

POLYCRATES' GUESTS:  
EXTRANEOUS TEXT AND ANCIENT CONSERVATION ON *P. Oxy.* 1790

The manuscript

*P. Oxy.* XV 1790 (Figure 1) is one of the most important surviving manuscripts of archaic Greek lyric<sup>1</sup>. It was published in 1922 by A. S. Hunt, who attributed it to Ibycus<sup>2</sup>. The attribution is not confirmed by overlap with fragments known from other sources, but has been generally accepted in subsequent scholarship and is indeed quite likely<sup>3</sup>. Our manuscript is one of only a small handful of papyri whose attribution to Ibycus has even been proposed<sup>4</sup>. Its fr. 1 preserves the poet's longest extant fragment, commonly known as the 'Polycrates Ode' (*PMGF* S151)<sup>5</sup>. It comes from the very end of the roll. Two full columns are followed by eight lines of a third, below which an elaborate *koronis* marks the end of the poem and of the book<sup>6</sup>. Originally, the extant fragment was 'succeeded by a complete width of 13 centimetres of papyrus', in the first editor's testimony<sup>7</sup>. This further fragment parted ways with the rest of the papyrus early on: there is no trace of it in the photograph that accompanied the *editio princeps*, it was not put under glass together with the other fragments, and none of the subsequent editors of the papyrus seems to have seen it<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 1237, *LDAB* 2434, *TM* 61292. Readers whose exclusive interest is the lyric fragment will find this article's only contribution to its text on p. \*.

<sup>2</sup> HUNT 1922a; authorship discussed at pp. 73-4.

<sup>3</sup> See also GARGIULO 2011, p. 71. After a great deal of complaining about the fragment's alleged poetic failings, PAGE 1951, p. 168 suggests that this «courtier-verse of the Ibycean type» may be «the work not of the master but of the school». BARRON 1969 *passim* has a few rebuttals for the alleged «inelegances of expression» (p. 119) that seem to be the only basis of Page's contrarian hypothesis.

<sup>4</sup> The other two are *P. Oxy.* XXXV 2735 (MP<sup>3</sup> 1485.4, *LDAB* 3972, *TM* 62784) and L 3538 (MP<sup>3</sup> 1942.8, *LDAB* 2433, *TM* 61291), whose attribution to Ibycus was proposed respectively by PAGE 1969, p. 71 and by WEST 1984, pp. 23-4. The attribution seems likely to be correct in both cases; on the first see now FINGLASS 2017. Also worthy of note are three fragmentary *hypommemata*, *P. Oxy.* XXXII 2636 (MP<sup>3</sup> 1949.2, *LDAB* 4819, *TM* 63610), XXXII 2637 (MP<sup>3</sup> 1949.3, *LDAB* 4820, *TM* 63611), and LXV 4456, which have been linked to Ibycus respectively by UCCIARDELLO 2001, pp. 106-13, PAGE 1970, pp. 93-4, and HASLAM 1998, p. 59. The Ibycean connection of the second has been accepted by most scholars, though see TREU 1968-1969, pp. 435-8 (suggesting Simonides) and the ἐποχή of UCCIARDELLO 2004, p. 53 n. 1; against the attribution of the third to Ibycus see UCCIARDELLO 2002-2003. On the transmission of Ibycus' text see UCCIARDELLO 2005 (esp. pp. 21-3, 46-54) and WILKINSON 2013, pp. 43-5.

<sup>5</sup> For commentary see HUTCHINSON 2001, pp. 237-56 and WILKINSON 2013, pp. 58-87. PAGE 1951, p. 167 suggests that the poem was one of several whose authorship was disputed by the ancients between Ibycus and Stesichorus, since schol. A.R. 4.973, p. 300 Wendel quotes only Stesichorus (*PMGF* 260 = fr. 316 Davies-Finglass) and Bacchylides (fr. 51 Maehler), not Ibycus, as poetic authorities for the word ὀρεῖχάλκος, which is found in our fragment (vv. 42-3); see also CINGANO 1992, pp. 196-7 and DAVIES – FINGLASS 2014, p. 592. It bears noting that disputed authorship of a poem need not imply that it was actually found in the canonical editions of both poets.

<sup>6</sup> HUNT 1922a, p. 73; further arguments in BARRON 1969, p. 119.

<sup>7</sup> HUNT 1922a, p. 73.

<sup>8</sup> BARRON, who examined the original (1969, p. 144 n. 1), only mentions the final *agraphon* through Hunt's report; PUGLIA 1997, p. 36 refers to its presence as merely 'probabile'.

Hunt assigned the writing to «the middle or latter half of the first century BC», but as later palaeographers realised, it needs to be antedated to the first part of that century at the latest, and more probably to sometime in the previous century<sup>9</sup>. The hand is an elaborate but «rather crabbed»<sup>10</sup>. fair-sized (letter-height 3 to 4 mm), top-heavy, strictly bilinear, and heavily ornamented majuscule. The line-spacing is irregular but relatively generous (mostly 2 to 3 mm). The height of a full twenty-line column is 12 cm. The column-to-column width at coll. ii-iii can be estimated to just under that figure. Including the handsome upper and lower margins, which seem to be preserved in their entirety or almost so, the roll was just over 20 cm tall. This datum is not unexpected for a Ptolemaic roll<sup>11</sup>. To compare just the obvious lyric examples, *P.Oxy.* XI 1361 + XVII 2081(e) = *P.Lond.Lit.* 48 of Bacchylides' *Encomia* (first century BC or early first AD), which at one point was probably in the same library as the Ibycus, is 23.1 cm tall<sup>12</sup>; *P.Lille* inv. 23 + 26 + 111c of Stesichorus (early second century BC) is 23.5 cm tall<sup>13</sup>; *P.Oxy.* IV 659 = *P.Lond.Lit.* 44 of Pindar's *Partheneia* (mid- or late first century BC) may have been even shorter than these, very close to our Ibycus<sup>14</sup>. The *verso* is blank. Both the detached final *agraphon* (*teste* Hunt) and the space below the eight-line col. iii preserve no trace of an end-title, which again is unsurprising in an Egyptian papyrus of this date: hexameter papyri, for instance, provide plenty of parallels for Ptolemaic rolls lacking end-titles<sup>15</sup>. The roll had a long history spanning several centuries before it was discarded onto the rubbish heap that would become the Kôm Ali el-Gammân in Behnesa, as will be discussed in greater detail below<sup>16</sup>.

When re-editing *PMGF* S151 (then known as *PMG* 282) for a seminar at the Institute of Classical Studies in early 1969 and subsequently for publication in its *Bulletin*, John P. Barron availed himself of infrared photographs taken by Eric Hitchcock, UCL's in-house photographer at the time<sup>17</sup>. As well as a better view of the poetic text and of the scholion to the right of col. ii, the new photograph of the largest fragments (frr. 1, 2, 3, 10, 22) clearly showed the presence of further, extraneous writing on the papyrus, in mirror image, most of which invisible to the naked eye<sup>18</sup>. Borrowing a neologism from Brian Rotman (via Christian Bök) and honouring Polycrates' celebrated hospitality one might call this extraneous writing a 'xenotext'<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> First century: HUNT 1922a, p. 73. Second: Turner *ap.* BARRON 1969, p. 119 («c. 130 B.C.», cfr. *GMAW*<sup>2</sup> p. 48), see also KIM 1988, p. 250 n. 10. Second or early first: CAVALLO 1991, pp. 20-1 [2005, p. 115]. Late second: MAEHLER 1998, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> HUNT 1922a, p. 73.

<sup>11</sup> See TURNER 1980, p. 37; CAVALLO 1983, p. 48; JOHNSON 2004, pp. 142-3, 216 (table 3.6B.2).

<sup>12</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 179, *LDAB* 436, *TM* 59337; height measured on the original. Date: GRENFELL – HUNT 1915a, p. 65 (first century AD); CAVALLO 1974, p. 36 [2005 pp. 127-8], 1991, p. 16 [2005, pp. 109-10] (first BC or hardly later than the early first AD). On the find context see p. \* below.

<sup>13</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 1486.1, *LDAB* 3975, *TM* 62787. For the height of the roll I rely on ANCHER – BOYAVAL – MEILLIER 1976, p. 293; PARSONS 1977, p. 8. Different dates have been proposed by ANCHER – BOYAVAL – MEILLIER 1976, p. 257 («pas postérieures au II<sup>e</sup> siècle, la deuxième moitié du III<sup>e</sup> siècle n'étant pas à exclure»); PARSONS 1977, p. 7 (early second century); HASLAM 1978, p. 30 («the second half of the third century»); TURNER 1980, pp. 21, 36-8 («say 270-230», cfr. *GMAW*<sup>2</sup> p. 124); CAVALLO 1983, p. 48 (first half of the second century, cfr. CAVALLO – MAEHLER 2008, p. 84). The latter dating was eventually endorsed by CLARYSSE 1990, pp. 353-4 on the basis of the documentary papyri found with the Stesichorus.

