

Book Review

The Oxyrhynchus Papyri LXXXII (Nos 5290–5343). Edited with translations and notes by N. GONIS, F. MALTOMINI, W. B. HENRY, S. SLATTERY, ET AL. Graeco-Roman Memoirs 103. Pp. xii + 200, frontispiece and pls XII. London, The Egypt Exploration Society, 2016. ISSN: 0306-9222. ISBN: 978-0-85698-230-9. Price £85.

This volume with editions of new Oxyrhynchus papyri contains 54 texts from the Roman and Byzantine periods, centred on a substantial group of iatro-magical papyri. As usual, the work is the result of useful cooperation between younger (texts previously published in dissertations) and more experienced papyrologists, in Oxford and elsewhere, and with colleagues from abroad who participated in a workshop or helped in various ways: a good example of the international *amicitia papyrologorum*.

The first three sections of the book are devoted to literary texts. Section I, *Theological Texts*, contains two papyri: no. 5290 (S. Beresford, with a tentative reconstruction of the text by W. B. Henry) is half of a leaf of a fourth century papyrus codex with a partly new fragment of the text of the *Apocryphon of Jannes and Jambres the Magicians*¹ written in the so-called Biblical Majuscule; no. 5291 (D. A. Fisher) has the remains of a few lines of Philo, *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini*, being a small missing corner of *P. Oxy.* IX 1173 fol. 9. The *New Classical Text* of section II, no. 5292 (S. Slattery) offers a fragment with scanty remains of two columns of Sophocles' *Tereus* dated on the basis of the handwriting, the 'Roman Uncial', to the early second century CE. Section III, *Extant Classical Texts*, includes the republication of a papyrus with a prose copy, probably for school use, of Menander, *Kitharistes* Fr. 1 (no. 5293, W. B. Henry), of which the back side with title or description is published for the first time; and five fragments of Theocritus, of which two belong to previously published rolls: no. 5294 (C. Meliàdò) and nos 5295–8 (E. Nabney). No. 5299 (A. Cairncross/W. B. Henry) is one of the few extant papyri with parts of Euclid's *Elements*. The text was written on the back of a largely unpreserved account or register in a cursive hand dated to the third century CE; it was a 'private production'. One relatively large and several smaller fragments contain *Elements* 1.4, 8–11 and 14–25 including the diagrams belonging to each proposition, which were mostly drawn freehand in the right margins. On p. 30 it is rightly suggested that some of the diagrams must have been drawn in the body of the text, to be able to align the rest of them, in the margins, more or less with the text they belonged

¹ Not 'Jewish Magicians' as in Preface p. v, cf. the review of same book by D. Martínez, *BASP* 55 (2018), 336–7. Another review by P. James has in the meantime appeared in *The Classical Review* 67 (2017) 382–5; see also fn. 7 of this review.

to.² As usual in the papyrological tradition,³ for each proposition only the enunciations (statements of the propositions) and diagrams are given; the proofs are missing. The editors remark that such a shorter text may have circulated in Roman Egypt because it was more economical and convenient; one might add that the texts found in Egypt were probably meant for practical rather than for scientific or theoretical use and therefore could do without the proofs.⁴ The text shows some omissions when compared to the Greek manuscript tradition, and, interestingly, sometimes agrees with Boethius, Proclus or the Arabo-Latin tradition. The literary section ends with no. 5300, a small fragment (only the fourth to be published) of Polybius 5.67, 9–10; and no. 5301 with a fragment, possibly deliberately abridged, of Plutarch, *Alexander* 42.8–10, 43.3 (both by S. Slattery). Section IV, *Glossary*, offers one text, no. 5302 (M. C. Scappaticcio/A. Wouters) containing three columns of an alphabetical Graeco-Latin conjugation table from the second century CE.

