

# Ⲣ<sup>27</sup> (Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1355) A Fresh Analysis\*

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**Abstract:** This detailed study of Ⲣ<sup>27</sup> suggests some adjustments to the older editions. In addition to revisiting its measurements and illegible letters (dots), some readings within the manuscript are challenged. A previously unnoticed alpha can be added after a new investigation into the fragment (απασα, verso line 19). It is noted that Ⲣ<sup>27</sup> contains some interesting *Sonderlesarten* often not included in critical editions, e.g. the original aorist passive εἰλελυθερωθη (verso line 16). The NA<sup>27</sup> and NA<sup>28</sup> reading of Rom 8:26 without υπερ ημων could also be confidently backed up with Ⲣ<sup>27</sup> <sup>vid.</sup>. Some speculations are raised concerning the almost illegible reading on verso line 6. The possibility of the text reading κρᾱ]ζομεν instead of υιοθε]σιας εν is suggested on the basis of an omission of the second ελαβετε from Rom 8:15 and the three dots above the last two letters of κρᾱ]ζομεν indicating a pause before the word *abba*. All in all, the study argues that the papyrus was read publically due to the reading aids that it contains.

## Introduction

Papyrus 27 (LDAB id. 3010; TM nr. 61854) was found in the manuscript treasury of a rubbish pit in Oxyrhynchus, Upper Egypt (present-day el-Bahnasa), and first published and collated in 1915 by B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt.<sup>1</sup> They assigned these two double sided fragments of a papyrus codex “with probability” to the third century.<sup>2</sup> The manuscript was first housed in Worcester Cathedral Library, from where it ended up in its present location at Cambridge University Library<sup>3</sup> (classmark Add. 7211).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Grenfell, B.P. & Hunt, A.S. (eds.), *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (Vol. XI), London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> Grenfell & Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* XI, p. 9; cf. Aland, K., *Studien zur Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments und seines Textes*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967, p. 115. Cf. Hatch, W.H.P., *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts of the New Testament*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939, plate IX, fn. 2; Junack, K., Güting, E., Nimtz, U., Witte, K. (eds.), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II: Die Paulinischen Briefe* (Vol. 1), Berlin: De Gruyter, 1989, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Hatch, *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts*, plate IX.

<sup>4</sup> Images of the item have previously been published in: Grenfell & Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* XI, pl. 1; Wessely, C., “Les plus anciens monuments du christianisme écrits sur papyrus (II),” in Graffin, R. & Nau, F. (eds.), *Patrologia Orientalis* (Vol. 18), Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1924, pp. 255–257; Hatch, *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts*, pl. IX; Comfort, P.W., & Barrett, D.P. (eds.), *The Complete Text of the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999, p. 108 (one page only); Jaroš,

Due to its early age and good textual quality, the manuscript is valuable for the textual criticism of Romans, in spite of its small amount of text. P<sup>27</sup> is a typical representative of the early fragmentary papyrus, whose importance should not be played down at the expense of the grand codices, for, as E.J. Epp points out, “it is well known that the NT papyri found at Oxyrhynchus constitute the most numerous, the most geographically concentrated, and as a whole the oldest at any single location.”<sup>5</sup> Oxyrhynchus plays indeed a unique role in New Testament textual criticism: the papyri found there comprise 42 per cent of the currently known 116 papyri,<sup>6</sup> 57 per cent of all pre-fourth-century NT manuscripts (or, 64 per cent of all NT papyri of known provenance<sup>7</sup>) were discovered there, forming “a microcosm of the various textual clusters (text-types) that present themselves across the entire NT manuscript tradition.”<sup>8</sup>

As a representative of such an important type and group of early NT manuscripts, NA<sup>27</sup> refers to P<sup>27</sup> five times, once supporting the non-vulgar reading of επ’ (Rom 8:20), once with an alternative present passive indicative form for ελευθερωω (8:21) and thrice supporting the NA<sup>27</sup> text reading (8:34; 8:38), yet twice, of these, as *vid.*<sup>9</sup> The papyrus is, therefore, worth revisiting in its own right, and especially so because of some differences that my detailed study of P<sup>27</sup> has found compared to its previously published editions.<sup>10</sup>