<sup>14</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 1371, *LDAB* 3742, *TM* 62560. A suggestion on the height of the roll can be found in PRODI 2014, p. 103, but see also the arguments for a larger format in D'ALESSIO 1991, pp. 106-8. Date: GRENFELL – HUNT 1904, p. 50 («latter half of the first century B.C.»); see also CAVALLO 1991, p. 21 [2005, p. 115] and CAVALLO – MAEHLER 2008, p. 126 (late first BC or early first AD).

<sup>15</sup> SCHIRONI 2010, pp. 25-8; 2016, p. 85.

<sup>16</sup> See p. \* below.

<sup>17</sup> BARRON 1969, esp. p. 144 n. 1; COCKLE 1983, p. 158.

<sup>18</sup> BARRON 1969, pl. V.

<sup>19</sup> ROTMAN 1987, 101-2; BÖK 2015 (on which see also GURD 2018).

Since it was clearly by a different hand and thus had no bearing on Ibycus' poem, Barron gave a summary description of it but made no attempt to investigate it further. Today, multispectral imaging (MSI) techniques allow hidden or faded inks to be brought into sharper relief than they could be in the Sixties, and the MSI of *P.Oxy.* 1790 fr. 1 which James Brusuelas kindly took for me is no exception (Figure 2, reversed like all the subsequent ones). It is to an exploration of the text(s) so brought to light that the present paper is devoted.

Barron described the situation as follows<sup>20</sup>:

In addition to the main text the papyrus carries three separate series of offsets, the result either of the accidental laying of another sheet of writing face-down upon the first before its ink was dry, or of the rolling of papyri face to face in circumstances in which they then became wet and exchanged their ink. These traces are visible to the naked eye in the upper margin. With the aid of infra-red photography (as on *Pl. V*) they may also be detected in the vacant space below the short column iii and in the lower margin. The offsets in the lower margin appear to have been made by writing of much the same date as the main text. But neither they nor any other of these traces are by the hand of the original scribe; and they need not now detain us. Part of the space left vacant below the last column is occupied by a scholium, in a hand of perhaps the first century A.D. By this time the roll was some two hundred years old, and it had evidently become rather fragile. On the *recto* both upper and lower margins have been strengthened by the addition of strips of inscribed papyrus, pasted face-downwards. These strips, which may be discerned in the photograph by their lighter tone, were added after the arrival of the earliest offsets, which they overlie in the margin below column iii.

He obviously envisaged two kinds of extraneous text on *P.Oxy.* 1790: the «offsets» deposited by another papyrus, and the original text of the «inscribed» papyrus strips that were used in antiquity to conserve *P.Oxy.* 1790 itself. However, he does not specify which visible writing, if any, he identifies as coming from these papyrus strips. Given his description of the position of the «offsets», one might conclude that in his judgement *all* the extraneous text on the manuscript – in the upper margin, in the blank space below col. iii, and in the lower margin – consisted of offset ink. A close inspection of the original and of the new MSI will reveal otherwise. Already Giambattista D'Alessio, in a cursory reference, has recently suggested that «the writing in the upper and lower margin surely belongs to a strip of papyrus used to restore the Ibycus [. . .] There are, however, traces also “in the empty central space” that cannot be accounted for in this way, and that are likely to be indeed offsets»<sup>21</sup>. The present article confirms the first part of the statement and qualifies the second: the traces «in the empty central space» are indeed to be accounted for in the same way as the others. First, however, let us review the evidence for the two phenomena in question.

### Offset ink on papyri

That ink can become offset from its place and leave a mirror image of itself elsewhere is well attested in the papyrological record<sup>22</sup>. Research has been particularly stimulated in the last decade by the publication of, and controversy on, the so-called Artemidorus papyrus (*P.Artemid.*)<sup>23</sup>.

The earliest example to be identified may have been *P.Oxy.* XV 1793 (Callimachus fr. 387, 388 Pfeiffer), some fragments of which Hunt was able to place correctly by taking into

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<sup>20</sup> BARRON 1969, pp. 119-21.

<sup>21</sup> D'ALESSIO 2012, p. 298 n. 32. He cites PUGLIA 1997, p. 36, who mentions «strisce di papiro, le quali mostrano tracce molto labili di scrittura precedente, incollate a faccia in giù», but no offsets, and likewise only relates the papyrus strips to the margins.

<sup>22</sup> This section has been greatly enriched by the dossier in D'ALESSIO 2012, pp. 297-8.

<sup>23</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 168.02, LDAB 7132, TM 65868.

consideration the offsets left by the one on the back of the other<sup>24</sup>. Another example is *P. Yale I 19 = P.CtYBr inv. 360*, a fragment of a roll of Thucydides, the mirror writing on the back of which was recognised in 1997, a full three decades after the *editio princeps*<sup>25</sup>. The mirror writing recognised on the verso of *P.Oxy. inv. 33 4B 83E (8-11)* (Menander's *Sikyonios*) by its editor, Eric Handley, remains unpublished<sup>26</sup>; he suggests that it represents a column from the next coil in the roll, and this suggestion will have to stand until the verso can be studied in more detail. Two major instances have come to light in the early years of this century: the Milan roll of the epigrams of Posidippus (*P.Mil.Vogl. VIII 309*)<sup>27</sup> and the Artemidorus papyrus, published in 2001 and 2008 respectively. In the former, the ink became offset when the manuscript had already been cut up and turned into cartonnage. In *P.Artemid.*, most of the offsetting took place when the roll was still intact and rolled, although some further offsets came into being after the manuscript was incorporated into the *Konvolut* from which it was extracted in 1981<sup>28</sup>. Among the latter group of offsets there are some left by the documentary papyri that were found in the *Konvolut* together with the Artemidorus papyrus<sup>29</sup>; some offsetting reportedly took place between these documentary papyri too<sup>30</sup>. Most recently, a further instance of this phenomenon has been recognised by the editor of *PSI XVI 1584*, another papyrus of Thucydides which preserves on the back a mirror image of a portion – now lost – of the next column on the front<sup>31</sup>. Many similar examples are provided by documentary papyri, helpfully listed in D'Alessio's article<sup>32</sup>.

Among the instances just quoted, in only one did the offsetting occur between different papyri (thus producing a true xenotext): namely, between the Artemidorus papyrus and the documents that accompanied it all the way from the mummification workshop that made the *Konvolut* to the coffers of the Compagnia di San Paolo<sup>33</sup>. In other words, the situation envisaged by Barron is uncommon but not unparalleled.

#### Papyrus conservation in antiquity

That deteriorated, or deteriorating, papyrus could be repaired by adding strips of reused papyrus is also well attested. A few examples drawn mostly from the work of Enzo Puglia – the go-to author for the conservation and restoration of papyrus manuscripts in antiquity – will suffice<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 234, *LDAB* 464, *TM* 59365; HUNT 1922b, p. 99.

<sup>25</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 1528.1, *LDAB* 4068, *TM* 62877; identification of the *verso* and re-edition of the fragment in BABCOCK – EMMEL 1997 («a list of names» which «has washed badly and is largely illegible» according to the *edd. prr.* OATES – SAMUEL – WELLES 1967, p. 39, who of course were reading it the wrong way around).

<sup>26</sup> HANDLEY 1984, p. 25. The papyrus was never republished in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* and therefore does not have a 'proper' *P.Oxy.* number.

<sup>27</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 1435.01, *LDAB* 3852, *TM* 62665. On the offsets see BASTIANINI – GALLAZZI 2001, pp. 28-109 *passim*.

<sup>28</sup> GALLAZZI – KRAMER – SETTIS 2008: 63–4 (54, 60–2 on the *Konvolut* and its dismantling). Among further discussions of the mirror text (and images) and their significance for the reconstruction of the roll see OTRANTO 2007a, pp. 318-20 [2007b, pp. 46-9]; BASTIANINI 2009; D'ALESSIO 2009, pp. 37–41; D'ALESSIO 2012; TARTE 2012.

<sup>29</sup> GALLAZZI – KRAMER – SETTIS 2008, p. 63; GALLAZZI – KRAMER 2012, p. 276-7. The documents are still unpublished.

<sup>30</sup> GALLAZZI – KRAMER 2009, p. 196; 2012, p. 277 and pl. 1–3.

<sup>31</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 1505.01, *LDAB* 4058, *TM* 62867; LÓPEZ GARCÍA 2013, p. 40. An image of the papyrus can be found *ibid.*, pl. V. *P.Oxy* LVII 3879 belongs to the same manuscript, but shows no such mirror text on the back (*ibid.*, p. 40).

<sup>32</sup> D'ALESSIO 2012, p. 297-8. A further instance is *P.Oxy. XVIII 2192 (TM 29029)*, see ROBERTS 1941, p. 150.

<sup>33</sup> On the collecting history of *P.Artemid.* see GALLAZZI – KRAMER – SETTIS 2008: 53–4.

<sup>34</sup> PUGLIA 1997, esp. chapters 2 and 4; see also COCKLE 1983, p. 152.

