

ATHENÆUM

Studi di Letteratura e Storia dell'Antichità
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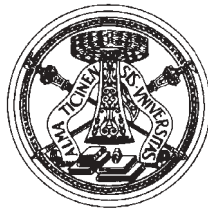


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INDICE DEL VOLUME

Articoli

M. BOREA, <i>Les armes de la langue et du mètre. Le discours iambique des Syracusaines de Théocrite [Language and Meter's Strength. The Iambic Speech of Theocritus Idyll 15]</i>	» 421
I.M. KONSTANTAKOS, <i>The Wisdom of the Hidden Old Man. An Ancient Folktale of the East in the Alexander Romance</i>	» 444
J. MONTENEGRO - A. DEL CASTILLO, <i>Some Reflections on Hamilcar Barca and the Foundation of Acra Leuce</i>	» 482
M. BALBO, <i>Alcune osservazioni sul trionfo e sulla censura di Appio Claudio Pulcro (cos. 143 a.C.) [Notes on Appius Claudius Pulcher's Triumph and Censorship]</i>	» 499
C. BUR, <i>Le spectacle du cens. Relecture du déroulement de la professio sous la République romaine [The Census Show. Re-examination of the Proceedings of the professio under the Roman Republic]</i>	» 520
S. CORREA, <i>Consolatio, memoria e identidad en las cartas de Cicerón a exiliados pompeyanos del año 46 a.C. (Cic. fam. 4 y 6) [Consolatio, Memory and Identity in Cicero's Letters to Pompeians in Exile of the Year 46 B.C. (Cic. fam. 4 and 6)]</i>	» 551
P. MARTÍNEZ ASTORINO, <i>Dos modos del artificio. La construcción poética de la historia en el pasaje de Rómulo de las Metamorfosis a la luz de los Fastos [A Twofold Device. The Poetic Construction of History in Metamorphoses' Romulus Episode in the Light of Fasti]</i>	» 569
G. PIPITONE, <i>Il teorema della relazione fortuna/potere nell'Agamemnon di Seneca [The Theorem of the Relationship between Fortune and Power in Seneca's Agamemnon]</i>	» 584
L. NICCOLAI, <i>«Areei potuto punirti, ma ho preferito scriverti». Regole della politica e regole della satira tra Contro Nilo e Misopogon [«It Was in My Power to Punish You, but Writing Seemed to Me Better». Rules of Politics and Rules of Satire between Against Nilus and Misopogon]</i>	» 605
M.L. LA FICO GUZZO, <i>La encarnación del Hijo de Dios en el Cento Probae. Dos rasgos del modus operandi intertextual [The Incarnation of the Son of God in the Cento Probae. Two Features of the Intertextual modus operandi]</i>	» 625
E. SPANGENBERG YANES, <i>Le citazioni di autori greci nell'Ars di Prisciano [Quotations from Greek Authors in Priscian's Ars]</i>	» 642
M. FRESSURA - D. MANTOVANI, <i>P.Berol. inv. 14081. Frammento di una nuova copia del Digesto di età giustiniana [P.Berol. inv. 14081. A New Digest Fragment from the Justinianic Age]</i> ..	» 689

Note e discussioni

P. NÝVLT, <i>Two Misunderstood Statements in [Arist.] Ath. 32.3 and Their Bearing on the History of the Four Hundred</i>	» 717
W.V. HARRIS, <i>Literacy Muddles</i>	» 724
C.M. CALCANTE, <i>Il sublime tra letteratura e metaletteratura in una recente interpretazione [The Sublime between Literature and Metaliterature in a Recent Interpretation]</i>	» 729
S. AMMIRATI, <i>Frammenti inediti di giurisprudenza latina da un palinsesto copto. Per un'edizione delle scripturae inferiores del ms. London, British Library, Oriental 4717 (5) [Fragments of Unknown Latin Legal Texts in a Coptic Palimpsest. Towards an Edition of the Primary Scripts of London, British Library, Oriental 4717 (5)]</i>	» 736
L. D'ALFONSO - M.E. GORRINI - A. MEADOWS, <i>Archaeological Excavations at Kınık Höyük, Niğde (Campaign 2016). The 5th-1st Century BCE Levels, and the End of the Occupation of the Citadel</i>	» 742

Recensioni

C. AMPOLO (a c. di), <i>Agora greca e agorai di Sicilia</i> (M.V. García Quintela)	» 753
G. BENEDETTO - R. GREGGI - A. NUTI (a c. di), <i>Lirici greci e lirici nuovi. Lettere e documenti di Manara Valgimigli, Luciano Anceschi e Salvatore Quasimodo</i> (M. Aschei)	» 756

