

The Millennium of Papyrology (2001–)?

In my contribution to the papyrological congress in Copenhagen I sketched the history of our discipline¹. Drawing on an apocryphal saying attributed to Theodor Mommsen but originating with Ludwig Mitteis², I identified the last hundred years as the century of papyrology. Recently I announced the beginning of a new century of papyrology³. In the present contribution I would like to outline the future of our discipline, but whereas in Copenhagen I included everything papyrologists do⁴, this time I would like to concentrate on the editing of texts, the core business of “artificers of fact”, as Herbert Youtie called us⁵. I cannot limit myself to the next hundred years, because the editing of texts will have to go on much longer. The material basis for what I am going to say is the Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Collections⁶, which provides information on collections of Greek (and Latin)⁷ papyri, but is still incomplete. For Aramaic⁸, Demotic, Coptic, Pahlavi and Arabic papyri I have collected the data myself. Hieratic papyri I have left out, because most of them date from before the period we are usually interested in⁹.

Two centuries ago, in a letter to his friend Jean-François Boissonade in Paris, Paul-Louis Courier, the French translator of *Daphnis and Chloe*, complained about the editing of the Herculaneum papyri as follows:

“Ne me parlez point des *papyri*. C’est le sujet de mes pleurs. Ils étaient bien mieux sous terre que dans les mains barbares où le sort les a mis. Il y a là force scribes et académiciens payés pour les dérouler, déchiffrer, copier, publier. Ce sont autant de dragons qui en défendent l’approche à tout homme sachant lire, et qui n’en font, eux, nul usage”¹⁰.

Thanks to the efforts of Marcello Gigante and others, this statement is no longer materially true. But the inaccessibility of papyrus collections has often been a bar to progress. Although there is as yet no electronic access to most collections, ongoing projects to digitize information about, and images of, papyri will help ease our way to collections from Aarau to Zürich. I am not suggesting that this is the only way to provide information about papyrus collections, but in the last couple of years the Advanced Papyrological Information System has demonstrated how useful it is to provide a wealth of information about, and

¹ P. van Minnen, *The century of papyrology (1892–1992)*, *BASP* 30 (1993) 5–18. The reference to a Theban fragment in the poem by William Wordsworth quoted on pp. 7–8 refers to Pindar, the poet from Boeotian Thebes (cf. note 15).

² Mitteis’ statement was reformulated by Fernand Mayence, the immediate source of Karl Preisendanz, who first attributed the apocryphal statement to Mommsen in 1950. K. Preisendanz, *Papyrusfunde und Papyrusforschung*, Leipzig 1933, 241 and 303, mentions the article in which Mayence reformulated Mitteis’ statement, but he does not quote it. He would do so only in 1950 but with the wrong attribution. For the details see Van Minnen (n. 1), 5, and A. Martin, *Das Jahrhundert der Papyrologie?*, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 46 (2000) 1–2.

³ P. van Minnen, *An official act of Cleopatra (with a subscription in her own hand)*, *Ancient Society* 30 (2000) 29–34 at 32.

⁴ Even papyri not from Egypt *pace* H. M. Cotton, W. E. H. Cockle and F. G. B. Millar, *The papyrology of the Roman Near East: a survey*, *JRS* 85 (1995) 214–235 at 214, note 1.

⁵ H. C. Youtie, *The papyrologist: artificer of fact*, *GRBS* 4 (1963) 19–32.

⁶ See <http://hpc.arts.kuleuven.ac.be/>

⁷ Throughout this paper the few Latin texts are included in the Greek papyri.

⁸ Including Aramaic and Nabataean.

⁹ Cf. *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 4 (1982) cols. 672–747. There are a few “abnormal Hieratic” or “cursive Hieratic” texts. I have included them among the Demotic.

¹⁰ P.-L. Courier, *Correspondance générale* 2, Paris 1978, 328; from a letter to Boissonade written January 23, 1812.

thousands of images of, papyri. For larger collections less comprehensive ways to provide some form of electronic access to information about the papyri could be envisaged. Existing information, such as a card catalogue, could, e. g., be turned into an electronic database.

The aim of the present contribution is to get an idea of the magnitude of the task lying ahead of those who, either individually or collectively, approach the task of editing unpublished holdings of papyri. My focus is on editing, not on preserving or describing papyri. Thanks to the “Holy Scrollers” government agencies in the United States and elsewhere have become aware of written artefacts from the distant past. As a result they have heavily invested in the conservation and cataloguing of papyrus collections on a scale never dreamed of. This is laudable, but should not keep us from our core business, i. e. to edit the texts written on the papyri. In fact the best way to preserve a papyrus is to publish the text written on it. Now, one might argue about what constitutes a proper text edition. I have listed some simple rules in the appendix. Broadly speaking a text edition has succeeded if it makes the need to have access to the original redundant for most practical purposes. This is no doubt an ideal case, but the past holds a warning. About half the texts published in Gaetano Marini’s corpus of Latin papyri of 1805¹¹ have disappeared since they were first published or reported on. In his reedition of these texts Jan-Olof Tjäder¹² did not include them, simply because the older editions had not reported adequately on what was then visible on the papyri. Nowadays we see much more thanks to our training and to a small extent thanks to modern gadgets, but still, if we do see things, but fail to make them explicit, the same fate might befall our editions as Marini’s.

