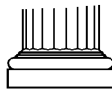


**Luisa Lesage Gárriga
Antonio D. Pérez Zurita
(eds.)**

**INSTITUCIONES LOCALES,
RELIGIÓN CÍVICA
Y ÉLITES URBANAS
EN EL EGIPTO ROMANO
(siglos II-IV d.C.)**



EDICIONES CLÁSICAS

Primera edición 2022

Ediciones Clásicas S.A. garantiza un riguroso proceso de selección y evaluación de los trabajos que publica.

La publicación de esta obra colectiva se ha realizado en el marco del Proyecto “Instituciones locales, religión cívica y élites urbanas en el Egipto romano (s. II-IV d.C.)” (UCO-FEDER 20. Referencia: 1380044-F) y ha sido cofinanciada por el Programa Operativo FEDER 2014-2020 y por la Consejería de Economía, Conocimiento, Empresas y Universidad de la Junta de Andalucía.



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© Ediciones Clásicas, S.A.
c/ San Máximo 31, 4º 8
Edificio 2000
28041 Madrid
Tlfs: 91-5003174 / 5003270.
E-mail: edicionesclasicas@gmail.com
Web: www.edicionesclasicas.com

Ilustración de la cubierta: *Papiro de Colonia 25v.*

I.S.B.N. 978-84-7882-889-0
Depósito Legal: M-30001-2022
Impreso en España por CIMAPRESS

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PRESENTACIÓN

La papirología en España no ha gozado tradicionalmente de un excesivo predicamento en la investigación, si bien en los últimos años distintas iniciativas, instituciones e investigadores han venido a paliar en parte dicha situación. En el año 2019 los profesores Enrique Melchor Gil, Israel Muñoz Gallarte y Dámaris Romero González, de las Áreas de Historia Antigua y Filología Griega, respectivamente, de la Universidad de Córdoba, tomaron la iniciativa de solicitar un proyecto de investigación que tuviera como objetivo principal el trabajo multidisciplinar por parte de filólogos e historiadores de distintos documentos papirológicos ocupándose de la traducción, análisis y contextualización histórica de los mismos. Paralelamente, se pretendía relacionar las distintas líneas de investigación que han venido siendo tradicionales en dichas Áreas, involucrando a investigadores con una dilatada trayectoria y colaboradores más jóvenes que pudieran iniciarse y dar continuidad a medio y largo plazo a dicho campo de conocimiento.

El Proyecto “Instituciones locales, religión cívica y élites urbanas en el Egipto romano (s. II-IV d. C.)” fue valorado muy positivamente por sus evaluadores, lo que permitió obtener la oportuna financiación y, en última instancia, el inicio de esta nueva línea de investigación en nuestra Universidad que esperamos tenga un amplio recorrido temporal. Entre los objetivos de este Proyecto estaba la celebración de sendas reuniones científicas que sirvieran como foro de debate en el que los integrantes del mismo, junto a otros investigadores invitados, pudieran poner en común los resultados de sus respectivos trabajos. Es así como a principios de junio de 2022 se celebró el I Congreso Internacional *Papiros greco-egipcios de época imperial romana. Instituciones, sociedad y religión*, que tuvo lugar en las instalaciones de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Córdoba, a cuyas autoridades, especialmente su Sr. Decano, D. Ricardo Córdoba de la Llave, agradecemos las facilidades y el apoyo recibido. Asimismo, la Universidad de Córdoba, a través de su Plan Propio, aportó financiación complementaria para la celebración del encuentro. Finalmente, no podemos dejar de mostrar nuestro reconocimiento a los miembros del Comité Científico del Congreso, a sus secretarios, D. Víctor A. Torres González y D. Sergio López Calero y,

especialmente, a todos los ponentes por su entera predisposición a colaborar con sus inestimables aportaciones.

El volumen que presentamos recopila once contribuciones realizadas por dieciséis investigadores vinculados a diferentes Universidades españolas y europeas. Los trabajos han sido distribuidos en tres bloques a los que se añade, a modo introductorio, un capítulo dedicado a los usos que se podían dar al soporte papiráceo, concretamente a la práctica opistógrafa, las relaciones entre textos de diferente naturaleza en un mismo documento y los vínculos de éstos con la colección de textos.