Pride of place goes to a roll of Plato's *Politicus* (*P.Oxy.* X 1248)<sup>35</sup>, which was reinforced with large parts of a contemporary manuscript containing Heraclides Lembus' epitome of several treatises by Hermippus «the Callimachean» (*Ath.* 2, 58f; 5, 213f) (*P.Oxy.* XI 1367)<sup>36</sup>; this additional papyrus was pasted face up on the verso of the Plato, allowing Grenfell and Hunt to read its text without technological aid or invasive intervention on the original. *P.Oxy.* XVII 2095, from the initial part of Herodotus' first book, was strengthened with papyrus strips, «on which some cursive writing is visible», glued to the back<sup>37</sup>. *P.Oxy.* XXVI 2450 (Pindar fr. 169 Snell-Maehler, probably from the *Dithyrambs*) «must at one time have been a handsome copy», but «clearly had suffered damage in ancient times, for the back has been patched with strips of papyrus, some of which exhibit third- or fourth-century cursive, and many of the letters of the Pindar text have been retouched or rewritten»<sup>38</sup>. *P.Oxy.* XLVIII 3369, probably from the first 'ordinary' *kollema* (that is, after the *protokollon*) of a roll of Menander's *Misoumenos*, was strengthened by pasting a whole sheet of papyrus on its back, «from an official property register» according to the first editor of the Menander<sup>39</sup>. Like the two listed before it, the papyrus that was added to the Menander remains unpublished; cases such as that of *P.Oxy.* 1367 are, unfortunately, rare. One other such piece of papyrus that was eventually published thanks to the acumen of Susan A. Stephens is a fragment of Demosthenes' *Against Meidias*, which was used to repair the *recto* – when the verso had already been written and was now, for all intents and purposes, the front – of a papyrus in the collection of Trinity College Dublin, inv. C 3 (Antonius Diogenes?)<sup>40</sup>. Similar cases in which a roll was repaired on the *recto* seemingly prior to the reuse of the verso are the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (*P.Oxy.* V 842 = *P.Lond.Lit.* 110)<sup>41</sup>, *P.Oxy.* XLVIII 3370 (Menander, *Misoumenos*)<sup>42</sup>, *P.Laur.* IV 134 (Plato, *Gorgias*)<sup>43</sup>, and *P.Oxy.* II 223 + *P.Köln* V 210 (*Iliad* book 5), where the document accounting for the longest stretch of the *recto* (*P.Oxy.* II 237, the so-called Petition of Dionysia) was reinforced with strips of papyrus as well as augmented with other documents<sup>44</sup>. *P.Mil.Vogl.* inv. 1241 was repaired on the verso when both sides had already been written, and the added strip of papyrus was then overwritten with a copy of the text that it had covered<sup>45</sup>. There are examples of more extensive restoration, where in some cases entire columns of writing were replaced by newly written ones<sup>46</sup>.

We also have a few ancient testimonies on such repairs. When an ancient author mentions glue or the act of glueing in the context of book maintenance, the reference is probably to repairing damage to the surface by pasting additional papyrus<sup>47</sup>. The *glutinatores* mentioned by Cicero in a

<sup>35</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 1397, *LDAB* 3799, *TM* 62614.

<sup>36</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 460, *LDAB* 1089, *TM* 59977. See HUNT 1914, p. 129; GRENFELL – HUNT 1915b, p. 113; PUGLIA 1997, pp. 33-5. Dating: GRENFELL – HUNT 1915b, p. 115.

<sup>37</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 462, *LDAB* 1135, *TM* 60021; HUNT 1927b, p. 136, see also PUGLIA 1997, pp. 32-3.

<sup>38</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 1369, *LDAB* 3705, *TM* 62524. Citations from LOBEL 1961, p. 143, see also PUGLIA 1997, pp. 36-7.

<sup>39</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 1303.4, *LDAB* 2681, *TM* 61534; TURNER 1981, p. 5, see also PUGLIA 1997, p. 32.

<sup>40</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 304.01 (the Demosthenes; the main papyrus is 2621), *LDAB* 4901, *TM* 63692; STEPHENS 1989.

<sup>41</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 2189, *LDAB* 583, *TM* 59483; GRENFELL – HUNT 1908, p. 111, see also PUGLIA 1997, pp. 44-5. The verso – but not the added strips of papyrus – is published as *P.Oxy.* VI 918 (*TM* 28335).

<sup>42</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 1303.5, *LDAB* 2663, *TM* 61516; TURNER 1981, p. 7, see also PUGLIA 1997, p. 45.

<sup>43</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 1414.1, *LDAB* 3798, *TM* 62613; PINTAUDI 1977, p. 112, see also PUGLIA 1997, p. 45. Also from the same manuscript are *P.Oxy.* III 454 and *PSI* II 119, but they bear no trace of similar restorations. The Latin text on the *recto* of the former has been published as *ChLA* IV 264 (*TM* 69879), but not the Greek text on the strip that was pasted on *P.Laur.* 134.

<sup>44</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 733, *LDAB* 2026, *TM* 60897 (join discovered by FUNGHI – MESSERI SAVORELLI 1989, p. 37); GRENFELL – HUNT 1899a, p. 96; 1899b, p. 141.

<sup>45</sup> MP<sup>3</sup> 2571.2, *LDAB* 547, *TM* 59448 (*recto*, philosophical text); the *verso*, carrying 'Menandrian' *monostichoi*, is *TM* 64132. The description above is based on DECLEVA CAIZZI – FUNGHI 1988, pp. 85-6; FUNGHI 1990, p. 181 n. 2; PUGLIA 1997, pp. 49-50. See also PUGLIA 1994a, p. 34.

<sup>46</sup> PUGLIA 1997, pp. 37-43.

<sup>47</sup> PUGLIA 1994b, pp. 126-7, 130-1; 1997, pp. 81-8.

letter to Atticus (4, 4a, 1) are likewise library personnel whose duties will have included repairing volumes in this way<sup>48</sup>.

As shown by the above examples, when it is only a matter of repairing or strengthening the papyrus itself, without intervening on the text written on it, it is the custom for such repairs to be carried out on the back of the roll, presumably so as not to impact visually on the front, where the text is to be read. This is no less true of the last few papyri in the list, in which conservation was carried out on the *recto* because the important side of the roll – so, from the user’s point of view, its front – was now the *verso*. Puglia cites no other example than *P.Oxy.* 1790 for a single-sided papyrus that was strengthened with strips applied to the *recto* after writing<sup>49</sup>. (There are examples of pre-existing imperfections on the *recto* being remedied *before* writing on it, but that is quite another matter<sup>50</sup>.) He remarks that this could happen because the conservation only concerned the margins. Although this is not all that there is to it, as we shall see, it stands true that these additions only concern blank parts of the manuscript. The reason may have been aesthetical: if a tear or the like is repaired on the back, it remains visible on the front, whereas a very accurate conservation work on the front – when not precluded by the presence of text – conceals the damage as well as making it good. It bears noting in this connection that *P.Oxy.* 1790 was not in fact only restored on the *recto*. As careful inspection of the original shows, at least three strips of blank papyrus were applied to the *verso* as well, vertically, with the direction of the fibres matching that of the surface of the original. The fact that no prior editor apparently noticed testifies to the great skill of the *glutinator* who conserved the papyrus. A few years later, however, Hunt did notice that an additional fragment of our papyrus, *P.Oxy.* XVII 2081(f) fr. 4, «has a strip of papyrus stuck on the back»<sup>51</sup>.

### The text(s)

To state the conclusion from the beginning: the evidence clearly indicates that most, perhaps all of the xenotext on the roll is not the result of ink being offset from another manuscript which came into contact with ours, as Barron had surmised. Rather, it is the writing on the strips of papyrus which were «pasted face-downwards» on it by the *glutinator*. This is equally suggested by examination of the original outside of its glass frame, including under the microscope, and of the MSI. But let us proceed in order.

If one looks at the best-preserved section of the lower margin, to the right of the fragment, below col. iii of the Ibycus, one is struck by a difference in the colour of the papyrus surface, as though we had not one but three bands of papyrus, separate but masterfully joined each to the next, running horizontally to cover a width of just over 4 cm from the bottom edge of the papyrus. The black-and-white image printed as Figure 1 does not show this fact clearly, but a glance at the high-resolution colour photograph on the *Oxyrhynchus Online* portal will make it obvious<sup>52</sup>. Further evidence comes from the text revealed by the MSI. Looking at the left-hand ‘column’ at the bottom left on the image (bottom right in real life) it is evident that we are not dealing with continuous text. The distance between the second line and the third is much greater than that between the first and the second and between the third and the fourth (which in turn is much the same). Between the second line and the third there also lies a row of tiny ink traces, which are at just the right distance to be the meagre remains of a further line of writing, either the one below the third line or the one

<sup>48</sup> See DORANDI 1983; TURNER 1983; PUGLIA 1997, pp. 99-105; HOUSTON 2014, pp. 218-20.

<sup>49</sup> PUGLIA 1997, pp. 35-6, 51.

<sup>50</sup> PUGLIA 1997, pp. 30-1.

<sup>51</sup> HUNT 1927a, p. 80.

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<http://163.1.169.40/gsd/collect/POxy/index/assoc/HASH0130/05bfb5a7.dir/POxy.v0015.n1790.a.01.hires.jpg>, or search <http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy/> for ‘1790’.

above the fourth, mutilated into almost complete disappearance. Finally, the third and fourth line (though only the third is legible to a sufficient extent to make this fact obvious) are upside down, as if turned 180°.