Thanks to recent developments some collections have become more accessible. This does not automatically mean that the papyri have become “accessible” in the scholarly meaning of the word, because that can only mean that the papyri are published. The last couple of years have not seen an increase in the number of texts published each year. Universities are nowadays not always very keen on projects to edit papyri. As everyone knows, academic posts are not based on research projects, but on teaching duties. The present situation in my own country (the Netherlands, in this case) is perhaps extreme, but usually a good indication of what is going to happen elsewhere (just think of free drugs, assisted suicide and same-sex marriage). Papyrology was actively pursued at two Dutch universities for a considerable time. Scholars there, although also teaching papyrology, were mainly engaged in research, i. e. in the editing of texts. Now that almost all of them have died, retired or moved to another country, the situation has become very bad for papyrology in the Netherlands. Even such *bona fide* research projects as the *Berichtigungsliste* face extinction simply because of a university administration’s top priority, i. e. to save money. Scholarly projects are the first to go in the next round of budget cuts, teaching posts the last. Compared to the *Berichtigungsliste* editing texts is not even regarded a *bona fide* research project in the Netherlands anymore. Even in countries where projects to edit papyri are still funded by government agencies, such projects are often short-term and are not automatically extended. The START-Programm in Vienna is wonderful, and the projects at Cologne and Heidelberg are even for a longer period, but these projects are not necessarily going to last for ever.

How has this reluctance to fund projects to edit papyri come about? Surely, new editions of papyri would expand our knowledge about the ancient world for a long time to come. The law of diminishing returns has not yet caught up with us, and one never knows what is going to turn up next. Why are other scholars not very interested in increasing our knowledge about the ancient world through new papyri? Perhaps we have not been very successful in making papyri accessible to scholars other than ourselves. Why edit new papyri, if most scholars do not know what to do with the old ones? We should not always blame others for not being interested in what we do. Because I am addressing papyrologists, it can do no harm to point to some of our own shortcomings. The suggestions in the appendix are meant merely to structure our thinking about what we are doing when we are editing papyri. I hope they can also help breach the “interest gap” between us and other scholars.

Perhaps the main reason why we do not inspire other scholars is because we ourselves often do not believe that new papyri will yield significant new data about the ancient world worth publishing. Many years ago I went through the papyrus collection in Leiden with a view to edit a volume of texts. That this is a very long time ago should be clear from the fact that such a project would be inconceivable in the Netherlands nowadays. A couple of years earlier another papyrologist, now no longer in the profession, had gone through the same collection for pretty much the same reason. His verdict was that there was only

¹¹ G. Marini, *I papiri diplomatici*, Roma 1805.

¹² J.-O. Tjäder, *Die nichtliterarischen lateinischen Papyri Italiens aus der Zeit 445–700*, 1–3, Stockholm 1954–1982.

one text which might deserve to be published. Guess what happened: we managed to publish an interesting volume of Leiden papyri (P.Leid. Inst.) by limiting ourselves roughly to the first hundred inventory numbers alone. Although the collection is not very large, it is not very small either, and more volumes could easily be produced from it. There are plenty of texts deserving publication on any count. My personal feeling is that all papyri deserve to be published, but the smaller, less rewarding, fragments can perhaps best be left for future generations.

Mommsen once remarked about the inclusion of even the smallest fragments of Latin inscriptions in the *CIL* as follows

“Ob jedes Stück, das er aufhebt und aufheben muss, auch wirklich des Aufhebens wert sei, danach fragt der Archivar zunächst nicht”¹³.

Clearly, if we published papyri the way Mommsen published inscriptions in the *CIL* (in majuscules with the occasional Latin comment, in folio volumes too large to handle for those of us who merely stand on the shoulders of giants), we would not be doing future scholarly generations much of a service (here I fully agree with Reinhold Merkelbach’s verdict on the uselessness of continuing to produce *IG* volumes in Latin, in folio), but we are certainly able to match the size of Mommsen’s *CIL* by what lies unpublished in papyrus collections.

Let me attempt a quick survey of this material in papyrus collections. In conversations with William Willis I used to estimate the total number of papyri (and ostraca)¹⁴ at 450,000–500,000, with about 50,000 published items. Now I would estimate the total number of texts at 1,000,000–1,500,000 with about 72,500 published items. In these figures I naturally include the smallest fragments if these come from discrete papyri. The increase is due to new finds of texts (as in Tebtynis) and the rediscovery of texts long thought lost (as in Leipzig), but especially to a greater awareness of the size of some collections and to the inclusion of texts in languages other than Greek. Everything not in Greek has not received the same kind of attention as the Greek material. Classicists should be proud of this. Egyptologists, Coptologists and Arabists have not usually been interested in this kind of material. There are of course notable exceptions, Frances Griffith and Wilhelm Spiegelberg for Demotic, Walter Crum and Walter Till for Coptic and Adolf Grohmann for Arabic. It is a pleasure to be able to be much more positive on this score than I could be in Copenhagen. The editing of Coptic papyri has taken a turn for the better and so has the editing of Arabic papyri, notably through the exemplary work of Werner Diem – and I mean exemplary also for us, editors of Greek papyri. Unfortunately, his work is not very well known among us, and I have never seen more than a couple of his editions myself¹⁵.

Reliable statistics about the number of Demotic, Coptic and Arabic texts in papyrus collections cannot be given. Even impressionistic data are often lacking. For texts in Aramaic and Pahlavi the situation is much better, but the number of texts in these languages is also much smaller. Recent corpora of texts exist for both languages¹⁶. We have an outdated list and an electronic database of Demotic papyri, which are both incomplete for the unpublished holdings in many collections¹⁷. Many years ago someone told me that the unpublished Coptic papyri in Berlin or Vienna (I cannot recall the details) constituted a nice stamp collection (*Briefmarkensammlung*), no more. I assume that in reality there are still treasures hidden in the Coptic material left in either Vienna or Berlin, and I do not just mean new “gospels” and other fare for the “quality” newspapers! The Arabic papyri in Vienna, the largest such collection in the world, are largely

¹³ T. Mommsen, *Reden und Aufsätze*, Berlin 1905, 38; from his *Antrittsrede* of 1858.

