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Communications to the editors may be addressed to the Senior Editor, WILLIAM H. WILLIS, Box 4715 Duke Station, Durham, North Carolina 27706, U.S.A. Orders for purchase and for subscription should be placed directly with the Circulation Manager, Miss DOROTHY ROUNDS, Box 144, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138, U.S.A.

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THE PAPYROLOGIST AT WORK

ERIC G. TURNER
University College London

The J. H. Gray Lectures
given at The University of Cambridge 1971

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Preface

THE THREE CHAPTERS composing this monograph were originally delivered as the J. H. Gray lectures in the University of Cambridge (such terminological exactitude should make it unnecessary to add 'England') in January and February 1971. Addressed to an audience of mature or maturing classical scholars only a few of whom had ever held a piece of papyrus in their hands, they were designed to exemplify the discipline to which the professional reader of Greek papyri submits himself and the methods he follows. I am grateful to the editor of *GRBS* for accepting them for publication in the monograph series and thus making them available to a wider audience; and to Professor Eric W. Handley, Director of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London, for a grant from the Henry Brown Fund in aid of printing costs.

I have left the text of the lectures practically unaltered, except that reference is made in the notes to further work on the papyri cited by way of illustration. The appendix contains a new copy (with plate) of one of these illustrative texts, and is an excellent example (turned also against myself) of the perils of over-hasty restoration discussed in the second chapter.

The Oxyrhynchus papyri illustrated in the plates are reproduced by kind permission of the Egypt Exploration Society, and were photographed with his usual skill by Mr E. Hitchcock of University College London. The abbreviations used for papyrus publication are the standard ones (set out in e.g. my own *Greek Papyri* [Oxford and Princeton 1967] 156ff). When referring to papyri not illustrated in the plates of this monograph I have tried to include a reference to a reproduction. In several cases I have referred to my own *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (Oxford and Princeton 1971), which I have abbreviated by the capital letters *GMAW*.

I should like to thank Miss Frances Mills for her help in repeated typing of passages of this book and in preparing the whole for the printer.

July, 1972

ERIC G. TURNER

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I

The Papyrologist at Work

*Happy was he, a bard and servant of the Muses in those days
when their meadow was yet unreaped; now all the spoil has
been parted, craft has discovered its bounds, we are like
runners who come last in a race.*

WHEN I was young I echoed the lament of Choerilus. All the great discoveries, it seemed, were in the past. But for classical scholarship the regrets are wasted, since the idea is not true. There have been greater discoveries in the last hundred years (and during the sixties of the twentieth century) than at any time since the Renaissance.

The recovery, not merely of gorgeous artefacts, but of works of imaginative literature has come about through the discovery of papyrus and parchment books in Egypt and the Near East. In 1890, the *Constitution of Athens* of Aristotle;¹ in 1896, Bacchylides²—I cite whole rolls for a moment, since we are to be spending most of our time with fragments; in 1907, 1958, 1964 and 1969, Menander;³ in 1967, Euripides.⁴ We might almost call this age that of the 'Manuscript Explosion'. Whole rolls or codices such as these, miraculously left over from the ancient world, were instantly available for the enjoyment and use of the scholar who had curiosity and ordinary

¹ P.Lit.Lond. 108=Pack² 163; E. G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (here after referred to as GMAW) no.60.

² P.Lit.Lond. 46=Pack² 175; complete facsimile (London 1897); M. Norsa, *Scrittura letteraria greca* (Florence 1939) tav. x.

³ P.Cair. inv. 43227=Pack² 1301; P.Bodmer IV (1958) (=Pack² 1298), XXV, XXVI (1969) (=C. Austin, ed. *Menandri Aspis et Samia* [Berlin I 1969, II 1970]); P.Sorb. inv. 2272, 2273=A. Blanchard and A. Bataille, *Recherches de Papyrologie* III (1964) 103ff=R. Kassel, ed. *Menandri Sicyonius* (Berlin 1965), GMAW no.40; P.Oxy. XXXIII 2656, GMAW no.43.

⁴ P.Sorb. inv. 2328, C. Austin, *Recherches de Papyrologie* IV (1967) 11ff=*idem*, *Nova fragmenta Euripidea* (Berlin 1968) 22ff.

philological training—and, let us add, good eyesight and patience. Moreover, through finds of this kind, immediate contact was established with antiquity: for these are the writings of men of the ancient world, not texts copied and recopied through a long period of transmission.

But finds of such relative completeness are rare. Time is a jealous goddess and exacts a heavy percentage on what is preserved. It is not only that a dry climate is needed for preservation—such as is found only in Egypt and a few parts of Palestine and Mesopotamia: papyrus, tough material that it is, decays almost as quickly as paper if it is allowed to grow damp. To survive relatively complete, a roll or codex must have been treasured in the ancient world too: buried for instance with its owner like the Hawara⁵ Homer or the *Persians* of Timotheus,⁶ preserved in a jar like the Cairo Menander or the Qumran scrolls⁷ (a jar under the floorboards was a frequent place in which the ancients kept their personal possessions), or hidden in some safe place—a cave, like the manuscripts of Origen found in the Toura quarries⁸ (and it must have been in some such cache that M. Bodmer's Menander was preserved). Like 'treasure trove' in England, such finds are lucky ones—and usually made by farmers, Beduin, prospectors—not by archaeologists deliberately planning a search for papyri. Planned excavations for this purpose have usually been directed at town sites. Indeed the bulk of papyri written in Greek and Latin found by excavation come from town sites rather than cemeteries. Such sites⁹ are Oxyrhynchus, first visited by Grenfell and Hunt in 1897, and then again for five continuous seasons from 1903 to 1907; and thereafter exploited by Italian expeditions; Antinoopolis, dug by John Johnson in 1914 and later by Italian investigators. Comparable with these towns in richness of results are villages in the Arsinoite nome (the Fayyûm), excavated by many expeditions—among which

⁵ Bodleian Library Gr. class. a.1(P)=Pack³ 616; GMAW no.13.

⁶ P.Berol. inv. 9875=Pack³ 1537; complete facsimile, U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, ed. *Timotheos, Die Perser* (Leipzig 1903). One page in W. Schubart, *Papyri Graecae Berolinenses* 1.

⁷ D.J.D.; and G. R. Driver, *The Judaean Scrolls* (Blackwell, Oxford 1965).

⁸ L. Doutreleau, *Recherches de science religieuse* 43 (1955) 161–76; *idem* and L. Koenen, *ibid.* 55 (1967) 546–64.

⁹ See E. G. Turner, *Greek Papyri* ch. 3, and references there. Medinet Madi: Edda Bresciani, *Rapporto preliminare delle campagne di scavo 1966 e 1967* (Milan 1968). Kas'r Ibrim: J. Martin Plumley, *JEA* 50 (1964) 4–5; *ibid.* 52 (1966) 9–12; 53 (1967) 3–5; 56 (1970) 12–18.

I should mention the expeditions from the University of Michigan to Karanis (1925–40), or that of the Universities of Milan, Pisa and Florence to Medinet Madi in 1966 and 1967 (and subsequently). To round off this summary catalogue mention should also be made of Roman forts, such as that of Kas'r Ibrim (Primis) in Nubia, examined by Professor J. M. Plumley and Professor W. C. Frend in the sixties of this century.

The finds from Oxyrhynchus (Behnesa, 120 miles south of Cairo) are of books and papers thrown away in antiquity by its ancient inhabitants. They were not, in general, found in its damaged buildings or hidden under the floors of its houses, but on ancient rubbish heaps over which the dry desert sand had quickly blown. We must recollect that a papyrus roll employed both hands of its reader when open; small wonder that a reader got into difficulties with his book from time to time, and then it would probably tear across. Athenian vases show readers struggling with rolls which have tied themselves in knots. Books, therefore, in the form of rolls probably had a shorter life than codices. Very many of our surviving pieces of book-rolls are torn across from the top to the bottom margin of the roll, presumably by this kind of accident. Some few were probably deliberately torn into small pieces by fanatical Christians in the early fifth century. But most of the fragments are the surviving ribands of books that were already damaged in antiquity, and in consequence were then tipped on to the rubbish heap. It is not without some justification that statisticians who work over the literary papyri listed in Roger Pack's *The Greek and Latin Literary Texts . . .* (second edition, Ann Arbor 1965) treat each fragment as evidence for the former existence of a complete roll. From such statistics an appreciation of the literacy and literary taste of Oxyrhynchus can be formed. What authors did they read? The authors still being read stood at least a chance of survival.

"We are sending off," wrote Grenfell to London in March 1898, "25 packing cases of papyrus texts recovered from this year's excavations. . . ." Similar figures could be quoted for the results of each of five subsequent years' work at Oxyrhynchus. The number was so large that work on preparing and sorting this material brought to England between 1898 and 1907 is still going on. The completer texts have now been published; but smaller pieces are still being damped out and sorted. One of these small pieces I shall shortly place before you.

To equip ourselves for a look at such a fragment we must continue our general survey. First the wood, then the trees.

First, then, a word about the physical properties of papyrus. This splendid Egyptian invention and product was made by a mechanical process from the papyrus plant, which was cultivated in special marshes in the Nile valley (as a government monopoly). The reed grows to a height of seven feet or more. Its stem is triangular. From one of these triangular faces the coarse rind is trimmed away and long ribands are torn (or cut, but experience shows that tearing produces a more uniform riband). These ribands are laid side by side on a hard, smooth surface, not so close that they overlap, nor so far apart that on drying shrinkage will leave a gap between them; above them a second layer is placed with equal care at right angles. A few blows with a mallet cause these two layers to coalesce firmly; the natural juices ('polyesters' as the chemist would term them) cause them to adhere without any added gum. The size of sheet made depends on the skill of the craftsman. The largest known is 46 cm. (about 18 ins.) high, but it is rare to find sheets more than about 37 cm. (say 15 ins.) in the Roman period, and about 25–30 cm. (say 10–11½ ins.) is a very common height then. The Elder Pliny gives a table of sizes and their trade names.¹⁰ The sheets were made separately, and then gummed together into rolls—sold at the stationer's in units of 20, 50 or even 70 sheets.¹¹ In these rolls the horizontal fibres are placed on the inside, where they are best protected from the constant strain involved in rolling and unrolling. Since the inside of the roll is also most easily protected from damage, it is the side usually chosen to carry the writing—what is in consequence usually called the 'recto' of the roll. We should note carefully that we cannot define this 'recto' except in relation to the incorporation of a sheet in a roll. The 'recto' is not the apparently smoother side. In a well-pasted roll, also, the joins between the sheets will show only on the recto.

These physical facts we need to know when we are confronted with a torn-up papyrus which we wish to reassemble. The overlap of the sheets at a 'join' between one sheet and another may be one way of proving that one tiny piece belongs to and is part of a second (as in the

¹⁰ Pliny, *HN* 13.78. It is a puzzling feature of his account that he gives only the less important dimension, namely width, and says nothing of the height.

¹¹ *P.Oxy.* ined., private letter of the second century after Christ, ἀγόρασον δέ μοι, κύριέ μου πατέρ, χάρτην ἐβδομηκοντάκollon.

Hypsipyle of Euripides¹²); so also may be a similar 'fibre' structure in a sheet. By 'fibres' are meant the vascular bundles present in the living reed, which on drying out present a diaper pattern of threads or fibres: the distances apart and irregularities of recurrence may be sufficient (under a microscope or in a photographic enlargement) to allow two pieces to be put together with some certainty.¹³ I should like to refer as an example to a roll of the poems of Alcaeus put together by Mr Lobel. The clearly seen square of discolored fibres guarantees the correctness of the join.¹⁴

The alignment in the Alcaeus fragment is surprising because it was normal for a scribe to write his text in columns that begin at the same point. In a prose text, such as the London Hyperides roll,¹⁵ an even beginning and ending can be maintained—except that the scribe has not troubled to rule a vertical line to mark his beginning, and consequently he keeps swinging away to the left as he works progressively down the column (this tendency to move further to the left is called Maas' law after the scholar who first pointed it out—it may be important for textual restoration, since the number of letters in the line is likely to increase as the starting point is displaced to the left). When he is copying a verse text the scribe (from the end of the third century B.C.) will normally make his column the width of the verse he is writing: hexameters will be the longest line (but hexameters and pentameters when written in couplets start at the same point). But in a dramatic text there may be indentation for a series of shorter verses (e.g. lyrics set in the middle of trimeters), while an occasional longer verse (a hexameter quoted in comic trimeters) will be made to project into the margin. From the time of the Alexandrian editions of the classics (say the end of the third century before Christ) it seems probable that a standard way of dividing lyric verses was adopted.

The ancient Greek scribe placed the writing material across his knees in order to write. His Egyptian predecessor sat cross-legged on the ground, and pulled his linen tunic tightly across his knees to serve as support for his papyrus roll. Probably Greek scribes at first adopted the same position—and because of poverty no doubt many of them continued to do so. But monuments at a quite early date show us

¹² G. W. Bond, ed. *Euripides, Hypsipyle* (Oxford 1963) introd. cf. *GMAW* no.31.

¹³ See *GMAW* nos.1–3.

¹⁴ *ibid.* no.72.