In theory, all this could be explained as offsets left by a different manuscript before the ancient conservation. This hypothesis, however, would require a remarkable series of coincidences to have occurred: that the source manuscript came into contact with *P.Oxy.* 1790 not once but at least twice – once the right way up, once the opposite – and left two series of offsets, both perfectly horizontal and parallel to each other, without the two overlapping by as much as a millimetre and without leaving any such offsets either on the non-conserved areas immediately above or on the bottom 17 mm of conserved papyrus immediately below. Furthermore, the text breaks that are visible in the MSI – at the top of the first line, where the summit of the letters is cut off; between the second line and the third, where the row of ink traces described above is; and at the bottom of the fourth line, where the top two-thirds (roughly) of the letters are cut off – coincide perfectly with the colour changes that are visible in the colour photograph and in the original. The inescapable conclusion is that we are dealing with separate strips of papyrus, and that the writing we see on the MSI is the writing they originally carried on their back. The one slight difficulty posed by this conclusion – namely that the lines in the two ‘columns’ partly preserved by the uppermost strip are not perfectly level with each other – is insufficient to overturn the evidence, and at any rate easily paralleled.

The situation in the upper margin is similar, only less straightforward. It is apparent that the text here is the product of (at least) two different hands and that therefore it is likely to come from two different manuscripts. One set of writing is found all across the top of the papyrus, but is badly preserved and very hard to read, so much so that one is not quite sure that it is all by the same hand, or indeed whether one is looking at it the right way up. The other seems to be in the same hand as the text in the lower margin. It is securely attested in two places in the lower part of the upper margin: a few letters, seemingly upside down, can be seen just above the right-hand side of col. i of the Ibycus, and what may have been a complete line sits above the left-hand side of col. iii of the Ibycus and the intercolumnium preceding it, where the first line of col. ii extends almost as far as to touch the next column. It is more doubtful whether the text just above col. ii is in the same hand; it is heavily damaged and very difficult to decipher. Marco Perale suggests to me that it may have been crossed out, which is indeed quite possible.

The text in this second hand is, once again, with all likelihood the main text on the back of the strips of papyrus that were used to reinforce the upper margin. The identity of hand with the papyrus used in the lower margin create a strong presupposition to that effect: it would be a strange coincidence if the same manuscript had both left offsets on *P.Oxy.* 1790 and then been used to repair it. Furthermore, just as we saw more than once in the lower margin, the contour where the text just above col. i breaks off corresponds exactly with the edge of the strip of papyrus that was pasted over the margin. Conclusively, while examining the *verso* in correspondence with the text above the left-hand side of col. iii, Daniela Colomo found that a wormhole affecting the original layer of *P.Oxy.* 1790 but not the added strip uncovers ink traces that correspond exactly with parts of the foot, stem, and crossbar of τ as visible in the MSI of the front<sup>53</sup>. This shows conclusively that these words were actually written on the back of the strip of papyrus that was glued onto the front of *P.Oxy.* 1790, not offset onto the original layer of *P.Oxy.* 1790 from another source. On the basis

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<sup>53</sup> A similar phenomenon is remarked by COCKLE 1983: 152 with regard to *P.Oxy.* XXI 2288 (MP<sup>3</sup> 1438, LDAB 3886, TM 62698; Sappho fr. 1 Voigt). In that case, however, the small size of the extant fragment precludes certainty as to where the lower layer is a strengthening strip as suggested by Cockle, a true *sottoposto* as suggested by TURNER 1973, p. 25 and accepted by OBBINK 2011, pp. 34-6, or something yet different. «At two places the layers can be made to part from each other, and this lower writing can be seen unambiguously» (TURNER), but one would need a watchmaker’s eyeglass – or whatever more technological gadget has now replaced it – to read inside that narrow crevice. The MSI in OBBINK 2011, p. 36 (fig. 1.2) shows no more ink than the one taken in the natural light.

of her finding, two other traces belonging to the same line of text can be identified further to the right, where the original layer has suffered more damage than the additional one in correspondence with a crack in the papyrus.

Similar traces can be observed here and there on the *verso* in areas where the text brought to light by the MSI belongs to the first, less formal hand. This is already evidence that at least some of the writing by the first hand represents the primary writing on the *verso* of the strips of papyrus that were used for restoration. More evidence is provided by the *recto*. Unlike the lower margin, where almost no trace of the text shows through to the surface, in the upper margin it is occasionally visible to the naked eye. This phenomenon often occurs in areas affected by a brown stain that may be due to an excessive dosage of the cedar oil with which the surface of the manuscript was treated in antiquity<sup>54</sup>. Might *cedrium* have made the papyrus more translucent, the way olive oil – or indeed water – would ordinary paper? The text here lies at a lower level than the surface of the papyrus: the horizontal fibres, where they survive, cover the ink. The same can be seen in the lower margin, although only with the aid of the MSI: the horizontal fibres evidently sit atop the ink, which they conceal even to the lens. What we have, then, is one of two scenarios (or indeed a combination of both): either some of the horizontal fibres on the added strips of papyrus have peeled off, revealing parts of the second layer (that is, the back of the *verso* of the strips), through which the ink had seeped when the strips were written; or, perhaps due to the effects of the cedar oil, some of the ink shows through to the surface, except where it is overlaid by a particularly stiff and non-translucent fibre.

But this need not explain the entirety of the text which we attribute to the first hand. For one thing, although the presence of repairs all across the upper margin is not in doubt, and it is mostly clear where the superimposed layer ends and the surface of the original roll becomes visible again, it is not at all easy to distinguish where (if anywhere) two of the added strips of papyrus touch, as instead one could do without much difficulty in the lower margin. In the MSI, above col. iii, one can see clearly where the strip written by the first hand breaks off above the line written by the second hand, but even this is hard to verify on the original. An even greater problem is posed by the difficulty of the script: beside not always being as parallel to the horizontal fibres as one would wish (but wobbly lines are far from unheard of in the papyrological record), sometimes it is so confused that one cannot even exclude the presence of two layers of writing overlaying each other. This hypothesis, of course, creates several additional problems; although not *a priori* impossible (offset ink on the original surface, subsequently covered by the written strips added by the restorer?), it rests on no verifiable evidence, and bears no further inquiry until a better palaeographer can make something out of the writing.

As it turns out, the text in the blank below col. iii has the same origin as that in the upper and lower margin. Barron described the ancient restorations in the upper and lower margin, but failed to notice – or at least to report – that similar restorations were carried out below col. iii too. The strips of papyrus that were used for this purpose are visible to some extent in the colour photograph at *Oxyrhynchus Online* and their presence is easily verified in the original. They are four strips of papyrus, *recto* up, pasted more or less horizontally, though not quite as perfectly as those in the lower margin. The ends of some of them flap up slightly, allowing them to be recognised with certainty, but their contours cannot always be discerned: for instance, it is hard to identify where exactly the boundary falls between the second strip and the third. The upper two strips straddle both sides of the large lacuna that now affects this area of the papyrus; the third, which is slightly taller than the first two are, is only on the right-hand side of the lacuna (as seen from life; the left-hand side in the MSI), while the lowermost seems to be only on its left-hand side. Right by the lacuna the papyrus is somewhat warped, with the result that a small portion of the third strip overlaps another.

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<sup>54</sup> That *P.Oxy.* 1790 was treated with cedar oil after restoration was suggested by BARRON 1969, p. 121. On the use of cedar oil in antiquity, both as a preservative and insect repellent and for aesthetical effect, see COCKLE 1983, pp. 157, 163-4 nn. 129-32 (with a list of *cedrium*-treated *P.Oxy.* at n. 135) and PUGLIA 1991, pp. 40-6, 81-6; 1994a, pp. 126-9; 1997, pp. 10, 82-3.

Autopsy of the original matches to a large extent what can be inferred from the MSI (a close-up can be found as Figure 7). The hand looks very like the second of those described above, although it is hard to be certain when the text is so scant and damaged. We can see clearly the remains of four lines. The second has a very slight downward tilt, while the third tips slightly upwards, so much so that the two come into contact right by the edge of the lacuna. The two upper strips carry one line each, the third carries two; the fourth does not seem to have any writing on the inside (the upright that is visible in the photograph, whatever it is, is written on the *recto*). One important respect in which the MSI forestalls a potential misunderstanding of the original is between the first two lines. The papyrus seems to suggest the presence of a gap – also visible on the colour photograph on account of its darker colour – between the uppermost strip and the one below it. The MSI, however, shows clear continuity of writing between the supposed gap and the strip above it. We are therefore bound to one of two explanations. Either a narrow slice of the added strip became detached but only after leaving an impression of itself on the original layer, perhaps facilitated by the humidity of the paste that joined them; or the change of colour is a mere coincidence and the gap is illusory. The latter seems more probable. The former is unlikely because no ink can be seen with the naked eye, contrary to what one would expect if there were offsets on the surface (see also p. \* below).

