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Isabella Andorlini Guido Bastianini
Manfredo Manfredi Giovanna Menci

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matter whether my reasoning is sound or not, P. Haun. inv. 407 will add some interesting aspects to the discussion of the land tenure policy of the Ptolemies which for so long has been based on the Fayum. Besides providing detailed information on the use of some of the land, P. Haun. inv. 407 provides us with a more detailed picture of differences between the north and the south, and it increases our understanding of the economic system connected to the land in the Thebaid.

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A Greek Educational Papyrus in Armenian Script

JAMES CLACKSON

INTRODUCTION

The object of this paper is a highly unusual papyrus which has recently been rediscovered in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (inventory number BnF Arn 332)¹. The text contains Greek written in Armenian script. This is the only example of Armenian script surviving on any ancient papyrus², and is almost certainly the earliest surviving Armenian handwriting. In this paper I shall give a short account of the history and contents of this text and attempt to ascertain the circumstances which may have led to its creation³.

1. THE HISTORY OF BNF 332

The history of the text is partly obscure⁴. It was bought by the French scholar Auguste Carrière (born 12th August 1838, died 25th January 1902, Professeur d'arménien de l'École des langues orientales vivantes and Directeur des études sémitiques de l'École pratique des hautes études⁵) from an Arab dealer, who did not reveal the provenance, but Carrière suspected that it came from the Fayum. In 1892 Carrière informed the Mechitarist congregations in Venice and Vienna that the text contained Greek in Armenian characters and sent them each a photograph of one side of the text. The text was first mentioned in print in the Armenian journal of the Venice Mechitarists, *Bazmavep*, in 1892 (p. 39), and then more fully by

¹ I am indebted to Dickran Kouymjian, Sarah Clackson and Kalle Korhonen for their help with this paper; I have also gained much from the suggestions of audiences at seminars in Cambridge, Florence and London.

² S. Clackson (1994:223 n. 6) mentions that '[t]here are also a few papyrus fragments with what looks like Armenian script on them' among the CUL Michaelides collection. On re-inspection of these fragments I no longer believe that they contain Armenian letters; they may be forgeries.

³ A full transcription and commentary is published in *ZPE* 129 (2000) 223-258.

⁴ The information here is mainly based on the accounts of Cuendet 1937:217 and Kouymjian 1997:185f.

⁵ See the obituaries by Meillet (1903) and Macler (1902).

the Vienna Mechitarist Tashean in a work on the history of Armenian palaeography. The text remained unpublished for the next forty years until the Swiss Armenianist Georges Cuendet, unable to locate the original, published an edition based on the photograph which Carrière had sent to the Vienna Mechitarists (Cuendet 1937 and 1938)⁶. Cuendet read much of the text from the photograph, and was able to elucidate some of the Greek words and phrases. Further progress was made by the Belgian linguist Maurice Leroy (Leroy 1938) and the papyrologist Claire Préaux (Préaux 1939). There the matter remained for another half century, until in 1993 Professor Dickran Kouymjian rediscovered the original text in the Oriental Manuscripts collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris⁷. Kouymjian immediately saw that the photograph from which Cuendet had worked did not present the complete text, which was actually written on both sides of the papyrus. The photograph also omitted a strip of papyrus on the left hand side and a fragment on the lower right hand corner. Kouymjian also discovered a complete transcription of the papyrus in the Bibliothèque Nationale, which is likely to have been made by Carrière himself.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE TEXT

The papyrus is currently mounted as if it were a single unbroken text, but actually consists of 4 separate fragments. Two small fragments, containing portions of between 4 and 6 lines, are presently mounted upside down and back to front in relation to the two large fragments, which both contain between 27 and 30 lines on each side. These two fragments are mounted alongside one another and appear to present a single continuous text. Indeed, the transcription published by Cuendet and the unpublished transcription in the Bibliothèque Nationale do not even indicate that there is a break in the text. However, careful examination of line-heights, script and papyrus fibres show that although the two fragments do join, their present alignment with one another is incorrect and one should be moved up 3 lines in relation to the other. The spacing between the lines is generally so regular that the misalignment is not immediately apparent, and the nature of the content on the published side does not make it easy to see that the two halves of a line do not actually tally, but the realignment results in greatly improved readings, and is confirmed by the material on the unpublished side of the text. One of the small fragments can also be shown to join with these two large fragments, and the fourth most likely belongs to the same sheet of papyrus.

