

A NEW TESTIMONY TO THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS\*

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The papyrus fragment P.Vindob. G 42417 offers a new testimony to the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews. The fragment measures 3.3 x 5.2 cm.; its margins are no longer extant; there are parts of Heb. 2.9-11 on its recto and Heb. 3.3-6 on its verso. The script runs along the fibres on the recto, and across the fibres on the verso.

Several witnesses to the Letter to the Hebrews have come down to us from Late Antique Egypt. The catalogues of J. van Haelst<sup>1</sup> and K. Aland<sup>2</sup> list eleven which were written on various materials (papyrus, parchment or ostraca).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, there is the papyrus codex P.Laur. IV 142 of the late fourth century,<sup>4</sup> as well as the parchment codex Sinai,

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1. J. van Haelst, *Catalogue des papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens* (Université de Paris IV Paris-Sorbonne Serie 'Papyrologie', 1; Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976).

2. K. Aland, *Repertorium der griechischen christlichen Papyri. I. Biblische Papyri* (PTS, 18; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1976).

3. Van Haelst, *Catalogue*, nos. 20, 182, 497 (= Aland, *Repertorium*, NT46 [0105]), 507, 536 (= Aland, *Repertorium*, NT12 [Var 35]), 537 (= Aland, *Repertorium*, NT13), 538, 539 (= Aland, *Repertorium*, NT17), 540 (= Aland, *Repertorium*, NT79), 541 and 542.

4. Edited by R. Pintaudi, 'N. T. Ad Hebraeos VI, 7-9; 15-17 (PL III/292)', *ZPE* 42 (1981), pp. 42-44.

Katharinen-Kl. ΜΓ 70 + St. Petersburg, Ross. Nac. Bibl., Gr. 9 (Gregory–Aland 0285) of the sixth century. The text on the recto of the fragment examined here is, however, to my knowledge, not attested by any of the papyri or other early Christian documents from Egypt. On the other hand, the text on the verso is attested by P.Oxy. IV 657, col. I (3rd/4th cent.), which contains a substantial part of the Letter to the Hebrews, as well as by a parchment codex from Egypt, Washington, Smithsonian Institute, Freer Gallery of Art, 06.275 (5th/6th cent.).<sup>5</sup>

As is usually the case with Christian texts, it appears that the fragment in question, which is written on both sides, comes from a now lost codex. The preserved text allows us to calculate the rough dimensions of the original folio. The fact that there must have been around fifty words on either side of the fragment, which has a height of 5 cm., while there are 172 words missing between the preserved parts, suggests that the space needed for the missing words must have been 17 cm. high. If one adds the length of the preserved fragment, i.e. 5 cm., plus 3 cm. for each of the upper and lower margins, it could then be deduced that the original folio was 28 cm. high. The width of the written column can also be calculated. Since there are approximately eight letters to the line on the 3.3 cm. wide fragment, while there must have originally been 34 letters to the line, the original column must have been 14 cm. wide. If another 4 cm. are allowed for the left-hand and right-hand margins, it turns out that the original folio was 18 cm. wide. The codex, therefore, measured 18 x 28 cm., which is a perfectly normal size for the papyrus codices of the time.<sup>6</sup>

From the point of view of textual criticism attention should be drawn to line 10, ]c κατὰ[. Here the manuscript tradition has ὁ δὲ πάντα (also τὰ πάντα attested) κατασκευάσας θεός. The reading πᾶν]τὰ κατὰ[σκευάσας is, however, palaeographically impossible for our

5. Edited by H.A. Sanders, *The New Testament Manuscripts in the Freer Collection* (University of Michigan Studies, 9; New York and London: Macmillan, 1918), pp. 249–315 (esp. p. 295) (van Haelst, *Catalogue*, no. 507 = Gregory–Aland I 016). The popularity of the Letter to the Hebrews is also mirrored in other texts of Late Antiquity, which contain reminiscences of it; cf. van Haelst, *Catalogue*, nos. 689, 730, 906 and 1097.

6. On the size of papyrus codices in Late Antiquity, see E.G. Turner, *The Typology of the Early Codex* (Haney Foundation Series, 18; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), pp. 13–34 (esp. pp. 14–22). The reconstructed format of our fragment corresponds to Turner’s Group 5 (c. 18 x 30 cm.).

fragment. A probable reconstruction that would remain as close to the original as possible would be: [... ὁ δὲ θεὸς κατασκευάσας (τὰ) πάντα ...], in which case the varying word order would have resulted from an error of the scribe or his model. It should, furthermore, be noted that there is a single case of accentuation in the text (a *spiritus asper* in line 4), whereas the *nomen sacrum*, την, which is usual both in medieval manuscripts and in papyri,<sup>7</sup> is also encountered here.