Tres de los estudios han sido englobados en un primer bloque consagrado al estudio de diferentes instituciones. En concreto, se analiza un documento original transmitido en una tablilla encerada que nos informa de las últimas voluntades de un miembro de la *classis Alexandrina* bajo la forma clásica romana del testamento *per aes et libram*. Además, se estudia el arrendamiento de los *agri vectigales*, fundamentales para la financiación de la vida municipal, realizando una comparación entre el marco legislativo que regulaba dichas propiedades, conservado en los distintos estatutos municipales y coloniales procedentes de la Bética, con casos prácticos documentados en diferentes papiros recuperados de Hermópolis Magna. La última contribución de este bloque está dedicada al análisis de la figura del prítano y su relación con la *boulé* en el marco del autogobierno de las comunidades del Egipto romano analizando el acta de una de las sesiones del Consejo de Oxirrinco.

El segundo bloque recopila cuatro trabajos dedicados al análisis de distintos aspectos del mundo religioso a través de diferentes documentos papiro-lógicos. El primero de ellos versa sobre el rol de autoridades religiosas, en concreto el del mago, como guía y medio de comunicación entre los humanos y la divinidad. Para ello se realiza un detallado análisis de los actos de lenguaje en *PGM VIII*. Le sigue un trabajo sobre otras figuras religiosas presentes en rituales y festivales, en este caso la del misterioso y elusivo *kynopes*, a través de un estudio del único testimonio griego donde aparece mencionado, el papiro *SB IV 7336*. El tercer trabajo se centra en el recurso al oráculo para consultas prácticas de la vida laboral, ejemplificado a través de un estudio histórico-semántico de los términos más problemáticos en el papiro *Köln IV 202*. Finalmente, el bloque concluye con el análisis pormenorizado y la traducción de los denominados *libelli*, certificados en papiro que ratificaban el cumplimiento de los sacrificios oportunos, como testimonios directos del conflicto religioso presente en el s. III d. C.

El bloque tercero recoge tres aportaciones referentes a otras tantas manifestaciones de la vida cotidiana del Egipto romano. En la primera de ellas se

muestra el papel de las nutrices en dicho contexto, las características del oficio o la extracción social de quienes lo ejercieron, especialmente a través del análisis de algunos documentos contractuales y recibos que documentan el abono por los servicios de estas mujeres. El segundo trabajo presenta un extenso análisis de un himno cristiano, único en su género, conservado en un papiro reutilizado de Oxirrinco, en el que se ha transmitido la notación griega para musicar un texto teológico cristiano y se compara y contrasta con otros documentos musicales griegos, así como algunos otros ejemplos conservados de himnos cristianos. Este bloque concluye con una contribución en la que, a través del recibo de un carnicero, se analiza la existencia de distintas técnicas culinarias y el uso que se hacía de las aves en diferentes contextos de la vida cotidiana en el Egipto romano.

El lector reparará, además, en que el volumen se cierra con unos índices que esperamos faciliten la consulta del mismo.

No podemos concluir esta presentación sin reiterar nuestro agradecimiento a todas las personas e instituciones que, con su ayuda, han contribuido a la edición de esta monografía colectiva, que ha sido publicada gracias al Proyecto de Investigación “Instituciones locales, religión cívica y élites urbanas en el Egipto romano (s. II-IV d.C.)”, cofinanciado por el Programa operativo FEDER 2014-2020 (UCO-FEDER 20, referencia 1380044-F) y por la Consejería de Economía, Conocimiento, Empresas y Universidad de la Junta de Andalucía. En especial, a los principales responsables de este, los profesores de la Universidad de Córdoba Enrique Melchor Gil e Israel Muñoz Gallarte y la profesora Dámaris Romero González, sin cuyo concurso e inestimable ayuda la publicación de este volumen no hubiera sido posible. Asimismo, a todo el personal de Ediciones Clásicas y, en especial, a su Director, D. Alfonso Martínez Díez, por su buena predisposición desde el inicio para que este libro pudiera ver la luz.

