

Brill's New Pauly entry s.v. Hypomnema, Montanari

(ὑπόμνημα; *hypómnēma*, more rarely ὑπομνηματισμός; *hypomnēmatismós*; Latin *commentarius* or more rarely *commentarium*). The word *Hypomnema* (from the root of μμνήσκω; *mimnēskō*, 'to remember') has the abstract basic meaning 'memory', presence in the memory or call/support for the memory (in this sense it already appears in Thuc. 2,44,2 and in Isocrates, Demosthenes, Xenophon etc.), however, in the course of time it takes on a large number of different connotations and nuances, especially the widespread (concrete) meaning 'mention, reference', also in the literal meaning (e.g. Thuc. 4,126,1), 'notice, memory aid, record' to designate a written *memorandum* of a private or public nature: economic catalogues, accounts, lists of persons or things, legal records, also formal documents e.g. petitions or protocols [3; 16]. Examples of this usage are found above all in papyrus documents. At least from the Alexandrian period onwards the word also designates the official registers, i.e. the archives of courts and public authorities (for which the term *ephemerides* is also used). The Latin equivalent *commentarius* covers all meanings of the Greek word - including the designation of official archives (of priests' colleges, e.g. the *commentarii pontificum*, or of magistrates or state institutions, e.g. the *commentarii Senatus*; the *commentarii principis* were the archives of the emperors); the term *acta* was also used in the Imperial period.

*Hypomnema* can assume the meaning 'note, record to aid memory' with reference to various occasions and situations of a private nature, e.g. *list of keywords* for a speech, lecture notes or records of newly acquired knowledge, teaching material etc. For example, 'to write notes' (ὑπομνήματα γράφειν) is used in Pl. Plt. 295c for a doctor or a teacher, who leaves behind written records for the sick or their pupils; in Pl. Phdr. 276d *hypomnēmata* are written notes to help one's own memory against the forgetfulness that accompanies old age, i.e. a kind of personal diary. The connotation 'note of a private nature' justifies the use of the word *hypomnema* in the sense of a certain piece of writing not intended for dissemination to the public, in contrast to a published work. The use of the term in the sense of 'draft, outline' to prepare a work still to be elaborated also has this basis in historiography and philosophy. In historiography it is well documented, according to one theory the historian first had to prepare a rough outline of facts, a *hypomnema*, that was then developed rhetorically.

The connotation 'memorable things' easily leads to the meaning 'discussion, representation, treatise' of various kinds (except oration and dialogue), henceforth as a book that has actually been completed and published. We have examples with reference to works with historical (e.g. Pol. 1,1,1), geographical (e.g. Ptol. Geographica 1,6,2), medical (e.g. often in *Galenus*), philosophical (Diog. Laert. 4,4 defines a part of the works of Speusippus as *hypomnema* compared with his dialogues) and rhetorical (Ps.-Longinus De Sublimitate 44,12) content or with reference to works of mixed content, such as the *Sýmmikta hypomnēmata* of *Aristoxenus* or the *Hypomnēmata* of *Callimachus*. The definition *hypomnema* is used in the special sense also for autobiographical writings and recollections of great men: Pol. 2,40,4 mentions the *hypomnēmatismoí* of the statesman Aratus of Sicyon (other examples found in FGrH 227-238). However, it is difficult to say whether and when the term was attributable to the author and really was the title of the work or a secondary designation of genre, attributable to *indirect tradition*.

From the Hellenistic period onwards the term *hypomnema* is used to designate a running exegetic commentary on literary texts that was written on a separate scroll from the commented text and was generally extensive in scope: this is one of the characteristic products of the scholarly philological work of the Alexandrian grammarians (together with the text edition, *ékdosis*), that made a lasting impact with [Aristarchus \[4\] of Samothrace](#) (c. 215 - 144? BC) In this case the *hypomnema* is the opposite of the *syngamma*, that designates a monographic treatise (see e.g. Galen, Comm. on Hippocrates, De acutorum morborum victu 15,515 K.; Scholia Il. 2,111). The originals of these writings have been lost; the diverse bulk of the scholarly material has been handed down by the scholiastic and erudite collections of the Byzantines. Only through papyrus findings are we familiar with significant remains of *hypomnēmata*. They are normally subdivided according to the lemma-exegesis model, that follows the annotated text, and they exhibit various interests and contents, from the simple glossographic explanation of individual words to the explanation of philological, exegetic, antiquarian or mythographical problems; from language and word usage, rhetorical figures, stylistic observations, proverbs, anecdotes and biographical questions to aesthetic and moral judgements on the work and eventually to [allegoresis](#). Often erudite-doxographic accumulation prevails, not infrequently in a shortened and brachylogical redaction. Extant examples of extensive commentaries from the Imperial period are the medically oriented annotations of [Galenus](#) (his commentaries on philosophical themes have been lost) and those of [Alexander \[26\] of Aphrodisias](#) on Aristotle; countless commentaries on Aristotle and Plato of late antiquity are also extant.