based on a centenarian culture that had already reached its Golden Age and was expanding throughout the East like a sudden storm that would affect not only the political but also cultural field, in the broadest sense of the term.

From the point of view of this exhibition, papyrology is undoubtedly one of the Sciences of Antiquity that best reflect the profound change brought about by the integration of Egypt in the Hellenistic cultural sphere. Indeed, most legal-administrative documentation preserved on Egyptian papyrus since the 4th century BCE is mainly written in Greek, both at a public and private level (*P.Monts.Roca* inv. 381 + ff.) (cat. 31). The most interesting aspect is that such documentation also continued to be drafted in Greek in later centuries, during which Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire. The very efficient and influential language of Roman law, which turned the coarse language of the Lazio into a prodigious linguistic creation, did not manage to penetrate the Hellenised Egyptian society enough and therefore was produced, processed and applied mainly in Greek, also during the Roman period (*P.Monts.Roca* inv. 113 + 192 + etc.) (cat. 36). The papyrologist has, therefore, one millennium of documentation available (from Alexander's conquest of Egypt until the arrival of the Arabs) in this language to get to know the Egyptian administrative organisation in the two periods.

### Ptolemaic Period: Land Divisions and Administrative Positions

Nonetheless, this profound hellenisation of the Egyptian administration took a long time to be completed; the Ptolemaic dynasty needed almost half a century to

arrange and systematise rooted and effective structures that came from pharaonic Egypt for its own benefit, although fundamentally leaving the essence of many of them intact. Such a gradual adaptation took place at two levels: administrative and judicial.

As for the strictly administrative organisation, the first thing reflected by papyri is that the division of the administered territory essentially retained the organisation of previous periods. Thus, papyri show us that the territory (*chora*) was divided into *nomoi*, which in their turn were organised into districts (*topoi*). However, some of these, *nomoi*, such as the Arsinoite, was divided into minor sections (*merides*).

Moreover, the towns and villages forming part of these territories were named *komai*, except the respective provincial capital, called *metropolis*. The capital of the province was the centre of economic and religious life and the place where the offices had their headquarters. However, Greek terminology featured in the papyri cannot conceal the fact that, fundamentally, this division of the territory actually came from the scheme designed in pharaonic Egypt.

Each of these territorial divisions, although subject ultimately – logically – to royal power, were directly assigned to the corresponding authority. Papyri provide us with the names of such positions, adding the suffix *-arches* ("power, government") to the name of the position according to the territorial level of their power: thus, in the *nomos* authority was held by the "nomarch", at the level of *topoi* we find the "toparch", and in each *come* their respective "komarch". Similarly, each one of these officers was assisted at his level by his own group of administrators.

Despite the apparent systematic clarity of these denominations, as shown by the papyri, it is not in fact easy to separate their powers because officers of different ranks have the same designation in the papyri. Moreover, it is interesting to check, based on the names of the different officers, the social or ethnic status held by these positions. Thus, although at a supra-provincial level high ranking officers were always Greek, at lower levels, in contrast, we immediately begin to find Egyptian names. Yet this data is not definitive: papyrologists are aware that since the 2nd century BCE, when the implementation of the Ptolemaic administrative system was already advanced and standardised, the names that appear on the papyri do not necessarily reflect the real nationality or ethnic group of their bearers.

Petition of  
the priests of  
Seknebtynis  
P.Monts. Roca  
inv. 315:TM  
219243  
Cat. 30



At a provincial level, the figure of the *strategos* is also documented: originally a military officer at the head of each province, he slowly became a civil authority; he finally replaced the nomarch, a figure that eventually specialised in taxation. The police head (*epistates ton phylakiton*, or "superintendent of the guardians") was also subject to the *strategos*.

### Legal Status of the Populations

A special niche within the territorial administrative organisation of Ptolemaic Egypt corresponds to the special legal status granted to three big cities, the so-called Greek *poleis* of Egypt: Naucratis, already mentioned, located in the Nile Delta; Alexandria, founded by Alexander in 331 BCE; and Ptolemais, in Thebes, founded in 296 BCE by Ptolemy I.

We do not have much detailed information about the administrative situation of these cities, but at least we

can confirm that they had a special status of autonomy: following Greek models, they had their own magistrates and courts, and applied their own civic laws, which some scholars have deemed influenced by Attic Law; we know that Ptolemais had its own citizen council or *boule*. Alexandria, moreover, enjoyed a special administrative status, as it was the capital of Ptolemaic Egypt. It was distinguished from the rest of the *chora*, and in fact later official Latin sources referred to an Alexandria distanced from the land of the Nile as a whole as *Alexandrea ad Aegyptum*.

The capital was the seat of the royal court and, therefore, also of the highest officers of the Ptolemaic administration. Two of them held the highest state administration posts: firstly, the *dioiketes*, high officer seemingly in charge of the management of agriculture, trade, religion and finance; with him we find in the papyri the *epistolographos*, an officer in charge of the King's chancery and therefore also of the drafting and issuing of decisions and rules.

It is very likely that the division of powers between the two high officers was not so rigid, as happened at the lower layers of Ptolemaic administration. Moreover, some specific functions of special scope were also assigned to certain officers; thus, for instance, the special account within the royal Treasury (called *idios logos* and resulting from the payment of fines or the confiscation of goods in accordance with the royal regulations) was the responsibility of a special officer.

Along with these positions, the papyri provide us with countless denominations of all types of officers (*syngeneis*, "the relatives"; *protoi philoi*, "the first friends"; *philoi tou basileos*, "the King's friends"; *somatophylakes*, "the bodyguards"; etc.), whose names and power changed over the Ptolemaic period of Egypt.

### The Administration of Justice in the Ptolemaic Period

As for the second large field of administrative reorganisation by the Ptolemaic dynasty, the restructuring of the administration of justice, undoubtedly the moment of reference is the last third of the 3rd century BCE; seemingly, it was by 270 BCE when King Ptolemy II Philadelphus issued an important regulation (*diagramma*) aimed at rationalising and structuring access to justice by the different ethnic-cultural groups living in Egypt (Wolff, 1970).

We should bear in mind that at that time the indigenous Egyptian population continued to go to their own courts, served by the traditional Egyptian sacerdotal body, and applied their own age-old system. The Greeks, in their turn, took their disputes to the royal administration, if not to the King himself. Moreover, almost since the start of Hellenistic colonisation the recourse to extra-judicial arbitration by the population of Greek origin has been attested. In fact, the oldest legal document preserved on papyrus, the famous *P.Eleph. 1* (311 BCE) (see translation p. 000), attests that the conflicts derived from the disagreement on the marriage clauses documented there in may be subject to the decision issued by three men chosen by agreement between the contracting parties.

This situation was rationalised, as mentioned above, through the judicial reform of Ptolemy II. It consisted, in the first place, of the establishment of specific courts for Greek citizens, the so-called *dikasteria*. They were permanent and formed by judges probably appointed at random from among Greek citizens for each specific case.

In the second place, Ptolemy II established the court of the *laokritai*, made up by local judges. The monarch's intention was to integrate the traditional Egyptian institutions into a single organisational structure, integrated into the royal power. Although probably these courts continued to judge according to the norms of Egyptian law, they already formed part of the royal administration, for all purposes.

Proof of this is that all these courts were supervised by the *chrematistai*, high-ranking representatives of the monarch; in practice, these representatives made up judicial bodies higher than the aforementioned courts. Similarly, both *dikasteria* and *laokritai* had the support of an *eisagogeus*, an official officer, which further emphasises his integration into a joint administrative structure. There was possibly a third court, the so-called *koinodikion*, mentioned in several papyri, but of which we know little more than the name; perhaps it was a court specialised in mixed disputes between Egyptians and Greeks.

Moreover, we should not forget the aforementioned *strategoï*, who among their functions enjoyed coercive enforcement, by which the parties could directly and extra-judicially turn to them to obtain a solution for determined conflicts, which is attested in numerous papyrological documents.

However, this *diagramma* of Ptolemy II cannot be seen as strictly judicial reform; probably the reform of the judicial organisation meant the starting point for a wider programme of reforms, which resulted in numerous regulations of substantive law, the seed of what could be called the "Ptolemaic legal system" (Seidl, 1962; Wolff, 1978/2002, with Rupprecht). Proof of this is that, although this structuring of the judicial organisation lasted barely one century (because by 170 BCE the *chrematistai* finally replaced the lower courts in practice), the Romans found in Egypt a solid and developed administration, which efficiently provided subjects with access to the management of their affairs related to the state, and on which they only had to carry out the essential reforms to adapt it to their own administrative models.

### The Administration of Roman Egypt

A few years after its annexation by the Romans, Egypt attracted an exceptional traveller, who had embarked on the undertaking of describing the world. At the beginning of his description of Egypt, Strabo (*Geogr.* 17.11.12-13) explains that it is



*"now a province, not only of vast revenue, but also governed by prudent men: the prefects, regularly sent there."*

Lex Genetivae  
Inliae. Bronze,  
1 cent. CE.  
Madrid, Museo  
Arqueológico  
Nacional

According to the geographer, the Roman prefect has the status of king, replacing in Alexandria the former Ptolemaic monarchs. Although this information is not constitutionally correct – for the inhabitants of the region the Roman emperor, not the prefect, has the status of kings and pharaohs, and for the Romans Egypt has ceased to be a kingdom, reduced to another province of the Empire –, the specificity of the prefect and of Egypt in the Roman world was very real.

This particular status is the result of history. In a country accustomed to consulting the king about any complaint or request, the prefect now held this position of providential governor as the envoy of the emperor. He is the vertex of the Roman administration of the country, a quite unusual vertex in the framework of the Roman provincial government. Shortly after the civil war with the defeat of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra, the danger that Egypt could represent for the power of Augustus if it fell in excessively ambitious hands was clear. Thus, Augustus himself, who formally restored the Republic to the Senate and to the People, not only ensured the personal appointment of the governor in Egypt but prohibited all senators from entering the province without his personal permission.

Thus, despite the enormous symbolic charisma of the seat of the provincial government, Alexandria, – in reality, because of the danger that this charisma involved –, the prefect was chosen by the emperor not

from the senatorial aristocracy, but from the members of the equestrian class. The prefecture of Egypt therefore became the highest position that these *equites* could achieve in the Empire: that of a "viceroys" with the rank of *legatus Augusti*, with full imperium identical to that of the senatorial proconsuls (Ulpian, *D.* 1.17.1), and a very considerable salary of 200,000 *sestertii* per year. Moreover, Augustus established a notable military power to Egypt, posting three legions and three units of cavalry there. Over one century later, with his usual lucidity Tacitus penetrated the *arcana imperii*, writing in the *Annals* (2:59):

*Augustus, among other secrets of imperial policy, had forbidden senators and Roman knights of the higher rank to enter Egypt except by permission, and he had specially reserved the country, from a fear that any one who held a province containing the key of the land and of the sea, with ever so small a force against the mightiest army, might distress Italy by famine.*

and, again, in the *Histories* (1:11):

*Ever since the time of the Divine Augustus Roman Knights have ruled Egypt as kings, with the troops to keep it in subjection. It had seemed wise to retain under the direct control of the imperial house a province so difficult of access, so productive of corn, ever distracted, excitable, and restless because of the fanaticism and licentiousness of its inhabitants, knowing nothing of laws, and unused to civil rule.*

This "seizing" of Egypt by the imperial house and the exceptional situation of the province within the empire had extreme long-lasting consequences: so, for instance, until Diocletian, Egypt maintained its own monetary system and its own calendar.

A complex network of notary and registry offices also seems to be peculiar to Egypt: the *katalogeion* in Alexandria, an *agoranomeion* in each metropolis, the *grapheia* in the minor towns, all of them for the notarization of documents; and, for the register of real-estate acquisitions, (cat. 33) the *bibliothekai enkteason* of the *metropoleis*, the *Nanaion* and the library of Hadrian in Alexandria. These registers made the acquisition of properties more secure, but also easier to control by the administration, for tax purposes and imposition of public duties (liturgies). Indeed, the Roman administration increasingly resorted to the liturgic system to impose on private individuals, according to their assets,

compulsory public duties of all types (*munera*), including those that involved serious financial liability, such as tax collection.

### The Idios Logos

Returning to Strabo, his account of the new administrative system of Egypt continues by explaining that other officers were subordinate to the prefect (through other sources we know that they earned 60,000 *sestertii*): including, notably, the *iridicus*, with subsidiary jurisdiction with respect to the prefect, and, inherited from the Ptolemaic administration, the *epitropos* of the *idios logos*, sometimes simply called *idios logos*, a position that could be translated as special account solicitor.

This special account (often mistaken for the *ratio privata*, which would not appear in the Roman tax system until Antoninus Pius) encompassed, under the Ptolemaic dynasty, most irregular non-recurring revenues, in contrast to the great many taxes: in particular, confiscated property, for instance after a criminal conviction; property without an owner; vacant inheritances, or those that could not be received by those who did not meet the requisites of Augustus' matrimonial legislation.

One of the largest sources that papyrology has brought to our knowledge of the administration, law and provincial life is related to this *epitropos*. It is the so-called *Gnomon of the idios logos*, a guide written as an epitome or supplement of the *liber mandatorum* that governed since Augustus the activity of the *idios logos*. The text, which has reached us in a copy from the second half of the 2nd century BCE, BGU V 1210 (along with a fragment of an early copy in P.Oxy. XLII 3014), comprises, in the part preserved, 115 regulations, extracted by one or several anonymous compilers, with greater or less accuracy from imperial regulations, *senatus consulta*, and decisions of previous *epitropoi*. Distortions of the actual meaning of these sources are not infrequent, and result almost inevitably in confiscations that a scrupulous interpretation of the law would have excluded. The *Gnomon* includes, in the aspects useful for the *idios logos*, a detailed section (§§ 4-54) with the regulation on inheritance, marriage, dowry and donations between husbands and wives as applied in Egypt to the different population groups.

### Civitates et Gentes: the Poleis and the Chora

All these sections of the Roman provincial government, like the prefect himself, were based in Alexandria. The

city, which under the Ptolemies had been both the capital of the kingdom and a polis formally outside it (*ad Aegyptum*), preserved this singular status only on a symbolic and formal level: the prefect, for instance, was formally called *praefectus Alexandriae et Aegypti*. For the rest, Alexandria was deprived by Augustus of its *boule* and of all legislative and jurisdictional autonomy. It would not recover them until the visit of Septimius Severus and Caracalla to Egypt in 200 CE, although no longer as a privilege but together with the remaining *metropoleis* of the province, in what was in fact the (late) municipalisation of the country.

Nevertheless, the citizens of Alexandria preserved under Roman rule their civic status as *astoi*, privileged in this respect in contrast to the remaining inhabitants of the province, who were reduced to mere *Aigyptioi* (Egyptians), regardless of their origin. In the language of the Roman administration, the term "Egyptian" comprised all those who were not Roman citizens or citizens from one of the four Greek *poleis* (Alexandria, Naucratis, Ptolemais, and, since Hadrian, Antinopolis); in other words, all the *peregrini nullius civitatis*, regardless of their ethnic origin, language and culture, from the humblest among the natives to the Greeks of the *metropoleis*, educated in the gymnasium tradition. This demotion of the proud metropolitan elite must have been felt as an affront, with consequences that went beyond the merely symbolic (only the citizens of the *poleis*, for instance, could have access to Roman citizenship), although mitigated by tax privileges and the opportunity to participate in the local government.

In Alexandria, Strabo continues in his aforementioned account, along with the new Roman officers, such as the prefect himself, notable positions of the Ptole-

End of a contract  
P.PalauRib. inv.  
26: TM 35734  
Cat. 38



Document  
related to tax  
collection  
P.Monts.Roca  
inv. 713: TM  
128359  
Cat. 69

maic administration also persisted, such as the *idios logos* himself, the *exegetes* and the *archidikastes*. The geographer ends with commonplaces on the subversive and chaotic character of the Egyptians in general and the Alexandrians in particular, widespread in Antiquity, as shown by Tacitus' texts, and arguing that the Romans had put things in order, organising the Alexandrian administration described above and appointing *epistrategoi*, *nomarchoi* and *ethnarchoi* as heads of the administrative districts.

In both cases, the Greek geographer, driven by his philo-Roman narrative, makes a serious mistake. We know well that all these positions dated back not merely to the Ptolemaic dynasty but in some cases to the pharaonic administration: in particular, the territorial structure, which divided the country into around 40 *nomoi*, with their capitals (*metropoleis*) and with the particular position of the great oasis of Faiyum (*nomos Arsinoites*), subdivided into three parts (*merides*). At the head of each *nomos* a *strategos*, who under the Ptolemaic dynasty had evolved from military officer to civil servant, and a secretary, the *basilikogrammateus* (royal scribe), both based in the *metropolis*, along with the *komogrammateis* of minor towns, were also the representatives of the power closest to the population in Roman times.

### Continuity or Rupture?

These multiple and profound continuities reveal the tenacious singularity of Egypt, but also of the Roman principle of minimal intervention. This principle is universal in the Roman provincial government and hardly needs to be explained in terms of its rationality and efficacy. For historians, it has also long worked as a screen that has prevented them from seeing how the appear-

ance of continuity can conceal profound transformations, when the pre-existing elements are re-organised in a new institutional logic. In the case of Egypt, this appearance of continuity through the millennia has had such a hypnotic effect that even a historian with the legal perceptiveness of Theodor Mommsen could believe that the country was a case apart in the Roman Empire, a kingdom rather than a province, with Augustus and his successors as followers of the old Ptolemaic and even pharaonic kingdom.

A turning point in the dismantling of this paradigm of the Greco-Roman continuity of Egypt was the legendary intervention of Naphtali Lewis at the 1968 Papyrology Congress held in Ann Arbor, "Greco-Roman Egypt: Fact or Fiction?", and his re-examination of the issue in 1983 under the eloquent title "The Romanity of Roman Egypt: A Growing Consensus". The importance of this shift goes beyond the mere academic discussion on Roman Egypt: the immense mass of papyri from Egypt gain a completely different value as a source if the many aspects in which Egypt is less unique than has generally been believed are acknowledged, and, with them, the fields where, with all due caution, the information from the Egyptian papyri may be extrapolated to other Eastern provinces or even to the whole Empire.

The jurisdictional system is a perfect example of how the old Ptolemaic structures are incardinated in a new logic. In Alexandria, as we have seen, the *archidikastes* continues as if nothing had changed, as "supervisor upon the *chrematistai* and the other courts" (BGU IV 1111). The position was held by members of the local non-Roman elite: this was, for instance, in all likelihood, the stance of a certain Protarchos, to whom contracts



in the form of a fictitious judicial agreement (*synchorseis*) published in the fourth volume of the Berlin papyri (BGU) are formally addressed between 25 and 5 BCE. In the *chora*, the *strategoï* and *epistrategoï*, among many other minor officers, act as judges.

And yet, this appearance of continuity conceals a brand new institutional mechanism. None of these judges are the expression of an autonomous jurisdiction. They are all now part of the Roman jurisdiction, headed by the prefect. The *strategoï* and the other officials acting as judges in the *chora* generally do so delegated by the prefect. His visibility as the incarnation of Roman justice, exclusive holder in the province of the *iurisdictio cum imperio*, is guaranteed by the practice of the *conventus* (*dialogismos*): the prefect's travelling court based in January in Pelusium, for the Eastern Delta, and until April in Memphis for the Thebaid, and Arsinoe for the Fayum. The number of petitions that the prefect received was so large that the system of delegating the resolution of many of them to lower officers is self-explanatory: we know, for instance, that during the *conventus* of 209 CE in Arsinoe, the prefect received 1,804 petitions in two and a half days (P.Yale I 61).

As for the *archidikastes*, regardless of his role in Ptolemaic jurisdiction, it now seems limited to the management of central notarial services in Alexandria (the *katalogeion*), and to the supervision of the procedure of execution of private debts through distraint, later performed in each *nomos* under the supervision of the *strategos* by the so-called *praktores xenikon* (collectors of private debts). This procedure continued to be performed, even in the Roman period, in accordance with the Ptolemaic royal decrees, but – again the continuity is just one aspect of a new institutional reality – now formally presided over by the prefect as sole holder of the *imperium* in the province.

### Hephaestion to Hephaestion, Greeting

Beyond the broad outline provided here, the papyrological documentation presents us with fascinating and unexpected pieces of life in the province and the activity of the Roman administration. In this respect, the papyri behave very differently to other written sources that feed the historian's work. The survival of these usually depends on someone having considered them worth preserving: recording them on stone or metal – such, for instance, as the great edict of 68 CE by the prefect Tiberius Iulius Alexander, preserved on the walls of the

temple of Hibis, in the Al-Kharijah oasis (*Oasis Magna*) – or producing a copy of the work by a major author. This is not the case of the documentary papyri: their survival has been dictated by climate and, ultimately, chance. Thus, they show us both what their authors wanted to make public – the emperors' constitutions, for instance, or the prefects' edicts, of which we have numerous fragments – and what they would have never imagined could survive the passage of the centuries. Drafts, work documents, in-house correspondence: the papyri reveal a lot of the administration's behind the curtain day-to-day routine.

A final factor contributes to the extraordinary wealth of information provided by papyri on government activity in Egypt: the bureaucratic tradition of the country, which Rome did not restrict at all, and that made it almost impossible to execute any transaction without leaving a written record. The supreme example of this proceeding was detected over one century ago by the great Ulrich Wilcken (*SB XVIII 13175 = WCbr. 52 = Sel. Pap. II 301*). In the year 194 CE, a certain Eudaimon son of Psois and Tiathres asked the *idios logos* to change his name to Eudaimon son of Heron and Didyme, thereby changing with some snobbery his parents' Egyptian names to their elegant Greek equivalent. The *idios logos*, once he had accepted the request, forwarded it to the *strategos* from the applicant's *nomos*, Nesut, in the Nile delta. By chance at that time the position was vacant, and the secretary, Hephaestion alias Ammoninus, *basilikogrammateus*, acted as deputy *strategos*. The correct bureaucratic procedure required the *strategos* to notify his secretary for the resolved request to be filed in the register. And thus, our Hephaestion alias Ammoninus, being simultaneously secretary to the *strategos* and deputy *strategos*, scrupulously respecting the procedure, left us this supreme example of bureaucracy and humour:

*Hephaestion also called Ammoninus, royal scribe of Nesut, acting as strategus, to Hephaestion also called Ammoninus, royal scribe of the said nome, most dear friend, greeting. A copy of the application presented to me by Eudaenion son of Psois and of Tiathres, of..., and subscribed by his excellency the idiologus Claudius Apollonius, about authorizing a change of name, is herewith forwarded to you, dearest friend, in order that you may take note and perform your part. Good-bye. The 3rd year of the Emperor Caesar Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax, in the month of Hathyr.*

## Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt

Francesca Mestre

### Introduction

From its beginnings, the Greco-Roman civilisation, as we know it, was a learned civilisation, in which education and culture played a major role. However, this certainly does not mean that education and culture were within everyone's reach: they were the preserve of a minority and, consequently, highly regarded, as they endowed society and the individual with value. Those who had received an education were admired because they had managed, albeit with great effort, to triumph: they were like athletic champions because knowledge was often compared to a high mountain that had to be climbed and only a very few could do so.

Without getting involved in pedagogical or psychological disquisitions, for ancient Greeks the main focus of education was to train citizens, a certain type of citizen who, logically, tended to recreate and perpetuate the existing social, political and economic hierarchies. It was a socialisation process whose primary objective was to prepare productive and loyal citizens in order to maintain the community balance. In other words, members of the leading classes were brought up to "lead" while the subordinate classes were brought up to "be led".

Everything individuals heard, read and saw in childhood determined who they would be and the community they would form part of; everything was perfectly and rigorously set out and regulated. In short, education (*paideia*) was closely linked to practising politics just as knowledge was directly linked to power.

As power had been the core of Greek education and school since the Classical period, it was gradually developed and tested as time went on and Greek civilisation itself became stronger and its education fully adopted its methods, programmes and resources. In other words, what began to emerge in the Classical period was not fully established until the later Hellenistic period and, thereafter, due to the simple inertia of the usually quite routine education phenomena, it remained largely unchanged for many centuries, almost until the end of Antiquity and beyond, in the Byzantine period.

A socio-political aspect worth bearing in mind when analysing the issue of Hellenism – that is, the hellenisation of the entire Mediterranean which was, actually, the entire known world, since Alexander the Great's conquests – is education, which had already reached the decisive point when its implementation was no longer experimental but had the strength and consistency of something fully formed. Hellenisation is, therefore,

more understandable if, along with taking into account the economic, political, cultural and linguistic prevalence of Greek culture, we recognise that the education system was also a highly significant instrument of cohesion. As Marrou – the author of a first history of education in Antiquity – argued, "the ancient Mediterranean world undoubtedly experienced *a* classical education, *a* coherent and regulated education system," speaking, of course, about Greek education which, once well-established, spread throughout all Hellenised areas and survived even after the Roman conquest.

### The Sources of the Education Curriculum

We still have many testimonies to the process and implementation of that education system, its approaches, methods and exercises, its specific application in childhood and youth, the work of teachers and educators in general, their relationship with students and disciples, and so on. Indeed, both in Greek and Latin, we can extract a great deal of information from the texts that have reached us that gives us an idea of how the educational path and, in short, schools worked. Authors from the Classical period – some of them even archaic, like Homer, or pre-classical, like Pindar – provide us with beautiful descriptions of the relationship between teachers and famous disciples, such as the centaur Chiron, educator of heroes, or Phoenix, preceptor of Achilles. Greek writers, such as Aristophanes, Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle and Isocrates, Roman authors from the Late-Republican period, such as Cicero, and writers from the Imperial period, both in Greek – Plutarch, Lucian, Galen – and Latin – Quintilian, Aulus Gellius – or from the Christian period, such as Libanius, a pagan from the 4th century CE who wrote in Greek, and Saint Augustine, are excellent sources on how some aspects of the curriculum were developed throughout the civilised world at each moment. Nevertheless, only papyri – a very important part of the papyrological corpus are school papyri – and other original documents such as the ostraca or tablets offer us real examples of the specific school activities rather than a reflection on education. It is as if, in this case in contrast to other fields, the different natures of our sources – on the one hand, literary and, on the other, papyri – were meant to be complementary, offering the other what it lacks. For example, while in the 1st century CE Quintilian reflected on whether it was more appropriate for Roman youths to begin their education in Greek or Latin, taking for granted that they

would have to be fluent in both languages, an Oxyrhynchus papyrus has preserved an interesting Latin-Greek lexicon, whose specific use is still quite mysterious but was probably used to find similarities – not only lexical but also morphological and idiomatic – between the two languages and that, whatever the level or sphere, must have been used for teaching.

### The "Handbooks"

In this fortuitously exact distribution of information provided by all these documents, only a small group of works, most of them quite late, are half way between educational reflection and specific school activity: the so-called manuals of exercises for rhetorical training or *progymnasmata*. Indeed, the handwritten tradition has left us four of these manuals by people that we know or assume were teachers: Theon (1st-2nd centuries CE) (cat.13), Hermogenes (2nd century CE), Aphthonius (4th-5th centuries CE) and Nicolaus (5th century CE). Along with reflecting, generally briefly, on education, their authors set out in detail the nature of several preparatory exercises for achieving the highest level of rhetorical perfection, define them, provide some examples of each one and even write some of them. The *progymnasmata* treatises are, therefore, a precious tool not only for knowing how the educators, teachers or masters of rhetoric (*rhetors*), call them what you will, conceived their teaching task but also a theoretical compendium of what many papyri contain in their practical application. Therefore, along with the remaining information on education, they provide us with a more comprehensive vision of school activity, as they help us to identify as such exercises done by the students themselves. We will later discuss these exercises in more detail because they are the best example of the maturity of the education system and, therefore, the efficacy of the Greek school.

### Alexandrian Philology

Hellenistic Egypt, since the death of Alexander, that is, Ptolemaic Egypt, was a major cultural focus, very particularly the city of Alexandria, which, because of the will of its kings, brought together the main wise men of the time. These men performed a fundamental task as receivers of all past knowledge – mainly Greek but also from other peoples whose ancestral works were translated into Greek –, which they studied, analysed and commented on, establishing their canons and taxonomy, to pass it onto future generations. From this point of



view, the work undertaken by Alexandrians under the tutelage of the Ptolemaic dynasty was paramount to determine classical values in later centuries, and to shape what for us is the Greco-Roman world. A titanic task impossible to undertake without solid educational foundations and two of their basic elements: rigour and discipline. The great influence of the Alexandrian practices expanded everywhere, especially, of course, in Egypt itself, in space and in time; the arrival of the Romans, which meant important changes in Egypt in many aspects, did not substantially change educational practices and contents. The unchanged persistence of the educa-

School board reused as an accounts register  
T.Monts.  
Roca inv.1487:  
TM131752  
Cat. 44



Teacher with two pupils. Relief, 2th-3th cent. CE, Trier, Rheinisches Landesmuseum.

tion system is revealed by the surviving testimonies; it is like a *continuum* and, in this sense, documents from the Hellenistic period or the early centuries of Roman power and Late Antiquity are so useful for us in defining this system. The same thing happens in terms of the different areas. Despite the limited area where papyri were discovered in relation to the extent of the territory under study in terms of education, and also in relation to the diverse origin of the other documentary sources, the evidence provided by Egypt can undoubtedly be extended to the whole educational spectrum of the Mediterranean, given the homogeneity of Greek dominion and the role of leadership played, in Greek culture, by Egypt in the Hellenistic period.

Moreover, and with the same intensity that the aforementioned maturity of Greek education contributed to forming the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman world, its application only strengthened and perpetuated the dominion of its elites, so that, in parallel to cultural, religious and civil practices, education also became a powerful agent for the preservation of Hellenism and helped shape it.

### Phases of the Education Process and Transmission of Knowledge

We can briefly define ancient education theory as based on the transmission of an established corpus of knowledge, which enjoyed wide consensus and whose gradual

acquisition gradually led to the understanding of the wisdom inherited. Obviously, in this framework, the past played an important role.

Teachers were its interpreters and guardians, those who protected the integrity of this corpus and transmitted it. Moreover, knowledge was conceived as links in a chain: each one connected to the next one by affinity and, in this way, through the accumulation of these links, the final objective was achieved: to have a good command of all of them individually and as a whole.

The educational application of these main lines rested on what they called the *enkyklios paideia*, which in Latin Quintilian translated as *orbis doctrinae*; that is, general education. It developed into three cycles or stages, ranging from primary school to rhetoric school, corresponding, more or less, to 7 to 18 years. However, and in contrast to ours, the education system of Antiquity was in no way a rigid path, either in terms of the age of the student – you could start at any age and the culmination of the rhetoric school could also be extended – or in terms of the contents of each cycle. Everything was flexible and depended on the individual, the family, the teacher, and so on. Such flexibility was partly because education was a completely private matter as there was no state intervention. Therefore, responsibility fell to the parents to find an education for their children or to students themselves once they had achieved a reasonably high level and wanted to take it further. This often involved travelling far from home to attend a specific master or simply to find a suitable one. In fact, some letters preserved on papyrus are examples of the correspondence between a son who is studying away and his family (see p. 000): he writes to provide news or to ask for money to pay for his education.

Moreover, quite separate from the *enkyklios paideia*, there were specialised disciplines, such as medicine, mathematics and astronomy, music or philosophy, which were studied outside general education, in a later phase or, perhaps, at the same time as the last stages of general education. We also have information about these specialised subjects; the professionals themselves – doctors such as Galen, mathematicians such as Ptolemy of Alexandria, both from the 2nd century CE, and many others – explain in their work some aspects of their training as students or their work as teachers, and some papyri seem to belong to these types of schools.