F. BESSONE, <i>La Tebaide di Stazio. Epica e potere</i> (G. Aricò)	»	762
E. CALIRI, <i>Aspettando i barbari. La Sicilia nel V secolo tra Genserico e Odoacre</i> (F.M. Petri) .	»	766
M. CHIABÀ, <i>Roma e le priscae Latinae coloniae. Ricerche sulla colonizzazione del Lazio dalla costituzione della repubblica alla guerra latina</i> (J. Pelgrom)	»	770
U. FANTASIA, <i>La guerra del Peloponneso</i> (A. Zambrini)	»	775
M. FARAGUNA (ed.), <i>Legal Documents in Ancient Societies, IV. Archives and Archival Documents in Ancient Societies</i> (A. Magnetto)	»	778
J.-L. FERRARY, <i>Les mémoriaux de délégations du sanctuaire oraculaire de Claros, d'après la documentation conservée dans le Fonds Jeanne et Louis Robert</i> (D. Campanile)	»	782
L. FEZZI, <i>Il corrotto. Un'inchiesta di Marco Tullio Cicerone</i> (Ch. d'Aloja)	»	789
C. FORMICOLA (ed.): Tacito, <i>Il libro quarto degli Annales</i> (F. Feraco)	»	792
E. FOSTER - D. LATEINER (eds.), <i>Thucydides and Herodotus</i> (A. Beltrametti)	»	795
L. FULKERSON, <i>No Regrets. Remorse in Classical Antiquity</i> (E. Sanders)	»	798
F. GHERCHANOC, <i>L'oïkos en fête. Célébrations familiales et sociabilité en Grèce ancienne</i> (S. Ferrucci)	»	801
F. GIORDANO, <i>Lo studio dell'antichità. Giorgio Pasquali e i filologi classici</i> (L. Polverini)	»	805
V. GRIEB - C. KOEHN (Hrsg.), <i>Polybios und seine Historien</i> (C. Bearzot)	»	809
J. HERNÁNDEZ LOBATO, <i>Vel Apolline muto. Estética y poética de la Antigüedad tardía</i> –, <i>El Humanismo que no fue. Sidonio Apolinar en el Renacimiento</i> – (ed.): Sidonio Apolinar, <i>Poemas</i> (F.E. Consolino)	»	812
A. KALDELLIS, <i>Ethnography After Antiquity: Foreign Lands and Peoples in Byzantine Literature</i> (D. Dzino)	»	821
M. LANGELLOTTI, <i>L'allevamento di pecore e capre nell'Egitto romano: aspetti economici e sociali</i> (J. Rowlandson)	»	824
L. MAURIZI, <i>Il cursus honorum senatorio da Augusto a Traiano. Sviluppi formali e stilistici nell'epigrafia latina e greca</i> (C. Campedelli)	»	827
L. MECCELLA (a c. di): Dexippo di Atene, <i>Testimonianze e frammenti</i> (S. Rendina)	»	831
F. MONTANARI - A. RENGAKOS - CH. TSAGALIS (eds.), <i>Homeric Contexts. Neanalysis and the Interpretation of Oral Poetry</i> (F. Bertolini)	»	836
H. OBSIEGER (Hrsg.): Plutarch, <i>De E apud Delphos - Über das Epsilon am Apolltempel in Delphi</i> (F. Ferrari)	»	841
M. QUIJADA SAGREDO - M.C. ENCINAS REGUERO (eds.), <i>Retórica y discurso en el teatro griego</i> (M. Di Stefano)	»	843
R. RAFFAELLI - A. TONTINI (a c. di), <i>L'Atellana Preletteraria</i> (Ch. Renda)	»	846
C. SALEMME, <i>Saffo e la bellezza agonale</i> (L. Belloni)	»	848
C. VACANTI, <i>Guerra per la Sicilia e guerra della Sicilia. Il ruolo delle città siciliane nel primo conflitto romano-punico</i> (J.R.W. Prag)	»	851
F. ZUOLO (ed.): Senofonte, <i>Ierone o della tirannide</i> (M. Lanzillo)	»	856