I studied the manuscript in Cambridge University Library over the course of the Lent Term of 2010, and again in the Michaelmas Term of 2012, using, in addition to bare eyes, a magnifying glass, a video enlarger and ultraviolet and white light, which were needed because of the (in part) poor condition of the fragments. A 600 dpi colour scan of the manuscript was also used. It is unclear whether the earlier editions could take advantage of all such tools. In my description of the papyrus, I follow D. Parker’s guidelines where applicable.<sup>11</sup>

## 1. Transcription of the Text

In the transcription below, a dot underneath the letter indicates a degree of uncertainty, while a question mark implies pure speculation. A mere dot means an illegible letter.

### 1.1. Verso

	ο]υ [τη σ]αρκι	Rom 8:12
	[του κατα σαρκα ζην ει γαρ κατα σαρκα ζ]ητ[ε] μελ	13
	[λετε αποθνησκειν ει δε π̄νι τας πραξει]ς του σω	
	[ματος θανατουτε ζησεσθε οσοι γαρ π̄νι θ̄υ αγον	14
5	[ται ουτοι ῡι θ̄υ εισιν ου γαρ ελαβετε π̄να] δουλειας	15

K., *Das Neue Testament nach den ältesten griechischen Handschriften* (CD-Rom), Wien-Würzburg: Rutzen, 2006, 2.40.

<sup>5</sup> As rightly pointed out by Epp, E.J., “The Oxyrhynchus New Testament Papyri: ‘Not without Honour Except in Their Hometown?’,” *JBL* 123 (2004), pp. 10f; contra Grenfell & Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Now up to P<sup>127</sup>, thus making Epp’s data slightly outdated.

<sup>7</sup> Epp, “The Oxyrhynchus New Testament Papyri,” p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Epp, “The Oxyrhynchus New Testament Papyri,” p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Nestle, E. & Aland, K. (eds.), *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27<sup>th</sup> revised ed., 8<sup>th</sup> corrected reprint), Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993, pp. 423f. The Byzantine εκ νεκρων would indeed not fit well in v. 34 on the manuscript. Similarly, the word order suggested by NA<sup>27</sup> fits most naturally with what can be seen on lines 39–40 recto. NA<sup>28</sup> cites P<sup>27</sup> similarly.

<sup>10</sup> Grenfell & Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* XI; cf. Wessely, “Les plus anciens monuments,” pp. 455–457.

<sup>11</sup> Parker, D. C., *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 90–94.

	[παλιν εις φοβον αλλα <u>πνα</u> υιοθεσιας εν ω κρα]ζομεν <sup>12</sup>	
	[ <u>αββα</u> ο <u>πηρ</u> ωστε? <sup>13</sup> αυτο το <u>πνα</u> συ]νμαρτυ	16
	[ρει τω <u>πνι</u> ημων οτι εσμεν τ]εκνα <u>θ[υ</u> ει δε] τεκνα	17
	[και κληρονομοι κληρονομοι] μεν <u>θ[υ</u> συνκληρονο	
10	[μοι δε <u>χ[υ]</u> ειπερ συνπασχομε]ν ινα και συνδοξα	
	[σθωμεν λογιζομαι γαρ οτι ουκ] αξια τα παθημ[ατ]α	18
	[του νυν καιρου προς την μελλ]ουσαν δ[ο]ξαν αποκα	
	[λυφθηναι εις ημας η γαρ απο]καραδ[ο]κ[ια της [κ]τι	19
	[σεως την αποκαλυψιν των] υ[ι]ων του <u>θ[υ]</u> απε.	
15	[δεχεται τη γαρ ματαιοτητι η] κτισις υπεταγη	20
	[ουχ εκουσα αλλα δια τον υπο]ταξαντα [ε]π ελπιδι	
	ο]υται απ[ο]	
	[οτι και αυτη η κτισις ελευθερ]ωθη .. της δου	21
	[λειας της φθορας εις την ελε]υθεριαν της δοξης	
	[των τεκνων του <u>θ[υ]</u> οίδαμεν] γαρ οτ[ι] απασα η κτι	22
20	[σις συνστεναζει και συνωδιν]ει αχρ[ι] του νυν	
	(3 lines lost)	
	βλεπο]μενη	24
25	[ουκ εστιν ελπις ο γαρ βλεπει τις ελπιζει ει] δε ο ου	25
	[βλεπομεν ελπιζομεν δι υπομονης απ]εκδεχ[ο]	
	[μεθα ωσαυτως δε και το <u>πνα</u> συναντιλα].βανεται	26
	[τη ασθeneia ημων το γαρ τι προσευξω]μεθα κα	
	[θο δει ουκ οίδαμεν αλλα αυτο το <u>πνα</u> υπερε]γ[τ]υ[γ]χα	
30	[νει στεναγμοις αλαλητοις ο δε εραυνων τας καρ]διας	27