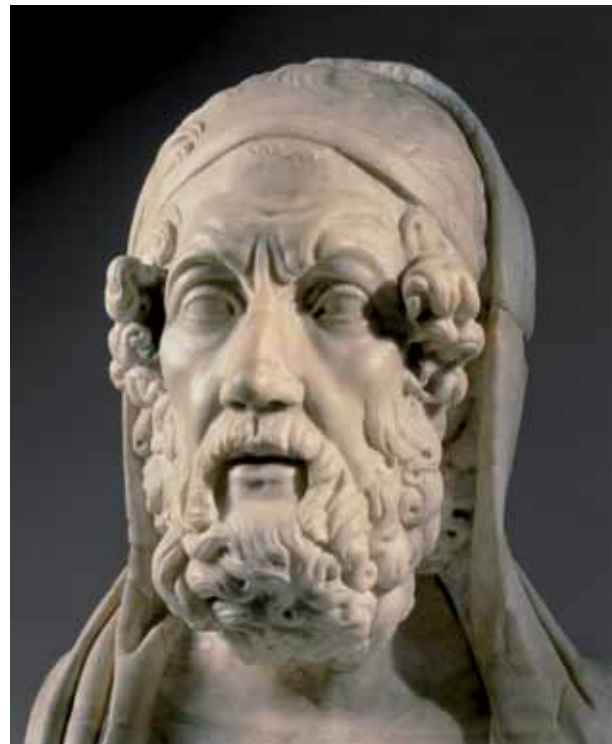
### Teachers and Exercises

In all cases, however, the schooling process had more to do with the master, the teacher, than with the school; in other words, the master *was* the school. He, in the direct relationship with the student, was the main authority – the only one – on what to do, how to do it, the pace, intensity, time, and so on. Nevertheless, as the parents chose and paid their children's teacher, he was, to some extent, subject to the parent's wishes and, therefore, had to follow their instructions. However, the maturity of the system meant that some elements were fixed, mainly by the uniformity of the cultural elements on which education rested and the objectives to be achieved. In any case, the teacher/student relationship was the main axis of the process, to the extent that a type of teacher, a professional, corresponded to each one of the aforementioned cycles (ref. chapter *Reflections of daily life in Greek papyri*).

The three cycles of the *enkyklios paideia* were studied under the guidance of three types of teachers: at an early stage the student, usually in childhood, learnt how to read and write with the *grammatistes* – who was often a slave who could go to the student's home. At this level, the student learnt to recognise and reproduce letters, could form words with them, used lists of words beginning with the same letter, and did exercises of this type. Later the *grammatikos* taught him the virtues and characteristics of the language. The student did exercises on brief texts taken from the ancients – Homer, the tragedians – or on some of the easiest *progymnasmata* such as the fable (*mythos*) (cat. 47), the anecdote (*chreia*) or the maxim (*gnome*). Finally, the third stage was usually developed at the house of the *rhetor*, who explained the elements of rhetorical theory, by reading and commenting on texts by historians and orators. The student did exercises in which he strictly applied the rules that come from the commented authors and works, above all refraining from any originality, any contribution of his own: here we find the first application of the *mimesis rhetorike*, rhetorical imitation, always based on the texts of the ancients. These exercises were the aforementioned *progymnasmata*, which are many and varied: narration (*diegema*), confirmation and refutation (*kataskene* and *anaskene*), commonplace (*topos*), praise (*enkomion*), comparison (*synkrisis*), ethopoeia (*ethopoiia*), description (*ekphrasis*), thesis (*thesis*), norm or law (*nomos*). All of them use a theme as a pretext and the authors of the manuals mention typical examples: for the *synkri-*

*sis*, a comparison between Hector and Achilles; for the *ekphrasis*, a description of the citadel of Alexandria; for the *ethopoeia*, what Niobe said when she saw all her dead children; for the *enkomion*, 'Thucydides' praise, and so on. These could come both from mythology and from the historical-political events of the polis in its most significant moments. These *progymnasmata* provided knowledge on a wide range of themes and confidence in the command of the language and in the preparation of a speech. If the *rhetor* suggested an exercise on confirmation and refutation, he introduced a theme, such as "the conversion of Daphne into a tree", and the student had to rehearse a composition for or against its probability, with the respective arguments; or if it dealt with working on the commonplace, the theme could be arguing against tyranny. Each of these exercises therefore helped, both in form and content, to construct speeches, to be convincing, to use words with skill, elegance and the power of persuasion. The *progymnasmata* acted as a foundation for the preparation of the speeches of the elite and instilled a method for reflection on language, on the archaic and classical texts and authors that served as a model and a given type of relationship of each individual with those texts and with the use of language in general. Thus, in later stages of the training, the routine,

Imaginary portrait of Homer. Marble, Roman bust of a Greek original from the 4th century BCE. Rome, Musei Capitolini



Page from the  
Miscellaneous  
Codex with  
mythological  
drawing  
P.Monts.Roca  
inv. 154: TM  
63186  
Cat. 48



so to speak, of the *progymnasmata* was particularly determinant for the form or genre in hand, such as laudatory or panegyric speech, haranguing speech, deliberative or judicial speech, apologetic or justifying speech, narrative exposition of events, description of objects or people and characterisation of individuals, among others.

Once the student was proficient in the different *progymnasmata*, he moved on to the higher exercise, the *melete*, which meant reaching the summit, in many cases the passport to active life, to work as a lawyer or politician.

In this case, the *rhetor* also suggested a theme and the student had to develop it in the situation proposed. For instance, a "haranguing speech in which Pericles speaks to the Athenians before sending the fleet to Korkyra to help its residents defend themselves against the Corinthians, aware that this will involve a confrontation with Sparta." The student then had to put himself "in the shoes" of the historical Pericles and, of course, knowing the historical events very well, construct and deliver a speech on the theme proposed before an pretended

Athenian assembly. Philosophical or political deliberation themes between two or more characters known by tradition could be proposed, using words actually spoken by them or which they would probably have said. It is difficult to accurately describe how the practice of the school exercises, particularly those of the *progymnasmata*, was applied in the preparation of a *melete*, for a higher level student, or a speech for an orator or a wordsmith. In some cases, they must have been like "preformulated" parts, already memorised all together, which were included in a long speech and contributed to its progression. However, in general, they provided orators with a range of already developed presentation and argumentation resources in which to shape their own compositions. They also put within their reach a range of common narratives, characters, anecdotes and value paradigms. In short, training in the *progymnasmata*, which was attained through the previous stages, was similar to a wide container of both contents and forms built up by each student, to use when constructing a *melete*, a speech, a declamation.

Undoubtedly, these types of school practices illustrate the learned and referential culture built from the Hellenistic period onwards. We even have fictitious speeches of the *melete* type by renowned writers such as Lucian or Aelius Aristides, so much so that the education system imbued cultural life. But in the cases where this relationship is not so direct, the echo of the school practices is always present and, particularly, in all literature that we usually designate under the generic name of Second Sophistic.

In contrast, the school papyri preserved are generally more examples of *progymnasmata* done by the students, or even lower level exercises, very often with spelling or grammar mistakes: they are very precious documents for assessing in detail how the learning process was really developing and where the difficulties lay. Much of the task of the teacher – *grammatistes*, *grammatikos* or *rhetor* – can be examined in the papyri: lists of examples, preparation of exercises, models of *progymnasmata*, etc., or even sections of what is equivalent to our current textbooks with texts to read and comment on. In all these cases, the individual writing style – confidence in the strokes, the material used –, what they write, the mistakes they make, the layout of the text and their content give us a great deal of information on daily aspects of education. And although it is often difficult to date a papyrus, the information it provides is always valid for

the whole education system because of its homogeneity and survival well into the Byzantine period, as already mentioned.

## Women and Education

One issue, related to education, which has often awoken interest and controversy, is the degree of women's participation, both as students and teachers. The early studies on education in Antiquity did not even consider it, taking for granted that women were outside this field, as happened in other spheres of the ancient world in Greece and in Rome. However, it seems that recently, mainly thanks to authentic documents, given that the literary sources completely overlook women, it can be argued that, albeit certainly a minority and according to their social and economic level – parameters which, as I have pointed out, are also applied to men –, women participated in the different educational tasks and stages, both as teachers and students. Here is certainly not the place to expand on this but undoubtedly it is one of the aspects with which specialists are currently concerned, and for which the information that papyri provides us is fundamental. This is one of the examples highlighting a clear opposition between the handwritten transmission of ancient texts – which also says a lot about the process of this transmission, mainly medieval and monastic – and first hand documents.

The fact is that the higher the economic and social status of both men and women – boys and girls – the more and better access they had to education, even if the fields of power provided by this education were exclusively reserved for men, but this was another matter. At the same time, however, having education, having gone to school, was practically a guarantee for life, whatever happened to the person. Thus, the *enkyklios paideia* somehow provided status and resources to those who had acquired it, as can be seen in the following epigram attributed to Lucian of Samosata, from the 2nd century CE, whose translation from Greek into English by W.R. Paton I borrow to conclude this brief introduction to education in the Hellenistic and Roman periods:

*Hail, Grammar, giver of life! Hail,  
Thou whose cure for famine is "Sing, O goddess, the wrath!"  
Men should build a splendid temple to thee, too,  
And an altar never lacking sacrifice.  
"For the ways are full of thee," Grammar, the hostess of all.  
(Anth.Graeca 11.400, Beckby).*

## The Funerary World in Egypt

Raquel Martín Hernández

### Introduction

Egyptian civilisation has always been characterised by the importance attached from an early stage to the passage from life to death. This obsession is revealed both in its colossal funerary architecture, with examples such as the great pyramid of Giza, which was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and the care with which the bodies of the deceased were prepared for the inevitable journey. Literature also shared the same fascination. An example of this is the so-called "Book of the Dead", more rightly translated as the "*Book of Going Forth by Day*". In this approach to the funerary beliefs and cults of the Egyptians we will focus on their most characteristic form of burial, mummification, a method of artificial preservation of the mortal remains of individuals and holy animals from the beginning of Egyptian civilisation to the Roman period. The sands of Egypt facilitated the natural desiccation of the interred body, and this natural process was the precursor to complex artificial rituals aimed at contributing to the preservation of the dead in an even more lasting way.

### The Funerary World in Ancient Egypt

According to Egyptian beliefs, the world was in a perpetual cyclical movement since its creation, in perfect order and harmony, but it can be disturbed at any moment with drastic consequences. For this reason, priests were responsible for faithfully performing all the rites in order to maintain the cosmic order and ensure the continuation of the cycle of life forever. The universal order tended to the disintegration of its parts, which was avoided thanks to everyday rites performed by the priests. Death, as part of these beliefs and this particular conception of the universe, was just one of these changes of the process of life. Death involved a dispersion of the constituent parts of the individual. To avoid this dramatic situation, priests needed to perform complex rituals to maintain all the constituent elements connected and guarantee the existence of the individual beyond worldly life.

The importance of this critical passage is reflected in the most famous mythical episode of Egyptian mythology: the death of Osiris, the recovery of his body parts and his mummification to become the King of the Underworld. Broadly speaking and simplifying the diverse versions, although no Egyptian source preserves a complete account of the myth, it tells of the fratricidal struggle between Osiris, King of Egypt, and his brother Seth. Seth, moved by hatred, attacked and dismembered

his brother and scattered his remains in the river Nile. There were 42 pieces, corresponding to the *nomoi* of Egypt, and the places where they were discovered would later become temples of the god. After the murder, the reign of Seth was established, during which Isis, wife and sister of Osiris, together with her sister Nephthys, found all the pieces of the god and, with the help of their power and the embalming techniques of the god Anubis, mummified the body of Osiris to endow it with new life, and he became the king of the dead. Isis, breathing the air of life into him, managed to conceive a son of Osiris, Horus, who would later overthrow Seth and recover his father's throne. Other versions tell that, although the goddesses did not find the god's phallus, they made one of wood so that Isis could conceive. The myth is the reflection of the historical struggles to control Egypt, a mythical support for the legitimisation of the royal succession, and an explanation of beliefs of the afterlife. Osiris, together with his sister and wife Isis, was the most worshipped divinity in Egypt, and his myth is the symbolic exemplification of death itself. Osiris is the perfect dead, and the embalming ritual to which he was subject by Anubis is the example followed by funerary professionals to turn any dead person into a being similar to a god, into a glorified spirit, into an Osiris.

### Preparation of the Body

Broadly speaking and greatly simplifying all these beliefs, we can say that for Egyptians man was formed, both in life and death, of several constitutive elements: the body, the heart, the *ka*, the *ba*, the name and the shadow (or the mummy itself) although, in texts from the Ptolemaic period and later, such elements would be reduced to four: the *ba*, the *ka*, the heart and the mummy. The union and harmony of all of them constituted the good life but also "the good death"; in other words, the eternal survival of man in the continuous and daily cycle of the sun god. With the funerary rituals, and after the individual overcame the dangers waiting for him in the Afterlife, including Osiris' court and the *psychostasia*, the weighing of his heart on a scale in which Maat's feather was the counterweight, the deceased became an *akh*, one of the "transfigured dead", represented by an ibis. The *akh* was made of the aforementioned elements and maintained his existence in the Afterlife with the same status and identity he had in life, although now endowed with the characteristics that link him to the god, without ever being identified with him. In fact, in the funer-

ary texts the deceased is called "personal name"-Osiris, making it clear that he belongs to the kingdom of the god of the dead.

To achieve this complex transformation, the funerary professionals had to perform a large number of rituals lasting several days, in different phases. It is possible to largely reconstruct all these rites through the literary and ritual texts preserved, the pictorial representations in tombs and monuments and the archaeological finds, but much of the litanies and prayers performed along with the practical rituals have been irremediably lost. Although these rituals were not identical through the centuries, we can distinguish several major components: the procession to the place of embalming, the embalming and subsequent rituals, the procession to the tomb, the ritual of the



opening of the mouth, and the final offerings. Along with these rites, the relatives of the deceased ensured that he periodically received food and drink after his burial, thus maintaining an important cult to the dead, also overseen by the funerary professionals (the so-called *choachytai*, "libation-pourers", from the Ptolemaic period).

The transportation of the deceased to the embalmers' workshops to start with the mummification ritual had a very special symbolism, because it involved the passage to the other bank of the Nile, the western bank, the land of the dead and the kingdom of Osiris. In its most complex versions, the ritual could closely resemble the myth, and the deceased was transported in a boat similar to that of Osiris, and two women performed the funerary lament in the same way Isis and her sister Nephthys did in honour of the god.

Once the body had arrived in the necropolis area, it was taken to the embalmers' workshops, small tents or adobe stalls located near the tombs. There the deceased was taken by the embalming priests, whose professional prestige and importance changed in the different historical periods, although they always maintained a well-controlled and mainly endogamous organisation. The function of these priests also has its paragon in the Osirian myth: they were in charge of performing the same ritual as Anubis did to give Osiris a new existence. The most perfect form of embalming, together with all the necessary rituals, lasted 70 days, although this could be longer or shorter depending on the historical period, the needs of given moments (epidemics, wars...) or the type of embalming desired because, as Herodotus tells us, not all types of mummification would be the same and, therefore, would not last the same time:

*When a dead body is brought to them (the embalmers), they show those who brought it wooden models of corpses, painted likenesses; the most perfect way of embalming belongs, they say, to One (Osiris) whose name it would be impious for me to mention in treating such a matter; the second way, which they show, is less perfect than the first, and cheaper; and the third is the least costly of all. Having shown these, they ask those who brought the body in which way they desire to have it prepared. Having agreed on a price, the bearers go away, and the workmen, left alone in their place, embalm the body (Histories 2, 86).*

The most meticulous way would follow the model according to which Osiris was mummified. Herodotus avoids mentioning the name of Osiris when it is linked to rites or myths related to his death. The body was displayed for three days in a place different from the em-

Mummy mask  
Museum of  
Montserrat inv.  
620.209  
Cat. 55

balming room. During these days, the body was washed with water from the Nile and palm wine, among other ointments. After this, the long mummification process began. In the first place, an incision was made on the left side of the deceased's body through which some of the viscera were extracted: liver, lungs, intestines and stomach, thus preventing the early decomposition of the body. The viscera were dried with natron and wrapped in bandages to be later deposited in the so-called canopic jars. The brain was extracted through the nostrils and, sometimes, through an orifice made in the base of the skull, while other organs were left inside the body. Particularly important was the heart, the seat of feelings and personality, which was left inside and protected by amulets.

After the extraction of the inner organs, the body was desiccated with natron, a process that lasted around 40 days, after which the corpse was washed again with water from the Nile and then oils were applied to the skin to ensure its elasticity. Later, it was stuffed with linen parcels of sawdust, leaves or other elements that absorbed humidity. On other occasions, these linen parcels contained the previously extracted and dehydrated organs.

After these actions, the mummy was ready to be wrapped in its characteristic linens. A priest, wearing a mask of the god Anubis, began this highly ritualistic process in which he gradually wrapped the different sections of the body following a strict order. During the whole transformation, prayers and spells were recited, and several amulets were deposited for the protection of the individual between the linens covered with resin to ensure that they were well bound. Depending on the period, the placing of the bandages and arrangement of arms and legs differs, although the crossed-bandaged form that became popular in the Roman period was especially characteristic.

From the 5th-4th centuries BCE, the linens of the bandages were used as writing material (cat. 51), and funerary literature texts were written on them, particularly some spells from the "Book of the Dead", intended, like the amulets, to protect the deceased on the difficult journey to the Afterlife. This was the final step in the evolution of the funerary writings aimed since early times to help the deceased to access the Afterlife. Previously, these literary texts were written on the walls of the pyramids and funerary monuments, thereby being called "Texts of the Pyramids", whose early testimonies date back to c.

25th century BCE. Later, when the use of coffins was popularised, whether stone or wood, their panels, inside and outside, became the new writing medium of the formulae aimed at avoiding the dangers of the Afterlife (early examples go back to the First Intermediate Period and were the most popular text of the Middle Kingdom = 20th-17th centuries BCE). Moreover, the surface of the coffin side panels became a kind of micro-cosmos with representations of the sky and the earth around the mummy it guarded. Finally, papyrus rolls would preserve the funerary literature. Each deceased who could afford it was buried with a personalised copy of the "Book of the Dead", thanks to which we still have beautiful examples such as the "Book of Ani" (c. 1300 BCE) or the "Book of Hunefer" (c. 1310-1275 BCE). The papyrus roll was placed partly spread out along the mummified body to guarantee its protection.

Along with the preparation of the body, the remaining pieces for burial were manufactured in the embalmers' workshop, such as the aforementioned sarcophagi. Their quality, decoration and style varied greatly during the different historical periods.

The manufacturing of mummy cartonnage deserves special attention, a kind of papier mâché used from the Middle Kingdom (cat. 54-56) (21st-18th centuries BCE)



to the Roman period to cover the mummy's body. It consisted of making a mixture of plaster or mud with linens and, especially in the Ptolemaic period, written papyri that had been discarded. The "recovery" by philologists of these reused papyri (and I put the word in quotes because this process involved destroying the cartonnage) has revealed literary treasures such as extensive fragments of Menander's comedy that would otherwise have been lost forever.

The wet cartonnage could be moulded and arranged all over the mummified body. Once dried, the decoration began, on some occasions stereotyped but on others, mainly in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, highly varied. The cartonnage could be spread all over the body forming a kind of decorated sarcophagus and usually decorated with images of gods or protective beings, such as the winged beetle. On other occasions the only part of the body protected with this material was the head and chest, considered a very important section of the man and his identity. Funerary masks appeared from the First Intermediate Period (with wonderful examples in gold such as the famous mask of Tutankhamen) and lasted until the renowned Faiyum faces (Roman period). These masks were realistic portraits painted on wood, placed onto the face of the mummy and attached with linen. Its purposes were not only to preserve the deceased's head but also to protect his individuality and identity.

### The Burial

Once the mummy and all the accessories to aid its protection, both real and magical, had been prepared, it was time to proceed to its burial. On some occasions it was performed next to the embalming place, because it was customary to be buried in the hometown. When someone had died abroad, the relatives or the funerary professionals sent the mummy to other relatives or buriers in the town where the burial would take place. This situation is described, along with the papyri, in some exceptional documents, used since the Ptolemaic period but particularly numerous in the Roman period: the mummy labels (cat. 52-53). These were documents mainly written on wood which were attached to the mummies with a piece of string. Among other purposes, these texts were intended to identify the deceased, provide the instructions necessary for the appropriate dispatch of the body to the cemetery or some other place, and to wish him a happy journey to the Afterlife. As identification docu-



ments they provide very important information about Egyptian anthroponymy in the Roman period and they help to conduct studies on life expectancy and produce genealogical trees or studies on the private beliefs of individuals. Moreover, these documents show how the different languages and writing systems coexisted in Roman Egypt. We have mummy labels written in Hieratic, Demotic, Greek, Coptic and bilingual labels in Greek-Demotic and Demotic-Hieratic (cat. 52-53) (see chapter *The languages of Egypt*).

The papyrus *P.Par.* 18 bis (2nd-3rd centuries CE) reflects the use of mummy labels for identifying the deceased, a particularly important matter when he had to be delivered:

*Senpamonthes to Pamonthes her brother, greetings.  
I sent you the body of Senyris my mother, prepared for burial,  
with a tag around the neck, through Gales father of Hierax*

Mouth-opening ceremony in the *Book of the Deads* of the scribe Nebqed. Papyrus, 1391 - 1353 BCE. Paris, Musée du Louvre

*in his private boat, the shipping costs having been paid in full by me. There is an identification mark on the mummy: a linen shroud is on the outside, rose-colored, with her name written on the abdomen. I pray for your health, brother.  
Year 3, Thoth 11.*

The idea that a proper burial of the mummy and its preservation were fundamental to guarantee its "life" in the Afterlife required every effort to be made, bearing in mind the many problems that could emerge. We have documents on papyrus that report, among other ups and downs, a mummy mislaid during its delivery or another waiting for the relatives to pay a debt.

*Papsaus to Askas his brother (adelphos), many greetings.  
I greet you and your entire household.  
I am already writing to you a second letter regarding the body of the soldier from Ouiseptos, a legionary, whose remains the transporters from Tmounache and Phebechis, Kuiteilis and his partner brought, whom they gave to your son.  
The evidence: they attached a staff to his back and, casting him on donkey belonging to you and your son, together with your son brought him to you.  
Now I am writing to you about him, so that you will bring him to his village. Since I have experienced a great insult and they almost brought me before the governor. Wasn't this because of what you have done to me? I offer another piece of evidence about him: your wife, when she came out, bought spices for four obols for the sailor from Tmunache named Kuiteileis. You have not treated me honestly, not bringing him to his proper place.  
I greet you and your son and your entire house. I pray that you are well. 19th month of the Pharmouthi. (P.Petaus 28)*

Once the mummy had finally arrived in the burial place, preceded, as we have noted, by a procession, one of the best-known rites was performed at the gates of the tomb: the opening of the mouth ritual. The rite had probably been performed since very early times but there are only artistic representations from the Dynasty 18 (1550 and 1295 BCE). This consisted of bringing a specific ritual instrument in the shape of a small hoe close to the mouth of the mummified body (covered with its cartonnage or placed in its coffin depending on how it had been arranged). The ritual, which was performed by standing the body up, as if it were a statue, and looking to the north, gave him the ability to speak and therefore to defend himself before Osiris' court where the trial of his soul would take place as well as the

aforementioned weighing of souls. Moreover, and according to the literature related to this rite, it also served to ratify the conversion of the deceased into an *akh*.

Once this ceremony had been performed, which finally endowed the deceased with his coveted status of glorified dead (although the texts already refer to him as *akh*), the mummy was placed in the tomb together with the ritual offerings and, on some occasions, sacrifices.

### Funerary Rites

Once the deceased had been buried, it was important to maintain his status. Relatives and funerary professionals were responsible for making offerings and feeding the deceased with libations and food. The cult of the dead was an extremely important part of the religiosity of Egyptians and, although ideally these offerings were made daily, with the centuries specific festivities were established for the relatives to contact their dead in the necropolises. Particularly important for these tasks was the Osiris-Sokar festival, held annually in the month of Choiak (last month of the flooding period = 28 November / 26 December) during which the episode of the death and revivification of Osiris was recalled. These rituals could probably be the "mysteries" referred to by Herodotus and Plutarch in their works.

Nevertheless, nourishing the deceased with food and drink offerings had been replaced since early times by the offering tables: stone recreations depicting the traditional mat on which the food for the dead was deposited, particularly bread, beer, meat and poultry. Wooden representations of the offering table, and paintings on the fake door of the tombs, began very early, with examples from the first dynasties, and they were especially popular in the Greco-Roman period.

The festivals related to the cult of the dead were also the perfect occasion for communication between living and dead, as in Egyptian beliefs the dead could influence all aspects of the daily life of the living. The "letters to the dead" are exceptional documents of Egyptian religion and otherworldly beliefs. They were mainly engraved on the jars for libations and offerings (e.g. Cairo or Chicago Vase), but also, like letters to the living, they were written on linen or papyrus, and they were left, like offerings, at the entrance to the tombs, as close as possible to the mummified body. Their content usually had to do with personal affairs and, sometimes, they were tremendously egoistical. The living asked the dead for help to get over sicknesses, for women in la-

bour, to conceive, to ask for justice for some offense and for their mediation in dividing an inheritance. Some letters even contained reproaches to the deceased for the situation of extreme poverty in which they had left their family or were written to ask the deceased why they were angry with their relatives and were sending bad luck to them.

*Neither by day nor by night do you (the akh) stand up for her, for you do not combat the one who does evil to her. Why do you wish the destruction of your house? Fight for her again today, that her household may be safe and that water be poured for you. If you do not do it, your house will be destroyed. Can it be that you do not know that it is this (female) servant who cares for your house among men? Fight for her, watch over her. Protect her from all, male and female, who act against you! Then will your house and your children again be well established. May you heed well* (Cairo Vase. Translation by Assmann 2005, p. 161)

Although we have focused this chapter on mummification and the diverse rituals related to it – as it was the most deeply-rooted form of burial in Egyptian culture –, it was not the only type of burial practised by the people of the Nile. Greeks and Romans performed interment or cremation rituals of their dead to, later, leave their body or ashes in cemeteries located on the outskirts of towns. The rites, like those performed in Greece and Rome, lasted at most three days and consisted of a wake for the deceased in his home, where the women of the house ritually washed the body, wrapped in cloths and adorned with wreaths and other embellishments, and laid on a bed with his legs facing the door (*prothesis*). This was followed by the funerary procession to the burial place (*ekphora*), at sunset according to the regulation of the legislator Solon (5th century BCE) and, finally, after a funerary procession, depositing his mortal remains in the cemetery where, moreover, the ritual offerings to the dead or the gods of the underworld were performed. In contrast to what happened in Egypt, Greeks and Romans did not need priests to perform funerary rites; the family took care of these tasks.

From the Ptolemaic period, mummification was accepted among the funerary customs of the Greek and, later, Roman population living in Egypt, increasingly

multi-ethnic due largely to mixed marriages. Towns as cosmopolitan and multicultural as Alexandria offer examples of the diversity of funerary rites practised by their residents. As a product of the religious acculturation of the area and the influences in both directions, the tangible funerary culture of the Greco-Roman period is very rich and exceptional. We have already mentioned the famous Faiyum portraits painted on wood and attached to the mummy, whose detailed realism is imposing. This type of mortuary decoration, which began around the 1st century CE and continued until the late 3rd century CE, mainly occurred in places with a high concentration of Greek and Roman populations, such as Faiyum or Antinopolis, hence their name "Faiyum portraits". As an example of the integration and conciliation of both funerary traditions, it is believed that the "Faiyum portraits" were taken in procession to the cemetery (*ekphora*) and later preserved and exhibited in the houses, where they could even be worshipped like the old wax busts of the Roman patriarchs (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 35.2.3), merging two cult to the dead traditions, so different and yet, at the same time, so similar, into one.

Greek mummy  
label  
T.Monts.Roca  
inv. 1302: TM  
156820  
Cat. 53



## Magic in Greco-Roman Egypt

Emilio Suárez  
de la Torre

### Introduction

Everybody could answer the question "what is magic" but this does not mean that it is an easy concept and, of course, it is not univocal. It has not been so throughout history or according to the cultural context in which such practices take place. The same happens with the social assessment of such practices and of those who perform them. The word "magician" itself soon reflected this variety of usages and assessments. Originally, it designated a tribe of the Medes and later specialised as a designation of Persian Zoroastrian priests of. When the term was adopted by the Greeks, it was used both in a positive and negative or pejorative sense. In fact, the negative sense was more common from when it first appeared in a fragment by Heraclitus (B 14 D.K.), while the professionals of these practices (and of others not always in keeping with the "official" religion) did not hesitate to use it as a term of prestige.

### Magic in Egypt

More important than the issue of the name is the view that a given society has of the practice of magic or, rather, the role that magic plays in that society. The example of Egypt is highly illustrative in this respect, because its history enables us to witness the evolution of magical practices in two very different periods: before and after the hellenisation of the territory and the later Roman rule. To properly understand the Egyptian case we must avoid establishing a radical distinction between magic and religion, an issue of endless debate among scholars. Without getting into the arguments in favour or against their separation, we only need limit ourselves to the most widely accepted aspect, that is, the consideration of magical practices by society as something marginal (which does not prevent them from being used) to understand the particularity of the Egyptian case. Magic and religion went hand in hand throughout Egyptian history. In a culture in which the religious factor is paramount, in which communication with the divine, the presence of the divinity and the role of the priests and temple are essential to the survival of the whole empire, paradoxically there is no word to designate religion but there is one for magic: *heka*. And not only this, *Heka* is the name of the god of magic, who was one of the first beings born out of the mouth of Aton (Atum), even immediately before *Hu*, the word with which it is closely linked. *Hekais* the protector of the solar boat on its nocturnal journey and was worshipped in Heliopolis, Mem-

phis and Esna. Moreover, the name *Weret Hekau* ("Great of Magic"), although applied to several goddesses, also refers to a goddess generally portrayed in the form of a cobra, the reptile shape of magician's staff.

In the Egyptian framework, the term magic embraces highly diverse practices and rites. The myths involving the Egyptian gods are full of references to events and prodigious situations, with a demonstration of extraordinary power that later reappears in the legends of the priests-magicians. These myths sustain rites that renew them. For instance, the fight against the snake Apep, which symbolises chaos and evil, was repeated each year in the temple of Karnak from the second millennium BCE, as illustrated in the *Book of Overthrowing Apep* (included in the Jumilhac papyrus). Moreover, the everyday rituals of the temples, for example the vivification of the statues, were essential acts not only for the preservation of the life of gods and pharaohs but of all people. Every day it is as if creation was repeated with the rising of the sun, and the order of the universe must be recovered and all beings freed from chaos, including the gods themselves. Apart from the mythical-ritual level, knowledge of magical formulas and processes was very important in Egypt in all eras, and testimonies of them are found in the texts inscribed in the pyramids, in the sarcophagi, in parietal inscriptions of the temples and, above all, it was a closely guarded heritage in the papyri and stele of the temple libraries. In addition to these testimonies are the numerous amulets, seals, figurines and statues that tell us about the widespread use of magic. A practice that followed very strict rules and rigorous detail: they required favourable days and the chosen place and moment, and the formulas had to be recited with great solemnity. These characteristics are repeated in the instructions of the formularies of the imperial Roman era, just as we find features that survive in this period, such as the inclusion of words in foreign languages, *vores magicae* without specific meaning and diverse magical signs.

The Egyptian magical texts cover highly diverse contents, predominantly protective magic. In the myths concerning gods this aspect was of great importance. In a more human terrain applied magic solved problems and situations of a more practical nature (in the Egyptian context), such as protection against scorpions, snakes, lions, hyenas, crocodiles (prophylactic magic) or, if the worst had happened, to cure bites and stings (curative magic). In this respect, we must note the close relationship between magic and medicine, without any

conflict (in contrast to what happened in Greece following the spread of Hippocratic medicine): even the pharaoh's doctors used magical procedures when necessary and the medical texts archived in the temples include prescriptions that are no different from those that appear in magical texts. Consequently, the magical recipe handbooks include remedies such as those mentioned or for headaches and birth, apart from others to prevent nightmares and to ward off evil spirits or the evil eye. Moreover, we must be very aware of the importance of the world of death and the Afterlife in Egyptian culture. This explains the abundance of references to the world of the dead (who were sent letters) and, also, the practice of necromancy. The "duplicate" of human beings in the Afterlife is the *ba* (while *ka* is a force that gives life to the individual and can return to the dead body). If the *ba*, represented as a bird with a human head, after several trials, reached the status of *akh*, then this "transfigured" spirit enjoyed privileges and its status was similar to that of the gods. Moreover, the *ba* could also be an emanation of the gods themselves. At the other extreme was the transformation of the spirit of the individual into a *mut*. These were people who had had a violent death, traitors, prisoners of war or even those who had died prematurely. Therefore, any of these spirits (*ba*, *akh*, *mut*), given their capacity to adopt different forms and harass the living, could become a threat that had to be removed and prevented through magical rites.