LUISA LESAGE GÁRRIGA
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Córdoba, noviembre de 2022

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OPISTHOGRAPHIC POPYRI AND PRACTICES OF COLLECTION IN ANCIENT EGYPT

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Resumen: Los papiros ofrecen importantes testimonios para investigar las prácticas de los antiguos escribas. De particular interés en este sentido resultan los papiros opistógrafos: manuscritos que contienen escrito tanto en el recto como en el verso. Este artículo reflexiona sobre las prácticas colectoras centrándose en varios papiros opistógrafos de Egipto. Para ello, se distingue entre dos tipos de opistógrafos: (1) manuscritos re-utilizados donde un segundo texto se ha inscrito en la parte de atrás por el primer texto ha dejado de resultar de interés, y (2) manuscritos donde diferentes materiales literarios se han reunidos de manera deliberada. Algunos de los manuscritos que se analizarán en el presente escrito son el papiro de Oxirrinco que incluye los últimos siete versos del Éxodo (*P. Oxy. VIII 1075*) y los siete primeros del Apocalipsis (*P. Oxy. VIII 1079*) en cada uno de los lados del papiro, y *P. Oxy. III 413*, que conserva dos mimos griegos del s. II d. C. Los resultados alcanzados en esta contribución permitirán avanzar la investigación de las relaciones intertextuales en las colecciones y repensar las circunstancias bajo las cuales ciertas composiciones fueron agrupadas o rechazadas por los colectores de la Antigüedad.

Palabras clave: Papiros de Oxirrinco, Opistógrafos, Colecciones de libros, Prácticas de escribas

Abstract: Ancient papyri offer important avenues of research to investigate the practices of ancient scribes. Of particular interest in this regard are opisthographic papyri: manuscripts that contain writing on both the recto and the verso. This paper will reflect on practices of collection by focusing on a number of opisthographic papyri from Egypt. I will distinguish between two types of opisthographs: (1) re-used manuscripts where a second text was inscribed on the back because the first text ceased to be of interest, and (2) manuscripts where different literary materials have been brought together deliberately. Manuscripts that will be discussed include the Oxyrhynchus papyrus that bears the last seven verses of Exodus (*P. Oxy. VIII 1075*) and the first seven verses of Revelation (*P. Oxy. VIII 1079*) on either side of the papyrus, and *P. Oxy. III 413*, which preserves two Greek mimes from the second century CE. The approaches proposed in this paper aim to contribute to discussions on intertextual relations within collections, and to rethink the circumstances under which compositions could both be grouped together or rejected by ancient *collectionneurs*.

Keywords: Oxyrhynchus papyri, Opisthographs, Book collection, Scribal practice

1. INTRODUCTION

Manuscript collections such as the Oxyrhynchus papyri from ancient Egypt have allowed scholars to engage with texts in many different ways. Apart from new compositions, the manuscripts discovered at these sites have provided scholars with fresh perspectives on a rich ancient culture of reading, writing, and collecting texts. In recent years, more attention has been paid to these material approaches. The present paper has developed from an interest in different forms of scribal engagement with ancient manuscripts. I am interested in not just the compositions that are preserved on papyri, but even more so in papyri as material artefacts — as tools that informs us in which different ways texts were used and how the scribes behind these manuscripts engaged with them.

Of particular interest in this regard are manuscripts that preserve more than one composition. Though the majority of ancient papyri bears the remains of only a single text, we also have a significant number on which groupings of texts can be found. These manuscripts can offer new perspectives on the ancient practice of collecting texts. The present contribution will explore the literary and cultural modes of collecting in ancient papyri from the Graeco-Roman period in order to put our different texts in conversation with each other. I want to do so by focusing on two types of manuscripts: opisthographic papyri, manuscripts that contain writing on both the frontside and the backside, and lists of books preserved on papyri. These types of evidence allow us to critically reflect on the scribal context in which different texts were produced, read, and circulated together.

In this paper, I will build on some of the work that I have done on the Dead Sea Scrolls opisthographs — aiming to shed light on a particular scribal phenomenon from a different, Graeco-Roman perspective.¹ The first section will address the question what scholars exactly mean when they write about opisthographic papyri: for which types of manuscripts has the term been used? Subsequently, I will briefly analyse a small selection of opisthographic papyri and ask under which circumstances the different texts they preserve were written down on one single manuscript. The final section will discuss a number of book lists on papyri, asking how these lists can illuminate our understanding of ancient collecting practices.

¹ AKSU, 2022b.

