

SOME UNCATALOGUED PAPYRI OF THEOLOGICAL AND OTHER INTEREST IN THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY

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IT was in the early part of 1963, as I was finishing my final year as Assistant Lecturer in New Testament Studies at the University of Manchester, that my attention was drawn to the uncatalogued Greek papyri in the John Rylands Library. Together with my fellow countryman, the Rev. J. Julius Scott, I made an examination of this collection, concentrating on those items in uncial script and those which had possible interest for students of ancient literature in general and the literature of the Judeo-Christian religious tradition in particular. In the entire collection, which I would estimate contains well over one thousand pieces (exclusive of mere scraps), we found only one fragment which clearly comes from a codex and very few others that could be said to have been written in a literary hand. The bulk of the collection consists of non-literary, mostly Byzantine, materials (letters, lists, deeds, contracts, petitions, etc.).

Following the examination, certain items were photographed for us by the Library, and these photographs together with my notes on a few of the pieces which have a potential interest for students of religion have formed the basis of the present study. Miss Tripolitis, who became interested in these materials in the course of her work at the University of Pennsylvania, has been concerned primarily with deciphering and editing the non-theological texts and the dating formula, while I have expended relatively more effort on the theologically relevant pieces, as well as adding the final editorial touches. It is our hope that this sampling of the uncatalogued Rylands collection may encourage others to examine it, for it should be emphasized that the pieces

edited below are not necessarily its best representatives, either in terms of state of preservation or of date and content.

We should like to take this opportunity of thanking for their helpful suggestions Mr. C. H. Roberts (Oxford University Press), Mr. T. C. Skeat (British Museum), Professor G. Zuntz and Mr. J. H. Harrop (University of Manchester), Dr. John Rea (Oxford University), and Mr. John Shelton (Stanford University). Nevertheless, we must assume full responsibility for the way in which their observations have been incorporated into the finished product. More than a word of thanks also is due to Dr. F. Taylor, Keeper of Manuscripts at the John Rylands Library, and to his staff, for assistance and encouragement.

No indications have been preserved as to the circumstances of discovery or the particular location in Egypt from which any of the following papyri come. In the index below I have noted where each piece is to be found in the collection of "Rylands Papyri: Greek, Additional", according to the number of the large *Box* (Roman numerals), the *sub-grouping* of folders (if any) within each Box, and the designation of the particular *folder* (by letter or number) or *piece* (only in Box I, by number) within the sub-group :

I. Papyri with Theological Interest

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Psalm 19 : 7-8 (20 : 6-7) | 3rd-5th cent. |
| 2. Prayer-Amulet (?) | 6th cent. |
| 3. Dating formula | 608 C.E.(?) |

Box : sub-gr. : folder no.

- | | | |
|-------|------|--------|
| III : | 1 : | N |
| I : | - : | no. 11 |
| V : | 14 : | 3 |

II. Miscellaneous Non-Literary Samples

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| 4. Heraklas to Horos | turn of era |
| 5. Besarion to Dionysios | 3rd-4th cent. |
| 6. Letter about a purchase | 3rd cent. |
| 7. Voucher | 3rd. cent. |
| 8. Double alphabet | 7th cent. |

- | | | |
|-------|------|---|
| VI : | - : | 2 |
| III : | 1 : | Y |
| II : | 7 : | K |
| III : | 1 : | γ |
| IV : | 10 : | B |

1. PSALM XIX. 7-8 LXX (=20 : 6-7) 4×7 cm. 3rd/5th cent.

This is the only strictly biblical piece to be identified in the entire collection. It does not come from a codex. There is an almost illegible, single line of cursive writing on the reverse side

of the fragment, but it is apparently by a different hand and of later date. Both the Psalm and the line on the reverse are written along the fibres of the papyrus. In quality, the papyrus itself is rather rough and thick. The ink appears to be very dark brown or black.

The Psalm is written stichometrically in a "rather formless uncial without any pronounced characteristics", which might conceivably date from the third century or even earlier, but which more probably comes from the fourth or even fifth century.¹ There are no obvious ligatures, although it appears that in line 5 an original *OYTΩ* has been corrected to *OYTOI*, thus giving the impression of a ligatured *OI*. Similarly, in line 4 the letter *I* has been corrected to an *C*. There is no punctuation or word division.

For purposes of Greek Old Testament textual criticism, the scrap is insignificant (see the notes). It has been collated with the materials in the Göttingen edition of Psalms (ed. A. Rahlfs, 1931), the shorter Cambridge Septuagint (ed. H. B. Swete, 1907), and the great Oxford edition of Holmes and Parsons (vol. 3, 1823). The common orthographical confusions of *E*: *AI* and *I*: *EI* occur (lines 3-4). In lines 1 and 6, some difficulties arise when one attempts to fill the lacunae: since the maximum length of lines 3-5 seems to be 34 letters, and since the final word (*AYTON*) of the stichos beginning on line 1 is carried over to line 2, we would expect line 1 to contain at least thirty-three to thirty-four letters. It would, in fact, have thirty-three letters if the words *KYPIOC* and *XPICTON* were spelled out in full. Nevertheless, in a fourth/fifth century Christian text, it would be very unusual not to find these *nomina sacra* abbreviated to \overline{KC} and \overline{XN} (\overline{XPN}) respectively.² Similarly, in line 6 we would expect to find *KYPIOC ΘΕΟΥ* abbreviated to $\overline{KC} \overline{\Theta Y}$ if the usual Greek text is followed there. Such abbreviation in line 6 would, in fact, provide the expected thirty-three letters. Thus we are faced with several possibilities: (1) the normal Greek text and the

¹ This is the judgement of T. C. Skeat, based on the photostat and communicated by letter in April 1963. C. H. Robert's independent judgement based on actual handling of the fragment also tended towards a fourth-century date, at earliest.

² See L. Traube, *Nomina sacra* (1907), and more recently, A. H. R. E. Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries A.D.* (1959).

expected Christian abbreviations occurred in both places, but the writing in line 1 was much more spread out than elsewhere, and contained only twenty-four letters ; (2) the abbreviations occurred in neither line, and line 6 was slightly longer than normal or was divided differently from the transcription given herein ; (3) the abbreviations were used in line 6 but not in line 1 ; (4) the text of lines 1 and/or of line 6 differed slightly from the normal Greek Psalm text. It would also be possible to argue that the fragment comes from a Jewish, and not a Christian, roll in which the tetragrammaton in line 1 (and 6, if $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}s$ were lacking) was spelled out either in Greek (ΙΙΙΙΙΙ) or in Hebrew (יהוה) characters,¹ but the only tangible support for such a hypothesis is the fact that the papyrus is not from a codex, and may be third century or earlier.

It is not impossible that the fragment comes from a Jewish, or a Christian, Psalm scroll (containing part or all of the canonical Psalms). More probably, however, it represents an independent page on which the Psalm (or more than one Psalm) was written (for liturgical purposes?), or perhaps is a piece of an amulet.²

¹ Compare P.Ox. 656 of Genesis (2nd/3rd cent. ; Rahlfs' no. 905, U₄ in Brooke-McLean), where the original copyist left a blank where the tetragrammaton occurred (because his archetype had it in Hebrew letters?), but a later hand supplied the proper form of $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron>s$ (unabbreviated !) in three of the four spaces ; $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}s$ is also unabbreviated in this fragment. For the tetragrammaton in Hebrew characters, see P. Fouad 266 of Deuteronomy (2nd/1st cent. B.C.E.), published in part by W. G. Waddell in *Journal of Theological Studies*, xlv (1944), 158-61 ; photo-facsimiles of additional fragments from this manuscript have appeared more recently in the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures (1950), pp. 13 f. See also the note by A. Vaccari in *Studia Patristica*, I (*Texte und Untersuchungen*, lxiii (1957), 339-42) and the transcriptions made by W. Baars in *Ned. Th. Ts.*, xiii (1958/59), 442-6. The tetragrammaton also is found in archaic Hebrew letters in fragments of Aquila's version and in the Greek Minor Prophets Scroll (1st cent., probably "quinta") published by D. Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila...* (Suppl. to *Vetus Testamentum*, x, 1963). See also P.Ox. 1007 of Genesis (3rd cent. ; Rahlfs' no. 907), in which the tetragrammaton is represented by a double yod bisected by a horizontal line (ZZ), and one of the Qumran Greek fragments (4Q Lev^b, 1st cent. B.C.E. ; described by P. W. Skehan, *Volume du Congrès* [Suppl. to *Vet. Test.*, iv, 1957], p. 157), in which it is represented by the Greek letters ΙΑΩ.

