

Learning and Faith: On calling papyri 'school texts' and 'Christian'

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62614/4fwf2779>

Abstract: This article is a review of those papyri, including wooden tablets and ostraca, which are listed as (certainly or possibly) 'school texts' on *LDAB*, whose religious orientation is given as 'Christian,' and which may have been written up to the end of IV AD. It is concluded that some papyri should not be considered here, since they cannot be classed primarily as school texts, their dating is too late, there is no reason to call them 'Christian,' or there is little known about them – although, as a whole, the Christian school texts deserve special consideration in the palaeography of early Christian papyri. It is also shown, however, that some of these papyri have only a tenuous connection with Christian faith, since they only include words that belong to 'a Christian milieu,' while others have a much stronger claim to be called Christian because they contain parts of known Christian works. The designation of this group of papyri as both 'school texts' and 'Christian' is no simple matter; and some implications of this are drawn, especially with regard to using some of these papyri in the textual criticism of the Greek OT, as well as the NT.

Introduction

Amongst the numerous papyri that survive from antiquity, 'school texts' form a small but significant group, in particular, those which have been identified as 'Christian.' However, a number of issues arise with regard to both of these labels; and in this article I seek to discuss their meaning and appropriateness as descriptions of papyri which were possibly written any time up to the end of IV AD. 'School texts' are usually taken to mean manuscripts deriving from a school (or, learning) context, although they sometimes include material written by teachers as well as students, and indeed students of varying degrees of writing expertise, from elementary to quite practised.¹ We will discuss below the assumptions that are often made in calling these manuscripts 'school texts.'

At least from the time of Constantine's confession of Christian faith early in the fourth century, if not earlier, Christian texts were used in certain learning contexts in various ways, along with classical and other texts (see esp. Morgan, 1997). Spelling exercises included words or names that belonged to well-known figures in the Bible, and 'Christian' words and texts were used in writing exercises. The parts of Christian texts included or referred to in the early period are from those which were later included in the official 'canon,' but of course certain Gnostic or Arian groups may well have used some of their own materials, as well as other texts consonant with the view of the official Christian churches amongst the 'orthodox' churches.

Thus, a number of extant papyri comprising students' exercises, or teachers' models of handwriting etc., contain texts with Christian content and have consequently come to be labelled 'Christian' by papyrologists. Some even appear on standard lists of OT and NT manuscripts. For example, a part of a codex of wooden tablets containing a section of Psalm 146 in Greek (LXX) has been given the number 2175 on Rahlfs' list of Greek OT manuscripts.

Part of a codex containing some of Paul's letters with Latin glosses is given the number P⁹⁹ on the Gregory-Aland catalogue of Greek NT papyri. And this is quite understandable because, insofar as these papyri provide evidence for the text of the Old or New Testaments, they testify to the form of the biblical text current at a particular time and place; however, this matter will receive further comment in the conclusion to this study.

Yet, in what sense are they 'school texts'? Indeed, in what sense are they 'Christian'? In this article I offer a description of a number of these manuscripts, and then some reflections with regard to their classification by modern editors as 'school texts' and as 'Christian.' I also suggest certain assumptions involved, and implications that follow, from calling them 'school texts' with Christian content. I will confine this study to papyri whose religious affiliation include the label 'Christian' in the *Leuven Database of Ancient Books (LDAB)*, and which are listed as being definitely or possibly 'school texts.' We will examine only those whose dating falls in II – IV AD on *LDAB*, although the possible date of some extends later than that. I have tried to be as complete as possible, so I have included ostraca and manuscripts with Greek writing but whose Christian texts are in Coptic.

Manuscripts will be listed in the *LDAB* order, and cited by their published number or, if this does not exist, their inventory number in the institution that holds them. Apart from their entry number on *LDAB*, I will also note, as applicable, their number in Cribiore's *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, Pack's *Greek and Latin Texts from Greco-Roman Egypt*, the Mertens-Pack³ database, van Haelst's *Catalogue*, K. Treu's 'Christliche Papyri' and C. Römer's 'Christliche Texte', Rahlfs' *Verzeichnis*², Aland's *Repertorium* I, and the Gregory-Aland list of New Testament manuscripts.² For each MS a sample of the text is given, and plates of

some manuscripts are provided. Translations are given, chapter numbers and versification following the LXX or NT text, where applicable.

The descriptions of handwriting are derived from Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers and Students*, if they appear there, but photographs of manuscripts have been examined in all cases. For the purposes of categorising the handwriting Cribiore (1996, 111-12) distinguished between four definite types:

1. ‘Zero-grade hand’ – the least skilled hand of a complete novice, who does not know letters and sometimes confuses them.
2. ‘Alphabetic hand’ – the hand of a learner, who writes accurately but slowly, sometimes using multi-stroke letters instead of one stroke.
3. ‘Evolving hand’ – the hand of a practised pupil, although still somewhat uneven.
4. ‘Rapid hand’ – the well-developed hand of an advanced student, or perhaps a teacher.

