

## Response

Both archaeologists and papyrologists have much to offer to historians studying Graeco-Roman Egypt. Both fields can be, and frequently are, quite descriptive. Both fields can be, and sometimes are, model or hypothesis-driven. But we must recognize that what the two fields can offer the many fields on which the rich materials from Graeco-Roman Egypt impinge are very different: precise dates, prices, laws, etc., vs. general trends. What we need to recognize is how the two specializations can work together, complement each other, and work toward a common goal.

First and foremost, we must remember several things.

1) Papyri and other written materials **are** artifacts and need to be treated as such.

2) An archaeologist looks for a series of contexts: features in a room, material on a floor, items in a structure, buildings in a city, settlements in a region, human modifications of a landscape. All artifacts within each context are studied in that context; at the same time, each artifact is studied in the separate comparative world of artifact categories. Both approaches are needed to derive social, economic, and cultural information to help address our knowledge of the history and culture of the group that produced or used the artifacts. Both are needed to aid the archaeologist drawing up his research design. Just as the archaeologist turns to specialists to analyze pollen and seeds, textiles, and so on, so he turns to the papyrologist (or numismatist or epigrapher) as a specialist to help understand what was going on at a site, why artifacts were written, how they ended up where they were.

3) Papyrologists, like other specialists, can extract a certain amount of information from intense study of the artifact, e.g., papyrus, as artifact and by comparing it with similar artifacts found elsewhere (elsewhere on the same site or on different sites). But to maximize the contribution to the study of the historical situation, to

maximize knowledge of this particular artifact, we need to understand the context of its discovery.

As an example from my own field, Egyptology, we can consider the extensive effort which has been expended reconstructing family archives of Demotic (and Greek) texts and then studying the papyri not as single documents floating in time and space but as part of a man-made group of artifacts whose content and variety have extensive implications for reconstruction of not only the history of one (extended) family but also the history of Graeco-Roman Egypt and its institutions. But how much more would we know if we knew where the archives were found, and with what non-papyrological material they were associated. And how much more about some currently uninteresting/unacknowledged location we would know if we knew that this archive originated there. One could begin asking questions about patterns of use, patterns of disposal, and so on.

Twenty-five years ago Don Whitcomb<sup>1</sup> identified three levels of interaction of texts and archaeology: text as artifact (internal to a site), text groups (groupings of contemporary comparable texts including some texts which are external to the site or with a broad or descriptive character), and the extended use of texts with a temporal or geographical distance allowing a generalizing perspective which is at a remove from the individual site, as the equivalent of ethnographic analogy. This extended use of texts does not apply the textual data directly to the archaeological evidence; rather, such evidence is used to create and test the explanatory models constructed from the archaeological and papyrological evidence.

"[In] the study of archaeological remains in an historical period, i.e., remains upon which documentary evidence may be brought to bear, it is necessary to begin with an analysis of the relationship of artifactual and documentary lines of evidence. The correlation of these separate lines of evidence may be expressed in terms of three degrees of relationship. The primary relationship between artifactual and documentary records is internal, in the sense that these classes of objects are both discovered in a specific archaeological context. There is thus an

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<sup>1</sup> Don Whitcomb, "Appendix A: Historical Archaeology," in "Trade and Tradition in Medieval Southern Iran" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago 1979).

equivalence as objects to be recorded and analyzed as fragments of a contextual depositional situation. The philological and classificatory operations, whether conducted by different specialists or the same individual, contribute equally to the understanding of the history of the archaeological site. Obviously more specialized literary or art historical studies (to give only two examples) are abstractions forced upon objects, divorcing them from their primary archaeological meaning." At the second level "there are, for most historical periods, documents of sufficiently broad or general descriptive nature that (although they may be contextually primary to a particular site or region) they have an external character. The parallel to such documentary evidence is the artifactual assemblage which, beyond simple classificatory operations, is an integrated body of material evidence which reflects the complexities of technological, economic or social organization of that past society." The tertiary degree of relationship "may be characterized as 'extended', most commonly through a temporal difference between the artifactual and the documentary materials. Other types of 'distance' may also be visualized; the crucial characteristic is one of perspective—a perspective which is somehow at a remove and therefore generalizing to varying degrees. For documents pertaining to a site or region, this would usually imply a commentary or description later than the occupation under study.

"The extended nature of this tertiary relationship suggests that the archaeological situation is more on the order of a generalized model approached or built up from two polar extremes. The documentary evidence, abstracted, patterned descriptions in their own right, amplify the model through analogies; that is, they offer interpretations and explanations which may be incorporated into the entire model. In this role, documentary resources operate in the same way as ethnographic analogies which are so constantly in evidence in all archaeological studies. The analogical data is at a remove from both the externally and internally related evidence and may thus be related not to that evidence but to a model constructed from that evidence.