¹⁵ *P.Lit.Lond.* 132; C. H. Roberts, *Greek Literary Hands* (Oxford 1956) pl. 13b.

seated scribes: a Louvre terracotta,¹⁶ for instance, classed as Boeotian and assigned to the sixth century before Christ, represents a scribe seated on a stool with a hinged tablet across his knees and the stylus in his right hand. It is not absolutely certain that he is writing: like the *paidagogos* of the Douris vase, he might be correcting a pupil's exercise. But his position is that shown in a number of later representations of persons certainly writing. We should note that the Greek scribe who wrote on papyrus used a stiff reed, which he cut, split and sharpened with a penknife, and this stiff reed is employed in the very earliest examples of Greek writing we possess (Derveni).¹⁷ Unlike the soft rush used in Egypt (handled indeed like a brush) a solid support would be needed for the writing surface if the papyrus was not to be punctured. Yet I know of no monument showing a writing table in use until the fourth century after Christ (Ostia relief),¹⁸ and the pundits say tables were not used. Nor do I know of any evidence for a writing board on which the papyrus might be supported, and should be grateful if any person could tell me of any.

No surviving Greek papyri are older than the fourth century before Christ. One day it may be that excavations at Saqqara will produce texts written by earlier Greek visitors to Egypt. But such will be freakish, and one cannot expect Egypt to provide Greek papyri till after Alexander the Great added Egypt to the Greek world and gave it a Greek administration in 330 B.C. Papyri, therefore, offer no evidence on the early history of Greek writing, the development of the alphabet, the time at which papyrus was first introduced into the Greek world, or what very early books looked like. When literary papyri at last turn up, they already seem to be written according to a system fully formed. A specimen of a commentary on an Orphic Cosmogony, which has survived only partly burnt from a funeral pyre at Derveni near Saloniki,¹⁹ and is to be dated, as I think, about 300 B.C., is the work of a skilful and practised scribe (except only that his line ends are uneven since he likes to end his lines with a complete word). We shall observe that he used no punctuation (except that he puts a *paragraphus* mark before and after a quoted hexameter line) and that letters are not grouped to form words but are written in

¹⁶ Louvre terracotta C.A. 684.

¹⁷ GMAW no. 51.

¹⁸ Greek Papyri pl. vi; GMAW p. 7 n. 2.

¹⁹ See *supra* n. 17.

continuous blocks. I may add in parenthesis that I believe this method of writing is not a primitive survival, but was deliberately adopted for aesthetic reasons. The main proof I would adduce is that the Romans were induced by their acceptance of all things Greek as models to abandon their own intelligent system of marking divisions between words and to write the Latin classics similarly in a continuous script. It was the reader's task to divide these blocks of writing into words, and this included the correct elision of syllables apparently in hiatus—for both syllables were usually written in full (or the same scribe might sometimes write them in full and sometimes tacitly elide one of them). It was also the reader's task to divide the words correctly into clauses, i.e. to punctuate them.

PLATE 1 shows one of the fragments,²⁰ unpublished, which I have picked out because it is easy to read, because it contains problems which my readers can help to solve, and also because it makes a picturesque addition to our knowledge of the ancient world.

Our first task is to set out precisely what the papyrus says, and to distinguish between what is certain or given by the text and what is a matter of inference. This is the prime responsibility of the papyrologist. It is often not fulfilled with the scrupulousness and unambiguity desired. We shall see how difficult a task it is (not to read the original but to make explicit our hypotheses during reading of a torn patch).

It is 10.5 cm. broad, 13.5 cm. high, and the photograph is facsimile size. Since the top is damaged we will begin with col. ii, end of line 2 and start of line 3:

δοκ[
 -ων πεπεκινονενι
 α μετενηνεχθαιτω[
 αποφάσεων

In the lower portion of col. ii the right-hand margin is preserved. Not very much, therefore, should be lost at the end of line 2. -ων should, one feels, go back to δοκ[—i.e. δοκ[ου]-ων; is it to agree with ἀποφάσεων, line 5, “since the ἀποφάσεις (‘judgements’ or ‘sayings’) seem to have been transferred to him” (ἐκείνων, which should refer to a third party)? But this first impression is excluded by the presence of ἐνίας, subject in the accusative case of the infinitive μετενηνεχθαι. If the restoration δοκ[ου]-ων is on the right lines, a noun (or predicative) in the feminine

²⁰ It is to be published in P.Oxy. XLI as no. 2944.

genitive plural must be found for it in the unread portions of lines 1 and 2. Let us leave this difficulty for the moment.

After ἀποφάσεων there is a space, and a paragraphus (the line under the initial letters which projects into the left-hand margin). This should mean (and clearly does here mean) that a new sentence begins.

5 φιλικος
 γουνομησιουσπο
 τουδιαμφιβητηθεν
 τοσυποτωνγυναι
 κωνπαιδιουγεγρα
 10 φεν οτικκηπτομε
 νωναμφοτερωντε
 κεινπροσταξαιτομ[
 ροσεκατεραδιατεμ

The reading of the letters gives us no difficulty except in the last line. At the end of line 12 μ must be followed by a vowel according to the rules of word division. We may therefore work back from *τεραι*, which can be clearly seen in line 13, to *εκατεραι*, preceded in that line by *ρος*, and try the restoration μ[ε]|ρος. We note that the letters *ητη* in line 7 have been crossed through and written over again and that there is a further space and paragraphus after *γέγραθεν* in line 10. The preposition *ὑπὸ* in line 6 is a puzzle. I know of no use of this preposition by commentators having the sense of 'under the heading of', where originally *περί* would be expected. *ἐπί*, however, as Mr C. H. Roberts reminds me, is idiomatic in this meaning, and I suppose a usage of *ὑπέρ* would also be conceivable to give this sense. Assuming that this is the sense we might translate: "For example, Philiscus of Miletus has written, on the subject of the child, which the two (*δια-* in *διαμφιβητηθεν-*) women claimed was theirs, that when both of them were pretending to be its mother he gave orders to cut it in two (*διατέμ[νοντα]*) and to give (the dative case justifies this verb) a half to each one of them."

Here, in fact, is the story of the judgement of Solomon in a Greek author. I remind you of the Biblical narrative (*I Kings* 3.16ff). Two harlots came before Solomon. Both had borne children, but one had 'overlaid' her child in bed and suffocated it; both now laid claim to the survivor. "Then said the king (v.23): the one saith, 'This is my

son that liveth, and thy son is the dead'; and the other said, 'Nay; but thy son is the dead and my son is the living'. And the king said, 'Bring me a sword'. And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, 'Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other'. Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, 'O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it'. But the other said, 'Let it be neither mine nor thine but divide it'. Then the king answered and said, 'Give her the living child and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof'." The writer of the book represented by the papyrus is unknown (his text was copied in the early second century after Christ), but he quotes as authority Philiscus of Miletus. This Philiscus is the subject of an entry in that admirable encyclopaedia, the *Suda*, where he is put down as a pupil of Isocrates and teacher of Timaeus, i.e. this carries the knowledge of this story in Greece back to the first half of the fourth century before Christ.

As far as I know, this story has not previously been found in any classical author. I have searched Stith-Thompson's *Index of Folk Themes* in vain. Moreover, Sir James Frazer mentions no Greek or Roman analogy when he discusses the Judgement of Solomon.²¹ The editor of Apollodorus and Pausanias should have been aware of such analogues if any scholar was. He can in fact quote parallels from Jaina literature in India—a fact which may well be helpful when, in a moment, we come to consider some wider implications of this text. The Jaina version runs: "A certain merchant had two wives; one of them had a son, the other had not. . . . Both women looked after the child, who did not know his real mother. All went to another country, where the merchant died. Then the women quarrelled, and a decision had to be reached who was the mother."

Can we say more (if only negatively) about the author of this fragmentary bookroll; and also about the context of the quotation from Philiscus?

The first 5 lines of col. ii are difficult because they form the end of a sentence (we note that there is only the one paragraphus; and we seem to see a *ὥστε* clause with a hanging participial phrase). Correct reading of this sentence, indeed, depends on the physical reconstitution of the original. When discovered, two small pieces, now shown as attached to the main fragment, were in fact severed from

²¹ *The Folklore of the Old Testament* III ch. xi, pp.570-71.

it. Can they be replaced accurately? We are helped here by taking into account the physical properties of a sheet of papyrus. This tiny fragment is anchored (1) by the continuity of the vertical fibres on the back and front (the method already illustrated); (2) by the sharing of tiny traces of ink forming three letters in line 2 on the front (]. ιγ); (3) the fact that there is also writing (a *gnome*?) on the back at this point, of which lines 2 and 3 can be reconstructed as follows:

2 το[ν] βιον ζηνων. .[.]..
3 τροπον ανακαλει. . . . c

This seems to be only a piece of doodling, but it helps to confirm that the loose fragments are correctly placed.

We note further that the papyrus is warped at the beginning of lines 3 (ων) and 4, and therefore also in line 2 the space is larger than needed to complete what appears to be ω.

(a)
]ςωστεκαι. []ετ[
(b) (c)
ρω. ιγεγονεν[]. ιδοκ

Inspection of the original at the three uncertain places enables us to proceed by elimination. At (a) there is a high dot of ink level with the preceding *iota*. Only the cross-bar of τ would be likely to produce such a dot of ink. At (b) the curve before ι, if it is not part of ω (and we have seen that it is probably not), can only be ο or θ. At (c) inspection of our text shows that the traces on the line before ι are exactly what appear elsewhere when α precedes (e.g. γυναι line 8, or παι line 9). αι (and nothing else) is entirely satisfactory here.

We can now make a perfectly satisfying grammatical sentence by restoring in line 1 the genitive of the article τ[ων] followed by ἐτ[έ]ρωθι γεγονέναι, and translate: "... so that, even of the sayings (ἀποφάσεων) which seem to have been uttered (γεγονέναι) on other occasions, some have been transferred to him (ἐκείνον)." The writer is, in fact, speaking of anecdotes which wander from one personality to another.

The full text will now run like this:

COL. ii

[...]ς ὥστε καὶ τ[ων] ἐτ[έ]-
ρωθι γεγονέναι δοκ[ου]-
cων ἐπ' ἐκείνον ἐνί-
ας μετενηχῆθαι τῶ[ν]
5 ἀποφάσεων. Φιλίσκος
γούν ὁ Μιλήσιος ὑπὸ
τοῦ διαμφισβητηθέν-
τος ὑπὸ τῶν γυναι-
κῶν παιδίου γέγρα-
10 φεν, ὅτι κηπτομέ-
νων ἀμφοτέρων τε-
κεῖν προστάξει τὸ μ[έ]-
ρος ἑκατέραι διατέμ[ν]ειν οἱ νοῦτα διαδοῦναι

Our earlier short survey of bookrolls leads on to three further points which I must mention quite briefly:

(1) The handwriting of our text, which when complete we found easy to read, is one that pretends to elegance: in particular, the size and regularity of the lettering, its wide spacing, the arches which offer a base for initial vertical strokes (e.g. of α, ν), the developed serifs, suggest a professional scribe writing a book of no ordinary quality.

(2) The small size of the roll—only 13 lines in the column, total height of roll 14 cm. (a size which includes wide margins above and below)—is itself remarkable among books found in Egypt. It is a format used for poetry books in the first and second centuries—Menander, *Karchedonios*²² is 16 cm.; a Pindar *Partheneion*,²³ reused to hold a collection of epigrams on its back,²⁴ is only 12.8 cm. high; the roll of Herodas in the British Museum²⁵ is 12.4 cm. high. Most copies of classical texts from Oxyrhynchus are 20 cm. or over—usually between 26 and 30 cm., as I have already indicated. To me this format, coupled with the calligraphic hand, suggests a prestige issue—a sort of coffee-table book. But I do not know what weight to give to this factor in the assessment of possible authorship of the text.

²² P. Oxy. XXXIII 2654 = GMAW no. 41.

²³ P. Oxy. IV 659 = GMAW no. 21.

²⁴ P. Oxy. IV 662.

²⁵ P. Lond. 135 = GMAW no. 39.

(3) Line 7 of col. ii, as we saw, has been written over a second time, as though being corrected. That is to say, someone has attempted to correct the text: but that person has not done it thoroughly, for *ὑπό* at line 8 seems to be used for *περί* (or at the least, *ἐπί* or *ὑπέρ*).

In my provisional translation I did not stop over the word *ἀποφάσεων*. It was a term frequently used for 'sayings', 'apophthegms' (e.g. Diogenes Laertius 1.41). If that is its meaning here, then the previous sentence seems to be recording the consequence of a previously stated proposition. It is, that even out of the apophthegms which seem to have been uttered on a different occasion some have been transferred to another person (*ἐκείνου*). Are we speaking of the Seven Sages? Who is *ἐκείνου*? Might he be Thales of Miletus, for instance? Such a note might be thought to be in place in a collection of *Apophthegmata*, which (to judge from the intellectual superficiality of Diogenes Laertius I) might well rank as light literature; and the format of this book is what might be expected in light literature.

But the word *ἀπόφασις* also means a 'judicial judgement'. It is a technical term for the award of an arbitrator in Athenian law or the decision of an emperor in Roman law. In view of the appeal made in the following sentence without more ado to Philiscus and the 'Judgement of Solomon' (possibly its abrupt introduction as a subject which would be at once recognized could be thought to point to a return to a subject already broached), this sense of *ἀπόφασις* is particularly apposite. Now we note that in the *Suda* the account of Philiscus of Miletus' works concludes with the title *Ἰσοκράτους Ἀπόφασις*. Sanneg took *Ἀπόφασις* to be a corruption of plural to singular, and supposed that Philiscus exercised a pupil's *pietas* and collected Isocrates' 'apophthegms' (a work like the *Ἀπομνημονεύματα Σωκράτους* of Xenophon). It would not have been out of character for a man who wrote the life of the Athenian orator and statesman Lysurgus, as F. Renehan has recently reminded us,²⁶ quoting a passage of the commentator Olympiodorus on Plato.²⁷ It would also be perfectly possible, however, to retain the singular *Ἀπόφασις* and to suppose that Philiscus composed an imaginary 'Judgement' which he put into the mouth of Isocrates. Among the genuine speeches of Isocrates, the *Busiris*, which purports to justify the legendary Egyptian king, is not remote in subject matter. This guess I owe to Professor A. Momigliano.