Cribiore (1996) gives examples of which school texts fit into these categories, and the reader is referred to her book for further details.

Catalogue of Manuscripts³

The manuscripts to be discussed are listed in Table 1.

1. Codex of seven wooden tablets including Psalm 46:3-10

Oxford, Sackler Library, Papyrology Rooms: *T. Bodl. Gr. Inscr.* 3019; *LDAB* 2418; Cribiore (1996) 388; *CPP* 0255; Pack 2732; M-P³ 2732. See W.E. Crum, *Mélanges Maspero* vol. 2 (1934-37), pl. XLVII, Cairo: IFAO, 73-76; L.Th. Lefort, in *Muséon* 48 (1935) 234-35; P.J. Parsons, *A School-Book from the Sayce Collection*, *ZPE* 6 (1970) 133-49, pl. VIII; Morgan (1998) 184-85

Col. 1

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>3. $\chi\epsilon\pi\chi\alpha\iota\varsigma \chi\epsilon\varsigma\iota \omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\tau\epsilon\pi\epsilon \omicron\upsilon\gamma\alpha\kappa \nu\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\rho\omicron \iota\chi\epsilon\kappa\eta\kappa\eta\kappa\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon$
 $\tau\eta\rho\upsilon$ (above: $\pi\kappa\alpha \tau\eta\rho\beta$)</p> <p>4. $\lambda\beta\theta\epsilon\beta\omega \nu\epsilon\kappa\lambda\alpha\omicron\varsigma \nu\alpha\kappa \lambda\upsilon\omega \bar{\nu}\epsilon\theta\eta\omicron\varsigma \theta\epsilon\kappa\omicron\upsilon\gamma\eta\tau\epsilon$</p> <p>5. $\lambda\beta\omega\tau\pi \nu\alpha\beta \bar{\nu}\tau\epsilon\beta\kappa\lambda\eta\rho\omicron\nu\omicron\mu\iota\alpha \pi\alpha\kappa\eta \bar{\nu}\eta\iota\alpha\kappa\omega\upsilon$
 $\lambda.\epsilon\tau\alpha\lambda\beta\mu\epsilon\rho\iota\tau\beta \delta\iota\alpha\psi\alpha\lambda\mu\alpha$</p> <p>6. $\lambda\pi\eta\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon \beta\omega\kappa \lambda\rho\alpha\iota \epsilon\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omega\lambda\alpha\iota \lambda\upsilon\omega \pi\chi\alpha\iota\varsigma$
 $\theta\omicron\upsilon\gamma\epsilon\rho\alpha\omicron\upsilon\gamma \bar{\nu}\varsigma\alpha\lambda\pi\iota\zeta$ (above: $\delta\iota\alpha\psi\alpha\lambda\mu\omicron\varsigma$)</p> <p>7. $\psi\alpha\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota \epsilon\pi\epsilon\kappa\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon \epsilon\rho\iota\psi\alpha\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota \psi\alpha\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota \epsilon\pi\epsilon\kappa$
 $\epsilon\rho\omicron\epsilon\rho\iota\psi\alpha\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota$</p> <p>8. $\chi\epsilon\pi\epsilon\rho\omicron \mu\pi\chi\alpha \tau\eta\rho\beta\eta\epsilon \nu\epsilon\kappa\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ ($\psi\alpha\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota$
 $\theta\omicron\upsilon\gamma\mu\epsilon\tau\rho\epsilon\mu\epsilon\kappa\eta\eta\tau\beta$ > deleted)</p> <p>9. $\lambda\pi\chi\alpha\iota\varsigma \epsilon\rho \epsilon\rho\omicron \epsilon\chi\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\kappa\eta\kappa\eta\theta\eta\omicron\varsigma \tau\eta\rho\upsilon \pi\eta\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ (above:
 $\psi\alpha\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota \epsilon\kappa\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\kappa\tau\rho\epsilon\mu\epsilon\kappa\eta\eta\tau\beta$)
 $\lambda\lambda\alpha \dots \delta\iota \iota\chi\epsilon\kappa\eta\kappa\eta\theta\epsilon\rho\omicron\kappa\omicron\varsigma \epsilon\tau\beta\alpha\lambda\beta$</p> <p>10. $\epsilon\kappa\alpha\rho\chi\omega\kappa\eta\kappa \dots \mu\epsilon\kappa\eta \bar{\nu}\epsilon\kappa\lambda\alpha\omicron\varsigma \lambda\upsilon\varsigma\gamma\eta\alpha\gamma\omicron\upsilon$
 $\nu\epsilon\kappa\eta\pi\eta\kappa\omicron\upsilon\gamma[\tau\epsilon \nu\alpha\beta\rho\alpha\lambda\mu]$ (Col. 2) $\epsilon\kappa\chi\omega\rho\epsilon$
 $\epsilon\kappa\eta\kappa\alpha \nu\tau\epsilon \nu\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon \lambda\upsilon\chi\epsilon\iota\varsigma\alpha\iota \mu\alpha\tau\alpha$</p> | <p>3. For the LORD, the Most High, is to be feared
 A great king over the whole earth.</p> <p>4. He subdued people under us, and nations under our feet.</p> <p>5. He chose our inheritance for us,
 The pride of Jacob whom he loves. Selah</p> <p>6. God has gone up with a shout,
 the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.</p> <p>7. Sing praises to God, sing praises.
 Sing praises to our King, sing praises,</p> <p>8. For God is King of all the earth;
 Sing praises with a psalm.</p> <p>9. God reigns over the nations,
 God sits on his holy throne.</p> <p>10. The rulers of the peoples gather
 with the God of Abraham,
 Because the strong of the earth are God’s, quite exalted.</p> |
|--|---|