² T. C. Skeat, in the aforementioned letter (cf. n. 1, p. 139), suspects an amulet. On the use of Psalms in amulets, see P. Collart, "Psaumes et Amulettes", *Aegyptus*, xiv (1934), 463-7, and the literature cited by C. Préaux in *Chronique d'Égypte*, x (1935), 364, n. 6. No examples are given of the use of Psalm xix in an amulet.

The relative coarseness of the papyrus does not suggest an extensive roll. A rough idea of the variety of ways in which Psalm passages have been used in the third to seventh centuries may be obtained from an examination of the fragments from the Vienna collection published by P. Sanz:¹ his numbers 5, 11, (18), 19, 20, and 23 represent amulets; number 14 seems to have been used liturgically (in private worship?); and number 24 employs a Psalm in what seems to be a school exercise. The stichometric arrangement used in our papyrus can easily be paralleled in other biblical papyri (not only from Psalms), although most of the other examples come from codices, not from rolls or individual sheets or amulets (of course, the quantity of codex fragments available for comparison is far greater!). P. Ox. 2386 (4th cent., Rahlfs' no. 2070) is a Psalm roll in which the text is not arranged stichometrically, but each new stichos is clearly marked by a sign in the continuous text. The Vienna collection mentioned above includes an amulet written stichometrically on both sides of a parchment leaf (P. Gr. Vind. 3080, 6th cent.). But the closest parallel I have yet found to our papyrus is P. Lit. Lond. 207 (3rd/4th cent.), which is a page on which Psalms 11-14 are written in two columns.² A later hand has used the verso to write out what appear to be reading lessons, and it may be that the Psalm portion also was used for this purpose—the syllables of Psalms xi-xiii are marked out with supralinear dots. In any event, the Psalms are written as in the present fragment, stichometrically with the final word or words from excessively long lines indented on the following line. But the Rylands fragment clearly was not written by the same hand as P. Lit. Lond. 207, and there is no reason to suppose that it was not primarily intended for religious use.

¹ *Griechische literarische Papyri christlichen Inhaltes*, I (1946), *Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Nationalbibliothek in Wien* (P. Erzherzog Rainer), nos. 5-24.

² "An Early Papyrus Fragment of the Greek Psalter" (unsigned), *The Athenaeum* (London; 8 September 1894), pp. 319-21. Milne's *Catalogue of the London Literary Papyri* (1927) refers back to the original publication, which included a reproduction. Despite the fact that the Psalms are written only on one side of the papyrus, the original editor argued that the page probably came from a codex of reading lessons.

1 (19 : 7) Ν[υ]Ν ΕΓΝΩΝ[ὅτι ἔσωσεν κύριος τὸν χριστὸν
 2 ΑΥ[τοῦ
 3 ΕΠΑΚΟΥCΕΤΕ ΑΥΤΟΥ Ε[ξ οὐρανοῦ ἁγίου αὐτοῦ
 4 ΕΝ ΔΥΝΑCΤΙΕC Η CΩΤ[ηρία τῆς δεξιᾶς αὐτοῦ
 5 (19 : 8) οὗ]ΤΟΙ ΕΝ ΑΡΜΑCΙΝ ΚΑ[ὶ οὗτοι ἐν ἵπποις
 6 ἡμεῖς δ]Ε ΕΝ ΟΝΟΜΑΤ[ι θεοῦ ἡμῶν μεγαλυνθη-
 7]CΟΜ[εθα

1. Only the very lowest extremities of these letters appear and none is well enough preserved to identify with complete confidence. Arguing from the expected line length, however, it seems unlikely that either κύριος or χριστὸν were abbreviated (see above). But note that Holmes-Parsons MSS. 206, 278, 283, 293, read κ(ύριο)ς τὸν χρηστὸν.

3. Read ἐπακούσεται.

4. Read δυναστείαις (the final C is written over an I) : B* has δυναστείαις.

5. οὗτοι seems to have been corrected from ΟΥΤΩ, probably by the original hand. For ἄρμασιν, R has ἄσμασιν.

6-7. It is not possible to determine precisely where the stichos was divided, although the fact that the COM of line 7 is almost exactly below the ΑΥ of line 2 suggests that nothing preceded the COM (but the text is broken). If the above division is correct, there does not seem to be room for the normal LXX wording spelled out in full : ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου θεοῦ ἡμῶν μεγαλυνθησόμεθα. Thus, in the reconstruction κυρίου has been omitted in agreement with A*, Holmes-Parsons MSS. 184, 188 (cf. 185), Cyprian (part ; *apud* Rahlfs) and Origen (*apud* Holmes-Parsons)—cf. Ps. xix. 6. Alternatively, an abbreviated κυ θυ might be read (but cf. line 1), or simply κυρίου (cf. Holmes-Parsons 278 and Psalt. Syr.). Line 6 could be shortened by either of the following variants to μεγαλυνθησόμεθα : S* (Aug) has ἀγαλλιασόμεθα (cf. xix. 6) ; S^c and many " Lucianic " witnesses have ἐπικαλεσόμεθα.

2. PRAYER-AMULET (?) 13.7 by 9.2 cm. 6th cent.¹

The beginnings of twelve (13) lines from the lower left hand portion of a small roll are preserved in this fragment. The initial letter of each new section of the text (lines 1, 5, 8, 11) is exaggerated and set out into the left margin. This margin also contains other markings further to the left. The text is written in black ink in a bold, sloping uncial with frequent ligatures (especially between T and the succeeding letter ; also AP and ΔΙ[?]). In line 3, the shorthand K = καί is possible (but see below), and the usual abbreviations for θεός and πνεῦμα occur in line 12. The orthography leaves much to be desired if the

¹ This dating is supported by C. H. Roberts.

text has been edited correctly in lines 2, 3, 7, and 12.¹ There is no evidence of punctuation or of word division, although a mysterious heavy black dot appears over some of the letters in lines 6-9 and inside the *C* of $\overline{\Theta C}$ in line 12; this mark does not seem to indicate corrections.

The text is written across the fibres of the papyrus, but there is no clear evidence that the reverse side of the piece had ever contained any extensive writing. Traces of ink do appear on the reverse, but close examination reveals that they are mostly "mirror writing" that has been transferred by blotting from the text of the papyrus itself under the combined influence of moisture and pressure on the rolled up or folded page. The same process also has produced "mirror writing" in the lower margin of the fragment, giving the impression that there are two more lines after line 13. In fact, however, these blots on both sides of the papyrus—blots which can be deciphered, to some degree, with the help of a mirror—show clearly that line 13 was the final line in the column, and that the papyrus had been rolled up or folded from the bottom. It is no longer possible to determine how many lines originally preceded the preserved text. Possibly the reverse side once contained some brief indication of the roll's contents, but the few remaining markings there (other than the "mirror writing") are extremely difficult to decipher.²

The original purpose of this little roll is not immediately obvious. That it was not part of a larger work (a liturgy or liturgical handbook) is obvious from the way in which the page had been rolled up as well as from the non-literary character of the writing. The personal emphases in the context of petition ("wash *me* . . . cleanse *me* . . . make *me* hear . . .", etc.) suggest an amulet³ or a prayer used in personal worship—private

¹ This recalls the remark of P. Collart in *Aegyptus*, xiii (1933), 209: "Les amulettes où se lisent des *Psaumes* ont un trait commun, qui est une orthographe abominable."

² The following traces of writing appear at the bottom of the inverted reverse side (i.e. upside down to and opposite lines 1-4), written along the fibres, in three lines: $\overline{\Theta}$ (with a heavy dot over it)/] \overline{C} \overline{O} \overline{Y} \overline{N} /]. \overline{C} \overline{I} \overline{N} (with a horizontal stroke below the *N*).

