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## THE FUTURE OF GRAECO-ROMAN WORK IN EGYPT<sup>1</sup>

BY PROFESSOR B. P. GRENFELL

I HAD hoped that Part XII of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* would be published before the date of this meeting, but though the composition of the volume was finished by the end of May, the printing has been somewhat slower than usual owing to the war. The book, however, is now being bound, and is promised for December. Professor—or, as he now is, Captain—Hunt has been away on military service during the last year, and though he took part in the decipherment and translation of the papyri in the earlier stages of the volume, the commentary unfortunately lacks his accustomed share in its composition. Part XI consisted practically entirely of literary texts, either classical, Graeco-Egyptian, or theological; Part XII on the other hand contains official and private documents, chiefly of the third century of the Christian era. We hope in the future to keep more closely to the chronological arrangement of the non-literary documents from Oxyrhynchus which was observed in some of the earlier volumes of the series, but was abandoned when literary papyri claimed nearly the whole available space. The most important section is that concerning the senate, which was established at Oxyrhynchus, as in other capitals of nomes throughout Egypt, in A.D. 202. It was more or less based on a Greek model, and for a century the municipality enjoyed a certain amount of freedom of government; but early in the fourth century most of its powers were usurped by a representative of the central administration called a *logistes* or *curator*. Of the papyri belonging to this section the earliest is a short decree of the Emperor Caracalla, probably in A.D. 215, when he visited Egypt, concerning the behaviour of senators. It runs as follows: ‘Proclamation of the Emperor Caesar M. Aurelius Severus Antoninus Parthicus Maximus, etc. If a senator strike or censure in an unseemly manner the president or another senator, he shall be deprived of his rank, and set in a position of dishonour. Published at Babylon (*i.e.* Babylon near Cairo) in the public colonnade, the magistrate in office being Aurelius Alexander...from Heliopolis.’ From this we may gather that the meetings in the early days were somewhat turbulent. Another papyrus contains a notice of a special meeting summoned by the president, who bears a long list of municipal titles, in about A.D. 284.

‘The question of the transport of provisions for the most noble soldiers does not admit even a brief delay, and for this reason, and since letters from his excellency the dioecetes Aurelius Proteas, as well as from his excellency Ammonius, are urging us on this matter, and the boats to receive the supplies are already at anchor, it became necessary to summon a special general meeting of the senate at a

<sup>1</sup> An address delivered at the General Meeting of the Exploration Fund, November 17, 1916.

suitable place, in order that a discussion may be held on this single subject, and the obligations performed as quickly as possible. Accordingly in order that every one, being informed of this, may willingly act as senator (?) to-day, which is the 15th, the letters are publicly exhibited. I thought it right that you should know by this proclamation that I have instructed you, being now in possession of the facts, to assemble swiftly in view of the orders, since no other subject remains for the present meeting, and to vote upon the elections of those who are to serve.

The 2nd (?) year, (month) 15.'

Three long papyri give reports, divided into sections, of discussions in the senate in A.D. 270—275, with the names of the speakers and abstracts of their remarks, while another contains a list of resolutions passed at a sitting, so that a very fair general idea of the proceedings can be obtained.

The debate on each topic was generally opened by the reading of a communication from the governor of the nome or some other external official, or by an explanatory speech from the president, who usually took a leading part in the discussion. The senators' remarks were frequently collective (the word corresponding to 'Hear hear' or 'bravo' was *ὠκεανέ*); but sometimes one set of magistrates spoke, or an individual senator. An official of the senate, who is prominent in bringing matters to a decision or collecting information, is called the 'syndic,' a kind of legal adviser, who also acted as the advocate of the senate in courts of law; but the officials of the central government do not take part directly in the debates.

The subjects of discussion concern partly administration, partly finance. Under the former head come the appointments of various local magistrates, the supply of whom tended to diminish in the third century owing to the lack of candidates able and willing to incur the necessary expenses of office.