Text 1: Tablet 2a (Ps. 46:3-10, verse layout)

No	LDAB No	Date (AD)	Language(s)	Material	Form
1	2418	end III	Greek, Coptic (Akhmimic)	Wooden tablets	Codex
2	2746	IV	Greek	Wooden tablets	Codex
3	2747	IV	Greek	Wooden tablets	Codex
4	2763	mid III – mid IV	Coptic (Sub-akhmimic)	Papyrus	Codex
5	3025	early IV	Greek	Papyrus	Sheet
6	3030	IV	Greek, Latin	Papyrus	Codex
7	3136	III (V?)	Greek	Papyrus	Roll
8	3172	IV	Greek	Wooden tablet	Tablet
9	3215	IV/V	Greek	Papyrus	Codex
10	3473	III-IV	Greek	Papyrus	Roll
11	5269	mid III – mid IV	Greek	Papyrus	Sheet
12	5680	IV	Greek	Ostrakon	
13	5736	2 nd half IV	Greek	Papyrus	Sheet
14	5786	IV/V (probably later)	Greek	Wooden tablets	Codex
15	5825	IV-VI	Greek	Ostrakon	
16	5872	IV-VII	Greek	Ostrakon	
17	107875	IV	Coptic (Bohairic)	Papyrus	Codex

Table 1: Summary of manuscripts

This codex of seven wooden tablets (23.8 x 11.0 cm; one missing),⁴ dated to end III AD, contains a number of grammatical and arithmetic school exercises in Greek, a paraphrase of Homer, *Iliad* 1.1-16 in Greek, and Psalm 46.3-10 in Coptic (Akhmimic). At least three hands are discernible, all student’s hands, the majority of the text (Cribiore’s *m.* 2) being ‘rapid’ but uneven, with some rubbing out and inkblots (see plates in Crum and Parsons). The text of Psalm 46:3-10 is given in Text 1 below (following Crum 76; cf pl. 6).

The format of this manuscript (a codex of wooden tablets), the unsteady writing hands, as well as the varied contents

(including mathematical exercises) show that this is indeed a ‘school text,’ presumably from a learning setting with some degree of formality. The absence of *nomina sacra* in the Psalm text on this papyrus might suggest a Jewish context, even at the end of III AD, although it is also quite possible that it is a Christian one, given the inconsistent use of *nomina sacra* in Christian papyri in the early centuries. In either case, it must have been seen as appropriate for a student to practise writing by copying Homer along with a Psalm from the OT.

2. Codex of five wooden tablets including Psalm 146.1-147.1

Paris, Louvre: *T. Louvre* MND 552 L-K-I-H; *LDAB* 2746; Pack 1619; M-P³ 2643.1 + 2307.1; van Haelst 239; Rahlfs 2175; Criboire 396. *Ed.pr.* B. Boyaval, *Le cahier scolaire d’Aurelios Papnouthion*, *ZPE* 17 (1975) 225-35 (pl. VII-VIII); id., *Le cahier de Papnouthion et les autres cahiers scolaires grecs*, *RA* (1977) 215-33; C. Pernigotti, 2008 *Menandri Sententiae*, Firenze: Olschki 47, no. 16.