³ On the use of Psalms in amulets, see the literature cited above in n. 2, p. 140. Psalm 1 does not occur in Collart's examples.

liturgy, so to speak. Considering the way in which the text is divided into stanzas, a hymn would not be entirely out of the question—perhaps the heavy black dots referred to above can be explained in this context, although they do not seem to follow a consistent pattern. If the text ever had an “official” role in Christian worship, it might have been as one of the private prayers which the priest would offer up for himself in the sanctuary before praying publicly for the entire congregation, or in connection with the administration of the sacraments, or the evening prayers for forgiveness.¹ Whether a priest would be likely to have such prayers written out separately in this manner, must be left for those more familiar with early Byzantine liturgy to decide. Most probably the fragment comes from a personal prayer-amulet.

The main portion of the preserved text (lines 5ff.) contains a quotation from the old Greek version of Psalm l. 10-12 (Heb., li. 8-10). Lines 3-4 also are strongly reminiscent of parts of that Psalm, especially verses 4 and 9, but are not in verbatim agreement with any known text form of the Psalm:

Ps. l. 4 ἐπὶ πλεῖον πλὺνόν με ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνομίας μου
καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας μου καθάρισόν με.

Ps. l. 9 ῥαντιεῖς με ὑσσώπῳ καὶ καθαρισθήσομαι
πλυνεῖς με καὶ ὑπὲρ χιόνα λευκανθήσομαι.

There also existed in upper Egypt as early as the fourth century a strange Christian form of the latter passage which read:²

¹ On such private prayers of the celebrant, in the larger context of the formal liturgy, see G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (1945²), p. 482. Examples in which Psalm l plays a role may be found in F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies*, I (1896), 5 (petition for the people in the “Liturgy of St. Clement”) and 145 = 202 (prayer of the priest, for himself, in the “Liturgy of the Coptic Jacobites”). For another example of a private priestly prayer during the liturgy, see *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vii (American edition by A. C. Coxe, 1886), 563 (“Liturgy of the Blessed Apostles”). According to A. G. Martimort, et al., *L’Église en Prière: Introduction à la Liturgie* (1961), Psalm l is used in the Byzantine ritual (182, n. 2), and is one of the Psalms designated for use at Matins (802). It also had a place in the “Service of Terce” in the Christian-Palestinian Syrian Horologion edited by M. Black (1954), p. 77 (= 32b).

² See Rahlfs’ edition of the Greek Psalms, ad loc., and Rahlfs, “Der Text des Septuaginta Psalters”, *Septuaginta-Studien*, ii (1907), pp. 157, 200, 246. The reading is attested by the fragmentary fourth-century Leipzig Papyrus 39 (=

No. 1



No. 3

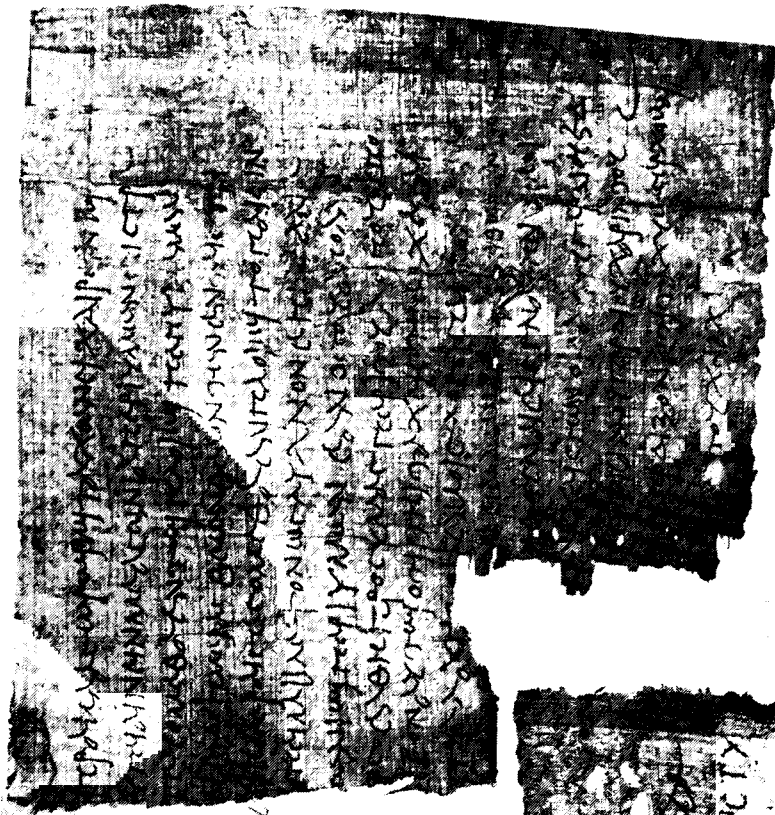


No. 2

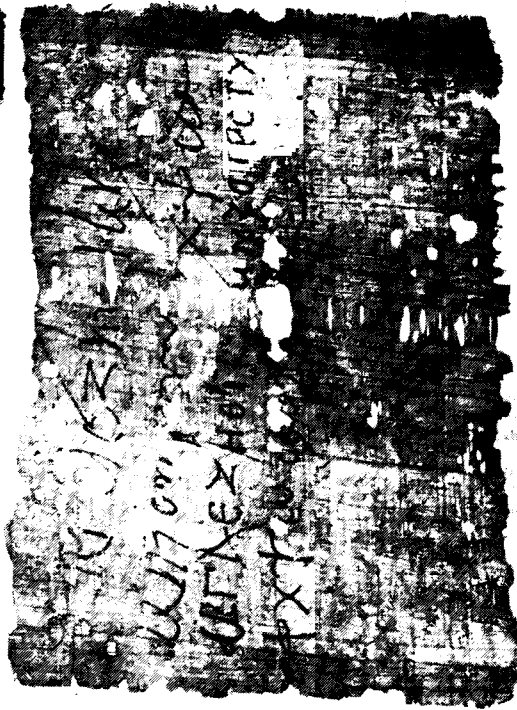




No. 7



No. 4



No. 8

ῥαντιεῖς με ὑσώπω ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ξύλου καὶ
καθαρισθήσομαι

πλυνεῖς με ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ ὑπὲρ χιόνα λευκανθήσομαι.

It is striking that this variant form has some close phonetic similarities to certain enigmatic portions of lines 2-3 of the fragment. If we assume that the relatively unlettered transcriber of the fragment was vaguely familiar with the phraseology of Psalm l. 9 in this upper Egyptian form, it would not be a difficult move for him to turn τοῦ ξύλου (or τῷ ξύλῳ ?) into his doxological (?) ΔΩΕΩΔΩ In line 3, he seems to have been at a loss to know what to do with the *IE* (from ἐξ αὐτοῦ ?)—there is some possibility that he paused after writing it. Furthermore, on this hypothesis it is possible to fill out line 1, with due attention to the few strokes which remain and to the expected line length, as follows (correcting the confusion in line 2) :

1]P[αν]τ[ι]εῖς με ὑσώπω ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵμα-
2 τος τοῦ ξύλου[. . . .

Lines 3-4 can be filled out in a number of ways, although the *IE* (?) is easiest to deal with if it is read as a shorthand καί (see the notes, below),

The Psalm quotation proper is introduced by the marginal symbol +, and the same symbol, with a more elongated horizontal stroke to the right, seems to stand at the conclusion of the roll. The first occurrence may represent the word ψαλμός, or may simply be the mark which frequently appears in papyri for various purposes (for a paragraph sign, to indicate the beginning and end of material of diverse nature or by a different hand, etc.). Notice, for example, the table of lections (6th/7th cent.), published by H. J. M. Milne,¹ in which the cross mark is used to Rahlfs' 2013), by a twelfth-century manuscript of excerpts from the Psalms (B.M. Oriental 5465 = Rahlfs' 1093), and by the Sahidic version. It is also found in a fourth-century manuscript of the Achmimic version of 1 Clement xviii.7 (see C. Schmidt, "Der erste Clemensbrief in altkoptischer Übersetzung," *Texte und Untersuchungen*, xxxii.1 [1908], ad loc.), while the first line (at least) was known to the Nestorian Timotheus I (c. 800 C.E.) in Syriac (see *Oriens Christianus*, i [1900], 306 f.).