The left hand margin on side A (the published side) and the bottom margin of the text are preserved, but the top margin is not. The realigned text is approximately 176 mm high and 224 mm wide. From an identifiable Diogenes *chria* preserved on side B (see below) it is possible to reconstruct the original width of the column, which must have been approximately 300 mm⁸. The approximate height (if the fourth fragment does belong to this same papyrus sheet) must have been at least 200 mm.

3. SCRIPT AND DATE

This text is the only surviving example of Armenian script written on papyrus, and the hand is considerably different from those found in the earliest Armenian manuscripts. The papyrus consequently has important ramifications for the study of Armenian palaeography. Kouymjian has made an extensive study of the script (see Kouymjian 1996, 1997 and forthcoming), and he believes that the letter-forms are closest to those found in lapidary inscriptions dated to the 5th century AD, and that consequently the date of the papyrus may actually be quite close to the date of the creation of the Armenian alphabet (traditionally dated to c. 406 AD). Previous scholars (Hengstenberg 1938 and Préaux 1939) thought that the similarity of the language of the text to Modern Greek suggested a later date, but it is possible to find secure parallels to nearly all the certainly identifiable vocabulary items from literary or documentary sources before the 7th century AD. There is also evidence from inscriptions and papyri to show that there were Armenians in Egypt before the seventh century AD, and the presence of the Armenians in the Byzantine army and administration is well known⁹. There is consequently no compelling argument to reject, and palaeographical grounds to support, a fifth – or sixth – century date for this text.

The handwriting is rapid, fluent and easy. Line-heights are very consistent, and there are generally no spaces left blank. In some places extra written material has been added between two lines of text. Phrases and separate words which form part of a list are separated by a colon (in the Armenian

⁸ This is unusually wide. There is no surviving early Armenian manuscript with comparable column width, although there are parallels in Greek papyri, see Turner 1987 text 60.

⁹ On Armenians in the Byzantine Empire see especially Charanis 1961, Kazdan 1984, Brousselle 1996. Armenians in the Byzantine Army, Dédeyan 1987; Armenians in Egypt, Maîté 1980. Kapoian-Kouymjian 1988 and Nigossian 1991. Note also the occurrence of the ethnic designation or name 'Aplévoç in inscriptions and papyri from Egypt: in Greek graffiti from the tombs at Thebes (Bailet 1925 nos. 1253, 1659 and 1707, all from before the Arab conquest); in papyri *P.Vind.Supp.* 3 r.1 (an alias of Besodoros, a gymnasiarch in Hermopolis c. 325 AD); *SB XII* 11076 r.19 (Hermopolis? 6th cent.), *P.Sorb.* II 69 45 F1 (restored from *Aplévoç*, see Gascou's note p. 230, Hermopolis 7th cent.).

⁶ The Mechitarist congregation in Vienna still possesses a copy of the original photograph (personal communication, Fr Vahan Hovagimian, 15.12.97).

⁷ The Bibliothèque Nationale has been unable to locate the acquisition details of the text.

script, a colon is the equivalent to a full-stop) but no other punctuation is used. There are a couple of extra notational devices: a horizontal bar written above the word θεός 'God' in its three attestations in line 19 of side A, and an X written above the end of the second word in line 16 of side A (see further under 5 below).