## 1.2. Recto

	τις [εγκαλεσει κατα εκλεκτων <u>θ[υ]</u> <u>θ[ς]</u> ο δικαιων τις	33, 34
	ο κατ[ακρινων <u>χ[ς]</u> <u>ι[ς]</u> ο αποθανων μαλλον δε εγερθεις	
	ος κα[ι] εστιν εν δεξια του <u>θ[υ]</u> ος και εντυγχανει υπερ	
	ημων τις ημας χωρισει απο της αγαπης του <u>χ[υ]</u>	35
35	θλιψ[ις η στενοχωρια η διωγμος η λιμος η γυμνοτης	
	η κινη[δυνος η μαχαιρα καθως γεγραπται οτι ενεκεν	36
	σου θ[α]γατουμ[εθα ολην την ημεραν ελογισθημεν	
	ως προβατα σφα[γης αλλ εν τουτοις πασιν υπερνικω	37
	μεν δια του αγα[πησαντος ημας πεπεισμαι γαρ οτι	38
40	ουτε θανατος ου[τε] ζωη ουτε αγγελιοι ουτε αρχαι ου	
	τε ενεστωτα ου[τε] μελλοντα ουτε δυναμεις ουτε	39
	υψωμα ουτε βα[θος ουτε τις κτισις ετερα] δυνησεται	
	[η]μας χωρισαι α[πο της αγαπης του <u>θ[υ]</u> της εν <u>χ[ω]</u> <u>ι[ω]</u>	
	[τ]ω <u>κ[ω]</u> ημων [αληθειαν λεγω εν <u>χ[ω]</u> ου ψευδομαι	Rom 9:1
45	συνμαρτυρουσης [μοι της συνειδησεως μου εν <u>πνι</u>	
	αγιω οτι λυπη μ[οι] εστιν μεγαλη και αδιαλειπτος ο	2
	δυνη τη καρδια μ[οι] ηυχομενη γαρ αναθεμα ειναι αυ	3
	τος εγω απο του <u>χ[υ]</u> υπερ των αδελφων μου των συγγε	
	νων μου κατα [σαρκα	

<sup>12</sup> This line is particularly difficult to read.<sup>13</sup> The word ωστε is contained by D.

(3 lines lost)

	αιων[ας αμην ουχ οιον δε οτι εκπεπτωκεν ο λογος	5, 6
	του θυ ο[υ γαρ παντες οι εξ ιηλ ουτοι ιηλ ουδ οτι	7
55	εισιν σ[περμα αβρααμ παντες τεκνα αλλ εν ισαακ	
	κληθησε[ται σοι σπερμα τουτ εστιν ου τα τεκνα της	8
	σαρκο[ς ταυτα τεκνα του θυ αλλα τα τεκνα της επαγγε	
	λιας λ[ογιζεται εις σπερμα επαγγελιας γαρ ο λογος	9
	ουτος [κατα τον καιρον τουτον ελευσομαι και	
60	εστ[αι	

### 1.3. Notes on the Transcription

On the whole, my transcription of the manuscript is more stringent than the previous ones. Some of the letters transcribed with a dot, or sometimes even without, were invisible to my eyes. This could be due to the ageing of the manuscript or differences in the methods used.