Lastly, we must stress the importance in Egypt of the concern about the future: prophesying in general and some of its varieties, such as interpreting dreams, as well as the concern with astrology and prediction using horoscopes (cat. 77), played an essential role in the life of Egyptians. However, some authors refute the consideration of prophesying as a form of magic, as it did not involve the use of a power in relation to the gods but rather aspired to knowledge of the future. If this distinction was applicable in pre-Hellenic Egypt, the testimonies of the magical papyri we will see support the inclusion of prophesying practices in the field of magic.

### Magic in the New Panorama of the Hellenistic and Roman World

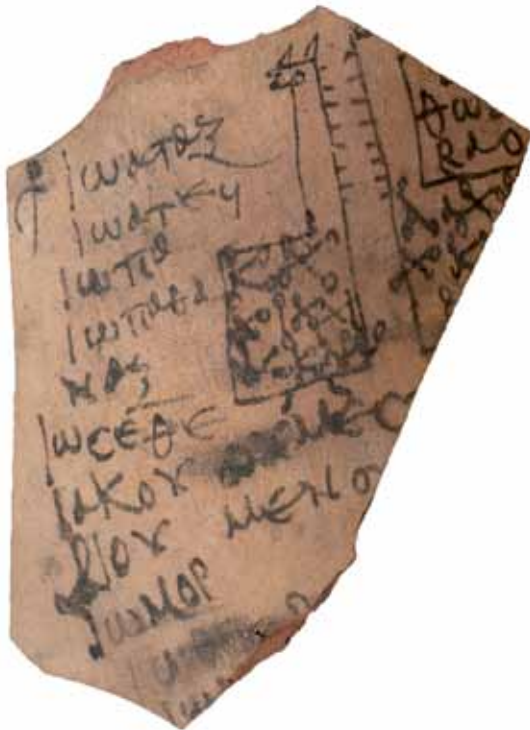
The profile of Egyptian magic outlined thus far was maintained to some extent in the Hellenistic and Roman era, but the new historical and social circumstances also brought about major changes. We are now in a multicultural and multilingual environment. The practice of



magic was increasingly expanding in the private sphere. The activity of the priests who in the *scriptoria* of the temples zealously kept the magical recipes also began to spread towards the private sphere and, gradually, they themselves had to readapt their lifestyle to the new circumstances. In addition, increasingly more "magicians" were not part of the priestly circles. In terms of the transmission of magical knowledge and the dissemination of recipes and the formularies that include them, the linguistic aspect radically changed the panorama. The Greek language, the Koine, became the language of magic. But it was not the only one: although not numerous, the papyri written in Demotic are also important. Indeed, some papyri with magical content have survived in Demotic, or are bilingual (part Demotic, part Greek), but it is not always easy to decide if the recipes they contain are independent of those written in Greek or if the Demotic tradition itself was influenced by the Greek, which is sometimes evident. But the phenomenon of multilingualism also affects the magical texts in other important aspects. The tradition of including formulas and words in foreign languages was maintained but was

Drawing of Seth with invocation  
P. PalauRib. inv.  
3: TM 63186.  
Cat. 73

A text of aggressive magic.  
Typhonicos logos  
O.Monts.Roca  
inv. 1472: TM  
341739  
Cat. 72.



now enriched by diverse traditions: interspersed with the Greek text we find formulas and terms that eventually come from the Middle Egyptian or the Demotic, but above all from Hebrew, Aramaic or Coptic, as well as those *voices* that, distorted, had lost all their meaning and were limited to reinforcing the mystery of the magical formula (see chapter The Languages of Egypt).

### The Magical Papyri

For the Hellenistic and imperial era the most important direct material testimony for knowledge of the practice of magic are the papyri, which we tend to denominate as "magical", although it is understood that such an adjective actually corresponds to their content. It is not, to say the least, the only testimony of such practices, as they formed part of a larger group of magical texts, including amulets (cat. 74, 75), gems, statuettes, ostraca (cat. 72), and lead tablets, generally for cursing purposes (*defixiones*, although they were also used for erotic spells), and other magical texts that archaeology has provided. However, it can be argued that the papyri are the most complete vehicle for understanding these practices because while the aforementioned objects show us the instruments of applied magic, papyri not only contain formularies and instructions for preparing these objects but also give us a much broader insight into the specific

features of magical practices, the beliefs surrounding the more religious and social factors.

Since the publication of the first papyrus with magical content in 1826 (Petretini), there have been several finds and partial editions, until reaching the edition by Preisendanz (vol. I in 1928, vol. II in 1931; vol. III was in galley proofs when the publishing house in Leipzig was bombed in 1943, although a copy was saved and now circulates in photocopies). It was later improved and expanded by Henrichs in the revision of 1973 (vol. I) – 1974 (vol. II). The English translation coordinated by Betz (1986, 1992<sup>2</sup>) included 50 new papyri known since 1941. Later, Daniel and Maltomini published numerous magical documents (*Suppl. Mag.* I 1990, II 1991), both formularies and texts of applied magic. However, the publication of this type of text is constant, albeit uneven. The project of a new critical edition of magical papyri led by Christopher A. Faraone and Sofia Torallas Tovar at the University of Chicago will become the new link in this chain of fascinating surprises that is the knowledge of ancient magic in its original testimonies.

Of all the magical papyri known to date, the oldest, dated to the 4th century BCE, is the one published by Petretini in 1826 (already cited as the first one published), which probably came from the Serapeum of Memphis and includes the so-called "curse of Artemisia" (*PGM* XL) by the woman of this name against her husband who had disinherited a daughter, for which she requests the support of Serapis and the other gods of the temple. The document is not only exceptional because of its date but also because, although it does seem to be based on a formulary, it still has different features from those of other later papyri, and it is not written in Koine but in the Ionic dialect with some Doric and Attic elements. The next oldest text takes us to the 1st century BCE. It is the so-called "Philinea papyrus" (*PGM* XX), with remedies against headache and fever. Its most notable feature is the use of hexameters in a magic spell. Apart from these examples, most Greek magical papyri can be dated to between the 2nd-4th centuries CE, with some later exceptions (up to the 6th-7th centuries CE). As one might suppose, not all the magical texts on papyrus are equally important for our knowledge of magic. Undoubtedly, the set of papyri of greatest importance and variety is still that acquired just before 1828 by a character with a novelistic biography, born on the island of Lemnos, with an Armenian father, known by the name of Giovanni Anastasi or d'Anastasi (among

other variations), a skilled trader who was a diplomatic representative of Sweden and Norway in Egypt. This set of papyri is known as the "Theban group" or "Theban library" as it comes (although without absolute certainty in the detail) from a tomb in Egyptian Thebes. This complete library (cf. Zago) was sold in separate lots (and on different dates) to the Rijksmuseum in Leiden, the National Library in Paris and the British Museum, in addition to two papyri that ended up in Stockholm. Apart from these papyri, there are another five that probably come from the same library, divided between the British Museum, Berlin (Archäologisches Museum), the Louvre and a small part of PGM I in Warsaw (Narodowe Museum). Moreover, other more doubtful isolated allocations of other papyri have been suggested for this group. They are all of exceptional value for several reasons. Notable among them is the longest magical papyrus known to date, an authentic "grimoire" (copied in codex form, not scroll), known as "the great magical papyrus of Paris" (PGM IV), with texts of painstakingly formal production and content. Overall, these papyri make up a carefully selected library (it was thought that the fact of being "buried" was due to the fear that it would be discovered in a time of persecution of magic, a frequent situation in the Roman world). In contrast to most papyri that do not belong to this group, it does not concern applied magic but an immense set of formularies. These are documents with highly diverse contents but that go beyond the usual everyday needs in the practice of magic and were apparently linked to a highly representative religious environment of the fusion of beliefs in the 4th century CE.

As mentioned above, the magical papyri of Greco-Roman Egypt broadened the purpose of the practice of magic to the most diverse ends, beyond those that appeared in ancient Egyptian documents. The two most numerous groups in terms of content are the prophesying and erotic recipes. It is clear that prophecy had already been included as another magical practice, with a great variety of possibilities: from the most traditional and mechanical technique (e.g. lecanomancy, or divination by inspection of water in a basin) to the instructions for encounters with the divinity with the aim of being instructed about the future and individual destiny. The epiphany can be oneiric but the instructions sometimes indicate that a direct vision of the god was expected. This involved the conviction that the ceremony and the magic *logos* recited could provoke this divine presence

and achieve what in the terminology of the papyri is designated as *systasis* (which translates the Egyptian *ph-nt*). Both when it concerns gods and in the case of daemon and divine envoys it was important to have formulas of "farewell", so they would return to their world and not cause more problems than those they wanted to resolve.

The section on erotic recipes is very broad, with a greater presence of male customers, but with plenty of examples (formularies or applied documents) of women too in pursuit of erotic relations, both heterosexual and homosexual. In this section, the range of recipes is very wide, in length and procedures indicated. Formulas of attraction known as *agogai* are very frequent, in which the gods and daemons invoked are asked to ensure that the beloved is absolutely subordinate to the person requesting the spell, and even that she flies and remains linked to him "for all the days of his life." There are also recipes to break up another couple, other very simple ones to achieve an immediate effect, some to strengthen male sexual potency and, as a complement to avoid surprises, others with contraceptive remedies. In this same erotic sphere there is a notable frequent difference between the recipes of the formularies and the examples of applied

Palimpsest with magical text. Parchment, provenance unknown, 10th-11th century P.Monts.Roca inv. 324



Greek horo-  
scope  
P.Monts. Roca  
inv. 223a: TM  
219241  
Cat. 77

magic, whether on papyrus or (above all) inscribed on lead tablets. With the exception of the aforementioned briefest ones, the former include varied instructions, with practical guidance (preparation of anointment, casting of a statuette, offerings of aromas and other rituals, sometimes highly detailed and complex) and, at the same time, texts to be recited (*logoi*), some in poetic form, aimed at the most diverse gods. For their part, the applied magical documents are limited to invocations to infernal deities, requesting the total submission of the beloved (also with some examples in verse) and little more, although there is a tendency to repeat the same request formula.

The submission sought is not always erotic. The recipes designated as *thymokatochoi* (lit. "that contains the spirit") can be applied to restraining and dominating enemies and hostile entities. For example, in *PGM X* a brief recipe of this kind (to make a phylactery or protection tablet) indicates that it is effective "against enemies, accusers, predators, fears and phantoms of dreams." This variety of recipe is frequently broadened to various levels of success (with specific references to business) and victory. As is seen, there are many formularies of defensive magic and, above all, positive for the user: a variety of cures and remedies, making friends, achieving progress, having a prodigious memory. There is no lack of peculiar practical applications: escaping from prison, becoming invisible, using your own shadow, crossing the Nile on a crocodile. Other recipes are to provoke certain dreams in other people or even to make them talk in dreams. Of course, there is black magic too, which seeks to harm the rival or enemy, whether by making them fall ill, unable to move or even die.

This list of purposes of the recipes suggests an excessively practical and everyday level that conceals the (formal and conceptual) complexity of some of them. This is the case of the long text called by Dieterich "Mithras Liturgy" (*PGM IV*, 475-820), a denomination that distorts the reality of this impressive document that includes, according to the papyrus itself, a recipe for "immortalisation" and is a direct request of a predictive nature to the divinity. It is a very valuable example of the mixture of Egyptian and Greek conceptions and traditions (particularly the latter) in the configuration of an incipient hermeticism (Betz), with a notable combination of philosophical-mystical elements with other more characteristic of less spiritual magical practice. Moreover, the text of *PGM XIII* (*P.Leid.* J 395), which

contains two versions (one longer and the other shorter) of the same ritual, enables us to appreciate the network of beliefs and procedures for approaching the divinity in a ceremony that, although it may contain signs that point to rites of the pharaonic priestly environment, it becomes an instrument in the hands of the magician who opens to a specific private environment the possibilities of the magic achieving a revelation and personal prediction through means proclaimed infallible and powerful under the authority of Moses, the supposed author of the book of recipes.

The recipes that appear in the formularies have common features and, at the same time, it is also true that each of them and each one of the papyri preserved has a long history behind it that is not always easy to elucidate. The most frequent common elements are the following. To begin with, combined instructions appear to (a) prepare substances suitable for the purpose sought, which can be of animal or vegetable origin; (b) perform the rite prescribed, indicating the moment, place and orientation of the magician, as well as the utensils to be used and, if appropriate, the statuettes, altars and other elements to be built or the drawings to be reproduced on papyrus, metal or other material, as well as the places where the recommended tablet, object or magical substance should be deposited; (c) instructions are included for the word that should be pronounced (the magical *logos*; sometimes the scribe adds variations found





in other papyri) and to persuade the daemons (that can be the spirits of the bodies used for the effect) and/or divinities that must be invoked. In this case, we sometimes find authentic hymns, with solemn expressions, in prose or in verse (generally dactylic hexameters, but also trimeters, tetrameters and even choliamb); (d) the text of the recipe alternates all these instructions with sound sequences (the most usual: the seven vowels of the Greek alphabet), *voces magicae* and expressions in the Egyptian language or in a variation of the neighbouring Semitic languages; (e) as it happens in current commercial rhetoric, it is very frequent for the recipes to contain references to their effectiveness, especially at the beginning ("unique in the world", "infallible"); (f) we can find allusions to episodes featuring the gods, which we call *historiolae* ("let her love me just as Isis loved Osiris"); (g) sometimes the formulary is presented as a didactic or initiation text from master to disciple, with an example of a epistolary structure; (h) the magician or practitioner of the magical rite takes on a position of strength before the gods themselves: on the one hand, he not only seeks to persuade them rhetorically but also threatens them; on the other, he himself can be identified with a divinity or daemon, which strengthens his position in the request; (i) lastly, as the greatest guarantee of efficacy

can be given by the provenance and authorship of the recipe, we find texts attributed to characters endowed with authority in ancient magical tradition (Moses, Democritus, Dardanus, Salomon, Jacob, Agathocles) or allusions to their directly divine origin (normally Hermes).

This enumeration of the most common features must not obscure the fact that each papyrus and, within it, each recipe, has a long history behind it, difficult to unravel in general. In contrast to the work of textual criticism with literary texts, the magical papyri are unique documents, copied for a specific occasion and destination (the "library" of the temple, that of the magician, of the possible clients, individuals or groups, who dare to possess these text even in periods of official persecution of magic). However, they contain clues to their own history, to the hands through which they have passed and the environment in which they have originated: alterations of the formulas, references to variants, sometimes historical data or literary allusions, peculiar applications of procedures attested in medicine.

### Conclusion

The weight of this tradition of magical practice would be felt in later periods: we find the fundamental features repeated in medieval magic and, in some cases, almost until the present. The spread of Christianity and its definitive status as exclusive official religion did not mean the disappearance of the belief in the strength of magic. As we have seen, it gives the impression that magic in some way neutralises the beliefs of contemporary religions and amalgamates them. The fusion of rites and cults is quite surprising: we find elements of the "official" religions of mystical cults, hermeticism and even Gnosticism. Christianity would adapt the use of magic to its creed. The presence of expressions and paragraphs in Coptic mixed with the Greek text of the magical papyri gives an idea of the importance of magic in this environment. Moreover, numerous papyri in Greek of Christian origin (some already compiled by Preisendanz) allow us to appreciate the ease of the process of adaptation: it is sufficient to replace the name of the Egyptian gods with that of Christ and introduce as *logos* or *historiola* sentences from the gospels and references to biblical tales, above all from the New Testament. Moreover, numerous texts from the history of Christianity, including the Byzantine, are full of examples of stories in which the magical component is essential. And let us not forget that the figure of the exorcist is still current today.

Demotic planetary table  
P. Monts. Roca  
inv. 314r  
Cat. 76

## Coptic Egypt

Sofía Torallas Tovar

### Introduction

Coptic Egypt refers to an Egypt characterised by the Christian religion, in a time span ranging from the late-ancient period to our days. In this chapter we will deal with the emergence of the Christian religion, the religious conflict in Alexandria and the development of the very important monastic movement, until the arrival of the Arabs in the 7th century CE, along with an aspect of great importance: the evolution of the Coptic language and its written literary production. Christianity in Egypt bears a special and original seal as the result of a multilingual, multicultural and multi ethnic society, of a history of complex development in which the coming and going of populations from different backgrounds left an indelible mark.

### Origins of Christianity in Egypt

Alexandria, the cradle of so many cultural and religious movements, was an incomparable setting for cultural and religious contact in the Mediterranean. Founded by Alexander the Great in 332 BCE, since its origins it had a mixed population: the newly-arrived Greeks shared the city with a conspicuous Jewish community, which occupied important areas of it and intermingled with the original local population of the district that preserved the Egyptian name of the original fishing town, *Racotis*. This mixed population, along with the profoundly religious character of the inhabitants of Egypt, was a fertile ground for a very special development that emerged with the arrival of Christianity. This new religion coexisted with other traditions for several centuries, bringing about major transfers and influences. The clear parallels between Christ and Osiris, the god murdered by his brother, resuscitated by the power of love; or between Isis and Harpocrates (cat. 58) and the Virgin and the child god, clearly emphasise the important pharaonic legacy in Coptic culture and religion.

Moreover, Egypt plays an important role in holy history. Matthew 2:13-20 tells of the arrival in the lands of the Nile of the holy family fleeing Herod. Similarly, we should recall the legend of the foundation of the church of Alexandria by Saint Mark between the years 43 and 48 CE and his death in 62 or 68 CE at the hands of the followers of Serapis, although its historicity is uncertain. However, the head of the Coptic Church, who always considered himself the heir of Saint Mark in the patriarchal see of Alexandria, does not seem to question it.

In this environment, the first Christian community of Alexandria must have been of Jewish origin. It was in this city where the first translation of the Bible (Old Testament) into Greek was produced in the 3rd century BCE, the Septuagint, within the largest Jewish community in the Mediterranean. Acts 18, 24-28 tells us about an Alexandrian Jew, Apollos, who converted to Christianity "in his land" and was a Baptist preacher. Around the year 50 CE there was probably a Christian community that had emerged within the Jewish community, about which we know very little. The first certain historical data we have concerns the twelfth bishop of Alexandria from 189 to 232 CE, Demetrius and the school known as *Didascalion*, founded approximately around the year 180 by Pantaenus, although attributed to Saint Mark (Eusebius, *HE*, II 16; V 10; Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, III 36) and aimed at confronting the Gnostic ideological and religious traditions. Pantaenus was its first known director and was followed by Clemens, Origen, Heraclas, Dionysius and Didymus the Blind (cat. 12).

### Expansion Inland. The Persecutions

The oldest manuscript fragment of the Gospels is a papyrus belonging to the Rylands collection in Manchester, containing John 18, palaeographically dated to the year 130 in Faiyum, in Middle Egypt (cat. 60). This proves that Christianity was no longer a phenomenon limited to Alexandria and that in the early 2nd century it had already spread to the rest of Egypt.

In these two first centuries we know very little about these early communities. What we do know is that from the outset there had been doctrinal and dogmatic dissensions and the strong Gnostic and Manichean trends entered the fray. Gnosticism is a conglomerate of philosophical-religious syncretic beliefs resulting from the intersection of Platonism, Judaeo-Christianity and eastern dualisms, which probably emerged in Syria and Palestine and was declared heretical after a period of some prestige among Christian intellectuals. In Egypt, Gnosis was widely spread through its famous doctors Carpocrates, Basilides, Valentinus and Theodotus, and survived until at least the late 4th century-early 5th century, as attested by the collection of translations into Coptic of Gnostic works in the library discovered in Nag Hammadi in the Thebaid in 1945. Gnosticism, briefly, is characterised by anti-cosmism: the tangible world is the work of a perverse demiurge opposed to the perfect world, the work of the true God. Gnosis, or "knowledge", consists of

the human being's awareness that his soul is captive and that liberation lays in searching the path towards the light.

Manichaeism, which emerged in the late 3rd century in Iran, where it was established as an organised Church, was also introduced in Egypt, as attested by the Coptic Manichean manuscripts from the 4th century found in Medinet Madi in 1929-30. It is a doctrine similar to Gnosticism, as it shares with it the notion of dualism, according to which there was an eternal fight between two opposed and irreducible principles, Good and Evil, linked respectively to Light and Darkness.

In this initial period one of the indicators of the vitality and growth of the Christian Church is the cruelty and violence of the persecutions. In Egypt, the edict enacted by Septimius Severus in 202 prohibiting Christianity hit a large number of Christians hard, such as Leonidas, the father of Origen. In 250, the Decian persecution made the bishop Dionysius flee to the desert. He finally went into exile in Libya with the Valerian persecution in 257. In 259, Gallienus's edict of tolerance gave some relief to the Christian community, which then experienced a moment of expansion and reached the Thebaid. This brief period of peace ended in 302-303, when Diocletian gave a coup de grace to eastern Christianity with four successive edicts of persecution. And that period would not fall into oblivion, given that the first year of this Emperor's rule, the year 284, was chosen as the start of the period known as the Era of the Martyrs or Era of Diocletian, which became a very important chronological system.

As a consequence, the worship of the martyrs emerged, and acquired great relevance. Saint Menas is for instance, worthy of mention. He was a martyr of military origin, executed in Alexandria in 296 (cat. 64). He had asked for his body to be placed on a camel and buried where the animal took him. For this reason, he is portrayed standing between two camels with his arms raised. The place chosen by the camel was a source of water in the Libyan Desert. When some years later, in 324, Empress Helena was cured of her elephantiasis by drinking water from this source, she had a church built in the place. The worship of Saint Menas grew and attracted a constant flow of pilgrims to his sanctuary.

But peace lasted little, and under Maximinus Daia, in 310-312, terror redoubled. Even Peter of Alexandria was decapitated in this last persecution, which culminated in 313 in the edict of toleration, or Edict of Milan. This edict, in the early 4th century, heralded a new era,



in which Christianity took on its peculiar and characteristic nature. The population converted, the bishops multiplied.

### After Tolerance, Dissension

After the great persecutions, internal controversies and persecutions entered the stage and also defined the evolution of the Church at that time. Meletius, Bishop of Asyut (Lycopolis) adopted an inflexible posture faced with the tolerance of Peter I of Alexandria towards

Early Christian stela incorporating a looped cross (crux ansata) or ankh symbol. Stone, 4th-7th cent. CE. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art

the Christians who had renounced their faith to save their life due to the persecutions of previous years. The Council of Nicea in 325 sought to establish order and reach an agreement with the Meletians. Meletius preserved his bishopric, but he was not allowed to ordain more bishops outside his region.

It was in Alexandria where the first great controversy emerged concerning the mystery of Christ. By the year 318-323, Arius set out his doctrine on the Trinity advocating that the Father is the only non-engendered, thereby undervaluing the Son, who could therefore not be co-eternal to the Father. The first Council of Nicea in 325, which declared the Son as true God, engendered, non-created and consubstantial to the Father, found Arius heretical, although the first Synod of Tyre in 335 exonerated him, and he was declared a heretic again after his death by the Council of Constantinople in 381.

In 328, Athanasius, a great follower of the Nicene faith, was finally declared Bishop of Alexandria. Until the Council of Constantinople in 381, the Arian crisis tore apart the eastern Christian communities. Emperors Constantius II (337-361) and Valens (364-378) themselves sympathised with the Arian movement, and therefore the confrontation did not culminate until Theodosius, a convinced Nicene, took power in 379 and put an end to Arianism. The Council of Constantinople in 381 confirmed the Nicene creed: in the Trinity there was a single *ousia*, or essence, and three *hypostaseis*, or persons.

In the year 391-2, Emperor Theodosius prohibited paganism. The Church evolved from persecuted to persecutor. At the request of this proclamation, the patriarch Theophilus (385-412) took the opportunity to violently destroy, among others, the Serapeum of Alexandria, a symbol of the ancient world. This patriarch and his successor and nephew Cyril (412-444) undertook an extremely violent fight against paganism and heresy. The destruction of temples was followed by the cruellest condemnations and massacres, such as the famous lynching of the philosopher Hypatia in 415 and the violent expulsion of the Jews in 412, which had antecedents of similar extremes of violence described by Philo of Alexandria in his treatise *Against Flaccus*, in the 1st century.

In the Council of Ephesus in 431, the patriarch Cyril made use of his wide authority and managed to exile Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, who refused the Virgin the epithet of *Theotokos*, or mother of God,

which had a clear repercussion on the divine and human nature of Christ. This epithet had emerged in Egypt in the early 3rd century, probably marked by a pagan legacy concerning the goddess Isis, mother of the god Horus, so revered since the Hellenistic period in Egypt and beyond its borders. The opposed view called for Mary to be named *Christotokos*, limiting therefore the divinity of the Virgin and differentiating the two natures of Christ, human and divine. Cyril's view was that Christ had a unique nature. After his death, in the year 444, Eutyches, an elder archimandrite of Constantinople, developed his theses insisting on this unique nature. A local synod in 448 condemned him, although he had followers such as Dioscorus, successor of Cyril in Alexandria, while in Constantinople he was strongly opposed by Theodoret of Cyrus, Eusebius of Dorylaeum and the patriarch Flavian. It can also be interpreted that the monophysite conflict (from the Greek *monos*, "one" and *physis*, "nature") emerged as a political rather than dogmatic conflict between the sees of Alexandria and Constantinople.

With the support of Emperor Theodosius II, Dioscorus held a synod in Ephesus in 449 that rehabilitated Eutyches and condemned Flavian. His formula is "*One nature of God the Word Incarnate*," without rejecting the human nature of Christ, but trying to move closer to Constantinople. Benefitting from Emperor Marcian's arrival to the throne, the adversaries of Dioscorus convened a counter-council in Chalcedon in 451, which condemned the patriarch of Alexandria and resumed and promoted the formula of Leo of Rome, which declared the unity of the persons (*hypostaseis*) and the duality of the natures (*physeis*).

In Egypt, more than in Syria-Palestine, the opposition to Chalcedon soon emerged, above all in monastic milieus. Apart from a minority of Chalcedonians, also called "Melkites", the anti-Chalcedonian posture became widespread, along with the rejection of Byzantium and the imperial and oppressing power. The successor to Dioscorus, Proterius, appointed by the Emperor, was assassinated in 457 and replaced by Timotheus Aelurus and most of the Egyptian Church became monophysite. Perhaps more than a true dogmatic and theological struggle they were political and cultural dissensions.

From 482 the imperial repression against the dissenting Egyptian Church softened with the acceptance by the Patriarch Peter Mongus of the *Henoticon*, a conciliating edict promulgated by Emperor Zenon (474-491) although drafted by the Patriarch of Constantinople

Acacius. It condemned both Nestorius and Eutyches and the Council of Chalcedon itself, while accepting as a unique rule of faith the decisions of the Council of Nicea (325) and Ephesus (431).

However, the radical monophysites, the "acephaloi", and the Chalcedonian extremists did not accept this edict. Conciliation was not achieved and the repression started by Emperor Justin in 518 redoubled. Justinian (527-565) implemented a policy of special virulence and repression against the monophysite movement. The religious controversy about the Trinity became more entangled and confused. A patriarch of Syrian origin, Damian (578-605), managed to reconstruct and unify the Egyptian Church, reorganise its hierarchy and his successor Anastasius (605-616) re-established relations with the anti-Chalcedonian Syrian Church after half a century of quarrelling.

In the year 618, the Persian invasion of Egypt took place, led by King Chosroes II. Emperor Heraclius resisted to the invasion and regained Egypt in 629. There he appointed Cyrus as Patriarch, with the mission of promoting monothelism (which recognises the duality of natures but one will). The Patriarch Benjamin had no other option than to go into exile in Upper Egypt.

The year 641 marked the Islamic occupation of Egypt, which would free the Copts from Byzantine rule. Without idealising the tolerance of Islam, we can argue that at the beginning relations with Christians were good, with some fleeting crises. The country was gradually Arabised and Islamised, both linguistically, culturally and religiously, although there has always been an important Christian community and a strong Church that has always preserved its peculiar distinctive features.

### The Birth of Monasticism

It can be argued that the birth of the anchoritic and coenobitic movements had its origin in the warm sands of the Egyptian desert. In the period of the persecutions, many Christians went to the desert, the logical place to flee since past times to escape the tax authorities or justice. At that time, the so-called *anachoresis*, or escape, took on a new meaning, and was characterised by the desire for life in solitude, to withdraw from the material world and to search for the communion of the soul with God through the renunciation of material goods. Thus, in 270 Saint Anthony chose the eremitic life when he decided to follow the Evangelical council of Jesus, who in a vision urged him to sell all his property.

These eremites would soon constitute small communities called *lauras*, in what we know as semi-anchoritism. Generally the minimal unit consisted of a master or elder man and one or a few disciples living in a cell. The cells were built around a shared church and the common activity of these *lauras* was minimal. The *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* provide us with information about the monastic activity mainly in the area of Scetis and Nitria, where this anchoritic variant was mostly concentrated. This form of life was founded by Ammon, according to the sources, who, forced into marriage, convinced his wife to take a vow of chastity and soon after he departed to the desert.

Christian cross in a column of the Temple of Isis. Stone, 4th-2nd cent. BC - Christian Era. Philae, Lake Agilka.



Holy Week lectionary. Detail  
Ms. Roca-Puig 1  
Cat. 28

Women, although they also lived in the desert, in general retired to the monastic life in small urban and family communities. Saint Anthony tells us that he lost his parents at an early age. He sold everything he had and brought his sister to a community of virgins. It is the first testimony of the existence of these types of female and typically urban communities of virgins and widowers who renounced their family life and made a vow of chastity.

Coenobitic communities, in their turn, are a step further in the organisation of community life. They based their organisation partly on obedience and a hierarchical system with different levels of power. The architectural structure of the monastery itself, cells grouped within a wall with common facilities, is also characteristic of coenobitism. What we know as coenobitic monasticism is mainly that of the orders of Pachomius of Tabennesi and Shenoute of Atripe.

Pachomius of Tabennesi was the most recognised founder of a model of asceticism that spread throughout the Christian East and West. We know his life and the history of his foundations through the hagiographic literature on his life. Several versions have reached us in Sahidic and Bohairic, and even in Greek. We also have a brief corpus produced by him and his successors, Horsie-sis and Theodorus, which includes a monastic rule, transmitted complete thanks to the Latin translation by Saint Jerome. Original of Sne (Latopolis), Pachomius joined the army of Maximinus Daia and was sent to the area of Thebes. There he saw how Christians showed great pity towards the inmates of the prison and decided to convert to Christianity and retire to the desert. But his charismatic personality and capacity for organisation attracted a large

number of people to him. In 316, he became a disciple of Palamon, only known because of his famous disciple. After seven years, he left Palamon and founded his first monastery in the abandoned village of Tabennesi. These foundations gradually grew and acquired well-organised structures, hierarchies of monks in charge of different missions within these organised societies, times of meals, prayer, fasting, and so on. The first monasteries were male, but Pachomius soon received the visit of his sister Mary and he had a cell built for her not far from the monastery, which would slowly give way to a complete nunnery, arranged with the same regime as the male communities.

Shenoute of Atripe is one of the most striking figures of ancient Christianity in Egypt. He was appointed Abbot of the White Monastery, close to Panopolis, in 385 CE. The White Monastery was the largest monastic complex in Egypt at that time, located in Atripe, on the opposite bank to Panopolis, in Thebes. We do not know much about the life of this abbot, apart from what we know through the hagiographic account of his disciple Besa, and brief mentions in his own work. Shenoute organised these communities in his own way and left his particular mark on them. His monastic regulation is different from Pachomius' and was characterised as quite harsh. The punishments fitted the crimes, mostly corporal punishments. The maximum sentence was expulsion from the community. Strict discipline reached other aspects, such as the possession of goods and extreme reclusion, in which family visits were not permitted.

Under his leadership the White Monastery became the most important monastic centre in the area. This monastery was structured in smaller units, called *synagogai*, linked to it. They also included female communities in which there were a certain number of monks who supervised and lived permanently with the sisters. To join the monastery there was a trial period of around three months in which the male or female novice lived outside. Later they entered to take the vow, renouncing everything.

### The Coptic Language

Coptic is the most recent phase of the Egyptian language, characterised by a new writing system derived from the Greek alphabet (see pp. 000-000). This phase is often related to the emergence and development of Christianity in Egypt because most literary texts preserved in this language are biblical, hagiographic or somehow related to the Egyptian Christian Church. However, we should not forget that it is the language of an age-old people



and that many other documents attest the generalised use of the Egyptian language in this form.