4. REPRESENTATION OF GREEK¹⁰

It should be noted at first that the Armenian text is not a straight transcription of a Greek original. This can be shown by the fact that the Armenian text uses the two different signs for / available from the Armenian alphabet to represent Greek λ. In Armenian a 'dark' (palatal) λ is phonemically distinct from a 'dark' (velarised) λ and the Armenian writer equated allophones of the Greek λ phoneme to the two different Armenian phonemes. The Greek of the papyrus appears to be close to the Greek spoken in Egypt in the early Byzantine period: there is much iacism (of ε and η, but υ is largely kept distinct); some interchange between voiced and voiceless stops; widespread reduction of final -iov to -υ; and evidence for the replacement of the dative by the genitive¹¹. Greek χ and β are almost always represented as stops, despite the fact that the Armenian script does have letters for the voiced labio-dental fricative [v] and a voiceless velar fricative [x] (which are not in fact used in the whole text). It has previously been argued that aspirated stops were retained in Egyptian Greek well into the first millennium AD (Bubeník 1989:190 following Gignac 1978:98) and this text supports that conclusion, but the retention of β as a voiced stop at this period seems more surprising¹². It may be that the text represents a rather conservative pronunciation, and this theory is supported by the preservation of the aspirate [h] in several words.

5. SYNOPSIS OF CONTENTS

The contents of this document are entirely Greek, there is no evidence of any Armenian vocabulary anywhere on the papyrus. The first half of side A contains phrases and sentences separated by colons¹³. Some of these phrases had already been interpreted by Cuendet and Leroy (A3 τιμήν καὶ οὐκ

¹⁰ See Leroy 1938:529-33 for a fuller discussion of the representation of Greek in this text, but note that his readings and interpretation of much of the text can be improved upon.

¹¹ Parallels to these developments are abundantly attested, see Gignac 1978:81.

¹² Note, however, that Armenian loan-words taken from Greek generally represent Greek β by Armenian *b* not *v* (Thurn 1900:408).

¹³ In what follows I have given a normalised version of the Greek for ease of interpretation, rather than a retranscription of the Armenian script.

ἔδωκες 'and you did not pay the price', A12 ἀνέδωκα ἀνὰ αὐτοῦ 'I gave them to him'), others can now be extended with the new alignment of the papyrus, or new fragments: A4 πόσο(ν) χρόνον ἔχεις ἀπ' ὅτε ἡλθες ὧδε 'How long is it since you came here?' (lit. 'How long have you had since you came here?'), A7 ἀπελθεῖν ποιῆσεν τὴν χρεῖαν τοῦ ὄντιον, 'to go to perform service of the house / hospital', A10 αὐριον (actually with the late Greek form αὐριον) ἐργασμαι ἡλθεν, 'tomorrow I am going. He went', A11 πῶς δεῦθεν δεῖξον με ὁδὸν τὴν ποτ' 'where are we going show me the road to...', A14 καλῶς ἔσονται (written ἔσονται): φάγετε μὴ περιμένετε 'I ate well. Eat don't wait', but some phrases still resist a secure explanation. Interspersed among these phrases there are some conjugations or rather groups of associated verb-forms: A9 ἀναχώρησε: ἀναχώρησα: ἀναχώρησεν, A13 ἔχουεν: ἔχω: ἔχεις: ἔχει, and perhaps also A8 ἀπερωτέ: ἡρώτησα 'you ask. I asked' (if *erodisa* = ἡρώτησα).

A lacuna in the text makes the interpretation of the following lines difficult, but it appears that the text contains the beginning of a thematic word-list at the end of line 15 with αἰστρον (probably to be interpreted as ἄστρον 'plough') which is followed in the next line by the word for sickle written twice δούραον: δούραον (an x-shaped cross is written above the ending of δούραον). Apart from a few discernible names of professions γαλκός: καὶ σκυρέος: 'smith, and cobbler', the next few lines are largely obscure until line 19 where the text reverts back to phrases: καὶ ὁ θεός φωνάξῃ σε: ὁ θεός βοηθήσῃ σ': ὁ θεός θεωρεῖσθαι σε 'and God guard you. God help you. God heal [you]'. A more secular phrase follows in line 20: τί ἔδωκες αὐτοῦ τιμήν 'what price did you give him?' after which the rest of the text on this side consists solely of thematic word-lists. First there are a few words for household equipment in line 20 (line 21 was added later between lines 20 and 22) and then lines 22-26 cover body-parts. Lines 29ff then move on to general terms for clothing and words relating to horsemanship.