¹⁴ Throughout this paper ostraca (and some other materials) are subsumed under papyri.

¹⁵ With the help of Petra Sijpesteijn I give here a list of editions produced by Diem in the last decade:

W. Diem, *Arabische Briefe auf Papyrus und Papier aus der Heidelberger Papyrus-Sammlung*, Wiesbaden 1991.

W. Diem, *Arabische Briefe aus dem 7.–10. Jahrhundert*, CPR XVI, Wien 1993; this and the following three are editions of texts from the Vienna collection:

W. Diem, *Arabische Geschäftsbriefe des 10. bis 14. Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 1995

W. Diem, *Arabische amtliche Briefe des 10. bis 16. Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 1996

W. Diem, *Arabische Privatbriefe des 9. bis 15. Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 1996

W. Diem, *Arabische Briefe des 7. bis 13. Jahrhunderts aus den Staatlichen Museen Berlin*, Wiesbaden 1997.

¹⁶ B. Porten and A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt 1–4*, Jerusalem 1986–1999 and D. Weber, *Ostraca, Papyri und Pergamente*, London 1992 for Pahlavi.

¹⁷ Lexikon der Ägyptologie 4 (1982) cols. 750–898. For “abnormal Hieratic” or “cursive Hieratic” see Lexikon der Ägyptologie 4 (1982) cols. 748–750.

unexplored. Of the 80,000+ items only about 500 are said to have been published. The second-largest collection of Arabic papyri, in the Kitab Museum in Cairo, numbers well over 65,000 items (a figure I once heard mentioned). A trifle of these have been published by Grohmann.

The largest collection of Greek papyri is not in Vienna, nor in Berlin or Florence, but in Oxford. The unpublished holdings of the Egypt Exploration Society by far outstrip all other Greek papyri in other collections. Because no new Oxyrhynchus material is added to the existing stock, ongoing excavations in Egypt (*la papyrologie militante*, as Salomon Reinach would say) will no doubt tip the balance in favour of the other collections eventually. The publication record of the Oxyrhynchus papyri is exceptionally good, but only a small percentage of the material has so far been published. There are more unpublished Homeric papyri in Oxford than there are published Homeric papyri *tout court*. Other collections, especially some of the smaller ones, have a much larger percentage of material published, when there was an active papyrologist, or even a team of papyrologists, attached to the institution holding the papyri.

There is in general a marked imbalance between the material in the various languages. Whereas less than 1% of the Arabic papyri in Vienna have been published, a lot more Greek papyri have been published from that collection over the years. The published Greek papyri and the material in course of publication thanks to the START-Programm account for about 10% of the 60,000+ Greek papyri in Vienna. The Coptic papyri in Vienna have even fared a little better than the Greek papyri, which is quite remarkable. This is largely due to the efforts of a single scholar, Till. In 1941 he expressed a wish which has become true in the last twenty-five years thanks especially to Hermann Harrauer¹⁸.

“Es ist zu hoffen, dass die Tätigkeit an der Papyrussammlung nach Beendigung des Krieges durch neue junge Kräfte und durch die Vermehrung der Bestände neuen Auftrieb erfährt, und dass auch die finanziellen Schwierigkeiten, durch die die Editionstätigkeit gehemmt wurde, für immer beseitigt werden und sowohl die ‘Mitteilungen’ wie auch das ‘Corpus’ in einer der wissenschaftlichen Bedeutung der Sammlung würdigen Weise wieder regelmässig die Sammlungsschätze der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich machen können”.

In a very large collection such as Vienna even the concerted effort of many papyrologists will only take small bites out of the material available. In Berlin the published Greek papyri account for about 25% of the large collection. This is because there used to be a team of papyrologists at Berlin. In Vienna there used to be only Carl Wessely, and even he could not publish as much as a team of papyrologists.

Figure 1 at the end of this contribution plots the number of papyri in any language published in five-year periods since 1890. I have lumped literary and documentary texts together. There are two remarks to make. In some editions (such as the *Sammelbücher*) there is no distinction between papyri and inscriptions. Numbers are therefore a bit inflated. Some editions of Coptic material do not distinguish between papyri and medieval manuscripts, again a cause of inflation. I have not tried to avoid the inflationary effect of reeditions either. There are thousands of texts republished in some form later on, and they are included twice in the data I collected. Still, I think the end result is very interesting. World War I does not seem to have had much of an effect on the rate of publication. Thanks to *Sammelbuch I* World War I is even the period in which most papyrological texts were ever published or republished! The two peaks early in the twentieth century are both to some extent the result of inflation, because apart from the *Sammelbuch* there are the mixed editions of Coptic texts by Crum in the period 1905–1909. The five-year average in the first decades after 1895 seems to have been about 4,000 texts.

After the crash of 1929 there seems to have been a slight drop. Unlike World War I World War II and its aftermath had a profound impact on the publication of papyrus texts. The period from 1950 onwards shows first an increase, then a decrease in the number of published texts. The erratic development seems due more to the publication of *O.Bodl. II* with over 2,000 texts than to anything else. In the last decades of the twentieth century the number of texts published in each five-year period seems to have stabilized itself at about 4,500–5,000. The up-and-down pattern is largely due to the number of texts not in Greek. The Greek texts published in each five-year period since 1975 seems to have been stable at about 3,500. I am happy to report that there does not seem to have been a “Sijpesteijn” effect in the last five-year period of the twentieth century. One would have thought that the death of a productive papyrologist such as Piet Sijpesteijn would have caused a drop in the number of Greek texts published, but this is not the case. This

¹⁸ W. C. Till, *Die Coptica der Wiener Papyrussammlung*, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 95 (1941) 165–218 at 172.

suggests that we can project the current rate of publication of Greek texts with some confidence into the not too distant future.