2. WHAT IS AN OPISTHOGRAPH?

Opisthographs come in all sizes and shapes, and what scholars consider to be an opisthograph may vary.² Eric Turner has characterized manuscripts as opisthographs when the text on the recto continues on the verso, a definition that has been preferred by scholars such as Jean-Luc Fournet and William Johnson.³ However, New Testament scholars such as Larry Hurtado, AnneMarie Luijendijk, and Paul Foster have used the term for a scroll on which we find different texts on either side. Here, I will focus on this second type of opisthographs — preserving multiple texts within one material setting. These manuscripts allow us to reflect on different practices of collection and classification and to hypothesize about different forms of textual engagement in antiquity. We can imagine many different scenarios behind an opisthograph. A writing exercise on the back of a literary text might be an indication that the scroll circulated in an educational context, while a manuscript with two prayer texts might signify a liturgical setting.

For the sake of clarity these examples can broadly be organized in two categories: re-used opisthographs where a second text was inscribed because the first text ceased to be of interest, and opisthographs where the two texts were intentionally brought together on one manuscript.⁴ I commented on the first category elsewhere, where I discussed the famous *P. Oxy. IV 654*: a papyrus that contains a copy of the *Gospel of Thomas* on the verso of a Greek land register.⁵ The re-use of this manuscript was probably a result of the documentary text that was penned on the front side of the manuscript becoming defunct. Instead of disposing of the papyrus altogether a composition of a very different character was added on the verso: a Greek sayings collection related to the New Testament gospels. An example of the second type can be found in the Dead Sea Scroll papyrus that bears 4Q503 on the recto (a collection of liturgies that are to be recited daily for a month during dawn and sunset), and 4Q512 on the verso (bringing together different purification rituals). Both these texts are liturgical texts, bringing together collections of prayers for specific occasions

² MANFREDI, 1983.

³ TURNER, 1978, 8-10; FOURNET, 1978, 5057-58; JOHNSON, 2004, 342.

⁴ FALK, 2014, 51.

⁵ GRENFELL y HUNT, 1904, 1. For a more extensive discussion of this opisthograph: AKSU, 2022a.

or times and, as such, probably circulated in a similar socio-liturgical setting.⁶ The compositions preserved on this opisthograph can be divided into units of prayer starting and ending with blessing formulas, which persuaded Falk to consider this manuscript as “a collection of valued writings.”⁷

3. THREE OPISTHOGRAPHS FROM ANCIENT EGYPT AND ROMAN PALESTINE

A particular well-known example concerns *P. Lond. Lit.* 108, a papyrus with Pseudo-Aristotle’s *Athenaion Politeia* on the back of an Egyptian farm account written in Greek and notes on the poem *Aetia* by Callimachus.⁸ The farm account was here written on the papyrological recto: with the fibres of the papyrus plant running in horizontal direction. The re-use of this manuscript was probably a result of the farm account becoming defunct. Instead of disposing of the papyrus altogether a composition of a very different character was added on the verso: a political treatise describing the Athenian constitution. The treatise would be of fundamental importance for our understanding of Athenian political history. However, our most important copy of this composition was clearly written without much care. The scribal hands of this papyrus use abbreviations, inconsistent columnisations and margins, and irregular handwriting.⁹ Furthermore, the *Athenaion Politeia* was not even the first text on the verso: the backside of the scroll was in first instance re-used for comments on a speech by Demosthenes, which were later crossed-out. It is worthwhile to think through the different scenarios behind this form of re-use. This opisthograph indicates for example that re-use could take place within vastly different contexts and across different literacies. In one way or another, the communities behind these different texts were connected through their use of the same manuscript. In order to further explore the potential scenarios for material re-use and contexts of use, it is of interest to consider two different opisthographs where similar texts seem to be brought together, offering groupings of Greek mime, and of Roman epic.

We first turn our attention to the *Oxyrhynchus papyri* from ancient Egypt, a corpus of roughly half a million fragmentary manuscripts that can be dated between about 300 BCE and 700 CE. There are multiple papyri from *Oxyrhynchus* that carry more than one composition and that seem to

⁶ FALK, 2014, 52.

⁷ FALK, 2014, 52.

⁸ KENYON, 1892.