²⁶ GRBS 11 (1970) 229–30.

²⁷ *ad Platonis Gorgiam* p.198, 1–4 Norvin.

Whatever the truth on this matter, the use of the story by Philiscus is an addition to the testimony of growing Greek interest in Eastern lore in the fourth century B.C. at or before the time of Alexander the Great. Josephus²⁸ traces some of the stages of this growth when discussing the way in which the Greeks came to a knowledge of Jewish history and wisdom. To him we owe knowledge of Clearchus of Soli's dialogue *Περὶ Ὑπνῶν*, in which one of the characters participating is Aristotle. Aristotle is depicted in conversation with the Jewish sage Hyperochides. "This man," we are told, "was a Jew by race, from Coele Syria. These persons are descended from the Indian philosophers" (the same view of their origin is later ascribed to others in addition to Clearchus by Diogenes Laertius²⁹ and by Megasthenes³⁰). We have already noted that Frazer quoted Indian parallels for the Judgement of Solomon. I owe to my colleague Raphael Loewe the information that the Old Testament scholar H. Gressmann³¹ suggested that the Indian version (in which the women are co-wives and parentage involves inheritance) is more likely to be the original than the Hebrew (where the women are harlots).

It might be thought that a striking anecdote such as that of the Judgement of Solomon could easily travel by oral report, via the mouths of men who had not looked into books. But the uneasy question then arises why so few of the striking anecdotes from the Jewish scriptures found their way into Greek thinking.

The further idea now comes up that perhaps after all the story reached Greece from Indian sources, not from Hebrew; i.e. that Judaea was side-stepped. On this I am incompetent to pronounce. But three points may be made:

(1) John Gray³² considers that most critical opinion would assign the compilation of *Kings* (based on annalistic sources, etc.) to deuteronomic circles in the late pre-exilic period, i.e. late seventh century, and assumes an exilic expansion and redaction. But a minority view dates *Deuteronomy* (and hence also the history which bears its imprint) to the post-exilic period but before Nehemiah (i.e. before 444 B.C.). I quote my colleague Raphael Loewe again: "It goes without saying

²⁸ Joseph. c. *Apionem* 1.22, 163.

²⁹ Diog. Laert. praef. 9.

³⁰ *ap. Clem. Alex. Strom.* 1.15.

³¹ *Die älteste Geschichtsschreibung und Prophetie Israels*² (Göttingen 1921) 198.

³² *I and II Kings: a Commentary*² (Philadelphia 1970) 6.

that no Greek version of *Kings* would have been available in the fourth century, and we may assume as much about an Aramaic one, even assuming that your papyrus' author could have read Aramaic."

(2) We may add a further doubt—a Greek of the early fourth century who has knowledge of Hebrew literature would be a real phenomenon. W. W. Tarn³³ has pointed out how little the Greeks in the Hellenistic period managed to learn about the Jews.

(3) The very form in which Philiscus of Miletus is quoted in our fragment, with its sudden introduction of the anecdote of the Judgement, suggests that this anecdote (or one very like it) had already been discussed by the author: and the purpose of introducing Philiscus is to give a different view. If so, the story might have been current in Greece at a period *before* the fourth century.

In this first lecture I have tried to lead you step by step through the process of discovery and exploitation of a new piece of information, won unexpectedly from written relics of the past. The pleasure, indeed thrill, of discovery is the reward for a great deal of drudgery: meticulous attention to exact setting out of what the papyrus contains, step-by-step testing of the hypotheses on which even simple restoration is undertaken. This I take to be the meaning of editing, and this is the proper task of a papyrologist. He will not do it well unless he attempts a further step—to reconcile what is new with what was already known. But since he cannot be a universal polymath, he will defer here to the opinions of others. Unless his text, however, is completely reliable, counsel will be darkened, not lightened, by his discoveries. I hope in the next lecture to discuss three literary texts (one recently published, one quite new, and one known for some time) which will further illustrate the importance of careful editing.

³³ *Hellenistic Civilisation*³ (London 1952) 210–11.

II

The Utilization of Small Fragments

IN the last chapter I touched on the fact that nobody has selected the papyri that should survive; but I also pointed out that unless literature was read and recopied frequently, there would have been no texts to survive. The large number of papyrus manuscripts of Homer reflects the extent to which Homer was read. Now one important factor governing literary taste was the school. We know what authors continued to be read from the best of evidence—that of the school books themselves.

In the first number of a new periodical¹ published in 1970 by the University of Louvain, two Belgian scholars, W. Clarysse and A. Wouters, edited a schoolbook datable by its handwriting to the fourth century after Christ. It is in notebook form and lists words and names, in rough alphabetical order, according to the number of syllables they contain. A number of books like this are known—I suppose they could be thought of as vocabulary exercises. Usually they begin with words of two syllables, then three, then four, and perhaps five. On the page shown in PLATE 2 are words of 4 syllables from late in the alphabet, Φ – Ψ. The words and names are such as would be found in poetical reading—Homer, Hesiod's *Theogony*, Apollonius Rhodius (a great many), Euripides, Xenophon—and above all Menander. On this page you can see Χαρίκιος followed by Χαυρέτρατος; under sigma we also find Σμικρήνης from *Epitrepontes*; we also have Σμίκη (with a κ), Σώστρατος, Γοργύλας from the *Dyscolus*; *Samia* as title; and three other names, Chaereas, Naukleros, Ξέρξης, may be from Menander.

It is quite possible that the text we are now to consider (PLATE 3) was a school piece of this kind. It is a scrap of papyrus which is the property of the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale in Cairo and was first published by B. Boyaval in ZPE 6 (1970) 1ff. It has since then

¹ *Ancient Society* 1 (1970), esp. 201–35. And see PLATE 2.

And we may translate:

"O Night, you are my confidante from among the gods,
You see most of the game of love: you keep a
Count of those tossed by thoughts of gallantry:
Have you ever seen a man more wretched than me,
A more rueful star-crossed lover? I'm standing now
Outside my very own front door, in deep
Depression, walking up and down. . . . Why, what
On earth for, now when you are at midnight,
When I could be sleeping with my darling in my arms?
She's indoors in my house, I could do it,
And I want to make love like the maddest
Of lovers—yet I don't: I'd rather choose
A long walk under the stars, heavy-hearted,
And tell you all the story. By heaven,
I just don't know. . . ."

From this survey I omitted verse 2. In *ZPE* 6 (1970) 99 Professor Koenen's and Dr Austin's suggestion πρόνοι πολλοὶ γεγένηνται is printed. But, as we have seen, the last two letters are λο[or δο[. It will not do, I think, simply to substitute λόγοι or δόλοι for πόνοι. After πλεῖστον μέρος in verse 1, πολλοί is flat, περὶ τούτων has to mean "this situation" (without frame of reference), while ἐν σοι must mean "during your course." I cannot believe Menander such a bungler: he needs to get from the invocation to Night in verse 1 to the question to Night in verse 4, and he does it in two moves: (1) "You see most of the game of love" and (2) "You keep the score." In verse 2 I should read ἐν σοι . . . λό[γος, "the account (or score) depends on you" (ἐν σοί); and I should like περὶ τούτων to be followed by a defining relative clause. We can manage it with something like σοι γ' ἀμελοῦνται at the opening of verse 3; but I have no convincing suggestion of how to manage the *prima facie* nominative and the τε of φροντίδες τ' ἐρωτικαί at the end of the verse. If we make them subject of a verb such as ὀδυνῶν in verse 4 (supposing Plutarch simply to have inserted an invocation to the wrong deity out of forgetfulness), we obscure the important fact that a question is being asked.

Uncertainties must remain. But this scrap has given us the pleasure of enjoying the opening scene of a famous lost comedy of antiquity which can be reconstructed with more than usual confidence. How much, indeed, can we put back into a text that is torn and damaged?

It is unfortunately true that new knowledge and a new text gained from a papyrus that is complete is one thing; inferences and combinations based on a broken or damaged papyrus are another. In this example we have had the best of both worlds. Yet even here, as the Appendix (pp. 48–50) shows, the restorations are over sanguine.

My second topic is a papyrus from which much has been hoped and from which only frustration has come. I cannot answer the problems it poses. But perhaps I can define them more closely and at least set out the reasons for frustration.

The fragment shown in *PLATE 4* figure A is a tiny strip from Oxyrhynchus⁵ published by Mr E. Lobel and containing the middle parts of verses from Sappho 1.1, the *Hymn to Aphrodite*:

—]	ἀλλ]ὰ τυῖδ' ἔλ[θ', αἶ ποτα κατέρωτα	]ατυῖδέλ[
	τὰ]c ἔμας αὖ]δας αἰοῖα πῆλοι	]cέμαcάν[
	ἔκ]λυες, πάτρο[c δὲ δόμον λίποια	]λυες· πατρο[
8	χ]ρύσιον ἦλθ[ες	]ρυσιον· ἦλθ[
—]	ἄρ]μ' ὑπαcδε[ύξαια· κάλοι δέ c' ἄγον	]μυπαcδε[
	ᾠ]κεες cτροῦ]θοι περὶ γὰc μελαίνας	]κεεcctροῦ]
	πύ]κνα δύν[εντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠράνω]θε-	]κναδῖν[
12	ρο]c διὰ μέccω·	]cδιαμεccω[
—]	αἰ]ψα δ' ἐξίκο]ντο· cὺ δ', ᾧ μάκαιρα,	]ψαδεξίκο[
	μειδια[]cαιc' ἀθανάτωι προσώπωι	]μειδια[
	ἦ]ρε' ὅττ[ι δηῦτε πέπονθα κῶττι	]ρεοττ[
16	δη]ῦτε κ[άλλ]η]μμι	]υτεκ[...]η[
—]	κ]ῶττι [μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι	]ωττί[
	μ]αινόλαι [θύμωι· τίνα δηῦτε πείθω	]αινόλαι[
	.]. cάγην [ἐc cὰν φιλότατα; τίς c', ᾧ	]. . ᾧ. [
20	Ψά]πφ', [ἀδικεῖ;	]πφ[

"Hither come, if ever in the past you heard my cry from afar, and marked it, and came leaving your father's golden house, your chariot yoked," verse 5—I adapt Professor Page's translation to the punctuation of the papyrus (there is a clear middle stop after χρύσιον,

⁵ *P.Oxy.* XXI 2288.

When we look at the second Sappho text (PLATE 4 figure B), we note that it shares some but not all of these characteristics: it also has marginal notes, occasional accents, and middle stops. But these latter are in this case subsequent additions (8 *μυρρα· και κακια·*), not copied along with the text. They might therefore be no more than the work of the corrector or a scholar working over the text, the appreciation of a man in antiquity relying on his taste to tell him how he should punctuate.

At the heart of Sappho 1.1 there is a notorious linguistic and textual difficulty. Sappho imagines Aphrodite responding to her summons, and recollects what she said last time: "You asked what once again is the matter with me, why I am calling once again, and what in my heart's madness I most desire to have." From the three verbs in the first person present indicative (the subject of which is Sappho, quoted by Aphrodite) there is a transition (still inside the quotation) to a third person verb, of which Sappho is the object, "Who, Sappho, wrongs you?" How is this transition managed? It used to be thought that a second person verb *μαίε* stood as the first word in verse 19, "Whom once again do you wish Persuasion (*Πείθω*—the form *Πείθων* should, perhaps, rather be written) to bring you for you to love?" The form implied in the verb *μαίε* is rightly stigmatized as a monster by Sir Denys Page.⁹

The manuscripts of Dionysius of Halicarnassus which quote the poem give either *μαίσαγεν* or *καίσαγεν*. If *μαί* is thought to be the result of the scribe's eye being caught by *μαί* of *μαίνολαι* up above, these readings may be of no value. F. Blass divided *πείθω|μαί ε(οι)*: "Whom am I to be persuaded to bring to you for you to love?" The sense involved would be admirable, but there is a great obstacle in that there is no other example of a word divided between the second and third verses of the Sapphic stanza; and to elision of *οι* it has been objected that in such cases as *ε(οι) αυτωι* crasis, not elision, is the process.

Can the papyrus give us any help here? PLATE 5 offers an enlargement. Unfortunately its left-hand side is damaged, and the first letter of the verse is not there, while the next two are damaged. Mr E. Lobel¹⁰ describes the traces thus: "19].., the tip of an upright well above the general level followed by what looks like the overhang

⁹ D. L. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford 1955) 9.

¹⁰ P.Oxy. XXI p.2.

of *ε* with a dot (prima facie a stop) below it on the line." In his interpretation of this description he writes, "The first visible sign seems necessarily to be the top of *φ* or *ψ* and there is no room for a letter between this and the next, which seems to represent *ε*. The missing letter—there could scarcely have been more than one—at the beginning of the line must therefore have been a vowel. I can suggest nothing within the conditions but *ᾤψ ε'*," and then considers the possibility of *τίνα δηῦτε πείθω ᾤψ ε' ἄγην ἐς Φάν φιλότατα*. In this treatment *τίνα* is object of the verb *πείθω*, *ε(ε)* of the infinitive *ἄγην* taken to be dependent on *πείθω*; and the transmitted *εἰν* must necessarily be altered to *Φάν*. An alternative solution suggested to me in conversation by Mr Lobel with the aim of keeping *εἰν φιλότατα* is to treat *ε'* as elided *ε(οι)*, followed by aorist infinitive passive **ἄγην* (for which the equivalent form in Attic would be **ἄγηναι*).