"On the other extreme, the artifactual evidence is organized into similar abstracted, patterned descriptions for inclusion in

the model. This archaeological operation, which may be variously labeled 'processual,' or 'systemic,' is accomplished by methodologies involving the testing of inferences within the artifactual data through increasingly sophisticated hypotheses and analytic techniques. These tested inferences, when successful, may be called 'laws,' 'processes,' or simply patterns; but they properly refer back not to the archaeological situation but to the model of that situation. Thus in the tertiary relationship in historical archaeology a general explanatory model is developed. In the end the methodologies of the documentary and artifactual approaches may seem to be curiously parallel, a 'conjunctive approach' which, when seen clearly, lends an excitement to historical archaeology.

"The segregation of these three degrees of relationship between artifactual and documentary evidence will contribute to the clarification of the possible utilization of these lines of evidence and the separate stages through which the study of this evidence may pass. Misconceptions of historical archaeology stem mainly from the inadvertent mixture of these degrees (or stages) for archaeological operations and inappropriate comparisons between the documentary and artifactual resources which chance to be available."<sup>2</sup>

In summary, then, texts are, first, artifacts, part of the material discovered at a site, and benefit from being studied in conjunction with the rest of the material from the site; this can be called the internal relationship. Some texts have a broad or descriptive character making them parallel to artifact assemblages as integrated bodies of material evidence reflecting the complexities of the technological, economic, and social organization of the society; this can be called the external relationship. The third level of relationship between texts and archaeology can be called the extended relationship: temporal or other differences between a text and an archaeological site allow a perspective, at a remove, frequently generalizing, which is not applied directly to the archaeological evidence but to the model constructed from the archaeological evidence, that is,

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<sup>2</sup> Whitcomb, *op.cit.* (above, n.1) 200-4.

archaeological and papyrological evidence are used together to create and test explanatory models.

Stephan and Verhooght worked to reconstruct the primary relationship of papyrological artifacts with other material objects and structures with(in) which they were originally deposited, raising important questions about archaeological context, with implications for the use and deposition of the papyri, and raising a series of interesting questions which would not have surfaced without the attempt to return them to their context. When one turns to what the texts tell about the life of a soldier's family, we move from the "internal" to the "external" level, from primary to secondary, and the texts become a more general (re)source.

Keenan looked at the third, or "extended" level, the later perspective. In this case, as Keenan notes, there is also an inverted model, al-Nabulsi working from the center of the Fayyum outward, modern papyrologists and archaeologists working from the fringes in. Al-Nabulsi sets the Ayyubid Fayyum "in a landscape" both natural and man-made. One can't use al-Nabulsi to suggest a direct model for the Graeco-Roman Fayyum, but his data can be used indirectly, and the fluidity he mentions (villages dying, flourishing, etc.) can be part of it.

Davoli also uses "distant" information (i.e., a third-level relationship), this time derived not from a medieval map and historian but from modern GIS/satellite imagery. She is (re)turning to a site which has produced many documents which originally had a primary relationship with the site as artifacts and which have provided general second-level information about life in the Graeco-Roman Fayyum. That is, she is trying to do for much of her sites what Stephan and Verhooght have done for house B167 at Karanis. She expresses concern with town-planning, and her efforts have been concentrated on public buildings. For instance, at Dime (Soknopaiou Nesos) the major Italian work is centered on the *temenos*, including three temples (attested in the papyri). At Bachias, too, the work has concentrated on the area of the temples and (restored) *temenos*. Although it may well be true that most of the papyri come from the temple area, I see a potential problem: an apparent interest only in public buildings and places where papyri might have been found is only one step removed from a papyrus

hunt, a far cry from modern archaeological surveys and excavations where historical processual or post-processual questions drive the research. Such concentration to provide context for the old materials is laudable; to use it to conceptualize and organize new excavations would be quite another thing.

Here fits Manning's call for more concern with institutions, theoretical models, the use of all available evidence to try to answer larger, dynamic questions. If we appreciate the very different kinds of questions which papyrologists and archaeologists can directly address (specific dates, prices, laws, etc., vs. general trends) and use all three levels of analysis (internal, text as artifact; external, text as part of an integrated body of material reflecting complexities in the organization of past society; text as extended resource helping structure and test models/hypotheses about dynamic relations in society), we will begin to be able to address some broad questions about Graeco-Roman history, including the economic questions which intrigue Manning. Both "sides" will ask better, better informed, more productive questions.

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