Thus one section describes an animated discussion on the question of the appointment of a public banker. The first speech came as usual from the president, who pointed out that persons already holding a public office were eligible for election to a second, and it was on this question that most of the subsequent debate turned; for after a second speech from the president urging an immediate election, but leaving the choice of a candidate to the senate, the members of the tribe which by rotation was responsible for the appointments to public duties proposed the election of Ptolemaeus, chief-priest, one of the minor municipal officials. The next speech was an objection to this nomination from Eudaemon, an exegetes (one of the higher magistrates), on the ground that the burden of two offices was beyond Ptolemaeus' means, as was also pleaded by the chief-priest himself. The president's suggestion, that more pressure should be brought to bear upon Ptolemaeus, as being too modest, led to renewed protests from him and Eudaemon; but though disposed to make some concession with regard to the office already held by Ptolemaeus, the president would take no refusal on the question of the bankership; and the senators showed their opinion by the customary acclamations. A final appeal from Ptolemaeus, supported by a reminder of his past services from his champion, was disregarded, and his election as public banker was proposed by the president and accepted by the senate, a last good word for Ptolemaeus being spoken by Eudaemon, acquiescing in the verdict of the majority.

As an example of debates on financial questions I may cite a section dealing with the supply of yarn for making the vestments required in a temple at Oxyrhynchus, and the amount to be paid to the yarn-merchants. The opening speech of the

president explained that a previous resolution of the senate concerning the budget of the temple required modification on account of the difficulty of obtaining yarn for manufacturing the temple vestments. Owing to the refusal or inability of the village flax-spinners and their wives to carry out their engagements, it had apparently become necessary to apply to the city yarn-merchants for the material, as was pointed out by the syndic, who reported that the price demanded was 49 denarii (196 drachmae), of which 11 denarii had already been advanced from the State Treasury. This price was considered too high by the senate, and they reduced it to 30 denarii, a figure accepted by the syndic, who then undertook to present a sample to the weavers appointed for the manufacture of the temple linen. The discussion then turned upon a petition of the associated cloth-weavers of Oxyrhynchus, who, like any modern trade-union, were demanding an increase in their remuneration owing to the rise in the price of raw materials and the wages of their apprentices. Probably these manufactures were destined for the State, which collected a certain amount of revenue in the form of clothing for the army. Some increase in the remuneration of the cloth-weavers was ultimately awarded by the senate.

A different group of papyri in Part XII is valuable historically, as throwing light on the chronology of the Roman emperors from A.D. 250—284. This period was very obscure owing to the poverty of literary evidence and the inconsistencies in the archaeological evidence concerning the dates, so that there has been much dispute as to the precise length of the reigns of the emperors Gallienus, Claudius II, and Aurelian, and the dates of their accessions, Gallienus being assigned sometimes 15, sometimes 16 years, Claudius 2 or 3, Aurelian 6 or 7. An astronomical basis for determining the dates of these emperors is now provided by three horoscopes, two in the reign of Gallienus and one in that of Carinus, shortly after Aurelian. These give the position in the signs of the zodiac occupied by the sun and moon and the five chief planets at the time of the nativity in question, which is fixed by the regnal year, month, day and hour. They are calculated according to the system of Ptolemy, which as regards the movements of the heavenly bodies was very accurate, and, since the data of the horoscopes accord very closely with the facts (in no case is there an error of more than a few degrees, and the signs of the zodiac are right throughout), there is no possible doubt as to the year of the Julian calendar to which the regnal years mentioned in the horoscopes refer. The result of the new evidence, taken in conjunction with that of coins, is to indicate that Gallienus' last year was his 15th, not his 16th, and Aurelian's last year his 7th, not his 6th, as has widely been supposed, chiefly on the evidence of a Strassburg papyrus, and that the death of Gallienus and accession of Claudius took place about July 268, and the accession of Aurelian in the spring of 270, not in that of 271.