Mr Lobel's skill as palaeographer and authoritative scholarship have won almost universal acceptance for his general view of the passage (that *πείθω* should be read and taken as first person singular present indicative) and for his suggestion *ᾤψ*. Yet he would himself be the first to admit to its tentative nature; and the photograph published in P.Oxy. XXI plate 1 is not such as to help us to seize the difficulty. I have reexamined the original, and had an enlarged photograph and a line block¹¹ made to show the complexity of the evidence.

It appears indeed that there are two layers of papyrus in this strip. The lower layer is probably also in the same handwriting; it is that fold of papyrus which lay adjacent to the upper when the book was still rolled up—i.e. part of the same roll of Sappho. At two places the layers can be made to part from each other, and this lower writing can be seen unambiguously. I have not dared to try physically to separate them. But if you look at the photograph (PLATE 5 figure A) at this spot you will see the horizontal fibres of that second layer below verse 19, and you will find the ink on them complicating the reading. These horizontal fibres show through where the upper layer is perished; it is on the upper layer, at the edge of a perished piece, that the high ink is found that has been taken for *ψ*, and on the right edge of the upper layer there is found the trace of *ε* followed by a low stop. See the drawing (PLATE 5 figure B). This *ε* and the stop

¹¹ The enlarged photograph (fig. A) and line block (fig. B) are set side by side in PLATE 5. In the block the shaded section represents the second (lower) layer of papyrus with horizontal fibres.

seem to me to be beyond doubt. The ψ , however, is obtained only by inference. It is the interpretation of the end of a pen stroke above the line made by a pen which was first moving upwards and then turned and moved down again. Here too the reading is confused by the presence of ink on the lower layer; in any photograph the straight edge of a broken papyrus layer leaves the same kind of mark as would result from a vertical ink line. Moreover, there has been a slight displacement of the axis of the writing in verse 19: $\alpha\gamma\eta\nu$ moves slightly uphill, and this piece seems slightly further than normally below the line above.

The chain of reasoning, to sum up, runs as follows: in the handwriting (as in most literary handwriting) the letters are set between two imaginary horizontal lines, one above them, one below. The only letters which normally rise well above the upper line are ψ and ϕ . This high trace must therefore by a process of elimination be one of these two letters.

We have, however, seen that our scribe sometimes writes a tall letter *alpha*: there is one example in *Phaedo* line 3;¹² another in this very text verse 13 $\alpha\epsilon\psi\alpha\delta\epsilon$ (α and δ are both high. It is unfortunately not possible to contrast these two letters for height with the neighbouring ψ , since the apparent black dots on the extreme right of the photograph are not ink. I must also say that this particular α seems to have been redrawn—that is, it may be anomalously made). Nevertheless it seems to me that the way is open to interpret the trace in verse 19 as α in addition to ψ or ϕ . Another possibility is open.

When I first observed this point I was tempted to think that an *iota* might also be squeezed between the α and the ϵ —that is to say, the papyrus might seem to have at least $\alpha\iota\epsilon\alpha\gamma\eta\nu$; and if it had that much, sound method might make one suppose that an initial μ or κ also stood in it (on the theory that if a fragmentary text could be interpreted as containing what the mediaeval manuscripts do, it must be so interpreted). There would be room for such an initial μ or κ , to judge by the fact that there must have been room for initial μ in the previous verse. This supposition (if explained on Blass's view that $\pi\epsilon\iota\theta\omega\mu\alpha\iota$ $\epsilon(\iota)$ stood here) would also account for the low stop after ϵ : it would be explicable as a 'separator' of elided $\epsilon(\iota)$ and $\alpha\gamma\eta\nu$, in the form of a dot on the line.¹³ But the proposed reading breaks

¹² PLATE 4 figure c.

¹³ Cf. GMAW p.13 n.1.

down on the insufficiency of space for the *iota* between the new *alpha* and the *sigma*.

I do not indeed have any acceptable suggestion to make. Without supposing an error by the scribe—and that I will not do, though scribes do make errors—one can think of three-letter words with α as the middle letter that could be used; but none is satisfactory in this context. Perhaps you who read this account may be able to do better.

Perhaps one final observation is worth making—too little is known of the reason why copyists put quantity marks on vowels in lyric poetry for the short mark on $\alpha\gamma\eta\nu$ to be treated as odd and therefore to militate against its being treated as part of the verb $\alpha\gamma\omega$. In Sappho fr. 44 (Lobel-Page), $\alpha\gamma\omega\nu$ imperfect at verse 14 has a circumflex accent, in verse 17 $\epsilon\pi\alpha\gamma\omega\nu$ imperfect has a long mark over the α . It would be a worthwhile task (but a drudgery also) to attempt to elucidate these anomalous quantity marks, and to see whether they can be explained on any grammatical theory (I think of such notations as $\phi\alpha\acute{\iota}\epsilon$, short; $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\phi\alpha\acute{\iota}\epsilon$, short; $\delta\kappa\lambda\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega$, short).¹⁴

The frustration is in part due to the inability to reconcile all the factors that must be reconciled (philological, interpretative, palaeographical); partly it is due to exasperation that Fate should have broken the papyrus at this point, and the attempt to press the remaining pieces too hard. I repeat, "New knowledge and a new text gained from a papyrus that is complete is one thing; inferences and combinations based on a broken or damaged papyrus are something quite other."

Among these inferences and combinations we must include 'restorations'. Papyrus texts are rarely entirely complete. When the beginning or ending of a verse is missing we fill up the missing part with a Greek word or words—that is, we 'restore' or 'supplement'—so as to obtain a continuous sentence and sense. If we are clever Greek scholars we may do this entirely acceptably. The temptation to do so is strong, for we create a usable text. Moreover, the restorations may have a diagnostic function in exploring the writer's meaning. The danger, of course, is that the restorations will come to be accepted as the author's words, and they may perhaps do him an injustice. I had this aspect in mind in discussing Menander's *Phasma* in 1969: we rush to credit Menander with all kinds of things regardless of whether he could have said them.¹⁵

¹⁴ GMAW p.14.

¹⁵ GRBS 10 (1969) 314 n.13.

142F ειναμπολ...[
 142G κυταυταυ.χ[
 142H τουτονλαβ.[
 142I αδηλονειπ[
 142J πασαναπο[
 142K πολυμ[
 142L τοιουτογ[
 142M κατα[
 142N .[

Combining these beginnings with the Bodmer manuscript we now get the following text:

134 [ῆ]δη λαβ[οῦσα— (MO.) μηδαμῶς. (ΔΗ.) πῶς μηδαμῶς;
 135 ἄλλω μ[ε θ]ῆρεψιν ἐνδον ὕδν προσδοκᾷς
 νόθον; [λέγω]ν τοῦτ' οὐ τρόπου τοῦμοῦ λέγεις.
 (MO.) τίς δ' [έ]στ[ιν] ἡμῶν γνήσιος, πρὸς τῶν θεῶν,
 ἢ τίς νό[θος] γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος; (ΔΗ.) σὺ μὲν
 παίζεις. (MO.) μὰ τὸν Διόνυσον, <ἄλλ'> ἐσπούδακα.
 140 οὐθὲν γέν[ο]ς γένους γὰρ οἶμαι διαφέρειν,
 ἄλλ' εἰ δικαίως ἐξετάσαι τις, γνήσιος
 142A ὁ χρηστός ἐστιν, ὁ δὲ πονηρὸς καὶ νόθος
 142B καὶ δοῦλος εἰ[
 142C λεγωνεαν[
 142D (ΔΗ.) ἄλλ' ἀργύριον[
 142E ἐστ' ἀψτῶ.ει.[
 142F εἶναι πολίτη[(?)
 142G (MO.) σὺ ταῦτα κυγχ[
 142H τοῦτον λαβ.[
 142I (ΔΗ.) ἄδηλον εἴπα[ς (?)
 142J πᾶσαν ἀπο[
 142K (MO.) πολὺ μ[
 142L τοιοῦτογ[
 142M κατα[
 142N .[

We may translate verses 132–38 as follows:

132 DEMEAS She's presented me with a son I don't need at all—
 A son, she says. But she'll be sent packing with it,
 At once.

MOSCHION Never!
 DEMEAS What do you mean 'Never!'
 You can't expect me to bring up a son—
 An illegitimate son—to please someone else.
 That's not like me at all.
 MOSCHION In heaven's name
 Which of us is legitimate, which illegitimate,
 Once he enters on the human condition?

The only restoration in the *editio princeps* which holds its place is Professor Sandbach's admirable παίζεις in verse 139. The true Menandrian text is both simpler and also more pointed than any of the restorations. Note the simple τίς δ' ἐστιν... ἢ τίς νόθος in verses 137–38; and the forceful ἄλλω με at verse 135, where the line runs over into the next (*i.e.* is not end-stopped). This rhythm is characteristic of Menander. ἄλλω I take to mean 'to please anyone else', and to be of common gender (Demeas is of course thinking of Chrysis, the audience of Moschion, whose child it is). At 134 ἡδη λαβοῦσα (C. Austin had suspected this might be the right way to restore in his commentary¹⁸) is presumably interrupted by Moschion. The feminine participle has the additional advantage that the subject of ἀπειν ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας will be the child's mother, foreshadowing the action Demeas actually takes in expelling Chrysis from his house in the next Act.

In the preface to his Loeb edition of *Greek Literary Papyri* (1942, second edition 1950), Professor D. L. Page has written, "I was eager to fill every gap with flawless fragments of my own composition; I ended with the desire—too late—to remove all that is not either legible in the papyrus or replaceable beyond reasonable doubt. At the eleventh hour, indeed, I expelled handfuls of private poetry." These words might apply to all of us.¹⁹ Few scholars have not succumbed some time or other to the lure of restoration.

¹⁸ *idem* II, p.60.

¹⁹ See the Appendix p. 48 below.

III

Village Administration in the Roman Empire in the Second Century

THIS CHAPTER is about the results to be won from an examination in depth of papyrus documents set in historical perspective. Documents are pedestrian texts, not winged chariots of the imagination as literary texts may prove to be. Yet an analysis of them in bulk may offer lines of thought no less interesting or valuable. And the results of this enquiry may have their own value for students of literature, since they will serve as a counterblast to the rosy optimism which may have been engendered by a superficial account of the lost works of literature preserved in Egypt—even in villages (since it is from a village, that of Tebtynis, that the roll of the *Diegeseis* to Callimachus was derived). My subject may be more closely defined as the impact in the late second century after Christ of the Roman administration of Egypt on village life in Egypt. The picture drawn will be a sombre one. It will raise questions about the interrelation of government and society and of literacy in that society. It may well also suggest questions that apply to the Roman Empire as a whole. But I shall not attempt to deal with anything except conditions in Egypt. I have not the knowledge; and inferences drawn from the highly individual evidence and conditions in Egypt should not be converted into generalizations unless the means of control are available.

The account may start from a copy-book maxim set out on a wax-tablet, no doubt to be copied in school (PLATE 6 figure A):

ἀρχὴ μέγιστη τοῦ βίου τὰ γράμματα
The greatest foundation of life is letters.¹

This motto, as I take it, enshrines the schoolmaster's ideal. But it

¹ This γνώμη μονόστιχος, from a tablet in the Berlin Museum, AmlBer 1911/12 Abb.99, oddly enough does not figure in S. Jaekel, *Menandri Sententiae* (Leipzig 1964). Similar ones in Jaekel are to be found on his pp.5, 16, 19.

was also a prized reality for many Greeks. In a famous paper² Jack Goody and Ian Watt argued the thesis that an important contributory factor to the development of freedom and of philosophic thinking in Greece was the result of society as a whole (for the first time in the history of the world) becoming literate. They date this phenomenon to the sixth and fifth centuries before Christ. The standards and practice in regard to literacy in Athens in the fifth century B.C. have recently been examined by F. D. Harvey.³ It is clear that in Athens there was a general expectation that the ordinary citizen could read and write.

This, no doubt, is the requirement to be expected of a fully literate person. But it is perhaps too high a standard to serve as a simple test of literacy. More often the terms 'literate' and 'literacy' are used of a much lower level of competency—the ability to write one's name (an ability for which some investigators use the term 'alphabetism'; persons who cannot write their name are 'analphabets'). Use of this lower level as a test is almost essential to the historical enquirer if he is not to beg the answers to a number of important questions. To these questions, I must emphasize, the answers are not known. Can a person who writes his name be expected *ipso facto* to be able to write more difficult things? Suppose a person cannot write his name, is it not still possible that he may be able to read? How far are competence in reading and competence in writing separable?⁴

Another point that we need to be clear about is that in applying this test of literacy to Athens we are doing it to a developed society, not to a primitive one. It is not the world of Homer in which heroes do not write, or of the early mediaeval age in which kings and archbishops cannot write.

Hellenism itself I take to be based on this aspiration formed in Athens—the expectation that men will be fully literate. Greek is the language of the administration in the Hellenistic kingdoms, and the papyri (such as the papers in the Zenon archive) show the immigrant officers of the civil service reading and writing a fluent and sober Greek. Hellenism, it may be said, depended on three props: Greek descent, the Greek language, and literacy. In this trinity descent comes

² "The Consequences of Literacy," first published in 1963, reprinted in Jack Goody, *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge 1968) 27–68.

³ "Literacy in Athenian Democracy," *REG* 79 (1966) 585ff.