The adoption of the Greek alphabet for writing this language was not immediate but rather experienced a complicated development through the first four centuries of our era. The Egyptian language had begun to be written in Greek characters with the first arrival of the Greeks in Egypt, although it was not standardised until the 3rd-4th centuries, when it was used for religious texts, and especially then as a vehicle for Christianisation. It coexisted with the writing that we call Demotic, corresponding to the Egyptian language since the year 700 BCE. The substitution of this complicated writing system by an alphabetical system is a process that could be explained because of the simplicity of the latter. However, it also has socio-political reasons given that Demotic suffered a decline and subsequent disappearance from the official documents with the arrival of the Romans, when the official language of the administration became almost exclusively Greek.

Of course, the use of such a different writing system means that the difference between the Demotic and Coptic phases seems enormous. However, there is much concomitancy between both grammars. One of the interesting aspects that came to light based on alphabetical writing is the dialectal differentiation that remained hidden behind other spelling varieties. These varieties are not distinguished in the ancient Egyptian texts in the pre-Coptic period also due to the great centralisation of the political and cultural model, although they probably existed. It is natural that in such a wide geographical area different dialects were distinguished over the centuries. The five most important dialects of Coptic are: Sahidic, from the area of Thebes, later used for literary purposes throughout Upper Egypt, which **made it** "classical Coptic", given that Pachomius and Shenoute, the main exponents of early Coptic literature, used it to write their works; Bohairic, also called Memphitic, originating from the western delta but which later spread throughout Egypt in the 9th century when the Patriarchate was transferred to Wadi al-Natrun. It is the dialect that survived longest and is currently used in the liturgy of the Coptic Church, although it is not spoken; Faiyemic, the dialect spoken in the oasis of Faiyum, Mesokemic or Middle Egyptian in the south of the oasis; Lycopolitan or Sub-Akhmimic in the region of Asyut; and Akhmimic the old dialect of Upper Egypt (city of Akhmim), which was soon replaced by Sahidic.

One of the characteristics differentiating Coptic from the variety chronologically prior to Egyptian is the great lexical influence that the Greek language had on it. Terms related not only to religion and philosophy but to daily life entered Coptic. They were added to the few terms that had gradually infiltrated Egyptian during the long and intensive contact it had had with the Greek language since Antiquity and which were mostly due to trade contacts. They tend to denominate products or realities previously unknown by the Egyptians.

After the Arab conquest of Egypt (641 CE) the period of Arabisation and Islamisation of the whole population brought about the replacement of Greek as the official language. The Coptic language then rose to become the language of the administration, probably because there was a body of bureaucrats who could read and write, used by the newly arrived lords for administrative tasks. Nevertheless, over the centuries of Arab occupation, Coptic gradually declined until it was reduced to the language of the liturgy. This gradual decline allowed Arabic to become the majority language in the 11th century. There would even be a ban on Coptic in private and public circles. In the 13th century, the Christian population of Egypt began to write their theological treatises in Arabic and the liturgy gradually used this language because of the increasing difficulty of believers to understand Coptic (cat. 28). Faced with this imminent disappearance there was an attempt between the 12th and 15th centuries to put in writing some rules to understand the biblical and liturgical texts and thus bilingual grammatical guides in Arabic and Coptic – even sometimes trilingual in Arabic, Coptic and Greek – emerged. These "grammars" had no previous tradition and gradually created the grammatical terminology based on the Arabic grammar, adapting it to the needs of Coptic. The first of these grammars was that of Amba Yuhannā al-Samanudī, Bishop of Samannudin in the 13th century. The peak of this tradition is represented by Athanasius of Qus, a monk from the Monastery of Saint Victor, whose grammar was transmitted in Sahidic and Bohairic.

It is believed that in the 14th century Coptic was practically extinct, although the historian al-Maqrizi reports that Coptic was spoken in the hamlets of Upper Egypt in the 15th century. It is even said that in the early 20th century there were families that still spoke Coptic, but they are isolated cases and fairly unreliable testimonies. Any attempt to revive Coptic, such as its teaching in schools in the mid-19th century, has been fruitless.

## Fustat: Islamic Egypt

Amalia Zomeño Rodríguez

### The Conquest

In the year 639, the Muslim troops commanded by ‘Amr b. al-‘As entered the Nile Delta after the victorious campaigns in Syria and Palestine. The conquering impetus of the new religion had taken them to continue towards the West, taking the most important cities of the Delta and besieging the fortress of Babylon. After the arrival of reinforcements and faced with the death of Emperor Heraclius, the city fell into Muslim hands, which opened the door to the conquest of Faiyum and, gradually, the whole of southern Egypt (al-Sa‘id). Alexandria resisted for a time, although soon it would also be Muslim after arduous negotiations with the Byzantine authorities. This marked the beginning of a new stage on the banks of the Nile: the Islamic period.

The conquering troops finally decided to establish the capital close to Babylon and chose a nearby enclave that they called al-Fustat. It is believed that this Arabic term, in reality written in different forms in the texts, could be an Arabisation of the Greek term Φοσσάτων (*Fossaton*, camp or encampment) and, in fact, it is used in bilingual papyri to refer to the city. Some Arabic chronicles, however, also use the expression *Fuṣṭāṭ Miṣr* or even *Miṣr*. At present, the ruins of al-Fustat and Babylon are preserved in a Cairo district called *Maṣr al-‘Aīqa* (Old Cairo).

For a very long period, Egypt – in Arabic *Miṣr* – played a decisive role in the history of Islam, receiving

governors from the Orthodox Caliphs (639-661) first and then the Umayyad dynasty from Damascus (661-750), to later also form part of the Empire and the administration of the Abbasids. After an interval of Fatimid rule (969-1171) during which Egypt disputed the legitimacy of the Eastern Caliphate, once again it had a fundamentally oriental and Sunni vocation and was then governed by dynasties of Ayyubid sultans until 1252. These were then replaced in power by their own private guards, the Mamluks, a military elite of slaves that remained in power until 1517, when Egypt became a province of the Ottoman Empire.

### The Arabisation of Egypt

Until the early 8th century, the Muslim conquest did not bring a radical shift in Egypt. The lowest levels in the administration did not change at all and, in fact, we could speak of a dual administration, Christian and Muslim, highly centralised in Fustat, which replaced the Byzantine provincial system. The new Islamic administration was led by the governor, who bore the title of walī, responsible to the Caliph of Damascus and who also exercised delegated justice. Egypt was divided into provinces (from Aswan to Akhmim, from Akhmim to el-Bahnasa, and from el-Bahnasa to Fustat) with governors who bore the title of amīr.

The inhabitants of the provinces could make requests and petitions directly to the Muslim governor, while the head of the community, at first usually a Coptic Christian, responded to these requests. The Christian population remained in the country and they were permitted to observe their religion, keep their properties and administer their affairs. In fact, the conversion of Christians to Islam was very limited in the beginning and it was not until the 12th century that most of the Egyptian population was Muslim.

### The Foundation of Fustat

The capital chosen by Muslims was not a Byzantine city but a Roman military camp. There they established a camp where the Arab clans that participated in the conquest gradually assembled. In fact, it was founded close to the fortress of Babylon, which was considered a strategic spot for the permanent domination of Egypt, and would also act as a camp for the troops that continued their conquest in North Africa. Over time, this military camp continued to grow and attracted a large number of Muslim inhabitants, thus becoming

Writing exercise. Detail  
P.Monts. inv.  
109  
Ct. 21



ing the centre of power from which the new religion spread. Together with the Muslims a large number of Christians lived there, as manpower and qualified hand workers, who were gradually brought to construct buildings and mosques, as well as ships. In fact, the first mosque in Egypt was built at the request and in honour of the conqueror 'Amr.

Although the early years were almost a continuation of the Byzantine structures, the subsequent reforms of 'Abd al-Malik (685-705) very slowly Islamised the country. As a first step into this process, the monasteries, owners of large territories, which at first did not pay the poll tax, had to begin doing so. Moreover, the Governor of Fustat, 'Abd al-'Aziz, gradually meddled in the tax affairs of the Christian owners and landowners (cat. 22). Other changes followed which, although they could be considered somewhat formal, reflected the reforming objective of the state: the Christian inscriptions on the coins were replaced by Koranic inscriptions; the language of the administration ceased to be Greek and was now Arabic and, finally, there was less Christian presence in the higher administrative positions, which had a greater effect on the population.

The province of Egypt had to contribute more to the funds of the Islamic Empire so that, at the end of the Umayyad period, the position of the Director of Finance (*'amil*) was strengthened and 'Ubayd Allah b. al-Habhab (724) was appointed. He made a new property register and raised taxes, which increased public funds but also provoked numerous uprisings in the Coptic community between the years 725 and 726. 'Ubayd Allah also brought from the East important population groups of Arab origin, specifically from the Qays tribe, which notably contributed to the Arabisation of Egypt. Most of the new arrivals settled in Fustat, a city which, at the end of the Umayyad period was no longer only a military camp but had become an active and prosperous metropolis, with the mosque of 'Amr b. al-'As as the core of its cultural, economic and social activity.

### The Abbasid Era

The Abbasid era has left us an image of rupture with the previous era, as it could be argued that it was then that the changes tentatively undertaken at the end of the Umayyad period were consolidated (cat. 20). In fact, in the year 750 the Islamic religion and Arab culture were already confined to the ruling elites, and the Coptic



Arabic amulet?  
P.PalauRib.  
inv.1042  
Cat. 23

Christian inhabitants were the majority. The leaders were still the families who joined the conquest with privileged positions and received military salaries. At first, the Muslim conquerors did not receive immovable properties as a part of the spoils of war but the agricultural lands and most of the rural areas along the Nile continued in Christian hands.

It was not until the death of the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid in 809 and the uprisings in the central lands of Islam that profound changes began in Egypt. Although the Caliphate of Baghdad requested the payment of more taxes by the Egyptians, the uprisings had led to the fall of the local elites and less control by the governors, who remained loyal to the Caliphate but also more independent. In this way, Ahmad b. Tulun (868-884) later governed during a period that could be considered the most prosperous in medieval Egypt, if only because a large part of Egyptian production remained in the country itself. The construction of a large suburb in the north of Fustat, where a new army was established, contributed to that longed-for prosperity, with a new mosque and a governor's palace. It was in that



Quran  
Library of Mont-  
serrat. Ms.Or. 77  
Cat. 26

period that Egypt began to link its future to the area of Syria and Palestine, both as the eastern border of the region and as a thoroughway towards Baghdad. Similarly, Egypt became a key point in the routes of pilgrims to Mecca and Medina, going up the Nile to Aswan and Qus and crossing to Jeddah (*P.Palau.Rib.* inv. 1042) (cat. 23).

The 10th to 12th centuries in Egypt were marked by the Fatimid period (969-1171). The coming to power of this new Shiite ideology in North Africa, which disputed the legitimacy of the Abbasid Caliphate, very directly affected Egyptian power and society because the country became one of the main and most conflictive borders of Sunni Islam. The country was being harassed by the Fatimids now settled in Tunisia, who continued advancing through North Africa and, in fact, took Alexandria in the year 919, although soon reinforcements from Baghdad arrived that helped liberate the Nile from those early attacks.

It was different in 969, when the Fatimid General Jawhar al-Siqilli, with around 100,000 men, had very few difficulties defeating the Egyptian army and entered Fustat: Egypt moved from being in the hands of the Eastern Caliphate to become the capital of the Western Caliphate.

### The Era of Papyri in the History of Islam

The study of the early centuries in the history of Islam continues to be a historiographic challenge, because the written sources reveal a series of episodes considered

part of a holy history, similarly as with the history of early Christianity. However, the sources written in Arabic that outline the history of the early centuries of Islam in Egypt are very different from those of other areas thanks to the contribution of the texts written on papyrus. In fact, Muslim Arabs adopted the writing forms of the previous cultures, using papyrus as a writing medium from their arrival (year 22 of the Hegira/643 CE) and until the second half of the 11th century (479/1087, the year of the last Arabic papyrus dated), when it was replaced by paper. The texts of the papyri are fundamental to understand this long process of transition after the arrival of Muslims in the Nile Delta as well as to record, sometimes in impressive detail, the slow administrative process in which Egypt changed from Christian to Muslim hands. The official correspondence of the governors with the provinces is well documented in the papyrus texts (*P.Palau.Rib.* inv. 1007) (cat. 19). Moreover, especially important among the Arabic papyrological collections are the private letters that show personal but also trade relations between the different Muslim cultures that coexisted in this transition, as well as the daily life of Muslim Egyptians. Documents written on papyrus also show how the Islamic state was gradually shaped in different stages, replacing the previous structures but also adopting new measures coming from the East and increasingly reflecting the authorities' Islamising design.

### The Fatimid Conquest

After the Fatimid conquest of Fustat, this new political order in Egypt brought, in addition to a new form of ritualising and living the Islamic faith in Shiism, recognition of the Caliphate of the West and, moreover, the construction of a new capital and a new court, now called *al-Qāhira* (the Victorious); that is, current Cairo. The new al-Azhar mosque became the centre of Ismaili teaching while Fustat resisted as a Sunni city. In fact, although the political power changed its Islamic credo and Ismailism was preached in the mosques, Sunnis and Christians were respected.

Still at that time, it could be argued that most of the rural Egyptian population continued to be Coptic Christian. In fact, the edicts by the Caliph al-Hakim (975-996) trying to do without Christian officers in the state apparatus and proposing a new dress and emblems for Christians and Jews in Egypt are striking. These impositions were not always carried out but clearly show the real situation in a mixed population. Similarly, the destruction and sacking

of churches and synagogues but, above all, the construction and renewal of mosques in ruins was also ordered.

It was al-Hakim himself who destroyed the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in 1009, a measure that provoked the Crusades but that showed only a part of an overall objective that sought the conversion of Christians and Jews. In 1051, the Zirid dynasty of the Maghreb took the political power and made this area return to the Sunni faith so that the Fatimid Caliphate established its capital in Egypt. Meanwhile, Baghdad had been taken by the Turks, falling into the hands of the Seljuk Tugrul Beg in 1059. The Turks managed to reach Cairo in 1068, although they were soon expelled (1074).

After a series of negotiations between the Byzantine emperor Manuel and the Christian king of Jerusalem, they both decided to occupy Egypt, although the project was never undertaken. In any case, Egypt was then the objective of the Crusaders because they feared that the Emir of Aleppo, Nur al-Din, was holed up there. In fact, although for a period of time Egypt was just a protectorate in the hands of the Franks, it was immediately re-conquered by the troops of the Seljuks who took power in 1169. Finally, in 1171, Salah al-Din Yusuf b. Ayyub, Saladin, deposed the Fatimid Caliph and called for prayer in the name of the Abbasid Caliph.

### Saladin in Egypt

Saladin opened a new stage in the history of Egypt by undertaking a wide-ranging revision of the land register and effectively sharing the agricultural lands between the officers and soldiers around him and who therefore saw a new order on the banks of the Nile. Like the Fatimids, the Ayyubids wanted to control and promote trade with the East through the Red Sea but also in the Mediterranean and towards the Indian Ocean. However, the presence of the Crusaders in Palestine and part of Syria impeded the tranquillity of the routes, both for pilgrims and traders. Paradoxically, it was at that time when Venetian traders began to establish themselves in Alexandria and pacts were signed with Genoa, although the assistance of these Christians to the Crusaders ended the trade.

The situation between the Crusaders and the need to maintain a strong army in the area meant that one of the Ayyubid sultans, al-Malik al-Salih, began to buy Turkish slaves to be quartered on the Nile island, Rawda, and

there trained in the army to serve as elite troops and later came to power.

### From the Mamluks to the Ottoman Empire

The Mamluk dynasty (1250-1517) held power in Egypt for longest and, although finding it hard to sustain political legitimacy, maintained its supremacy in the area and a very effective presence in the East. The Mamluk sultans emerged from the military elite, of slave origin, that the Ayyubids had maintained in their court and that, indeed, enjoyed great military prestige as they had overthrown the Mongol hordes and saved Egypt from pillaging and sacking. One of them, Qutuz, defeated the army of Hulaqu Khan in the battle of 'Ain Yalut in the year 1260, which enabled him to regain the whole of Syria – except the crusade fortresses. But even these fortresses were slowly being conquered by the Mamluks, who therefore saw their prestige and political legitimacy strengthened, which were difficult to maintain because of the slave origin of their members. Similarly, their military efficacy gave a new momentum to the fight against the Crusaders, during the government of Baybars and his immediate successors.

The power and prestige of Egypt increased greatly in this period, reconstructing itself and renewing the city of Cairo, which evolved from being a small town

Drawing of two warriors found in Fustat. Ink on paper, 11th cent. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art





to become one of the most important cities in the Islamic world. At that time, moreover, Baghdad was sacked by the Mongols and therefore the Egyptian capital had no rival.

In fact, Egypt was then the central area of the Islamic Empire, hosting both in Cairo, in the north of the ancient Fustat, and Alexandria, the Islamic cultural elites, returning to a cultural orthodoxy and religious conservatism. Particularly in opposition to the Mongol invading hordes of Syria, Egypt had to preserve Sunni public order and Arab-Islamic culture, as shown by the countless literary works of the period. This moral rigour of the court contrasts, on the one hand, with the popular culture developed in the rural areas and even in some urban centres. On the other, this cultural reaction against what was oriental meant that Egypt remained somewhat isolated from the very original artistic, literary and cultural currents that were flourishing in the East and rejected any contact with what was Asian.

During the 14th century, Egypt experienced a period of economic crisis that perhaps also brought about a generalised persecution of Coptic families who for centuries had remained in Egypt loyal to their religious beliefs, although under a flourishing Arab culture. A process of conversions of all these families to Islam began, while Coptic as a spoken language began to disappear: its ritual use would remain until the present (Ms.RP1) (cat. 28). Undoubtedly, a period of religious intolerance against the Copts emerged. Even some new Muslims, converted Copts, were victims of these persecutions, because their professional profiles led them, as they were now Muslims, to occupy posts of responsibility in the government and state administration, which earned them the envy of the Muslim population.

However, the decline came in 1347 because the population was decimated by the successive waves of the Black Death ravaging the Mediterranean and also due to the deteriorating economy and disintegrating political system. This decline was hastened with the arrival of the Asian conqueror Timur, who without much resistance took the Syrian fortresses of Aleppo, Hama and even Damascus in the early 15th century, very seriously threatening the borders of Egypt. In fact, the Mamluk military power was not being maintained and they saw how their weapons and equipment were strikingly obsolete faced with these new threats.

The Mamluk power in Egypt definitively declined when the Ottoman sultan Selim I defeated them in battle, capturing Cairo in the year 1517: Egypt lost its independence and hegemony and the centre of power was now in Istanbul.

The Lighthouse of Alexandria.  
Mehmed ibn Emir Hasan al-Su'ûdî, *Matâli' al-su'âda wa yanâbi' al-siyâda*. Paper, Istanbul, 1582. Paris, BnF, département des Manuscrits, supplément turc 242, f. 76 v°

## From Past to Present

María Teresa  
Ortega-Monasterio

### Introduction

From Antiquity and until well into the Middle Ages, the manuscript was the vehicle of transmission of knowledge. Until the emergence of printing and even beyond, the only way for the transmission of knowledge, both in the scientific and religious aspect, was mainly through handwritten copies and the circulation of this production. Therefore, the study of manuscripts, whatever the language, has been the basis on which any work, both philological and historical, had to be founded. However, until the mid-20th century, the manuscript was used as a textual vehicle, without attaching importance to any other element, such as the medium on which it is written, the materials used, the writing techniques, and so on; that is, all the elements other than the text.

Since the mid-20th century, paleographers and codicologists have agreed on the need for a global study of manuscripts such as mediums, inks, format, ruling and spacing and catch words, among others, and that they are elements that must be simultaneously studied to provide an insight into the history of written heritage, regardless of the language. We must not forget that the external characteristics of manuscripts always depend on the time and place, on the era in which they were composed and the geographical location, regardless of the language of composition. There are several turning points in the history of writing that we cannot understand unless we study an extensive set of documents written in various languages. The evolution of writing must take into account the evolution of other contemporary writings and their cultural setting.

This process has occurred with the manuscripts written on different mediums (papyrus, parchment, paper...) and all languages used in the Mediterranean area: mainly Greek, Latin, Arabic or Coptic. The result is that today these kinds of elements receive the attention they deserve and thanks to their inclusion in the works in this field it has been possible to reach conclusions and conduct additional studies, which would be impossible in any other way. However, the beginnings of the study of manuscripts, and specifically papyri, were very different.

### Travellers to Egypt and the Early Papyri Collections

Since the 16th century, we have known about travellers who mentioned or bought papyri in the area of Egypt, where undoubtedly they have survived in better conditions thanks to the dry climate. However, the great dis-

coveries began in the 19th century, many of them from the Napoleonic Empire, which increased the number of expeditions to North Africa. It was in the 20th century when papyri finds and studies intensified, accompanied by editions of the different texts according to the prevailing criteria of the period. The early discoveries correspond to Herculaneum, between 1752 and 1754, with around 2,000 fragments carbonised during the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE, studied with the help of a curious machine, an instrument designed by P. Antonio Piaggio in 1753, which managed to unroll them very slowly without causing much damage. A little later, in 1778, the *Carta Borgia* was found in Egypt, currently at Naples Museum.

Later, and after the finds following Napoleon's expeditions to Egypt and the passion for Orientalism that began to develop in Europe, papyri started to reach the different European libraries. Professors C. Leemans, A. Mai, A. Peyron, W. Brunet de Presle and E. Edger are among those who edited the first papyri in Europe. Fayum, Oxyrhynchus and Elephantine provided large and important quantities of material. Although early collectors were more interested in achieving complete texts, on many occasions the papyri appeared in a very fragmentary state, even as very small pieces. During the last quarter of the 19th century, papyri began to arrive in the main European libraries: Vienna, Berlin, Turin, Leiden, Paris, Milan, Geneva, Munich and London added important documents to their collections and the arrival of these texts meant a new challenge for specialists. Not only did they have to study and edit them but also they had to create a new school of papyrologists to continue their work. The first scientific journals appeared for this purpose, such as *Mitteilungen aus der Sammlung der Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer* (1886), *Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete* (1901), *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'archéologie orientale* (1901), *Aegyptus* (1920) and later *Études de Papyrologie* (1932). The universities of Oxford, Heidelberg, Leipzig, Columbia, Michigan, Princeton, Harvard and Berkeley became centres of scholars dedicated to organising and publishing these materials. Names such as W. Schubart, G. F. Tsereteli, F. G. Kenyon, U. Wilcken and B. Grenfell, among many others, became famous.

### Father Bonaventura Ubach

While all of this was happening in Europe, the panorama was different in Spain. Only a few stand out for their "Orientalist" enthusiasm in sometimes imitating great travelling scholars, a frequent phenomenon in Europe,

Father Bonaven-  
tura Ubach



as the case of the sisters Agnes Smith Lewis and Margaret Dunlop Gibson, who travelled with great difficulties to Sinai and reported the existence of the Syriac version of the *Codex Sinaiticus* in 1892. In Spain, one of the most curious characters from the early 20th century is Father Bonaventura Ubach (1879-1960). He was a monk at Montserrat, a Biblicist and enthusiast of the East who, keen to learn first hand about the world of the Bible and the locations of its stories, travelled to Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. He made long stays to get to know the peoples and their customs, to live with them

and, above all, do the work he considered most important: achieving a collection of pieces of all types for the Biblical Museum of Montserrat. From 1921 to the mid-1950s he travelled constantly for this purpose and it was precisely in those first years, in 1927 and 1928, when he visited Egypt and bought several Egyptian objects, probably including the papyrus collection. According to Anscari Mundó, these papyri probably come from the region of the Nile Delta, an area that Father Ubach visited in April and November 1928. He had also been to Cairo in October 1923, but only for six days to take the

return boat to Marseilles: in his account of this journey, there is no mention of papyri. The collection, named *Papyri Barcinonenses*, comprises just over 200 fragments mostly written in Greek, 15 in Coptic, one papyrus in Latin, one in Demotic and another in Arabic, the largest measuring only 270 x 280 mm. Their texts are mostly private documents, including some letters, contracts or lists, although some feature literary texts. The collection was studied by R. Martín Hernández in a contribution to *Palabras bendichas*, published in 2011. After confirming that some papyri had been lost during shipping (in fact, nos. 140, 171 and 174 are missing), they were inventoried and restored in 1963 by the aforementioned A. Mundó. Later, Professor Manfredi revised this inventory, presenting his results at the International Congress of Papyrology in Athens in 1988. The collection is now held at the Biblical Museum of Montserrat. Their state of conservation is adequate, although future preservation work is planned to ensure the pieces do not further deteriorate. All these papyri date to between the 1st century BCE and 8th century CE and many of them were edited between 1986 and 2001, above all those of a literary content; they contain texts by Apollonius of Rhodes (cat. 10), Thucydides (cat. 9) and Callimachus.

We cannot forget the enormous difficulties suffered by our monk in his journeys, when he collected all his pieces. Firstly, the transportation at that time needs to be mentioned. In his diary of 1923, he relates how it took five days to reach Baghdad from Aleppo (just over 700 km), travelling in a convoy of automobiles, in order to grant safety against possible assaults of Bedouin tribes on the road. Or in Suez, when on 7 April 1928 and due to a plague of insects, he had to strip naked and disinfect all the clothes he was wearing. There were also economic restrictions: In order to save something of what the Abbey had given him for the journey and use it to purchase antiquities and objects for the museum, Father Ubach even slept in the open air and travelled on horseback or mule on many occasions. In his diaries, he often describes his feeling that anything he spent on himself was excessive. He lived on the hospitality of the peoples of the region, something often reflected in his writings. He was usually well received by the locals, accommodated in their houses and helped in the search for objects to send to Montserrat. However, he did not save on his purchases as he did on his person. For example, on 13 June 1923 he wrote that he had acquired in Homs a dozen Arabic manuscripts for which he paid

5 pounds sterling. He experienced the same difficult circumstances on his three journeys to Sinai, made in 1910, 1928 and 1932. In particular, the description of the first journey is highly detailed and, once again, illustrates all the difficulties he had to overcome to achieve his goal. Father Ubach's task, both his journeys and his intense philological endeavours, are summarised in the works of Father Romuald, one of his great companions and disciples, and in his own, such as *El Sinai. Viatge per l'Àrabia Pètria cercant les petjades d'Israel*.

### Ramon Roca Puig

It was not until the 1950s that papyrological studies began in Spain. The most numerous papyri collections in Spain come from two papyrologists who, originally, had the same aspirations: to create a papyrological institute that could accommodate papyrological studies. I refer to Ramon Roca Puig and Josep O'Callaghan. Both lived in Barcelona and were practically contemporaries as they died in 2001, although Roca had been born slightly earlier in 1906, while O'Callaghan was born in 1922. We owe the best collections of papyri currently preserved in Spain to their work and determination.

The Roca-Puig Collection is also held at the Abbey of Montserrat. It was compiled by this priest thanks to the continued contributions of different patrons and his efforts in securing funds. Born in Algerri (Lerida) and son of teacher parents, he was a member of a large family and showed his special inclination for research from a very early age. He studied classical languages within ecclesiastical studies, obtained the title of doctor in theology and was ordained a priest in 1928. A book that provides many details of his life was edited by S. Janeras in 1987, with the title *Miscel·lània Papirologica Ramon Roca Puig: en el seu 80è aniversari*. From 1950 there is already attestation in his archives of his desire to create a papyrological institute. In 1950 he started to collaborate with the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) through the Cardenal Cisneros Philological Research Centre with the purpose of editing some specific texts on papyrus. However, this collaboration fizzled out without resulting in anything positive in the way that he wanted it to happen, despite having made several proposals to create an institute for this purpose. Previously, in 1952 in Barcelona, he had founded the Association San Lucas Evangelista to foster knowledge of early Christian literature. To this end, he had joined forces with Reverend Dr. Lluís Urpí Carbonell and Mr Joan Vidal Gironella, as

the Association's director, to which other members soon incorporated, and it became a foundation governed by a public board of trustees. His orientation was fundamentally philological and Christian, due to his firm religious beliefs. He decided to base all his studies on handwritten documentation, creating a library specialised in palaeography, ancient Christian literature, and papyrology, which would be effective as a basis for the studies he would later undertake in the framework of this association that, in 1957, received the support of the Abbot of Montserrat, Aureli Maria Escarré. In other words, Ramon Roca took first steps to promote papyrological studies simultaneously in Barcelona and in Madrid; in the former, through the Association San Lucas Evangelista and the formation of its library and in the latter, working through philological studies within a project dedicated to the study and editing of New Testament manuscripts. A summary of Roca Puig's relationship with CSIC can be found in the publication *Palabras biendichas*, which appeared in 2011 in tribute to Father Pius-Ramon Tragan.

Roca Puig visited the Catholic University of Louvain and contacted the Association Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, based in Brussels, which also conducted studies on papyrology. Moreover, he attended international Papyrology congresses, such as the one in Vienna in 1955. He also travelled to Cairo on several occasions between 1945 and 1960 with the main purpose of buying papyri with literary and Christian content. However, due to the difficulty of acquiring individual papyri as they were generally sold in lots, papyri containing other types of texts are also included in the collection. In the archive of his correspondence there are documents detailing some purchases, such as the series of letters exchanged with Mrs Georgette Bianchi. She was the widow of Emilio Bianchi and one of his sons, Achille, lived in Cairo in 1973 and 1974, where he apparently bought some good papyri. The letters mention the sale of two important lots: the first, comprising 49 folios and 2 fragments of a commentary on Zacharias attributed to Didymus the Blind (cat. 12), and the second, comprising 20 folios, 4 half folios and other fragments by the same author, in a commentary on Genesis. All these papyri were sold to Roca for the sum of 90,000 and 45,000 Swiss francs, respectively. To complete the operation, Roca planned to travel to Lugano in August 1975, although it seems that he spent more time convincing Mrs Bianchi to sell all the papyri. But finally, in a letter dated in September of that same year, Roca was informed that they had closed

the agreement on behalf of the family on the sale of the commentary on the Book of Zacharias. Father Doutreleau was already editing this commentary, based on some good photographs; it had been submitted for publication in the series *Sources Chrétiennes*, where it appeared in 1976, in a study conducted in collaboration with Father Nautin, who had spent some years working on the subject. The final sale of the papyri was not completed until November 1976, as we can see in a letter to Roca with the bank details to pay the agreed amount, a total of 135,000 Swiss francs, as reflected by two additional receipts in the correspondence. The well-known Father Silvestre Chauleur, who had been director of the Coptic Institute of Cairo, had expressed in a letter dated 8 August 1955 his interest in this codex and the importance of the commentary on Zacharias. Father Chauleur acted as Roca's intermediary on numerous occasions for the purchase of papyri.

Roca was less lucky with another papyri lot he bought in Egypt in 1957 and that he tried to take to Spain through the embassy. The shipment contained 12 packets with papyri, a wooden Latin tablet from the 2nd century and a later codex in Greek, probably 12th century. Roca explains in a document written by him that he delivered everything to the Spanish Ambassador in Cairo, José de Castaño, on 2 October 1957, to be sent to the Archbishop of Barcelona. This all happened in the presence of the Spanish Consul, Mr Francisco Palanca, and was duly packaged, sealed and labelled with the correct address. Nevertheless, it never reached its destination. After many letters from Roca to the embassy about the delivery and without receiving any response, in 1959 Mr Palanca told him that the package was not in the embassy and had probably been sent together with Mr Castaño's belongings after he was appointed to Copenhagen. Despite the impact of this incident in the scholarly community and the intervention of well-known professors who contacted the then Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Castiella, nothing more was heard about it. The same fate had already befallen another delivery made in July 1955 with texts of Psalms and Jeremiah. In this period, any purchase made in Egypt was a risk, if you did not have all the necessary guarantees, and could end in disaster, as in these two cases.

