

## Some Early Inventories of the Herculaneum Papyri

In *Cronache Ercolanesi* 20 for 2000 we announced the discovery of an Inventory of the Herculaneum Papyri in the Historical Archive of the National Museum of Naples<sup>1</sup>. This inventory, which appears to be the oldest which we have, is almost certainly part of a general inventory of the Museum of Portici, the remainder of which, however, has not been found<sup>2</sup>.

It seems to us desirable to publish the text of this inventory as tool which allows the student to go back to a time before the unrolling of the vast majority of the Herculaneum Papyri. At the same time, we should like to avail ourselves of the opportunity to publish other early inventories, which are in the Archive of the *Officina dei Papiri Ercolanesi*. These inventories known to students of the papyri, but not published in their entirety, go back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the period of the most intense activity concerning the unrolling, conservation, drawing, and engraving of the rolls. In this way future editors will be able more easily to trace the various stages which have left the papyri in their present state, a process which is a necessary part of the attempt to reconstruct the original rolls. We have decided not to publish the later inventories, which reflect a state of the *Officina* and its papyri very similar to the present state, which is well documented in the *Catalogo dei Papiri Ercolanesi*, compiled under the direction of M. Gigante<sup>3</sup>.

We propose to publish five documents, in addition to the new inventory. Two are inventories of papyri; two are catalogues of drawings made by the staff of the *Officina*; the last piece is a list of the furnishings of the *Officina*, which we want to include because in the Inventory of the National Museum, after the papyri, there is a list of the other objects, in Room Six, so that the later list seemed a good pendant to the earlier Inventory. The presence or absence of cabinets in the *Officina*, and their adequacy, was also a constant concern of Father Piaggio, and some of those inventoried are likely to have been those about which he writes in his various accounts of life in the *Officina*.

After the Inventory of the National Museum, which is not dated but must stem from the early 1780's, the first of the documents we shall publish is the 'Stato delle porzioni dei Volumi di Papiro svolti sino a tutto il 1798' ('State of the pieces of the Papyrus Rolls unrolled through the end of 1798'), dated the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1803<sup>4</sup>, which provides us not only with data for the papyri unrolled in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, before the transfer of the material to Palermo to keep it safe during the Parthenopean Revolution of 1798, but also — in an appendix — with information on the first year of work done under John Hayter in Portici, from January of 1802 through January of 1803.

The first inventory of drawings bears the date 22 January 1806 and was prepared, or completed, at the time of the second departure of the Bourbons for Palermo, when the Kingdom of Naples was conquered by the French. This time, the King decided to leave the contents of the Museum in Portici; unlike the papyri<sup>5</sup>, the vast majority of the Museum's holdings had never been sent back to Portici from Palermo, but now it was decided to send to Palermo the drawings, most of which were made between 1802 and 1806, leaving the papyri behind. The list of drawings was made to accompany this shipment and functioned as a receipt, signed by Pirro Paderni, for the consignment of drawings<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *An Inventory of the Herculaneum Papyri from Piaggio's Time*, pp. 131–147. The signature of this document is: Archivio Storico del Museo Nazionale di Napoli, Serie Inventari antichi n° 43.

<sup>2</sup> We were put on the track of this Inventory by D. Blank, *Reflections on Re-reading Piaggio and the Early History of the Herculaneum Papyri*, *CErc* 29 (1999) 55–82, sp. 79–82.

<sup>3</sup> Napoli 1979.

<sup>4</sup> This list was also taken into account and cited by Blank, *Reflections* (see note 2) 75–78. The signature is: A.O.P. Ba XVII 5.

<sup>5</sup> When Ferdinand IV and his court left Naples for Palermo because of the Neapolitan Revolution in December 1798, he decided to take with him all the material from the Museum, along with the papyri, which remained in the five crates in which they had been packed for shipment in the port of Palermo until the beginning of 1802.

<sup>6</sup> A.O.P. Ba XVII.

From the following year, 1807, comes the ‘Catalogo dei papiri ercolanesi dati per isvolgersi e restituiti, con la indicazione di quelli donati da S.M. a personaggi esteri’ (‘Catalogue of Herculaneum Papyri given out for unrolling and returned, with the notation of those given by His Majesty to foreign personages’). The ‘Notamento dei Papiri disegnati’ (‘Notation of Papyri which have been drawn’) is undated but presumably goes back to ca. 1810. It gives an accounting of the apographs beginning with the resumption of activity in the Officina in 1806 under the direction of Monsignor Rosini, after Hayter’s departure for Palermo<sup>7</sup>.

