

BOOK REVIEW

New Literary Papyri from the Michigan Collection: Mythographic Lyric and a Catalogue of Poetic First Lines. Edited by CASSANDRA BORGES and C. MICHAEL SAMPSON. *New Texts From Ancient Cultures.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012. Pp. xvii + 171. 6 black-and-white plates. Hardcover, \$65.00. ISBN 978-0-472-118076.

In the last decades few newly found literary papyri have offered some real thrills to Classical philologists (the very latest one being the 5th-century BCE Daphni papyrus and tablets, discovered in 1981 and published now, see M. L. West, *GRMS* 1 (2013) 73–92), while some of the best surprises came, and may still come in the foreseeable future, from texts which have lain buried for many years in large collections and were never thoroughly studied, or even left unpublished. Borges and Sampson's volume provides for the first time a comprehensive analysis and a complete edition of the remains of a papyrus roll of unknown provenance, including literary texts (18 fragments in all), bought in separate batches in the 1920s for the Michigan collection, and only partially published in the past.

These fragments are exceptional in many ways: for the early date (3rd-2nd c. BCE), for their contents (a previously unknown lyric composition; a list of incipits of known and unknown lyric and tragic texts; a short, enigmatic, paraliterary text in prose with verse quotations); and for their peculiar bibliographical features. Their history is summarized in the Introduction: *P.Mich.* 3250a, b and c, catalogued in haste, were labeled as Coptic, and therefore left aside by the first scholars who dealt with the collection (a fact that sadly occurred also in other papyrological collections worldwide). All the fragments of this batch were resurrected to the attention of the philologists with the dawn of the digital cataloguing process in the '90s: only in 1999, thanks to the *APIS* system, did P. Heilporn first notice that *P.Mich.* inv. 3250b joined with 3498, a fact that enabled papyrologists to realize that the papyri catalogued under different entry numbers were part of the same roll: once the fragments were reunited it was possible to reinterpret them as a whole, and to tackle the texts again, questioning some of the conjectures of the *editores principes* on *P.Mich.* 3498 recto and verso.

Bibliologically-wise, this bunch of papyri is the bizarre result of the reuse of a 3rd century BCE literary roll, preserved over many decades (as shown by signs of repair): the recto and the verso of the roll were already written when the book was cut down in smaller segments (the height could be half or one-third of the original one), which were reused as a scrap book, probably in the 2nd century BCE according to a paleographical assessment, but only on the recto, after it was whitewashed: the actual recto, preserving a list of incipits, is therefore a palimpsest; the sequence of the fragments attached as it stands now is based on the verso text. An informal, uneven and rough hand¹ wrote in thick ink an uncommonly mixed list of incipits of lyric poems and of lyric sections of tragedy on *P.Mich.* inv. 3498+3250b recto, 3250a recto and 3250c recto, edited by Borges. The same hand seems to be responsible for another poetic fragment (not to be joined with these, however), *P.Mich.* inv. 3499, transmitting archebulean lines tentatively attributed to Callimachus by Lloyd-Jones. While the awkward hand at first sights looks like that of a barely alphabetized, unpracticed βραδέως γράφων, according to the editor it shows nonetheless a certain degree of rapidity and confidence (see p. 11), and the process attested here suggests a relatively sophisticated scholarly background, if not that of the Alexandrian Library certainly the environment of the advanced education: the list of incipits could be the preliminary work for a private anthology to be assembled according to personal tastes of the compiler, or an intermediate/advanced syllabus for school teaching; the editor suggests this could be a proof of an index of works the writer owned or was collecting (see pp. 12–18). List of incipits compiled by ancient scholars for their private use are not a novelty: much awaited is the still unpublished, 3rd century BCE list of incipits of epigrams of *P.Vind.* G 40611; another inventory of epigrammatic incipits (Philodemus?) survives on *P.Oxy.* 3724 (1st CE), while from Oxyrhynchus comes a catalogue of Sappho incipits (*P.Oxy.* 2294, 2nd CE). Actual anthologies of tragic parts are also well attested: a 3rd century BCE anthology of Euripidean prologues is preserved on *P.Hamb.* 118–19, and one of lyric pieces from Euripidean tragedies written by a not very skilled hand of the same period appears on *P.Strasb.* WG 304–7 (see M. Fassino, *ZPE* 127 (1999) 1–46).²

¹ Borges compares it with *P.Köln* III 125, a school text with anapaests (2nd/1st BCE); but cf. also, for some features, the 2nd BCE hand of the *katochos* Ptolemy on Turner, *GMAW* nr. 45.