Despite all these incidents, Roca managed to build up an important collection of papyri, expanded by some donations and other contributions from patrons, aware of the importance of his work, reaching around 1,500

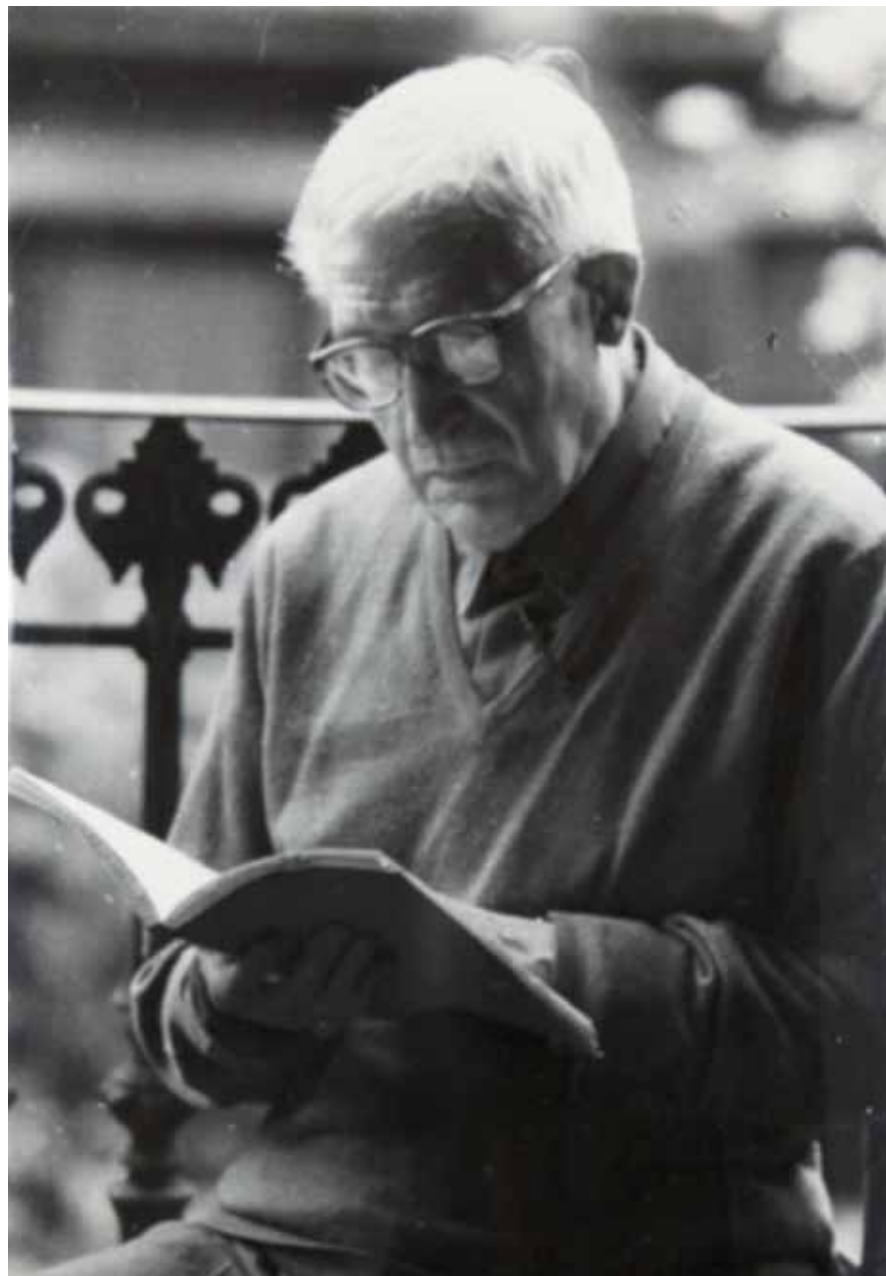
papyri. Roca had written a detailed report about the need to create a Christian papyrology centre, with the description of what would be the institution he wanted to create, a handwritten document preserved in his archive. This report was submitted to several authorities but, unfortunately, in Spain it was very difficult to find the sponsors necessary to establish it. Neither did he receive much support from the government, even though it was taken personally by Dr. J. Vives i Gatell to the Secretary General of the CSIC, Dr. J. M. Albareda, in October 1953. In the end, it all came to nothing. There is a note in his handwriting at the end of the document that says: "it was fruitless. *Laus Deo.*"

The collection ended up at the Abbey of Montserrat, donated upon his death by Father Ramon Roca Puig. This collection is of great documentary, literary and historical value. It comprises over 1,500 pieces on papyrus and parchment from Egypt ranging from the Ptolemaic era to the 10th century CE. In 1998, already in Montserrat, Father Ramon Roca Puig decided to change the name of the collection from *Papyri Barcinonenses* to *Papyri Montserratenses II* because he had spent the last four years of his life in the monastery, to which he bequeathed all his possessions. However, for practical reasons, it was later decided that it would be called *P.Monts.Roca*.

Some of the pieces are real treasures, both literary and documentary. They are mainly written in Greek and Coptic, although there are a considerable number of pieces in Latin, Arabic and Demotic. Moreover, this was not the first collection that entered Montserrat. The first collection, of around 200 pieces, comprises mainly Greek material, with a few pieces in Coptic, Arabic and Demotic. This collection was brought to the monastery in 1928 by Father Bonaventura Ubach (1879-1960), also responsible for the acquisition of the magnificent oriental collections of the Museum Biblicum and the Library of Montserrat (see above).

### Josep O'Callaghan Martínez

The Palau-Ribes Collection has an almost parallel history to that of Roca Puig. The more than 2,000 manuscripts it comprises were acquired in the 1960s by Father Josep O'Callaghan (1922-2001) under the patronage of his brother-in-law Josep Palau-Ribes i Casamitjana, after whom the collection is named. The collection was deposited in the Centre Borja of the Jesuit community in Sant Cugat del Vallès, where it was the basis for the Papyrology Research Centre at the Faculty of Theology



in Barcelona until its transformation into the Faculty of Theology of Catalonia in 1983, which marked its end.

Josep O'Callaghan was born in Tortosa on 7 October 1922 to a family of Irish origin. During the Spanish Civil War, he moved with his family to San Sebastián, a time that largely influenced him to revive his religious vocation. He later moved again to Barcelona at the end of the war to enter the Society of Jesus in 1940 and be ordained in 1952. He earned a degree in Theology and later a doctorate in Humanities in 1959 from the Univer-

Ramon Roca Puig



Josep  
O'Callaghan  
Martínez

sidad Complutense de Madrid, obtaining the Menéndez Pelayo Prize for his thesis. He earned a second doctorate in Classical Philology at the University of Milan in 1960. The main topic of this thesis was "5th century Greek Christian Letters" already revealing his academic interests. He later taught at the novitiate of Veruela (Saragossa) between 1947 and 1949. He had some collaboration, like Dr. Roca, with the CSIC, obtaining a scholarship from this organisation to study in Münster in 1953-54. From 1955 to 1960 he was director of the CSIC Cardinal Cisneros Philological Research Centre, produc-

ing several papyrological studies. He also collaborated with the CSIC in the project *Biblia Políglota Matritensis* between 1977 and 1984.

In Barcelona, he taught at the Faculty of Theology in Sant Cugat del Vallès from 1961 to 1971, a period when he showed his special interest in papyrological and classical studies; consequently, he founded the Papyrological Research Centre. To this end, he had conversations with the Provincial Council of Barcelona, from whose president he requested funding for the acquisition of papyri, without much success. However, he was helped by his brother-in-law Josep Palau-Ribes i Casamitjana, to whom he owed most of his progress. Palau-Ribes acted as sponsor and funded the acquisition of most of the papyri of this collection. O'Callaghan sometimes travelled to Egypt, although he made most purchases through intermediaries, very probably the same ones who obtained Roca Puig's papyri.

With the aim of promoting papyrological studies, O'Callaghan founded the journal *Studia Papyrologica* (1962-1983) and the collections *Papyrologica Castrortaviana* (1967-1991) and *Estudis de Papirologia i Filologia Bíblica* (1991-1995). From 1971 and until his retirement in 1992, he was professor of Papyrology at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, and later became Dean of the Faculty of Bible Studies. He had worked with Father Josep M. Bover, also a member of the Society of Jesus, in the preparation of the critical edition of the New Testament in Greek, a project that helped him further explore critical textual studies. This edition, published for the first time in 1959, was later republished in three languages: Latin, Greek and Spanish. For several years the name of O'Callaghan was present in several scientific publications due to the debate that emerged from his suggestion for identifying one of the Greek texts of the Qumran cave 7, the papyrus 7Q5. He argued that this text corresponded to a fragment of the Gospel according to Saint Mark, a thesis he published in 1972 in the journal *Biblica* and that was refuted by several specialists. Finally, in 1995 he published the book *Primeros testimonios del Nuevo Testamento*, which was however more like a manual of Papyrology, in support of his first argument.

Upon O'Callaghan's death, on 15 December 2001, the papyri were transferred to the Historical Archive of the Jesuits in Catalonia, their present location. They had been donated to the Society of Jesus in 1978 through an official deed of statement, signed by his brother-in-law, Josep Palau-Ribes, and his sister Concepció O'Callaghan

Martínez. Almost one hundred of the papyri in the collection have been published, mainly in the volumes of the journal *Studia Papyrologica*. The collection is especially rich, both in variety and quality. It contains papyri, parchments and ostraca; there are papyri in many oriental languages: Hieroglyphic, Demotic, Hieratic, Greek, Coptic, Latin, Syriac, Hebrew and Arabic, corresponding to a period ranging from the 8th century BCE to the 10th century CE. Despite O'Callaghan's main interest in obtaining Christian papyri dated to the first decades of our era in Egypt, the texts provide a very wide thematic spectrum, from classical or biblical literature, magical and school texts, or official administrative documents, although most of the collection is composed by Greek and Coptic literary and documentary texts. A 5th century Coptic Gospel Book, the oldest surviving is one of the highlights of the collection. Also remarkable is a large group of carbonised papyrus, which require highly specialised treatment to be inventoried and studied.

The study of this wide-ranging collection continues today. Its texts are still being added to the website <http://dvctvs.upf.edu> of the Pompeu Fabra University and in 2014 a doctoral thesis was defended in this university proposing a dating method for the papyri, complementary to current methods, which above all takes into account biological criteria. It is based on the composition of the papyri, from the point of view of the chemical elements they contain or their physical features. At the same time, the thesis places special emphasis on the consideration of the documents as cultural assets, which require a series of preventive actions for proper conservation. The study focuses, as we have indicated, on the Palau-Ribes Collection, in order to determine the state of the issue of papyrological heritage. The conclusion is that prevention is fundamental, endeavouring to avoid as far as possible the restoration actions that, if not undertaken appropriately, can damage the documentary material.

**The Pastor Foundation for Classical Studies**

Lastly, there is another collection of papyri in Spain, smaller in number of documents than those previously mentioned but important for its quality and content. This is the collection of the Pastor Foundation for Classical Studies in Madrid. It holds around four hundred papyri and was donated by Penélope Photiadés to the Foundation during the presidency of Dr. Manuel Fernández Galiano. This collection was restored in the 1980s and

is especially interesting due to its documents in Coptic dialects, that are otherwise scarcely documented in other collections. One of the most important pieces of this collection is a part of the papyrus codex 967 of the Old Testament. This codex contained the books of Ezekiel, Daniel and Esther, currently dispersed in fragments conserved in different papyrological collections in Dublin, Cologne, Princeton and Barcelona. The Madrid part, which includes several folia of the codex, was published in 1971 by Manuel Fernández Galiano. For different reasons, this collection is not represented in this exhibition.

As we can see in this brief summary, in recent years papyrology has attracted growing interest in Spain. Thanks to scholars and research groups, not only have the collections been restored and conserved but also they have been promoted in all academic fields, awakening increasingly more interest from the public and young researchers. We trust this work will continue in the future and that papyrologists in Spain will attain the international prestige they deserve.

Matrix printing of the Bible of Montserrat.





## Catalogue

### Cat. 1. Papyrus Rolls

1. P.PalauRib. without inventory number

Provenance unknown

5.5 x 4 cm.

2. P.PalauRib. without inventory number

Provenance unknown

3 x 14 cm.

The papyrus, understood as a writing medium, was produced from *Cyperus Papyrus*, an aquatic plant of woody stalk growing abundantly on the Nile banks. Its stalk was cut in several sections and each of them was later cut in longitudinal strips. These strips were joined together as follows: first, several strips were arranged alongside the others forming a first layer on which another layer of strips was placed, which was joined to the former perpendicularly to form a kind of weft. Later they were pressed and dried in the sun. The resin from the papyrus fibres acted as a natural glue and the two layers formed a papyrus sheet.

A roll like those exhibited here is the result of joining several papyrus sheets. Each join was made by slightly overlapping one sheet over the other and so on successively. The point at which two sheets are joined is called *kollesis* (Gr. κόλλησις) (see cat. 35, 36, and 37). The papyrus roll was the standard format sold and used. If the scribe wished to write a document, he cut the amount needed from the scroll; if, however, the roll was not long enough, he could keep adding as many sheets as he needed.

Usually, the side of the roll where the fibres run parallel was used first as it eases writing. When storing the document, it was rolled with the written side inside to protect the text. When the original content of the roll was no longer of interest to the user, he could even "recycle" it to write a new document on the other side (see cat. 13, 43, 68).

The papyrus rolls can have different sizes. The standard size of the rolls was made by joining 20 papyrus sheets. Each sheet was between 20 and 25 cm. high and between 19 and 33 cm. long. The joining of 20 sheets therefore made up a roll measuring approximately between 20 or 25 cm. high and 3.80 to 6.60 metres long. The rolls exhibited are small.

Given that these rolls are still rolled, it is not possible to know about their content.

A. Bülow-Jacobsen (2009).

AFG-RMH



### Cat. 2. Homer, *Odyssey* 11.73-78

P.Monts.Roca inv. 46: TM 61221

Papyrus

Mid-3rd cent. BCE

Provenance unknown

8.3 x 3.5 cm.

Fragment of a column with seven lines of verses from the *Odyssey* 11.73-78. The text, as corresponds to a well-produced book, is written parallel to the fibres of papyrus in fine capitals enabling it to be dated, by palaeographical comparison, to the mid-3rd century BCE. There are signs that it has already been restored in Antiquity by reinforcing the most fragile sections with papyrus strips glued on the verso, which seems to be proof of the quality of the book or, in any case, that it was greatly valued by its owner.

Despite the small amount of writing preserved, this text attests notable differences with the text transmitted by later papyri and medieval manuscripts, as is usual in papyri prior to 150 BCE. These feature the text established by Alexandrian Philology, which, due to the rigidity of its standardisation, has been designated as *Homeric vulgate*.

Specifically, *P.Monts.Roca* inv. 46 features an "extra" verse after 75 and, perhaps as a consequence, a difference not attested in any other manuscript (a unique variant) at the beginning of what we preserve of verse 76. Verse 77 prominently overhangs towards the right, which may be due to a correction in the unpreserved section of the text, which would have meant that the verso had to be rewritten after the corresponding crossing-out, making it finish further to the right of the usual line ending. These sometimes quite striking divergences with later papyri have earned the name of "eccentric" or "wild" papyri for those which, like this one, feature a text prior to that of the *Homeric vulgate*.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca*  
IV:34.  
AND

### Cat. 3. Homer, *Iliad* 9.696-10.3

*P.Monts.Roca* inv. 47: TM 67369  
Papyrus  
Mid-3rd cent. BCE  
Provenance unknown  
9.1 x 10.7 cm.



Remains of 16 lines of a column corresponding to the final verses of Book 9 of the *Iliad* and the first verses of Book 10. The lines were located at the beginning of the column, as shown by the partially preserved upper

margin. The text is written following the direction of the fibres. The handwriting is a librarian hand from an early Ptolemaic period, known as epigraphic style, because of the rigidity of the strokes. These features suggest a book produced with certain quality standards. The roll, according to quite a common practice in the Ptolemaic period, was later reused to make a mummy cartonnage, as shown by the remains of glue and paint still visible on the surface (see cat. 54).

Also typical of the early Ptolemaic period is the more than notable divergence of the text from the one we know through the medieval manuscript transmission, which is the same we find in the text transmitted by papyri since around the year 150 BCE, a tradition which, due to its inalterability over the centuries, has been designated as *Homeric vulgate*. After verse 708 of Book 9, two verses are included that are not part of this tradition whereas verses 697, 706 or 709-713 do not appear. Usually these verses that can be added to or removed from the textual transmission have a varied formulary nature; that is, they are constructed through metric formulae that help the oral composition and the subsequent recitation and, therefore, were not essential for the narrative development of the poem. Yet it remarkable that such omissions and additions in this case result in a different ending for Book 9 of the *Iliad*. This peculiarity means that in the early Ptolemaic period, before the influence of Alexandrian philology on Homer's text was felt, the division of the two great epic poems, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in 24 books, coinciding with the number of the letters of the alphabet, would not have been established.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca*  
IV:33.  
AND

### Cat. 4. Homer, *Odyssey* 5.113-122

*P.Monts.Roca* inv. 48: TM 61164  
Papyrus  
1st cent. BCE-1st cent. CE  
Provenance unknown  
5.5 x 6.1 cm.

Remains of 10 lines of a column written following the direction of the fibres; the verso of the roll is blank. Out of the literary texts exhibited here, *P.Monts.Roca* inv. 48 has the highest production standards: the space between

lines and letters is regular. The latter, of medium-large size, tend to be confined to regular squares and generally do not exceed the lower and upper margins of the line. The script also features ornamentation, especially visible on the lower edges of the vertical strokes.

The script style is highly standardised and can be identified with the so-called "epsilon-theta style", thus named because of the peculiar shape of these two letters, which reduce the middle element to a point. This style developed towards the late 1st century BCE and early 1st century CE.

The text features a diacritic sign above the epsilon of line 115. Despite the accuracy in the copying, the text transmitted by the papyrus is not of the best quality: it is possible to see spelling mistakes and modifications of complex passages, which points to a simplified or, to use the technical term, trivialised text.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca* IV:37.

AND

**Cat. 5. Homer, *Iliad* 1.135-139**

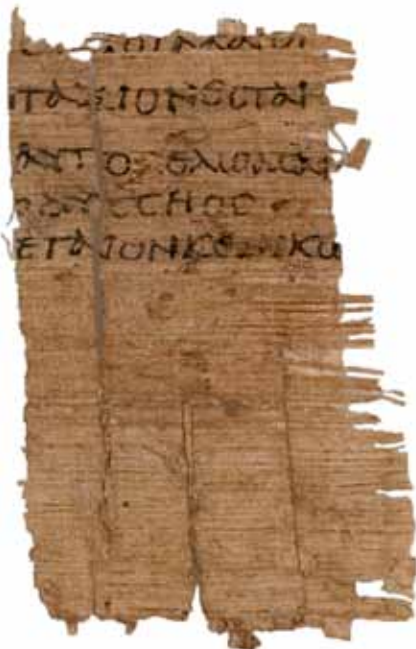
P.Monts.Roca inv. 49: TM 66765

Papyrus

Early 2nd cent. CE

Provenance unknown

3.5x 5.5 cm.



Remains of 5 lines of a column containing the end of the verses corresponding to the *Iliad* 1.135-139. The text is written parallel to the fibres, and the verso of the roll, which is blank, was reinforced in Antiquity. These two characteristics, along with the style of the hand, which can be identified as one of those used for the professional production of books, the so-called, "informal round", suggest that our fragment belonged to a copy of the *Iliad* of some quality.

By palaeographical comparison, the copy can be assigned to the early 2nd century CE and, as can be expected in that period, the text does not feature any new variant with the text known by the remaining manuscript tradition.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca* IV:35.

AND

**Cat. 6. Homer, *Iliad* 14. 1-80, 369-381, 411-419**

P.Monts.Roca inv. 541A and B: TM 120582

Papyrus

3rd cent. CE

Theadelphia?

Fr. A1 14x 16.2 cm.

Fr. A2 3 x 2.7 cm.

Fr. B 6 x 10 cm.



This copy attests an early case of transmission of ancient literature in codex format rather than on roll, as was usual until the 4th century CE. The codex format, although previously known, was not deemed suitable for the formality needed to produce a book, at least at a professional level. Only through the influence of Christian tradition, in which this format was used and not considered as professional book production, the codex as a book format finally prevailed for the transmission of pagan literature. The type of writing used here coincides with the aforementioned lack of formality, which does not seek to achieve specific formal standards but reveals an experienced scribe who writes quickly, often joining up the letters, which for this reason we call cursive writing. By palaeographical comparison, we can date the book to the 3rd century CE.

Thanks to the numerals present on both sides of fragment A, which were used to paginate the codex, we know that this fragment formed part of the first folio of the codex, of which the upper part of pages 1 and 2 has been preserved. Fragment B, in its turn, belongs to another folio and features the lower part of pages 9 and 10.

Calculating in fragment A the section of text missing between the point in which it stops on the first page and the beginning of the second, we can say that one complete page would contain around 43 lines and also, because the margins have been preserved, albeit partially, we can reconstruct the original dimensions of the codex, which would be 27 cm. high by 16 cm. wide. This format matches the characteristics of the earliest codices. If the codex contained the whole of Book 14 of the *Iliad* (522 lines), 12 pages would have been used to write it completely.

The text transmitted by our codex does not feature interesting variants with the standard known as *Homeric vulgate*, already fully established in the 3rd century CE, but only spelling mistakes common in the period and the area of production of the book (i.e. Egypt). However, the relatively abundant use of reading signs should be noted, which show how their inclusion in the transmission of the text, mostly derived from the practice of the Alexandrian philologists, had already been established in the 3rd century CE.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca*  
IV:36.  
AND

### Cat. 7. Fragment of Hesiod, *Theogony* 862-872

P.PalauRib. inv. 24 = TM 60107 = LDAB 1221

Papyrus

Early 3rd cent. CE

Provenance unknown

4.7 x 7.2 cm.



The poems of Homer and Hesiod aroused enormous fascination and admiration throughout Antiquity and shaped the literary taste and mentality of the ancient Greeks. Homer formed the basis of their education, as is proven by the thousands of papyri containing Homeric verses, many of them coming from school environments. In stark contrast, the Hesiodic papyri published to date amount to roughly 160, 80 of them from the major poems, *Theogony*, *Work and Days* and *Shield*. This scarcity in comparison with Homer makes any single testimony of a Hesiodic poem especially valuable. The Palau-Ribes Collection is honoured with the possession of this papyrus of Hesiod's *Theogony*, which preserves a column with the remains of eleven verses of the episode known as "Typhonomachy". It contains the story of how Zeus personally fought the monster Typhoeus, who had defied his supreme power. The god defeated him using his thunderbolt, whose heat made the earth melt like tin or iron (vv. 861-867). Zeus cast Typhoeus

into the deepest part of the Underworld, the Tartarus, who had fathered the monster by mating with Gea, the earth. Typhoeus is the source of those humid winds that blow at random over the sea, different to the winds that are beneficial to men: the Notus, the Boreas and the Zephyrus, which proceed from gods (vv. 868-872).

The papyrus is written on only one side by an experienced hand with informal features, which may be included in the so-called formal mixed or severe style, used at the beginning of the 3rd century CE. The omission of a letter (v. 863) and an orthographic mistake (v. 865) seem to indicate that the papyrus was neither a professional copy nor a scholar's private copy, but probably an advanced student's copy, corrected by the teacher after being written. The text contains some accents, which may mark rare words or difficult aspects that would be explained in a separate commentary or word list.

S. Bartina, (1968).

J. O'Callaghan, *PLit.PalauRib.*:9.

A. Nodar Domínguez (2010).

MAS

### Cat. 8. Demosthenes, *Against Midias*

P.Monts.Roca inv. 275: TM/LDAB 113820

Papyrus

Early 1st cent. CE

Provenance unknown

4.8 x 8.3 cm.



Small fragment formed by 11 lines with gaps that transmits part of the speech *Against Midias* by the Attic orator Demosthenes, composed around the year 350 BCE. It begins in paragraph 62, when Demosthenes declares that his confrontation with Midias, a wealthy and violent Athenian who offended him publicly at the theatre, surpasses the hostility of other confrontations in the history of Athens, such as the one between Iphicrates and Diocles. The translation of the fragment transmitted by the papyrus, with many gaps, is: "*Now although men have quarrelled often enough, whether on private or on public grounds, no one has ever been so lost to shame as to venture on such conduct as this. Yet it is said [...]*". Despite the brevity of this piece, some of its readings are interesting for studies of the textual transmission of the orator's works, especially for the debate on the prevailing presence of papyrological readings in one of the two ancient codices that preserve the illustrious orator's work.

The text is written in big uncial capitals of elegant stroke, with regular spacing between letters and lines, decorated by strokes on some letters, without contrast between narrow and broad letters and without any diacritical sign. Its writing is very similar to that of *P.Mich.* inv. 1575, which transmits the *Iliad*, originally dated to the 1st-2nd centuries CE, although today it seems accepted that it is a little earlier (early 1st century CE), the same date as this papyrus.

A. Nodar, S. Torallas Tovar, *P.Worp2*.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca* IV:38.

D. M. MacDowell (1990) *ad loc.*

M<sup>a</sup> P. Leganés Moya – F. G. Hernández Muñoz (2008) *ad loc.*

FHM

### Cat. 9. Thucydides Codex

P.Monts. inv. 10: TM 62913/LDAB 4105

Papyrus

3rd cent. CE

Oxyrhynchus?

2.7 x 7 cm.

This small fragment of papyrus contains several lines from one of the most recognised works of classical Antiquity: *The History of the Peloponnesian War* by the Athenian Thucydides. This fragment of papyrus, along with others that belonged to the same codex and which are in

9.



the collections of Oxford, Geneva, Cologne and Manchester, formed around the 3rd century CE part of a large codex structured in pages written in two columns of approximately 55 lines each. The scribe's hand, who composed this text in a beautiful uncial in a severe style, has been identified as that of one of the *Oxyrhynchus* scribes, prosaically known as scribe A35. Its provenance has also been identified: the library of Hypsipyle.

A. López (1995).

W. A. Johnson (2004), 64.

RMH

### Cat. 10. Fragment of the *Argonautica* by Apollonius Rhodius

P.Monts. inv. 122: TM 59172/LDAB 267

Papyrus

2nd-3rd cent. CE

Provenance unknown

4.2 x 3.5 cm.

This small fragment of papyrus, probably part of a roll, contains 5 fragmentary lines of the second book of the epic poem the *Argonautica* by Apollonius Rhodius (3rd century BCE). Although the brief and fragmentary text of the papyrus does not contain anything new with respect to the text transmitted by the manuscripts,

10.



it provides an important detail related to the context in which it was created or used. The accents on some of the words, as well as the elegant hand in which it is written, link the text to the erudite setting of the study of the classical literary works.

O. Musso (1986).

RMH

### Cat. 11. Literary Roll: fragment of Hellenistic Historiography

P.Monts.Roca inv. 267: TM/LDAB 219235

Papyrus

3rd cent. BCE

Provenance unknown

Fr. 1: 3.1 x 2.8 cm.

Fr. 2: 3.4 x 5.3 cm.

Fr. 3: 8.5 x 16.8 cm.

These three fragments from the same papyrus roll contain an interesting previously unknown text. It is a fragment of historiographic prose probably related to Alexander the Great. The narrative takes us to a coast in which a sacrifice is being offered to an undetermined goddess, consisting of a complete dress, a gold libation bowl (*phiale*), an axe and a dagger. There is then a hecatomb in the presence of magistrates, priests, important citizens and foreign residents. To identify this fragment as historiography related to Alexander, certain aspects that usually characterise it have been taken into account: in the first place there is a military setting; and the name Eurydice appears, a name borne by many women related to the Macedonian dynasty; there is a reference to the "bodyguards", (*σωματοφύλακες*; *somatophylakes*), a corps of Alexander's right-hand men. Although the name of

11.



Alexander does not appear, there are enough clues to relate the text to him.

Given its date, and if this identification is correct, it could be the work of some of the first generation of Alexander's historians: Callisthenes of Olynthus, Anaximenes of Lampsacus, Nearchus of Crete, Cleitarchus of Alexandria, Ptolemy son of Lagus, Aristobulus of Cassandria, Chares of Mytilene, Epyphus of Olynthus, Polykleitos of Larissa or Medius of Larissa.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca* IV:39.  
STT

**Cat. 12. Didymus the Blind, Commentary on the Book of Zechariah IX 14, 3**

*P.Monts.Roca* inv. 421: TM 59670  
Papyrus  
6th cent. CE  
Tura  
44.5 x 27 cm.

Pages of a 6th century codex containing the commentary on the *Book of Zechariah* written in the 4th century CE by Didymus the Blind. The manuscript comes from the set of codices found in 1941 in a gallery of an old

limestone quarry in Tura, close to Cairo, all of them containing works by Origenes and Didymus. This find has returned to us some of the best preserved extant papyrus codices.

The 2nd Council of Constantinople (583 CE) condemned the ideas of the so-called "Origenism" and declared them heretical, and therefore the works of Didymus, who followed Origenes in many aspects, were also affected by the interdiction. This made their free circulation very difficult and led to their almost total loss. Before the discovery of Tura, only small fragments of Didymus' extensive commentaries on the Bible survived, transmitted as references and quotations in the works of later authors. Hence, the manuscripts of the quarry mark a turning point in our knowledge of this author and his exegetical works.

The codices of Tura were most probably abandoned in the gallery by the monks of the monastery of Saint Arsenius, with the aim of protecting their community from heretical ideas. Indeed, when the manuscripts were found, most of their bindings were removed, the folia of many were cut in half and all of them were either rolled or folded. One of the manuscripts even showed clear traces of having been submerged in water. All these procedures have been explained as intended to make the books difficult to read without directly destroying them: the monks probably tried to avoid the reading and the diffusion of the heretical writings, but they were also conscious of the need to treat the Biblical quotations and the mentions of the Name of God they contained with due reverence.

The lack of titles or colophons identifying the works and authors of the manuscripts of Tura suggests that they were written when Origenes and Didymus had already been condemned; that is, they were always clandestine copies of forbidden authors, whose names were kept secret. Therefore, it is extremely surprising to find the traces of so many readers on them: in the case of Zechariah, apart from the corrections of the scribe himself, the manuscript shows comments and annotations of at least five further readers, providing us with an extraordinary testimony of the intellectual curiosity of the monks in late Byzantine Egypt and their desire for knowledge beyond the censures imposed on them.

L. Doutreleau (1962).  
IPL

**Cat. 13. Comment on Theocritus,  
Idyll 1.45-152, 7.5**

P.Monts.Roca inv. 316: TM/LDAB 113900

Papyrus

4th cent. CE

Provenance unknown

7.4 x 12.9 cm.



Theocritus was a Greek poet born in Syracuse (310-260 BCE), founder of bucolic poetry. Alongside his works *Idylls* and *Epigrams*, comments or scholia on them survive mainly through medieval manuscripts. This small fragment of papyrus was reused to record, in tiny script, some scholar's comments on Theocritus' *Idylls*. Six other known papyri preserve annotations or comments on Theocritus. They are an important testimony to the order that these poems followed in Antiquity, because *Idyll* 7 appears after 1 (the same order as the medieval manuscript K). The text preserved in this papyrus does not exactly correspond to the aforementioned scholia on Theocritus known through the medieval manuscripts, although it is possible to see some relation. These notes may belong to an early stage in their development. We know the names of the philologists who worked on Theocritus' text, such as Theon and Asclepiades of Mirlea in the 1st century BCE, Amaranthus in the 2nd century CE, and Munatius and Theaetetus in the 2nd and 4th centuries CE, although given that their texts are unknown, it is not possible to attribute to any of them the comments

contained in this papyrus. Very cautiously, it is possible to consider a link with Theaetetus.

The verse of this fragment contains remains of a documentary text and therefore it is probably not a page of a codex or a text written in a margin but a fragment reused for erudite scholarly notes.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca IV:40*.  
H. Maehler (1994).

STT

**Cat. 14. Official Mna**

Museum of Montserrat, Ubach Collection, inv.

no. 440.100

Bronze

106/105 BCE

Seleucia

12 cm. diameter, 743 gr.



This piece was acquired by Father Bonaventura Ubach (1879-1960) for the Biblical Museum of the Benedictine Abbey of Montserrat. During his productive trips to the Near East in the 1930s, he bought a very rich collection of objects. The main purpose of his acquisition of antiquities was to illustrate the Biblical text. In this case, the *mna* is one of the weights used in the marketplace, appearing in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (for example *Esdras* 2, 68, or *Luke* 19, 24).

In the upper and lower part inside the frame, the Greek text has "Year 4, official mna" [ἔτους Δ, δημόσια μνά]. In the centre, to the left, stands the bust of a god (Hermes Agoraios?) on a weighing scale, to the right, two *cornucopiae* in mirror shape on a half moon, and the

ear of a wheat stalk, all motifs that evoke commercial activities. On the edge all around the brim is the name Zenobios.