A lingering question is why the owner of the papyrus felt the need for conservation work to be carried out here too. An inspection of the *verso* reveals no particular damage, other than that which affected the entire manuscript long after these strips of papyrus were added. Nothing suggests that anything had specifically affected the *recto*, either. It may seem as though the conservation was meant to cover rather than repair, but one is at a loss as to what could possibly have to be covered here. This is where one normally finds end-titles, but why cover it? Furthermore, the MSI fails to show any trace, underneath the added strips, of anything that may have needed covering. The reason for the intervention remains obscure.

The reconstruction offered in this section faces one potential problem. As far as one can see, the strips that were used for conservation were all pasted with the horizontal fibres – in other words, the *recto* – facing us. The reason for this is obvious. The poetic text on *P. Oxy.* 1790 was written along the fibres, and the person who carried out the conservation wanted his work to be as elegant and unobtrusive as possible; this entailed that the visible side of the strips he added must likewise be the one with the horizontal fibres. The problem is that this requires our xenotext – that is, the text written on the other side of these strips of papyrus – to have been written on the *verso* of the roll which they came from even though there was no corresponding writing on the *recto*. As is well known, a papyrus roll is written first along the fibres, and only later, if at all, across the fibres<sup>55</sup>. A recent study by Francesca Maltomini has done away with what had been regarded as possible counter-examples: «There are no certain examples of a roll used first on the *verso* and then on the *recto*»<sup>56</sup>. Given this fact, the situation in our papyrus is odd.

But the problem should not be pressed too far. We are dealing with mostly fairly narrow strips of papyrus; it may be a simple coincidence that some of them had writing on the *verso* while the *recto* was blank. Writing never covers every last inch of the page (so to speak), so a particular strip of papyrus may well not show writing on the *recto* even though other parts of the *recto* were indeed written. An alternative is that the writing on the *recto* was washed away very carefully prior to reuse; papyrus palimpsests are not unheard of. If so, the *glutinator* once again did an excellent job, because no trace of the *scriptio inferior* was left. In either case, the conservator's primary criterion was that the *recto* should be blank; the state of the *verso* was immaterial. And indeed much of the *verso* was blank too: the lowermost strip in the lower margin seems to have been entirely blank on both sides, at least to the extent that it is preserved, and there are no obvious ink traces anywhere in the lower margin on the left-hand side of the fragment, below coll. i and ii (though this part of the

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<sup>55</sup> First stated by WILCKEN 1887.

<sup>56</sup> MALTOMINI 2016; see also TURNER 1978, esp. pp. 17-19.

papyrus may be too heavily damaged to tell). The strips of papyrus that were used to repair the *verso* of *P.Oxy. 1790* were likewise blank on both sides.

The evidence is overwhelmingly in favour of identifying the xenotext – all that written by the second hand, and most or all of that written by the first – as written on the added strips. The apparent problem in this interpretation is more easily overcome than are the difficulties caused by rejecting it.

### The final *agraphon*

In its original conception, this article was to conclude with an expression of deep sorrow for the loss of the «13 centimetres of papyrus» that followed the main fragment according to its first editor<sup>57</sup>. Given its position – my reasoning went – this further fragment may well have carried more of the xenotext, which was merely invisible to the naked eye of the early twentieth century. However, when the article was nearing completion, I was made aware of a stack of bifolia from old *Oxford University Gazettes* where some extra papyrus fragments, too small or uninteresting to be published and put under glass at the time of the original publication, were still being kept in that treasure-house of all wonders, the Papyrology Room of Oxford's Sackler Library. One of these bifolia, unearthed (more properly, unboxed) by Claudio Meliaddò, was labelled «1790 | debris & | blank | piece». It turned out to contain just that: the large blank fragment mentioned by Hunt, several very small scraps (at least two of which carry traces of writing), and an amount of what can fairly be described as papyrus dust.

Our «blank piece» measures 19.4 cm in height and 13.8 cm in width. Although unrolled and conserved, it was still somewhat creased in parts when it was found, whereupon Dr Colomo carried out some further conservation work prior to imaging. As Mark de Kreij suggested and I was able to verify on the original, two ink traces on its left edge constitute the tip of the c that concludes col. iii.7 ἐξείτ in the Ibycus poem in the main fragment, and a high stop to follow it. This coincidence shows the exact placement of the two pieces relative to each other, notably confirming that they are contiguous – an important datum towards the decipherment of the text that concerns us. The presence of the high stop is not without consequences for the interpretation of the poem. It indicates that in the scribe's understanding, or in that of his antigraph, the last three verses (*PMGF* S151, 46-8) consisted of a sentence each: those who fought in the Trojan War «have a share in beauty forever; you too, Polycrates, shall have unperishing glory; just so my own glory for song, too», or something of this sort<sup>58</sup>.

The upper and lower margins of the *agraphon* clearly display on the *recto* the ends of the (respectively) two and three strips of papyrus that were visible on the right of the published fragment, thus confirming the conclusions reached in the previous section. A further strip of papyrus, some 2.5 cm tall, was pasted on the lower margin to the right of those visible in the main fragment, and examination on the light-box reveals that two narrow strips of papyrus have been pasted one above the other roughly in the middle of the fragment, level with the upper two strips in the blank below col. iii in the main fragment. As the light-box also makes apparent, there is a *kollesis* running down the left-hand edge of the fragment. As in the main fragment, some ink traces in the uppermost strip in the upper margin are visible, however faintly, to the naked eye. Again as in the main fragment, some sections of the *verso* too were reinforced with the addition of vertical strips of papyrus, blank on both sides, with the fibres parallel to those of the original layer. It is remarkable – touching, even – that the owner decided to restore so carefully even the rear endpaper (as it were), a part which need not have been visible at all even when the roll was being read.

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<sup>57</sup> HUNT 1922a, p. 73; see p. \* above.

<sup>58</sup> The interpretation of this passage is notoriously contested; see most recently WILKINSON 2012, pp. 83-7, with earlier bibliography.

The MSI (Figure 3) does not provide much more text, but some of that which it does provide is valuable. For what concerns the second hand, we can now see traces of a few more letters in the two uppermost strips in the lower margin, thus allowing perhaps the entire width of the lines preserved in the main fragment to be seen. The ink that was visible to the naked eye in the upper margin of the blank fragment can also be seen more clearly, and a few more traces are now apparent in the area around it. However, no single letter in this hand is entirely preserved and identifiable, and the fragment brings one no closer than the old one to deciphering the text, except by strengthening one's suspicion that at least one of the papyrus strips in question may be upside down. The other strips, including those pasted in the middle section of the fragment, appear to be blank.

### The first hand

Most of the text in the upper margin of *P.Oxy.* 1790 is by an informal hand which is excessively hard to read, due in part to its bad state of preservation. The cursive κ is noteworthy, but this letter-shape is attested for such a long period of Greek palaeography that it is of little use in determining the date. One would not expect the manuscript to have been very old when it was cut apart for scrap papyrus<sup>59</sup>, and nothing in what survives of the script is evidently incompatible with a dating in the second or even third century (roughly the same period as when the conservation work was carried out, and only a short time after the date that can be assigned to the second hand, see p. \* below); but even as much is conjecture.

The one fairly legible section comes in the top right corner of the MSI, i.e. in the top left corner of the papyrus, above col. i of the Ibycus (see the close-up in Figure 4). One has the impression that the text was divided up by means of horizontal lines, some small portions of which are visible to the naked eye, although they seem rather long for *paragraphoi*. The only string of text that can be read with relative ease provides a possible, if very speculative, hint towards the kind of volume that the source text may have been.

The beginning of the third line clearly reads ]ορκιαορ . . . [. This sequence of letters is actually attested once in the TLG database, in the D scholia to *Il.* 2, 339 (p. 109 van Thiel<sup>2</sup>) *συνθεσία : αἱ συνθήκαι. ὄρκια ὄρκοι* (YQX : ὄρκια δὲ οἱ ὄρκοι Z). But in ancient Homeric scholarship forms of ὄρκιον are frequently glossed with forms of its Attic and *koine* cognate ὄρκος even when the two words are not written right next to one another. In the D scholia to *Il.* 2, 124; 3, 73; and 3, 245 (pp. 92, 155, 169 van Thiel<sup>2</sup>) ὄρκια πιττά is glossed with πιττούς ὄρκους (cfr. Hesych. ο 1230 Latte ὄρκια πιττά• ὄρκους ἐπὶ πίττεσι). At 3, 105 ὄφρ' ὄρκια is glossed with ὅπως τοὺς ὄρκους, two lines later Διὸς ὄρκια with τοὺς Διὸς ὄρκους, and at 269 ὄρκια is paraphrased as τὰ πρὸς τοὺς ὄρκους (pp. 157-8, 170 van Thiel<sup>2</sup>). At 4, 155 ὄρκι' ἔταμνον is explained with ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐπὶ τῷ κῶι θανάτῳ τοὺς ὄρκους ἐποιήσαμην, and at 269 ἐπεὶ σὺν γ' ὄρκι' ἔχευαν is glossed with ἐπειδὴ συνέχευαν τοὺς ὄρκους, ἐφιώρκησαν (pp. 195, 200 van Thiel<sup>2</sup>). The other corpora of Homeric scholia provide several more examples, and Herodian explicitly states the equivalence of the two nouns (III/1 p. 358 Lentz). Given this context, a source text containing ] ὄρκια ὄρκοι [ or ] ὄρκια ὄρκου[ς (neither is an unacceptable reading of the traces; Homeric usage favours the latter) could be a set of *scholia minora* to book 2 of the *Iliad*, or also a Homeric glossary or a *hypomnema* to a passage containing any of the 27 occurrences of ὄρκια in Homer<sup>60</sup>. A work on another author, surviving or not, is also possible: the word is attested in Herodotus (five times), Bacchylides (fr. \*\*26.8 Maehler), Ibycus (*PMGF* S227, 5), and many others. If instead we read the second word as ὄρκος (Perale), it may

<sup>59</sup> Such speculation is, however, precarious: see the discussion of an analogous phenomenon in LAMA 1991, pp. 81-92.