⁴ Cf. Lawrence Stone, "Literacy and Education in England 1640–1900," *Past and Present* 42 (1969) 69ff, esp. p.98 and p.139.

to be the least important feature; but the Greek language and the ability to handle it, i.e. literacy in a more advanced sense than our minimum definition just given, remain of major importance. The Greeks in Egypt showed a fierce pride in maintaining these two points. Their competitive festivals included competitions in music and literature. *P.Oxy.* 2338, of the second half of the third century after Christ, lists the names of 70 persons victorious at Oxyrhynchus as 'trumpeters, heralds, poets' between A.D. 261 and 289 (of the names of winners one-half only have Greek forms). When the Romans conquered Egypt they adopted an attitude which was more royalist than that of the king. They required members of the Greek gymnasia to show Greek parents on both sides, i.e. they reintroduced the criterion of purity of descent. And they exploited these members of the Greek gymnasia as their officials for the internal administration of Egypt.

Contrasted with the Greek ideal of universal literacy is the attitude of the native Egyptians among whom the Greeks settled. To them writing was the possession of a closed corporation of scribes, for whom it was an instrument of privilege. "The occupation of scribe alone confers dignity and staves off misery" is the claim made in *The Instruction of Akhtoy, son of Duauf*.⁵ The scribe is as venerated a figure as the old Scottish professor. The position was the same throughout most of the Nearer East—in Mesopotamia, Babylon, Assyria; and in Crete and Mycenae at the time of Linear B writing. In Hellenistic and Roman Egypt the old tradition left its mark in the names of prominent members of the internal administration—the 'royal scribe', βασιλικὸς γραμματεὺς, who governed a district, and the 'scribe of the village', the κωμογραμματεὺς. But in the Hellenistic and Roman periods these offices are filled by Greeks, or at least Hellenized Egyptians, and their language of administration was Greek. The Egyptian scribe in the Roman world (I omit the Ptolemaic, since its complexities are not easily dealt with briefly) still wrote the ancient Egyptian language, whether as hieroglyphs (probably rarely) or hieratic or demotic. But he did not write this language in the service of the governmental administration. For administrative purposes it was only in the internal administration of the temples that demotic was still utilized. On the other hand returns made about the temples to the central administration were normally in Greek. When there-

⁵ Quoted by Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*³ (Oxford 1957) p.24b.

fore a docket in demotic was found on the back of a return in Greek made by the temples of Soknopaiou Nesos dated August 24th A.D. 158, the editors were right to describe it as unparalleled. "It seems," they wrote, "to render in demotic the title γραφή ἱερέων καὶ χειρισμοῦ of the Greek . . . and was presumably added when the return was filed by an Egyptian temple clerk."⁶

"Demotic writing," says P. W. Pestman,⁷ "tends to disappear, starting in the second century of our era. The latest dated demotic ostrakon is of A.D. 232/3; the latest dated demotic papyri are of A.D. 322/3. There are still some literary texts and a large number of undated mummy labels to be attributed to the second or third century of our era. After this period there are demotic texts only on the walls of the temple at Philae, which continues to inscribe demotic down to A.D. 452/3. It is also at Philae that there is the latest known hieroglyphic text (of A.D. 393/4)." But the Egyptian language is still alive. Its continuing vitality is attested by Egyptian personal names; it is spoken in the villages, as the need for official interpreters proves.⁸ Moreover, it appears written in the new form which we call 'Coptic'. The two cultures fused their traditions when Greek written notation was taken over to express the Egyptian language. The letters of the Greek alphabet and seven additional signs gave a new and long lease of life to Egyptian in the form of Coptic, aided by its association from the outset in the popular mind with the propagation of Christianity. When the process began is still not agreed by scholars. But it seems to have progressed well beyond the formative stages by the end of the third century after Christ.

For completeness' sake it is worth noting that a third view of the scribe was held in the ancient world. It is the view of the upper class Roman. It treats the scribe with contempt as a hack, and is given expression in Horace's phrase *insani ridentes praemia scribae*.⁹

What, now, is the state in the second century after Christ of our 'three props of Hellenism'—descent, language, literacy? The Romans had made a determined attempt to arrest the decline in purity of descent but only with partial success, as the wide use of Egyptian

⁶ D. S. Crawford, P. E. Easterling, *JEA* 55 (1969) 186-88.

⁷ *Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava* XV (1967) 2-3.

⁸ W. Schubart, *Einführung in die Papyrskunde* (Berlin 1918) 312, quoting BGU I 227, III 985, *P.Fay.* 23, *P.Teb.* II 450, *P.Oxy.* VII 1029, XII 1517. Cf. R. Taubenschlag, "The Interpreters in the Papyri," *Charisteria Thaddaeo Sinko* (Warsaw 1951) 361-63.

⁹ *Hor. Sat.* 1.5.35.

personal names in the middle classes shows. The Greek language, however, seemed to be more firmly established as the dominant language, not only of the administration but of private contracts as well. And what of 'literacy' or 'alphabetism'?

Now one might guess from the shortcomings of documentary texts, and especially of private letters, that many Greeks did not write easily, perhaps did not even read easily, and therefore resorted to the public letter-writer at his post in the street to make up as well as to pen their communications for them. These are the texts which show recurrent types of morphological and syntactical errors. Their contents are restricted in vocabulary and idiom to the banal—which is why the textual criticism of documentary papyri proceeds on quite opposite methods from the textual criticism of literary manuscripts, and with the greater sureness, since the banal is within reach, imaginative language may be unique.¹⁰ Indeed, restricted competence in literacy restricts the kind of private documents we may expect to find to those of ordinary situations: sales, wills, registrations. Only where there is a minority of really literate persons is something more interesting to be expected—the private correspondence of articulate individuals, the literature of opposition to Rome (The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs), etc.

In an attempt to reach more precise figures two scholars have tabulated the cases of persons described in Greek contracts as 'not knowing letters' (γράμματα οὐκ εἰδότες), 'illiterates' (ἀγράμματοι) or as 'slow writers' (βραδέως γράφοντες), all of them persons on whose behalf another person signed.¹¹ Their statistics show a total of over a thousand examples, which reach a peak in the first and second centuries after Christ and thereafter decline. But this chronological spread is almost certainly accidental, due to a more abundant documentation at the peak periods. It has not been controlled by establishing a relationship between the totals for each century and the total number of documents available for that century. Moreover, these persons are 'analphabetes' in Greek but not necessarily in demotic (in some cases it is explicitly stated they do write demotic).

But a real insight into the interrelation of government, society and

¹⁰ See especially H. C. Youtie, *The Textual Criticism of Documentary Papyri* (BICS Suppl. 6, London 1958).

¹¹ E. Majer-Leonhard, *ΑΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΟΙ* (Frankfurt 1913); R. Calderini, *Aegyptus* 30 (1950) 14ff.

restricted literacy at the level of village administration is offered by the archive of papers collected by Petaus, son of Petaus, village clerk (κωμογραμματεὺς) of Ptolemais Hormou and associated places in the years A.D. 183/4–186/7. Petaus was himself a slow writer, as we shall shortly see. A total of 127 texts, some in more than one version, divided between the collections of the University of Michigan and the Institut für Altertumskunde of the University of Cologne, have been published as a joint effort by these two universities.¹² The editors are Herbert C. Youtie, Louise C. Youtie, Ursula Hagedorn and Dieter Hagedorn, and it is hardly necessary to say that they have done their task in exemplary fashion. The editing has overcome the difficulties presented by rubbed and damaged texts, crabbed cursive hands, abbreviations, words disguised by the phonetic and morphological changes of later Greek; and perhaps above all by the administrative jargon (it is interesting to note that the Greek for 'and/or' is ἢ καί).

No details are known about the discovery of the archive. One supposes it came from Karanis (the home village of Petaus) and the papers when found in the thirties were divided by the finders. One item, no. 91, was divided between the two purchasers—in the original inventory it was the last papyrus catalogued in the American list, the first catalogued at Cologne; and it may therefore be inferred that this divided piece came in the middle of the pile. A few texts not connected with Petaus' office have intruded into the papers (e.g. nos. 124–27; no. 30, cf. below): they might have been family documents.

A preliminary notice of the archive was given by Professor H. Youtie in a Brussels lecture in 1966.¹³ The 127 texts are classified into 8 declarations to officials, 1 petition, 16 items of official correspondence, 5 letters of a more private character, 2 loans, 7 accounts, 5 items dealing with tax lists and accounts, 46 items dealing with liturgies (i.e. compulsory office, on which more later), 30 lists of names and 7 miscellaneous texts. No work of literature is associated with them; how could one expect such a thing? But there is one surprising private letter, no. 30, "Julius Placidus to his father Herculaneus greeting. Dius came to us and showed us the 6 parchments. We didn't choose any of them, but we did collate 8 others for which I paid

¹² *Das Archiv des Petaus* (Papyrologica Coloniensia IV, Cologne 1969).

¹³ Published in *Cd'E* 41 (1966) 127–43, under the title "Pétaus, fils de Pétaus, ou le scribe qui ne savait pas écrire."

100 drachmas on account. . . .” The word for ‘parchments’ is *μεμβράναι*, par excellence a parchment notebook often used for keeping accounts or memoranda, as C. H. Roberts has shown.¹⁴ The word translated ‘collated’ (*ἀντεβάλομεν*) is applied regularly both to checking one literary manuscript against another and checking documents against their original.¹⁵ Now it would be possible to suppose that the writer is rejecting one set of badly copied documents, and paying on account for others which were satisfactory. But the impression remains (and it is the editors’ view also, since they speak of ‘Pergamenthandschriften’) that Dios is producing parchment manuscripts for inspection and sale. The correspondents in these letters—Julius Placidus, a Roman citizen, to judge by his *nomen*—do not figure elsewhere in the archive, and it is not easy to say why this letter should be found included in it. Whether or not the letter has any connection with the archive, it is interesting for the history of the book trade. The editors affirm that the handwriting belongs to the second century.

It seems that the hands of 11 scribes can be distinguished. The scribes in the headquarters of the village administration do not necessarily restrict themselves to their official assignments: they are allowed to write a document on behalf of a private client (e.g. no.12). A considerable part of their duties was to make copies, both of incoming and outgoing documents. The copying of an incoming document which needed to be passed on to a third person would be begun half way down the sheet of papyrus, to leave room for the later addition above it of a covering letter. Papers filed in the office would be stuck together in the form of a *τόμος συγκολλήσιμος*, a gummed roll.

The restricted literacy of the village clerk Petaus himself is inferred from a writing exercise, which is such a curiosity that it needs to be seen (PLATE 6 figure B). Our clerk was required by custom to subscribe (*ὑπογράφειν*) the documents which he passed on to higher authorities. On a sheet of papyrus Petaus has practised writing his name, his title *κωμογράφ(αμματεύς)* (abbreviated), followed by the word *ἐπιδέδωκα*, ‘I have submitted’. This tiny irregular handwriting is met on the signatures of several documents in the archive. It will be noticed that in line 5 of his exercise he left out the first *ε* of *ἐπιδέδωκα*, and from then onwards copied the word without it (clearly following the previous

line like a child). That this inference is correct and that such restricted literacy was not unique among officials at this level is confirmed from a report Petaus made on a colleague who was village clerk of a neighbouring village. It had been objected by third persons that this colleague was unfit for office since he had not the required property qualification and was illiterate (*ἀγράμματος*). Petaus reported on him to his superior officer, the *strategus*, that “he was not illiterate¹⁶ but was able to subscribe (*ὑπογράφειν*) to the documents he submitted to the *strategus* and to other papers” (no.11). This is exactly what Petaus himself could do. What is meant, and how Petaus could occupy an official position in spite of this disability, we shall discuss later on.

Other personal details about Petaus are scanty. To occupy this position at all it is likely that he had a *πόρος*, that is to say, a property-qualification: he owned a property (e.g. a house) of the value of at least 3000 drachmas¹⁷ (cf. nos.10 and 11), i.e. he was a member of the moderately well-off middle classes. A brother called Theon is mentioned (no.31). The village of Ptolemais Hormou, ‘Ptolemais of the Anchorage’, (and its associated villages, Kerkesoucha Orous, Syron, Psinaryo, Epoikion Herakleonos) was in the southeast of the Arsinoite nome or district. The name Petaüs (‘gift of Isis’; note that it is Egyptian in form, the Greek is ‘Isidorus’) is at home in the north of the *Arsinoites* only, in the villages of Philadelphia, Euhemeria and Karanis; and Karanis (no.31) seems indeed to be Petaus’ home-village. If so, Petaus is not officiating in his home-area (which was technically called his *ιδία*). It was already an accepted hypothesis that higher officers like the *strategus* and *royal scribe* were not appointed to control their own home areas but to districts away from home. It seems that this same salutary principle was applied also to the village clerk, the lowest rank in the hierarchy.

Egypt contained only four cities at this time—Alexandria, Naucratis, Ptolemais and Antinoe. The main area of the province fell outside the system of administration by which a city was responsible for its territory. It depended on control from Alexandria exercised through regions (*epistrategiai*) themselves divided into districts (*nomes*), the

¹⁶ See the correction to the published translation, H. C. Youtie, *GRBS* 12 (1971) 240 n.8.

¹⁷ The meaning of *πόρος* is not ‘income’, as was long thought and is still wrongly repeated. The matter was clarified by J. Scherer on *P.Phil.* 1, 9 and N. Lewis on *P.Leit.* 1. If there were any residual doubt (there isn’t) it would be removed by the unpublished papyrus in part transcribed below pp. 44–45. In the sentence *ὁ πόρος παθήτω* can only apply to a property.

¹⁴ “The Codex,” *ProcBritAc* 40 (1954) 174.