Notizie di Pubblicazioni

M.S. BASSIGNANO (a c. di), <i>Supplementa Italica n.s. 28. Regio X. Venetia et Histria: Patavium</i> (R. Scuderi)	»	861
J. CHRISTIEN - B. LEGRAS (Hrsg.), <i>Sparte hellénistique. IV^e-III^e siècles avant notre ère</i> (L. Thommen)	»	861
P. FAURE, <i>L'aigle et le cep. Les centurions légionnaires dans l'Empire des Sévères</i> (L. de Blois) ...	»	863
W. FELS (Hrsg.): Prudentius, <i>Das Gesamtwerk</i> (G. Galeani)	»	865
W. FITZGERALD, <i>How to Read a Latin Poem. If You Can't Read Latin Yet</i> (P.F. Sacchi)	»	866
G. LAMBIN, <i>Le chanteur Hésiode</i> (F. Bertolini)	»	868
A. LINTOTT (ed.): Plutarch, <i>Demosthenes and Cicero</i> (R. Scuderi)	»	869
F. MALHOMME - L. MILETTI - G.M. RISPOLI - M-A. ZAGDOUN (sous la dir. de), <i>Renaissances de la tragédie. La Poétique d'Aristote et le genre tragique, de l'Antiquité à l'époque contemporaine</i> (F. Cannas)	»	869

F.G. MASI - S. MASO (eds.), <i>Fate, Change, and Fortune in Ancient Thought</i> (F. Ferrari)	»	872
Y. MODÉLAN, <i>Les Vandales et l'Empire romain</i> (A. Marcone)	»	873
M. OSMERS, « <i>Wir aber sind damals und jetzt immer die gleichen</i> ». <i>Vergangenheitsbezüge in der polisübergreifenden Kommunikation der klassischen Zeit</i> (A. Donati)	»	874
M.F. PETRACCIA, <i>Indices e delatores nell'antica Roma. Occultiore indicio proditus; in occultas delatus insidias</i> (R. Scuderi)	»	875
R. RAFFAELLI (a c. di), <i>TuttoPlauto. Un profilo dell'autore e delle commedie</i> (F. Cannas)	»	878
R. RAFFAELLI - A. TONTINI (a c. di), <i>Lecturae Plautinae Sarsinates, XVII. Rudens</i> (F. Cannas)	»	878
Pubblicazioni ricevute	»	881
Elenco dei collaboratori dell'annata 2017	»	883
Indice generale	»	886
Elenco delle pubblicazioni periodiche ricevute in cambio di « <i>Athenaeum</i> » e distribuite fra le biblioteche del Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici dell'Università di Pavia.....	»	891

MICAELA LANGELLOTTI, *L'allevamento di pecore e capre nell'Egitto romano: aspetti economici e sociali*, Bari, Edipuglia 2012, pp. 173.

This study of the pasturage of sheep and goats in Roman Egypt is based on the 77 published declarations of sheep and goats, plus a further 14 unpublished Oxyrhynchite declarations to be published in a forthcoming volume of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. This corpus of 91 declarations is listed and annotated in the Catalogue (pp. 131-153), which assigns each text a unique identifier by which it is cited throughout the book (e.g. Eracl. -13. 4 = the fourth declaration dated to 13 BC from the Herakleopolite nome).

As L. explains in Ch. 1, the declarations reflect three distinct administrative phases, first identified by S. Avogadro, *Le ἀπογραφὰὶ διὰ τὴν ἀποικίαν ἐν τῷ Ἰσχυρῷ Ἰσχυρῷ*, «Aegyptus» 15 (1935), pp. 131-206, and refined by C. Balconi, *Le dichiarazioni di bestiame ed il controllo del patrimonio zootecnico nell'Egitto romano*, «Aegyptus» 70 (1990), pp. 101-110: I) from Augustus to late in Claudius' reign, an annual declaration was submitted in late Tybi or Mecheir (January), reporting adult animals only; II) between before July 54 and 67 or later, two annual declarations were required, the first (in Mecheir) being supplemented in Epeiph (July) with a notification of any progeny born or other acquisitions since the first declaration; III) and finally (from before 98/9 to the latest known declaration, dated 238), this supplement was abandoned in favour of a single, more detailed, declaration made in Mecheir, which recorded the changes from the previous year. The unpublished and recently published texts included by L. seem to suggest antedating the start of phase III to 90 or even 84, although this is not stated explicitly¹.

Medieval Europe» 19/2 (2011), pp. 204-231. Cf. also my own *Local Knowledge and Wider Contexts: Stories of the Arrival of the Croats in De Administrando Imperio in the Past and Present*, in D. Dzino - K. Parry (eds.), *Byzantium, Its Neighbors and Its Cultures*, Brisbane 2014, pp. 89-105 that was published little after Kaldellis' book.