Section V, *Magic and Medicine*, forms the core of this book. All but two of its 13 papyri were published by F. Maltomini; the texts are edited with detailed and up-to-date commentaries, with a list of abbreviated literature preceding the editions (p. 47). Nos 5303–5 from the third century CE contain fragments of rolls with magical handbooks. No. 5303 has the remains of four spells: one perhaps dealing with sexual intercourse, another may describe a rite connected with Seth-Typhon. The spells on the larger fragment no. 5304 include a love charm, charms to subject (*ύποτακτικόν*) and to restrain anger (*θυμοκάτοχον*), a binding love charm (*φίλτροκατάδεσμος*), and a charm for attraction (*άγωγή*). In no. 5305 four columns are preserved, written in two different hands, which might indicate 'that this magical handbook was produced in a copying centre'.⁵ The spells include another charm to restrain anger, a spell to a drinking-cup, *έπίλογος εις ποτή[ριον]*, a charm to win favour (*χαριτήσιον*) and two love charms. Nos 5306–7 are two

² A schematic drawing of the described layout would have been helpful here.

³ Except for the third-century BCE Berlin ostraca with Euclidean text, see J. Mau and W. Müller, 'Mathematische Ostraka aus der Berliner Sammlung', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 17 (1960), 1–10.

⁴ Cf. S. Cuomo, *Ancient Mathematics* (London, 2001): papyri with parts of Euclid's *Elements* 'written for personal perusal' (p. 145), another papyrus 'probably aimed at architects for training or reference' (p. 146).

⁵ Although the different hands might as well point to a papyrus for private use, where some spells were perhaps added at a later date, cf. e.g. *P. Warren* 21 which seems to be a private collection of spells and horoscopes.

fourth century Christian amulets, one to protect a lady named Eulogia against all sorts of fevers, the other similar but much shorter for a certain Bassa. Both amulets are written in the same hand as used for the amulet *P. Oxy.* VI 924. Remarkably, the parallel parts of the texts are not exactly the same, pointing to ‘the great fluidity of the process of copying magical recipes and producing applied charms’. Nos 5308–11 are different and smaller amulets, against fever and (no. 5311) against ‘every pain and convulsion’.

No. 5312 from the sixth century CE is a rare example of a Christian *χαριτήσιον*, ‘charm to win favour’: the first half consists of a list of 17 angels, some of whom were formerly unknown (Ekophael, Nimiel, Echael, Thiemab), with their attributes (ll. 2–3 ‘Michael, the one in charge of the sun; Raphael, the one in charge of the moon’, etc.); the damaged second half of the text must have continued with the usual request. Following two tiny fifth-century Christian amulets (nos 5313–4, published by L. Tagliapietra), this section ends with a unique papyrus (no. 5315, written on the back of 5304) containing prescriptions with an unnamed substance that may have been *κόπρος*, ‘excrement’; hence the title of the papyrus ‘stercoraceous medical recipes’. The text is made up of very short statements like ‘Eagle (droppings), crushed with wine and drunk, stop sufferers from quinsy. Vulture (droppings) with honey cool fever. Crane (droppings) with water stop scabs (?). Platypous (droppings) with myrtle oil against boils. Swan (droppings) with vinegar stop leprosy’ (ll. 4–10). The section as a whole gives a vivid picture of the daily practice of magic and medicine in Roman and Byzantine Egypt.

Section VI, *Documentary Texts*, presents 27 papyrus documents in chronological order. The second century CE documents include a petition and part of a similar document mentioning a temple-carpenter Teos (nos 5316 and 5317 = *P. Oxy.* III 579 descr.; S. Slattery) and a census declaration for 174/5 CE (no. 5318, M. Malouta).⁶ The third century is represented by a petition from an inhabitant of the Small Oasis to the epistrategus (no. 5319, 203–7 CE, L. M. Bortolani), which is of importance since it mentions the right to be exempted from public capitation taxes for people aged 60 or over, still just as it was in the beginning of the Roman Period. This is furthered by an unusually styled lease of irrigation works (*τοὺς ποτισμούς*, l. 4) of a cucumber bed, this text belongs to the papers on the former property of Claudia Isidora alias Apia (no. 5320, 227/8 CE, J. D. Thomas), and a business letter of the assistant of the procurator Thonius on varied office matter (no. 5321, J. Yuan). All but the last three of the following Byzantine documents, dating from the fifth and sixth centuries, were edited by N. Gonis. Among them orders to supply meat to *σεβαστοφόροι* (meaning unclear, no. 5322); two orders and a receipt for meat addressed to the same cook Anuthius and belonging to a dossier of papyri stemming from the household of a *comes* Ioannes (nos 5334–6); an order to supply meat and money to two churches, probably a religious offering by Isis, the possible wife of Apion I (no. 5333); and an order to supply wine from the dossier of a different *comes* Ioannes (no. 5338). Many of the texts are