Part XIII, which is in preparation, will contain two sections of mainly third century documents (contracts and private accounts), for which there was not room in Part XII, but will be chiefly devoted to literary papyri, like Part XI. Of these the most valuable is a papyrus containing parts of two lost dithyrambs of Pindar, the authorship of which is proved by the occurrence of three extant fragments. The dithyrambs were hymns nominally in praise of Dionysus, just as the paeans, of which we published considerable fragments in Part V, were nominally in praise of Apollo. One of the two poems was addressed to the Argives, the other was addressed to the

Thebans, as is shown by the title. The opening strophe and antistrophe of the second poem, each of 18 lines, are well preserved. There is also part of another Pindaric papyrus, containing some of the Olympian odes. This is the first papyrus of the extant portion of Pindar's poems to be discovered, and, since none of the Pindaric MSS. is older than the 12th century, will be very valuable for the history of the text, for it belongs to the 5th century. The longest literary papyrus is part of a roll containing speeches of the Attic orator, Lysias, of which there are over 100 fragments, divided among at least two of the lost orations. The title of one of these, *Against Hippotherses* is preserved: the following oration seems to be directed against a person called Theomnestus, but is not either of the two extant orations of Lysias against an individual of that name; and though the name Theodotides also occurs, and some fragments of Lysias' oration *Against Theodotides* were published by us in the *Hibeh Papyri*, the subject of that speech seems to have been different from that of the Oxyrhynchus oration, which is concerned with a charge of fraud. The oration against Hippotherses was also a private one, but contains several references to political events, the case being concerned with the revolution of the 30 Tyrants, and the restoration of the democracy. There are also many fragments of a different papyrus containing a speech against a certain Lycophron, which is to be ascribed to the orator Lycurgus. Lycophron was defended by Hyperides in a speech which is partly extant in a British Museum papyrus, the prosecution being conducted by Lycurgus, and the occurrence of several of the same proper names in the two papyri leaves no room for doubt as to the authorship of the Oxyrhynchus text. Part of a Socratic dialogue in the style of Plato, but not extant, though the works of Plato are preserved almost in entirety, is more difficult to identify. The argument turns upon the character of Themistocles, who is stated to have been disowned by his father, a circumstance which was not previously known. Another valuable literary text gives a series of apparently disconnected discussions of various points connected with Greek mythology or literary history, illustrated by quotations from different authors. One of the sections deals with Kaineus, who was supposed to have been turned from a woman into a man by Poseidon; another deals with the confusion between Thucydides the politician and Thucydides the historian. Extant authors are represented (besides the Pindar fragment already mentioned and others) by fragments of Herodotus Book III, which are much more extensive than any Herodotean fragments discovered previously, of the *Ajax* of Sophocles, the *Orestes* of Euripides, and the *Plutus* of Aristophanes. Among the theological texts I have so far identified an early fragment of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, a work which was very popular in Egypt, and several early biblical pieces. Of these the most interesting is one from the first chapter of Ecclesiasticus in the LXX, which contains the verse *The word of God most high is the fountain of wisdom, and her ways are everlasting commandments*. This verse occurs in a late Greek cursive MS. and in some of the ancient versions, but is omitted by all the chief uncial codices, and has generally been regarded by recent editors of the Apocrypha as an amplification of the verse preceding. But its occurrence in the Oxyrhynchus papyrus (6th cent.) suggests that the omission is probably due to homoioteleuton (this verse ends with *αἰώνια*, its predecessor with *αἰώνος*). This is interesting in view of the recent efforts of Prof. Clark to show that the shorter text found in the most ancient Greek MSS. of the Gospels, the Sinaitic and Vatican codices, as contrasted with the longer Western text, is due



not to interpolations in the Western text but to accidental omissions of lines in the other.