The ‘Notamento de’ mobili, e di tutto ciò ch’esiste nell’Officina de’ Papiri’ (‘Notation of the furniture and of everything present in the Papyrus Workshop’) is also undated. It probably dates from the period between 1817 and 1822<sup>8</sup>.

It can already be seen from this very brief overview how these documents witness the principal stages in the activity of the Officina during the important years between the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 1810: the activity of Piaggio and his collaborators after the death of Paderni in 1781, the interruption for the trip to Palermo (1798–1801) and the work carried out so efficiently by Hayter in Portici (1802–1806), Rosini’s re-organisation of the Officina and resumption of its work in its new quarters in the Palazzo degli Studi (now the National Museum) after the second departure of the Royal Family for Palermo (1806–1813).

Let us now take a quick look at the ways in which these catalogues can be of use for the study of the Herculanean rolls.

We have often wondered when the papyri received their numbers. During the first decades of Piaggio’s work in the Officina there was no numeration of the rolls, and Piaggio’s references to them in his various reports on the work make it clear that there was no systematic register of all the pieces<sup>9</sup>. In the Inventory of the National Museum the papyri are listed beginning with number 312<sup>10</sup> and ending with number 1695, the numbers from 1–311 being lost in an earlier section of the Inventory. It seems certain that this is the first text we have in which we find the numeration which, with a few exceptions, is still used today<sup>11</sup>.

This Inventory provides a precise description of the *volumina*, giving: the type of piece (papyrus, piece, fragment, portion, mound); the piece’s shape (canal-shaped, flat, compressed into a flat slab); the condition (damp, wavy, broken, squashed, compressed, lacking small parts, lacking one of its ends, with leaves separating, easy to separate); things done to the piece (bearing signs of cuts, stripped on the outside of the roll, the object of an attempted unrolling, unrolled); measurements in palms and inches. It is clear that the editor of a papyrus can profit from this information, for example: if the roll under consideration is said to be ‘cut’ or ‘stripped on the outside’, one may assume that the portions of papyrus which had been taken from the exterior of the roll may still exist or may have survived to be taken apart and drawn in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and that these portions may be among the items listed in the Inventory. The search for these pieces may also be aided by the fact that the Inventory gives the dimensions of all but the smallest pieces.

Another point which emerges from the Inventory is that at that time the papyri which had been unrolled were still preserved in one piece, as they had come off Piaggio’s unrolling machine. Later, all the unrolled papyri except one were cut into pieces of ca. 40 centimeters in length and mounted in frames, as we find them today. According to the Inventory, however, the only papyrus which had been cut up was P.Herc. 1497, which contains the fourth book of Philodemus’ *On Music*, the first roll opened on Piaggio’s machine. It was Piaggio’s wish that the papyri be preserved in their full length, and his dispute over the proposed cutting of 1672, the second papyrus he unrolled, is well-known from the lengthy letter he sent to Secretary

<sup>7</sup> A.O.P. Ba XVII 2.

<sup>8</sup> A.O.P. Ba XVII 3.

<sup>9</sup> See Blank, *Reflections* (see note 2), part IV.

<sup>10</sup> The text of the Inventory actually begins in the middle of the description of P.Herc. 311. After the papyri are listed the furnishings of the Sixth room of the Museum: the Inventory must therefore have included the entire content of the Museum. If this is actually the Inventory kept by La Vega, director of the Museum, then it will certainly have contained all the materials in the Museum’s collection.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Blank, Longo, *An Inventory* (see note 1), 141–145, where it is noted that P.Herc. 1497 — the only one divided into several pieces and displayed in frames under glass — had a different number for each of its frames, from 1497–1504; evidently, the numbers from 1498 to 1504 were later assigned to other pieces. They also point out that the last numbers of the Inventory are problematic. Another reason for variation between the numbers used today and those in the Inventory are those papyri which in the Inventory are still lumped together, but which were subsequently separated: the Inventory gives these groups of pieces just one number each.

of State Tanucci in 1756<sup>12</sup>. Evidently, Piaggio got his way, and thirty years later not only 1672, but all the other papyri which had so far been unrolled, were preserved uncut. One papyrus is said by the Inventory to be ‘rolled-up on a stick’. This presumably refers to the rod which sat atop the first machines made by Piaggio: the leading edge of the papyrus being unrolled was attached to this rod and the papyrus was rolled up onto it in reverse as it came off the roll. This aspect of the machine was eventually changed, when it was decided that the papyri would be cut into pieces as they were unrolled. It is not possible to say exactly when this change was made: it had been thought that the system was altered in this way already during the early years of Piaggio’s work, after the 1756 dispute with Mazzocchi; now, thanks to the discovery of the Inventory, we can be certain that the papyri were preserved whole until at least sometime in the late 1780’s and that the machines used by Piaggio and his collaborator Merli continued to have the rod at the top, onto which the papyrus was unrolled<sup>13</sup>. On the other hand, we also learn from the Inventory that there were not many papyri unrolled during all this time: only eight papyri are listed as having been unrolled, while two are said to be still in progress.