The fragment can be safely dated by applying palaeographical criteria. In fact, even though several characteristics of the elegant script point to an early dating,<sup>8</sup> the drawing of specific letters such as ε and μ allows us to date the papyrus to the sixth or seventh century.<sup>9</sup>

In what follows, a diplomatic transcription of the fragment is presented and then a reconstructed version of the text. It should be borne in mind that the allocation of the lost text in each line is hypothetical. Owing to the loss of the margins, there is no indication of the position the fragment originally occupied in the column and, consequently, as to exactly where a line stopped and the next began.

7. Cf. A.H.R.E. Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries A.D.* (Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava, 8; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959), pp. 93, 107–109 and Aland, *Repertorium*, p. 423.

8. Cf., e.g., R. Seider, *Paläographie der griechischen Papyri*, II (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1970), no. 44 (P.Bodm. II, Jn 9.28–35; middle of the 2nd cent.) and no. 54 (P.Beatty VII, Ezek. 16.57ff.; 3rd/4th cent.).

9. Cf., e.g., K. Treu, ‘Neue neutestamentliche Fragmente der Berliner Papyrusammlung’, *APF* 18 (1966), pp. 23–38, esp. p. 36 (P.Berol. 3605) (Plate in R. Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* [American Studies in Papyrology, 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996], p. 410, plate 80) and A. Deissmann, *Die Septuaginta-Papyri und andere altchristliche Texte* (Pap.Heid., 1; Heidelberg: Winter, 1905), no. 1 with plates (plate of a folio, also in Seider, *Paläographie*, II, no. 67, plate 37). Important elements of the same type of script are also to be found in papyrus documents of the period; cf., e.g., CPR VII 27 (6th/7th cent.).

*Diplomatic Transcription*

Recto

- 
- 1 ]ιη̅ν̅ δια[  
2 ]η̅ εκτε[  
3 ]υ̅τος γε[  
4 ]ω̅ δ̅ι̅ ον̅ τα̅ π[  
5 ]ου̅ς ει̅ς δο[  
6 ]ρω̅τηρια̅ς[  
7 ]ε̅ γ̅αρ[

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Line 4 ὄν

Verso

- 
- 8 ]υ̅ οικ̅ο[  
9 ]ο̅ς κα̅τ[  
10 ]ε̅ κα̅τ̅α[  
11 ]πι̅στο̅ς ε̅γ[  
12 ]α̅ρτυ̅ριον̅ τ[  
13 ]ε̅ υ̅ιο̅ς επι̅ τ[  
14 ]ν̅ η̅μ̅ει[

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Line 10 ὁ δὲ πάντα κατασκευάσας θεός ed.

*Reconstructed Version*

Recto

- 
- [ ...<sup>2.9</sup> τὸν δὲ βραχὺ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους ἤλ-]
- 1 [αττωμένον βλέπομεν] Ἰη(σοῦ)ν διὰ [τὸ πάθημα τοῦ]
- 2 [θανάτου δόξη καὶ τιμ]ῆ ἔστε[φανωμένον, ὅπως]
- 3 [χάριτι θεοῦ ὑπὲρ πα]γτὸς γε[ύσηται θανάτου.]
- 4 [2.10 Ἔπρεπεν γὰρ αὐτ]ῷ, δι' ὃν τὰ π[άντα καὶ δι' οὗ]
- 5 [τὰ πάντα, πολλοὺς υἱ]οὺς εἰς δό[ξαν ἀγαγόντα]
- 6 [τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς] σωτηρίας [αὐτῶν διὰ παθη-]
- 7 [μάτων τελειῶσαι. 2.11 ὁ τ]ε γὰρ [ἀγιάζων κτλ.]
- 

Verso

- 
- [<sup>3.3</sup> καθ' ὅσον πλείονα]
- 8 [τιμὴν ἔχει το]ῦ οἴκο[υ ὁ κατασκευάσας αὐτόν.]
- 9 [<sup>3.4</sup> πᾶς γὰρ οἴκ]ος κατα[σκευάζεται ὑπό]
- 10 [τινος, ὁ δὲ θεὸς] κατα[σκευάσας πάντα. <sup>3.5</sup> καὶ]
- 11 [Μωϋσῆς μὲν] πιστὸς ἐγ [ὄλω τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ ὡς]
- 12 [θεράπων εἰς μ]αρτύριον τ[ῶν λαληθησομένων,]
- 13 [<sup>3.6</sup> Χριστὸς δὲ ὡ]ς υἱὸς ἐπὶ τ[ὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ·]
- 14 [οὗ οἰκός ἐσμε]ν ἡμεῖ[ς κτλ.]
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