Wessely's transcription differs from Grenfell & Hunt's on just five occasions: he sees one fewer letters on verso line 8 and recto line 53, one more certain letters on verso line 14 and recto line 49 and one fewer doubtful letters on recto line 45. In comparison to both of these early collations, I see significantly fewer certain letters and more doubtful ones. Junack *et al.* are closer to my reading of the papyrus, giving it an even greater number of doubtful letters. As an interesting example, their verso line 6 contains more uncertainty than the previous editions, rendering the line as υιοθεσι]ας εν instead of Grenfell & Hunt's υιοθε]σιας εν. This is, again, closer to my reading of the text. Compared to Comfort & Barrett, I see more letters on four and fewer on at least fifteen occasions. Their transcription also reads the superscription of verso line 17 differently as -σεται instead of -ουται, without stating why. Another difference is the absence of any indication of uncertainty in their collation.

The following chart sums up how many letters different transcriptions see in P<sup>27</sup>.

Transcription	Published	Visible letters	Certain letters	Doubtful letters
Grenfell & Hunt	1915	464	439	25
Wessely	1924	462	440	22
Junack <i>et al.</i>	1989	459	365	94
Comfort & Barrett	1999	468	–	–
Siikavirta	2013	459	378	81

## 2. The Physical and Palaeographical Characteristics of P<sup>27</sup>

On the whole, the text of P<sup>27</sup> is badly damaged, with between half or two thirds of the textual column lost.<sup>14</sup> Most scholars deduce that the papyrus was a one-column page composed of 32 to 33 lines, of which only 20 + 7 lines on the verso and 19 + 8 lines on the recto side remain, with three lines in between the fragments and “several” upper and lower lines lost completely.<sup>15</sup> The others propose that the number of letters is between 32 and 42 per line<sup>16</sup> while my transcription gives a slightly broader spectrum from 29 to 42 and an average of approximately 36.

<sup>14</sup> Grenfell & Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* XI, p. 9; Aland, *Studien*, p. 115.

<sup>15</sup> Aland, *Studien*, p. 115; Hatch, *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts*, plate IX; Junack (et al), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 30; van Haelst, J., *Catalogue des papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens*, Paris: Sorbonne, 1976, p. 179.

<sup>16</sup> Aland, *Studien*, p. 115; Junack (et al.), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 30.

Twelve to thirteen lines would be needed to fit Rom 8:27–32 in the missing portion between the two-sides, making use of the average of 36 letters per line. Assuming that the gap is evenly divided between the two sides, that would give the papyrus about 36 lines per page already, not taking into account the missing top of the verso and the bottom of the recto side. Therefore, Eric G. Turner’s estimate of “41?” lines per page resonates with my analysis.<sup>17</sup> To estimate how many pages Romans or the entire Pauline corpus would have encompassed in the codex of which P<sup>27</sup> was a part, the following calculation would need to be conducted: the number of letters in Romans or the Pauline corpus ÷ (36 × 41).

Taken from different points of the fragments,<sup>18</sup> we gain the following measurements:

	Large fragment	Small fragment
Widest point (cm)	4.4	3.1
Narrowest point (cm)	2.0	1.6
Longest point (cm)	10.9	4.5
Shortest point (cm)	6.8	3.3

These results differ somewhat from the less detailed overall measurements of Grenfell & Hunt and others of 11.2 x 4.4 cm for the large fragment and 4.7 x 2.5 cm for the small fragment (cf. K. Aland’s 11 x 4.4).<sup>19</sup> Originally, the page is envisaged to have been 25–26 x 13 cm, with approximately 23–24 x 10 cm as the dimensions of the written area.<sup>20</sup> Also my measurements of the margins differ from those of Aland, K. Junack *et al.*, who mention merely an outer margin of 1.5 cm:<sup>21</sup> the outer margin on the verso side as we have it now measures 0.3–1.0 cm and 1.0–1.3 cm on the recto side.

As the fragments are double-sided, the fibres on the verso go in the left-right diagonal direction, compared with the vertical fibres on the recto side.<sup>22</sup> At times, the wearing out of the papyrus has revealed and twisted the fibre structure so severely that it makes the text difficult to read. According to W.H.P. Hatch, the much clearer recto side must have been reproduced.<sup>23</sup> The small hole penetrating the margin on line 15 of verso and 44 of recto could be a binding trace. Similar traces may be seen in e.g. P<sup>105</sup> (*P. Oxy. LXIV 4406*) and in *P. Ryl. III 461d*.