At least 11 copies of the same weight are known in museums in Jerusalem, Paris, London, Nicosia, Aleppo and Malibu, with a remarkable variation in weight (from 925 gr. to 615 gr.). This might be due to forgeries or the use of the same ancient cast.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (2005).

P. L. Gatier (1991).

STT

### Cat. 15. The Account of Chabrias

P.Monts.Roca inv. 757: TM: 144231

Papyrus

3rd cent. BCE

Provenance unknown

9.9 x 8.2 cm.



This fragment is written on both sides, one of which features the personal accounts of a man named Chabrias. It contains annotations on monthly expenses: mostly sums paid to other individuals (ll. 2; 8: to *Zenon*; l. 4: to *Samaus*) in both cash and kind. Written at 90°, the text on the other side also bears an account. The papyrus features stains probably due to its later reuse as a mummy cartonnage (see cat. 54).

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca* IV:88.

AFG

### Cat. 16. Receipt for Weights and Measures Conversion Tax

P.Monts.Roca inv. 328: TM 219246

Papyrus

141/142 CE

Bubastis

12.5 x 19 cm.

This receipt, written by a clumsy and inexperienced hand, is the only testimony we have of a particular tax from the Roman period: that of the conversion of measures in the market (*ἐρμηνεία μέτρου*). Although it is not known as such, it seems logical that in a world such as the Mediterranean, in which so many cultures came together, it was essential to standardise weights and measures to facilitate trade. In our papyrus, an oil manufacturer pays eight drachmae for this tax in the village of Bubastis in the fifth year of Antoninus Pius.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca* IV:71.

STT

### Cat. 17. Note Asking for Help

P.Monts.Roca inv. 36 TM: 219259

Papyrus

2nd cent. CE

Provenance unknown

8.5 x 6.2 cm.



This papyrus features a succinct note asking for help. The dispatcher was stopped "at the Gate of Prosperity" while doing his business (ll. 1-2). There follow the final words urging his addressee to "come to my help" (ll.

4-5). The course of events leading up to this note is difficult to establish. According to the editors, "the Gate of Prosperity" may refer to the local market by the city gate, where the dispatcher or someone related to him was probably arrested. Requests for help of this kind are frequently related to imprisonment.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca* IV:93.  
AFG

### Cat. 18. Coins Minted in Alexandria

Ubach Collection

Nero no. 18

Copper and silver alloy

54-68 CE

2.4 cm. Ø

Trajan no. 50

Copper and silver alloy

98-117 CE

2.5 cm. Ø

Hadrian no. 53

Copper and silver alloy

117-138 CE

2.3 cm Ø

Antoninus Pius no. 63

Copper and silver alloy

138-161 CE

2.4 cm Ø

No. 18. Billon tetradrachm of Nero (54-68 CE), issued in 56-57 CE. The obverse features the bust of Nero on the right with a laurel crown and the legend "Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus Emperor" (ΝΕΡ(ΩΝ) ΚΛΑΥ(ΔΙΟΣ) ΚΑΙΣ(ΑΡ) ΣΕΒΑ(ΣΤΟΣ) ΓΕΡ(MΑΝΙΚΟΣ) ΑΥΤΟ(ΚΡΑΤΩΡ)). On the reverse there is a male figure holding a lance and a cornucopia with the legend "People of the Romans. Year 3" (ΔΗΜΟΣΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ. (ἔτους) Γ). Mint: Alexandria. Emmet 116(3), R3.

No. 50. Billon tetradrachm of Trajan (98-117 CE), issued in 101-102 CE. The obverse features the bust of Trajan on the left with a laurel crown and the legend "Emperor Caesar Nerva Trajan Augustus Germani-



cus" (ΑΥΤΟ(ΚΡΑΤΩΡ) ΚΑΙΣ(ΑΡ) ΝΕΡ(ΟΥΑ) ΤΡΑΙΑΝ(ΟΣ) ΣΕΒΑ(ΣΤΟΣ) ΓΕΡ(MΑΝΙΚΟΣ)). On the reverse, the bust of Nile on the left crowned with a lotus and a branch of papyrus on the back and a cornucopia on the front. On one side we read "year 5" ((ἔτους) Ε). Mint: Alexandria (MBC Seaby 88/00 no. -/32633. Emmet 395).

No. 53. Billon tetradrachm of Hadrian (117-138 CE), issued in 134-135 CE. The obverse features the bust of Hadrian on the left with the legend "Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus" (ΑΥΤΟ(ΚΡΑΤΩΡ) ΚΑΙΣ(ΑΡ) ΤΡΑΙΑΝ(ΟΣ) ΑΔΡΙΑΝΟΣΣΕΒΑ(ΣΤΟΣ)). The reverse reads "year 19" ((ἔτους) ΕΝΝΕΑΚ(ΑΙ)Δ(ΕΚΑΤΟΥ)), along with a bust of Serapis/Nile? on the right (Seaby 00 no. 3719).

No. 63. Billon tetradrachm of Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE), issued in 144-145 CE. The obverse features the bust of Antoninus Pius on the right with diadem and the legend "Antoninus Augustus Pius" (ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΣΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΣ) ΕΥΣΕΒ(ΗΣ). The reverse reads "year 7" ((ἔτος) Ζ). Alongside there is a Justice (*Dikaiosyne*) standing and looking towards the left, holding scales in the right hand and a cornucopia in the left. Mint: Alexandria. (Milne no. 2130, Dattari no. 2191, Seaby 88/00 no. 1320/4338).  
STT

**Cat. 19. Letter**

P.PalauRib. inv. 1007  
Papyrus  
8th cent. CE  
Provenance unknown  
21 x 15.2 cm.

This fragmentary papyrus contains a letter sent by Hayyan b. Shurayh, who was the finance director of Egypt from 717-720. While his title is not mentioned in this undated letter, the topic of the letter suggests that Hayyan also held this function at the time the letter was written. His name appears on glass weights, coins and papyri. The finance director was responsible for the collection of taxes in kind and coin in the whole province. His chancery produced letters setting out the amounts and procedure of the collection and transportation of taxes to the capital. Hayyan, located in Fustat, writes to ‘Abd Allah b. Shurayh, probably his brother who was responsible for the administration and collection of taxes of a particular region (indicated in the letter by "your land"). From the beginning of the 8th century, Arab-Muslim func-

tionaries had started to replace Christian Egyptians at the level of the pagarchy. ‘Abd Allah b. Shurayh was very likely the product of this movement, while his relation to the higher-placed director of finances shows how dynasties of Arab officials arose over time in post-conquest Egypt. ‘Abd Allah b. Shurayh is instructed on a delivery of wheat. He is asked to have the wheat collected in the district under his control and carried to a specified place. On the back of the letter, the address appears mentioning the name of the sender and addressee as well as a summary of the letter's contents. The Arabic writing shows the very characteristic palaeography of chancery writings dating to the first two centuries of Islam with large angular shaped letters spaciouly organised across the page.

Ragib (1997), no. 1.  
Sijpesteijn (2013) 90, 96, 193, 300.  
PMS

**Cat. 20. Prayers**

P.PalauRib. inv. 1049  
Papyrus  
8th-9th cent. CE  
Provenance unknown  
28.6 x 16.4 cm.

This Arabic papyrus shows a fragmentary and undated text that includes part of a prayer before sleep. The text explains how the believer – following the *sunna* or customs of the Prophet Muhammad – should entrust his body and soul to God during the night's sleep.

This text is probably an early variant of a Prophetic *dictum* that would later become part of canonical



19.



20.

Muslim Tradition or *hadith*. As happened with other Prophetic *dicta*, this text would have existed orally for generations before it was committed to writing.

The date of this piece is quite uncertain since the Arabic script bears characteristics found in the first centuries but also others of later periods, such as the diacritics on some consonants. In all likelihood, the papyrus dates to the 9th century CE.

W. M. Malczycki – A. Zomeño (forthcoming).  
WMM

### Cat. 21. Writing Exercise

P.Monts. inv. 109  
Papyrus  
10th cent. CE  
Provenance unknown  
27 x 27.5 cm.



The text only contains four formulas used very frequently in the introduction of Arabic letters in papyri. The first one, "May God prolong your life", was copied twice in the first two lines. The second, "May God help you keep your high rank", was written down two other times. The other two formula "May God fulfil His favour upon you" and "May God augment in His benevolences towards you" are repeated three times, also repeating the last preposi-

tion at the end of the line. On both sides the lines are divided and some of the text has been deleted on the verso.

It is as if they are rehearsing the start of a letter by repeating the same sentences and, therefore, this might be a writing exercise. However, the size of the papyrus is surprisingly big for such a text since these exercises were usually written on smaller pieces.

Grob 2010, 47-48.  
AZR

### Cat. 22. Accounts Register

P.Monts.Roca inv. 57  
Papyrus  
8th cent. CE  
Provenance unknown  
23.7 x 25.1 cm.



This papyrus sheet seems to have formed part of an accounting book written in Greek. It preserves part of the 19 lines and only the upper and left margins survive, the latter wide and well-defined. The entries seem to be payment of taxes in kind. Each entry follows the same structure: name of the tax payer, sometimes with his patronymic, followed by the type of material paid as tax and finally the amount corresponding to the monetary value of the tax of each

payment. Some of the materials, such as acacia wood, are repeated.

The accounts are the work of a professional scribe with a very experienced hand, as revealed by the cursive style and fine stroke of the handwriting along with the frequent use of abbreviations, which in many cases are used for the names of the tax payers.

These accounts are dated to the 8th century CE. The personal names, especially the presence of the name Tzamoul, confirms that it is from the Arab period as this name only appears in documents dated to this century.

The use of the Greek language in the accounting of land properties and in the collection of taxes in Egypt in the Arab period is attested by this document, although it disappeared after the 8th century CE. An edict from the year 705 started to limit the use of Greek and to impose Arabic in all fields of administration. These documents come mostly from the Aphroditopolitenome, which could support a hypothesis on its provenance.

Unpublished.

MJA

### Cat. 23. Arabic Amulet?

P.PalauRib. inv.1042

Paper

11th cent. CE

Provenance unknown

11.9 x 32.5 cm.

This curious Arabic document, which is preserved in the Palau-Ribes Collection, where there are two other similar pieces, is probably from the Fatimid period (909-1171 BCE). They have been made on paper, and have very similar illustrations on the top, for which the scribe used black ink and pigments of different colours.

There are few documents with similar characteristics as this piece, so its material purpose is still unknown. However, we know that the text and drawings accompanying it allude to the city of Medina and the Holy Sites (*biqa'*), placing this document in the context of pilgrimage, perhaps as a protective amulet. Similarly, its format and size resemble the certificates of pilgrimage to Mecca (*ijazat al-hajj*). Both types of documents share information about the rites and holy places visited during the

trip, but amulets do not mention the name of its owner or the year in which the pilgrimage was made, as in this case.

The text is written in *naskhi* script, one of the most developed calligraphic styles in the Middle East. It starts with the expression *al-bamduliallah*, an opening formula which means "thanks be to God," and which emphasises the sacredness of the text. It also mentions the city of Medina, which was chosen by Muhammad to escape from Mecca in 622 CE.

It is probable that the owners of these documents acquired them during the pilgrimage journey, perhaps like a prayer of protection against any eventuality. The vertical format suggests that pilgrims would take them rolled and stored in a box, to carry them more easily.

Unpublished.

Robinson – Grube – Meredith-Owens and Skelton

(1976).

SCM

### Cat. 24. Three Lamps from the Early Islamic Period

1. Museum of Montserrat,  
Ubach Collection inv. 840.706

Ceramic

8th-9th cent. CE

Palestinian production

11.6 x 6.3 x 3.7 cm.

2. Museum of Montserrat,  
Ubach Collection inv. 340.707

Ceramic

7-9 cent. CE

Palestinian production

10 x 5.5 x 3.6 cm.

3. Museum of Montserrat,  
Ubach Collection inv. 340.813

Ceramic

8th-10th cent. CE

Palestinian production

10 x 7.5 x 3.5 cm.

Ceramic lamps of Palestinian provenance and early Islamic chronology. Given their morphology and cast manufacturing technique they culminate a long tradition dating back to the Roman period, thereby con-

24.



stituting a clear continuation of the Paleo-Byzantine types (6th century). This type of material for domestic lighting is well represented by the finds in the main cities of the region: Jerusalem, Capernaum, Nazareth, Ramallah, Bethsan, Jerash, Pella or Amman. These three pieces typologically correspond to the oil channel-nozzle lamps.

The first two are the result of the clearest maintenance of the Paleo-Byzantine traditions from the area of northern Palestine. Both feature a cast decoration characterised by a mainly lineal pattern, arranged radially with respect to the central filling hole and in parallel to the pointed nozzle. Chronologically, their production ranges from the 7th century to the late Umayyad period (mid-8th century) and even Abbasid (9th century), the later dating is supported by some Samaritan inscriptions located in some copies.

The third lamp is slightly modern and its shape is also biconical, with a pseudo-conic knob and annular

basis also decorated, its surface is smoked by the use. The piece features an ornamentation of vegetal rinceaux with rosettes inside arranged around the filling hole. Although some units are already documented in the late Umayyad period, it is the Abbasid lamp (8th-10th centuries) par excellence. Although they usually lack an external lid, in the Jirbat al-Mafyar Palace a glassed version has been found, later to mid-8th century.

C. A. Kennedy (1963) 67-115.

R. Rosenthal – R. Sivan (1978).

AU

### Cat. 25. Leaf from the Quran

P.PalauRib. inv.1055r

Parchment

9th-10th cent. CE

Provenance unknown

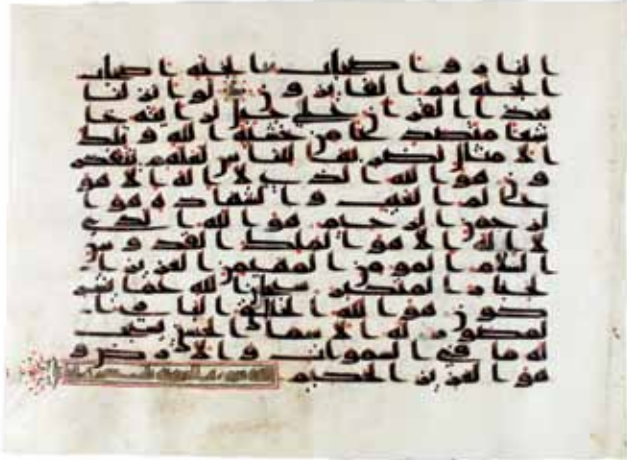
30.5 x 22.9 cm.

This piece on parchment contains the last four Quranic verses of *surat al-Hasbr* (59: 20-24), which means "The Meeting". It also includes the beginning of the following sura *al-Mumtabana* ("She that is to be examined"), written in gold ink. Each of the 114 chapters that divide the Quran, the sacred book of Muslims, is called *surat* (Arabic: *سوراة*, *as-Surat*)

This page, detached from the original manuscript, is preserved in very good condition and dates to the 9th-10th centuries CE. The text was written in sepia ink and is completely vocalised, in order to avoid any reading mistake (note that short vowels a, u, i are not usually written in Arabic). The scribe wrote the vowels drawing red dots surrounding the letters, and not with small stripes, as was frequent. This copy of the Quran also illustrates the development of the Arabic diacritical system: black dots in a smaller size, placed above and below the letters, distinguish between consonants.

At the end of the last line of the text, there is the beginning of the next chapter: *al-Mumtabanah*, which means "She that is to be examined". The text continues in the verse of the leaf. The title of this *surat* was written with golden ink, outlined with black ink and surrounded by a simple and lightly ornamented red and green box.

The style of calligraphy used is called Kufic, which was adopted by professional scribes for copying Qurans at the request of wealthy families (given the high cost of the parchment) between the 8th-10th centuries CE. It



25.

is a very particular style for which the scribe uses a reed pen (*qalam*) with the tip cut at an angle that allows angular shapes to be drawn, both thick and thin strokes, as well as the enlargement of the letters (technique known as *masbq* or "extension"). Also remarkable is the space between letters, which makes reading difficult for anyone who is not familiar with the text, and the use of hyphens to separate words at the end of lines 10 and 12.

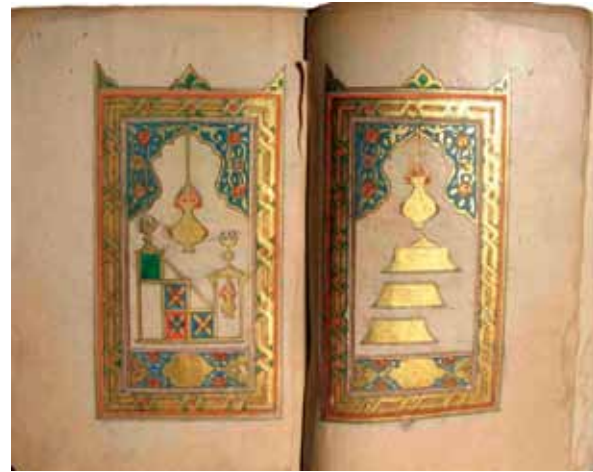
Unpublished.  
Déroche (1992).  
SCM

**Cat. 26. Quran**

Library of Montserrat, Ms.Or. 77  
Paper  
1767 CE  
Provenance unknown  
20.5 x 12.7 cm.

The copies of the Quran, the holy book of Muslims, have an immense religious value as a book containing the Revelation: that is, the Word of God. Moreover, as a religious object, it has an important value, given that its copy and production was usually a task undertaken in the name of God.

This copy preserved in the Library of the Abbey of Montserrat was painstakingly produced, both in the copy of the text and in the binding. As mentioned in the colophon, the copy was made in the year 1181 of the Hegira, the year 1767 CE, by 'Ali al-'Ulwi, disciple of Ahmad al-Dahani, known as al-Safi Dada. It comes,



27.

therefore, from a scribal workshop perhaps belonging to the Ottoman court. It was commissioned as a gift for a woman, Hawwa, perhaps for her personal use.

The layout of the pages, all through the text, is always inside a block of 15 lines in each page. It also features, only in the first pages, a geometric and floral decoration in gold and green. In the rest of the volume, the text is written in black within a golden, black and red frame. The margins appear clean, although the different sections of the ritual readings are marked with flowers and plants. Like other Quranic copies from the period, this copyist presents the titles of the *surats* (chapters) in white, within gold strips and marks the start of the *aleyas* (verses) with a small golden circle.

This copy of the Quran was restored in 1998 in the Monastery of Sant Pere de les Puel·les, Barcelona.

Giralt (2002) 238-239.  
Zomeño (2009) no. 77.  
AZR

**Cat. 27. Dalā'il al-Jayrāt**

Library of Montserrat, Ms.Or. 79  
1750 CE  
18.5 x 11.8 cm.

This text is one of the most popular texts in Sunni Islam and religiosity, immediately after the Quran itself. It was composed by the Moroccan Sufi Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Sulaymān b. Abū Bakr al-Jazūlī (d. 869/1465 CE) and, ever since, it was widely copied and used all over the Islamic world.

In the 97 folios, the text features prayers to the Prophet Muhammad, and reads as a long litany of blessings to the Prophet. It was organised as a manual for his devotion. Although the introductory and final prayers might change considerably, most versions contain a section invoking the blessings of the Prophet, the list of his names and epithets, and a description of his grave in Medina. These sections are usually followed by the body of the text, consisting of the prayers divided into several ritual sections, which are linked to eight successive days. However, there are many other possible variants according to the copyists involved, especially when they were displaying their skills as Quranic calligraphers.

In copies as luxurious as this one, the chapters are typically divided by using red ink but the copyist also uses gold for marking the separation of the different prayers. As is typical in this book, a design is incorporated in the section devoted to the life of the Prophet Muhammad so that by using black, gold, red and green there is a schematic design of his tomb, together with the Caliphs Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, facing the page with a drawing of the *minbar* of the Prophets Mosque at Medina.

This copy was drafted by Aḥmad b. Ismāʿīl in 1165/1750 CE.

Zomeño (2009) no. 79.

Witkam (2007).

AZR

### Cat. 28. Holy Week Lectionary

Ms. Roca-Puig 1

Paper

1847 CE

Cairo

46 x 30.5 cm.



This volume contains a lectionary, a collection of biblical readings that must be performed in the Coptic mass during Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday. It was copied on 18 Baramhat 1561 (14 March 1845) by ʿAbd al-Masih Salib, a copyist who appears in many manuscripts preserved in Cairo.

It is a bilingual manuscript, written in Bohairic Coptic and Arabic, which illustrates how the Coptic language continued to be used in the liturgy and mass readings, while Coptic Christian believers in the 19th century used Arabic like the rest of the population. This volume uses Coptic for the readings but Arabic, the language in which the colophon is written, is used to introduce the chapter and explain some specific aspects of the liturgy. Usually, the text of the Coptic readings is arranged in a column in black, and the red ink is used to separate the verses. The first folio features a polychrome decoration on the upper section marking the beginning, but throughout the volume only some Coptic characters are decorated as capitals. The binding was made with leather on cardboard, and features cast iron decoration with double box motif and the cross of Saint Andrew in the centre. Remains of the strings that must have been used to lock the volume are still preserved.

The manuscript was purchased by Ramon Roca Puig in Cairo and entered the Montserrat collection in 1997.

A. Khater – O. H. E. Burmester, *Catalogue*, II, 34, 80; III, 27 and 34.

F. del Río – A. Zomeño (2012) Ms. RP 1.

AZR

### Cat. 29. A Royal Amnesty Decree

P.Kroll + P.PalauRib. inv. 172 a-b = P.Köln. VII 313:TM 2229

Papyrus

After 9 Oct. 186 BCE

Oxyrhynchus?

P.PalauRib. inv. 172 a: 8.3 x 22.4 cm.

P.PalauRib. inv. 172 b: 11 x 15.6 cm.

These three fragments from the Palau-Ribes Collection belong to the same roll now partially kept in Cologne. The extent of the original text preserved corresponds to the first column (*P.PalauRib.* 172 a + *P.Kroll* col. I) of the decree plus some fragments of other columns (fr. B: *P.Kroll*, col. II; fr. C: col. I: *P.PalauRib.* inv. 172 b; col. II: *P.PalauRib.* inv. 172). They have been re-edited as *P.Köln.* VII 313.

The papyrus features a copy of a royal decree issued by Ptolemy V Epiphanes on 9th October 186 BCE. It follows the defeat of a major revolt in southern Egypt (206-186 BCE), which remained independent from the Ptolemaic kingdom after having established a theocratic monarchy with two successive Egyptian pharaohs. The measures adopted by Epiphanes in this decree were probably intended to bring some economic and social stability among the Egyptian inhabitants in a period of extreme turmoil.

According to the fragments preserved in Cologne and the Palau-Ribes Collection, fugitives and policemen would be absolved of all their crimes with the exception of murder as well as temple thief (fr. a; ll.1-6). In addition to this, a general amnesty was enacted for crimes committed up until September/October 186 BCE (fr. a; ll. 6-10). Another measure aimed to relieve the economic strains of the local population was the remittance of debts incurred by farmers of royal land (fr. a; ll. 13-17), and by owners of vineyards, orchards and bathhouses (fr. a; ll. 19-20). Lines 10-20 of fragment b introduce the legal institution of the *habeas corpus*, by virtue of which royal officials were explicitly forbidden to put any accused in prison for private causes without having brought him before the judge.

P.Köln 7.313.  
AFG

29.



### Cat. 30. Petition of the Priests of Seknebtynis

P.Monts.Roca inv. 315: TM 219243

Papyrus

2nd cent. BCE

Tebtynis (Arsinoite nome)

15.5 x 17.3 cm.

This papyrus sheet features the lower part of a petition from the priests of Seknebtynis, the local crocodile god (Sobek of Tebtynis) to an official who is hard to identify. Judging by the fact that the addressee is asked to send his "guards armed with swords" (*μαχαιροφόροι*, *machairophoroi*), one may think that it is the *strategos*, administrative head of the nome, but there are other officials who have such swordsmen under their command. Even members of the royal guard could be involved, and in that case this petition could be addressed to the king in Alexandria (*enteuxis*), although the expressions used in the formulary of this document speak against this possibility. High priests and priests of the lower rank in the hierarchy of the temple (*pastophoroi*) are mentioned, though the fragmentary state of the text does not allow their participation in the conflict mentioned to be reconstructed.

Although the document is damaged and has lost a significant part of the text, it is clear that the priests have suffered some kind of assault and theft on their premises and request protection of their lands and temple, and that the culprits be brought to justice.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca IV*:66.  
STT

### Cat. 31. Ptolemaic Contract of lease

P.Monts.Roca IV 77

(inv. 381 + 569 + 578 + 649): TM 128573

Papyrus

9 Dec. 148 BCE

Hephaistias

30 x 27.5 cm.

This piece is made of four different papyrus fragments which were stored and catalogued separately in the Montserrat collection. The original purpose of the papyrus was to document a contract, but afterwards it may have been reused as material for making a mummy cartonnage, since there are still some remains of polychromy on the back of one fragment. On papyri reused as mummy cartonnage, see cat. 54.

31.



This document is a beautiful example of one of the oldest types of contract documented in the papyri, the so-called *hexamartyros syggraphé* (ἑξαμάρτυρος συγγραφή), whose name refers to the six witnesses that certified the agreement. In order to guarantee the authenticity of the text, the papyrus contained a double copy of the contract: the upper half of the papyrus, containing one of the copies, was rolled and sealed by the six witnesses (*scriptura interior*). The other half, where the other copy (*scriptura exterior*) was written, remained open and visible in order to be used at any time in daily practice. In case of doubt or dispute about the authenticity of the external text, the seals of the witnesses were broken and the inner text was revealed. In this piece the *scriptura interior* can be seen along the upper margin of the sheet; the script is very small, but the text, although difficult to read, can be recovered thanks to the copy of the *scriptura exterior*.

The contract is a lease of land, with the usual clauses of this kind of agreement: term of the contract, amount of land involved, obligations, warranties, payment date and place, provisions against non-compliance, and enforcement clauses. At the end of the text, after the subscriptions, there is also a short summary of the essential data of the contract.

The papyrus is dated to the 34th year of Ptolemy VI Philometor and Kleopatra II (9 December of 148 BCE).

S. Torallas – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca IV:77*.

S. Torallas – K. A. Worp (2010).

JDR

32.



### Cat. 32. A Contract of Lease

P.PalauRib. inv. 150: TM 23617

Papyrus

2nd cent. CE

Oxyrhynchus

7.4 x 14.8 cm.

This papyrus features a contract of lease of 12 *arouras* of land in the neighbourhood of Leontos Epoikion (a hamlet belonging to the *kleros* of Apollonius) between a resident Oxyrhynchus and an individual named Ephonychos, from the village of Tychinnekotis. Ephonychos is described as "*Persian 'of the epigone'*" (l. 5), a legal designation meaning "debtor, lessee" who was subjected to extra-judicial enforcement. The contract was written along the fibres in a cursive and professional hand datable to the 2nd century CE.

The contract period extends "for the present year 22 [...]" at the end of which the leaseholder has to pay the agreed rent while taxes for the land are to be paid by the owner "who remains in possession of the produce" (ll. 21-22) until he has received the annual rent due to him. Once the lease is guaranteed (l. 23), the lessee has to pay the rent after harvesting, in the month of Pauni, on the threshing-floor of Tychinnekotis (ll. 26-28). This rent is described as "wheat, new, pure, unadulterated, not mixed with barley, and sieved as though being measured into the public granary with the four-measure of the landowner" (ll. 28-32).

S. Daris, *P.PalauRib.:7*.

AFG

**Cat. 33. A Sale of a House**

P.PalauRib. inv. 148: TM 32149

Papyrus

3rd cent. CE

Oxyrhynchus?

9.5 x 9.6 cm.



This fragment of papyrus features the final part of a sale contract of a house and its annexes for the price of at least 2,000 drachmas.

The text is inscribed along the fibres in a professional hand datable to the 3rd century CE. Although there is no reference to its place of provenance, the legal wording of this contract has many similarities to contracts from the city of Oxyrhynchus.

The extent of text preserved contains the legal commitments made by the vendor, who appears identified as the daughter of the gymnasiarch Severus Diogenes. According to law, Roman women typically needed a tutor (*kyrios*) to do any legal business, with the exception of those who had earned the privilege of the *ius liberorum* ("the right of the three children") which exempted freeborn women who had borne three children from guardianship. This right was claimed by the daughter of Severus Diogenes in lines 12-13 of the contract: "I Aurelia [...] daughter of Severus Diogenes the gymnasiarch, acting without a guardian according to Roman law because of the law concerning children." The buyer was also a woman named Aurelia Apia.

The characteristics of the house being sold here as well as its location were probably detailed in the first part of the document, which has not been preserved.

S. Daris, *P.PalauRib.*:11.

AFG

**Cat. 34. A Sale of Wine**

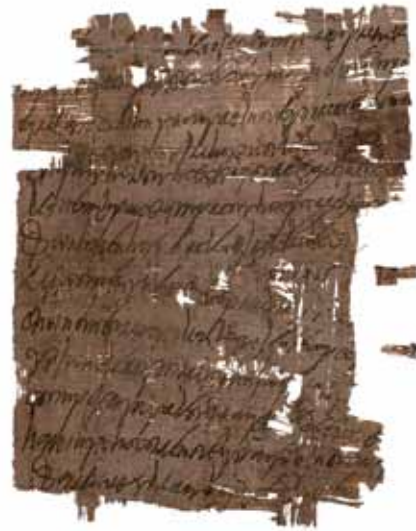
P.PalauRib. inv. 178: TM 38404

Papyrus

6th cent. CE

Heremopolite

11.2 x 14 cm.



This piece of papyrus is the result of having randomly joined two fragments that originally belonged to the same document. This was probably perpetrated by an antiquities dealer to improve the attractiveness of his stock. As the editor notes, the two main fragments of the document of sale were inversely joined, so the fragment bearing the first four lines in the papyri is to be placed at the bottom. Based on a comparison with similar documents, much of the original text has been reconstructed.

Although there is no reference to its place of provenance, the phraseology of the document has many similarities with that of the documents of sale of wine from the Hermopolite. There has been much discussion about the exact nature of these agreements: whether they were real sales with payment in advance or loans of money to be repaid in wine.

In the first line of the document (now lost) the seller states "by this written deed of guarantee [I acknowledge] that I have received and been paid by you for the full price and jointly approved by us with one another for 50 metra of wine made of unadulterated must, [which I shall give to you at the moment of the vintage] in the month of Mesore [...]" By the month of Mesore (July-August) picking of the grapes typically starts. Then comes the pressing of the produce, after which the wine remains in fermentation vats until it is ready for consumption. Thus the wine is further referred to as "of the best quality and well-pleasing [calculated with the measure] of three sextarii" (l. 6-7). In Egypt, the fermentation process could last from Mesore until the months of Choiak-Phamenoth (December-March).

As stated in the guarantee clause: "Should any of this wine be found to be vinegar or not fit for use or having a mouldy taste by the month of Phamenoth the same indiction I shall replace it with good wine without dispute or delay or legal process or any other pretext..." (ll. 8-13) A penalty clause (ll.13-15) is also added: "Should this time go by without me giving this amount of wine, I am prepared to give to you ten keratia for its value [...]"

S. Daris, *P.PalauRib.*:21.

*P.Heid.* V 296-331.

T. Kruit (1992a).

T. Kruit (1992b).

AFG

### Cat. 35. Fragment of a Contract (Exchange)

*P.PalauRib.* inv. 149: TM 38409

Papyrus

6th-7th cent. CE

Provenance unknown

7.7 x 14.8 cm.

This papyrus was accurately cut by an antiquities dealer; hence it is almost a perfect rectangular shape. The right half of each sentence is lost. From the layout of the remaining text – the preserved text belongs to the bottom of the left hand column – it can be argued that the original document may have been large. In the left margin there is a *kollesis* (the sheet joint in which two different pages of a papyrus roll were glued together). The text was written by two different hands. The formulary expressions used throughout the text reveal that the document contains a contract of exchange (*ἀντικαταλλαγή*;



35.

lat. *permuta*). Moreover, the expression "they improve and repair / beautify..." (*βελτιοῦνφυλοκαλεῖν*) is typical of Byzantine agreements dealing with real estate, which may also be the case here. Contracts of exchange are not commonly found in documentary papyri.

One of the parties is a woman called Sybilla daughter of Isis.