¹⁵ E.g. *P.Oxy.* XII 1479, 4.

latter then controlling a large number of villages. Nomes are under a *strategus*, who has only civil functions, helped by a nome secretary, the royal clerk (*βασιλικὸς γραμματεὺς*, the name, as we have seen, being retained from Pharaonic times): to these two officers the village clerk reports. His position, though lowest in the chain of command, is far from unimportant: any system is as strong only as its weakest link, and it is through the village clerk that the central government came into direct contact with the mass of the mainly rural population of Egypt. He was responsible for the execution of the fiscal and agricultural policies decided on in Alexandria, for general control of the local police, and above all for the continuous recruitment of an unpaid labour force (the liturgical officers) to supervise the day-to-day tasks of administration, about which we obtain very detailed information in this archive. If any of these tasks is slackly handled, there will be a shortfall in productivity, the rents on *public* (that is, government-owned) land (the larger part of the productive acreage of Egypt) and the taxes on private land will not be collected. Local discontent might lead to riot; but the government was more concerned with a shortfall in tax collection, since the bulk of both rents and taxes were collected in corn, not in money, and were shipped down the Nile and across the Mediterranean to Rome, and the authorities would at once have to fear a reckoning if the total expected was not realized.

At the end of the line the capital of the world therefore may be made to feel what goes on in the village of Ptolemais Hormou. But of direct news of Rome in these papers there are only slight traces, though interesting ones. In no.9, an application is made for relief from poll tax by a relative on behalf of two kinsmen who had been condemned by a prefect *πρὸς θηρ[ί]α*, i.e. *damnati ad bestias* (the restoration is made almost certain by linguistic analogy). What crime had been committed is not known: murder, armed riot, banditry, or adherence to Christianity, all are canvassed by the editors. The document is of the most matter of fact kind possible. It is not even clear what degree of kinship united the applicant to the condemned. Secondly, in no.24, the clerk is instructed to investigate a boundary dispute in the presence of all interested parties, so that "each person may be given his own." The Greek words, as the editors point out, are a translation of the maxim of Roman law *suum cuique*.¹⁸ Yet the

¹⁸ *Digest* I 1.10.1.

practice of the Roman administration, and its disastrous effects, give a grim irony to this precept.

The village clerk is of course a government officer, required to implement government policies. The public opinion of his village is expressed through a body of village elders (*πρεσβύτεροι*; the name is traditional but misleading, for they do not need to be old men), usually five, who are indeed given a certain constitutional function in administration;¹⁹ they are more therefore than a type of shop steward. Nevertheless, they had means of representing the views of the village to higher authority, and a prudent village clerk would try to have them on his side. In this archive there are two dated and signed copies (no.12) of an application which elders of the village of Kerkesoucha Orous made to higher authority for replacement of the local chief policeman (*ἀρχέφοδος*), who came under their orders.

The papers in this archive show that tasks undertaken by the village clerk were almost all of a traditional or at least a mandatory kind—they were undertaken at the request of higher authority. The village clerk does not initiate action. Yet it would be misleading to say that the village clerk does not have to show initiative: some of the tasks require a high degree of decision on his part. We may classify his tasks into routine verifications; investigations which may require an act of decision, at least to the extent of recommending a particular course of action to his superiors; and those which are highly complicated, such as the establishment of lists from which liturgical officers are to be drawn.

Tasks of verification concern applications or declarations made by private individuals. It is probably broadly true to say of the bureaucratic system of Egypt that its aim was to compile central registers; such registers concerned the status of individuals and their property (compiled from the 14-year census declarations); listed private property (compiled from the general and also particular declarations of private property ordered from time to time by prefects); and drew up land-schedules compiled from the land lists maintained traditionally by the village clerks (i.e. on the agricultural use and exploitation of land). None of the latter lists appears in this archive, but recollection of the papers of Menches, village clerk of Kerkeosiris in the Ptolemaic period,²⁰ makes one think their compilation must

¹⁹ See A. Tomsin, *Les Presbyteroi des villages* (Brussels 1953).

²⁰ See D. J. Crawford, *Kerkeosiris, An Egyptian Village in the Ptolemaic Period* (Cambridge 1971).

still have been one of Petaus' duties. But the relevance of this generalization is that individuals who wished to be treated differently from the norm must themselves make personal application for such treatment: hence, the birth (even of a daughter) must be notified, so that she would not be treated simply as an ordinary member of the population (nos.1-2); a death, so that poll tax would not be payable (nos.3-9); offers would be made for the purchase of confiscated property (nos.13-16) or of land which had gone out of cultivation (*ὑπόλογος*), which was allowed to be sold under safeguards and with the right of reduced taxation for three years to persons who would bring it back into cultivation (nos.17-23). The facts in these applications, made to the nome authorities, had to be checked at source by the village clerk, who is on every occasion reminded of his responsibilities, e.g. no.2, 13-14 "Take the steps usual in such cases, remembering that responsibility and risk falls on you for any improper action." Land had to be surveyed and classified and its condition reported on. In boundary disputes (as we have already seen) the degree of initiative allowed is greater. "At your own risk visit the aforesaid land and in the presence of the neighbours in dispute and all other proper persons, in accordance with the cautionary documents (*ἀσφάλειαι*) produced to you and the other documents preserved in the records, give each man his own without prejudice to any public or private interest, remembering that the responsibility for anything improper rests on you." This may seem a blanket instruction—all the more so in that the letter is addressed to the clerks of other villages in addition (and two copies of the original application still survive). One wonders whether any of the village clerks would have been likely to take any decisive step in reply or would merely pass the buck. A macabre private letter (which may not belong to the archive) details how the body, perhaps embalmed, of a legionary soldier on its way to his home village has gone astray.

By this time in the second century the Roman government in Egypt had come to rely not on paid government officials but on personal service exacted from private individuals. The nomination of a whole host of these officials is the subject matter of by far the largest number of the papers in this archive.

The term by which this institution is known, *λειτουργία*, shows that its original concept was borrowed from the service freely offered to his city by a Greek citizen. In the second century systematic appoint-

ment replaces service freely given; it becomes a *munus patrimonii* or *munus personale*, a burden, which is not to be avoided when it comes round to your turn to discharge it. This discharge is no light matter, since not only is the liturgist's time and energy called on for relatively long periods; if he makes a mistake, or fails to carry out his duties to the satisfaction of the government, he may be made bankrupt in satisfying the guarantee he has been required to give. The development of this institution is now well known, thanks to the work above all of M. Rostovtzeff, of Fr. Oertel²¹ and of N. Lewis.²² But I know of no other series of papers which shows as vividly and clearly as this one the wide ramifications of the system—which was to prepare the way for a Byzantine nexus in which all had their position and tasks determined by their status.

It was Petaus' task to nominate a whole series of such liturgical officials: men who would collect the special requisitions (bread, wine, oil, gifts, hay, timber, vegetables, barley, fishing boats) made to entertain the prefect on his travels through the province (nos.45-47), special police for his headquarters in the praetorium (48); men to work on the renewal of the dykes (*χωματεκβολεῖς*, 49), to collect straw to build dykes (50-51), to be in charge of irrigation and the corn sowing (52), to supervise the corn harvest en route to the threshing floor and public barns (53-54), to act as supercargo on the ships that carried the corn to Alexandria and to keep the samples safe (55-58), to supervise the state corn-barns as *sitologoi* (59-63), to act as collectors of money taxes (64-65), to be supervisors of land in the Imperial estates (75-78), to be officials in the gymnasia (79-83), to be official postman (*ἐπιστολαφόρος*) for a series of villages (84), to deliver camels (85).

The choice every year of persons of standing and property to fulfil these functions must have occupied a great deal of time and caused much heartburning and headache. It is true the village clerk does not make the actual appointments: he draws up lists which are forwarded to the *strategus*, or perhaps sent on by the latter to the *epistrategus*, who may hold a ballot (when they are sent to him *εἰς κλήρον*).²³ Moreover he consults as many persons as he can, especially the village

²¹ *Die Liturgie* (Leipzig 1917).

²² *Inventory of Compulsory Services in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt* (AmStudPapyr III, New Haven and Toronto 1968).

²³ See N. Lewis, "The Limited Role of the Epistrategos in Liturgic Appointments," *Cd'E* 44 (1969) 339-44.

elders: for in some cases the latter will share the responsibility—*γνώμη καὶ ἐγγύη* (or sometimes *κινδύνω*) *πάντων τῶν ἀπὸ τῶν κωμῶν*. But the preparation of the initial lists falls to him, and he must have had several shots at it. Thirty lists of names (nos.89–120) show this (for some offices there are three draft lists), so do some memoranda (nos.25 and 26), without name of originator or addressee, setting out alternative names for particular tasks. He must beware of making nominations to two offices at once, or to a new office without a period of respite between it and the previous liturgy. And if his facts are wrong, the penalties are likely to be severer than befall the test-selectors of an England cricket eleven. In a case before the prefect of Egypt Valerius Eudaemon in A.D. 143, a village scribe convicted of having put forward the name of a man without property (*ἄπορος*), was condemned to pay not only the prescribed fines but also four times the value of the small amount of property of his victim, for the latter had been sold up.²⁴

An unpublished papyrus from Oxyrhynchus, which is to be edited by Gerald M. Browne, shows even more savage action being taken by the prefect in office in A.D. 147/8—confiscation and sale by public auction of the property (*πόρος*) of 120 liturgical officials who had left their homes, presumably because they could not meet their obligations (this under that Roman emperor who for Gibbon represented the peak of happiness for mankind). Since the reader may like to see a specimen of a difficult but interesting documentary papyrus, a photograph of part of the text is reproduced in PLATE 7. Here is the transcript of the lower portion of col. ii:

- 8 *πραγματικῶν πρὸς χρεῖαις δηλ(ωθεντῶν) ἀνακεχωρη(κεναι) τοῖς*
ἀπο 5 (ετους) Ἀντωνίνου καίσαρος τοῦ κυρίου ἐξῆς ετεσι καὶ
 10 *μηδε μετὰ τὸ ἐπὶ πόλεων προγραφῆναι ἐπανελήλυ-*
θεναι τὰ ὑπαρχ(οντα) ἐδηλ(ωθη) κατεσχ(ησθαι) · Οὐαλερίου Προκλου ἐν
διαλογισμῷ Καβάσειτου τῷ θ (ἔτει) κεκρίκοτος τῶν
ἐντος ἐνιαυτοῦ τῆς προγραφῆς μὴ ἐπανελήλυ-
θοτῶν τὸν πόρον πρᾶθῆναι, ὁ ἐκλογιστὴς τὰ κρι-
 15 *θεντὰ ἐπέστειλεν τῷ τε στρατηγῷ καὶ βασιλικῷ*
καὶ εἰς ὑπομνησιν τῷ διοικητῇ Ἰουλίῳ Ἀμυντιανῷ
ἀνηνεγκὰ δι' ἐπιστολῆς τῷ ι (ετει) ἢ εἰδῆς μὴδε(ο)πω τι
περὶ αὐτῶν εἰ κατηλθόν τινες παρατεθεῖσθαι καὶ

²⁴ P. Wisc. 23, W. L. Westermann, *JEA* 40 (1954) 107ff.

Πετρωνίος Οὐωρατος ὁ ἡγεμονεύς(ας) ἐπὶ ὀνομάτων
 20 *τὸν ἀριθμὸν ρκ ὑπεγράψεν · ὁ πόρος πρᾶθῆτω*
εἰς δέ ·

This may be translated as follows:

“The property of [liturgical] officials who were reported to have resorted to flight from their homes, starting from the 6th year of Antoninus Caesar the lord [A.D. 142/3] and the following years, and not to have returned even after proclamation was made in the cities, has been reported confiscated. After Valerius Proculus [prefect A.D. 145/7] at the assize of the Kabasite district [a district in the Delta] in the 9th year [A.D. 145/6] had given judgement that the property of those who did not return within a year of the proclamation was to be sold, the *eklogistes* [i.e. the auditor general] informed both the *strategus* and the royal scribe of the judgement; and I brought it to the attention of the *dioecetes* Iulius Amyntianus in a letter in the 10th year [A.D. 146/7] that you might know that no annotation had as yet been entered in regard to them, as to whether some of them had returned to their homes; and Petronius Honoratus ex-prefect [prefect A.D. 147–8] subjoined the following minute to the papers of persons to the number of 120: their property (*πόρος*) is to be sold. Their names are:”

It is of course easy to imagine to oneself that the village clerk's method was that of a sergeant-major, “Fall in the volunteers for cleaning the latrines.” Yet he has not the authority of the sergeant-major. Moreover, we are badly informed on the crucial point: was the office of village clerk itself without remuneration? That it was filled by nomination in the same way as other liturgical offices we know from the documents in this archive itself, the papers of the allegedly ‘illiterate’ colleague on which Petaus is asked to verify the facts (cf. above no.11, p.39). It was therefore compulsory service. Was it also unpaid? F. Oertel (writing more than 40 years ago²⁵) reserved judgement on this point, noting that certain revenues fell to the incumbent from “the fund underlying the village clerk's office” (*ὑποκείμενον τῇ κωμογραμματεῖᾳ*), whatever this fund was. It could have been made up from the customary *bakshish* or *φιλόανθρωπα* (W.Ostr. I p.401; P.Giss. 31), and from ‘exactions’ (*λογεῖται*) made on his behalf (P.Giss. 61). In the Ptolemaic period Menches had thought

²⁵ *Op.cit.* (*supra* n.21) 159.

it worth undertaking the cultivation of derelict state land in order to hold the office.²⁶ It would seem as though there were pickings to be had; there was the mere pleasure of exercising authority; it is not impossible that men thought it safer to be in a position to manipulate a system which was potentially dangerous. The risks of bankruptcy, which had befallen a *sitologus* (nos.14, 20) or a chief-policeman (no.16, 6), did not deter Petaus from accepting appointment. But it is not easy for us to sort out the relative weight of social pressure, legal compulsion and possible self-interest.