² Incidentally, according to M. R. Falivene (“Greek Anthologies on Papyrus and their Readers in Early Ptolemaic Egypt,” in *Proceedings of the 25th International Congress of Papyrology* (Ann Arbor, 2010) 207–16), some of the literary texts from Hamburg and Strasbourg may come from El Hiba. The provenance of these Michigan papyri is unknown, but is probably worthwhile to check,

The text of the recto is presented with critical edition (without a diplomatic transcription) and a philological commentary. A section of the Michigan list had been already published by Merkelbach in 1973 as *P.Mich. inv. 3498*; only the recent discovery that 3250 forms part of the same roll allowed the editors to add the missing part of the third column and a new, fourth column to the list of incipits. In the list are recognizable previously known fragmentary lines of Alcaeus, fr. 34 (ii.1) and fr. 308.1 Voigt (ii.11), and half line of a Sappho incipit, fr. 5 Voigt (iii.2); *P.Mich. 3250c recto i.7* may be Anacreon *PMG* 395.1. The list is orderly, divided into sections, marked by indented headings accompanied by *paragraphoi* (see p. 13 fig. 2), three of which are still readable: *parodōn archai* (actually, not all the incipits are of *parodoi*, some are just from lyric section of tragedies); *merōn archai* (beginning of “acts,” see p. 30; given the frequent confusion between delta and lambda in the papyrus it could also be read *melōn archai*, “beginning of lyric songs”); and *tōn simo[]archai* (the mysterious name in the lacuna could be Simonides, but other integrations are possible, see p. 32); to these may be added, dubitatively, *gonai* (“genealogies,” see p. 34). The Michigan list is almost contemporary with Callimachus’ *Pinakes*, which must also have included (cf. fr. 433, 434 and 436 Pfeiffer) *archai* of the works catalogued in the Alexandrian Library.

Previously unknown fragments of New Music, “Euripidean” Lyric, are preserved in *P.Mich. inv. 3498+3250b verso* and *P.Mich. inv. 3250c verso*, edited by Sampson. This is probably the most difficult and puzzling section of the papyrus: Page edited only *P.Mich. inv. 3498*, and had therefore only a partial idea of its contents (some of his readings are consequently corrected here, see e.g. p. 95 n. 117). The hand (see p. 38 fig. 3) is described as “a unique semicursive” with “random (and unusual) ligatures and occasional decorative serifs,” but there are also errors of haplography, dittography and phonetic (fr. 2 i.4-5), and sometimes even in places when the Greek is clearly readable the letters copied do not make sense: this may remind one of the clumsiness of Apollonius and his brother Ptolemy, the *katochos* of the Serapeum, in copying some of the literary texts of their private anthology. Other similarities with some of the Serapeum texts, are, possibly, the subject,³ the fact that the lyric piece was written on a verso, and therefore is a pri-

through a comparison of hands and of the quality of the papyrus, any possible link with this Hiba cartonnage.

³ For the relationship between Greek and Barbarians (it is an episode of the Trojan war, the first installment of a West–East competition politically reinterpreted at the time of the Persian wars and later by Alexander), cf. M. L. Nardelli, *Aegyptus* 67 (1987) 13–25; id., in B. Mandilaras, ed.,

vate rather than a library copy, and the use of a writing instrument with a thick end, which may recall *P.Med.* 15 (prologue of Euripides' *Telephus*)⁴ and other texts from the Serapeum collection, like the above mentioned Louvre papyrus, *GMAW* nr. 45. The editor refers repeatedly to it as "Egyptian kalamos" (39, 117, 119): this definition may be quite confusing, as the tool used for Demotic papyri is better known as "rush"/"brush," while *kalamos* generally identifies the Greek/Latin reed pen, Lat. *stilus*.⁵ I wish, therefore, that in a further contribution it could be specified whether the tool used by the V hand is just a thick reed pen, or really a rush, as it could make a substantial difference on the assessment of the cultural environment where this piece was copied. The use of an Egyptian writing tool (a rush) may be evidence for the biculturalism of the writer, a 3rd century BCE scholar (or just a eager reader) of Egyptian-Greek descent, possibly of the first generation of mixed ethnic; a good 2nd-century BCE example are the two brothers of the Serapeum mentioned above, who, however, could write their Greek texts just as easily with a reed pen.

