

IL PAPIRO DI ARTEMIDORO (P. ARTEMID.)

EDITED BY CLAUDIO GALLAZZI, BÄRBEL KRAMER, AND SALVATORE SETTIS. PP. 630, FIGS. 67, B&W PLS. 24, COLOR PLS. 16, B&W PULLOUT PLS. 2, COLOR PULLOUT PLS. 2. DVD-ROM 1. LED EDIZIONI UNIVERSITARIE DI LETTERE ECONOMIA DIRITTO, MILAN 2008. €480. ISBN 978-88-7916-380-4 (CLOTH).

This hefty volume contains the complete publication of a papyrus that has attracted an enormous amount of attention since it was first mentioned in a publication in 1998. The papyrus (real or not real?) soon entered Italian academic debate, along with personality clashes and media warfare. With this volume in hand, the world can judge for itself, although it is already quite clear that the debate does not end here.

The 3 m long papyrus (in three fragments) derives from mummy cartonnage purchased from a private dealer for the Egyptian museum in Turin in 2004. Its contents are triply unique in that it contains a map (the earliest Greek map to survive), a literary text (supposedly the second book of Artemidorus of Ephesos' *Geographical Writings* that otherwise has not survived), and various drawings of real and imaginary animals and body parts of people (unique in the art history of the ancient world). It would seem that the papyrus started its life as the bearer of a geographical text, which, for reasons unknown, was left unfinished after a first map had been incompletely drawn in a space left blank for this purpose between the columns of writing. The roll then ended up in an atelier where, with varying degrees of success, body parts were sketched on the empty parts of the front of the papyrus and a wide variety of animals were sketched on the back. The papyrus was then crushed together with a number of documentary texts to produce what is termed a *Konvolut* (61 [fig.]).

The book is divided into six sections: (1) a detailed discussion of the history of the papyrus roll itself, (2) a thorough edition of the text, (3) a discussion of the map, (4) colorful descriptions of the drawings on the verso and (5) recto, and (6) a contribution on the significance of this

papyrus to art history. A more-or-less thorough bibliography (13–50) and indices complete the first volume. The second folder in the case contains color, black-and-white, and infrared photographs of parts of the papyrus, as well as very impressive color and black-and-white continuous photographs of both recto and verso of the whole roll. Hidden underneath all these plates is a DVD-ROM with digital images in high resolution.

Given the intense debate about the authenticity of the papyrus, the first section has been most anticipated. In addition to describing the provenance of the roll it presents the results of the scientific testing that has taken place on the papyrus and its ink. Carbon dating of three spots on the papyrus leaves no doubt that it is ancient, dating (with 95.4% probability) somewhere between 40 B.C.E. and 130 C.E. The ink is carbon based, not metallic, which would fit the same time period.

The only thing that all technical discussions do not address sufficiently is the relationship between the ancient papyrus and the carbon-based ink, thus leaving ample room for those arguing that the contents of this roll are a 19th-century forgery. It is also not helpful that the data points used for analysis are not described in detail and with precision, which one would expect in the presentation of scientific evidence. For example, for the three spots used for carbon dating (69), we know only that one was taken 6 cm from column IV; yes, but was this left or right, and where exactly (given that the roll is 41.5 cm high)? And were the three spots for analysis chosen at random? The same vagueness applies to the seven spots used for the analysis of ink (72). "Different areas of the roll" is just not specific enough for making scientific analysis available for discussion. Given

the high stakes, and the determination of those people who prefer this papyrus be a forgery, the editors could have done a better job presenting their evidence. (It is also not helpful to print the wrong fig. 1.6 on p. 75, to be corrected on a sheet of corrigenda.) I wonder whether it would have been useful to do similar analyses on papyri and inks whose authenticity is not in doubt, especially to establish whether something can be said about a difference in binding between ink and papyrus after 2,000 years vs. after 100 years. I do think, however, that the ball is now again in the court of the people who see this papyrus as a forgery, and that the editors provide sufficient, though not conclusive, evidence for its authenticity.

The second section (89–272) presents the Greek text on the papyrus, with facing transliteration and transcription, extensive critical apparatus, a running translation, and extensive textual notes. What is quite unfortunate is that the 25 documentary texts that came out of the same mummy cartonnage are only given a brief mention (60). These texts provide context for the Artemidorus Papyrus and should have been treated in full in a volume like this, adding indeed an extra analytic level (to the textual, cartographical, and art historical levels of analysis).

The third section (273–308) discusses the map and puts it in the context of what we know about ancient maps. It also tries to relate the map to the text and to actual geography, which, not surprisingly, is more difficult and less conclusive than one would like (305).

The fourth section (311–460) discusses in detail the animal sketches on the back of the papyrus (V1–V41), also trying to relate them to actual animals, if possible. Many drawings show the same fascination with detail that is known from various ancient floor mosaics. The captions that accompany the drawings offer some interesting additions to Greek lexica, such as the amphibian “panther-crocodile” (V3).

In the fifth section (463–578), Adornato details the drawing of human body parts that

occupy empty sections on the front of the papyrus (R1–R25) and puts those in the context of what we know about reproducing humans in sculpture and drawings in antiquity.

In the final section (581–616), Settis summarizes the contributions of this papyrus to art history.

The Artemidorus Papyrus remains a strange papyrus. However, what the editors succeed in showing is that the strangeness is not so much lying in the individual elements but in the fact that these are all found together on one papyrus. We have other texts from antiquity that we did not have before and that contain words and expressions we did not know were already in use at that time (recent vigorous debates about whether or not the Greek found in the so-called Posidippus Papyrus was up to “classical standards” comes to mind). We have maps from antiquity, and the map found on this papyrus fits well in what we know about ancient maps. And we have drawings and reproductions of animals from antiquity (esp. on mosaics such as the Praeneste Nile mosaic) that are quite similar in detail to what we have in this papyrus. Admittedly, the drawings of human body parts are quite unlike anything we have from antiquity, and this shows also in the fact that most of the corroborative evidence put forward to “prove” their authenticity is coming from sculpture. But, if indeed the papyrus and ink are ancient, we may have to revisit our assumptions about ancient portraiture.

This papyrus reminds us that our knowledge of antiquity is incomplete and based on sources that have survived and submitted to several centuries of selection and chance survival. Whenever something falls through the cracks of selection and survival, so to say, we may not like what we see because it does not fit what we have, but we have to deal with it.

ARTHUR VERHOOGT

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48109-1003
VERHOOGT@UMICH.EDU