The hand can be characterised as upright informal majuscule<sup>24</sup> as well as irregular (cf. the alphas, epsilons etc.), and despite being uncial, it has cursive elements typical of the third century.<sup>25</sup> The ligature elements in the text are interesting. For instance, on the second line of the verso, all three letters in the Greek μετ are tied together. Another good example on the recto side is the ligature of ωσ on line 38. The letters alpha, iota, kappa and pi extend below the line, delta and iota go over the line (notable in κτισις on verso line 15), and beta, xi, phi and psi do both.<sup>26</sup> The letter xi is particularly elaborate and has a tail that stretches underneath the following letter (see for instance αξια on verso line 11). Hatch rightly points out that between some

<sup>17</sup> Turner, E.G., *The Typology of the Early Codex*, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977, p. 147.

<sup>18</sup> As suggested by Parker, *Introduction*, p. 91.

<sup>19</sup> Grenfell & Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri XI*, p. 9; Wessely, “Les plus anciens monuments,” p. 455; Aland, *Studien*, p. 115; Turner, *Typology*, p. 147 lacks an estimate of the overall page dimensions.

<sup>20</sup> van Haelst, *Catalogue des papyrus*, p. 499; Aland, *Studien*, p. 115.

<sup>21</sup> Aland, *Studien*, p. 115; Junack (et al), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 30.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. van Haelst, *Catalogue des papyrus*, p. 499.

<sup>23</sup> Hatch, *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts*, plate IX.

<sup>24</sup> Grenfell & Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri XI*, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> Wessely, “Les plus anciens monuments,” p. 455.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Junack (*et al.*), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 31.

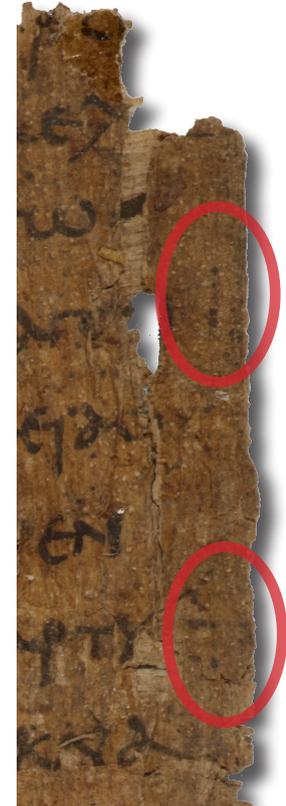
words, there is slight separation,<sup>27</sup> notably on line 42 of the recto (ὑψωμα ουτεβα[θος) and line 3 of the verso (του σω[ματος). This could also be the case with the proposed gap before the word *abba* (verso line 7; see below).

There are no stops in the text apart from the paragraphus line on top of recto line 54 on the small fragment (Rom 9:6).<sup>28</sup> There, the τ of του penetrates slightly further into the margin than elsewhere in the papyrus.<sup>29</sup> The text lacks accentuation and punctuation but does contain the diaeresis on the initial iota and upsilon.<sup>30</sup>

It also seems that various kinds of dots appear mostly in the margins but also between lines, which has not been noted by the previous editors. Most of the single dots look like standard line markers (e.g. recto lines 35–40), but the triple (the edge of the margin on recto line 37) and double dots (e.g. verso line 25 of the small fragment) are more complicated—let alone the combination of a dash underneath (verso line 19 and maybe 11) or above two dots (verso line 7; verso line 27). Especially two of these are worth mentioning. On the sixth line of the verso, there appear to be three dots in a down-pointing triangular shape above the letters ε and ν. This is especially significant if the word on the line is κρα]ζομεν instead of υιοθε]σιας εν, as I speculate below, in which case it might indicate a pause in voiced reading before the Aramaic word *abba*. This, however, is mere speculation. The following line on the same page has both an elongated upsilon for right-hand justification and what looks like a dash on two parallel dots (see figure 1).