⁹ JOHNSON, 2004, 157-58.

intend to bring related texts together.¹⁰ A curious example can be found in *P. Oxy.* III 413, which preserves two Greek mimes from the second century CE. The recto bears three columns of a text called *Charition* (after the main character), and the verso three columns of *Moicheutria* (“The Adulteress”).¹¹ Grenfell and Hunt date both texts on palaeographic grounds to the 2nd century CE.¹² These compositions do not just offer the spoken text of the plays, but also stage directions such as musical notations and instructions for the actors to enter the stage.¹³ Stavros Tsitsiridis has argued that *P. Oxy.* III 413 concerns the technical manuscript of two mimes and was based on manuscripts with their complete dramatic texts to which annotations were added.¹⁴ The technical texts of the two plays were brought together on an opisthograph, perhaps in preparation of a performance.¹⁵

Our second example brings us to a different context: Masada in the Judaean Desert. Yigael Yadin during his excavations of the site in 1963-65 discovered a range of manuscripts, including the Latin Papyrus Masada 721. This opisthograph was discovered in Locus 1039 (“Locus of the Scrolls”) where it was most probably deposited during the Roman occupation after the fall of Masada.¹⁶ *P. Mas.* 721 was dated to the Jewish Revolt (66-73 CE) and contains an anonymous poetic fragment on the recto and a verse from Virgil’s *Aeneid* on the verso.¹⁷ This opisthograph must have belonged to a Roman legionary at Masada; Hannah Cotton and Joseph Geiger hypothesize that the writer of the unknown verse line might have wanted to express his feelings of horror about the war.¹⁸ The *Aeneid* as well is of course strongly associated with war and the horrors of battle.¹⁹

¹⁰ Among the papyri of Oxyrhynchus we possess at least 400 opisthographs in a variety of genres, such as the exercises of students, but also literary texts written in scribal bookhands. How many of these concern manuscripts that could be qualified as collections of valued works is unclear. KRÜGER, 1990, 161.

¹¹ GRENFELL y HUNT, 1903, 41-57.

¹² GRENFELL y HUNT, 1903, 41.

¹³ ROSTRUP, 1915.

¹⁴ TSITSIRIDIS, 2011, 200.

¹⁵ Tsitsiridis suggests that the manuscript would have been used by the “stage director” of the play in order to stage the performance: TSITSIRIDIS, 2011, 211-12.

¹⁶ COTTON y GEIGER, 1989, 18-20.

¹⁷ COTTON y GEIGER, 1989, 31-35.

¹⁸ COTTON y GEIGER, 1989, 31-34.

¹⁹ The verse preserved on *P. Mas.* 721, however, is from Dido’s discussion with her sister Anna in book 4 and not specifically associated with warfare.

When grouped together, these two verses comprise a small collection of Latin epic on a small, portable scroll or sheet.

Both *P. Mas.* 721 and *P. Oxy.* III 413 present us with intentional groupings of texts: compositions of similar genres (Greek mime and Roman epic) are brought together on a single manuscript. These two opisthographs can be juxtaposed to *P. Lond. Lit.* 108 (bearing a farm account, the *Athenaion Politeia*, and notes on a poem by Callimachus), which seems to preserve an intriguing instance of material re-use. These three manuscripts together demonstrate different forms of textual practices. Close consideration of opisthographic manuscripts can be a starting point to reflect on intertextual relations within collections. These matters will be approached from a different perspective in the next section, where we will turn our attention to lists of books preserved on papyri.

4. LISTS OF BOOKS PRESERVED IN POPYRI

George Houston in his influential study *Inside Roman Libraries* has distinguished a number of different forms of papyrological evidence for libraries and book collections from the Roman world.²⁰ A potential source that has not received much scholarly attention concerns a particular corpus of papyri that contain lists of titles of ancient compositions. Here, Houston builds on Rosa Otranto's work in which she collected nineteen such lists of non-Christian books.²¹ Another six lists collected by her are made up of Christian books. These book lists are of a variety of lengths and it is unknown if any of them is complete. What can be surmised, however, is that these lists are inventories of actual book collections (and not for example scholarly bibliographies), because some titles occur double, and on some lists opisthographs are preserved.²² Nineteen lists are of course a very limited sample, but Houston nevertheless draws a number of relevant conclusions.

First of all, book collections seem to have existed in a wide range of sizes, varying from a total of five texts, up to several thousand volumes.²³

²⁰ HOUSTON, 2014.

²¹ OTRANTO, 2000.

²² Especially the repetition of titles excludes the possibility that we are dealing with, e.g., a bibliography, or an educational reading list such as Quintilian provides in *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.45-131. As setting for such collection lists, we could think, for example, of an inheritance or the purchase of new books. HOUSTON, 2011, 236-37.