The first ten lines of side B of the text also mostly contain word-lists: line 5 has a list of eating and cooking vessels, line 6 seems to contain tool names: σουβλίον 'awl'. At line 7, however, the thematic organisation starts to break down: words for building materials πλινθία: λίθον: 'brick, stone' are followed by adjectives σκληρόν: ἄσπρον: 'hard, soft' and then κερνός 'smoke'. Line 8 contains a list of disabled or diseased persons παραλυτικός: λεπτός: κυλός (written κελλός¹⁴): ὑδρωτικός 'paralytic, leper, bandy-legged, dropsical'. The following line also contains adjectives, possibly relevant to health, but in line 10 the thematic organisation appears to be lost in the sequence 'shoemaker's last (or 'pattern'¹⁵), scorpion.

¹⁴ The unusual writing of *e* for *u* may be due to confusion with Armenian *xet* 'lane'.

¹⁵ The word *καλατρίδιον* is borrowed into Armenian and Persian with the meaning 'model, pattern' (Hibschmann 1897:163).

garden' and possibly 'blond' (καλαρόδιον: οκροπίος: παράδεισος: ξανθός). In this line and the next a space has been left before the first surviving word; this is the only time when the writer of this papyrus leaves a blank space.

The next section of the papyrus is more difficult to read and interpret. It appears from the diminishing number of colons that the writer is here reverting to writing out phrases in lines 11-12. Word-lists again start in line 13 (possibly representing kinship terms) and 14 (terms for 'tent', 'rope', and 'reed'), and in line 15 rudimentary verbal conjugations make a re-appearance: ἀτροφῶ: ἀντρεγε 'I bring back. He brought back. Line 16 seems to contain terms for weather: γάλαζα 'hail', καταιγίδιον 'storm', and ὁρόος 'dew'. But at line 17, beneath a lacuna, there is a new departure: three Diogenes *chryae* are given in lines 17-21 followed by at least three *sententiae*. From what I can read of the Diogenes *chryae* none are elsewhere attested in papyri¹⁶, although one can be securely matched to a *chrya* found in the manuscript tradition¹⁷, and I believe that the other two can also be equated with attested *chryae*, although the interpretation is not completely secure. The *sententiae* given (ἀρχὴ τοῦ βίου τὸ φρονεῖν τὰ γράμματα, and ἀρχὴ σοφίας) φῶρος θεῶ) match those found elsewhere in papyri.

The text then reverts back to what appear to be a mixture of phrases and word-lists. Among the identifiable vocabulary are nautical terms in line 24 πλοῖον: ναῦτης: ἀνάγειν: κατέγειν 'boat, sailor, put out to sea, put in to land', and words for 'right, left, up, down' in l. 27. In lines 29f. there is a fragmentary list of Egyptian month names, followed by phrases on the last line including οὐ θέλω 'I do not want.' This final section is noteworthy since it appears that the writer actually repeats the month names and the phrase οὐ θέλω. As far as I can tell nowhere else on the papyrus is any material repeated.

6. THE PURPOSE AND ORIGIN OF THE TEXT

We are now in a better position to evaluate the purpose of the text, and to attempt to answer the question of when and why it was written. Previous scholars, working only from the wrongly aligned side A, have all noted the existence of short phrases in the text corresponding to what is presumed to be spoken Greek of the period; note for example line 12 ἀνέδωκα αὐτὰ αὐτοῦ 'I gave them to him' showing the characteristic replacement of the dative by the genitive. Scholars were generally agreed that the text was some sort of personal phrase book created informally for the use of the writer to

help him acquire a working knowledge of the Greek language, with useful and practical vocabulary taken down by ear¹⁸.

