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AN 'OUR FATHER' WITH PROBLEMS

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## AN ‘OUR FATHER’ WITH PROBLEMS

This sheet (probably an amulet) with the Lord’s Prayer, held in the Beinecke Library, was published very recently in this fashion:<sup>1</sup>

- 1    πατηρ υμων [ο] ε ου[ρανοικ αγιασθητω]  
      το ονομα σο[υ ελθετο η βασιλεια σου]  
      κενηθητου = τ[ο θελημα σου ως εν ουρανω]  
      και επι κης τον αρτον [ημων τον επιουσιον]  
 5    δος υμιν συμερον = και α[φες ημιν το οφειλη-]  
      ματα υμων = ως και υμ[εις αφηκαμεν]  
      οφητης υμων = και μ[η ειςενεγκης]  
      υμας εις π[ι]ρασιμον κ[α]ι ρυσαι  
      υμας απο του πονηρο[υ.....]  
 10  το κυριω υμων - [.....]

The purpose of this note is to discuss the textual problems raised by this piece, in part due to its spelling, which the editor calls ‘barbarous’. Whether the erratic Greek in the restored parts of the text was intentional, is impossible to tell, but we may exonerate the scribe for what he wrote but has not survived: so, in line 2 for ελθετο read ελθετω, in line 5 for το read τα, and add the article τοις (however spelled) at the end of line 6, which goes with οφητης = οφειλέταις in 7 (the only veritable ‘barbarism’ in this text). It is more difficult to judge when an idiosyncratic text is further obscured by a break; in informal texts of this kind, the text is often fluid, and textual variation defies expectations. Thus in line 1 the papyrus was thought to have [ο] ε ου[ρανοικ in place of ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς: the loss of the nasal (ἐν > ε) can be paralleled from elsewhere, but the omission of the article does not seem to have any counterpart in the rest of the tradition. The editor asserts that ‘there is just sufficient space in the line for ὁ before the epsilon’, but the on-line image reveals ink traces there, which do not suit omicron; omega would be a better reading. This could be ὁ in phonetic spelling, but the letter immediately before hardly reminds one of nu, while it seems that something was corrected. Furthermore, the reading of the letter on the edge as upsilon is very dubious: what is visible is a short oblique rising from left to right, with no trace whatsoever to its left. Upsilon has two forms in this hand (the open bowl and the y-shaped one), and neither can match what we have here. This oblique could be the left-hand leg of mu or nu, but neither letter immediately suggests itself in the context.<sup>2</sup> An additional difficulty is that there does not seem to be enough room for all of τοῖς οὐρανοῖς ἀγιασθήτω in the break. All in all, a crux, and not the only one in this text.

As the editor notes, κ[α]ι ρυσαι (kappa is dotted, but the reading is secure) in line 8 ‘would be unique in the textual tradition (all other witnesses reading ἀλλά)’ (p. 64); it is also awkward that the line is rather short as restored. The solution to this problem is offered by three other witnesses to the text, BGU III 954 (van Haelst 720), P.Bad. IV 60 (van Haelst 346), and P.Duk. inv. 778<sup>3</sup>, which have κύριε at this point.<sup>4</sup> Thus

<sup>1</sup> P.CtYBR 4600: B. Nongbri, The Lord’s Prayer and XMT: Two Christian Papyrus Amulets, *HThR* 104 (2011) 59–68, at 59–64, with a plate on p. 61; for digital images, see <http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/papyrus/oneSET.asp?pid=4600>. The ‘=’ signs in the transcript, called ‘double line mark[s]’ (p. 61), could also have been rendered as short oblique strokes.

<sup>2</sup> For some time I toyed with the idea that the papyrus had ε ου [τοις ουρανοικ, with the vowels ε and ο having changed places, but this will be impossible if ω = ὁ is read before this sequence,

<sup>3</sup> Ed. C. A. La’da – A. Papatomas, A Greek Papyrus Amulet from the Duke Collection, *BASP* 41 (2004) 93–113.

