

Guido Bastianini/Angelo Casanova (eds), *“I papiri letterari Cristiani.” Atti del convegno internazionale di studi in memoria di Mario Naldini, Firenze 10-11 giugno 2010* (Studi e Testi di Papirologia, N.S. 13. Florence: Istituto Papirologico “G. Vitelli,” 2011). Pp. 210 and 27 plates. € 50,00. ISBN 978-88-87829-45-7.

- [1] A decade on from the passing of Mario Naldini, this volume, the *Atti* of a congress held in his memory, honours his vast contribution to the study of Christian literary papyri. The preface also honours the memory of Colin Austin, who died in August 2010, shortly after the congress was held; some particularly appropriate lines of poetry composed by Austin stand at the start of the volume.
- [2] A contribution from C. Nardi (‘Mario Naldini e la papirologia’, 3–21) opens the volume, tracing Naldini’s papyrological career with a focus on his contribution to the study of ancient Christian literature, surveying his intellectual forebearers and background in Florence and his own work, from his first steps in papyrology as a student of Vittorio Bartoletti, through his work on Christian letters on papyrus, to his contributions to a diverse range of themes related to early Christianity in the papyri.
- [3] R. Bagnall (‘The Readers of Christian Books: Further Speculations’, 23–30) takes the opportunity to expand on one of his speculations in *Early Christian Books in Egypt*, that ‘the expanded civic elite of the early third century, particularly the members of the newly founded city councils of the nome metropoleis, might have provided a major part of the audience for ownership of Christian books’ (23). Bagnall addresses this from various points of view, emphasizing the urban provenance of the majority of third-century Christian papyri, and speculating on possible owners of these books. Here Bagnall devotes most attention to a neglected category, the *boethoi*, managers, agents, and other ‘assistants’ of various sorts, dwelling on various of these individuals, and their reading and writing activities, by way of problematising a range of assumptions.
- [4] G. Bastianini and G. Cavallo publish ‘Un nuovo frammento di lettera festale (PSI inv. 3779)’ (31–45). This section from a papyrus roll, which probably comes from the Arsinoïte nome, preserves the Greek text of one column and part of a second of the 9th Festal Letter of Cyril of Alexandria of 421. A list of surviving Festal letters on papyrus (illustrated in whole or part in plates I–VI), of which PSI inv. 3779 is the earliest, leads to a valuable palaeographical discussion of the Alexandrian majuscule in which the papyrus is written (made even more useful by the reproduction on plates VII–X of some of the papyri under discussion), and its connection to the patriarchal chancellery in Alexandria, before proceeding to the text and commentary.
- [5] Ranging widely over issues, questions, and pieces of evidence, thereby offering many characteristically insightful observations, P. Parsons asks if Christians were truly ‘A People of the Book?’ (47–57), answering the question circuitously but perceptively in the affirmative. Along the way he asks more specific questions, including ‘do Christian literary texts have a special kind of transmission, or do they simply represent a special case of a general phenomenon: each copy slightly divergent, from scribal error or scribal contamination, from every other’ (53), which he answers in part in his final paragraph with an injunction for those working on the palaeography of Christian texts to look across at the ‘pagan Classics’, offers a (still necessary) corrective to attitudes to the textual witness of the papyri (‘it is not the papyri that are wild, but our expectations that are unrealistic’ (54)), and closes with perceptive paragraphs on ‘styles’ of script and units of palaeographical dating (suggesting two generations may be a better unit than a century, 55-56).
- [6] J. Chapa offers a thorough analysis of Psalm 90 (‘Su demoni e angeli: Il salmo 90 nel suo contesto’, 59–90), surveying the Psalm itself, recent work on it, and the liturgical, scholastic, and apotropaic uses to which it was put, with a listing of papyrus witnesses classified by these types of usage.
- [7] A. Carlini and M. Bandini contribute a chapter on ‘Il Pastore di Erma: Nuovi testimonianze

e vecchi problemi' (91–105), which comprises a discussion of the early history of the work by Carlini, followed by observations by Bandini on the contribution of Codex Sinaiticus to the texts of the *Similitudes*.

- [8] The volume then turns to apocrypha. E. Giannarelli's chapter, 'Papiri, Letteratura cristiana antica e apocrifi del nuovo testamento: Apporti e problemi vecchi e nuovi' (107–122), takes its cue from several contributions by Naldini to discuss a range of early Christian texts, setting the papyri alongside later copies of texts to address a number of textual questions.
- [9] O. Zwierlein offers a discussion of 'Griechische Papyri in der Überlieferung der Acta Apostolorum apocrypha' (123–145), which begins with a catalogue of Apocryphal Acts on papyrus, of which images of some feature at Plates XI–XV, offering detailed observations on the text of several in comparison both with medieval versions, and each other, as well as discussions of the apocryphal correspondence of Paul and the Corinthians and the replica of the 'Quo Vadis scene' in P.Hamb. Bil.1 (with plates XVI–XX).
- [10] P. Marrassini then surveys the 'Scoperta e riscoperte dell' *Apocalisse di Pietro* fra Greco, Arabo ed Etiopico' (147–160), providing a valuable and up to date guide to and discussion of the various witness to the *Acta Petri*.
- [11] The volume closes with three contributions which publish new texts. J. Gascou examines 'La montagne d'Antinoopolis, hagiographie et papyrus' (161–171), adding new information and texts (or descriptions thereof) related to the dossier of the 5th century Antinoopolite anchorite Apa Sabinos and the monastery which later bore his name, and locating the 'Holy Rock' north of Antinoopolis mentioned in the papyri in a number of hagiographical texts.
- [12] M. Stroppa edits 'Une papiro inedito del Fisiologo (PSI inv. 295)' (173–192 with plates XXI–XXII), providing a detailed study of the papyrus and reflecting on the manuscript tradition of the *Physiologos*.
- [13] D. Minutoli and R. Pintaudi provide a codicological reconstruction and textual and paratextual discussion of 'Un codice biblico su papiro della collezione Schøyen MS 187 (*Esodo* IV 16 – VII 21)' (193–2-5), a folio of which is given at plate XXVII, along with an account of the acquisition history of the papyrus (illustrated at plates XXIII–XXVI).
- [14] The production standards of the volume are high, and the plates, though black and white, of largely excellent quality. Containing as it does many of the major voices in the field, with a selection of essays which make important contributions, and a number of interesting new early Christian texts, this volume is a fitting tribute to Naldini's memory, and the editors and contributors are to be thanked and congratulated for producing it.

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