<sup>60</sup> Explanations of ὄρκια have so far failed to turn up in *scholia minora* on papyrus, judging from the repertory published by LONDON 2012.

have been the beginning of a longer exegetical note rather than a mere glossary-style synonym. The script would be compatible with an exegetical work, since such texts are often written in informal or indeed semicursive hands; the same goes for the use of *paragraphoi* (if this is truly what we have here) to divide sections or *lemmata*<sup>61</sup>. It goes without saying that, given how little of the text survives and how little of what survives can be read with any confidence (the first word, for instance, could just as easily be *πολυορκία*), this hypothesis must remain highly tentative.

### The second hand

The second hand is formal and much easier to read, although it yields no similar clues towards identifying the source text other than by clearly pointing to a work of literature. Barron suggested that this hand is «of much the same date as the main text», which following a suggestion by his UCL colleague Eric Turner he assigned to «c. 130 B.C.»<sup>62</sup>. However, as Giuseppe Ucciardello observes, several characteristics of this hand rather suggest the script known as round majuscule or Roman uncial<sup>63</sup>, the canonical example of which is the so-called Hawara Homer (*P.Hawara* pp. 24-8) now at the Bodleian Library.<sup>64</sup> This entails downdating the source manuscript by several centuries, given that this script is attested in the first and second centuries AD. The loss of synchronicity with the main text is not to be regarded as a problem, as we shall see. But let us proceed in order.

Our script is upright, fair-sized (letter-height ca. 4 mm), generously spaced (between 3 and 4 mm), and elegantly written. It is tendentially bilinear, though not perfectly so. The foot of *u* projects slightly below the baseline; there is no certain attestation of the other obvious candidates for breach of bilinearity, *ϕ* and *ψ*. It is not quite quadrilinear, but close enough. The round letters *ε θ ο c* – the last three of which are especially hard to tell apart – are very slightly taller than they are wide; a little narrower are *υ*, with the arms joining the stem just above mid-height, and the only surviving *β*, where the upper arc is considerably smaller than the lower one. Conversely, *ν* and *κ* – where the left and right strokes join just above mid-height – are occasionally slightly wider than they are tall. The only certain *ω* is broad, with its left part larger and rounder than the right and the shaft leaning very slightly to the left. As is common in this style, the upper arc of *ε* bows as far down as the crossbar, and the bottom arc touches the baseline a little to the right of the middle, as though the bottom right

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<sup>61</sup> On *hypommemata* and their material characteristics see DEL FABBRO 1979, pp. 81-92 (esp. 83-6 on informal hands, 87-8 on *paragraphoi*); on those of *scholia minora* see RAFFAELLI 1984, pp. 166-77 (esp. 175-7 on *paragraphoi*). It must be noted that our text does not display the two-column format that is typical of many (though not all) papyri of *scholia minora*, with Homeric words on the left and *interpretamenta* on the right (see MONTANARI 1984, p. 135; RAFFAELLI 1984, p. 173).

<sup>62</sup> BARRON 1969, pp. 120 and 119 respectively.

<sup>63</sup> On the ‘round majuscule’ see chiefly CAVALLO 1967a [2005, pp. 151-61] and 1972, pp. 133-4 [2005, pp. 76-8]. His designation as ‘maiuscola rotonda’ is adapted from Turner’s broader label ‘formal round’ (*GMAW*<sup>1</sup> pp. 25-6), which unhelpfully encompasses the so-called Biblical majuscule and Coptic uncial (on the latter of which see at least IRIGOIN 1959 and CAVALLO 1975 [2005, pp. 175-202], who calls it ‘Alexandrian majuscule’) as well as the style under discussion here. The earlier designation ‘Roman uncial’ is due to SERRUYS 1910, pp. 494-5, which remains a valuable essay. If we are correct that the text we read on these strips was written on their *verso*, this is an additional counter-example to the rarity of the round majuscule on reused papyri (discussion in LAMA 1991, pp. 95-6).

<sup>64</sup> *MP*<sup>3</sup> 616, *LDAB* 1695, *TM* 60571; Bodl. Lib. ms. Gr. class. a. 1 (P). Images can be found at <http://ipap.csad.ox.ac.uk> under ‘Pack 616’. A thorough discussion of this well-known but somewhat understudied manuscript is Vanberg 1987-1988; a new transcript of the text and *scholia* has been prepared by Amy Koenig for the *Homer Multitext* project (currently off-line due to site maintenance; I am grateful to the author for the information). This style is discussed in detail, with plenty of other examples, by CAVALLO 1967a [2005, pp. 151-61]; see also PRAUSCELLO – UCCIARDELLO 2014, p. 48.

quadrant of the letter had been prised open slightly. The top of  $\pi$  extends on either side.  $\alpha$  and  $\lambda$  look awfully like each other and often can only be distinguished on the basis of context (though equally often they cannot); the ascender and the descender meet about two thirds of the way up, and there is a discreet leftward hook at the top. Similar ornamentation – another common trait of this style<sup>65</sup>, although one that is difficult to discern in circumstances such as ours – appears to be applied at least occasionally to the ends of  $\kappa$ ,  $\nu$ , and  $\upsilon$ , and the foot of  $\tau$ . There is sometimes an appearance of shading (Section 4, strip 1, col. ii), but as far as the MSI allow us to go it was not consistently applied<sup>66</sup>. Thus this hand falls somewhat in between the two groups, *a* and *b*, outlined by Guglielmo Cavallo within the round majuscule<sup>67</sup>. Of his five tell-tale letters, one inclines strongly towards group *a* ( $\upsilon$ ), two towards group *b* ( $\kappa$  and  $\omega$ , although the one certain example of the latter is anything but clear), one is indecisive ( $\beta$ ), and one unattested ( $\phi$ ); the evident but understated ornamentation also seems to take the middle ground between the two groups.

In terms of dating, the second century AD – the date usually assigned to the Hawara Homer<sup>68</sup> – looks plausible on account of the apparent maturity of the script. Cavallo’s narrative of the historical development of the round majuscule is attractive, but securely dated manuscripts on which to map the details of the narrative are rare indeed<sup>69</sup>, which precludes a precise assessment. The great distance in time between the original layer of *P. Oxy. 1790* and this manuscript – or manuscripts, since the first hand may also be roughly coeval – is no great problem. The older an object is, the likelier it is to need conservation, and it makes sense for such conservation to be carried out with relatively new material rather than with something that is itself several centuries old.

As noted in the Introduction, *P. Oxy. 1790* was certainly in use for a long time. The cursive annotation next to the foot of col. ii was dated by the first editor to the first century AD but can just as easily belong in the next century<sup>70</sup>. Apparently after that note was written, the surface of the roll was treated with cedar oil for protection against insects and for aesthetical effect<sup>71</sup>. Hunt reports that the roll belongs to «the second large literary find of 1905-6» together with several other fragments published in volume XV of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* and elsewhere<sup>72</sup>. The date of the documentary papyri found below them suggests that they were sent to the dump in the fifth century AD<sup>73</sup>: half a millennium, perhaps more, after the Ibycus was copied, and long after the date of the added strips too. If George W. Houston is correct in his reconstruction, we are dealing with a large book collection spanning from the second or first century BC (our manuscript is the most ancient in the lot) to the second or third century AD<sup>74</sup>. It contained a remarkable proportion of poetry – four or

<sup>65</sup> See CAVALLO 1967a, pp. 211-12 [2005, p. 153].

<sup>66</sup> See CAVALLO 1967a, pp. 210-11 [2005, p. 152].

<sup>67</sup> CAVALLO 1967a, pp. 217-18 [2005, pp. 158-9].

<sup>68</sup> First or second century according to KENYON 1899, pp. 101-2, rebutting the fifth-century date originally assigned by Maunde Thompson *ap. PETRIE* 1889, p. 24 (a reminder of the deceptive similarity between this script and the ‘Biblical majuscule’, see further CAVALLO 1967b, vol. I pp. 15-17, 25-7, 33 n. 3); the second-century dating was assigned in *New Palaeographical Society Facsimiles* s. I *ad* pl. 126(b) and commonly accepted thereafter. Seider (*PGP* vol. II § 23) suggests the second or the third century, but see already CAVALLO 1967a, p. 210 n. 3 [2005, p. 152 n. 3]; against the tentative earlier dating proposed by MARICHAL 1950, p. 130 n. 1 see CAVALLO 1967a, p. 216 n. 44 [2005, p. 157 n. 38].