After finishing Oxyrhynchus XII, I have been mainly occupied with the editing of Part III of the Tebtunis papyri for the University of California. Part I, which consisted of late Ptolemaic papyri found in crocodile-mummies, was issued as a joint volume by the University and the Exploration Fund; Part II, consisting of papyri of the Roman period from the town of Tebtunis, was issued by the University alone, as will be this volume, which comprises papyri of the third and second centuries B.C. from mummy-cartonnage, like the Petrie and Hibeh papyri. The greater part of the long and delicate process of unrolling the papyri was undertaken by Prof. Smyly of Dublin, who has been collaborating with me in the edition, as also has Mr E. Lobel, a young Oxford papyrologist, now engaged in war work. Since the bulk of the papyri belongs to the reigns of Ptolemy Epiphanes and Philometor in the first half of the second century B.C., they serve usefully to fill the gap between the Petrie papyri and the papyri of the first Tebtunis volume. The most important literary pieces are some fragments of, apparently, the *Inachus* of Sophocles, a satyric drama of an obscure character, to judge by both the extant and the newly recovered remains. There is also part of a treatise on music (not Aristoxenus), and an extract of 30 lines from a lost comedy. Besides several fragments of the *Iliad*, which do not differ much from the vulgate text, there are several of the *Odyssey*, which are remarkable both for their comparative rarity and on account of the presence of a number of new lines and other variants. This circumstance shows that the influence of the great Alexandrine scholars of the third century B.C. in fixing the text of Homer as we have it to-day was at first much stronger in regard to the *Iliad* than to the *Odyssey*, of which the text seems to have remained in a fluid condition until the close of the second century B.C. The non-literary papyri, which number over 400, contain many official and private documents of great interest, some of them of considerable length. Among these I may mention a well preserved papyrus of over 250 lines, written towards the end of the third century B.C. by a high Alexandrian official, probably the diocetes or finance-minister, to a subordinate upon the appointment of the latter to a post in the administration of the revenues of the Arsinoite nome. Elaborate directions are given to the official in question concerning the care of dykes and canals, the inspection of crops, how to deal with complaints against the village officials, the supervision of persons who were in difficulty about the payment of rent, the making of lists of the royal and private cattle, the transference of the king's calves to the proper byres, the supervision of the corn-transport to Alexandria, the inspection of the state weaving-factories and oil-factories, the audit of the revenue accounts of villages, the revenue from pastures, the administration of the affairs of the *μάχιμοι* (the descendants of the ancient Egyptian warrior class), and so on, concluding with instructions how to deal with matters not mentioned in the circular, and general advice to work hard and avoid bad company. Hardly any extant Greek papyrus gives so comprehensive an insight as this into the working of the Ptolemaic administration. A special interest attaches to a group of second century B.C. papyri from a village called Samaria, in which was a colony of Jewish settlers. To this group belongs the oldest known contract in Greek for a loan upon mortgage of house property, written in B.C. 181. I hope to issue the third Tebtunis

volume, the last of the series, as well as Part XIII of the Oxyrhynchus papyri in the course of 1918.