This type of text, an *ad hoc* phrase book created by ear for personal use, is not unknown among the documents surviving from the ancient and the mediaeval world. Bischoff has collected a number of such texts in various languages from the middle ages (Bischoff 1967) and the famous Foliūm Parisinum (P. Louvre 2329) offers an example from Late Antique Egypt. The text includes terms for food stuffs, body parts and necessary items for the traveller, and one equivalence which suggests that the vocabulary was actually taken down verbatim, the word ζυροτόλης 'beer-seller' is glossed as *crinido* 'caramide' (line 23 Kramer 1983:95). Like our Armenian papyrus, the Foliūm Parisinum records a register of Greek close to the spoken language, and records it in a non-Greek alphabet, this time Latin. However, now that more of the Armenian text is known and it is better understood, the dissimilarities between the two texts outweigh the similarities. The writer of the Foliūm Parisinum includes Latin equivalents for his Greek phrases; indeed, it appears that he first started writing out just the Greek words (in Latin transcription) with no gloss, but after two lines realised that he would not be able to remember what the words meant and went back and wrote the Latin terms above the Greek terms. For the rest of the text he wrote the Latin and Greek terms side by side (with the Latin given first).

The Armenian text as we have seen does not include glosses for the Greek words, nor does it leave any spaces for glosses. The length and nature of the information argues against its use as a simple *aide-memoire*, and the immediate practical use of a number of terms on side B and certainly of the *chryae* is highly questionable. Neither is this type of material paralleled in the glossaries compiled by travellers in the Middle Ages. In fact much of the material on our papyrus has links with other ancient texts which have a far clearer educational role, by which I mean that they appear to have arisen in contexts of a teacher and a pupil, and not from an individual 'finding things out' for himself.

The contents of our Armenian text have clear similarities to ancient

¹⁸ '[I]l s'agitrait selon l'hypothèse la plus vraisemblable d'une page de notes prises par un Arménien qui s'exercerait à conjuguer le verbe "avoir" et qui dressait des listes de mots pour enrichir son vocabulaire grec [...] serait-ce le memento d'un étudiant en médecine' (Cuendet 1938:38f.). '[I]l auteur était un Arménien s'exercant à l'étude du grec; pour transcrire les mots de la langue qu'il apprenait, il s'est servi des caractères arméniens qui lui étaient familiers. C'était vraisemblablement un de ces nombreux soldats ou officiers arméniens qui ont souvent joué un rôle important dans l'armée byzantine' (Leroy 1938:514). '[I]le papyrus arménien est un manuel de conversation, comme il s'en est trouvé en Égypte, où le latin est écrit en caractères grecs. Le manuel est conçu pour un voyageur' (Prieux 1939:187). '[z]weitelches handelt es sich um ziemlich zusammenhanglose griechische Sprachübungen eines in Ägypten weilenden armenischen Arztes' (Hengstenberg 1938:494). 'il s'agitrait d'un manuel de conversation utilisé par un Arménien s'exercant au grec' (Bataille 1955:13), so also Pack² 2136 and Brashar 1981:39 n. 8.

¹⁶ Listed in *CPF* vol. 1** 48 (p. 89ff), add to these *O.Claud.* 413.