This codex consists of five wooden tablets (of an original eight), each measuring 13.5 x 18.0 cm, in the form of a school exercise book belonging to Aurelios Papnouthion. It was found at Memphis, and is dated to IV AD, perhaps early IV. The tablets contain a variety of school exercises in Greek, namely, the teacher’s model and Aurelios’ copy of five verses of Menander, and Aurelios writing some metrological signs and ten distichs on figures from history and mythology. Another hand wrote some mathematical

- (1b) αινειτε τον] κν̄ οτι αγαθον ψαλμον =
τω θεω ημω]γ ηδυντη ενεσις = (2) ηνκο-
δομων ιερ]ουσαλην ο κυριος =
και τας διασπορ]ας του ειδραηλ επισιναξι
5. (3) = ο ιωμονος το]υς συντετριμμενουν
την καρδιαν] = κε διςμενον τας τας
αυ]των = (4) ο αριθμον πληθι
αστρων = και π]αειν αυτου ονοματα καλω-
ν = (5) μεγας ο κς̄] ημον κε μεγαλη ειςχυς
10. αυτου = και της] εννεσεος αυτου ουκ ες-
τιν αριθμ]ος (6) αναλαββανο πρα-
εις ο κς̄ = ταπε]ιγος [δ]ε αμαρτωρους
εως της γης =] (7) εξα[ρξ]ατε το κω̄
εν εξομο]λογησι = ψαλλατε
15. τω θεω ημων] εν κιθαρα = (8) το περιπ-
αλλοντι το]ν ουρανον εν νεφεραις =
τω ετοιμαζο]ντι την γη νετος = τω
εξανατελλο]ντι εν οραις χορτον =
(9) διδον]τι κτηνεσι τροφην
20. αυτων = και τοις ν]εσοσσις {ου} τον κορακον
τοις επικαλ]ουμενους αυτον =
(10) ουκ εν τη δυνατεια το]υ ιππου θελησι =

exercises, and Aurelios again wrote the text of Psalm 146.1-147.1 and eight lines of iambic trimeters. Aurelios’ writing is certainly an unsteady (‘evolving’) student’s hand (see pl. in *ed.pr.*). *Nomina sacra* appearing in the Psalm text are κν̄ (Tab. 4b.1), κω̄ (Tab. 4b.13), and κς̄ (Tab. 5a.2); κς̄ has been restored twice (Tab. 4b.9). Presumably, all of the *nomina sacra* were copied from the model; the superior *makra* are far from straight. There is one instance of κυριος written *in plene* (Tab. 4b.3) and restored in full in Tab. 4b.12; ουρανον also occurs in full (Tab. 4b.16); θεω is restored twice (Tab. 4b.2, 15) by the editor. The text appears to have some errors. The text of Ps. 146.1-10 is provided in Text 2 below.

Since there are no definitely Jewish papyri using *nomina sacra*, this papyrus can be classed as ‘Christian’ with some confidence. If the texts were given to the student by the teacher, the tablet is ‘Christian’ only in the sense that, like no. 1, the teacher chose to use an OT text, along with a classical one, as part of a student’s writing exercises. Hence, if this codex may be taken as testimony to anyone’s religious convictions, it would be the teacher’s rather than the student’s, although it only provides evidence of an environment in which it was permissible for a teacher to use Christian texts in school – so not under Julian – without giving a clear indication of personal convictions. Thus, Boyaval suggests that the Psalm text and the crosses prove ‘l’origine chrétienne du cahier’ (Boyaval, 1975, 227); but it is not possible to say more than that about either the student or the teacher.

- (1) Praise the LORD! For a melody is a good thing;
to our God may praise be pleasing.
- (2) When the LORD builds Jerusalem,
He will also gather in the dispersed of Israel,
- (3) he who heals the broken-hearted
And binds up their fractures.
- (4) he who counts multitudes of stars,
And gives names to all of them.
- (5) Great is our Lord, and great is his strength,
Of his understanding there is no counting,
- (6) when the Lord lifts up the meek,
But brings down sinners to the ground.
- (7) Sing to the Lord with acknowledgement,
praise him with the lyre,
- (8) the one who decks out the heavens with clouds,
who prepares rain for the earth,
who makes grass grow on the hills,
- (9) who give to the animals their food,
to the ravens’ young who call on him.
- (10) He will not want the strength of the horse.

Text 2: Tablet 4b (MND I, side 2) (Ps. 146.1b-10a) (Ps. 146.10b-147.1 continues on Tablet 5a, + iambic trimeters)

3. Codex of two wooden tablets including Psalm 92

Paris, Louvre: *T. Louvre* MND 552 E-F; *LDAB* 2747; van Haelst 205; Rahlfs 2174; Crihiore 397. *Ed.pr.* B. Boyaval, Psaume 92 sur deux tablettes scolaires, *ZPE* 17 (1975) 145-150.