The editing of Greek papyri thus seems a fairly stable affair, if we disregard the impact of World War II. The editing of texts not in Greek is totally different. The bulk of the Coptic material was published by a single scholar, Crum, early in the twentieth century. A significant number of texts were added to this by Till after World War II. There is no gap between the two scholars, because for some time they were contemporaries, but after Till's death there is a gap in the publication of Coptic papyri. Only in the last decade of the twentieth century has the number of published Coptic texts increased to the old Crum and Till levels. Likewise, the Arabic material has not been published as a steady stream. From the 20s to the 60s of the twentieth century Arabic texts were almost exclusively published by Grohmann. Again, the last decade of the twentieth century has witnessed a spontaneous increase in the number of papyri published. There is a concerted effort to establish Arabic papyrology as a discipline in its own right. There is no such effort to establish Coptic papyrology, but papyri do play an increasingly important role at Coptic congresses. With Demotic papyri the situation is not as good as with Coptic and Arabic papyri. Ever since the days of Griffith and Spiegelberg there has been a steady stream of Demotic text editions. Strangely enough, in the last fifteen years there has been a decrease in the number of Demotic texts published, compared to the rest of the period after World War II. What are the Demotists up to?

My rough count of published papyri is as follows:

Greek	66,421
Coptic	8,986
Demotic	4,273
Arabic	3,094
Aramaic	1,119
Pahlavi	323
Total	84,216

Note that all these figures are inflated, because I have not filtered out inscriptions (in the Greek and Coptic *Sammelbücher* and in Spiegelberg's edition of the Demotic texts in Cairo), medieval manuscripts (in Crum's Coptic catalogues) and reeditions of texts (notably in Greek and Demotic). All in all, I would reduce the total number of published texts to about 72,500 (roughly 50,000 Greek documents, the majority inventoried in the Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis, 7,500 Greek literary texts, inventoried in the Leuven Database of Ancient Books, 7,500 Coptic texts, 3,500 Demotic texts, 3,000 Arabic texts, and 1,000 Aramaic and Pahlavi texts). If half or even two thirds of the unpublished material in papyrus collections is publishable, this would mean that at the present rate of publication it will take 1,000 years or so to exhaust these collections.

It is interesting to consider how many papyrologists have contributed to these impressive totals. In the last two five-year periods about 65 papyrologists have produced over 1,000 texts each year, thus on average about 15 papyri a year. One may compare this with the early twentieth century, when the 800 papyri a year were published by only 10–15 papyrologists, who each edited about 70 papyri a year. I guess we are going slower and produce better editions now. Youtie used to say that a full-blown papyrologist could edit no more than 25 papyri a year.

New finds tend to exceed the number of papyri published each year. We will therefore in fact never be done. Because the new finds are not allowed to leave Egypt, only teams of papyrologists working in Egypt itself will be able to edit the new finds. This is not a problem, but it is important to insist on the need not to let this material be dispersed in the Egyptian system of provincial museums before a proper census of them is taken. Of course, editing a papyrus is not just based on autopsy. Much work can be done at home with images of the papyri. A large part of the new finds consists of ostraca rather than papyri, but this material is not significantly different. Because it is often even more of a problem to show just why ostraca are important, editors of ostraca should make more of an effort to make their material more interesting to other scholars, and some are in fact doing so — just think of O.Claud. III.

Political upheavals are sometimes good for papyrology, so the Dutch experience of budget-cutting socialists and liberals is perhaps not altogether typical. In the former East Germany the academic turnover (*die Wende*) has brought papyrology back to several institutions. Notably in Leipzig the appointment of an ancient historian with an interest in papyrology has so far resulted in the rediscovery of several corroded boxes with long-lost papyri, hundreds or thousands of them. Leipzig is now once again one of the largest papyrus collections in Germany. Across the border in Prague, our Czech colleagues (in conjunction with

the indefatigable Rosario Pintaudi) have rediscovered a major collection of about 10,000 papyri originally purchased by Wessely privately. Efforts to tap dormant papyrus collections at other universities in Germany where papyrology has died because of World War II have resulted in several major publications, e. g. P.Müsch. II and III.

A papyrus collection that has sadly gone out of business, so it seems, is the one in the British Library. Although the material in the British Museum continues to attract the attention of scholars interested in texts not in Greek and a modern catalogue for the Coptic literary material exists¹⁹, after the retirement of the last papyrologist in the British Library, it has become unclear, to me at least, what the future of its collection will be. The speed with which Frederick Kenyon and Harold Bell published big chunks of Greek material has given us thousands of texts, but after the early decades of the twentieth century, the coverage has become much more spotty. The accession catalogues of the British Library occasionally mention the acquisition of further materials, but to the best of my knowledge no one has set down to turn the rough records into a usable file for interested scholars to use. Both the set-up in the British Library and the quality of the photography leave much to be desired. Papyri need another kind of treatment than Western manuscripts, the kind they receive, e. g., at the British Museum. The separation of “classical” and “oriental” materials in London has not been entirely to the favour of the “classical” side. This is not something classicists can be proud of. Although many more Greek texts have been published, the “oriental” material stands a much better chance of remaining accessible. As an example of what remains to be done in London I may point to one of my own research projects. Many years ago I discovered unpublished documents belonging to the family archive of Theognostus. Several substantial *epikrisis* records from this archive still await publication. They show, e. g., that the *rhemboi*, so far only known in connection with the Oxyrhynchite corn dole²⁰, constituted a separate category among the municipal Greeks in Hermopolis.

The new technology allows us to work in collections without actually being there. It also allows us to put pieces of a puzzle back together again, which would otherwise be an awkward process of waiting for photographs to arrive. By contacting relevant scholars working in collections or by browsing websites we can make joins between fragments of one and the same papyrus and establish links between related texts online, with the help of really rather simple images. Several links between Duke papyri and papyri from other collections have been established with the help of the Duke Papyrus Archive, online since the end of 1995. In the appendix I have included some simple guidelines to streamline the presentation of papyrological websites. There are now a score of such websites, some more comprehensive than others.

The Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Collections provides information about all papyrus collections. At present it lists over 400 public institutions and private individuals owning papyri. If possible, it provides e-mail and website addresses. If these are not available, it provides at least a postal address, unless the collection is now no longer extant, e. g. when a private collection has disappeared without leaving a trace. Papyrus collections which are not attached to an academic institution with a continuing provision for papyrology are often lost to the papyrological world. Notable exceptions are the Martin Bodmer papyrus collection, which is now almost exhausted, and the originally private collection of Chester Beatty. Such benefactors of humanity (us) still exist (just think of Martin Schøyen and the Scriptorium). Even university collections are not necessarily permanent: the Cornell papyri are now at Michigan, and most of the ostraca from the Metropolitan are now at Columbia. The Mississippi papyri were almost all sold to Duke (to raise money for papers once belonging to William Faulkner)²¹. For the majority of collections there is as yet hardly any information in the Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Collections. For a number of important and a few smaller collections there is more detailed information thanks to a colloquium held in Leuven in 2000²². Scholars responsible for these collections were asked to provide an overview of the holdings in their collections in a streamlined form. Those who did not attend the colloquium in Leuven can provide

¹⁹ B. Layton, *Catalogue of Coptic Literary Manuscripts in the British Library Acquired since 1906*, London 1987.

²⁰ N. Lewis, *The recipients of the Oxyrhynchus siteresion*, CdE 49 (1974) 158–162 at 160–161, thought *rhemboi* were people on a rotation scheme for the corn dole, but this does not work for the *epikrisis* records which record people's permanent status.

²¹ P. van Minnen, *The earliest account of a martyrdom in Coptic*, *Analecta Bollandiana* 115 (1995) 13–38 at 14.

²² See W. Clarysse and H. Verreth (eds.), *Papyrus Collections World Wide*, Brussel 2000.

such information for collections in their care. They can take the online descriptions of other collections as a model. Willy Clarysse can provide further information²³.

The Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Collections aims at three things. Its primary goal is to present brief descriptions of all papyrus collections and to provide links to their websites and their caretakers. This part of the website will grow as more caretakers of collections provide the necessary data. It seems worthwhile to have a separate database of such brief descriptions rather than mere links to existing websites. The streamlined descriptions can be read and taken in quite easily, and when I was asked to provide a brief description of the Duke papyrus collection, I noticed that the end result provides a good way to acquaint oneself with that collection, which browsing the website of the collection itself does not. It serves as an index of the most important things one has to know about the collection. Once taken to the website of the Duke collection itself, one has access to the full data, but that is not always what one is looking for.

Two other goals of the Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Collections are more ambitious. They are: tracing finds and reconstructing archives. The dispersal of papyrus finds can be reversed by linking the various collections holding papyri from the same find. It is therefore necessary to have some idea of the finds and their dispersal. If papyri were found in controlled excavations, they can be put together again virtually by linking the websites of the collections holding the material from these excavations. The University of Michigan excavations at Karanis provide an example of this. The majority of papyri found there were returned to Cairo, some papyri remain in Ann Arbor. Of course, Michigan's website is much further advanced than Cairo's, which is non-existent. But once the material from Karanis is accessible by findspot, irrespective of whether the original is now in Cairo or Ann Arbor, we will be able to put the pieces of the puzzle back together again, much in the way I sketched in an article several years ago²⁴. Something similar can be envisaged for the dispersed papyri of the Egypt Exploration Society and from Petrie's excavations. Both Michigan and the Egypt Exploration Society have some photographic documentation of papyri and ostraca now dispersed. Michigan has already included photographs of ostraca in their website — an example to follow.

There are of course problems even with controlled excavations. The University of Michigan excavators at Karanis changed the numbering system of the findspots in the course of the excavations, so that the excavation labels for material from the same findspot are not always the same. For the excavations of the Egypt Exploration Society the situation is even more tenuous. Links between papyri cannot be established by findspot, but merely by the fact that they were found at about the same time. The boxes in the Ashmolean are in fact the "findspots" of most Oxyrhynchus papyri, but we may assume that Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt put the material in these boxes more or less chronologically in the order in which they were found. The Tebtynis material seems even better served by the numbers they wrote on many papyri. The numerical sequence suggests that papyri with numbers close to one another could well be linked²⁵. Petrie's material is much less well traceable, but if it derives from cartonnage, as much of the Ptolemaic material, there is a reasonable hope that items belonging together may still be linked. Several archives can thus be enlarged with pieces one would not otherwise have recognized as belonging together²⁶. It is also useful to look for purchases made about the time of controlled excavations. Several pieces found have often mysteriously disappeared from sites and turned up on the antiquities market. Controlled excavations have also sometimes been directed at spots where illegal finds had been made just earlier, as in Karanis just before the University of Michigan started excavating the site²⁷. A few stray pieces from Kellis were acquired by the papyrus collections of Genova and Duke a couple of years before the excavations started²⁸. The latest excavations at Kellis and in the Eastern Desert and also in towns in the Fayyum such as Tebtynis hold a great promise, because the recording of the findspot is now much better than in the earlier excavations.

²³ His e-mail address is willy.clarysse@arts.kuleuven.ac.be.

²⁴ P. van Minnen, *House-to-house enquiries: an interdisciplinary approach to Roman Karanis*, ZPE 100 (1994) 227–251.