²³ Houston list number 4 (Otranto list number 14, *P. Turner* 39) is the one with only five titles, Houston list number 3 (Otranto list 6, *P. Oxy.* XXXIII 2659), an opisthograph, appears to be part of a catalogue of a significant library.

Multiple copies of one composition in a collection is not uncommon. One list, Otranto number 16 (*PSI Laur. inv. 19662 verso*), even has three copies of Plato's *Alcibiades*, and two of the *Philebus*, *Protagoras*, and the *Gorgias*.²⁴ We can imagine a range of different reasons for this: the collector or collectors behind this corpus of texts might have wanted to compare several editions of a composition, or received duplicate copies through inheritance or as a gift.

Second, there appears to be a uniformity in themes and subjects within these book lists. Otranto list 6 only consists of works of comedy, while Otranto list 15 (*P. Ross. Georg. I.22*) and 17 (*P. Vars. 5 verso*) appear to preserve philosophical collections. Other papyri such as Otranto lists 3, 16, and 18 (*P. Turner 9*) are collections of "classics," and present the titles of some of the most popular authors from antiquity such as Homer, Hesiod, Plato, and Xenophon. Only the very brief list 14 provides us five titles with no apparent relation. However, this homogeneity in collection is not universal: even specialised lists contain individual titles that do not seem related to the rest of the collection. The fragmentary list 15 for example consists of a specialized philosophical corpus, but also has one medical work.

In general, there is sound evidence for the practice of collection of literary works in the Graeco-Roman period, also outside public libraries. We do not know of course if the booklists present the final catalogue of a collection or perhaps only a small part or subsection of it, but these papyri do offer us clear evidence that people brought together books that corresponded to their particular personal or professional interests, and that these titles were arranged along related topics and not, for example, according to material features.²⁵

Interestingly, Houston sees a special place for opisthographs among these book lists. He observes that in many cases it is mentioned explicitly when the scroll in question concerns an opisthograph, sometimes in abbreviated form, which suggests that this was a common item on such lists.²⁶ It is possible of course that there were more opisthographs on which the composition on the recto continues on the verso, but that these were simply

²⁴ OTRANTO, 2000, 89-95; HOUSTON, 2014, 76-77. Enzo Puglia has published a study of this papyrus and concluded that it concerns a library catalogue from the third century CE: PUGLIA, 1996.

²⁵ HOUSTON, 2014, 78-80. The *Pinakes* by Callimachus, which is often read as some sort of a reference work about the Library of Alexandria, also catalogues works according to topic or genre (such as history, philosophy, or epics): HENDRICKSON, 2017, 7-8; TOO, 2010, 55-56.

²⁶ HOUSTON, 2014, 60.

not indicated specifically.²⁷ However, in some instances there are multiple titles given for one entry on a booklist, which seems to indicate that more than one composition was preserved on a single scroll.

Otranto list 16 is of particular interest in this regard. On this papyrus, which was first published by Medea Norsa in 1921, one finds what appears to be the catalogue of a (mostly) philosophical collection.²⁸ This booklist was introduced above, because it includes several exemplars of the same works by Plato. However, we also encounter the mention of a manuscript that carried three different Platonic dialogues: Plato's *Hippias Major*, *Hippias Minor*, and Aristotle's dialogue *Eudemus*.²⁹ Next to that, two other scrolls on this list consisted of two dialogues. One manuscript carried two works by Plato, *Meno* and *Menexenus*, the other one had both Plato's *Parmenides*, and *Anacharsis* by Lucian of Samosata. A fourth scroll probably had two other Platonic dialogues, *Alcibiades* and *Lysis*, but it could also be only one of them.

The most persuasive explanation for the presence of these booklist entries consisting of multiple titles is that they refer to opisthographs on which several compositions were written down together, which is how both Houston and Enzo Puglia understand these references.³⁰ Puglia considers this a more plausible scenario than multiple compositions on one side of the scroll on the basis of two reasons. First, he follows Armando Petrucci who observed that Graeco-Roman scribes preferred manuscripts "made up of only one work (or only one book) of a single author," while very few 'miscellaneous papyri' survived that contain multiple texts by different authors on a single side.³¹ Opisthographs, on the other hand, appear to be more common. Second, specifically concerning the manuscript containing three Platonic dialogues, Puglia argues that it is more credible that a scribe wrote *Hippias Major* and *Minor* on the recto and *Eudemus* on the verso.³² Writing all three compositions on a single side probably would have required an unusually big scroll.