The history of the unrolling of the papyri is also illuminated by the precise notes in the Catalogue of Papyri from 1807. Its entries begin with the formula ‘Dato per isvolgersi’ (‘Given out for unrolling’), followed by the date (generally, the day, month, and year) on which each piece was given to the employee assigned to unroll it. Normally, these indications are followed by the specification of what was actually done: ‘unrolled’, ‘completely unrolled’; some pieces are said to have been ‘returned’, meaning that the unrolling was not completed, probably due to difficulties encountered during the attempt. From this Catalogue we can see that a large number of pieces (larger than that indicated in the ‘Catalogo’ of 1979) was given out for unrolling between 1782 and 1796. Of these, some are now preserved only as ‘last leaves’, what remained after all the interior layers had been copied and scraped away. Piaggio himself, therefore, may have been the one, after Paderni’s death, to order the opening of the exterior portions which Paderni had removed from the rolls; but upon seeing that the individual layers of these pieces could not be removed without destroying them, Piaggio will have stopped the process of opening them: the drawings of at least some of these pieces are among the Oxford facsimiles, and in some cases, the numbers have been changed since the drawings were made; in some cases, no unrolling or separation of layers seems to have been accomplished, and the papyri were returned to their places in the cabinet, to be opened or scraped down only after Hayter’s time. All this confirms what we knew already, that after the death of Paderni in 1781, Piaggio, in part using better methods, intensified the activity of unrolling in the *Officina*, and that in the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the staff of the *Officina* worked, or attempted to work, with more or less success on a far larger number of rolls than the seventeen we have customarily associated with this period on the basis of the ‘Stato delle porzioni dei Volumi di Papiro svolti sino a tutto il 1798’ which we mentioned earlier. Of course, these are very fragmentary texts, unlike those relatively well-preserved rolls unrolled on the machine and listed in the ‘Stato’. Nonetheless, they are papyri which were the object of attention during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and should be taken into account when we evaluate the work done during that time<sup>14</sup>.

The Catalogue of 1807 also gives us an idea of the time required for the unrolling of the papyri and hence of their condition, since it gives precisely the dates on which the papyri were given out and returned. Such calculations are possible especially for the period from 1802–1805, that is, roughly for the period in which Hayter was active in Portici; for the previous period, the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, we have relatively few and less precise dates, or none at all.

Analysis of these dates shows that the time spent in unrolling sometimes varied significantly, from a few days to more than a year. Since, as we have seen, the majority of this work was done in a limited period of time, during which only a certain limited group of technicians was working in the *Officina*, the differences in the time required to open the papyri should be due to the difference in their condition, rather than to the different skills of the technicians. As we have just said, some texts were opened in just a few

<sup>12</sup> The signature of this document in the Archivio della *Officina dei Papiri* is: Ba I, fasc. I 7. On the dispute, cf. L. Spina, *Vita dell’Officina dei papiri ercolanesi (Inediti dall’Archivio dell’Officina)*, *Le parole e le idee* 11 (1969) 275–285.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. M. Capasso, *I papiri e la collezione dei rami ercolanesi, Contributi alla storia della Officina dei Papiri Ercolanesi*, 2, a cura di M. Gigante, *I Quaderni della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli*, Serie VI 1, *I Papiri Ercolanesi IV*, Roma 1986, 131–156, sp. 136–141.

<sup>14</sup> That Piaggio wanted to separate the layers of scorze, but without scraping them down and thereby destroying the inner layers, and that he actually began this process on some pieces, is argued and illustrated by Blank, *Reflections* (see note 2), parts I–II (see also the correction given in Blank, Longo, *An Inventory* [see note 1]).

days: P.Herc. 300 and 1407 in four days, P.Herc. 310 in eleven, P.Herc. 56 in twenty, while for 1506 one year and six months were needed. But the cases in which very long times were necessary are limited: it took from one to two months to unroll most of the papyri; for a small number three to four months were used, and only in a few cases was more time needed.