A more interesting question from a human point of view is: how was a man who wrote with difficulty and presumably was dependent on other persons to read to him able to maintain control of his staff and clerks and not be swindled? Moral authority and personality might well count for something. But it has been pointed out by Professor Youtie²⁷ with great plausibility that Petaus probably had the support of his brother Theon, who, as we know, could read and write. No.31 is a loan made to Petaus and Theon jointly, falling in the time of Petaus' office at Ptolemais. The body of the text was written by Theon (lines 13-14). The presence of a member of the family who enjoyed his confidence and would not be cheated could be the reason why an illiterate could carry off his duties. But if so, the running of office was a family affair: possibly it was worthwhile for the two brothers in a material sense.

For all its human interest, the question just asked is a naïve one from a historical point of view. We have seen that one of Petaus' brothers was literate in Greek. We do not know the reason why that brother could write Greek and Petaus could not, and what part was contributed to that result by acts of choice and differing abilities or strengths of personality. We do not know whether that brother had already carried out, or might be picked on to carry out, a tour of duty in the same liturgical office as Petaus held.

What the cases of Petaus and his colleague do teach us, and teach us forcefully, is that we must represent to ourselves a complex bureaucratic system of government, dependent on paperwork, in which the controllers of those who do the paperwork are themselves barely literate. How far this situation may have held outside Egypt it is for others to examine. In Egypt at this time there are indications that this

²⁶ P.Teb. I 10= W. Chrest. 160.

²⁷ *Op.cit.* (*supra* n.13) 142-43.

situation is the result of strain, and that in consequence standards were being relaxed. Petaus and his colleagues are the earliest examples in the Roman period of officials who are only just literate in a society where literacy is a prerequisite of the functioning of government. A scribe who can barely write, a *γραμματεὺς* who is almost *ἀγράμματος*, goes against the Egyptian tradition of the scribe as well as the Greek aspiration to literacy. Petaus and his colleague are the precursors of those third-century 'analphabets' listed by Majer-Leonhard and Calderini who have Greek names and have held office as gymnasiarch in the Greek gymnasium.²⁸

I have written that the Roman system placed a great deal of strain in the later second century on quite ordinary men of the lower middle classes. It is for historians to determine the reasons for this strain, and I shall not speculate on them here. But it may be worth risking one speculation. The reforms of Severus which introduced into Egypt the city system by turning the nome capitals into true cities may have hoped to transfer to the more literate Greek upper middle class living in those cities some of the responsibilities previously carried by the lower middle class village folk. And in the end, it is to be noted, this policy also was to end in failure. The middle classes of the cities also moved towards a condition of restricted literacy. The fascinating question then arises as to how far this condition is a symptom or a cause of the failure of the Roman system of government. But that is another subject, as Herodotus would say.

²⁸ After these words were written I received two lectures on a similar theme given by Professor H. C. Youtie: "ΑΙΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΟΣ: an Aspect of Greek Society in Egypt," *HSCP* 75 (1971) 161-76, and "Βραδέως γράφων: between Literacy and Illiteracy," *GRBS* 12 (1971) 239-61. In the former (p.172) he writes: "It is a fair inference that they [Petaus and Ischyron] were not alone among officials at their level in being unable to write. In the ceaseless administrative struggle to obtain men both propertied and literate, the less significant of these qualifications had doubtless often to give way. When this happened, the social climate of Egypt must have provided a ready apology. If the man couldn't write, he could always pay to have the writing done."

APPENDIX

A New Copy of the Opening of Menander's
Misoumenos

THE DIPLOMATIC TRANSCRIPT given here is of an additional papyrus copy of the opening of Menander's *Misoumenos*, discovered among the unedited Oxyrhynchus papyri after Chapter II was written (and delivered as a lecture). This new text (PLATE 8), written in an upright, rounded, not very careful semi-bookhand of the late second or early third century on the back of a documentary register, presents the prologue of the *Misoumenos* in fuller form than *P.Boyaval*. The presence of an empty papyrus sheet to the left of the column and the fact that the verse beginning ὦ νύξ is the verse at the top of the column confirm that here, as in *P.Boyaval*, the beginning of the play occurs. Only the first column of *P.Oxy.* is given below. Parts of a second column, and a number of fragments, are reserved for publication in a forthcoming volume of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*.

The discovery of a new text (apparently a book text, in spite of its inaccuracies) rubs home the warnings given in Chapter II about the perils of restoration. Because the tables are turned against myself (in my copy on p.19 I have accepted restorations at verses 7–8 and 13–16 which are now shown to be on completely wrong lines), I have been careful not to alter a word of what I had written on pp.19–20 about this prologue. I should, however, like to call attention to the confirmation of Eric Handley's brilliant correction of line 2 (Plutarch's "Ἀπολλων) to ἄρ' ἄλλον...των"; and to the correct solution to the restoration of lines 2–3 by anaphoric πλείστοι anticipated by Kraus. To be noted also is the entrance of Getas at verse 15. No scholar had suggested the entrance of a new character at this point. But it must be remembered that the left margin and beginnings of lines are missing from *P.Boyaval*, and there was in consequence no external pointer (*paragraphus*, character-name) to this entrance.

ωνυξ κυγαρδηπλειστοναφ[...]ειτηςμερος
μετεχειςθειων· ενσριτεπεριτρυτωνλογοι
πλειστοιλεγονταιφροντιδε[...]ρωτ[...]και
αραλλονανθρωπων[...]θλιωτερον
5 εορακας· αραερωντα[...]οτμω[...]ερον
προσταισεμαυτον[...]νθυραισεστηκαεγω
εντωστενωπωπεριπατωντεα[...]ωκατω
αμφοτερα· μεχρ[...]ουσεσσυχεδον
εξωκαθευδεινητηξερωμενηνεχει
10 παρεμουγα[...]εστινενδονεξεστιντεμοι
καιβουλομ[...]ιτουτωσανεμμανεστατα
ερω[...]· ουτωδευπαιθριωδεμοι
χειμ[...]εστιναιρετ[...]τερον
εστη[...]ρεμντικαικαλουντισοι
15 Γετας τοδ[...]μενονουδ[...]τωθεω[...]
νυ[...]· ητεονεστ[...]εσπρητης
ω[...]τερθε· ουςμεσ[...]
τος[...]· τ[...]πο[...]

The new Oxyrhynchus text uses *scriptio plena* (including τουτωως 11 for τουθ' ὥς), and has several uncorrected errors: 7 περιπατωντε for περιπατω τε, 12 ουτωδε for ουπω δε, 9 εχει is probably an error for εχειν (so the quotation in Chariton); and 8 is certainly unmetrical. Note also εξω 9 (εξδον implied from Chariton). In 14 also the new text with καλουντι differs from λα[λοῦ]ντι of *P.Boyaval*.

7 Correct to ἐν τῷ στενώπῳ περιπατῶ τ' ἄνω κάτω.

8 αμφοτερα.μ: the letter after ρα can be read only as c, not as ε. After χ a descender and apparently a loop above, i.e. ρ; the traces are then indeterminate, and uncertainty is compounded because the tops and feet of letters are situated on separated scraps which have warped differentially. μεχρω[ν]ν μεσουσης could be traced out from the remains, though meaningless as Greek, but is not a reading of the passage. *P.Oxy.* points to χρη or εχρη(ν), while *P.Boyaval* (according to L. Koenen, pp.16–17, above) has εχωνν..

In any case αμφοτεραςμεχρ is unmetrical. A pedestrian solution is to suppose an omission before ἀμφοτ..., e.g.:

εἴτ' (or ἄρ' or ταυτ') ἀμφότερ' ἄμ' ἔχρην μεσοῦσης σου χρέδον
εξδον (as Chariton) καθεύδειν τὴν τ' ἐρωμένην ἔχειν;

It is tempting to suggest that the sense was ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρω... ἔξω καθεύδω; ("shall I be able to rest in peace?", cf. fr.333 Koerte [Plokion] and Koerte's note *ad loc.*).

12 There is space for 5 letters after ερω[. It is possible that the high stop was not placed immediately after ἐρω[ν τις].

13 There is not room for χεμ[ωνος οντος]. Perhaps the scribe omitted some portion of these words.]τοσετ[.], ν, P.Boyaval.

Between αρετ and τερον there is space for three letters, not merely for ω. Presumably a further error.

14 ἐστη[κέναι τ]ρέμοντι, John Rea.

15 A proverbial phrase would make a satisfactory entrance line for Getas (since no door has 'creaked', he is presumably pursuing his master round the block). One might suggest something of the form

τὸ δ[ὲ] λεγόμενον οὐδ' ἄγ[αθῶι], μὰ τοὺς θεούς,
νυ[κτὸς φθο]ρητέον ἐστίν.

λεγόμενον does not, however, quite fill the space, and others may be able to find a more pointed phrase. μὰ τοὺς θεούς is from P.Boyaval. P.Oxy. seems to have had μὰ] τῷ θεῷ, which should be a woman's oath.

Some Books for Further Reading

GENERAL

- E. G. Turner, *Greek Papyri, An Introduction* (Oxford and Princeton 1968) [Lists all known papyrus publications to 1967 and their abbreviations]
- J. G. Winter, *Life and Letters in the Papyri* (Ann Arbor 1933)
- H. C. Youtie, *Prolegomena to the Textual Criticism of Documentary Papyri* (*Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, Suppl. 6, London 1958)
- H. C. Youtie, "The Papyrologist: Artificer of Fact," *GRBS* 4 (1963) 19-32

BOOKS AND WRITING

- J. Černý, *Books and Paper in Ancient Egypt* (London 1950)
- F. G. Kenyon, *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome*² (Oxford 1951)
- N. Lewis, *L'Industrie du papyrus* (Paris 1934)
- C. H. Roberts, *Greek Literary Hands* (Oxford 1956)
- R. Seider, *Paläographie der griechischen Papyri*, I and II (Stuttgart 1967 and 1970)
- T. C. Skeat, "Greek Papyrus and the Ancient Book," ch.2 in *Cambridge History of the Bible II* (Cambridge 1970)
- E. G. Turner, *Athenian Books in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.* (London 1952)
- E. G. Turner, "Scribes and Scholars of Oxyrhynchus," *Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung Erzherzog Rainer*, n.s. V (Vienna 1956) 141-46
- E. G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (Oxford and Princeton 1971) [= GMAW]

PAPYRI AND GREEK LITERATURE

- P. Maas, *Textual Criticism* (Oxford 1958)
- B. M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*² (Oxford 1968)
- R. A. Pack, *The Greek and Latin Literary Texts from Graeco-Roman Egypt*² (Ann Arbor 1965)
- D. L. Page, *Greek Literary Papyri* (Loeb Library, London and Cambridge [Mass.] 1942)
- R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford 1968)
- J. U. Powell, E. A. Barber (eds.), *New Chapters in Greek Literature* (Oxford 1921-1939)
- L. D. Reynolds, N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars* (Oxford 1968)

B. A. van Groningen, *Traité d'histoire et de critique des textes grecs*, in *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, Afd. Letterkunde N.R. 70.2 (Amsterdam 1963)

HISTORY

V. Arangio-Ruiz, *Negotia* (Florence 1941)

H. I. Bell, *Egypt from Alexander the Great to Justinian* (Oxford 1948)

B. M. David, B. A. van Groningen, *Papyrological Primer*⁴ (Leiden 1965)

[texts]

A. S. Hunt, C. C. Edgar, *Select Papyri*, I and II (Loeb Library, London, New York and Cambridge [Mass.] 1932 and 1934)

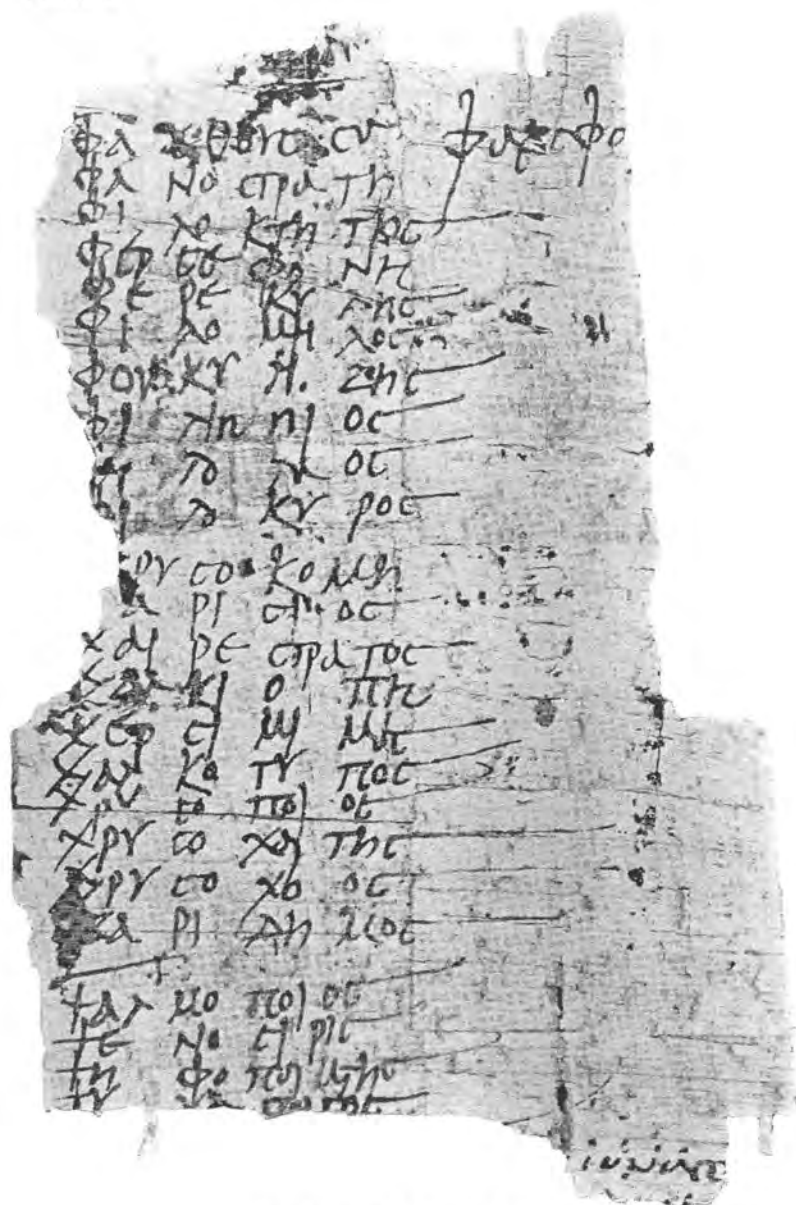
A. C. Johnson, *Roman Egypt* (Princeton 1936)