²⁷ These manuscripts would be what TURNER, 1978, 8-10 labels as 'true' opisthographs.

²⁸ NORSAL, 1921. The book list was written on the verso of a land register from the third century CE: PINTAUDI, 2008.

²⁹ HOUSTON, 2011, 234-37; HOUSTON, 2014, 78; PUGLIA, 1996, 56-58.

³⁰ PUGLIA, 1996, 56-58; HOUSTON, 2011, 236.

³¹ PETRUCCI, 1995, 1.

³² PUGLIA, 1996, 58.

Nothing has survived of these manuscripts mentioned on Otranto list 16, so one has to be very careful with definite statements about them. Nevertheless, on the basis of these titles we are at least invited to hypothesize about the potential relationships between the texts on these ‘hypothetical opisthographs.’ All of the compositions on the booklist that share the same manuscript with another text are Platonic dialogues. If we are indeed dealing with opisthographs, then it seems very likely that these concern intentional collections. It is for this reason that Puglia refers to them as “un rotolo composito,” which indeed suggests that the intention behind it would have been to combine different texts together on one scroll.³³ How these opisthographs would have looked like remains beyond our knowledge, just as one unfortunately cannot reconstruct the types of reading events and reader responses they might have invited. I would suggest that it is plausible to read these references as evidence that opisthographs could have been used as an instrument for collection building in order to gather related compositions together.

In the case of Otranto list 16, the presence of such manuscripts would have been in line with the overall profile of the collection as it is represented on the papyrus. The booklist suggests that the reader or collector behind the collection would have had a scholarly interest in philosophical literature and might have wanted to compare editions or read different dialogues in close contact with each other.³⁴ Book lists such as Otranto 16 give us a general idea of the intentionality behind the practice of collection. There is a motivation to bring different books together. Large assemblages seem almost never to be a random selection, but generally serve a particular (personal, professional, or scholarly?) interest. However, despite the clear value of these book lists, they also have their limitations, most notably that a lot of evidence goes missing in absence of the material remains they mention.

5. CONCLUSION

The present contribution developed from a broader interest in papyri as material artefacts that allow us to examine how ancient scribes engaged with manuscripts: how were texts produced and used, and which texts were written, read, and studied together? Of particular interest in this regard are papyri that preserve multiple compositions, as these manuscripts allow scholars to explore which texts circulated in the same context. It is with

³³ PUGLIA, 1996, 58.

³⁴ OTRANTO, 2000, 95.

these considerations in mind that this paper focused on opisthographic papyri. Opisthographs contain writing on both the recto and the verso and can, as such, illuminate our understanding of ancient collecting practices.

The opisthographs *P. Lond. Lit.* 108, *P. Oxy.* III 413, and *P. Mas.* 721 were discussed in some detail here. The first papyrus can be considered a re-used manuscript: the farm account on the recto ceased to be of interest, after which different scribes added notes on a poem by Callimachus next to it, and a copy of Aristotle's *Athenaion Politeia* on the backside. *P. Oxy.* III 413 and *P. Mas.* 721, on the other hand, are of a different character. *P. Oxy.* III 413 concerns a small collection of two mimes on a single manuscript, while *P. Mas.* 721 brought together two instances of Latin epic on a portable manuscript. This brief assessment shows that opisthographic manuscripts can sometimes be understood as intentional groupings of texts, preserving valuable information with regard to the question which texts were read, studied, or performed collectively within a similar context.

The final section examined a selection of the book lists on papyri that were published by Rosa Otranto. These book lists provide evidence that people collected manuscripts with compositions that corresponded to their particular personal or professional interests, and that these titles were arranged thematically. On some occasions do we find multiple titles given for one entry on a booklist, which suggests that these entries refer to opisthographic manuscripts on which several compositions were brought together in order to build a collection. These considerations are intended as a starting point on a discussion regarding how scholarly conceptualisations of ancient collecting practices can be connected to the study of manuscripts as material artefacts. Though this paper is by no means intended as the final word on the study of opisthographs and book lists preserved on papyri, the approaches proposed here aimed to rethink the circumstances under which compositions could both be grouped together or rejected by ancient *collectionneurs*.

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