This notebook comprises two partially preserved wooden tablets (7.5 x 19.0 cm) probably from Antinoopolis, again from a school exercise book in Greek, judging from the unsteady ('alphabetic') hand and the way in which the lines are badly ruled and unevenly spaced (see Boyaval, 1975, pl. Vb). The tablet contains the text of Psalm 92. Various *nomina sacra* occur in the text: $\overline{\kappa\epsilon}$ (F.4), $\overline{\kappa\epsilon}$ (E.17, F.8), and $\overline{\kappa\upsilon}$ (F.11); and $\overline{\kappa\epsilon}$ has been restored twice by the editor (E.1, 5). The superior *makra* are written quite untidily, as in no. 2 above. The text of Psalm 92 is given below:

Tablet E	Tablet F
(1b) [ο $\overline{\kappa\epsilon}$ εβα]ειλευσε[ν] [ενεδυ]ατο = [] . . . = [ενεδυ]ατο	οι μετεωρι- μοι της θαλασ<σης> θαυμαστος εν υψηλοις ο $\overline{\kappa\epsilon}$ (5) τα
5. [$\overline{\kappa\epsilon}$ δυ]γαμιν [και περι]εζωσατο [και γαρ ε]στερεο- [σεν την ο]ικου[μ] [ενην ητι]ς ου ζα-	5. μαρτυρια σου επιστοθησαν [ς]φ[ο]δ[ρα = τω] οικο σου [πρεπει αγιασμα] $\overline{\kappa\epsilon}$ και το κ[α]τοι-
10. [λευθη]εται = (2) [ετοιμο]ς ο θρ- ονος σου απο τοτε = απο του εωνος	10. [κ]ειν με εν οι- [κ]ω $\overline{\kappa\upsilon}$ εις μα- [κ]ροτητα ημε- [ρ]ων = (vacat) (vacat)
15. σου ει = (3) επηρα- ν οι ποταμοι $\overline{\kappa\epsilon}$ επηραν υ ποταμοι φο- νην αυτον =	
20. (4) απο φωνον ηδα- τον πολλο- ν = θαυμαστοι	

- (1) The Lord reigned, he was dressed splendidly he was dressed in power and robed himself; for he established the world, which will not be shaken.
- (2) Your throne was ready from that time, you are from eternity.
- (3) The rivers, Lord, lifted up the rivers lifted up their voices.
- (4) Because of the voices of many waters, the billows of the sea are amazing, the Lord is amazing on high.

- (5) Your testimonies are quite true, holiness is fitting for your house, Lord, for a long time.

Here again, the presence of *nomina sacra* would normally be seen as indicating a 'Christian' text of some kind. Indeed, Boyaval suggests these tablets too were written 'en milieu chrétien' (Boyaval, 1975, 146). Hence, these wooden tablets provide us with a third clear example of a 'school text,' presumably from a formal learning setting, in which copying a Psalm was seen by the instructor as an appropriate writing exercise.

4. Papyrus codex - John 10.7-13.38

Dublin, Chester Beatty Library: *P. Beatty Ac.* 1390; *LDAB* 2763; M-P³ 2320.13. *Ed.pr.* W.M. Brashear, W.-P. Funk, J.M. Robinson, R. Smith 1990 *The Chester Beatty Codex Ac. 1390*, Leuven: Peeters.

This papyrus codex, dated mid III – mid IV, contains mathematical school exercises in Greek and then John 10.7-13.38 in Coptic (sub-Akhmimic). Hence, the papyrus does contain a school text, as with no. 1 above (*T.Bodl. Gr.Inscr.* 3019), and that part of it presumably derives from a formal learning setting of some kind, but what of the text of John 10.17-13:38 which follows? The text of the first page with the Gospel section is provided in Text 3.

In assessing this codex, it is important to note that *m.* 2, the hand in which the Gospel text is written, is not the same as *m.* 1, the hand in which the mathematical exercises were written first. The Coptic handwriting is described as 'casual' by the editors (Funk, Smith, in Brashear et al., 59), but also as consistent with the work of a professional scribe accustomed to preparing documents (Funk, Smith, 60), although 'rather incompetent or, at least sometimes, extremely inattentive' (Funk, Smith, 64). A number of inconsistencies and a certain unevenness in layout, as well as frequent corrections and omissions, add to the 'casual' effect of the Gospel section, but the editors' assessment of the hand implies that this second section of the papyrus is probably not a 'school text' at all, even though the first section is. Further, *nomina sacra* are always provided with a superior *makron* and, although only a limited range of these are used ($\overline{\iota\epsilon}$, $\overline{\pi\epsilon\chi\overline{\varsigma}}$, $\overline{\pi\epsilon\chi\rho\overline{\varsigma}}$, $\overline{\pi\epsilon\overline{\tau\eta\overline{\alpha}}}$) (Funk, Smith, 76), this would seem to indicate a Christian setting of some kind, rather than a Jewish one, but not necessarily a learning context. Hence, while the codex contains school material (mathematical exercises), the gospel section is probably not a 'school text' in any meaningful sense, since it seems to have been added on blank pages at a later time. The hesitation on the part of *LDAB* expressed by adding a question mark after 'school text' is thus entirely deserved. More likely, someone wishing to produce a copy of this text used a codex with spare pages which was at hand.

