A FRAGMENT OF *SAPIENTIA SALOMONIS* FROM OXYRHYNCHUS *)

BY

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The harvest of papyrus and parchment from Oxyrhynchus has yielded numerous biblical and theological texts, but this is the first of *Sapiencia Salomonis* (P. Oxy. Inv. [8] 1B. 199/K(3)). Now measuring 8.7 X 8.6 cm., the fragment preserves the bottom outside corner of a leaf from a vellum codex, and contains portions of 4, 17-19 and 4, 19-5, 1. Judging from the extent of text missing between recto and verso, the original page contained seventeen lines, with a single column of text approximating 9.0 X 7.0 cm. The lower and outer margins, which measure c. 2.5 and 2.0 cm. respectively, appear to reach almost to their original dimensions; therefore the original leaf would have measured about 14.0 X 11.0 cm.

The text is written \( \text{στρ}^{7} \text{ράς} \), or more properly by \( \chi\omega\lambda\alpha \), with each colon beginning a principal line and continuing on a line indented c. 0.7 cm. In three instances (recto, line 7 and verso, lines 5 and 8) lengthy cola have required a third line, which is indented still farther. The measurable secondary indentations are offset an additional 0.2 and 0.5 cm. The scribe did not rely on vertical or horizontal ruling to guide his pen, with the result that the indentations stray variously from the margin, and each line of text undulates slightly across the column.

The somewhat casual aspect of the format is matched by a certain informality of the hand itself, which is an extremely light and delicate uncial of the so-called "biblical" type. The characteristic chiascuro has been achieved with skillful ease. There is only the faintest suggestion

*) This fragment is the property of the Egypt Exploration Society, which has kindly permitted its publication in advance of serial re-publication in the series *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. I am glad to record my appreciation to Eric G. Turner and Peter Parsons, who have provided valuable assistance in preparing the *editio princeps*. Photographs of the fragment have been furnished by the Central Photographic Unit of University College, London.

1) The inference of a single-column format is problematic. If the fragment adjoined the inner instead of the outer margin, the extent of text missing between recto and verso would yield conclusive evidence for the number of columns. Under the actual circumstances, however, a single-column format can be inferred only from the fact that a two-column leaf would measure c. 14.0 X 20.0 cm., which is contrary to the prevailing vertical format of uncial vellum codices.
of serifs. In the formation of individual characters the scribe has cast the circular letters on a smaller scale than that of the square letters, and both have been elongated horizontally beyond rigidly symmetrical limits.

Compression of letters to conserve space is not a regular feature at line endings, this presumably due to the colometric format. On the recto, where most line endings are intact, compression has slightly affected τοὐτο in line 8, the three final letters of νεκρὸς in line 10, and less so the nomen sacrum in line 6. On the verso compression can be detected throughout the entire span of line 6.

Among the great uncial codices this hand is comparable to the third hand of Codex Sinaiticus 1), yet without its size and studied elegance. A more apposite parallel is the hand of P. Berol. 5011 (Psalms) 2). Resemblance to these hands suggests a date in the fourth century A.D. for the present fragment.

The text is almost bare of a supplementary apparatus. With the exception of a double point (:) in line 6 of the recto, there is no punctuation. Accentuation and aspiration are absent, as is iota adscript. The extant text provides no occasion for elision. Two instances of the nomen sacrum ΚĆ occur on the recto in lines 4 and 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recto (Flesh Side)</th>
<th>Verso (Hair Side)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ΚΑΙ ΟΥ ΝΟΗΜΟΥ ΥϹΝ ΤΙ ΕΒΟΥ</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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1) The meticulous analysis by H. J. M. Milne and T. C. Skeat (Scribes and Correctors of the Codex Sinaiticus [1938], p. 23) characterizes hand D with terms that are also appropriate for the script of the present fragment. Especially relevant are the smaller size of the circular letters and the “slightly undulating effect” of D’s lines.

2) See the plate in G. Cavallo, Ricercbe sulla maissance biblica (1967), II, pl. 44.