(fragments of) contracts for the lease of land: nos 5324–6, 5331–2, 5337, the last one of 10 June 493 CE with the latest attestation of Strategius II as *vir clarissimus*; further the lease of city property by a cellar-keeper (new word *ἀποστασιάρια*) and her sister (no. 5329), and the lease of a bakery (no. 5330). The land lease no. 2325 (3 July 437 CE) has the earliest reference to the private monetary standard (*ιδιωτικῶ σταθμῶ*, l. 15) of Oxyrhynchus. This text is an addition to the archive of the landowner Flavius Strategius I, the ‘forefather’ of the famous and well-attested family of the Apiones. It is the second earliest papyrus to mention him; in the editor’s note to line 3, Strategius’ career is reconstructed as far as possible. The same Strategius I is the addressee of no. 5327, a petition showing for the first time that Strategius also owned estates outside Oxyrhynchus. No. 5323 is presented as ‘the first fifth-century protocol to be identified in the Oxyrhynchus collection’ (although a reference to another one of 494–500 CE is found in the note to line 1); this *protokollon*, a separate piece of papyrus containing the names of certain high officials usually attached to the beginning of a document, is dated to 436–8 CE after the mention of Flavius Apollonius, a known *comes sacrarum largitionum*. Nos 5339–41 are three sixth-century applications for the removal of names from tax lists: the first one, concerning no less than 120 arouras of land, was published by N. Gonis and the other two, as well as the last text, a request to supply 200 artabas of wheat as a donation to the monastery ‘The Great Desert’ (no. 5342), were published by A. Syrkou. In general, these 21 Byzantine texts further confirm the view of life in late antique Oxyrhynchus as we already know it, while extensively adding new details of all sorts including new information on known Oxyrhynchites of the highest ranks.

The last section, VII, *Drawing*, contains one small papyrus, dated to the fifth or sixth century CE, with Daniel (as the antique caption tells us) and the lions, represented crudely in black and some red ink (no. 5343, H. Whitehouse).⁷ The usual indexes, as well as a convenient list of corrections to published papyri, conclude the book. Black-and-white plates of all the literary and magical papyri, and the drawings of seven of the documentary texts are given on the frontispiece and on 12 plates at the end.⁸ The editors deserve to be praised for this fairly flawless⁹ 82nd volume of the steady yearly output of *Oxyrhynchus papyri*, providing us, again, with interesting, thoroughly commented new texts.

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⁶ In line 5, the image seems to allow for the reading *ἀπ’* | *Ὀξυ(ρύγχων)*, instead of *ἀπ’* *Ὀ-|ξ(υρύγχων)* which goes against the hyphenation rules.

⁷ M. Zellmann-Rohrer, in his online review of the same book in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2017.06.39, may be right in suggesting the drawing was used as an amulet.

⁸ Digital images of the published Oxyrhynchus papyri can be found in the *Image Database of Oxyrhynchus Online* at <http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy/>. At the time of writing, however, the images of the following papyri in this volume LXXXII turned out to be ‘currently unavailable’: 5290, 5294, 5298, 5299, 5305, 5313, 5314, 5317, 5320, 5326, 5327, 5329, 5340, 5341, 5342; also missing are the back of 5293, and 5321 (a different small fragment is displayed in its place) – website last consulted 21 Feb. 2019.

⁹ There is a small inconsistency on p. x, where text 5342 is ascribed to N. Gonis, with p. 178 mentioning A. Syrkou as its editor.