<sup>69</sup> On this sort of problem see PARSONS 1970, pp. 378-80, mostly concerning Guglielmo Cavallo’s reconstruction of the historical development of the Biblical majuscule (CAVALLO 1967b) but equally applicable here.

<sup>70</sup> HUNT 1922a, p. 73 (first century); MAEHLER 1998, p. 14 (first or second). The scholion is re-edited by BARRON 1969, pp. 122-5 and McNAMEE 2007, p. 287.

<sup>71</sup> BARRON 1969, p. 121; see further n. 54 above.

<sup>72</sup> Preface of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* XV, cf. those of voll. VIII, X, XI, and XIII.

<sup>73</sup> GRENFELL – HUNT 1906, p. 12 [2007, p. 362].

<sup>74</sup> HOUSTON 2008, pp. 251-64; 2014, pp. 158-71. An important *caveat* is at 2007, p. 338–9. Against seeing Grenfell and Hunt’s second find of 1906 as part of the same library as the find made by Evaristo Breccia in

five rolls of Alcaeus, two or three of Sappho, two of Bacchylides, at least six of Pindar, and many more – and of annotated texts<sup>75</sup>. Most of these manuscripts were copied in the second century, with a particular concentration towards its end; several others may date from the late second or early third century.

Given the date that can be assigned to the second hand, it is possible that the restorations date to about the same time as these other manuscripts, when the owner(s) of the collection may have been equally busy acquiring new books and conserving the oldest item in the collection – which perhaps, in view of both its antiquity and the comparative rarity of Ibycus on the book market, was the most valuable one too<sup>76</sup>. The book-roll out of which these strips were made need not have been very old at the time – the writing on the *verso* perhaps a few decades old, and therefore the roll itself somewhat older – but was evidently either damaged beyond repair or reputed uninteresting enough to be used for scrap papyrus.

### The text by the second hand

We can now offer a transcription, with very few and tentative supplements, of the most legible parts of the text written by the second hand. We will proceed downward and rightward from the vantage point of the MSI: above col. iii of the Ibycus and the intercolumnium before it (Section 1), above the end of col. i (Section 2), in the blank space below col. iii (Section 3), and in the lower margin below col. iii and in the corresponding section of the blank fragment (Section 4). Each strip of papyrus will be treated individually, again proceeding downward. In Section 4, the boundary between the published fragment of *P.Oxy.* 1790 and the previously unpublished *agraphon* is signalled by a double slash, //.

Throughout this part of the article it should be kept in mind that the transcription could only be carried out on the basis of the MSI, where ink is often hard to distinguish from small holes and cracks in the papyrus surface, shade, and other intruders. Of these only the former can be spotted through careful examination of the original. The transcripts and descriptions offered here should therefore be regarded as tentative and capable of much improvement.

#### Section 1 (Figure 5)

..ϡτωβ..α. . . .

A lunate shape: no trace of a crossbar, but this need not mean much as the mid-upper section is badly rubbed. Next, tip and two legs of a triangular letter: context favours α over λ (δ unlikely). After v, lower arc of a round letter and traces of a crossbar, a lot higher than that of ε normally

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1932, as suggested by FUNGHI – MESSERI SAVORELLI 1992a, pp. 76–9 and 1992b, pp. 55–9 see HOUSTON 2007, pp. 327–38 (it is Grenfell and Hunt’s third find of 1906, not the second, that probably matches Breccia’s; see further CIAMPI 2009, pp. 135–52; HOUSTON 2014, pp. 143–58).

<sup>75</sup> HOUSTON 2008, pp. 257–9; 2014, pp. 167–70. One of the Bacchylides papyri, *P.Oxy.* XI 1361 + XVII 2081(e) is particularly interesting in that, like *P.Oxy.* 1790, it continued to be annotated a long time after being copied. The main text dates from the first century BC or the beginnings of the first century AD (see n. 12 above); some of the annotations – including the one certain marginal title, unless I made a complete fool of myself in PRODI 2016, p. 1146 – could easily date to the second or even third century AD. As concerns the Pindar papyri, FUNGHI – MESSERI SAVORELLI 1992b, pp. 43–54 may be wrong in attributing them all to a single scribe: see JOHNSON 2004, p. 26 and add the fact that *P.Oxy.* XIII 1604 (MP<sup>3</sup> 1367, *LDAB* 3715, *TM* 62534) has poem-titles in the margin while XXVI 2442 (MP<sup>3</sup> 1360, *LDAB* 3747, *TM* 62564) has them in the column. Nevertheless, the identical style and date of the handwriting still allow the hypothesis of a Pindaric *opera omnia* (the like of the Πίνδαρος ὄλος of which, frustratingly, only the *sillybos* survives as *P.Ant.* I 21) that was commissioned from two different scribes but with the aim of a single set.

<sup>76</sup> On the scant presence of Ibycus in the papyrological record see p. \* and n. 4 above.

is (θ not securely attested in this hand, but such a high crossbar would be strange). If joined to the right-hand side of ν the traces would look like κ, but one would not know what to do with the rest of ν, which is not easily dismissed as ι plus stray ink. A clumsy ο is also possibility, especially if ο is also the correct reading after the next τ. Next, two traces at mid-height as though from the two legs of π (the black spot on the top line in the MSI is actually a hole). α: crossbar and the lower half of the right leg, but enough to rule out any alternatives. After it, τ seems likely, but ι is possible if the apparent cross-bar is an illusion, as might be suggested by its continuation across the top of the next letter. Then a round letter without its upper right-hand quadrant: ο likely but not quite certain. Next, a speck near the top line and the beginning of a horizontal on the baseline. After a vertical crack that cuts right through the fragment, lower left-hand arc of a round letter and low crossbar (ε?); there is ink near the top line too, but it need not be part of the letter (it is visible in natural light too, and some of it certainly belongs elsewhere).

If we have the beginning of the line (which is not a given, although the extant length would suit a full line) the obvious reading is ξϰυτῶν, although *e.g.* το]ζϰύτων cannot be excluded. Then, ξῖνϰι (Peralé) seems a trifle too long for the space between ξ and α, but likewise it cannot be ruled out.

### Section 2 (Figure 6)

.ε..

A trace at mid-height and a horizontal-looking smudge on the top line connecting to the upper half or so of a vertical. Of ε the lower arc and the crossbar survive. Then the lower half of a vertical followed by traces suggesting either a sharp descender or the leftmost part of a round letter. Between them, a speck of ink on the top line, perhaps surmounted by a slim descender (a grave accent?).

The transcription and the description of the traces are based on the assumption that the strip of papyrus on which they are written is upside down (Figure 6 is turned 180° accordingly). This seems correct, as the letter transcribed here as ε makes little sense otherwise, but there is not enough text for certainty.

### Section 3 (Figure 7)

strip 1

.....υ...τ.

The left-most part of the strip narrows down to a point, preserving only traces of the middle of letters. A low speck of ink; then, traces of a descender and an ascender two thirds of the way up, and between them a larger trace near the baseline (υ not the only option, as the traces could belong to two letters). Further along, a trace on the baseline and one above just to its right (the tall black curved trace further up in the MSI is actually a crack in the papyrus), then apparently an ascender with a leftward hook at the top and a foot that descends to the right, and a descender with a slight leftward hook at the top and possibly a trace of a left leg (α, δ, λ). Next comes an u-like structure, much of which however is but the faintest shade (including what looks like a circumflex) and therefore commands little certainty; then, a shape like that of λ but much squeezed together and with an extended left foot, followed by a sharp descender that seems to open up slightly at the bottom. The next letter looks like λ, but α cannot be excluded (δ is, by context). After τ (of which only the right half of the crossbar is missing), three traces at mid-height, with a large spot of ink near the top line and perhaps a tiny speck on the baseline aligned with the last of the three.

Before τ, the traces are compatible with λϋμα. If the previous letter can be read as ρ (which is not intuitive, but possible), then θραϋμα (Perale) or indeed τραϋμα are viable alternatives. The dative singular is not impossible (the circumflex above the supposed υ may be an illusion of the MSI), but τ and ι would have to be strangely pressed together; the traces at the end of the line, if they are in their proper place, exclude all other forms of the word.

strip 2

.....[.]ζευ

Parts of a vertical connecting to a horizontal at mid-height, then a speck of ink nearer to the baseline, followed by several smudged ink traces which do not easily lend themselves to interpretation (the one at the top right-hand corner of the wormhole is not ink but part of the hole itself). Just before the lacuna, seemingly parts of two verticals connected by a horizontal that protrudes to the right (π? τ?), but other articulations cannot be ruled out (e.g. a clumsily written round letter followed by the beginning of τ). After the lacuna, the top right quadrant of ζ seems clear, although the lack of a secure ξ in this handwriting precludes absolute certainty. The final υ is dotted because, although there seems to be no other possible interpretation of the ink, the shape of υ in this hand (if we can assume that it is the same hand) is usually different.