9 lines: conclusion of mathematical exercises

10. ΝΤΕΝΕΣΑΥ (8) ΟΥΑΝ ΝΙΜ ΝΤΑΥΕΙ ΖΕΝΚΑΝΧΙΟΥΕ ΝΕ
 ΑΥΩ ΖΕΝΚΑΝΕ ΝΕ ΑΛΛΑ ΠΕΝ'ΜΑΝ'ΕΣΑΥ ΣΩΤΜ ΔΡΑΥ
 (9) Δ
 ΝΑΚ ΠΕ ΠΡΟ ΕΡΕΨΑΟΥΕΕΙ ΒΩΚ ΑΖΟΥΝ ΕΙΤΟΟΤΥ
 ΦΝΑΟΥΧΕΕΙ ΑΥΩ ΕΦΝΑΒΩΚ ΑΖΟΥΝ ΝΦΙ ΑΒΑΛ ΝΦ
 ΒΙΝΕ ΝΟΥΜΑΜΑΝΕ (10) ΠΣΑΝΧΙΟΥΕ ΜΑΦΙ ΕΤΒΕΛΑΥΕ
15. ΕΙΜΗΤΙ ΧΕΚΑΣΕ ΕΦΑΧΙΟΥΕ ΑΥΩ ΝΦΩΟΥΟΥΤ ΝΦ
 ΣΤΨΕΚΟ ΑΝΑΚ ΝΤΑΕΙ ΧΕΚΑΣΕ ΕΦΝΑΧΙ ΝΟΥΩΩΣ ΑΥΩ
 ΝΣΕΧΙΟΥΖΟ (11) ΑΝΑΚ ΠΕ ΠΩΣ ΕΤΝΑΝΟΥΦ ΠΩΣ ΕΤΝΑ
 ΝΟΥΦ ΨΑΦΚΟΥ ΤΕΨ[Υ]ΧΗ ΖΑΝΝΕΦΕΣΑΥ (12) ΠΧΑΕΙΒΕΚΕ
 ΔΕ ΕΤΕ ΟΥΨΩΣ ΕΝ ΠΕ ΠΕΕΙ ΕΤΕ ΝΩΦ ΕΝ ΝΕ ΝΕΣΑΥ
20. ΨΑΦΝΕΥ ΑΠΟΥΩΝΩ ΕΦΝΗΥ ΑΥΩ ΝΦΚΑΝΕΣΑΥ
 ΝΦΠΩΤ ΝΤΕΠΟΥΩΩΝΩ ΤΑΡΠΟΥ ΑΥΩ ΝΦΧΑΡΟΥ
 ΑΒΑΛ (13) ΧΕ ΟΥΧΑΕΙΒΕΚΕ ΠΕ ΑΥΩ ΠΕΦΡΑΟΥΩ ΕΝ ΠΕ
 ΖΑΝΝΕΣΑΥ (14) ΑΝΑΚ ΠΕ ΠΩΣ ΕΤΝΑΝΟΥΦ ΑΥΩ ΤΣΑΥ
 ΝΕΕ ΝΝΩΕΙ ΑΥΩ ΝΩΕΙ ΣΕΣΑΥΝΕ ΜΑΕΙ (15) ΚΑΤΑΘΕ ΕΤΕ
25. ΠΑΕΙΩΤ ΣΑΥΝΕ ΜΑΕΙ ΑΥΩ ΑΝΑΚ ΤΣΑΥΝΕ ΠΑΕΙΩΤ
 ΑΥΩ ΤΝΑΚΟΥ ΝΤΑΨΥΧΗ ΖΑΝΕΣΑΥ (16) ΟΥΝΤΗ ΔΕ
 ΑΝ ΜΜΕΥ ΖΕΝΚΕΕΣΑΥ ΕΖΕΝΑΒΑΛ ΕΝΕ ΜΠΙ
 ΑΖΕΣΑΥ ΑΥΩ ΝΕΤΝΜΕΥ ΑΝ ΤΝΑΣΑΨ'ΖΟΥ ΝΣΕ
 ΣΩΤΜ ΑΤΑΣΜΗ ΝΣΕΨΩΠΕ ΝΟΥΕΙΑΖΕΣΑΥ Ν
30. ΝΟΥΩΤ ΨΩΣ ΝΟΥΤ (17) ΕΤΒΕΠΕΕΙ ΠΑΕΙΩΤ ΜΑΕΙ
 Ε ΜΑΕΙ ΧΕ ΤΝΑΚΟΥ ΝΤΑΨΥΧΗ ΧΕΚΑΣΕ ΑΝ
 ΕΙΝΑΧΙΤΣ (18) ΜΝΛΑΥΕΕ ΦΙ ΜΑΣ ΝΤΟΟΤ ΑΛΛΑ

of the sheep. (8) All who came are thieves and robbers, but the shepherds did not listen to them.