S. Daris (1986).

S. Daris, *P.PalauRib.*:26.

SB XVIII 13126.

JDR

### Cat. 36. Tax Receipt for the Heirs of Marinos

*P.MontsRoca* inv. 308: TM 219247

Papyrus

8. Dec. 419 CE

Oxyrhynchus

12.6 x 13.7 cm.

This papyrus features two tax receipts issued to the heirs of Marinos. On the verso side there are some knots following a regular pattern, which may reflect the manufacturing of the papyrus. Moreover, it also features a *kollesis* (see cat. 35) at approximately 7 cm. counting from the left edge as well as several folding marks (on the manufacture of papyrus, see cat. 1). The scribe was professional and abbreviated many words using diagonal lines.

36.



This document presents two receipts, one of them for the monthly payment in gold for the *stathmos*, while the other was issued for the payment of the *vestis militaris*. Both taxes were issued for the billeting of the army; the latter being assessed in terms of pieces of clothing but levied in cash at a rate proportional to landholding.

Tatianos and Euethios, who signed this receipt in ll. 4-5, are both well-known individuals belonging to the upper society of Oxyrhynchus: they are referred to as *politeuomenoi* (councillors) in other papyri.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca* IV:72.  
AFG

### Cat. 37. Remains of a Legal Dossier: (A) Account and (B) Report of Proceedings

*P.Monts.Roca* IV 70 (inv. 113 + 192 + 193 + 194 + 1204): TM 219245  
Papyrus  
378/379 CE  
Alexandria  
38.2 x 13.3 cm.

The piece consists of the upper part of two papyri glued together, configuring a so-called *tomos synkollesimos* (τόμος συγκολλησίμος: literally, "pasted papyrus-roll"). These rolls joined together related legal documents, in order to keep them together for daily practice or storage. The joint (*kollesis*, see 35) can be still seen at the lower part of the space between the columns.

37



Although the dark colour of the piece may suggest damage by burning, it seems more likely that the coloration is due to humidity. The size and orientation of the damaged parts reveal how the papyrus was originally rolled.

The *tomos* seems to have contained a report on the proceedings of a trial before Flavius Cratinus, *Praefectus Annonae* in Alexandria. Due to the state of preservation of the papyrus, it is difficult to know the content of both documents more precisely.

The first document (A), written entirely in Greek, features eleven lines of text, whose lost beginning makes it impossible to guess the original length. It seemed to contain an administrative account, dealing with amounts of wheat or barley, and their provenance and destination is recorded.

The second document (B) contains a bilingual text. The date and some sentences (formulary expressions to introduce each record of the trial proceedings) are written in Latin, and the rest of the text is written in Greek. From the few remains of text we can nevertheless recover some names, like the lawyer Soterichus, or the judge, the *Praefectus* himself.

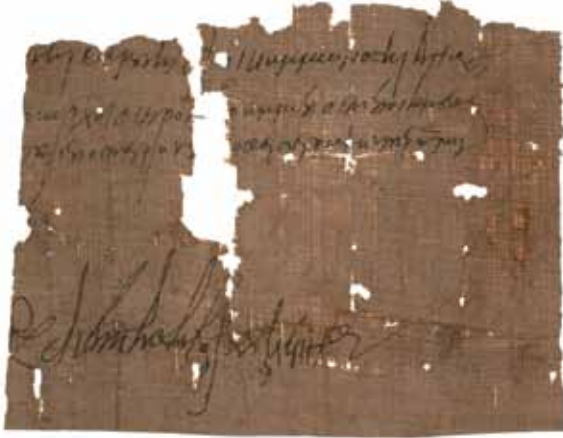
S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca* IV:70.  
JDR

### Cat. 38. End of a Contract

*P.PalauRib.* inv. 26: TM 35734  
Papyrus  
5th-6th cent. CE  
Oxyrhynchus?  
11.2 x 8.9 cm.

This fragment belongs to the end of a contract dated to the 5th-6th century CE. Since most of the text is now lost, the exact nature of the agreement remains unclear.

38.



However, the document preserves an interesting formula: a third party was asked to sign the agreement on behalf of the contractual parties (l. 3: "[...]oxenos son of Petros wrote for them upon request") probably because they did not know the letters. The widespread use of this formula in documentary papyri recording contracts reveals that a significant portion of the population of Greco-Roman Egypt was illiterate.

*P.PalauRib. I:18*

JDR

### Cat. 39. List of Greek Gods

*P.Monts.Roca inv. 840: TM/LDAB 219238*

Papyrus

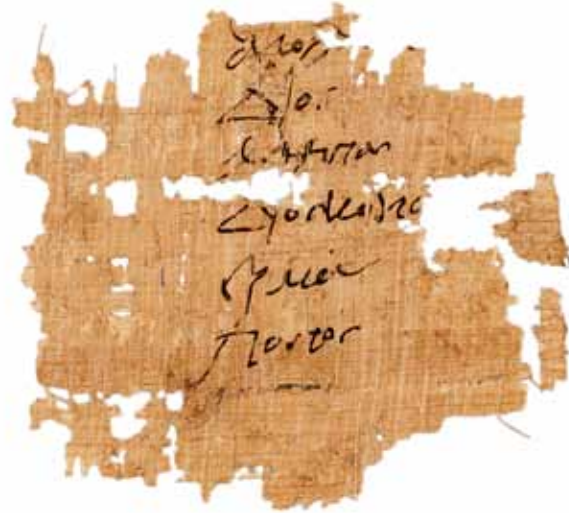
2nd-3rd cent. CE

Provenance unknown

7.2 x 6.5 cm.

This sheet of papyrus contains six lines with the following names of Greek gods in the genitive case: Apollo, Zeus, Athena, Dioscuri, Hermes and Pan. A tiny trace of a previous line is visible. The names are written along the fibres in a skilled cursive hand, and the verso is blank. There is a parallel for this papyrus in an ostrakon from Narmouthis (Medinet Madi), of the same date, which preserves the names of three gods in the genitive case (Zeus, Sarapis and Ammon). The strange fact that they are written in the genitive case indicates that both texts are school exercises of elementary level. Other papyri and ostraca from the school milieu provide other kinds of lists of gods, such as Greek gods with their Latin equivalent, written in Greek characters, gods

39.



who helped the Trojans in the Trojan War, and gods with their genealogies.

*S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), P.Monts.Roca IV:60.*

MAS

### Cat. 40. School Exercise

*O.PalauRib. inv. 4: TM 144299*

Ostrakon

6th-8th cent. CE

Provenance unknown

10.3 x 6.9 x 1.4 cm.

The ostrakon contains a school exercise for learning the Coptic alphabet. It does not seem to be an exercise for copying the alphabet but rather to memorise and practise writing it. The piece is fragmented and preserves part of the five lines, none of them complete. Each one of the lines contains letters grouped in brief sequences in alphabetical order, as is the case with  $\alpha\omicron\iota$ ,  $\kappa\lambda\mu$  and  $\psi\varphi\chi$ . However, we see alterations of diverse types in the arrangement of all the lines: the sequences of letters do not follow the alphabetical order from beginning to end, as it happens in line 4, where the sequence  $\kappa\lambda\mu$  is followed by the sequence  $\Gamma\Delta$ , which comes earlier in the alphabetical order; a second alteration concerns the order of the letters within the corresponding sequence, such as in the case of the letters  $\omega\psi$  (ll. 3 and 5). And a third alteration lies in the fact that the apprentice has forgotten (or omitted) one of the letters in the middle of the sequence. This final characteristic occurs on several occasions, such as in

the cases of the Egyptian letters  $\psi\varphi\zeta\sigma$ , a sequence in which the letter  $\chi$  ( $\psi\varphi\zeta\langle\chi\rangle\sigma$ ) is missing (ll. 3 and 5); the letters  $\epsilon\eta\theta$  (l. 2), in which the letter  $\zeta$  ( $\epsilon\langle\zeta\rangle\eta\theta$ ) is missing and in the sequence  $\theta\kappa\lambda\mu$ , in which the letter "iota"  $\iota$  ( $\theta\langle\iota\rangle\kappa\lambda\mu$ ) is missing.

These alterations suggest that the apprentice was unskilled and at a basic level of apprenticeship. This hypothesis is strengthened by the scribe's hand, which denotes the lack of experience in writing because it is a rigid rather than agile hand, using thick strokes, which also shows the irregularity in the size of the letters characteristic of those who are beginning to write and lack a good command of the stroke of the different characters.

Unpublished.

MJA

**Cat. 41. Writing Exercise**

P.PalauRib. inv. 224v: TM 62351

Papyrus

Mid-2nd-3rd cent. CE

Provenance unknown

13.8 x 8.5 cm.

Highly fragmented papyrus document of light brown colour that preserves the upper margin of approximately four centimetres. The text, written on the verso across the fibres, contains an elegant calligraphic exercise on which in the four preserved lines it can be read  $\text{Ἰσι}|\delta\acute{\omega}\rho\omega\iota\tau\acute{\omega}\iota\delta\iota\omega\iota\ \text{Παλλά}\alpha$ ]. Given that the initial letters of the first proper name have not survived, the editor, J. O'Callaghan, suggests Isidorus, a highly attested name in

the documentation preserved. As for the second name, it is more difficult to read. It could be the village where this Isidorus lived or where he came from: Pallantos, a village located in the Hermopolitenome. In this case, the sentence could be interpreted as: "to Isidorus, a private individual from Pallantos." The handwriting is elegant and skilful, quite regular, with the exception of the alpha which, on some occasions, shows a disproportionate stroke, probably made by the hand of a professional scribe who was perfecting or exercising his art. As for the dating, J. O'Callaghan considered that the document might belong to the 6th-7th centuries CE because of its palaeographic similarity with another document, the *P.Med.* 19, dated to that time. For his part, *P.Orsini*, also for palaeographic reasons, dates it between the mid-2nd century and mid-3rd century CE because of its similarity with a document of the chancellery of the prefect of Egypt Subatianus Aquila, the *P.Berol.* 11 532. This last proposal seems more probable to us.

J. O'Callaghan, *P.PalauRib.Lit.*:36.

AC

**Cat. 42. Christian School Exercise**

P.PalauRib. inv. 217r: TM 65392

Papyrus

7th-8th cent. CE

Provenance unknown

8.4 x 8.3 cm.

Papyrus fragment from the Byzantine period of brown colour preserving part of a Christian school exercise written by an unskilled hand. Because of the fragmen-

41.



42.



tary state of the document it is only possible to read the beginning of the five lines preserved, written on the recto in parallel to the fibres, because the lower and right margins have been lost. As usual in this type of practice, the student reproduced the sentence-model that the teacher had written in the first line an indeterminate number of times. In the case at hand, the text of the exercise contains a Christian invocation to the Trinity repeated several times, which J. O'Callaghan, the first editor of the text, reconstructs as follows: "In the name of the Father" (Ἐνὸνόματι τοῦ πατρὸς). Although it is not possible to guarantee that this reading is exact because of the illegibility of the last letters, the Trinitarian invocation, in its different variants, appears sufficiently attested in the documentation that has been preserved. This documentation notably includes a school exercise, the *P.Bal. II 396*, in which l. 6 and l. 7 feature the same invocation contained in our papyrus, suggesting a plausible continuation: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Spirit" (Ἐνὸνόματι τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος). It is also worth noting that these Christian invocations usually headed many documents from the Byzantine period written not only in Greek but also in Coptic, regardless of having a Christian content. Moreover, even the Arabs when they arrived in Egypt adopted this practice *mutatis mutandis*.

J. O'Callaghan, *P.PalauRib.Lit.*:34.  
AC

### Cat. 43. School Exercise

*P.PalauRib. inv. 410*  
Papyrus  
4th-6th cent. CE  
Provenance unknown  
21.5 x 30.7 cm.

The papyrus consists of 15 fragments that we can re-integrate as part of a sheet and three fragments that it has not been possible to locate. Of the latter, the one that preserves the string attesting that the sheet would be sewn to others on its left side, forming a kind of notebook, is of special interest. Indeed, this was the original format of the document, and not that of a codex, because not only are recto and verso written on by different hands (it is also not unusual to find codices from that period in which different scribes write different sections) but the papyrus must be turned 180° to

43.



read the writing on the other side. Most likely, the sheets were first written on the side where the sewing was on the left, and once the notebook was used, it was reused on the other side, turning it 180° so that the sewing remained on the left side of the writing lines.

In both cases the writing is skilful and reveals an experienced hand and even on the verso it shows some signs of formality (letters and lines regularly separated, tendency to bilinearity, or regularity on the upper and lower edges of the lines). Along with the nature and arrangement of the contents, this suggests a manual of writing exercises for the teacher's use rather than exercises done by students.

On the side where the fibres run parallel to the writing we see a series of trisyllabic Greek and Coptic words arranged in columns and in groups of five by their initial letter and in alphabetical order from τ to ω, with brief vestiges of words from the previous column, which would be those belonging to the groups beginning with the letters ν ξ or ϖ ρ σ. Separated from this section by a horizontal line in the third column we find a syllabary comprising groups of two letters formed by the vowels followed by the special letters of the Coptic alphabet.

On the verso we have a syllabary formed by groups of letters that combine the consonants of the Greek alphabet in alphabetical order accompanied by the seven vowels (the first group begins without an initial consonant; that is, directly with the seven vowels) followed in their turn by all the consonants in order. The syllables are circumscribed within an irregular grid which starts

by forming columns but ends, probably because of lack of space, in tight horizontal lines in which only the first of the vowels, the *α*, appears with the diverse consonants in sequence. The groups appear separated by forward slashes. The fact that it acts as an example or model for the remaining vowels suggests that it was a teacher's book.

Unpublished.  
LGJ/AND

#### Cat. 44. School Board Reused as an Accounts Register

T.Monts.Roca inv.1487: TM131752  
Wood  
7th-8th cent. CE  
Aphroditopolitenome?  
17.4 x 35.5 x 0.6 cm.

Dark reddish wooden board, split in the centre into two fragments lengthways. Originally it could have been used as a blackboard at school given that the surface on both sides is polished and on one side it has two centred orifices through which strings could have been passed so it could be hung and used by the teacher to show his students models of letters or texts. However, the possibility that it had been part of a codex formed by small wooden boards, joined and bound through these two side holes, cannot be discarded.

The board is a palimpsest on both sides. It is almost impossible to see anything of the old text, which was erased to write the visible text. Although the board is preserved complete, it is extensively damaged in the lower part due to termites and humidity stains on the upper part, which have left dark rings that make it hard to read.

The upper text of the recto, written in Coptic, is a list of personal names in two columns. The names appear along with the patronymic or the trade, and are linked through lines to sums in coins expressed in *solidi* and/or *keratia*. These registers are grouped in several lists, also separated by lines. In total, there are 43 entries and some of the names are written on several occasions. Many of them are female, which makes this list a document of great importance and comparable to other mainly female lists of names from the Byzantine period.

The text on the verso, at 180° from the recto, might be the continuation of the list. However, it features many reading problems.

These accounts were written by the hand of an unskilled scribe, whose letters are irregular and hinder dating. The provenance of the board is unknown although several of the names recorded on the list are frequent in the documentation of the Aphroditopolitenome, which might indicate that it came from this or a neighbouring region.

M. J. Albarrán Martínez – S. Torallas Tovar (2011).  
MJA

#### Cat. 45. Scholia Minora on Iliad I

P.PalauRib. inv. 147v: TM 60390  
Papyrus  
2nd cent. CE  
Oxyrhynchus?  
13.4 x 19.1 cm.



The papyrus (fragment no. 5 of *P.PalauRib.* inv. 147, the largest of the 18 extant fragments) contains the remnants of two consecutive columns of a text dealing with a short glossary of difficult words (*scholia minora*) of the first book of the *Iliad*. Specifically, it offers commentaries and glosses on words that appear in the *Iliad* 1.286-416.

The work was written on the verso of a roll composed of reused documents. The production of such rolls of "recycled" papyrus was a common practice in Greek and Roman Egypt, intended to produce books that were not for commercial purposes, but to be used

by scholars and intellectuals in their private studies. The analysis of these documents allows the piece to be dated to the 2nd century CE, and suggests an origin in Oxyrhynchus, where most of them were produced.

The structure of the *scholia* can only be appreciated in this fragment of the piece: the bottom part of the first column shows the *lemmata* (the commented words) and their corresponding explanations, separated by blank spaces. The second column, in a much worse condition, only preserves the *lemmata*.

*P.PalauRib.* inv. 147v presents similarities with other papyri preserving *scholia minora* of Homer. In particular, *P.Köln.* inv. 2281, which was written by the same hand, deserves mention. Nevertheless, compared with this and other papyri with this kind of *scholia*, the text in our papyrus seems peculiar: the *lemmata* of the second column do not follow the original sequence of the Homeric verses but are arranged in an apparently chaotic order, and it also contains new glosses and explanations not transmitted in other papyri.

The study and commentary of the Homeric poems was the earliest scientific activity in the field of philology, which started the development of this discipline in Alexandria at the beginning of the Hellenistic period. This papyrus provides us with an example of this tradition of studies, and attests its strength and vigour five centuries after its birth.

J. O'Callaghan, *P.PalauRib.Lit.*:8.  
IPL

#### Cat. 46. Treatise on Rhetoric

*P.PalauRib.* inv. 155: TM 100188  
Papyrus  
3rd cent. CE  
Provenance unknown  
7.5 x 12 cm.

The papyrus consists of the lower part of a sheet written on both sides and originally from a codex. The upper part is preserved in Michigan (*P.Mich.* inv. 6). It contains the remnants of a section entitled *On Myth* (Περὶ μύθου) belonging to a treatise on rhetoric. It deals with the persuasive power of tales and stories and the advantages of including them in speeches.

The author of the text divides myths into Aesopian, Cilician, Egyptian, Cyprian, Libyan and Sybaritian. Unfortunately, the piece is highly abridged and the text is

too fragmentary to follow the explanations of the differences between these kinds of narratives. "Myths", understood as short stories with a moral background, were well known in Antiquity as a section of the so-called *Progymnasmata*, the series of exercises intended to improve students' rhetorical skills. Moreover, in the section of the papyrus preserved in Michigan, scholars have identified some very close parallels between this text and the works of the famous 1st century *rhetor* and sophist Aelius Theon. The parallels have been interpreted as direct borrowings from him, which confirms the relationship between the papyrus and the field of rhetoric.

The informal nature of the handwriting and its irregular appearance indicate that the papyrus contained a non-commercial copy, most probably a text consisting of materials collected for personal use in the teaching or learning of the rhetorical art. It includes a reference to the Aesopian fable no. 134 on the dog that stole a piece of meat when the butcher was distracted. However, the fragmentary condition of the papyrus, in particular this section of it, as well as the poor state of the ink, have caused the loss of most of the text, so that the details of the narrative and its role within the treatise remain unclear.

J. O'Callaghan, *P.PalauRib.Lit.*:28.  
IPL

#### Cat. 47. Miscellaneous Codex

*P.Monts.Roca* inv. 126-178  
Papyrus  
4th cent. CE  
Tebaid  
11.4 x 12.3 cm.

In a letter from 1955 addressed to Roca Puig regarding its purchase (see p. 000) the Miscellaneous Codex is described as coming from the library of the monastery of Saint Pachomius, a monastic founder from the late 3rd century-early 4th century who headed a monastic order with several monasteries in southern Egypt. Although this cannot be confirmed, this information places the Miscellaneous Codex in relation with a series of interesting contemporary codices, which were purchased in Cairo and in the same years in which Roca Puig acquired this one by other collectors such as Bodmer and Chester Beatty. The physi-



47.

cal characteristics of all these codices, both in their format and palaeography, confirm that they probably have the same origin (see cat. 63).

Moreover, the content of the codex is very interesting. It comprises different works in Greek and Latin and attests an interest in the learning of Latin in Upper Egypt and the use of classical texts, such as Cicero's *Catilinary Orations*, in the education of Theban youths. It can be argued that it is from a school and Christian environment, although it is not possible to accurately know if it is a monastery or a Christian school.

The first section of the codex contains quite long passages from Cicero's first and second *Catilinary Orations*. It is followed by the *Psalmus responsorius*, a liturgical Latin Christian text. Next appears a mythological-themed drawing whose interpretation is disputed (see cat. 48). The fourth section of the codex is a selection of prayers in Greek, followed by perhaps the most famous text of the codex, the *Alcestitis*, an anonymous poem in Latin hexameters. This composition is followed by one of the most interesting texts of the codex, the "*Hadrianus*", until now an unknown text. It is a kind of narration whose main character is Emperor Hadrian, written in quite bad Latin.

The codex ends with a list of over 2,000 Greek words, alphabetically arranged in six groups. It is the alphabetisation of a shorthand handbook.

G. Nocchi Macedo (2014).

J. Gil – S. Torallas Tovar, *P.Monts.Roca III*.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp, *P.Monts.Roca I*.

STT

### Cat. 48. Page from the Miscellaneous Codex with Mythological Drawing

P.Monts.Roca inv. 154: TM 63186

Papyrus

4th cent. CE

Provenance unknown

11.4 x 12.3 cm.

The texts preserved by the Miscellaneous Codex of Montserrat (see cat. 47) include the mythological scene exhibited here between the *Psalmus responsorius* and a selection of prayers in Greek. It depicts a naked man wearing a kind of Phrygian cap and a bag hanging from his shoulder. In his left hand, he brandishes a peculiar weapon and in his right a head looking steadily at the face of a monster defeated on the ground on which the mythological character in question is standing.

The sketch was interpreted by Roca Puig as part of the mythical episode of Heracles and the man-eating Mares of Diomedes, his eighth labour, at a moment when the hero offered a victim to one of these mares. The interpretation was based on the supposition that the sketch had to have some relation with the texts contained in the codex. Given that the only text of mythical context was the *Alcestitis*, a representation of her liberator, Heracles, might fit.

However, the most likely interpretation of the sketch is that of Perseus killing the sea monster using Medusa's head. This interpretation is based on the hero's iconography, which has been portrayed with a bag to keep Medusa's head (the *kebisís*), the traditional curved sword (the *harpê*) and the headdress sometimes represented as a kind of Phrygian cap and sometimes as a winged helmet, a mythical gift from Hades.

R. Roca Puig (1989) no. 4.

S. Torallas Tovar – S. Carro Martín (coord.) (2015) 70-71.

RMH

**Cat. 49. Declaration of Death**

P.Monts.Roca inv. 991: TM 133234

Papyrus

1st-2nd cent. CE

Provenance unknown

5.4 x 8.1 cm.



The death of an individual in Roman Egypt was a public matter. The Egyptian inhabitants were registered in censuses conducted every 14 years. Tax payers were typically registered in separate lists, from which they should be removed in the event of their death in order to be registered in the official list of the deceased.

The relevant authorities were thus informed of these events by means of the submission of a declaration of death. Theoretically, when a man with taxable status died, his close kin had to submit a notification declaring his death to the village or metropolis scribe. However, a large number of notifications declaring the death of individuals not liable to the poll tax has been preserved: they mostly concerned boys under the age of 14 as well as men over 62. This fragment of papyrus contains the lower part of one of these declarations of death: although neither the identity of the deceased nor the date of death has survived, we know for certain that the departed was a woman. This fact might have further implications, since women in Egypt were not liable for the poll tax.

The declaration from Montserrat features the request to list the departed in the official register of deceased (ll.4-8). In addition, this document contains an unparalleled indemnity clause (ll. 8-10) that kept the declarant free of "slandorous accusations."

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca* IV:68.

AFG

**Cat. 50. Funerary Papyrus**

P.PalauRib. inv. 450: TM 57952

Papyrus

1st cent. BCE-1st cent. CE

Provenance unknown

277.1 x 19 cm.



The *Book of Going Forth by Day*, generally known as the *Book of the Dead*, is a collection of funerary spells put together in the New Kingdom (1550-1069 BCE) and used until the Roman Period (30 BCE-395 CE). It was mostly written on papyrus, although there were some spells intended to be inscribed on specific objects, such as *shabti* figures or heart scarabs. The spells could also be written on other funerary objects or on mummy bandages (see cat. 51).

The funerary papyrus presented here was written on the recto of a roll using black ink. It is currently in a very bad state of preservation. Most of the top part of the papyrus roll has been preserved, but the lower section is broken and part of it has been lost.

The average height preserved here is half of the size of a normal papyrus roll (c. 40 cm.). In some sections of the papyrus a second register is visible, which seems to indicate that the roll was originally twice the height now preserved.

It is composed of a series of vignettes accompanied by descriptive texts written in hieroglyphs and hieratic. Part of the fragments contains a series of portals, labelled as "portal (number) of the Weary-Hearted One", a designation of Osiris. Next to each portal stands its guardian, a demon holding big knives in his hands. These correspond to chapters 147 and 148 of the *Book of the Dead*. Another fragment shows a figure in a sycamore tree, pouring water from a libation jar (*qbh-jar*) on the hands of another figure, supposedly the deceased, which corresponds to chapter 59. The end of the papyrus depicts the mummy of the deceased lying on a bed, being mourned by Isis and Nephthys, while Horus and Anubis bring offerings of cloth and unguents. In the last scene, Anubis introduces the deceased, represented in Greco-Roman fashion, with curly hair, to the Judgment Hall. In the centre of the chamber, a platform scale, as opposed to the normal plate scale, is supervised by Thoth, represented as a baboon. Horus and Anubis hold each side of the scales with a string. On the left end of the room, Osiris sits on his throne wearing the *atef*-crown and a very elaborate garment decorated with stars. An offering formula in two columns is written behind Osiris. The figures are identified with their epithets in the texts.

C. Sturtewagen, *Palau Rib. Nr. Inv.* 450.  
MEP

### Cat. 51. Linen Bandages with Hieratic *Book of the Dead*

L.Monts.Roca inv. 1483  
Linen  
4th-2nd cent. BCE  
Provenance unknown  
32 x 14.2 cm.

The *Book of the Dead* was a collection of funerary spells intended to provide guidance to the deceased on his/her journey to the Netherworld (see cat. 50). They were first written on papyrus in cursive hieroglyphs, but in the Ramesside Period (1295-1069 BCE) and especially in the

51.



21st dynasty (1069-945 BCE) the first hieratic examples appear. The papyri were placed in the coffin, sometimes partially unrolled, covering the body of the deceased, and in some cases accompanied by other funerary texts, such as the *Book of Amduat* during the Third Intermediate Period (1069-664 BCE). In the 30th dynasty (380-343 BCE) the spells of the *Book of the Dead* also started to be written on mummy bandages. These bandages would be wrapped around the body of the deceased, constituting the outer layers of the mummy wrapping, and their proximity to the body, surrounding it from every side, would ensure the magical protection of the deceased, in addition to that provided by amulets and other apotropaic elements. Despite the fact that most of the mummy bandages preserved were unrolled in the past and their context lost, in some cases it has been possible to connect particular spells referring to specific parts of the body with the placement of the bandages. The deceased could have owned a papyrus of the *Book of the Dead* in addition to the spells written on the bandages.

The present mummy bandages are written in hieratic with black ink in horizontal lines from right to left, forming a series of columns divided by narrow blank spaces. The script is small and skilfully written, despite the difficulty that the material poses to writing. On top of some of the sections some figures are still visible, drawn in a very simple but elegant way, with clean fine lines. One of the fragments depicts two masculine figures walking to the right, holding staffs in their left hands, and wearing a kilt and a garment represented by a line across their chests.

Unpublished.  
MEP

**Cat. 52. Greek Mummy Label**

T.Monts.Roca inv. 1302: TM 156820

Wood

1st-4th cent. CE

Thebes?

8.9 x 12 x 1.1 cm.

This mummy label shows a Greek text written in uncials and black ink, with the name and the patronymic of the deceased: Har(p)ekysis, the son of Antinoo. It is very difficult to know much more about the deceased with such a brief text, and Roca Puig's documentation does not offer any information about the origin of this funerary document. Nevertheless, the shape in which the wood was cut and the text written on it are typical of documents from the Theban area. Some of these labels are suspected of being forgeries.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (2013).

RMH

**Cat. 53. Demotic-Hieratic Mummy Label**

Museum of Montserrat SM6

Wood

2nd-3rd cent. CE

Panopolis?

12.1 x 3.8 x 0.4 cm.

Mummy labels contain short texts written generally on pieces of wood but also on other materials, such as limestone, or faience, with the original purpose of identifying the mummy to which they were attached in their mummification process and transport to their burial. Thus, most of the texts inscribed on them contain elements such as the name of the deceased, the names of the father and the mother, and sometimes grandparents, spouse or other relatives. Other elements can be the occupation, age, date of death, and origin. Apart from their function as identification elements, mummy labels could also act as funerary stelae and, therefore, other types of formulae could also be included in the text. A religious formula can be found on the Demotic labels, which is not common in the Greek ones. These can include expressions of condolence. The most common languages in which mummy labels were written are Greek and Demotic, with many bilingual examples, but there are also some in hieroglyphs and hieratic, as well as Coptic. Some examples

also include illustrations. As identifying documents, mummy labels provide very interesting information to develop studies on Egyptian anthroponomy in Roman times, family trees, and studies on personal religious beliefs.

The mummy label is of the type designated as stella-shaped, with two corners of the same side cut in an angle. This is the area where the label should have been perforated to pass through a string in order to attach it to the mummy. The absence of this perforation might indicate, together with its very good state of preservation, that the label was never used. The label is only written on the recto. The inscription is composed of three lines of text, which contain the same text in hieratic (line 1) and Demotic (lines 2 and 3). The text gives the names of the deceased Pasais and his father Harendotes, and the profession of the former: "the prophet". The use of hieratic and Demotic in the same label is not very common, and the reason for the use of the former might be religious, or as a way of showing erudition. The handwriting seems to be the same for the two texts, and is of very good quality. Some mistakes in the hieratic seem to indicate that the scribe had some problems understanding the text. The verso is blank.

F. Gaudard (2015).

MEP

**Cat. 54. Fragments of a Cartonnage Mummy Mask**

Museum of Montserrat without inv. no.

Painted cartonnage

Greco-Roman Period

Nile Delta

25 x 34 cm.

The term "cartonnage" designates a material used for the fabrication particularly of funerary equipment. It consists of the layering of linen or papyrus with plaster or mud, in order to create a surface that could be modelled in a particular shape when wet, and later painted and decorated. It was used from the Middle Kingdom (2055-1650 BCE) to the Roman period (30 BCE-395 CE) to make mummy masks and mummy cases. This material was cheap and easy to model and decorate, and could be gilded and inlaid with glass elements in order to make it look more lively and luxurious (see cat. 55). During the pharaonic period, cartonnage was normally

54.



made with linen, but in the Greco-Roman period old papyri were reused in these pieces.

The fragments of cartonnage on exhibition were acquired together with the papyrus collection (*Papyri Barvinonenses*) and other Egyptian objects, mostly of funerary character, by Father Bonaventura Ubach in 1928 in the Nile Delta. These fragments are part of the chest section of a mummy mask. Their surface is painted in blue, red, yellow (now darkened), and white. One of the fragments shows the remains of one side of a tripartite wig, painted in blue, with the tips of the wig decorated with horizontal lines. Next to it, several decorated horizontal rows represent the beads of a wide necklace. On the back of the fragments, the different layers of papyrus used to make the mask are visible. The texts readable among the fragments are written in Demotic, and appear to be sections of accounts, with lists of names and numbers attributed to each entry. Among the texts that can be found in cartonnage, documentary texts are the highest percentage, due to the shorter span of their useful life (see cat. 15). However, other types of documents, such as literary or paraliterary texts (see cat. 3), also appear in this type of object.

Unpublished.

MEP

### Cat. 55. Mummy Mask

Museum of Montserrat inv. 620.209

Painted cartonnage

Ptolemaic period

Provenance unknown

46 x 28 x 20 cm.

The concern of the ancient Egyptians with the preservation of the body for the afterlife led them to develop a series of techniques to prevent the decay of the dead body, which led to the complex mummification process, and a series of funerary equipment in order to better protect the mummified remains. The head was one of the most important parts of the body, and therefore it had to be especially protected in order to ensure the successful transition from the world of the living to that of the dead. Mummy masks were developed with this aim, magically also acting as substitutes of the head of the deceased in the case that something would happen to it. The earliest masks date to the First Intermediate Period (2160-1650 BCE) and were used throughout all the time that the mummification process was active in Egypt. Mummy masks started as a royal prerogative, like most elements of the funerary equipment, and their use was progressively extended to the higher classes and to other individuals, using different materials in their fabrication. Royal mummy masks were normally made of precious metals, such as gold or silver. Other materials used were carved wood or cartonnage. The masks cover generally not only the head but also the chest, and sometimes they depict the hands of the deceased and a necklace.

