Report on Greek Papyri purchased of Nahman, May, 1921.

The papyri were the property of various dealers, and formed ten lots (numbered 1 to 11, but lot 9 was a stone, brought for the Egyptian Dept. and therefore not included in the price of the papyri), separately priced. Nahman, however, acted as representative of all the dealers, and the negotiations were on the basis of the total price asked, which amounted to £1740 (Egyptian £, not English). After examination of the papyri, £1600 was offered and accepted by Nahman. Even at this reduced price the papyri cannot be regarded as cheap, but in the present condition of the market it is useless to expect purchases at the rate possible in former years, and the papyri are sufficiently good to make it worth while to secure them. They vary in cheapness; but as the purchase was made in a lump the prices set by the dealers on the single lots can be ignored in making the distribution. Five papyri bought by Dr. Aukren in the Fayum and evidently from the same site as those included in lot 11 are additional to the main collection as regards price but will be included in it for distribution.

In working through the papyri I kept each lot separate, numbering all the papyri contained in it with the exception of fragments too small to be worth individual attention. The total of numbered papyri (excluding Dr. Aukren's purchases) amounts to 277; this includes several collections of small fragments and some cases in which two papyri are put together to make a single lot.

but all those numbered seem to possess some, if con. only a small, value.

The large or fairly large rolls number 13. One of these is a Coptic document from Edfu, of the Arab period and of unusual interest. Another is a Coptic magical codex of considerable size, containing much interesting material; and a third is a number of sheets of papyrus (mostly in good condition), united into a roll and containing Coptic magical texts, mostly (if not in all cases) copied from the codex just mentioned. The appearance of the rough, clumsy hand, something in the ink, and the fact that the texts are copied from the codex, apparently not very intelligently (in one case at least two different texts appear to be "conflated" into one) suggested suspicions of forgery; but the papyrus must be ancient and forgery on this scale and of this character is so novel that it seems preferable to regard these copies as ancient, perhaps due to the pupils of the magician who owned the codex.*

Of the Greek rolls classed as "large or fairly large" five belong to the Fuerza find, of which something will be said below. The others are:- (1). Roll of the sitologi of Philadelphia (= Fuerza, but this must proceed from a different find), chiefly receipts for corn payments. This includes many documents; and besides the main roll, which is excellently preserved, there are several detached documents or fragments evidently belonging to it or to a similar roll. The dates are the years A.D. 306, 307, etc.; the main roll measures roughly

* These Coptic rolls have been examined by Mr. W. E. Crum.

1 ft. 1 in. × 5 ft. (2). A long roll, some of it well preserved but parts fragmentary and very brittle, containing returns of landed property for the land survey to the ἀναμετρητής of the Division of Heraclides in the year A.D. 302. The main roll measures roughly 9 ft. 9 in. in length.

(3). A long but very brittle roll from the Delta, of the second century. Its brittle condition makes it inadvisable to handle it more than necessary, and the cursive hand is not easy to read, so that I cannot say definitely what the subject is; but it is certainly a register, arranged by nomes and containing a long list of names followed by numbers. The nomes I have noted are the Saïte (several times), and the Pharbitic (= Pharbaëthic?). On the verso is also a text or texts, but I have not ventured to examine this side ~~till it~~ while the roll is unmounted. The total length is probably over 7 feet; the height is 8 in. The removal of this roll, if assigned to a contributor other than the British Museum, would be a little precarious, but it could, I think, be made safe if the roll were cut into shorter portions and these secured between boards. (4). A 2nd cent. land register; 2 ft. 4¼ in. × 4¾ in. Writing on both sides. (5). A table of fractions, from ⅛ to 1/15, similar to those contained in the Akhmîm mathematical papyrus. Probably 4th cent. 3 ft. 6½ in. × 3¾ in.

The Coptic papyri number 10. These include the ones already mentioned and a collection of small miscellaneous fragments; also a mass of fragments glued together to form

part of a binding, of little or no value (lot 6).

Literary papyri are few and not important. Stretching the word "literary" to its full extent, they may be specified as follows:—

(1). Fragments of Homer, Od. II (27)-60, 152-66. 3rd (?) cent., or perhaps ~~3rd~~ 2nd.

(2). The tables of fractions already mentioned.

(3). A treatise on mensuration, with well-drawn diagrams. 2nd cent. Probably of some interest. 9½ in. × 4½ in.

(4). Portions of two columns of a prose literary work, evidently philosophic. Socrates appears to be mentioned, but the fragment is apparently not from Plato. 2nd cent. 6 in. × 6 in.

(5). Portions of two columns of a play, apparently of the New Comedy. I have failed to identify it with any known fragment of Menander or other writer. 1st–2nd (?) cent. 5 in. × 5½ in.

(6). Mathematical calculations. In a cursive hand, but and mentioning sums of money, but probably (so far as a cursory examination enables me to judge) of a theoretical rather than purely practical kind; hence classed as literary. 1st cent. 5 in. × 8½ in.

The Zenon rolls already referred to are a valuable collection found on the site of the ancient Philadelphia, whence came the Zeno archive. About a hundred of these papyri are, ~~as~~ according to Dr. Ankren's computation, still in the Fayum. They (or some of them) have been offered for sale at Cairo but refused by the dealers as of little value. Book no. II of our purchase proved to proceed from the same find, having either been discovered indepen-

death and sold at Cairo or been disposed of in advance of the others, perhaps because of better quality; these papyri are certainly on the whole better than those bought by Dr. Andreu. The whole collection, to judge from the specimens seen, proceeds from a single archive, that of the local official concerned with the census and the collection of poll- and other personal taxes at Philadelphia; it falls within fairly narrow limits of time, roughly from A.D. 30 to 60. The rolls consist mainly of accounts, a fact which weighed with the Cairo dealers and does undoubtedly diminish the value of the find; but on the other hand the good preservation of the rolls, their connection with a single site and a short period of time, give them considerable interest & value to students of the economic history of Egypt. Besides registers, they include several letters. The best of these, which is also, without doubt, the gem of the whole collection, is a roll measuring 11½ in. by 8 ft. 9½ in., which on the recto has a tax-register but on the verso contemporary copies of (1) an edict of L. Aemilius Rectus announcing the public exhibition of a letter from Claudius to Alexandria, dated A.D. 42, (2) the letter itself, practically perfect, in four broad columns (96 lines) and of unusual historical interest.

The Fuerza documents offer a problem as to distribution. It is in itself undesirable to divide up a collection so intimately connected; on the other hand, if we fail to secure those still in Egypt, for which a very heavy and probably exorbitant price is asked, the find will in any

case ~~and probably~~ be broken up, and isolated documents may probably have been disposed of already. It would perhaps therefore be permissible to divide up those already acquired, a course desirable in the interests of an equitable distribution; but in that case I would suggest that all contributors agree to a joint publication of these particular papyri.

The rest of the papyri ~~are~~ consist of Greek "documents" of a miscellaneous character. Ptolemaic papyri mostly of the 3rd cent. B.C., but some of them later, number 8; but this figure includes 2 collections of miscellaneous fragments. There are at least two and perhaps more letters from the Zeno archive. Papyri of the Byzantine & Arab periods (excluding Coptic) number about 50 (this includes two ~~sheets~~ lots of miscellaneous fragments); the rest are Roman. The various classes of documents, letters, contracts, official correspondence, accounts and registers, returns and applications, are all represented; and it should be possible to assign to each contributor a fair representative collection of documents of various periods and classes.

H. I. Bell

May 23, 1921.