¹ Fig. 1 (p. 12) represents all the Arsinoite declarations as belonging to group III, but the catalogue (pp. 143-144) expresses uncertainty whether Ars(H). 90. 1 belongs to II or III. From the details given in

The chronological and geographical spread of this evidence is heavily skewed towards the Oxyrhynchite nome and the Julio-Claudian period; group I come exclusively from the Oxyrhynchite (27 cases) and Herakleopolite (10) nomes², group II are all Oxyrhynchite (8) except one Hermopolite example; only the provenance of group III is more varied, and conforms more closely to the overall survival pattern of documentary papyri of the second and third centuries (the 41 texts of group III include 16 Arsinoite, 13 Oxyrhynchite, several Herakleopolite and Hermopolite examples, and one each from Athribis in the Delta, Lykopolis and Upper Egypt). The group III texts thus provide a reasonable basis for general analysis, while the earlier texts contribute usefully to our knowledge of the administration and rural society of the Oxyrhynchite nome, which is generally not as well documented for the first century of Roman rule as for the remainder of the principate. The existence of so many early declarations presumably reflects the Roman administration's ability to draw on a longstanding Ptolemaic tradition of keeping detailed records of livestock, which L. mentions only briefly (p. 13, citing Clarysse and Thompson's recent substantial discussion; cf. C. Balconi, *Bis gravae pecudes. Dichiarazioni di ovini demotiche con annotazione greca*, «Aegyptus» 68 (1988), pp. 47-50).

Ch. 1 also clarifies how the declarations formed the basis for compiling the ἐξαριθμησις θρεμμάτων, the livestock register, which not only allowed the government to establish how much pasture tax (ἐννόμιον) to expect, but also provided comprehensive data on the size and whereabouts of flocks throughout Egypt, facilitating, for example, the resolution of lawsuits over alleged thefts of livestock (pp. 17-18). Typically for Roman Egypt, the declarations show the interaction of various officials both at village and nome level (and at least for the later second-early third century, the *epistrategos* of the Heptanomia; p. 21). One of the unpublished Oxyrhynchite texts, unfortunately without a precise date, demonstrates that the toparch continued to exist more than half a century after the last secure attestation, and into the early second century (p. 19).

Ch. 2, devoted to the taxation of flocks, combines the declarations with the considerable quantity of other relevant evidence (mostly tabulated in Tables 6-10). Its most important conclusion is that the ἐννόμιον was not, as scholars have believed, a licence for pasturage on public land similar to the Roman *scriptura*, but an annual tax levied on (privately owned) sheep and goats, charged at a flat rate per animal (confirmed by a Theban receipt which states the number of animals instead of the sum of tax; p. 53). It was one of the minor taxes collectively subsumed under the term εἶδη, as explicated further by L's paper in the Geneva Congress Proceedings (2012). Distinct from the *ennomion*, the term φόρος νομῶν (so far attested only in the Arsinoite and Mendesian nomes) designates the cash rents levied on publicly owned pasture land, while φόρος προβάτων refers to the rents levied on leased flocks of sheep and goats (pp. 36-38 – normally belonging to imperial or other large estates).

Ch. 3 analyses the amount of pasture land attested respectively in the Oxyrhynchite, Arsinoite, Hermopolite and other nomes, drawing on the evidence used so far in the book, and other texts, primarily land leases which refer to pasture or to fodder crops specifically intended for grazing by small livestock (fodder was, of course, needed also for donkeys, oxen and other transport beasts); Tables 11-13 tabulate the relevant leases (2 Oxyrhynchite, 35 Arsinoite, and 7 Hermo-

the catalogue, Oxy. 84. 1 seems to me to belong to group III, but we must await its publication for confirmation.

² Ars. I. 1 (*P.Mich.* XVIII.782) also belongs in group I, but its Arsinoite provenance is uncertain.

polite). Oxyrhynchite references to permanent pasture (βομῆαι) are certainly very scarce (all concerning publicly owned land), compared to the plethora of evidence from the Arsinoite nome (where it was also known as κτάμια, a term apparently local to Tebtunis). However, the sole explicit mention of sheep throughout all the numerous Oxyrhynchite leases which specify fodder crops (often in rotation with cereals) more probably reflects the idiosyncrasies of the local lease formulae rather than indicating that the fodder was mostly intended for other purposes than sheep pasturage³. Given the large number of sheep and goats attested (see Ch. 4), the scarcity of permanent grassland, and the benefits to the land from the dung of grazing animals, I surmise that it was normal for the fodder crops to be used after cutting for grazing sheep even when this was not actually stated.