The present mummy mask is made of cartonnage, a material very popular during the Ptolemaic period (332-30 BCE) (see cat. 54), and gilded to represent the flesh and jewellery of the deceased. The facial features of the deceased, with straight eyebrows meeting on the same line towards the centre of the face and eyes with horizontally pointed inner canthi, together with its material, allow this mask to be dated to the Ptolemaic period. The deceased wears a tripartite wig, painted in blue. The representation of golden skin and blue hair, imitating lapis lazuli, identifies the deceased with the gods, since these were the substances with which the ancient Egyptians believed the flesh and hair of the gods were made. This representation ensured the transition of the deceased to a divine state as one of the glorified dead.

MEP

56.



### Cat. 56. Mummy Mask

Museum of Montserrat inv. 620.208  
Greco-Roman period  
Provenance unknown  
27 x 19.5 cm.

Gilded mummy mask made of cartonnage with an inscription in hieroglyphs on its upper part. Its state of preservation is poor: part of the forehead and the left ear are missing. The right edge and the inscription on the top are also damaged. However, it is still possible to discern a certain level of realism in the depiction of the facial features of the departed: the lips are thick, the nose is straight and sharp, and the chin is prominent.

AFG

### Cat. 57. Letter Mentioning a Hieroglyph Carver

P.Monts.Roca inv. 247: TM 219260  
Papyrus  
End of 3rd-4th cent. CE  
Oxyrhynchus?  
16.7 x 8.1 cm.

This papyrus contains an almost complete private letter addressed to Sipharos. It was written in a cursive and irregular hand dated to the 3rd-4th century CE. The papyrus features vertical as well as horizontal folding marks. The letter begins with the greetings "To the Master of

57.



my soul and my Lord Sipharos" followed by the customary expressions of concern about health "Before all, I pray for your health, father." The same concerns are again expressed in the closure: "I pray for your health and well-being, my deliverance."

On the verso stands the address and order of deliver: "Give to Sipharos, the priest." Dated to the end of 3rd-4th century CE, this letter was written at a time when the knowledge of hieroglyphs was virtually extinct. Despite its late date, a hieroglyph carver (l. 7) and a pagan priest (vo. l. 2) are mentioned. Hieroglyph carvers formed a guild in the 2nd century city of Oxyrhynchus (*P.Oxy* VII 1029) and they might have lasted until the end of the 4th century, when hieroglyphic inscriptions are no longer recorded.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp, *P.Monts.Roca* IV:94.  
AFG

### Cat. 58. Harpocrates on Horseback

Museum of Montserrat, Ubach Collection inv.  
825.027  
Terracotta  
Late Hellenistic-Roman period  
Provenance unknown  
11.9 x 4.5 x 10.5 cm.

Harpocrates is an Egyptian deity, a late, popular version of the solar god Horus, son of Isis and Osiris, the Lord of the Underworld. He appears invariably as an infant or a small child, holding one finger to his mouth,

58.



although other details may vary. This pose is, literally, the Egyptian hieroglyph for "child". As often in Egyptian art, one must "read" the picture as one might read a papyrus roll. Of course, not everyone was "literate" in this sense: Greek and Roman authors, unfamiliar with traditional Egyptian writing, routinely misunderstood Harpocrates's gesture, taking it to represent silence ("shhh!"). In this case, Harpocrates wears a pharaonic crown and a military tunic and rides a horse like a victorious commander; other terracottas show him riding everything from a dog to a camel to a hippopotamus. One might compare this image of benevolent child-savior with contemporary religious developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, notably the rise of Christianity.

RN

**Cat. 59. Processional Figure:  
Worshipper with Image**

Museum of Montserrat, Ubach Collection inv.  
825.061  
Terracotta  
Late Roman  
Provenance unknown  
17.5 x 10.4 x 3.3 cm.

The line between human and divine was often blurry in Egyptian art. At first glance, this figurine seems to represent the goddess Isis holding her infant son Harpocrates on her left hip. Yet the larger, female figure lacks the

59.



characteristic features of Isis, and is more likely a human worshipper. Her pose likens her to the goddess, while her costume keeps her distinct. She wears a long tunic and a cloak, and raises her right hand in a traditional Egyptian gesture of celebration. By her left shoulder she carries what is likely a ritual image; it appears to grasp her tunic with its right hand.

Although difficult to make out, the figure may be a grotesque; Egyptian audiences felt that deformed or ugly bodies could help ward off bad luck. Other figures carry horns of plenty, statues, or sacred boxes in this same position. The open-ended nature of this imagery may be frustrating to modern scholars, but seems to have been valued in Antiquity. By mixing and matching motifs, even humble craftsmen could produce rich, complex imagery, replete with allusion.

RN

**Cat. 60. Gospel of Matthew**

P.Monts.Roca inv. 1: TM 61783  
Papyrus  
Late 2nd cent. CE  
Provenance unknown  
Fr. A: 1.8 x 1.1 cm.  
Fr. B: 4.9 x 5 cm.

This papyrus, composed by two small fragments, is known among scholars as Papyrus number 67 (P<sup>67</sup>). Its dating to the 2nd century CE makes it the most ancient testimony of the Gospel of Matthew.

Three other small fragments of this same codex were purchased in 1901 by Charles B. Huleatt and delivered to the library of Magdalen College in Oxford. These fragments, known as P<sup>64</sup>, were published in 1953 by C. H. Roberts. Roberts himself verified that the fragments of Montserrat, when they were published by Roca Puig in 1956, formed part of the same codex, and included an additional note in a later publication by Roca in 1961, asserting this coincidence.

Based on the fragments preserved at Magdalen College, it has been possible to reconstruct the page format of the codex: in two columns of 35/36 lines each. Taking this pattern as a starting point, and placing the Montserrat fragments as they must have been placed in keeping with the direction of the fibres, it has been possible to obtain the dimensions and composition of the codex, which was possibly bound in quires of four sheets folded in half.

The smallest fragment of the two in Montserrat contains verses 9 and 15 of chapter 3 and the largest verses 20-22 and 25-28 of chapter 5. Each one is located in different pages of the codex: the small one in pp. 5-6 (in the first half of the quire), and the largest fragment in pp. 9-10 (that is, in the second half of the quire). The Montserrat fragments have features characteristic of the early biblical codices, among which their restrictive textual nature must be stressed, as the text has not yet been contaminated by the clarifications of the scribe. There is also the abbreviation of the *nomina sacra* and the upper or intermediate point to mark the pauses or verses.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.) *P.Monts.Roca IV*:48.

R. Roca-Puig (1961).

MVS

### Cat. 61. Book of Daniel

P.Monts.Roca inv. 43: TM 61933

Papyrus

2nd-3rd cent. CE

Provenance unknown

18.5 x 11.7 cm.

This papyrus is one of the two semifolios preserved in Montserrat of the Papyrus 967 according to Rahlfs' numeration. It is a codex that preserves most of the Book of Ezekiel, the Book of Daniel followed by the Greek additions to this book and most of the Book of Esther. The codex is incomplete, and the 36 pages that are still

61.



missing would include the first 8 chapters of Ezekiel and the six additions to the Book of Esther along with another brief book such as Ruth or Tobit. Several collections preserve folios of this codex: Dublin (Chester Beatty Collection), Princeton (Scheide Collection), Madrid (Pastor Collection) and Cologne (Collection of the Faculty of Theology).

All the pages are numbered on the central part of the upper margin, in this case with 181<sup>r</sup>-182<sup>v</sup>. This page features part of the prophetic visions referring to Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Daniel 11:29-32 and 11:34-38). The other semifolio of the Montserrat collection contains part of chapters 7 and 8 of the Book of Daniel.

The codex features the Septuagint version of the Book of Daniel, transmitted by very few manuscripts. The text contains a large number of unique readings as corresponds to its early date. It features a clear square writing, the predecessor of the biblical uncial of subsequent codices, rapid and irregular, but quite consistent.

The provenance of the codex is not known with any certainty, although the editors consider it might be a town in Upper Egypt such as Aphroditopolis, Faiyum or Panopolis because the papyri of the Chester Beatty Collection, which preserves folios of this codex, were found in a Coptic cemetery close to these towns.

S. Torallas Tovar – K.A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca IV*:47.

R. Roca-Puig (1976).

MVS

**Cat. 62. Gospel of John with Commentary**

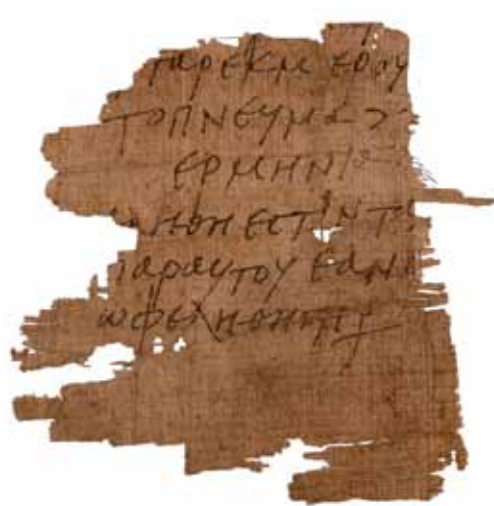
P.Monts.Roca inv. 83: TM 61645

Papyrus

Mid-3rd cent. CE

Provenance unknown

10.3 x 9.5 cm.



The Roca Puig Collection preserves several texts of those known as "hermeneutic manuscripts"; that is, manuscripts that provided the interpretation of some verses of the Gospel of John not always in order. Along with the papyrus on display in this exhibition, the collection includes seven other biblical papyrus fragments written in Greek and five on parchment, one of them bilingual (Greek-Coptic) and another in Coptic.

This text is known among scholars as Papyrus number 80 (P<sup>80</sup>) and must have been part of a codex that offered on each page one or several verses of the Gospel of John with its corresponding commentary (Gr. ἐρμηνεία). However, today the purpose of these manuscripts is the subject of debates. Among the most popular are that the comments could be oracular answers, assistance for the bibliomantic interpretation, biblical reflections, liturgical tools or summarised notes.

The fragment features the final part of verse 34 of chapter 3 of John: "For the one whom God has sent speaks *the words* of God, for God *does not give the Spirit partially*," followed by the comment: "the words that have been spoken *by him* (*sc.* John the Baptist) *are true if you benefit* from them" (in italics the words of the papyrus). John's verse transmitted by this pa-

pyrus preserves the reading "partly", possibly the original reading, instead of "by measure", featured in most manuscripts.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca IV:51*.

R. Roca-Puig (1966).

MVS

**Cat. 63. Sahidic Gospel Book**

P.PalauRib. inv. 181-182-183

Parchment

5th cent. CE

Upper Egypt

16 x 20 cm.



This codex is one of the most important and earliest copies of the Sahidic Coptic version of the Gospels. It is beautifully written in a biblical uncial on vellum of great quality and preserves an old binding. Its appearance is very sober and without decoration. It is undoubtedly a copy of great quality.

In palaeographic and linguistic terms, it is one of the most classical Sahidic codices known. It contains three of the Gospels in the western order: John, Luke and Mark. In his introduction, Quecke argues that the text coincides in general with the text of "Alexandrian" or "Egyptian" type (manuscripts B and Vatican codex) and points out the presence of some variants considered western.

Although the provenance of the codex is unknown, Robinson suggested that it could belong to the same series of the so-called "Dishna papers", of which it has been stated – perhaps not sufficiently substantiated – that they might be from the library of a Pachomian monastery. He bases his supposition on the fact that O'Callaghan created his collection at the same time and through the same mediators as the Bodmer (Geneva) and Chester Beatty (Dublin) collections.

H. Quecke (1984).

H. Quecke (1977).

H. Quecke (1972).

STT

#### Cat. 64. Saint Menas Ampulla

Museum of Montserrat, Ubach Collection inv.

825.107

Terracotta

4th-7th cent. CE

Provenance unknown

10 x 7.5 x 2 cm.



This terracotta *ampulla* of oval shape, narrow neck and with two handles on the sides bears the figure of Saint Menas, an Egyptian martyr. Following the most extended tradition, Menas was born in the late 3rd century CE in Nikiu, close to Memphis, within a Christian family. He served in the army for some years but left it later to undertake an ascetic life. He was martyred around the year 296 CE and his body was moved on a camel to the western desert. The animal stopped in an area of the Lake Mariout, close to the city of Alexandria – approximately 45 kilometres to the south-west – refusing to continue

marching, which was interpreted as a sign that this had to be his place of burial. Some time later, miracles were attributed to Menas, mainly related to healings after having drunk the water from a source near his tomb. The spread of the news about these miracles made the tomb and sanctuary a famous place of pilgrimage, with a basilica and buildings to accommodate pilgrims, mainly in the 5th and 6th centuries CE. The pilgrims' desire to take the miraculous water and the blessed oil with them resulted in the almost mass production of bottles or flasks, the terracotta *ampullae*, made in the sanctuary itself.

Menas is always portrayed, on one or both sides of the *ampulla*, within a medallion, standing and facing front, dressed as a soldier, with his arms raised in praying position and flanked by two camels, the animals which, according to tradition, carried his body to the burial place. On the upper part of the figure there is the engraved inscription in Greek "Saint Menas", as a certificate of authenticity of the water or oil it contained. Hundreds of *ampullae* have been found not only in Egypt but also in many cities throughout the Roman Empire, such as Cologne, Marseilles or Jerusalem, which attests the large circulation of pilgrims who went to the sanctuary attracted by the fame of the saint's miracles.

P. Maraval (1985): 319-322.

P. Grossmann (1998): 282-302.

MJA

#### Cat. 65. Tax

P.Monts.Roca inv. 227

Papyrus

8th cent. CE

Monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit.

Hermopolitenome

10 x 10 cm.

This unpublished piece of the Roca-Puig Collection, in a good state of preservation, contains the complete text of a receipt for the payment of a tax, dated on the 2nd day of the month of Mesore of the second indiction. It is the payment for an annual poll tax imposed by the Islamic government. The tax was generally designated with the Greek term *diagraphon*, but on some occasions, as happens in this papyrus, it is also called *andrismos*. This term derives from the Greek "man", making a direct reference to the fact that it was a tax for males. The tax was demanded from all non-Muslim men without exception,

65.



and therefore also priests and monks, as revealed by this receipt from the Monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit, in the Hermopolitenome. The tax had to be paid in gold coins and the internal administration of the monastery was responsible for collecting.

The document begins with the opening formula: "It is our father who writes," which alludes to the superior in the monastery as the authority issuing the receipt, and was addressed to the group of monks called "the brothers of the *andrisimos*", in charge of collecting the tax from each of the monks living in the monastery – approximately one coin per head – and later processing its payment to the administration of the Islamic government.

This document records the payment of 16 gold coins, a high tax that corresponded, as written down in the same document, to the payment of the tax quotas that remained to be paid that year by each of the males of the congregations. Probably, the document is related to the internal administration of the monastery and the organisation of its own accounts.

S. Clackson (2008).

MJA

### Cat. 66. Wine Payment Order

P.PalauRib. inv. 352: TM 144327

Papyrus

8th cent. CE

Monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit. Hermopolite nome  
16.3 x 12.6 cm.

This papyrus contains an order of payment or supply of wine from the Monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit. It seems that it had contained another text, as it is possible to see remains of some letters under the current text. In

66.



its second use, the papyrus was reinforced to be able to write on top of the text preserved. This practice of recycling papyri is frequent in documents from this monastery. The text is preserved almost complete and only a small part is missing on the left lower side, which is covered by two fragments, from different documents, applied in modern times by a dealer so that it looked like a complete document.

The order belongs to a type of document written in Coptic, issued in the administrative office of the monastery. They are headed by a fixed opening formula: "It is our father who writes," making reference to the superior of the monastery who, on some occasions, signed the document at the end with his own hand, as a way of ratifying and validating the order. Approximately one hundred examples of this type of document are preserved, which can be dated to the 8th century CE. They are either payment receipts, generally taxes, or food product delivery orders, such as in the case of this papyrus.

This order in particular is addressed to Apa Victor, possibly the administrator of the monastery, who also appears in other similar orders. Apa Victor was in charge of supplying wine to two monks: 20 jars to Apa Papnoute, for the church of Apa Christodore, and 20 jars to Brother Anoup in the cell of Apa Papohe. The order is dated on day 22 of the month of Mesore of the eighth year of the indictional cycle (each cycle corresponds to 15 years). The document was written by a scribe called Elliotus and signed at the end by Daniel, the superior of the monastery, whose signature is also found in other documents.

M. J. Albarrán Martínez (2012).

MJA

**Cat. 67. Wheat Delivery Order**

O.PalauRib. inv. 26: TM 144319

Ostrakon

8th cent. CE

Monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit. Hermopolite nome

14.5 x 7 x 0.8 cm.



This text is written on a fragment of reddish ceramic, probably from an amphora. The text follows the usual formulary of the delivery orders of goods, issued in the administrative office of the Monastery of Apa Apolo in Bawit. The goods delivered were especially wheat and wine, from the land owned by the monastery and stored in its larders. There are a large number of orders of this type in Coptic and they follow a similar structure: they start with the imperative formula, "Enter", followed by the amounts ordered to be delivered, the place of origin, the name of the carrier and the date the order was issued.

This document contains a wheat delivery order. However, although the text is complete, some elements of the standard format are missing: it only contains the initial formula, the amount of wheat to be delivered and its place of origin: "Enter 16 sacks of wheat in the Moui stable." Moreover, the name of the carrier and the date of issuing are also missing. The writing is irregular and quite unskilled, and the letter "n" has been omitted in several words, which may be considered a grammar mistake. All these characteristics suggest that it was not written by a professional scribe, as in the other orders of this type preserved, which puts into question whether it is a real delivery order or a writing exercise using one of these orders as a model.

M. J. Albarrán Martínez (2016).

S. Bartina (1966).

MJA

**Cat. 68. List of Assignments of Garments and Textiles**

P.Monts.Roca inv. 707

Papyrus

7th cent. CE

Hermopolitenome?

20.5 x 11.6 cm.



On the verso of a fragment of a Byzantine public document, probably a petition, at 180° one finds this list of garments and textiles, written in Coptic and Greek, related to a monastic environment. The only criterion to assign it to the Hermoupolitenome is the fact that three of the personal names appearing on this list are mainly attested there.

The document features a list of people followed by deliveries or assignments of garments and textiles. The use of the terms of textiles in this period points to a monastic or church environment. A monastic robe (*lebiton*), the *mappa*, attested in this period as an altar covering, and even the *sabanon*, attested as a scarf in the priestly attire, recall a monastic or religious environment. The papyri present an enormous variety of names for clothes, both in Greek and Coptic, changing over the centuries, and very often in contexts, such as lists and inventories, where there is no further information about their shape, purpose or use. This is the case with our papyrus.

Unpublished.

STT

**Cat. 69. Document Related to Tax Collection**

P.Monts.Roca inv. 713: TM 128359

Papyrus and clay

7th-8th cent. CE

Hermoupolis

10.2 x 3.7 cm.

This papyrus contains two lines of text written across the fibres, in brown ink, in a cursive hand datable to the 7th-8th century CE. It seems to have been cut from a larger document, perhaps by the dealers of antiquities, due to the fact that it is provided with a clay seal. This text seems to be a payment of a sum of money, perhaps related to matters of taxation as the use of the clay seal seems to suggest. It is of interest that there is a reference to the monks of the monastery of the Holy Apollos, the well-known monastery in Bawit. Both collections of papyri, Roca-Puig and Palau Ribes, own a considerable number of documents from this monastery and the surroundings (see cat. 65, 66 and 67).

The clay seal has been stamped twice. On one side there seems to be a cornucopia, and on the other side a human (perhaps female) figure standing, holding a long object in the left arm. Clay seals are frequently found in late papyrus documents dealing with taxation.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca IV:73*.

A Boud'hors – J. Clackson – C. Louis – P. Sijpesteijn (eds.), *P.Clackson 50*.

STT

**Cat. 70. Fragment of Decorative Textile**

Ubach Collection inv.113

5th-7th cent. CE

Egypt

10.5 x 30 cm.



Fragment of textile in tapestry with wefts of polychrome wools on a linen taffeta. The basic warp and weft are made from linen with S-twist. The decoration weft, for its part, is in wool with S-twist. The decoration is arranged around lobed motifs that can be considered cordiform schematic flowers of different

colours (one in pale pink and another in green) on a red background. These motifs are surrounded by thick stalks in linen with buds forming diagonal lines and a cruciform motif at the intersection. At the sides, offset with central motifs, are the same cruciform motifs. At the top left we glimpse a second register in brown and blue but it is incomplete. It is likely that the fragment belonged to the decorative strip of a tunic (Lat. *clavus*).

A. Cabrera (forthcoming).

LTC

**Cat. 71. Fragment of Decorative Textile**

Ubach Collection inv.107

6th-7th cent. CE

Egypt

12 x 26.5 cm.



Fragment of textile in tapestry of polychrome wool. The basic warp and weft are made from linen with S-twist while the decoration weft is wool also with S-twist. The fabric is divided into three registers. In the central register, there is a small disk (*orbiculus*) with a horseman riding without stirrups, wearing a tunic. The horse, somewhat schematic, is harnessed and in galloping stance. It is completed with four rectangular registers with schematic vegetal decoration, flanked by two fine strips of heart-shaped motifs in yellow, brown and blue. Given the use of wool and the outline in black wool, the piece can be dated to around the 6th-7th centuries CE.

A. Cabrera (forthcoming).

LTC

**Cat. 72. A text of Aggressive Magic.  
Typhonicos logos**

O.Monts.Roca inv. 1472: TM 341739  
Ostrakon  
6th-8th cent. CE  
Provenance unknown  
12 x 14 x 0.8 cm.

This ostrakon is a very special piece as, for the moment, it is the only document in the Roca-Puig Collection featuring a text of aggressive magic. The text and its drawings are on the convex side of the ostrakon. The concave side is blank.

The text, a sort of invocation without a clear meaning, has been related to the *Typhonicos logos*, "Typhon's magical formula". The magical words of this formula appear in several documents dating back to the 1st century CE. All the documents containing this formula (in different variations) are related to aggressive magic.

The text is accompanied by a representation of two animals with long necks whose heads are looking in opposite directions. Two small legs support their quadrangular bodies which have been filled by magical *charak-teres*. *Charakteres* were quite popular symbols in magical documents from Roman and Byzantine times, and they were considered very powerful. In this document, the *charakteres* are Greek letters adorned with small circles at the vertexes.

Despite the years of distance, the magical document of Montserrat presents interesting parallels with a prescription for a restraining spell preserved in the Greek magical papyrus PGM VII 940-968 (4th century CE). The use of ostrakon is related to ritual acts of aggressive magic, mainly erotic magic, according to the extant magical handbooks for Roman and Byzantine times. Invocations to the god Seth-Typhon are also well represented in the instructions to accomplish this kind of magical artefact.

Even if it is not possible to assert outright the aim of the Montserrat ostrakon, the material together with its text and its drawing suggest that it was conceived as an aggressive piece of magic, whose motivations were mainly rivalry in all kinds of matters, including love.

R. Martín Hernández – S. Torallas Tovar (2014).  
RMH

**Cat. 73. Drawing of Seth with invocation**

P.PalauRib. inv. 3: TM 63186.  
Papyrus  
2nd-5th cent. CE  
Provenance unknown  
9 x 12.5 cm.



This piece of papyrus has been interpreted as a magical document. The papyrus was written only on one side against the fibres. The whole design is composed by a representation of the god Seth accompanied by a Greek invocation to the right that can be translated as "the terrible and loud-voiced god". As R. W. Daniel and F. Maltomini noticed, the invocation is quite appropriate for the god who raises the voice (*śd-hm*); Seth.

The god is depicted as a donkey-headed human being, and is dressed with a short skirt. The iconographic model is well-known: the armed god. In this case, the god holds a bow in his left hand and an arrow in his right hand. This representation of Seth is very similar to one appearing in a prescription for causing separation in one of the Greco-Egyptian magical handbooks (PDM xii 62-75).

The invocation was written by a not very well-trained hand, which probably also drew the representation of Seth because the ink is the same. The invocation is composed of poetic words, used in the Homeric works that are close to the hymnic invocations. The way the text was written yields the acrostic of the name of the god: Seth (Σηθ).

The papyrus shows marks of having been folded in Antiquity, a feature that provides information about its use, because curses and amulets alike were folded in order to hide the text and preserve its power.

Therefore, it is logical to interpret the text as an aggressive magical document, and not as an amulet, as the first editor of the text considered at the time.

J. O'Callaghan, *P.Lit PalauRib.*:39.  
R. Daniel – F. Maltomini (1992), no. 69.  
RMH

**Cat. 74. Magical Amulet**

P.Monts.Roca inv. 239: TM 140309  
Papyrus  
Mid. 2nd-3rd cent. CE  
Provenance unknown  
9.7 x 10 cm.



This papyrus preserves a magical design that was probably composed to prevent or eliminate fever. The text was written by a slow-hand, not trained but not careless. The magical word, *archamariachabel* (APXAXAMAPIAXABEA), is written to form a triangle set up by the repetition of the magical word that loses its final letter in each line. These magical designs are well-known by other magical documents and are referred in magical handbooks as "wing-shape" formations; (πτερυγοειδῶς). This kind of magical drawing is usually related to healing purposes, but not solely. A belief in magical analogy must be understood; that is, a belief that in the same way the magical word disappears line by line, the problem or the disease will also disappear.

The magical word is not attested in other magical texts but it is coherent with other powerful words from similar texts that are based on alliteration and repetition of vowels. The end –ελ appears relatively frequently in magical papyri in personal names of divine powers. These names may be related to the Hebrew root meaning "god".

Remains of ink that are coherent with a *charakter* (χαρακτήρ) appear in the right-hand margin of the design. *Charakteres* are very schematic magical designs, very popular in magical papyri from Roman times onwards, which consist of crossed lines, like schematic stars, whose vertices are adorned by small circles (see cat. 72 and 78).

This kind of amulet was very popular in Greek and Roman times as well as in Christian times. They used to be folded, leaving the text in the inside, in order to form a small package to be placed in pendants for the protection of its owner.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca* IV:61.  
RMH

**Cat. 75. Christian Amulet**

P.Monts.Roca inv. 742: TM 219239  
Papyrus  
5th-6th cent. CE?  
Provenance unknown  
5.5 x 3.5 cm.



This small piece of papyrus is a complete Christian magical text: a healing amulet. The palaeography indicates that it was probably written around the 5th or 6th century CE. As it occurs with cat. 74, the papyrus preserves marks where it was folded in Antiquity.

The text was written in black ink following the direction of the fibres. It starts with a series of consonants or symbols whose meaning is unknown, although it is possible to find some parallels in other Christian magical documents.

The prophylactic text is similar to other amulets from Christian times. The invocation to the divinities, in this case the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, written in abbreviated form, is followed by the imperative "heal!" (θεράπευσον, *therapeuson*), to indicate, right after, for whom the amulet has been made, in this case, Pachoumis. The state of the ink makes it impossible to know what the sickness affecting Pachoumis was. However, an indication that the affliction must be eliminated from the whole body can be read. The text ends with the schematic drawing of a cross.

The use of this kind of amulet for healing, small tickets of papyrus written and folded to be carried in a pendant around the neck, was very popular in Christian times.

S. Torallas Tovar – K. A. Worp (eds.), *P.Monts.Roca* IV:62.  
RMH

### Cat. 76. Demotic Planetary Table

*P. Monts.Roca* inv. 314r  
Papyrus  
1st cent. CE  
Provenance unknown  
8 x 14 cm.

This papyrus, composed of seven fragments, preserves a planetary table of the type designated as monthly almanac, since it registers the movement of planets indicating their positions on each month of the year. Each year seems to have been introduced by a line that probably registered the number of the year and the planet to which the following data referred. Each entry occupies a line, which has the following structure: month, day, zodiac sign, and longitude. The months are written with a single numeral, and the days use the special shapes for day numerals, from 1 to 30. The position of the planets is indicated by the sign of the zodiac constellation plus the exact location in degrees and fractions of degrees. The zodiac signs are indicated by one single sign plus a

star determinative (\*), to denote that they are astronomical terms. The longitude data is always given by two numerals, which indicate degrees and minutes, and a little hyphen-like sign in many but not all the columns.

Fr. 1+2+5+6 preserves two columns of the table in an incomplete state. These columns record data for two different planets, and each one comprises, at least, two years. The top section of column 1 lists the movement of a fast planet, which moves from one sign to the next one in one month. If we consider that each line corresponds to a month, it has to be one of the inner planets, and its movement would fit best with that of Venus. The lower section of this column also records the movement of a fast planet, perhaps the same one as in the top part. Column 2 is better preserved. The movement recorded here corresponds to that of Jupiter in the top section and most probably also in the lower section of the column.

At the time of the edition of this text, this is the only monthly almanac attested written in Demotic, since the other Demotic planetary tables are templates, sign-entry almanacs, and tables of other kinds. Parallels are found only among Greek papyri. The format of the table is, therefore, purely Hellenistic, with no connection to previous pharaonic astronomy.

M. Escolano-Poveda (forthcoming).  
MEP

### Cat. 77. Greek Horoscope

*P.Monts.Roca* inv. 223a: TM 219241  
Papyrus  
336/337 CE  
Oxyrrhynchus?  
13 x 13 cm.

This small piece of papyrus preserves a very damaged but complete horoscope. It was written with the fibres in a greyish ink. This text probably corresponds to the first use of the papyrus. The verse preserves a written document against the fibres, in black ink, written in a professional cursive hand.

Horoscopes were very popular in Antiquity. Astrologers worked out the future of a newborn by looking at the position of the different planets and other celestial points in the heaven at the very hour

of his/her birth. The seven planets (Saturn, Jupiter, Venus, Mars, Mercury, the Sun and the Moon) and other important astrological points such as the Mid-heaven and ascendant (ὠροσκόπος, horoscope) appear in this text.

This horoscope begins, like other ancient horoscopes, with the date and time of birth: 5th of Mesore at the fourth hour of the night. The name of the customer and the year of birth do not appear, leading the editors to infer that the horoscope was made in general for someone born in this year.

After the date of birth, the different planets and main celestial points are written in successive lines followed by the sign of the zodiac in which they were placed on that day and at that hour. The text is organised following the zodiac signs. When two planets were in the same zodiac sign, they appear in the same line followed by the sign in question.

The horoscope ends with a greeting formula, "Farewell."

S. Torallas Tovar and K. A. Worp (eds.) *P.Monts.Roca* IV:64.  
RMH

### Cat. 78. Palimpsest with Coptic Magical Text

*P.Monts.Roca* inv. 643: TM 126174  
Parchment  
5th-6th cent. CE  
Provenance unknown  
16.5 x 18.1 cm.

This piece from the Roca-Puig Collection is part of a bigger group of Coptic magical texts written on the part of a parchment codex that contained Book 2 of Samuel in Sahidic Coptic. Although the text of the erased writing (*scriptura inferior*) has been published, the magical text remains unpublished. However, its magical content is clear due to the particularities of these texts. First, the figure in the centre of the piece, a human or divine figure framed in an oval, has interesting parallels with other magical drawings of similar beings that appear in other manuals of Coptic magic. Normally these drawings personify powerful forces that, on occasions, contain names of power inscribed inside. Another of the characteristics that indicate a magical content of the text is the series of *charakteres*

78.



surrounding the central drawing: drawings formed by lines whose vertices end in small circles (see cat. 72 and 74). On occasions, these lines form letters of the Greek alphabet. Lastly, the repetition of vowels is also characteristic of magical texts, which are often used in invocations.

The pages of the biblical manuscript of Samuel were removed and sewn together to form a roll on which the magical text was written. This is not the only case in which biblical manuscripts have been used for this purpose. It was probably hoped that the power of the sacred text would in its turn bestow greater power on the magical text written on it. The palimpsest was later ripped up; we do not know if this was part of a ritual or just to destroy it, or perhaps for it to be sold in parts. Despite the dispersion due to the antiquities market, fragments of this manuscript have been found in the Palau-Ribes Collection in Barcelona, and in McGill University in Canada.

S. Torallas Tovar, *P.Monts.Roca* II:8  
B. C. Jones (2013).  
RMH