²⁵ For an example see A. M. F. W. Verhoogt, *Family papers from Tebtunis: unfolding a bundle of papyri*, in: A. M. F. W. Verhoogt and S. P. Vleeming (eds.), *The Two Faces of Graeco-Roman Egypt: Greek and Demotic and Greek-Demotic Texts and Studies Presented to P. W. Pestman*, Leiden 1998, 141–154.

²⁶ The Petrie papyri are being reedited by Willy Clarysse.

²⁷ The famous tax rolls from Karanis were acquired just before the excavations started. Only a small piece (P.Mich. IV 357B) was found during the excavations in structure 138.

²⁸ See P.Gen. I 21 and II Appendice 1, SB XVIII 14293 and three more papyri in P.Sijpesteijn (forthcoming).

Does material found together in controlled excavations always derive from an archive? Perhaps not, because some contamination is inevitable, but it is always worthwhile to try to link such material. I am now particularly thinking of the Demotic literary material found in Tebtynis²⁹. This is usually identified as deriving from a temple library, but this is impossible. We know what kind of texts were kept in a temple library, and the majority of Demotic literary texts found in Tebtynis do not belong there. They are also often written on the back of discarded Greek documents, which means that they are private copies. There are, moreover, multiple copies of some texts. Clearly hundred copies of a Demotic narrative text (Inaros-Petubastis), some of them written on the back of discarded Greek documents, do not derive from a temple library. The papyri cannot derive from a single private library either because of the multiple copies. It also cannot be school material, because most texts are not expected in school (e. g. the Demotic narrative text and the learned hieratic religious encyclopaedia published by Jürgen Osing)³⁰. Are these papyri then merely junk? No, because virtually only Demotic literary texts were found, and only a few Demotic documents. The material was clearly not thrown together haphazardly. The papyri were actually found together crammed into two storage bins on the east side of the Tebtynis temple area. I personally think that we are dealing with a kind of *genizah* for discarded literary texts here. Just as the oriental Christians and the Muslims later on, the Egyptians deposited only discarded literary texts in a sacred spot — unlike the Jews, who also deposited discarded documents in their *genizahs*. The Demotic literary papyri from Tebtynis ultimately derive from the private libraries of the local priests, but they are not the sum of these libraries, merely the discarded part of these libraries. This explains the presence of multiple copies of some texts and of many private copies on the back of discarded Greek documents. Now, can the Tebtynis find be called an archive? I would think so, if we use a very broad definition of what constitutes an archive (anything put together *deliberately* in antiquity).

A separate category is constituted by mummy cartonnages. Some of these were retrieved in controlled excavations, such as at Abusir el-Melek. Most were acquired from dealers. The very nature of the mummy cartonnages makes it interesting to see whether the papyri from one and the same cartonnage are linked in some fashion. Mummy cartonnages are basically waste paper, and the “green” mummifiers have no doubt contaminated the material they collected for making the cartonnages. Yet it often appears that texts from a piece of cartonnage are closely related. Between mummy cartonnages this is no doubt also the case, but it is then less easy to establish links. The pieces from one and the same mummy are now often no longer recognizable as such, also because the paint on the outside has been removed in many instances. Grenfell and Hunt painstakingly identified the cartonnages yielding Tebtynis and Hibeh papyri. This offers an opportunity to explore possible links between the texts from these sites. Nowadays, papyri from a single mummy cartonnage are often published together, thus providing instant gratification for those of us interested in ancient archives. But because this material is so extensive, we may never get a clear grasp of the whole.

When papyri were not found in controlled excavations, the situation is a little more complicated. Here “museum archaeology” becomes important. If collections are known to have acquired papyri from the same source at about the same time, we can try to see whether links between the collections can be established. In the modern fashion this would mean linking the websites of these collections. As an example I may mention the early purchases of the German *Kartell* or the British Museum consortium. Links between the various older German collections are of course well-known to scholars, but it is now possible to put the original purchases back together again and see whether the papyri are related by linking the websites. We cannot always assume that the papyri are related, because the dealers may already have contaminated what they offered for sale. Likewise, the material allocated to various institutions by Bell, such as the first-century tax archive from Philadelpheia, could now be made accessible all at once, by linking the websites. This the Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Collections also aims to achieve with the help of scholars responsible for the various collections, who are invited to provide details about purchases and other acquisitions.

There are difficult problems here. In some cases institutions will not want to divulge how they acquired their papyri, now that UNESCO rulings have made it seem illegal to buy papyri (this won't stop institutions with a lot of money from buying papyri). There is also a grey area difficult to demarcate, when the original

²⁹ For what follows see P. van Minnen, *Boorish or bookish? Literature in Egyptian villages in the Fayum in the Graeco-Roman period*, JJP 28 (1998) 99–184 at 168.

³⁰ J. Osing, *Hieratische Papyri aus Tebtunis* 1, Copenhagen 1998, 25–218.

purchases cannot be dated exactly or when the dealer cannot be identified. As an example I may mention the archive of Greek and Coptic letters addressed to one John, who was an important spiritual leader in the fourth century³¹. Several Greek texts were published in 1964 and recognized as part of an archive. The papyri derived from boxes said to contain material from Hermopolis. I recognized these as the boxes mentioned early in the twentieth century by Grenfell and Hunt. This gave me a clue to the date of acquisition and the dealer (the kind of dealer Grenfell would visit at the end of the nineteenth century). This was not much, but I also knew that originally these boxes were intended for the earl of Crawford, whose collection went to the John Rylands Library. Since there were no Greek texts in the Rylands collection belonging to the archive, I looked around for such material in Coptic and found a series of fourth-century letters addressed to one John published by Crum in 1909. That all these letters derive from a single archive has now been generally accepted. We cannot trace the papyri beyond Grenfell, so the original findspot must remain unknown³². In this and other cases “museum archaeology” has to yield to another, more promising, way to reestablish links between papyri now dispersed.