The fourth chapter treats the socio-economic status of the flock owners and the distribution of herd sizes by place and chronology, accompanied by several figures and Tables 14-18. The Oxyrhynchite declarations attest several metropolitane owners, including two families whose economic affairs are illuminated by small dossiers. But evidence on the owners' status is preserved in relatively few cases (and not until AD 67), so that as far I can see, we cannot be sure how many of the owners of the many small flocks attested by the early declarations (65% containing fewer than 30 sheep) were villagers by status, however likely it is that the majority were (L. also notes the large flock owned by Antonia, wife of Drusus, and managed by her slave; p. 85). We also unfortunately lack explicit evidence for the status of Herakleopolite owners, where some herds are unusually large, and their owners' names hint of high status (pp. 97-98). The scarcity of Upper Egyptian declarations could have been appropriately supplemented (p. 98) by the series of Theban ostraca listing sheep-owners whose flocks rarely exceed 40 sheep (*SB* XIV.11721-11738; cf. L., p. 16 nt. 26). In addition to the relatively few Arsinoite declarations, L. adduces a wealth of other evidence for the status of flock owners, including some of the largest archives surviving from the nome (veteran Bellienus Gemellus' manager Epagathus; Heroninus, who managed the estate of the prominent Alexandrian, Appianus; and the related «archive of the sheep-lessees of Theadelphia») ⁴. Characteristic of the Arsinoite nome (and especially Euhemeria) were the προβατοκτηνοτρόφοι, responsible for administering the flocks of imperial and public estates, particularly providing their forage (pp. 92-94). All four Hermopolite declarations involve metropolitane owners (the status of Anubion son of Sarapion is securely confirmed in *Erm.* 130. 1, and that of his brother Eutyichides by several texts from their archive). Overall, small flocks (under 30 beasts) predominated in the first and second centuries, but were outnumbered in the third by those of medium (31-60) and large (61-150) size; over the whole period, 73% of flocks comprised fewer than 60 beasts. But the largest number (38%: fig. 13) of animals belonged to flocks comprising 121-500 beasts, reflecting the extent to which sheep-rearing was predominantly an enterprise of wealthy proprietors.

³ The 'standard' Oxyrhynchite formula was «for cutting and grazing» (εἰς κοπήν καὶ ἐπινομήν): *P.Fouad* 43; *P.Oxy.* III.499; IV.810; XIV.1686; XLI.2974; *SB* VIII.9918; X.10216; cf. *P.Oxy.* LXIX.4739; all these references certainly belong (together with IV.730) in p. 61 nt. 4, and arguably could have been included in Table 11.

⁴ The Trismegistos 'Archives' website is especially helpful for Arsinoite archives (including that of the shepherd Akouis; cf. L., p. 88): www.trismegistos.org/arch/index.php.

The final chapter is devoted to the forms of management of both public and private herds, preceded by a short contrast between the regime of transhumance found in many parts of the Mediterranean, and the Egyptian practice whereby flocks were mostly grazed around a particular village (recorded by the declarations, together with the name of the shepherd responsible for them), and only occasionally moved to a neighbouring nome. The owners of small flocks sometimes took on the role of shepherd themselves, or entrusted the role to a family member, or employed a shepherd; small flocks were often combined with others under the management of a single shepherd (p. 123). One might add that, although most shepherds were adult (described as paying the poll-tax), two were underage (Oxy. 28. 1; Oxy. 29. 1 – also probably the declarant's son, judging by the names). The large and very large private flocks were managed in three ways: direct management by the proprietor (exemplified only by Ars(T). 140. 1, reporting 140 sheep and 9 goats owned by a villager); employment of *phrontistai* or other estate managers; or leasing them to professional herdsmen. Our evidence for the management and composition of flocks makes clear that the main economic purpose of keeping sheep lay in selling their fleeces for wool (supporting the extensive textile industry in Roman Egypt). Almost all herds contained many fewer goats than sheep; goats were more destructive and prone to illness, but helped to prevent the sheep straying, and were valued for their skins. The females of both species also, of course, produced milk and its derivatives and young (to sell for meat and/or sacrifice, or for breeding; p. 126).

A succinct «Conclusion» resumes the book's main arguments and themes. As its title promises, this book offers more than just a papyrological survey of the declarations, but makes a significant contribution to understanding the importance of sheep and goat husbandry to the economy and society of Roman Egypt. Although it does not achieve complete coverage of all papyri relevant to sheep and goats (which would have required a much larger study; the DDBDP lists over 300 texts from the Roman period referring to sheep) it does exploit most of the important texts in addition to the declarations, especially those illuminating the role of pasturage in the economy of large estates (including imperial and other public estates).

There is a bibliography, and useful indexes of texts cited (both the declarations and other papyri), and of Greek words, but no general index.

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