<sup>4</sup> Th. J. Kraus, Manuscripts with the *Lord’s Prayer* – they are more than simply Witnesses to that Text itself, in Th. J. Kraus – T. Nicklas (eds.), *New Testament Manuscripts. Their Texts and Their World* (2006) 225–66, at 247 and 250, states that in these three texts (BGU III 954 only implicitly) the *Lord’s Prayer* ends with the vocative, but this is not the case, and only holds for an ostrakon from Greece (full references in Kraus, 237f.), which has κύριε after πονηροῦ.

the Beinecke piece probably had κύριε, written out in full or, less likely (there is no trace of a supralinear bar) as a *nomen sacrum* (κε); this would have been followed by ἀλλὰ ῥύσαι.

The last line throws up another serious problem. The *Paternoster* proper ends with πονηρο[υ in line 9, but there is one further line, possibly the last line written on this sheet. The editor is not comfortable with το, but the reading is beyond doubt. He further notes that another such text ends with the vocative κύριε,<sup>5</sup> but we do not have a vocative here, no matter how idiosyncratic the Greek could be. As with large parts of the indirect tradition, several Egyptian texts of this type add a doxological formula after the prayer (BGU III 954, P.Bad. IV 60, P.Duk. inv. 778, P.Iand. I 6 = P.Giss.Lit 5.4 [van Haelst 917], P.Köln IV 171). In one of them, the doxology is preceded by the phrase διὰ τὸ (l. τόν) μονογενῆ υἱόν (P.Duk. inv. 778.21f.), which recurs in a papyrus that does not have the doxology: P.Köln IV 171.6f., διὰ τοῦ μονογενοῦς (ς)ου Ἰη(σοῦ) Χρ(ις)τοῦ.<sup>6</sup> None of them refers to 'the Lord', but Christ can also be called 'the Lord', and we may consider whether the Beinecke papyrus had δια] | το κυριω υμων, i.e., διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. A reference to the 'Lord' as intermediary introduces a doxology in P.Oxy. III 507.5f., though the wording is not the same as here: διὰ τοῦ κυρίου κα[ι] σωτηρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χρ(ις)τοῦ. The horizontal trace at the end of line 10 would suit a cross or stauogram, which would suggest that this is the end of the text, i.e., that no other word was written after υμων; however, the phrase διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν without any further qualification would hardly be an ideal closure. Alternatively, it is eminently possible that το κυριω is to be read as τῷ κυρίῳ; a dative in this context might occur in P.Köln VIII 336.4, το[υ] πονηρω (l. -οῦ) ενχ[, where the editor tentatively proposed to restore ἐν Χ[ρισ]τῷ. Whatever the case, we are dealing with a novelty, though one whose exact wording is at present impossible to reconstruct. **See below.**

Finally, a note on the palaeography and date. The editor observes that 'while [the hand] shows some affinity to documentary hands, the letters are generally less crowded and better defined than those of documents'. He compares it with P.Vindob. G 39736 = SB VI 9576 of 643, reproduced in H. Maehler – G. Cavallo, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period* (1987), pl. 43c,<sup>7</sup> and concludes that a date 'in the sixth or early seventh century ... seems likely, although precision in these matters is always difficult'.<sup>8</sup> That such precision is hard to come by is surely true, but it is unclear how a palaeographic parallel that dates from the mid seventh century would suggest a date-range that starts from the sixth and does not go beyond the middle of the seventh century. The script is a mixture of the minuscule usually found in Greek official documents of the late seventh and earlier eighth centuries, and of the 'sloping majuscule' or ordinary Coptic writing of the time; for example, line 7 has a mostly Greek look, while line 6 starts with a mu of the minuscule type but the letter forms that follow are of the kind common in Coptic texts of the period. The handwriting is that of a trained scribe, but it should cause no surprise that the spelling is erratic; cf. e.g. MPER XV 4 (8th cent.), written in an ambitious hand but with horrendous spelling.

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9–10 Probably ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ] | το (l. τῷ) κυρίῳ ὑμῶν (l. ἡμῶν); see H. Quecke, *Untersuchungen zum koptischen Stundengebet* (1970) 438f. (cf. 334f.).

<sup>5</sup> See above, n. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Christ appears as the mediator for the doxology; see F. H. Chase, *The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church* (1891) 171.

<sup>7</sup> This document is called a 'letter', but is in fact a receipt.

<sup>8</sup> Text quoted from pp. 61 and 62.