¹ "Early Psalms and Lections for Lent", *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, x (1924), 278-82. This piece also is described in Milne's 1927 catalogue of London literary papyri, no. 234. The use of the cross sign in amulets also is common, along with the sign †.

indicate a new paragraph in line 1, while the abbreviation \div ($\alpha\lambda\mu\acute{o}s$) occurs on the very next line and frequently throughout the text. In addition to this marginal \div at line 4, our fragment contains markings in the far left margin beside the large initial letters of lines 8 and 11. They may be intended as numbers, but if so, they make little sense for the present form of the text.

At several places the Psalm quotation is at variance with the majority of Greek Psalm manuscripts as listed in the editions of Rahlfs, Swete, and Holmes-Parsons (see p. 139 above). In line 6 $\epsilon\upsilon\phi\rho\omicron\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\eta$ is probable, in agreement with three cursives listed in Holmes-Parsons. Clearly something is amiss in line 7, although the solution is not immediately apparent. In line 12 the omission of $\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}$ before $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ is unattested in the extant Greek Psalm tradition, as are the final words of the roll in line 13.

- 1] . [] . [
- 2] *TOC* $\Delta\Omega\Xi\Upsilon\Lambda\Omega$ [] [
- 3] *ΠΛΕΝΙΕC ΜΕ ΙΞ* [
- 4] \div *ΚΑΘΑ<P>ΙC[o]N M[ε*
- 5] *ΚΟΥΤΙΕ[ις] ΜΕ[ἀγαλλίασιν καὶ εὖ-*
- 6] *ΦΡΟCΥNH* *ΑΓΑ[λλιάσονται ὅστᾱ*
- 7] *Ο Τ Η ΤΑΠΙΝΟΥ[*
- 8] *ΙΖ* *Π Ο C Τ Ρ Ε Ψ Ο Ν* [τὸ πρόσωπόν σου
- 9] *ΑΠΟ* *ΤΩΝ* *ΑΜ[αρτιῶν μου καὶ πασ-*
- 10] *ΑC* *ΤΑC* *ΑΝΟ[μίας μου ἐξάλειψον*

11] *v* *K* A P Δ I A N KAΘA[ρὰν κτίσον ἐν ἐμοί
 12] O ΘC ΠNΑ ΕΜ [
 13] ON ME —|——|

1. The left margin preserves part of a vertical stroke, probably from another enlarged letter like those beginning lines, 5, 8, and 11 (or possibly another cross—see lines 4/5 and 13—or similar sign). The third or fourth letter from the margin is almost legible and seems to have been *Δ* or *Α* or *Τ*. (For a possible reconstruction, see above.)

2. The sprawling letter *Ε* is relatively sure, and seems to be followed by *Υ*. What comes immediately before it is not so clear—probably *Ω* but possibly *Ο*. On the far right, well below the line, is the lower portion of a vertical stroke which hooks roundly to the left; no obvious explanation has suggested itself, unless it is another *Ε*. Possibly the transcriber of the fragment intended to write some form of the root *δοξολογεῖν* here—*δοξολογοῦμαι*, *δοξολογόντος*, *δοξολογία* ? The letter *Δ* is quite positive, although he may have meant it as a *T* (see above, *τοῦ ξύλου*).

3. Probably read *πλυνεῖς με*. The letter or letters that follow might possibly designate an abbreviated *καί* (*K*), but the form is not very similar to other occurrences of *K* in the fragment; more probably they are the letters *ΙΕ* (= *ἐξ* ?). Before the fragment breaks at the end of this line, there is an empty space the width of a letter followed by a slight trace of ink at the break. This suggests that the line continued, as suggested above (*ἐξ αὐτοῦ*) or perhaps with the words *ἀνομίας μου* (Ps. l. 4); if in fact an abbreviated *καί* was intended, the line might have read *πλυνεῖς με καὶ λευκανθήσομαι* (cf. Ps. l. 9b).

4. *KAΘAICON* seems to have been miswritten for *καθάρισον*. Perhaps the line originally read, to complete the couplet, *καθάρισόν με ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας μου* (cf. Ps. l. 4b).

5. In the far left margin between lines 4 and 5 occurs the cross sign which is discussed above. Then comes an enlarged *A* which extends into the margin by the width of three to four average letters. The most significant variations to Greek OT texts of this line are: *μοι* for *με* in several "Lucianic" MSS. and the corrector of Hesychius' commentary (cf. Rahlfs); *ἀγαλλιασέως* in Rahlfs' MS. 2013.

6. It is improbable that any letter was written between *εὐφροσύνη* and *ἀγα-*, although the papyrus is badly torn here. There is hardly room for *-HN*, but *-HI* (or perhaps *-HC*) is barely possible. A heavy black dot has been written above the *H*. Most Greek OT MSS. read *εὐφροσύνην* here, although *-ης* is found in Rahlfs' 2013, and *-η* in three cursives in Holmes-Parsons. *ἀγαλλιᾶσεται* is read by a few "Lucianic" MSS. and the Hesychius corrector, and *καί* is placed after *εὐφροσύνην* in six Holmes-Parsons cursives (cf. also Augustine and the Vulgate). The spelling *ὁστέα* occurs in some witnesses.

7. The first nine letters are clear, with black dots over the *TH*. The tenth

letter almost certainly is *Υ* (but possibly *Ω*) ; it cannot be *M* or *N*. Most Greek OT MSS. here have *τεταπεινωμένα* (modifying *ὅσα*), but a few "Lucianic" MSS. and the Hesychius corrector have *τεταπεινωμένων*. It is not clear what the transcriber of the fragment intended : possibly he had run the words *ὅσα* and *τεταπεινω-* together carelessly, or he may have meant to write *ὁ τεταπεινωμένος* (with a singular verb in line 6) ; also possible would be *ὅτι ἐταπείνουν* (τὴν ψυχὴν μου, cf. Ps. xxxiv.13) or perhaps *ὅτι ταπεινοῦνται*. Finally, the dots over *TH* might indicate a correction (omit those letters), leaving *ὁ ταπεινῶν*, but this is not supported by the use of dots elsewhere in the fragment.

8. To the left of the large initial *A* are two letters, possibly *IZ* (= 17[?]) followed by a horizontal stroke, or *IS*(16) or *IE*(15) or *IA*(14). A heavy black dot has been placed over the final *N* (and possibly over the first *O*).

9. There seems to be a superlinear black dot between the first two letters of *ἀμαρτιῶν*, and a light vertical stroke over the *N* in *τῶν*.

11. To the left of the initial *K* is what appears to be the letter *θ* (= [1]9?). The vertical stroke of the marginal *K* extends from lines 10-12. It is not clear whether the papyrus has *KAPAI* or *KAPTI* (probably a ligatured *AI* with a high stroke).

12. There is a black dot in the *C* of *ΘC* (or is it *ΘE*?). After *θεός*, Greek OT MSS. read *καὶ πνεῦμα εὐθὲς ἐγκαίνισον ἐν τοῖς ἐγκάτοις μου*, but clearly this was not found in lines 11-12. After *πν(εὺμ)α* (or is it *πν(εὺμ)α(τι)*, or perhaps *πν(εὺμ)ατι*?) the papyrus does not seem to read the expected *EYΘEIC* (*εὐθὲς*). None of these letters is entirely legible ; there seems to be traces of *EM* (or *EN*) before the papyrus breaks off, preceded by *Υ* or *H* or *TI* and another letter—did the transcriber write *πν(εὺμ)α(τι) ἡγεμονικῶ* (or *ευγ-*, or *υγ-*) *στήρισόν με* (Ps. l. 14) ?

13. The most likely reading is *ON ME*, although *EN ME* is not impossible. Several possibilities suggest themselves for filling out the end of line 12 : *στήρισόν με* (see to line 12), *ἐγκαίνισόν με* (or *ἐν με*), *ἐλέησόν με* (cf. Ps. l. 3), or even *καθάρισόν με* (again). There follows a cross mark (the vertical stroke is barely visible) with its horizontal stroke continuing to the right beyond where the papyrus breaks off.

Translation (based largely on conjectural reconstruction)

[Sprinkle me with hyssop dipped in the blood of the cross,
[and I shall be cleansed]

(or possibly, " . . . in blood—I glorify your name . . ."),
Wash me with [it from lawlessness, and]
cleanse me [from my sins.]