(9) I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. (10) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. (11) I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (12) But the hired hand who is not the shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees - and the wolf snatches them and scatters them - (13) because he is a hired hand and the sheep do not matter to him. (14) I am the good shepherd, and I know my own and my own know me, (15) just as the Father knows me and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. (16) And I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold; I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. (17) This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. (18) No one takes it from me, but

Text 4: fol. 2v, mathematical exercise + John 10:7b-18a

5. Single papyrus leaf - Romans 1.1-7 (Fig. 1)

Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Library: SM 2218; LDAB 3025; van Haelst 490; Cribiore 302; Aland, *Rep. I* NT 10 (= Var 33) = Φ^{10} . *P. Oxy.* II 209. Cf. G. Cavallo, H. Maehler, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period A.D. 300-800 (BICS Suppl. 47)*; London: University of London Institute of Classical

Studies, 1987) 8, pl. 1a; K. Jaroš, *Das Neue Testament nach den ältesten griechischen Handschriften* (CD-Rom) (Mainz: Ruppolding, 2006) 4941-46, no. 3.8; Anne-Marie Luijendik, *A New Testament Papyrus and Its Documentary Context: An Early Christian Writing Exercise from the Archive of Leonides (P.Oxy. II 209/ Φ^{10}), JBL 129 (2010) 575-96.*



Figure 1: P. Oxy. II 209, upper portion only (reproduced by permission of Horton Library, Harvard University) <http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/7456384>

(1) παυλος• δουλος χ̄ρῡ ιη̄ῡ κλητος αποστολος• [αφ]ωρις
 μενος εις ευαγγ̄ελιον θ̄ῡ (2) ο [π]ρο[ε]πηγ'γειλατο δια τ[ω]ν π̄ρω
 φητων αυτου εν γρ[α]φαις αγ'ειαις (3) περι του ῡῡ αυτου του
 γενομενου εκ επ[ε]ρματος δαυδ' κατα σαρκα (4) του οριθεν
 5 του ῡῡ εν δυναμει κατα π̄νᾱ αγιωσυνης εξ ανακ
 τασεως νεκρων ιη̄ῡ χ̄ρῡ του κῡ ημων (5) δι ου ε[λα]βο]
 μεν χαριν και απ[ο]στολων εις υπακωων πιστεως εν
 πασι τοις εθνεσ[ι] υπερ του ονοματος [. (6) . . .] ιη̄ῡ χ̄ρῡ (7) πασι
 10 τοις ουσιν εν [ρ]ωμη αγαπητοις θ̄ῡ κλητοις [αγ]ιοις
 χαρις ημιν και ει[ρ]ηνη απο θ̄ῡ π̄ρος ημων και κῡ χ̄ρῡ ιη̄ῡ
 [+ blank space, 2 lines in documentary hand, space, χιτ – m. 2]

(1) Paul, servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle; set
 apart for the gospel of God, (2) which he promised beforehand
 through his prophets in the holy writings (3) about his son, who
 came from David physically, (4) but who was designed Son of
 God in power by the Holy Spirit by the resurrection from the
 dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, (5) through whom we have received
 grace and apostleship for the obedience of faith among all the
 gentiles, for the sake of his name [(6)]– Jesus Christ. (7) To all
 in Rome, who are God's beloved ones, called as saints, be grace
 and peace from God our Father and the Lord Christ Jesus.

Text 5: Text on the recto of P.Oxy. II 209 Rom.1: 1-7.

This manuscript consists of an almost complete single papyrus leaf (19.9 x 25.1 cm), containing Romans 1.1-7 in Greek (m. 1) and two other lines of cursive writing (m. 2) mentioning a name but otherwise without clear sense in the large blank space below that on the recto; only one word and some letters (m. 1) occur on the verso. The papyrus is dated to early IV AD, and comes from an archive. The following *nomina sacra* appear on the recto: χ̄ρῡ (ll. 1, 6, 8, 10), ιη̄ῡ (ll. 1, 6, 8, 11), θ̄ῡ (ll. 2, 5, 9, 10), ῡῡ (ll. 3, 5), π̄νᾱ (l. 5), κῡ (ll. 6, 10), and π̄ρος (l. 10). The word δαυδ' appears (virtually) *in plene* without a makron (l. 4). A *sicilicus* occurs, as commonly, after a final consonant (δαυδ') or between two identical consonants (-γ'γ-, l. 2), but unusually after γ mid-word (l. 3). The text on the recto of the papyrus is given in Text 5 above (Luijendijk, 576-77).