As Comfort and Barrett have suggested, P<sup>27</sup> has close similarities with P<sup>20</sup>, or, even, presents the same hand.<sup>31</sup> Similar letters include the alpha, beta, delta, epsilon, kappa, iota, omicron, pi, rho, sigma, phi, upsilon, psi, omega, whilst dissimilarities exist in the eta, mu and nu.<sup>32</sup> The zeta may be another letter that looks different. P<sup>20</sup> has been dated to the third century, which means that P<sup>27</sup> would stem from the same time period, even if it were not written by the same copyist. Junack *et al.*, however, have argued that P<sup>27</sup> is certainly older than P<sup>20</sup>, whose penmanship is better than in P<sup>27</sup>.<sup>33</sup>

The text lacks itacisms and assimilations, reading συ]νμαρτυ[ρει (Rom 8:16), συνκληρονο[μοι (8:17) and συνμαρτυρουση[ς (9:1).<sup>34</sup> The following *nomina sacra* are visibly abbreviated: θεος (8:14, 17, 19; 9:6), κυριος (8:39), πνευμα (8:14) and χριστος (9:3). The text length makes it likely that others such as υιος, ιησους, ισραηλ and πατηρ were contracted as well.<sup>35</sup>



1. Close-up of dots highlighted on verso lines 4 and 7.

<sup>27</sup> Hatch, *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts*, plate IX.

<sup>28</sup> Grenfell & Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri XI*, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> Junack (*et al.*), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Grenfell & Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri XI*, p. 9; Hatch, *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts*, plate IX; Junack (*et al.*), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 31.

<sup>31</sup> Comfort, P.W., & Barrett, D.P. (eds.), *The Complete Text of the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999, pp. 97, 109.

<sup>32</sup> Comfort, P.W., *Encountering the Manuscripts: An Introduction to New Testament Paleography & Textual Criticism*, Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005, pp. 168–169, cf. 63.

<sup>33</sup> Junack (*et al.*), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 31.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Junack (*et al.*), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 31.

<sup>35</sup> Grenfell & Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri XI*, pp. 9–11; cf. Junack (*et al.*), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 31.

### 3. The Textual Problems of P<sup>27</sup>

P<sup>27</sup> has text from Rom 8:12–22, 24–27 (verso) and 8:33–9:3, 35–39 (recto).<sup>36</sup> In its original form, P<sup>27</sup> contained mostly a good quality Alexandrian text.<sup>37</sup> The only clearly visible exceptions are the επ' instead of the vulgar εφ' on verso line 16 and the unknown present passive correction of the illegible reading on verso line 17.<sup>38</sup> On the basis of the tight space, it is very likely that the text there originally read ελευθερωθη or ηλευθερωθη εκ in the aorist instead of the longer future passive.<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, Grenfell & Hunt seem to think so as well but do not print it in the text of their edition. The correction by a later hand (ελευθερο]υται απ[ο) together with the original reading are



2. The correction in Rom 8:21 (between verso lines 16 and 17).

both *Sonderlesarten* only found in P<sup>27</sup> and some Vulgate manuscripts.<sup>40</sup> Comfort and Barrett, however, render the correction as ελευθερωθησεται, without explaining why.<sup>41</sup> The present form would logically match those in Rom 8:22 and convey a meaning of the liberation of creation as an on-going process, whilst the aorist is slightly odd albeit understandable if referring to the recapitulation and liberation that has already and definitely taken place in Christ.

Somewhat more surprisingly, the first editors seem to have missed the initial α from απασα in Rom 8:22 (see figure 3).<sup>42</sup> The small ellipse-shaped trace is unlikely to be anything but the round part of the alpha, not even part of the initial π.<sup>43</sup> This is especially evident when compared to the almost identical second α of the word. The video enlarger came in useful when confirming this small discovery. Grenfell & Hunt, together with the subsequent editions, have failed to notice the alpha even though it is visible to the naked eye. They do not even mistake it for the iota of σι, which their edition puts in brackets. This extra letter does not alter the meaning in any way, however, as the form with an alpha is merely an alternative yet slightly less common form of πασα.