Make me to hear [rejoicing, and the bones] which have been
humilia[ted will rejoice in gladness.

Avert [your face] from [my] si[ns, and blot out]
all [my] law[less deeds.]

[Create in me] a clean heart, O God ;
[with a] spirit [of guidance, strength]en me.

3. CHRISTIAN DATING FORMULA 8×8.5 cm.

608 C.E. [?]

This fragment from the beginning of an unidentifiable document preserves the trinitarian Christian dating formula intact :

“ In the name of the undefiled and homoousian trinity, Father and Son/and Holy Spirit : In the consulship/of our most pious ruler [. . . ?],/the sixth year, on the 17th of Pauni [June 11], in the 12th indiction/”

On the reverse side, written with what is the left and top margin of the document proper serving as top left margin respectively (that is, written perpendicular to the document, along the fibres) is the beginning of the address : +ΓΡ(αμματεῖον [?]) COYNTΩ “ contract/deed of (or for, or to) Sountōous . . .”. The unusual spelling Sountōous is relatively sure on line 6 of the document in the fairly standard identification formula which mentions lineage (“ son of . . .”) and location (“ from the town of . . ., in the . . . nome ”).

The document is written in black ink along the fibres of a light brown papyrus sheet in a semi-unical hand. The dating formula closely resembles those from the time of Maurikos, Phokas, and Heraklios (582-641)—indeed, such formulas came into use under Maurikos—and the indentification of the sixth year of consulship with the twelfth indiction points strongly to the year 608/609, the sixth year of Phokas’ consulship.¹ Alternatively, it might come from c. 593/94, under Maurikos (who was named consul several times), or from slightly later, under the reign of Heraklios and his son (the sixth year would be c. 617/618 ; but the 12th indiction c. 623/24). In fact, the only other occurrence of ἄχραντος that we have been able to find in such a dating formula comes from the year 614, under Heraklios.² This adjective also

¹ Compare the formula, very similar to ours, in Preisigke’s *Sammelbuch*, no. 5266 : “ in the 6th year [of Phokas’ reign], on the 15th of Mesore [August 9], in the 12th indiction ”—this is dated 608 by the editors. Similarly, *Sammelbuch*, nos. 4503 (3rd year of Phokas, 10th indiction) and 4505 (4th year of Phokas, 12th indiction—corrected to 10th by the editors) are dated to 606. Phokas’ reign began in 602, his consulship in 603.

² *Sammelbuch*, no. 4669 : ἐν ὀνόματι τῆς ἁγίας ἀχράντου καὶ ζωοποιοῦ καὶ ὁμοουσίου τριάδος. . . . On some other formulas of this period, see H. I. Bell, “ A Dating Clause under Herachius ”, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, xxii (1913), 395-405.

occasionally is used of the trinity in documents from the sixth century.¹

- 1 + ἐν ὀνόματι τῆς ἀχράντου καὶ
 2 ὁμοουσί(ου) τριάδος, πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ
 3 καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματ[ος· υ]πατίας
 4 τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐνσεβ(εστάτου) ἡμῶν δεσπ(ότου) [
 5] L(ἔτους) S̄, παῦνι IZ̄, ἰνδ(ικτίονος) IB̄
 6] λιος Cουντώουτος υἱὸς
 7] φρ_{οοο} μήτρος
 8]_{οοοο} νας ἀπὸ ἐποικίου
 9]_{οοο} νομοῦ

.

Except for diereses in lines 2, 5, and 6, and what may be a rough breathing over the first letter in line 2, the punctuation, accents and breathings, and resolution of abbreviations have been supplied.

3. Read ὑπατείας.

4. Unfortunately, the line becomes illegible after the letters ΔΕ. Portions of three or four additional letters appear before the papyrus breaks off, just short of the expected margin. If, as we might expect, an abbreviated form of δεσπότου (ΔΕCΠ, ΔΕΠΟΥ, ΔΕΤΟΥ) occurred, there could have been room for a name such as Φωκά in the suspended form ΦΩ which is well attested elsewhere. Indeed, if the left part of line 5, which now appears to be blank, originally contained writing (see also to line 6), an abbreviated name such as Φλαοίου Ἡρακλείου might even be conjectured.

5. What we have read as the symbol for ἔτους has the rounded form of a C, and might indeed be the final letter of the fully spelled word ἔτους. But there is no evidence of writing to the left of this letter, and the papyrus is preserved for the space of four to five letters in that direction. Thus the line may have been indented, or there could have been a long space left between the end of the ruler's abbreviated name at the start of the line (two letters could have been accommodated in the missing portion of line 5 at the left) and the beginning of the dating

¹ Preisigke's *Wörterbuch* (1925) lists P. London 1675.2 (ἐνορκούντες κατὰ τῆς ἀχράντου τριάδος καὶ τῆς ὑμῶν σωτηρίας) and Corpus Pap. Raineri 30.II.27 (ἐπωμόσατο τὴν ἀχραντον καὶ ὁμοούσιον τριάδα). G. W. H. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, fasc. 1 (1961), also refers to a similar use by Theodoret (mid 5th cent.), *Interpr. in Psalmos* to 57 : 6.

formula proper. After the symbol (or word) for "year" comes the uncial digamma (= 6). The uncial number *IZ* (= 17) is clear, and *IB* (= 12) is probable, although at first glance the mutilated *B* looks like another *Z*.

6. Immediately below the the first clear letters of line 5 are the letters *IOC*. As in line 5, the papyrus is preserved for the space of about four letters to the left, but the only evidence of writing is a short, low hook before the *IOC*, resembling the lower part of a *C* or the right foot of a *Δ* or *A*. If there originally had been writing to the left, perhaps a name such as *Ἀνρίλιος* appeared. The letters of the name *COYNTΩOYTOC* (genitive of *Κουντώους*) are clear; one might be tempted to read the *Ω* as *B*, but it is not the same type of *B* as is found in lines 4 and 5. The nearest thing to this spelling in Preisigke's *Namenbuch* (1922) is the form *Κοντώους* (see also *Κοντώους* and *Κουνεῦς*).

7. Perhaps a careful handling of the actual fragment, which becomes quite frayed at this point, could recover more of lines 7-9. A name such as *Ὀννώφρις* may have begun line 7. After the letters *MH*, the lower part of a letter is preserved, but it more closely resembles a *Φ* than the expected *T* of *μήτρος*. The top stroke of the final letter in the line is elongated to the right for the remainder of the line (about six spaces).

8. The tops of approximately four letters are preserved before *NAC* (probably the last part of a personal name).

9. The remnants of three or four mutilated letters precede *NOMOY*.

4. HERAKLAS TO HOROS AND TACHONIS.

12.6 × 13.4 cm. Turn of the era

This letter from a husband to his wife (?) and son seems to have been written while Heraklas was on military duty. The writer expresses concern for the recipients, and especially for his son (was there a potential military threat to them? was the son ill?), and gives instructions on how to deal with a financial crisis that has arisen (lines 7 ff.). Unfortunately, the last six lines are too fragmentary to reconstruct the situation with confidence. It is clear that it pertains somehow to a fuller and to weavers (lines 12-14).

The papyrus is relatively well preserved, with the upper and right margins intact. The only significant damage is to the lower left corner, where approximately one-third (11-13 letters) of each of the last six lines is lacking—including, unfortunately, the first part of the dating line. The letter is written along the fibres in a bold, upright semi-cursive hand with frequent uncial characteristics. On the basis of paleography (C. H. Roberts) and the simplicity of the dating formula, the letter would seem to

come from the time of Augustus (27 B.C.E.—14 C.E.). It had been rolled up from right to left, with the writing to the inside, and on the back of the roll using the left margin as a base line was written the address, probably “ [Heraklas, to Tachonis] and to Horos his son ” (see line 1). There is no indication whence Heraklas was writing, or where the recipients lived.