¹⁷ Giannantoni (1990) text no. 286.

educational texts. Firstly, it can be linked to ancient bilingual glossaries. These comprise texts both transmitted through the manuscript tradition, in particular the group of texts known as the *Hermeneumata Pseudo-dositheana*¹⁹, and papyrus glossaries, particularly those which contain words grouped thematically and not as the explication of a text or author. Not surprisingly, some of the lists and vocabulary items in the *Hermeneumata* match those on our Armenian text: parts of the body, vessels and furniture, clothing, military vocabulary and so on. But the similarities go deeper than shared themes, compare the following listings of terms for body parts:

BnF 332 Side A lines 22f.		
ἀνθρώπος	CGL III 11-13	MPER XVIII 256
ἡλίκια	ἀνθρώπος (p.11 line 31)	ἀνθρώπος (1)
κεφαλή	ἡλίκια (line 36)	
line 23	κεφαλή (line 54)	κεφαλή (5)
γλῶσσα	p. 12 lines 29-33	
οὐρανίσκος	γλῶσσα	
*γούλιον	οὐρανίσκος	
τρεχτήλος	κίονις	
ὦμος	τρεχτήλος	
στῆθος	ὦμος	
	πῶρος	
line 25	p. 13 lines 14-19	
ὀρχίδια	ὀρχις	
πῶλη	σαρκίς	πῶλη (165)
βυζίν	κυστίς	
μηρός	νεφροί	ὀρχις (173)
γόνατα	μηροί	μηροί (174)
	γόνατα	γόνατα (175)

The *Hermeneumata Leidenia* has been selected as an example of the glossaries in CGL III (Goetz 1892:11-13, the Latin section has been omitted) and in the third column I have taken the Greek words from the Greek-Coptic glossary belonging to Dioscorus of Aphroditio as an example of word lists of similar structure to the *Hermeneumata* found in Egypt²⁰. As can be seen, the three different sources all start their body parts list with ἀνθρώπος 'man'; in our text it is followed by ἡλίκια 'age', also listed in the

¹⁹ See Dionisotti 1982 especially 90-2 for discussion and dating of the origin of the *Hermeneumata* published in CGL III.

²⁰ The similarity in structure between the word-lists in the *Hermeneumata* and thematically arranged bilingual Latin and Greek word-lists found on papyrus is well known (see Korhonen 1996:16f and Kramer 1996:35f). The similarity with the Greek-Coptic glossary of Dioscorus of Aphroditio (first published in Bell and Crum 1925) also deserves to be emphasised.

Hermeneumata and then body terms are listed starting with the head, followed by the eyes, mouth, tongue, and so on proceeding down the body. Space does not permit full comparisons of the lists here, but in the short examples I have given the similarities are clear. It is noteworthy that the terms for body-parts given in the Folium Parisinum are not listed in this ordered structure; although the list begins with 'head', it proceeds 'tongue', 'hands', 'feet', 'belly', 'cushion', 'beard', 'eyes', 'mouth'.

Our Armenian text also has close links to educational texts written solely in Greek. There is an especially striking connection between the *chriae* and *sententiae* of our text and the famous *P.Bour. 1* (Cribiore 1996 cat. 393, dated to the fourth century), which also has Diogenes *chriae* followed immediately by *sententiae*, arranged alphabetically and starting with ἀρχὴ μεγίστη τοῦ φρονεῖν τὰ γράμματα (l.169f)²¹. Thematically arranged word-lists, also feature among the material classed as educational, for example *P.Tebt. II 278* (Cribiore 1996 cat. 99) which contains an alphabetically arranged list of occupations, or *P.Mon.Epiph. 621* (Cribiore 1996 cat. 123), a list of bird-names not in alphabetical order.

There is also a small number of texts from Egypt which present Greek educational material written in a foreign script. The clearest example is a fragment of the dialogue between Alexander and the gymnosophists written in Latin script by an experienced hand and dating to the second century AD (Pack² 2100; most recent edition with plate: Seider 1978 text 13). Kramer (1984) does not think that this text is a dictation but a copy made for private use by a bilingual Latin scribe, but the presence of the same dialogue in an educational text (Cribiore 1996 cat. 380) and in the *Hermeneumata* (Goetz 1892:385-6) strongly suggests that this text does belong in an educational context. It is possible that there are also a number of Greek 'educational' texts which were actually written by Copts proficient in writing Coptic but not in Greek. An example of this is Cribiore 1996 cat. 323 (*MPER XV 120*, P.Vindob. G 26127, 7th-8th century AD). This text contains the well known story of the man who killed his own father, which turns up in a number of educational texts, probably as a dictation exercise; the hand appears to be a confident and proficient scribal hand, although the proliferation of non-standard orthographical forms would be highly unusual for a scribe trained in Greek²².