This is the third and certainly most ambitious goal the Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Collections aims to achieve. This is only possible by doing more research, i. e. by reconstructing archives, taken in the broad sense of sets of texts, either public or private, put together *deliberately* in antiquity and presumably found together in modern times. Orsolina Montevecchi and Erwin Seidl provide lists of such archives in their works³³, and these could easily be expanded. The Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Collections is in the process of doing this. This part of the website is actually the most developed, although even here a lot of work remains to be done. Each archive is briefly described in a streamlined fashion, and links to the various collections are provided as well. These links take one to the pages within the website, and there one can get to the websites of the institutions themselves — if they have websites. There are at present over 250 archives in the Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Collections. Several archives have been renamed in light of further research. Thus, the Drusilla trial papers are now listed under Agrippinus, and the Sarapion archive is in fact that of Eutychides, the last owner of the archive. If known, an indication is given of work currently being done on the archives. This seems helpful, and again scholars working on particular archives are requested to let Clarysse (willy.clarysse@arts.kuleuven.ac.be) know of any developments in this area.

Once papyri in different collections have been identified as deriving from an archive, links between the purchases made by these collections are also established at once. But this is not always very helpful. Dealers often keep junk boxes with bits and pieces deriving from all over the place, which they will sell throughout their long career. This material often remains available for inspection through several generations of dealers. Individual items are removed by purchases all the time. A good example is the material from the archive of the *strategos* Apollonius. The original find was made early in the twentieth century in Hermopolis. The German *Kartell* and some other institutions acquired the bulk of the material early on. But individual pieces are known to have been purchased much later from dealers, e. g. a papyrus at Duke. In such cases only the content of the papyrus and sometimes the hand or some other aspect of the papyrus can provide a clue. Thus, carbonized papyri are likely to come from Boubastos. Ursula Kaplony-Heckel can spot Demotic texts from Pathyris, Harrauer can tell from their script whether later fourth- and fifth-century documents derive from the Heracleopolite nome, and others no doubt have similar experience with materials they have worked on. About 1933 Aristide Calderini recognized a papyrus offered for sale as belonging to the Serapeum archive, which was originally discovered about 1820 — a sobering experience: the date of acquisition does not always have to be very close for papyri to belong together.

³¹ What follows is based on P. van Minnen, *The roots of Egyptian Christianity*, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 40 (1994) 71–85 at 80–85.

³² C. Zuckerman, *The hapless recruit Prois and the mighty anchorite, Apa John*, *BASP* 32 (1995) 183–194 at 191–192, incorrectly identifies the find with that made near Lycopolis in 1897. In fact, only Coptic and Arabic papyri and parchments (thus, presumably not fourth-century material) were reportedly found there. From W. E. Crum, *Coptic Monuments*, Le Caire 1902, nos. 8080–8103, it would appear that “papyrus” in the original report was merely a misprint for “papier”.

³³ O. Montevecchi, *La papirologia*, 2nd ed., Milano 1988, 247–261 and 575–578, and E. Seidl, *Ptolemäische Rechtsgeschichte*, 2nd ed., Glückstadt, Hamburg, New York 1962, 15–49, and *Rechtsgeschichte Ägyptens als römischer Provinz*, Sankt Augustin 1973, 55–71. See also *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* 6 (1986) 876–886.

In the present contribution I have shown how much papyrologists have accomplished since 1895. I have indicated how the ongoing efforts to make papyrus collections more accessible contribute to a common goal. I have positioned the Leuven Homepage of Papyrus Collections with its focus on finds and purchases at the center of these efforts. I have also given an idea of the enormity of the task lying ahead of us. We can be proud of the accomplishments of our predecessors, and we can be grateful that Egypt has provided, and still provides, us with great material which will never run dry.

Appendix

There is nothing in papyrology like O. Guyotjeannin, J. Pycke and B.-M. Tock, *Diplomatique médiévale*, Turnhout 1993. This combines the approach of P. W. Pestman, *The New Papyrological Primer* and that of M. Depauw, *Companion to Demotic Studies*³⁴, but also tells one “how to do” medieval diplomatics. We are far from having achieved uniformity in Greek papyrus editions, let alone in Coptic, Demotic and Arabic papyrus editions³⁵. Medieval diplomaticists have of course been doing it much longer. What follows may prove useful³⁶.

“Ten commandments” for **preparing** papyrus editions

1. Report what you see; respect the original
2. Document your decisions, not everything under the sun
3. Do not document bad thinking or *cul de sacs*
4. Provide “un résumé qui fait connaître de manière concise et précise le contenu du document” (O. Guyotjeannin, J. Pycke and B.-M. Tock); a general introduction to a text should “retrace” (*nachvollziehen*) the text, everything else is strictly speaking unnecessary
5. Do not use individual words and expressions in the text to display bibliographical knowledge in the notes; use notes only to provide necessary comment which cannot well be presented in consecutive form in the general introduction to the text
6. Do not print all passages containing the same individual words and expressions in full in the notes (and do not copy them wholesale from the Duke Data Bank of Documentary Papyri), but only when they are part of an argument
7. Read everything you refer to
8. Avoid inconclusive references like ff. or sqq.
9. Keep two maxims of two masters in mind: “Dots are a papyrologist’s conscience” (P. W. Pestman) and “trop d’hermétisme nuit à nos sciences” (L. Robert)
10. Put risky or *exempli gratia* restitutions in the notes

“Ten commandments” for **publishing** papyrus editions

(see also the “Recommendations aux éditeurs de documents adoptées au XII^e Congrès International de Papyrologie [Ann Arbor, août 1968]” in the 1997 list of members of the Association Internationale de Papyrologues)

1. Use sequential numbering for volumes in a series
2. Use sequential numbering for texts in a volume or series (use a, b, c etc. only for different versions of the same text); do not publish loose-leafed editions
3. Provide titles briefly indicating the nature of each text

³⁴ P. W. Pestman, *The New Papyrological Primer*, 2nd ed., Leiden 1994 and M. Depauw, *Companion to Demotic Studies*, Brussels 1997.