- 1 Ἡρακλᾶς Ὡρωι καὶ Ταχώνει, χαίρειν καὶ
 2 ὑγειαίνειν. με ἀγωνία περὶ ὑμῶν. ἐπὶ στρα-
 3 τευόμεθα, ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ πεπύκαμεν
 4 ὀκτὼ ἡμέρας. θεῶν θελόντων, ἐν ταῖς τρι-
 5 σὶ ἡμέραις ἐσόμεθα ἐν πλοίῳ. τὸ παιδί-
 6 ν ἐπειμβλέψον ὡς λύχνον, ἐπιδὰν ἀ-
 7 γωνιῳ περὶ ὑμῶν. ἐὰν ὁ τοῦ Ἀπόλλω-
 8 νος ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς περὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ, ὑπό-
 9 διξον αὐτῷ ὅτι τῇ ταχείστῃ ἔρχεται
 10 Πτολλάτι τοῖς ἐμοῖς λόγοις. εἶπον ἐπίμ-
 11 β]λεψα [μιν λίαν ἰ ν ν θω αν
 12]ωι δοῦναι εἰς γνάφην περὶ
 13]ἐλαχείστων. οἶδα τοῦ γερδίου (δραχμαὶ) Δ
 14](δραχμαὶ) Κ τοῦ ἄλλου γερδίου χάριν τοῦ
 15]καὶ ὑπόδιξον ὅτι τάχῃ ὡς ἔρχομαι.
 16]ς σεβατοῦ, χοίαχ ἱγ

On the reverse :]καὶ ὦρωι τῷ νίῳ

Punctuation, accents and breathings, and iota subscripts are supplied.

2. Read *ὑγιαίνειν*. Perhaps the writer intended to say *μὴ ἀγωνία περὶ ἡμῶν* ("Don't worry about us"), or he meant what is more normally expressed by *ἀγωνιῶ περὶ ὑμῶν* ("I am concerned/anxious about you", see lines 6-7). It seems almost as awkward to read *μέ* as the subject of the preceding infinitive as to leave the wording as it stands, ungrammatical and verbless. In later Greek *με* could stand for *μετά*, but this is also awkward, as well as unlikely, here. The reading *ἐπεὶ στρατευόμεθα* ("since we embarked") seems preferable to the compound verbal form *ἐπιστρατευόμεθα* ("we are advancing").

3. Read *πεποιήκαμεν*, or perhaps *πεπλεύκαμεν*. The phrase "in the ship" could be construed either with what precedes or with what follows.

5. Read *παιδίον*.

6. The text gives what seems to be a doubly prefixed form *ἐπεμβλέψον* (*ἐπιβλέψον*, *ἐμβλέψον*—cf. also lines 10 f. below). Instead of *ΕΠΙΔΙΑΝ* (read *ἐπειδάν*) the text may have *ΕΠΙΔΙΑΝ* (*ἐπειδὴ ἄν*); the Δ is quite blurred (because of a vertical fold) and seems to be followed by a vertical stroke.

6f. Read *ἀγωνιῶ*.

7. A blank space approximately the width of a letter precedes the *ἐάν*.

8f. Read *ὑπόδειξον* (cf. line 15).

9. Read *ταχίστη*.

10. Only the top portions of the eighth to eleventh letters are preserved. The last letter in this line is clear, and seems to be a carelessly written *M* or possibly *B* or *K*; probably we should read *ἐπέμβλεψα* (see above, line 6). It is not entirely clear how lines 9-11 should be punctuated.

11. To the left of the lacuna appear the tops of four to six letters; *ΕΨ* (or *ΑΨ*) are clearest, followed by something like *Δ* or *Λ* (probably not *N*). Thus *ἐπιμβλέψον* as in line 6 does not seem likely. The remainder of this line is almost totally illegible because of a horizontal fold in the papyrus. The letters transcribed above are the most probable candidates.

12. The first preserved letters seem to be *ΩΙ* or *ΑΙ*. The *γνάφη* (or *κνάφη*—carder or fuller) was a member of one of the monopoly trades of the time; see P.Ox. 1488, lines 9-10 (*ναφική*).

13. Read *ἐλαχίστον* or possibly *ἐλαχείστον*.

14. A small, brittle piece which has subsequently broken off from the left side contained what seems to have been the same "drachmae" symbol (←) as that found at the end of the previous line. Punctuation in this fragmentary section is, of course, difficult—the *χάριν* could go with what precedes, although in the papyri it often does not.

15. Read *ὑπόδειξον* (as in lines 8 f.) and perhaps *ταχέως* (although *τάχυν* *ὥς* is not impossible). Above the final letters of *ἔρχομαι* is a flourished stroke to the right resembling a *C* with the bottom elongated horizontally.

16. Perhaps read *Λ(ἔτους) . . . καίσαρος* *σεβαστοῦ*. There is not enough

room for more than the simplest of names or titles, unless abbreviations were employed. There might possibly be room for the abbreviated $\epsilon\rho\rho(\omega\sigma\omicron)$ also. The spelling $\chi\omicron\iota\alpha\kappa$ is more normal.

Translation

Heraklas to Horos and Tachonis : Greetings and good health ! I am anxious about you. Since we took up our duties, we have spent eight days aboard ship. As the gods will, we will be aboard ship three more days. Watch over the child like you would over an oil lamp, for I am anxious about you. If Apollo's representative should come to you concerning the balance, inform him that it is coming speedily by (the hand of) Ptollas as I promised (or perhaps, " with my accounts "). I said (that) I have looked into (the matter) . . . sufficient . . . to give to the fuller concerning (or, " about ") . . . at the least. I know of the weaver's 4 drachmae . . . 20 drachmae of the other weaver for the sake of . . . and indicate that I am coming as quickly as possible.

[Farewell. The x year of Caesar] Augustus, Choiak 13 (= December 9).

5. BESARION TO DIONYSIOS 26.7 × 10.5 cm.

3rd/4th cent.

Besarion makes an accounting to his " lord and patron " Dionysios, who apparently is a man with extensive landholdings, concerning various domestic affairs relating to the estates under Besarion's care. The villages of Plelo and Lile in lines 7 and 16 are located, respectively, in the " middle " ($\mu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\eta$) toparchy and in the $\alpha\pi\eta\lambda\iota\omega\tau\eta\varsigma$ toparchy of the Oxyrhynchite nome (see P.Ox. 1285, 111 and 92). The exact situation in which Besarion finds himself is difficult to reconstruct from the somewhat cryptic allusions contained in the letter. Apparently he had responded to an earlier letter from Dionysios, but failed to receive further instructions from Dionysios as he expected (lines 5-10). He also tries to explain why he did not appear in person before Dionysios (lines 10-11). Thereupon Besarion refers to certain payments he has sent in terms which suggest that he is leasing the cattle and lands of which he speaks from Dionysios. As early as the third century C.E., the $\phi\acute{o}\rho\omicron\varsigma\ \pi\rho\omicron\beta\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega\nu$ (lines 15-16) had come to indicate income from the flocks of sheep and herds of

goats which were leased to their tenants by the great landholders.¹ The cash rent referred to in lines 16-17 (ἀργυρικός φόρος) would probably be for the lands themselves.² Lines 18-20 suggest that Besarion's fields produced material for the weaving trade. The issues alluded to in lines 21-25 are not clear. The opening and closing formulas (lines 1-3, 26-27) can be paralleled widely in Christian letters from the third to the fifth centuries.³

The papyrus itself is relatively well preserved, with all margins intact (unless some slight loss has occurred at the right). The writing is in a bold, nearly upright, irregular semi-cursive hand with frequent ligatures, and extends along the fibres. It is typical of the later third or early fourth centuries. On line 14 a deletion of a dozen letters is indicated by supralinear dots. At the end of lines 6, 23, and 25, a supralinear horizontal stroke is used to indicate suspensions of the letters κ (or perhaps κτων), ν, and υτην. The supralinear apostrophe is clear on lines 16 (Υ') and 19 (CIIΠ'ΠΙΑ), and may have occurred also on line 22 (ΤΕC'CEΡΑ). The numbers and related symbols in lines 15-17 are particularly difficult to decipher; we have made calculated guesses as to their possible significance and relationship. The reverse side of the papyrus is blank.