When the cartonnage from Tebtunis has been published, I trust that we may be able to begin the unrolling of the similar papyrus cartonnage from various sites in the Fayûm which Prof. Hunt and I found for the Exploration Fund, and which will probably provide material for a couple of volumes, besides the remainder of the Hîbeh cartonnage, which will require a volume, and the cartonnage found by Mr Johnson at Aphroditopolis and elsewhere, which may occupy two or three more. The Graeco-Roman Branch is indeed very fortunate in the possession of an immense store of accumulated material for publication, so that the stoppage of work in Egypt caused by the war does not particularly affect it. I have not had time this summer to continue the task which I began last year, of sorting and unrolling the papyri in the unopened Oxyrhynchus tin-boxes, numbering about 400. The papyri in Parts VI—XIII have, with the exception of some of the more important literary pieces, been drawn from that portion of the finds which Prof. Hunt had time to unroll on the spot, *i.e.* from the smaller of the thirty lots into which each day's finds were generally divided. The larger lots, to which the best finds usually belonged, had to be packed up without unrolling them. Hence, except in the case of the papyri from the first out of the six years' excavations at Oxyrhynchus, the proportion of the papyri which we have yet examined is much less than half, and barring accidents the Oxyrhynchus series is likely to extend to thirty volumes. There is thus no pressing need for further excavation for some years at any rate. At the same time I hope that, when the opportunity offers itself after the war, excavations for papyri may be resumed. The excavation of Antinoë by Mr Johnson disposed of the only remaining town site south of the Fayûm which was particularly promising. In the Fayûm itself occasional finds of papyri are still made by *sebâkh*-diggers at the much dug sites of Harît (Theadelphia) and Girzeh (Philadelphia). One find that occurred at Harît shortly before the war went to Berlin; another which was made at Girzeh shortly after the outbreak of the war went to Florence. But I do not think that there are any sites left in the Fayûm which would repay systematic excavations for papyri. There are possibilities in connexion with some of the town sites in the south-western Delta, but though a few stray papyri seem to have come from them, probably damp has there been nearly as fatal to the preservation of that fragile material as it has been for instance at Naucratis and Bubastis. The only large find of papyri in the Delta has been at Thmuis, near Mendes, where the rolls were burnt and carbonized, like those from Herculaneum. The best prospects for making new finds are, I think, held out by the district between Minyeh and Girgeh. The Ptolemaic necropoleis in the region between Wasta and Minyeh have been pretty thoroughly examined, partly by Prof. Hunt and myself, partly by Mr Johnson; but at Akhmîm finds of papyrus cartonnage still occur, and considering the interest attaching to Ptolemais Hermiou, the Greek town established by Ptolemy Soter near Akhmîm, and now under the modern Menshiyeh, some efforts ought to be made to discover the site of the Ptolemaic cemetery. Beyond Girgeh, towards Luxor and Assuân, the region is less promising, for papyrus seems to have been much scarcer there than in Middle Egypt, as is indicated by the frequent employment of ostraca as substitutes.

If however further excavation is not practicable for the Graeco-Roman Branch, Journ. of Egypt. Arch. iv.

there is another field of research which it might profitably undertake. The geography of Graeco-Roman Egypt has not been treated comprehensively since the time of Parthey in 1859, long before the era of papyrus discoveries began. The amount of geographical information scattered through Greek papyri, inscriptions, and ostraca is now very considerable, particularly with regard to Middle Egypt. In several of the nomes of that region it is probable that nearly all the Graeco-Roman place-names are by this time known; and for Upper Egypt and the Delta also there is much new evidence available. A detailed comparison of the ancient and Arabic names would doubtless lead to many identifications. The compilation of a geographical dictionary of Graeco-Roman Egypt from the time of Herodotus to the Arab conquest, including the demotic and Coptic evidence, and accompanied by maps, would be not only very useful to students of that period of Egyptian history, but would pave the way for a new comprehensive treatment of the hieroglyphic evidence, for which Egyptologists are still dependent upon the now somewhat antiquated geographical dictionary of Brugsch. The undertaking is of course a large one, and though most of the work lies in collecting evidence from publications, a certain amount of exploration in Egypt would be necessary. Having always been interested in the geography of Egypt, in Part II of the Tebtunis papyri I treated the place-names of the Fayûm in some detail; and I have made a beginning of a more comprehensive work such as I above described, though, while I am working alone at papyri, there is of course very little time that can be spared for this purpose. If, when the war is over, the Graeco-Roman Branch finds excavation too expensive, it might still support the less ambitious undertaking which I have outlined, and perhaps devote a volume or two to geography. Prof. Hunt may not be very anxious to leave Oxford when he returns to it, and Mr Johnson has been doing such useful work at the Clarendon Press that they may be unwilling to part with him at the close of the war: in any case he has the Antinoë volume to publish, the Theocritus papyrus in particular being eagerly expected. But when the time comes, I shall, I hope, be ready, if desired, to renew exploration in Egypt for the Exploration Fund.