
The University of Michigan Collection of Papyri

The nucleus of the University of Michigan collection of papyri was formed in 1920, through a selection from the accumulation of finds made in Egypt during the Great War. Additions have subsequently been made, and the number of items in the collection is now about 1100. The great majority of the papyri, well over 900, are Greek; there are about 100 Coptic; the remainder are Demotic and Arabic. Together with the papyri there have been acquired some good specimens of waxed and wooden tablets and a few ostraka. The Greek papyri include literary, theological, astrological and mathematical fragments, letters, and public and private documents.

The literary pieces, which are relatively few in number, comprise some interesting specimens. Homer is represented by *Odyssey*, IV, 450-481, and by the following portions of the *Iliad*: I, 32-57; III, 408-422; VI, 211-221; X, 192-212; XVII, 541-550; XVIII, 209-216; 220-241; 251-260; 275-281; 294-299; 306-342; 437-617. All the fragments of *Iliad* XVIII are parts of a single roll of the latter part of the second or first part of the third century A. D. There is also a mutilated fragment of the *Scolia Minora*.

An unidentified epic fragment in a script of the third century A. D. is especially interesting. It is strongly reminiscent of Hesiod and may belong to the Ἰλιόξυ. There is also a small fragment of a rhetorical treatise entitled Περὶ Μῦθου. It deals with the uses of the myth in rhetoric, and in content somewhat resembles the work of Aelius Theon dealing with the same subject. A paper dealing with the Homeric fragment XVIII, 437-617, the epic fragment, and the rhetorical treatise, was read by Professor J. G. Winter before the American Philological Association at Yale University in December 1922 and will be published in the forthcoming volume of the Society's *Transactions*.

Another significant literary papyrus contains a fragment of Dioscorides. It dates from the third century A. D. and contains part of the very long 76th chapter of Book II. The roll of which it formed a part was remarkable for the unusual length of its columns, there being 89 lines in one, 87 in another. The text is of interest chiefly because it presents a number of readings which agree with the MS. Escorialensis III R. 3 (Wellmann's E), eleventh century, against all others. The effect of this discovery may be to attach a somewhat greater importance to peculiar readings of the Escorial MS. and perhaps to modify the stemma constructed by Wellmann. Professor Campbell Bonner discussed this fragment in a paper presented at the above mentioned meeting of the American Philological Association, and will publish the new text in full in the near future.

The most important theological text contains portions of the *Shepherd* of Hermas. It consists of about fifty pages of a codex, certainly not later than the early part of the fourth century. The fragment extends from *Similitudes*, II, viii, to *Similitudes*, IX, v, 2. Some of the pages are intact but most of them are more or less torn. For this part of the *Shepherd* the only other Greek text known is the Athos MS. (XVth cent.). The papyrus offers a better text, so far as it goes, than the Athos MS. It is interesting to note that it contains several sentences omitted in that MS., but known to the makers of the two Latin versions.

Seven large fragments, of from one to four columns each, come from an astrological roll of unknown authorship, which belongs to the late third or early fourth century A. D. and seems to be a new type of astrological work. Its peculiarity consists in the use of a series of astronomical measurements as the basis of an astrological doctrine, viz. the assignment of spheres of influence to the planets.

The documentary papyri of the collection owe their importance largely to their representative character. They range from the middle of the third century B. C. to the eighth century A. D. All the familiar types of documents, are represented, and the number of perfect, or almost perfect, specimens is relatively large. While the Ptolemaic texts are neither very numerous nor very important, there are two groups of documents from the early Principate which are of unusual interest. The first, numbering about 150 pieces, comes from the Grapheion of Tebtunis and belongs to the Principates of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero. The choice piece of this group contains the ἀναγγελεῖς τοῦ

γραφείου of Tebtunis and Kerkesouchon Orous from *Germaneikos* 3 to the close of the second year of Claudius (41/2 A. D.). It is a large roll, 2 m. 39 cm. long and 29.30 cm. wide. The *verso* contains the entries of 247 contracts, and the *recto* abstracts of fifty of these contracts listed on the *verso*. Of particular interest are the lengthy abstracts of five συγγραφαὶ τροφίταις. The writer discussed this document before the Philological Association last December in a paper which will shortly be published.

The second important group of documents, containing 122 pieces, comes from the archives of a public office (probably that of the Comogrammateus) at Philadelphia. These papyri belong to the same period as those of the preceding group, practically all being dated in the principate of Claudius. Most of these documents are registers of various sorts, which should yield valuable information concerning social and economic conditions in the Fayum about the middle of the first century of our era.

Among the interesting miscellaneous pieces in the collection is a School Exercise Book of many leaves in Greek and Coptic. A perfectly preserved waxed diptych, containing a copy of a *pro-fessio liberorum* of 128 A. D., in Latin, commands the most attention.

The task of editing the Michigan papyri has been entrusted to members of the University Staff. It is the intention to make the definitive publication in the *Humanistic Series* of the *University of Michigan Studies*. Pending this final publication, however, discussions [of the more important papyri and, if possible, their textes, will be published from time to time in the pages of scientific periodicals, for the benefit of those interested in papyrology and in the hope that suggestions and criticisms from other scholars may prove helpful in preparing the final edition.

In the same series of *Studies* a papyrus codex of the *Minor Prophets* will be published by Professor Henry A. Sanders. This codex dates from the beginning of the fourth century, or possibly from the latter part of the third century A. D., and contains thirty-three leaves written on both sides. The text includes the eleven prophets Amos to Malachi and a few lines from the end of Hosea. The codex will be kept with the University of Michigan papyri until after the publication is completed; it will then be permanently placed in the Freer Gallery in Washington.

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