- 1 Κυρίῳ μου πάτρωνι
- 2 Διονυσίῳ · Βησαρίων.
- 3 Π[ολ]λὰ ἐν θεῷ χαίρειν.
- 4 Ἐγραψά σοι διὰ Διδύμου
- 5 τὴν διάθεσιν τῶν γηδίων
- 6 ὧν ἑπερ' ἔγραψάς μοι τῶν ἀποτᾱ(κ)-

¹ Previously it indicated rent paid to the government for the use of state-owned sheep and goats; see S. L. Wallace, *Taxation in Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian* (Princeton University Studies in Papyrology, ii (1938), pp. 79-80).

² Ibid. p. 71.

³ See, e.g. G. Ghedini, *Lettere Cristiane dai Papiri Greci del III e IV Secolo* (1923); M. T. Cavassini, "Lettere Cristiane nel Papiri Greci d'Egitto," *Aegyptus*, xxxiv (1954), 266-82; J. O'Callaghan, "Lettere Cristiane dai Papiri Greci del V secolo", *Aegyptus*, xli (1961), 26-36.

- 7 των τῆς Πλελῶ καὶ οὐκ ἔγρα-
 8 ψάς μοι περὶ αὐτῶν. εἰ τι σοι
 9 δοκῇ ἀντίγραφόν μοι περὶ αὐ-
 10 τῶν. καὶ δι' αὐτὸ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐσχό-
 11 λασα ἀναβῆναι πρὸς σου. ἀγόρα-
 12 ζον σπέρματα _{οο} · ἔπε[μ]ψα
 13 διὰ τοῦ ἀδελφλοῦ μου Κυμε-
 14 ώνος [[καὶ ἐπαγάθου _ο]], ἀργυρίου
 15 (τάλαντα) TΛΑ · τούτων φόρου προβά-
 16 τω]ν τῆς Λιλῆ (τάλαντα) ΕΗ, καὶ ὑ(πὲρ) ἀργυ-
 17 ρέκου φόρου τὰ λοιπὰ (τάλαντα) CΞΓ.
 18 καὶ πέμψον μοι τὸν μέλλον-
 19 τα δοκιμάζιν τὰ σίπ'πια·
 20 ἐτοίμασαν γὰρ αὐτά. ἔπεμ-
 21 ψα δὲ διὰ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φοινίκια
 22 πεταλίδια τέσ'σερα. οἱ δὲ τά-
 23 κτονας εἰ μὴ μίαν κυκλάδα(ν)
 24 οὐκ ἐποίησαν. Πανηφ _{οο}ση καὶ
 25 Πασοήρις _{οο}μόνοι ἐποίησαν τὴν ᾰ(ὑτήν).
 26 Ἐρρώσθαί σε εὐχομαι πολλοῖς
 27 χρόνοις.

Except as noted, punctuation, accent, and the like are supplied.

3. At the start of the line, the *Π* is clear, but whether *πολλά* should be read, or perhaps *πλεῖστα* (which also is attested in such formulae), or something similar, cannot be determined from the preserved traces.

6. The letters *ΠΕΡ* are inserted above the *ΕΓ* to make *ὤνπερ*.

6f. The final letter in line 6 has a horizontal stroke above it which we have resolved to a *K*, but possibly the author intended *ἀποτά(κτων) τῶν* or even *ἀποτά(κτων φόρων) τῶν*. It might also be possible to read *ἀποστά(ν)των* ("fugitives") here, since the left part of the *T* is unusually hooked, and might represent *CT*.

9. Read *δοκεῖ*.

11. *πρός σε* seems to be meant, but *σου*, or possibly *σοι* appears to have been written.

11f. Probably the participle *ἀγοράζων* ("since I am buying") or the imperfect *ἡγόραζον* ("I was buying") should be read here. The imperative *ἀγόρασον* (cf. also lines 9, 18) seems much less likely in the context.

12. After *σπέρματα* there is room for one or two letters, and some faint traces of ink seem to be visible. But perhaps the papyrus was simply blank at this point.

13f. *ἀδελφοῦ* could be meant literally or figuratively (Christian brother, brother in service). The cancelled words *καὶ ἐπαγάθου* (= *χρηστοῦ*?) possibly also applied to Symeon, who seems to have had a rather trusted position to judge from the tasks he performs.

14. After *ἐπαγάθου*, traces of another cancelled letter appear, possibly *O* or *Ω*. The letters we have read as *ἀργυρίου* are not carefully written and might be read differently (*ΑΡΤΑΒΟΥ*?). The initial *A* (?) is especially peculiar.

15. Only the very top of the first letter/symbol is preserved (faintly), followed by rather large, scrawled letters of which *ΑΑ* (or *ΔΑ*) seem most likely. It is not at all sure that the initial symbol indicates *τάλαντα*.

16. What has been read as the sign for *τάλαντα* is much clearer here, like a large reverse *S* bisected by a horizontal line. The letter/number/symbol between it and the *H* is not so clear, however, and is as close in form to *P* as to *E*. After the abbreviated (*Υ'*) come 3 or 4 carelessly written letters somewhat similar to the *ΑΡΓΥ* (?) of line 14 (but not exactly the same).

17. The second and third letters are difficult to read; *IK* is unlikely, but *EK* (or *EM*) would be possible. Thus we would read *ἀργυρικού* with some hesitation. The last part of the line also has its difficulties; *λοιπά* is possible, but the *ΑΟ* are especially blurred, while the *Π* could also be read as an *E*. The symbol taken as *τάλαντα* here is not exactly like that in line 16, but its top resembles more closely the traces preserved in line 15. The first letter after this symbol in line 17 looks very much like a digamma (*CT* form, = 6), but might conceivably be a badly written *C* (= 200). Separate horizontal lines appear above the *ΕΓ* at the end of the line, but not elsewhere above supposed numbers (lines 15-16).

21f. It is not clear what is meant by *φοινίκια πεταλῖδια τέσσερα*. The first part of *τέσσερα* (?) is badly blurred, but the other two words seem certain. Should we read *φοινί(ε)ια* in its literal sense, "from the date-palm", or perhaps as "Phoenician" (*φοινίκεα* meaning "purple" seems less likely here)? *πεταλῖδια* seems to be the diminutive of *πετάλια*, but the meaning of neither is clear—wreaths? (see Preisigke) small flat dishes (or crates)?

22f. Read *οἱ τέκτονες*. It is not entirely clear what is meant by *κυκλάδαν*, but

it probably refers to some part of the water works used to irrigate the fields. The final *N* in line 23 is indicated by a supralinear horizontal stroke.

24f. Preisigke's *Namenbuch* includes several similar names, but not any identical to these: e.g. *Πανιφνοῦς*, *Πανεφρέμις* (and related forms), *Πασαρίς*, *Πασαράει*, *Πασῆρις*, *Πεσόρις*, *Πεσουήρις*, *Πεσ(ο)ῦρις*.

25. The final word is abbreviated to the letter *A* with a horizontal stroke above it.

26f. Line 26 is indented the space of three or four letters, while the last line is indented three more spaces in relation to line 26.

Translation

To my lord patron Dionysios, (from) Besarion. Many greetings in God. I wrote you by means of Didymos about the disposition of the lands, with reference to which you wrote me concerning the stipulated amounts for those at Plelō (?), and you did not reply to me concerning them. If anything occurs to you (to say), write me concerning them. And for this very reason I did not have time to come to you, since I am buying seed. I sent by means of my brother Symeon [[who is also fortunate (?)]] 331 talents of silver. Of these, 68 were rent for the sheep at Lilē, and the remaining 263 talents (?) were land-rent (literally, "rent in silver"). And send me him who is to inspect the hemp, for I have it ready. And I sent by means of the same one (Symeon) four small palm-wood dishes (?). But the carpenters made nothing but a single water wheel (or perhaps, "did not make a single"). Panēfresē (?) and Pasoēris made it by themselves.

Farewell; may you live many years.

6. LETTER 9.2×8.2 cm. 3rd cent.

This fragment preserves most of the lower thirteen lines of a letter written in an upright semi-cursive (with frequent ligatures) along the fibres of the papyrus. The left, bottom, and right (? see below) margins are virtually intact. It is possible that the very fragmentary first line, which is indented slightly, was the initial line of the letter. No indication has been preserved of who wrote the letter, where it was sent from, to whom it was sent, etc. Nor is there any evidence of a dating formula at the end. Both the idiom (e.g. *πανοικεσία*, line 14) and the script suggest a third-century date.