3. The discovered alpha in Rom 8:22, reading γαρ σι[ι] απασα η κτι (verso line 19).

Another observation concerning previous editors has to do with verso line 6. There, the letters before the εν are somewhat problematic. To my eye, it would be possible to envisage the word as κρα]ζομεν (or, indeed, κρα]ξομεν as in F) instead of υιοθε]σιας εν. This word could fit at the end of the line if the somewhat redundant repetition of the verb ελαβετε were omitted, resulting in 40 letters on the line. This could happen as the result of a careless mistake but would not change the meaning of the sentence. The suggested reading would include a gap of five to ten letters before (or, indeed, after) the interjection αββα ο πηρ as a reading aid. A similar gap seems to appear in P<sup>20</sup> on recto line 11, between the invisible ορατε σι and before the

<sup>36</sup> Aland, *Studien*, p. 115; Junack (et al), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 30.

<sup>37</sup> Junack (et al.), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 31.

<sup>38</sup> Grenfell & Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri XI*, p. 9; Hatch, *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts*, plate IX.

<sup>39</sup> Grenfell & Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri XI*, p. 11 fn. 17; cf. Wessely, “Les plus anciens monuments,” p. 457 and Junack (et al), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 31.

<sup>40</sup> Junack (et al.), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 31.

<sup>41</sup> Comfort, & Barrett, *Complete Text*, p. 110.

<sup>42</sup> Grenfell & Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri XI*, p. 10; cf. Wessely, “Les plus anciens monuments,” p. 456.

<sup>43</sup> This is a reading by Junack (et al.), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 62.

emphatic statement of Jas 2:24 (ἐξ ἐργῶν [δικαιουται ανθρωπος κα]ι ουκ εκ πιστεω[ς μονον]).<sup>44</sup> One may speculate further with insertions such as ωστε, as found in Codex Claromontanus (D) and in the Syriac Peshitta. This would signify a further departure in P<sup>27</sup> from the Alexandrian text-type towards a Western (or Byzantine, in the case of sy<sup>p</sup>) text.

On the other hand, such speculated omission of the verb is not attested anywhere else, and the proposed reading does have its problems. The long, slightly curved letter, if taken as a ζ, does not occur elsewhere in the papyrus for comparison. If taken as the work of the same scribe, the zeta in P<sup>20</sup> (occurring three times) lacks the long downward stroke appearing in this section, looking much like the modern capital Z. The iotas in P<sup>20</sup> are also sometimes markedly extended and final sigmas often open downwards, which could also be the case here. If taken as the iota of υιοθε]σιας, however, it would certainly be the longest and curviest one in P<sup>27</sup>. Perhaps this is why Junack *et al.* render υιοθεσι]ας.<sup>45</sup> A useful point of comparison between the majority interpretation of this line in P<sup>27</sup> and P<sup>20</sup> is recto line 6 in the latter where the same sequence of letters (σιασ) occurs in the word θυσιαστηριον and looks rather similar to what it could be in υιοθε]σιας in P<sup>27</sup>. In P<sup>27</sup>, there would also seem to be a small gap between the μ and the ε, unless the wrinkling of the vertical fibres have simply caused it to appear over time. That could be the case, and P<sup>20</sup> may indeed not be the product of the same scribe. What we can be sure of is that the decay of the manuscript's fibres makes reading the letters before εν very difficult.

The significance of P<sup>27</sup> for the textual variants concerning διοτι (8:21), τις (8:24), τη ασθeneia (8:26), υπερ ημων (8:26), ιησους (8:34) and τις 8:39 is also an interesting question. Suffice it to say that since all of these variants are *vid.* in the manuscript, assumptions concerning them can only be treated as such, apart from one exception. The addition of υπερ ημων (8:26) is clearly not supported by P<sup>27</sup>, as it would lead to the exceptionally great number of 50 letters on verso line 30. All the other variants, perhaps aside from the extra long τις τι και reading of 8:24 (yielding 44 letters on verso line 25), would fit within the papyrus' normal range of letters per line.

These observations show how much speculation is involved when discerning the letters and words of a badly damaged and worn out papyrus. Moreover, on the basis of how many more letters Grenfell & Hunt read compared to the number readable today—especially at the ends of the lines—the question must be raised whether they had P<sup>27</sup> in a much better condition almost a century ago or if they were simply more optimistic in their work than contemporary scholars.