Being transcribed before the introduction of colometry (at some point by the time of Aristophanes of Byzantium), the lyric text does not present a division into *kola*, like the 4th century BCE papyrus of Timotheus' *Persians* (*P.Berol.* 9875). A tentative metrical analysis of the piece, an astrophic, polymetric composition predominantly based on cretic, iambo-trochaic and dochmiacs, is proposed at pp. 118–29, including also a partial reconstruction by E. C. Kopff. Sampson provides both a diplomatic text with an abundant paleographic commentary, and the reconstructed text with translation and critical apparatus. The subject of the lyrical piece has something to do with the Trojan myth, as it is set in the Troad. A narrative in fr. 1 is soon interrupted: introduced by a dicolon, an agitated and protracted *oratio recta* seems to refer to the construction of a wooden object (a funeral pyre? The Wooden Horse? Ships?); also in fr. 2 (see l. 5) a direct speech is recognizable. Before the philological commentary, and in order to make some of his choices in restoring the text clearer, the editor offers a detailed discussion and evaluation of all the likely hypotheses of the reconstruction of the narrative framework, of the identity of the main narrator, of the speaker quoted and of his audience, leaning in favor of Sinon as the main narrator (talking to the Trojans)

Proceedings of the XVIIIth International Congress of Papyrology, Athens 25-31 May 1986 (Athens 1988) 179–88.

⁴ See A. Calderini, *Aegyptus* 15 (1935) 239–45 (esp. 240).

⁵ See, e.g., among others, T. Evans, in *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds* (Cambridge, 2012) 112.

and of Helenus as the character emotionally addressing the Greeks on the verge of the construction of the horse. The Trojan subject may well fit with many lost tragedies we only have a hint of (e.g. Sophocles' *Simon*), but the editor, considering all its features, prefers to describe this as lyric piece in the fashion of the late 5th/4th c. BCE New Music, stylistically inspired by Euripides; the author proposed is of the like of Timotheus and Theodektes.

Finally, *P.Mich.* inv. 3250a verso, poorly preserved, offers an even more bewildering text of mythological content. Here too, diplomatic transcription and paleographic commentary are provided before the reconstructed text with translation and commentary. The use of multi-spectral photography (thanks to the Ancient Textual Imaging Group, Brigham Young University), introduced to Papyrology in the early 2000s for the publication of damaged and almost illegible papyri, helped to recover the text in 2009, but not to solve its problems. Oddly, in the fragment there appear both the hand of the lyric composition of the verso, writing a few lines (until ii.5), and the (decades or even a century later) hand of the recto, adding another text in the space left blank when hand V stopped copying its own. The content does not seem related to the incipits nor to the lyric piece of the verso, even though poetic and prosaic terms appear mixed together, as in the lyric composition of Trojan subject: it could be a prose text, such as a commentary, a treatise or a narrative work that quotes lines of poetry (see the anapestic dimeter at ii.5).

The book is carefully produced (rare are the misprints such as “unmarked” for “unmarked,” 62), and is complemented by 6 black-and-white plates with photographs of some of the fragments discussed, a Bibliography, an Index Locorum and a General Index. This is a valuable and intriguing contribution not only to Greek philology and to the history of Greek literature, but also to the history of ancient scholarship and bibliology. This remarkable volume, not only based on the efforts of the two main editors but also on the suggestions and support of many fellow scholars (among others, the late Traianos Gagos), has unveiled some of the mysteries of this enigmatic roll, but is expected to trigger more scholarly debate, just as the Oxyrhynchus “New Simonides” and the Milan papyrus of Posidippus did some years ago. Other attempts may be made in the future to assess the provenance of the fragments (see n. 2 above); the striking contrast between the clumsiness of the hand of the recto and the sophistication of the process of selection and cataloging of incipits still demands to be explained; the original lyric piece with a Trojan subject copied, apparently, by a bilingual/ bicul-

tural Ptolemaic literate also deserves further analysis, but before attempting any more guesses on the cultural context of both texts, a thorough comparative analysis of both the hands of the recto and of the verso with contemporary material, and a more advanced investigation on the kind of errors made by the writers (e.g. the spelling confusion between delta and lambda, cf. e.g. *P.Mich.* 3250c recto ii.2, iii.5-6) are recommended; contributions of more limited scope could be made on specific points of the commentary, on particular integrations and peculiar features of these papyri (e.g. the two puzzling letters in the margin of *P.Mich.* 3498+3250b recto iii.7; the prose line in *P.Mich.* 3250c recto i.3; the unusual indentation of *P.Mich.* inv. 3250c verso i.4). This is a book that should not be absent from any papyrological and classical library, as I suspect that the second life of these curious texts has only just begun.

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