The main content concerns some sort of transaction that was in the process of being completed. The author advises his recipient how much money is available, what arrangements are to be made, etc., but the precise details are not clear—possibly grain is involved (lines 7 and 9). Finally, he asks to be kept informed about the results (lines 8-10), and explains that a family problem will keep him from joining his recipient as he had previously planned.

On the reverse side, written up-side down in relation to the letter (thus, against the fibres), are five lines of virtually illegible writing which seem to have extended beyond, or at least up to the very edge on the right (which is also the letter's right margin). The lower half of this reverse side is blank, which encourages the belief that it was written after the letter; if so, the right margin of the letter originally may have been somewhat wider. There is no reason to believe that both sides were inscribed by the same hand, although the badly preserved state of the reverse side admittedly makes this difficult to determine.

- 1 ε[]_{οοο}[]_{οο}[
- 2 παρ[α]σχῖν ἐκ δραχ(μῶν) _ο[
- 3 τριάκοντα δύο. εἰ ο[
- 4 πρὸς τούτοις ἐσσι ἀσφα-
- 5 λίσαι ἀραβῶνα λάβων
- 6 τάλαντον ἥμαι πρὸς, πρὸς
- 7 ἀρτάβας (ἀρτάβαι) CNA γίνεται
- 8 (τάλαντα) IB. καὶ πότε βούλεται
- 9 τὴν ἐνβολὴν ποιῆσθαι
- 10 δήλωσόν μοι εἶνα εἰδῶ.
- 11 ἡδυνάμην καγὼ γενέσθαι
- 12 πρὸς σε, διὰ δὲ τὴν νωθρίαν

13 τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ οὐκ εὐτόγησα.

14 ἔρρωσο, πανικησίᾳ εὐτύχων[

Punctuation, accents and breathings, etc., are supplied.

1. The initial letter, probably ε or perhaps θ, is indented slightly. Traces of four or five other letters are preserved in the line.

2. Read *παρασχεῖν*. After ΔΡΑΧ (the X is dropped to indicate the suspension) there is room for two or three letters before the normal limit of the margin is reached.

3. Possibly two or three letters are broken off at the end, if the line was of normal length. εἰ οὖν or εἰ οὐ(κ) would be possible.

4. Read *ἔστί*.

6. Apparently ἥμῃ is used for the more normal ἥμισυ (half a talent is worth 30 minae or 3,000 drachmae).

7. The figure which presumably follows ἀρτάβας is badly blurred but seems relatively tall and might have been the symbol for ἀρτάβαι. The letter that follows is peculiar; it looks like the right half of a Roman numeral I with exaggerated horizontal strokes at base and top (it is blurred to the left). There is nothing else like it in the document. It might conceivably be a strangely written C, thus giving the number 251 (CNA), but that is far from certain.

8. The initial symbol seems to be that for τάλαντα, followed by the number 12 (IB).

9. Read *ἐμβολήν*.

10. Read *ἵνα*.

12. Read *νωθρείαν*.

14. Read *πανοικεσία*. The salutation is indented by the space of 4 letters. The final word is not entirely clear, but seems to be εὐτύχων (the last three letters are fairly certain).

Translation

. . . to supply at thirty two drachmae (each). If . . . a down-payment is to be secured in addition, take half a talent for 251 artabae, making a total of 12 talents. And when he wishes to make the shipment, tell me so I will know. I myself would have been able to be with you, but because of the illness (?) of my brother, I am not free (to come).

Farewell. Prosper with all your household.

7. VOUCHER 6.5 × 8.25 cm. 3rd cent. [?].

This well preserved, complete little document has all margins intact and is written in an upright hand which sometimes reflects

“chancery style” with uncial and cursive forms freely mixed (e.g. three, and possibly four different forms of the letter *N* appear; ligatures are frequent). The reverse is blank. A date somewhere in the third century appears likely.

The exact import of the note is not entirely clear, nor is there any indication who has written it. The abbreviation at the end of line 1 probably stands for the professional donkey-driver, the *ὀνηλάτης* (often abbreviated to *ONHΛ* or even to *ON*). Thus the note would read: “There is given to each donkey-driver in the field sixteen drachmae wages each month, and a pair of sandals, as Petechonsis (?) orders.” On the other hand, the abbreviation on line 1 might indicate the animal itself, the *ὀνύδιν* (see P. Cairo Goodspeed 15.16), or *ὀνίδιον*, or *ὀνός*. In this circumstance we would read: “There is given to each donkey in the field a provision amounting to 16 drachmae worth each month, and a set of shoes” Satisfactory resolution of this problem requires a more exact acquaintance with economic practices in third-century Egypt than is presently at the disposal of the editors; judging from the taxes sometimes levied on donkey-drivers, however, 16 drachmae would seem to be a very modest monthly wage (see Wallace, *Taxation*, pp. 200 and 212).

- 1 Δίδονται ἐκάστῳ ^Λ *ON* *I*
2 ἐν τῇ γράσκει ὀψωνίου
3 μηνιαῖαι δραχ(μαὶ) δεκάεξ
4 καὶ σανδαλίων ζυγόν
5 ὥς φήσιν Πετεχῶνσις.

Breathings and accents have been supplied.

1. The letters at the end of the line are *ONI* or *ONY*, with an *Λ* or *Λ*-like form over the final letter. The leading possibilities seem to be *ὀνηλάτης* or perhaps *ὀνιδίω* (see above).

2. The genitive *ὀψωνίου* is probable, but the ending is written in a ligatured cursive with a final flourish, and might conceivably be simply *Λ* or *AN*.

3. In *MHNIAIAI*, the final *Λ* is sure and the remainder of the last letter could well be from a ligatured *I* (or possibly *C*). Thus we have construed this

word with $\delta\rho\alpha\chi(\mu\alpha\iota)$ rather than with the preceding $\delta\psi\omega\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon$ (?). In the suspension ΔPAX , the X is raised above the line.

5. The name of the person ultimately responsible for the situation is difficult to decipher, although the papyrus is perfectly preserved at this point. The first three or four letters are the least clearly written; ΠET is far from obvious ($TEAY$ or ΠAY also seem possible), but the only name listed in Preisigke's *Namenbuch* that seems to qualify is $\Pi\epsilon\tau\epsilon\chi\acute{\omega}\nu\sigma\iota\varsigma$.

8. DOUBLE ALPHABET 8.75 × 11.5 cm. 7th cent. [?].

This relatively well-preserved little paleographer's prize contains the Greek alphabet written in large, nearly upright, scrawling Byzantine cursive letters (lines 1-2), and then repeats the alphabet, with the six supplementary Coptic letters at the end, in smaller, upright uncials. The exercise is written against the fibres, and on the reverse are found the last part of 3 almost illegible lines written with the fibres. The writing on the reverse is undoubtedly older than the alphabetic exercise since it seems to be part of a larger piece that was re-used in making the latter. The upper edge of the alphabetic side forms the lower edge of the reverse, and seems to have been the lower margin of the original. On the alphabet side, all four margins are preserved and the lower two fifths of the piece is blank.

1 $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \epsilon \zeta \eta \theta \iota \kappa \lambda \mu$

2 $\nu \xi \omicron \pi \rho \varsigma \tau \upsilon \phi \chi \psi \omega$

3 $A B \Gamma \Delta E \Sigma H \Theta \dot{I} K [\Lambda] M N \Xi O \Pi P C T Y$

4 $\Phi X \Psi \omega \Upsilon \Upsilon \epsilon \Delta [\sigma] \dagger$

Of special interest among the individual letter forms are the cursives δ (like a reversed 6 with the loop open and a tail to the right), λ (like a cursive η with a short left side), ν (like a simple capital L followed without break by a small l in English script), ξ (like a capital M in English script), π (like a pair of flowing, linked cursive gammas written above the line), τ (like an uncial Y), and υ (very shallow, apparently without any vertical element).

Among the relatively formless uncials, the *A* is quite cursive and is even linked to the *B* ; the Δ is made up of three separate strokes of which the left is vertical, perpendicular to the line of writing, while the other two intersect at a right angle to form what looks like an isosceles right triangle with the left stroke as hypotenuse ; the *E* tends towards the large cursive type.