E. G. Turner, "Roman Oxyrhynchus," *JEA* 38 (1952) 78-93.



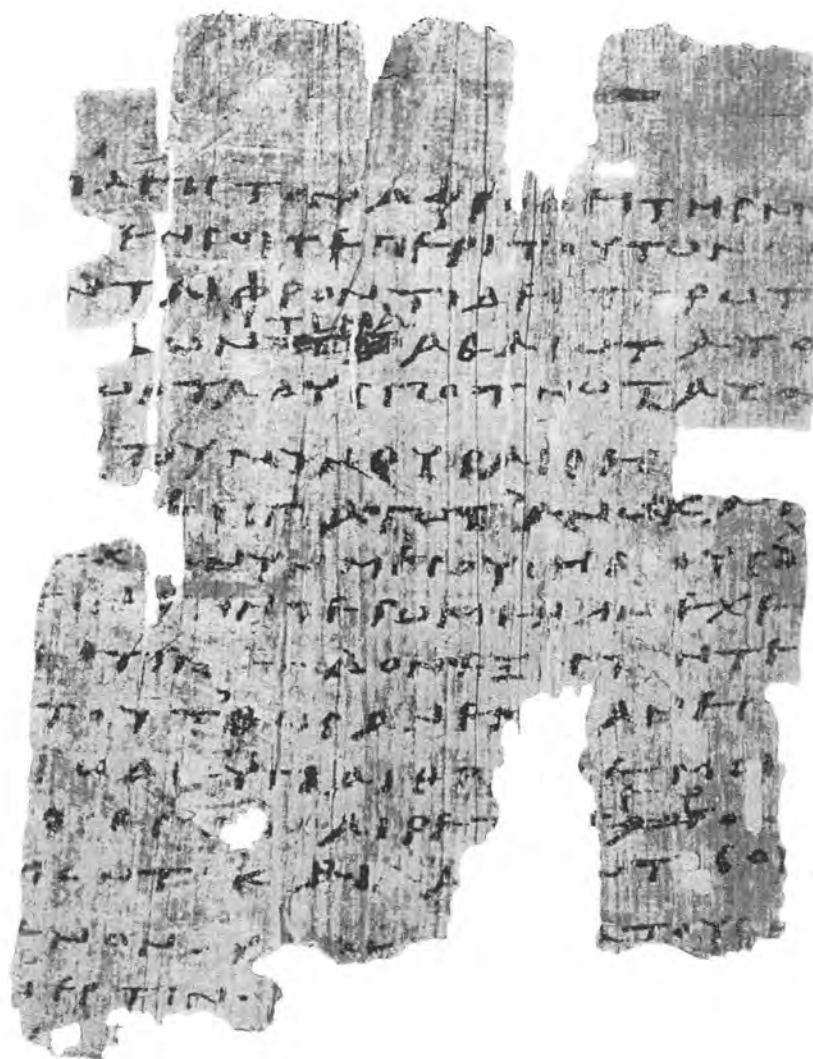
ANONYMOUS AUTHOR, *Περὶ Ἀποφάσεων*

Unedited papyrus from Oxyrhynchus, now P.Oxy. XLI 2944



FRAGMENT OF A SCHOOL BOOK

P. Chester Beatty, leaf 3 recto of a schoolboy's exercise
(Reproduced from *Ancient Society* 1 [1970] plate x)

BEGINNING OF MENANDER, *Misoumenos*

P. IFAO inv. 89 verso, ed. B. Boyaval, *ZPE* 6 (1970) 1ff, enlarged by one-half
(New photograph courtesy Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Cairo)

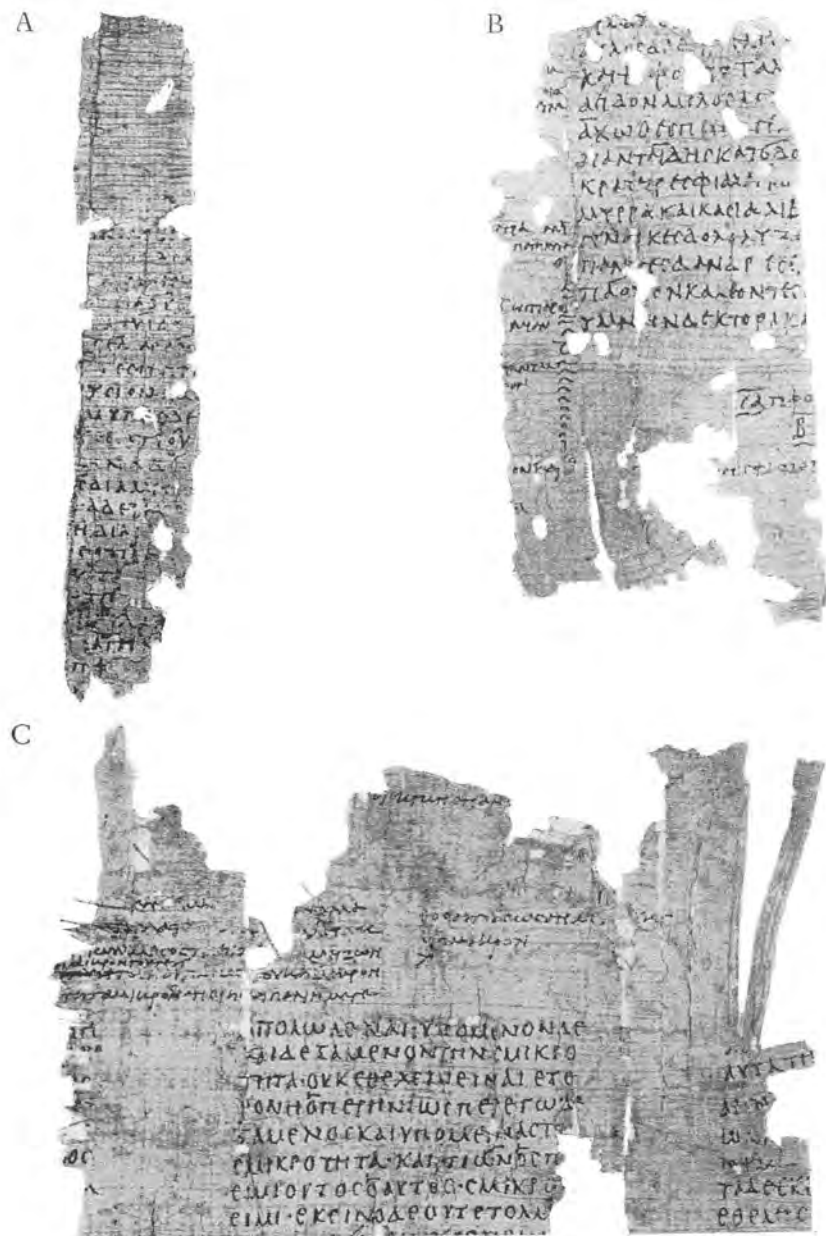


Figure A. FRAGMENT OF SAPPHO 1.1 (P.Oxy. XXI 2288)

Figure B. FRAGMENT OF SAPPHO 2 (P.Oxy. XVII 2076)

Figure C. FRAGMENT OF PLATO, *Phaedo* (P.Oxy. XV 1809)



Figure A. THREEFOLD ENLARGEMENT OF PLATE 4 Figure A

Figure B. DRAWING OF SECTIONS OF Figure A

(Courtesy of Miss Julia Farell, Slade School of Fine Art)

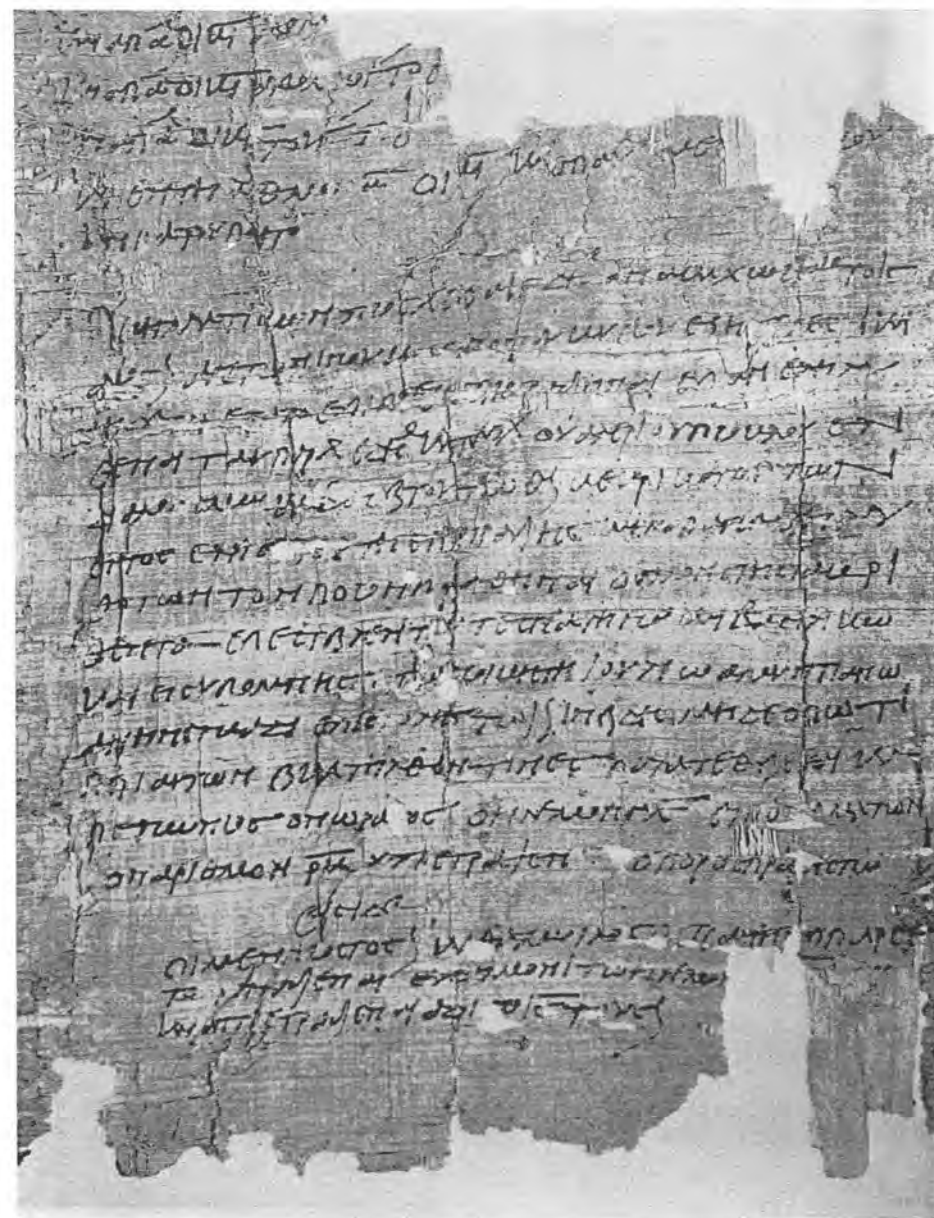


Figure A. WAX SCHOOL TABLET

(Berlin, Staatlicher Museum: AmlBer [1911-12] Abb. 99, reduced by one-half)



Figure B. A SCRIBE PRACTISES HIS SIGNATURE (P. Petaus 121)



AN UNPUBLISHED OFFICIAL LETTER FROM OXYRHYNCHUS (COL. II)

(By permission of the Egypt Exploration Society)



UNEDITED
FRAGMENT OF
MENANDER,
MISOMENOS
(By kind permission
of the Egypt Exploration
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EMERSON BUCHANAN, *Aristotle's Theory of Being.* 1962

Two dollars fifty cents

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JACK L. BENSON, *Ancient Leros.* 1963

Two dollars fifty cents

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WILLIAM M. CALDER III, *The Inscription
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Index of Passages Cited in HERBERT WEIR SMYTH Greek Grammar.
Compiled under the direction of WALTER A. SCHUMANN. 1961

One dollar seventy-five cents

Number Two

STERLING DOW, *Conventions in Editing.* 1969

Two dollars

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