³⁵ Aramaic and Pahlavi texts have been collected in recent corpora, which are by their very nature uniform within themselves.

³⁶ A further source of inspiration is *Index du Bulletin Épigraphique* 3, Paris 1975, 1–6. Cf. also S. Dow, *Conventions in Editing*, Durham, NC 1969, on editing inscriptions.

³⁷ For ancient historians who do not read ancient languages this is of course a problem. Our control of ancient sources through reliable translations is very spotty indeed.

4. Provide clear headers with the modern date and the provenience (both *Schreibort* and *Fundort*, if these differ) and a reference to the plate in the volume itself
5. Resolve symbols and abbreviations and also numbers if these are part of a larger word
6. Include all “stage directions” (change of hands, where the papyrus breaks off etc.) in the text itself; make sure that in an articulated text each [is followed by] and that each] is preceded by [
7. Add accents, punctuation and other diacritics and capitalize names
8. Include a critical apparatus not in Latin
9. Provide exact translations
10. Provide indices of Greek and other words and of subjects

“Ten commandments” for **using** papyrus editions

1. Read the ancient text first³⁷
2. In doubt read the translation
3. If still unsatisfied, read the part of the introduction which “retraces” (*nachvollzieht*) the text
4. If all else fails, read the notes
5. If this does not help, try to undo the interventions of the editor in the text (the following three maxims of P. W. Pestman may help)³⁸
6. One must be cautious with regard to emendations and corrections suggested by the editor
7. If the editor has to accept a mistake in a lacuna, there is almost certainly something wrong
8. If in an uncertain context the editor makes suggestions, emendations or supplements but the resulting phrase sounds odd, one should not follow him
9. Older comments are not necessarily outdated: “Le bon sens ne vieillit pas” (F. Lot)
10. If the editor fails to provide internal cross references (e. g. to plates in the edition), add them in the margin of your copy

“Ten commandments” for **constructing** websites of papyrus collections

1. Include the (unique) inventory number in the electronic addresses of records about, and images of, papyri
2. Include the dpi scale in the electronic address of images
3. Use 72 dpi images to record what a papyrus looks like on a 72 lpi screen; use 150 dpi images to provide over 95% legibility; use 600 dpi images as archival copies and for over 99% legibility
4. Do not use a fancy background against which text is displayed
5. Provide both searching and browsing options
6. Make sure every page is self-contained and provides the user with an idea of where he is
7. Websites should be digestible as a self-contained entity and as part of a larger whole
8. Provide as many acquisition data as possible
9. Provide information about fair use and publication policy on each record
10. Provide a lasting contact address

³⁸ I prefer these maxims for users of papyrus editions to the so-called *lex Youtie* (*iuxta lacunam ne corrigas*), which is aimed at editors but is logically a fallacy. Cf. M. Fassino, *Sulla cosiddetta 'lex Youtie'*, RFIC 125 (1998) 72–75.

Comforting thought: “inconsistency is too common to be criminal” (G. L. Prestige, a renowned expert in dogmatics).

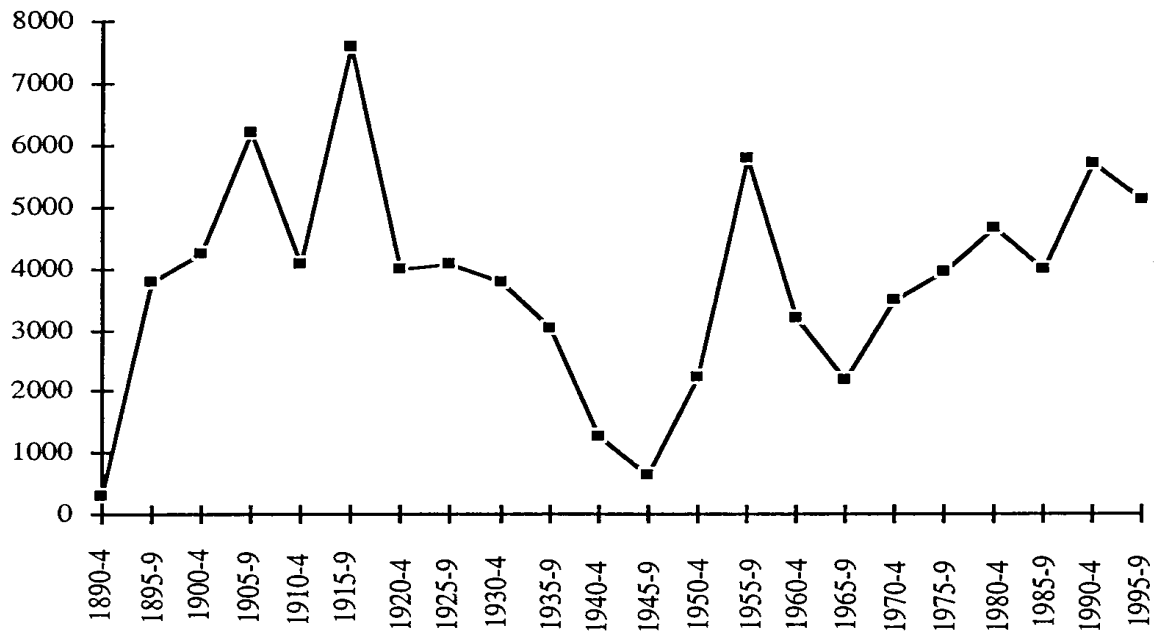


Figure 1: Number of papyri published by five-year periods