The dark traces below these last few letters are not part of this, or any, additional strip of papyrus. Alignment with the two lines of the next strip may suggest that they may be offsets from that strip, which may have originally reached across what is now the lacuna before its end became detached<sup>77</sup>, but this hypothesis cannot be verified.

strip 3

τ.λκ. [  
..... [

**1** After τ a round letter with what appears to be a crossbar protruding some way to the right (ε?). Palaeographically, the next letter could as well be χ, but this is excluded by the context. After κ, a vertical trace some two thirds of the way up. **2** Seemingly the very top and the lower half or so of a round letter, but very faint; it is hard to be certain whether the rightmost end is not part of the next letter. What follows is the lower half of an upright, its foot visibly serifed leftward, and a speck of ink on the top line to its right, suggesting τ. After this, a deep bowl extending all the way down from the top to the baseline, followed by three and a half similar loops: ομε, ομο, ομω, ωμ are all possible.

The only option for l. 1 seems to be traces from a part of κατελκύω, unless one wishes to invoke Hesych. π 2055 Hansen πετελκέε· καμπύλον.

Section 4

strip 1

<sup>77</sup> A similar phenomenon – although in that case it was the original surface of the papyrus that left an impression on the strip that was pasted onto it, not the other way around – can be observed on *P.Mil.Vogl.* inv. 1241, see DECLEVA CAIZZI – FUNGHI 1988, p. 86, with p. \* above.

col. i (Figure 8)

..//....ε...  
(.)//...πυκνῶ

col. ii (Figure 9)

.επ[.]κ.[.]μ.νο.[  
ε...[.]

**col. i.1** A trace on the baseline and one above it at mid-height (most of the line is missing its topmost part), followed by a longer, vertical-looking trace at the baseline and a speck of ink at mid-height towards the left (υ?). On the main fragment, two vertical-looking smudges, possibly connected by a concave stroke near the baseline; the second of them appears to have an ascending excrescence at the top. Then, a stem surmounted by two diverging strokes, one ascending decidedly to the right, the other either tilting slightly leftward or perhaps just a slightly wobbly upright: υ if the former, ρ if the latter. Scattered specks of ink in the upper half of the letter-height where the surface is damaged, followed by the two legs of either α or λ. After ε, an upright: given the space, ι may seem likelier than τ. Next, the right end of a round letter and a trace of its left side some two thirds of the way up, followed by three traces at mid-height: the third certainly from an upright, the first and second could also come from a round letter. **2** Seemingly the outline of a round letter; it is hard to tell if it has a low crossbar or it is mere shade. Then a trace about a third of the way up. On the main fragment, two round letters: the second has certainly a crossbar (ε?), the first perhaps not. Then an upright, a trace at mid-height which suggests a descender rather than a horizontal, and a trace on the top line just before a crack in the papyrus: ν likely, but η (nowhere safely attested in this hand) cannot be ruled out. At the end of the line, top and bottom of a descender: given the context, α is certain.

**col. ii.1** A round letter seemingly without a crossbar. After κ, the two legs of a triangular letter and the full arc of a round letter whose upper right-hand quadrant is somewhat flattened in. The bowl of μ is very faint indeed, but the two sides leave little room for doubt. Then, traces along the perimeter of a round letter. After ο, left side of a round letter, with no trace of a crossbar. **2** Of the likely ε only the top left quadrant survives, from the crossbar up. Then, top half of an upright connecting to a horizontal to its right on the top line, followed by an almost identical shape (γγ suggested but not certain) and the top of a sharp descender or vertical (υ not the only option). After a gap in the papyrus, an ascender covering at least the upper two thirds of the letter-height (i.e. not κ).

The last word of col. i, **2** must be πυκνά, perhaps used adverbially, ‘much, often’ (LSJ<sup>9</sup> s.v. πυκνός B.II). It may have been preceded by the ablative suffix or by a participle in -θέν. Among restorations that would suit the traces are ὄπι|ςθην (the ν is sometimes found before a consonant, though rarely), οἰ|ςθην (the anonymous author of *P.Lond.Lit.* 165 uses οἰςθεις as an aorist participle and Late Antique prose writers run away with its compounds, cf. Hesych. π 973 Hansen παροιθεντι· παρενεχθεντι and identical entries in several other lexica), or indeed εἰςοι|ςθην; not, I would say, ἄθροι|ςθην. It is noteworthy that this column, at a width of 4.2 cm, is significantly narrower than the others whose length can be measured or estimated (about 6 cm, see p. \* below). However, the new fragment and the old one are demonstrably contiguous (see p. \* above), and the width of the column in strip 2 also requires the two fragments to join in this very way.

In col. ii, **1** the traces suggest ὁ ἐπ[ι]καθ[ή]μενος ‘the bank’s clerk’ (Dem. 36, 7 ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐπικαθημένου; more fully at 49, 17 τὸν Φορμίωνα τὸν ἐπικαθημένον ἐπὶ τῆι τραπέζηι, 33 τῶν δόντων τὸ ἀργύριον . . . ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης καὶ ἐπικαθημένων τότε, cfr. Poll. 3, 84 Bethe), but other possibilities can be thought of. If the line preserved in Section 1 is complete, this one, being of about the same length, may well be too. At the beginning of the next line, ἐγγύ[ς] is possible; if the second high horizontal is shade not ink (which cannot be excluded), ἐπί comes naturally to mind, but the shape and position of ι would be a little odd. If it truly is ἐπί, then the ἐπ[ι]καθ[ή]μενος can be anyone ‘sitting on’ or ‘at’ anything.

strip 2 (Figure 10)

.]. .[...]. . .[.] . . .[  
 .ου[...]. τ . . . βφ// . . .

**1** A cup-like shape on the baseline, narrower than would be expected of o or a similar letter, with a further speck of ink connecting on its left: ω possible. Then the bottom left-hand quadrant of a round letter. The lacuna has room for three letters, perhaps four; it is followed by two vertical-looking traces on the baseline, seemingly connected a little way up by a stroke that protrudes to the right (but it may be an illusion of the MSI), and then by the bottom of a round letter, the trace of whose crossbar may likewise be illusory. The scattered traces that follow the lacuna do not easily lend themselves to description, and nothing really is visible on the blank fragment, warped as it is. **2** An upright with the stump of an ascender and a descender emanating from it: β or κ. Of υ survive the foot and the left arm. The lacuna seems to be two and a half letters long. Before and after τ, triangular letters galore: the one before seems to have a crossbar, the first two after are uncertain (the second appears to have ink traces on the baseline, but they may be illusory and the lack of a clear δ in this hand precludes comparison), of the third only the right leg survives. After β, a round letter missing its right end; no hint of a crossbar. After the break, a tiny trace on the top line and apparently the foot of a descender to its right (κ or ν), followed by the shade of a vertical reaching below the baseline and a further trace on the baseline, apparently from a vertical, surmounted by a flat or slightly concave shape near the top line. There are two traces at mid-height further to the right, but it is hard to be certain that they are ink.

As mentioned above (p. \*), this strip of papyrus was pasted upside down (Figure 10 is accordingly turned 180°). Given the width of the lacuna and the letter-shapes after it, the most intuitive restoration of l. 2 is ]κου[ci or ]βου[ci followed by a form of the aorist of καταλαμβάνω. The infinitive, which would require ε instead of ο, seems less likely than the participle; κ]αταλαβό//ντι or κ]αταλαβό//ντα would suit the traces.

### Conclusions (so to speak)

Not much can be said on a general level. If the lines in Section 1 and Section 4 strip 1 col. ii, 1 are roughly complete, column-width was in the region of 6 cm; this datum is confirmed by Section 4 strip 2 but defied by strip 1 col. i. The intercolumnium in Section 4 strip 1 can be measured at about 2.6 cm. There may be traces of two lectional signs: a grave in Section 2, a circumflex in Section 3 strip 1. Too little survives, and too far apart, for the train of thought to be followed. If the few tentative readings proposed above hit the mark, the text is not known to the *TLG*, but the papyrological gaps of the latter preclude the firm conclusion that we are dealing with an unknown text. The aligned line-ends suggest prose, and nothing in the language speaks against that conclusion. A τραῦμα and an ἐπικαθήμενος, if correctly recognised, would be at home in forensic oratory, but this is by no means the only context where they can be found. Forms of οἰκθεία are never found in ‘good’ Attic and only start occurring in the Imperial age, so the presence of one such form in our text – again if correctly recognised, which is doubtful – would suggest that the text is not much earlier than the papyrus which preserves it.

As always, an edition is a beginning, not an end-point. Several questions – indeed most – remain open: from the text and interpretation of much of what the second hand wrote, to almost all that concerns the first hand, the identity and story of Polycrates’ diverse guests remains tantalisingly unknown. This article is meant to serve first and foremost as proof of concept. It will have more than repaid its author’s effort if it encourages further investigation of the xenotext on *P.Oxy.* 1790, or indeed of papyrological xenotexts more generally.

## ABSTRACT

The article examines the conservation work which *P.Oxy. XV 1790* underwent in antiquity. The combination of multispectral images (MSI) and careful inspection of the original *in situ* allows a more precise understanding of the work carried out by the conservator and of the materials he used. It is established that the extraneous text made visible by the MSI is written on the *verso* of the strips of papyrus that were used by the conservator. The article includes a partial transcription of the text together with an attempt at interpretation.

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