The Inventory in the National Museum can also give information useful for a study of the *umbilicus*: its presence seems to be scrupulously reported, and the different observations which have been made in this area in recent studies<sup>15</sup> can be explained by changes in the situation of the rolls. For example, all the *umbilici* which are now found on their own come from papyri which were unrolled, when no record of the presence of the *omphalos* was kept<sup>16</sup>; for other *volumina* the data are inconsistent, probably because we are dealing with cases in which the numeration has been altered<sup>17</sup>; for some papyri the conclusions at which previous studies have arrived are now confirmed by the data in the Inventory<sup>18</sup>.

Now we come to the other area for which the catalogues provide data, the other antiquities and the furniture of the Museum. The last part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Inventory covers, as has been said, the ‘Sixth Room’ of the Museum of Portici: it may be useful to compare what is listed here with what we already knew from previously available sources. Even a superficial comparison with the description of this room given in the excellent article on the Museum of Portici by A. Allroggen Bedel and H. Kammerer Grothaus<sup>19</sup> confirms and supplements what those two scholars have written. They speak of a black and white mosaic pavement, marble benches, candelabra, vessels for heating water among which was a most unusual one in the shape of a fort, a round table, and a piece of furniture, described by Winckelmann, in the shape of a stairway and covered with polychrome marbles. All this is not only listed in the Inventory, but also minutely described, with detailed measurements; and it also lists many other objects<sup>20</sup>.

The ‘Notation of the furniture and of everything present in the Officina de’ Papiri’ helps us to recognize the contents of the Officina during the years immediately following its transfer to the Palazzo degli Studi di Napoli, the current National Museum. Our text may be compared with that of De Jorio, who concluded his small book on the Officina with a guide for visitors<sup>21</sup>. The layout of the rooms described by De Jorio in 1825 is slightly different from that which is seen in the ‘Notamento’. Both texts show that four rooms were allocated to the Officina, where the papyri were stored and unrolled; the furniture too seems to be the same in both descriptions; but the arrangement of the furniture changed in the course of just a few years. For example, according to De Jorio, the third room housed the large cupboard in which were exhibited the best examples of *instrumenta scriptoria*, including the wax tablets, pens, and papyri in unusual condition, e. g., those which were in groups, rolled at both ends, or opisthographic<sup>22</sup>, and in the same room the unrolling was underway; thus, the third room was the centerpiece of any visit to the Officina. In the ‘Notamento’, however, we see that the machines for unrolling were kept in the fourth room, where papyri were presumably being unrolled and where the papyri which had not yet been unrolled were actually kept. The ‘long papyrus’, P.Herc. 1672<sup>23</sup>, was hanging on the wall in the third room, but De Jorio describes it as hanging in the fourth room, and similar differences obtain regarding other objects.

It is clear that these are marginal considerations in Herculaneum papyrology. Yet they may nonetheless be felt to be important by those familiar with these papyri, who want to reconstruct even the smaller details of the early history of their story.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. M. Capasso, ‘*Ομφαλός/Umbilicus: dalla Grecia a Roma*, in Id., *Volumen. Aspetti della tipologia del rotolo librario antico*, Napoli 1995, 73–98.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. for example, Capasso, *Ομφαλός* (see note 15), 84 s.

<sup>17</sup> Capasso, *Ομφαλός* (see note 15) notes the presence of the *umbilicus* in P.Herc. 97, 325, 516, 1254, 1304, 1374, 1438, 1699, 1751, 1755, which, according to the Inventory, did not have them. In the case of the last three papyri named, the change in numbering is certain, since as we have seen the last piece in the Inventory was 1695. For the first, P.Herc. 97, we do not have any information, since the Inventory begins with number 312.

<sup>18</sup> These are P.Herc. 632, 1172, 1240, 1495, 1624: this confirms that the numbering is substantially the same as that used today.

<sup>19</sup> A. Allroggen Bedel, H. Kammerer Grothaus, *Il Museo Ercolanese di Portici, La Villa dei Papiri*, II Suppl. a CErc 13 (1983) 114.

<sup>20</sup> For example: four sun-dials, two limestone statues (one male, one female), seven glass containers (carafes, cups, glasses), two cylindrical glass vessels held in cylindrical limestone containers, various candelabra.

<sup>21</sup> *Officina* cit., 90–92.

<sup>22</sup> *Officina* cit., Tav. 1, p. 82.

<sup>23</sup> P.Herc. 1672 contains the second book of Philodemus’ *Rhetoric*, cf. *supra*.