## Conclusion

The correction in Rom 8:21 indicates that the text was treated with some care. While the small size of the papyrus is taken by some to indicate that it was not meant for public (liturgical) reading, P<sup>45</sup> is of a similar size and has reading marks that indicate that such usage was possible for manuscripts written in small hand, too.<sup>46</sup> As Peter Head has observed, many of the Oxyrhynchus fragments from the second and the third centuries portray clear evidence of diaeresis (P<sup>100</sup>, also P<sup>66</sup>, P<sup>45</sup>), breathing marks (P<sup>77</sup>, P<sup>104</sup>, P<sup>107</sup>, P<sup>113</sup>, also P<sup>45</sup>), punctuation marks (P<sup>77</sup>, P<sup>102</sup>, P<sup>103</sup>, P<sup>113</sup>, P<sup>115</sup>, also e.g. P<sup>45</sup>, P<sup>66</sup>, P<sup>75</sup>), paragraph divisions (P<sup>77</sup> and codices cited earlier) and

<sup>44</sup> High-definition images of P<sup>20</sup> can be consulted at <http://www.princeton.edu/~dcskemer/APIS-James1.html>.

<sup>45</sup> Junack (et al), *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus II*, p. 31.

<sup>46</sup> I am indebted to Dr Peter M. Head for this observation.

page numbering (P<sup>106</sup>, also P<sup>66</sup>).<sup>47</sup> Although P<sup>27</sup> lacks punctuation, the existing *nomina sacra*, diaereses on an iota (8:17; cf. second-century P<sup>52</sup> in recto line 32, verso line 2) and two upsilons (8:19, 39), gaps between letters (verso line 3; recto line 42; possibly also verso line 7; cf. P<sup>75</sup>) and possible reading-aid dots (most notably verso line 6; cf. P<sup>75</sup>) may indicate that this manuscript's early use entailed public reading.<sup>48</sup> Recto line 54 is the only place where P<sup>27</sup> shows evidence of ekthesis (projection of the first letter of a new section into the left margin such as in P<sup>64</sup>). Despite variation in how divisions were marked, as Epp points out, there is clear indication of liturgical use amongst the Oxyrhynchus papyri.<sup>49</sup> It is likely that amidst the persecutions of the third century, Paul's comforting text at the end of Rom 8 would have been cherished and read often in Christian congregations.

Because of its excellent category I text, it can be maintained that P<sup>27</sup> is an earlier representative of the text type that made its way into the Codex Vaticanus. As Epp maintains, Oxyrhynchus was a cradle of all text-types.<sup>50</sup> It is, therefore, possible that the textual tradition behind old papyri such as P<sup>27</sup> was used as the source for the formation of B, increasing the significance of the papyrus. Critical editions of the NT could take advantage of the papyrus even more than the five times that NA<sup>27</sup> and NA<sup>28</sup> do. For instance, the original and unique aorist passive reading of ε/ηλευθερωθη could be mentioned, as it conveys a very different kind of meaning from the future passive. Similarly, the reading of 8:26 without υπερ ημων could be confidently backed up with a P<sup>27</sup> <sup>vid</sup> in the apparatus. In future studies, the speculated omission of the second ελαβετε in Rom 8:15 would also be an interesting detail to test further.

All in all, this study of P<sup>27</sup> has shown that even well-known and widely studied papyri reward further examination. Further in-depth studies of the so far neglected dots and their potential role as reading and pronunciation aids may provide interesting insights into the context in which P<sup>27</sup> was used.

<sup>47</sup> Head, P.M., "Some Recently Published NT Papyri from Oxyrhynchus: An Overview and Preliminary Assessment," *TynBul* 51 (2000), pp. 1–16, p. 5; cf. Head, P.M., "Is P<sup>4</sup>, P<sup>64</sup> and P<sup>67</sup> the Oldest Manuscript of the four Gospels? A Response to T. C. Skeat," *NTS* 51 (2005), pp. 450–457. Also Hurtado, L.W., *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, p. 182.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, pp. 177–181. Head admits, however, that sometimes the "dots" remain simply inexplicable, especially when they do not correspond to paragraph divisions (see the discussion on Papyrus 100 in Head, "Some Recently Published NT Papyri," p. 14).

<sup>49</sup> Epp, "The Oxyrhynchus New Testament Papyri," p. 54.

<sup>50</sup> Epp, "The Oxyrhynchus New Testament Papyri," p. 12.