However although there are parallels with other educational texts there are also a number of striking differences. I am aware of no educational text

²¹ This favoured maxim of ancient education is of course widely attested, see Cribiore 1996 cat. nos. 148, 158, 160, 319, line 1. The maxim in our text has been altered slightly; compare the variant ἀρχὴ μεγίστη τοῦ βίου τὰ γράμματα (*SB III 6218*).

²² Note the editors' comment 'der Schreiber ein Kopte mit Praxis im Schreiben koptischer Texte ist.'

which has such a wide column width, or which presents so much material without the use of lines or spaces to separate out the information, or indeed which offers such a confused and unstructured mixture of phrases, untitled word-lists, *chriae* and *sententiae*. The register of many of the vocabulary forms seems to be lower than that typically used in educational texts, particularly the frequent use of the suffix -iov / -iv). Much of the material is unparalleled from educational sources, particularly the series of phrases and sentences at the beginning of side A.

The Armenian text is unique, and it is not surprising that we are unable to find any close parallels. The presence of such a quantity of Greek material without any glosses is, however, extremely puzzling, and one can only speculate over the circumstances of its creation and purpose. It would appear to represent an aberrant use of Greek educational material, probably for the acquisition of the language by an adult Armenian²³. It is possible that the writer took down information by ear from an informant who himself was only dimly able to remember his own educational experience. This would explain the existence of some recognisable order in the list of body parts and the presence of *chriae* and *sententiae* found in other educational texts, but also the general lack of structure of the whole text, and the haphazard nature of the material.

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²³ For the possibility that some of the material in the *Hermeneumata* was originally used for adult learners see Korhonen 1996.

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Reconstructing the archives of the Monastery of Apollo at Bawit

SARAH CLACKSON

The Monastery of Apollo at Bawit, 28 kilometres south west of el-Ashmunein, is today one of the better known Egyptian monasteries thanks to the impressive architectural remains and artefacts excavated at the site at the beginning of the 20th century, now mainly in the Louvre and the Coptic Museum in Cairo¹. Artefacts apart, however, we know very little about how the monastery functioned from day to day, partly because very few of the manuscripts found during the Bawit excavations have been published to date². Furthermore, a number of manuscripts appear to have been plundered from the site and bought up by collections around the world. We know that one of the monastery's excavators, Jean Clédât, did not think papyri found at the site by locals important enough to warrant purchase by him (Clédât 1901, 91).

It was a desire to identify texts from what I have presumptuously called the 'archives' of the Bawit monastery which led to my hunt for Coptic and Greek texts which could be linked with a monastery of Apollo in the Hermopolite nome. Sixty-six of these texts, mostly now belonging to the British Library and British Museum³, and dating from the 6th to 8th centuries, are to be published in an edition which I abbreviate here as *P. Mon. Apollo I* (in press, Griffith Institute Monographs, Oxford). Some of the issues raised in this article are pursued in greater depth in introductory sections of this edition.

¹ Only a small percentage of the site was in fact excavated; see Bénazeth 1995 for an introduction to the excavations.

² We are largely dependent upon information derived from literary sources such as the *Historia Monachorum* and the *Life of Paul of Tammab* which mention a monastery of Apollo in the region of el-Ashmunein as an Antonian-type laura, Coquin and Martin 1991, 363; *CKA* 643-5.

³ The current whereabouts of some texts are unknown to me and I have had to use transcriptions of them made by Walter Ewing Crum and Paul Kahle Jr. Some were previously owned by the Austrian collector and dealer, Erik von Scherling.