On the basis of the large uneven ('evolving') hand of m. 1, the editors suggest that this papyrus is a writing exercise, and hence a learning ('school') text, as does Luijendijk (2010). While this is probably correct, it is less clear than for nos 1-3 what that learning context was, since it seems to be an isolated sheet. Even if the holes on the left side of the recto are binding holes, which would suggest that it originally belonged to a codex, and while the *nomina sacra* indicate a Christian context of some kind, we can be no more specific about its Christian context than about its learning context. In this case, 'school' is perhaps more specific a label than the evidence allows.

6. Papyrus codex with Greek-Latin lexicon of Pauline epistles and Greek grammar

Dublin, Chester Beatty Library: Ac. 1499; LDAB 3030; CPP 0525; M-P³ 2161.1; van Haelst 511; Aland, *Rep. I*, NT 99 = P⁹⁹. *Ed.pr.*: A. Wouters, 1988 *The Chester Beatty codex AC 1499. A Graeco-Latin Lexicon of the Pauline Epistles and a Greek Grammar*, Leuven: Peeters.

This large papyrus codex (13.6 x 16.8 cm) consists of 51 folios, of which 34 are blank, and dates from IV AD, according to the editor. The codex is a language study book, containing the passive conjugation of the verbs ποιέω, βοάω, χρυσόω and πλέκω (13 pages), along with *lemmata*

mostly taken from the Greek text of 2 Corinthians (275 *lemmata*), Galatians (85), Ephesians (65) and Romans (1) with Latin glosses (10 pages), and a Latin alphabet. Only one hand is evident throughout the codex, writing with thick upright, mostly regular strokes, perhaps that of an accomplished student or an experienced copyist (Wouters, 1988, 169-91). A number of errors and corrections appear in the codex. A sample of the lexicon part of the codex is given below (fol. 11r, ll. 1-5).

(fr. 11r – Greek-Latin lexicon of 2 Cor 9.2-11.8, 5.13-6.3)
 Lines 1-5 (words from 2 Cor 9.2-7)

- (2) παρασκευασθαι : praeparata est " [... απο περυσ?]ιτ" priore " ηερεθεισε : provabit (3) " κ̄α[υ]χημα : gloria]mur "
- (4) απαρασκευαστους : inparatos (5) " η[γ]ησα]μην : exhistimabi " προσελθωσι : pergent " [προκαταρ]τισωσιν : praeparent "
- 5. πλεονεξιαν : abaritiam (7) " εκαστ[ο]ς : unusquisque " προ- (+ 28 lines to complete page)

- (2) to be prepared: praeparata est; [since last ye?]ar priore has stirred up: provabit (3) b[oa]sting: gloria]mur
- (4) unprepared: inparatos (5) I c[onsider]ed: exhistimabi; they might go to: pergent; they [arrange in advance]: praeparent
- 5. greed: abaritiam; (7) each: unusquisque; dec-

This codex belongs to a learning context of some kind, but it is by no means clear that this was part of a formal 'school'. It is quite possibly the work of a private student, either wishing to extend his linguistic ability in Latin (or Greek) or to understand some of the Pauline letters. Given the centrality and simplicity of the words that occur as *nomina sacra* in the texts excerpted, it is not surprising that they do not occur in this codex, either as *nomina sacra* or *in plene*. Wouters rightly concludes that the codex belonged to 'a Christian milieu' (Wouters, 1988, 167), but it is clear that the writer wished either to extend his linguistic ability in Latin (or Greek) or to understand some of the Pauline letters. The 'school' setting is quite unclear in this case, however the Christian context is apparent.

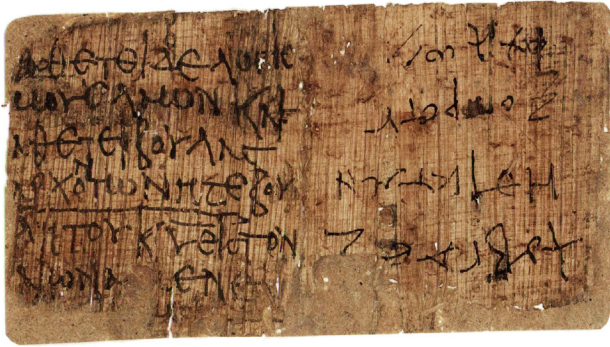


Figure 3: P. Vindob. G 29274r (fol. 1v, 8v) (photograph courtesy of Austrian National Library)

Sanz notes that this notebook gives us ‘einen Einblick in den Elementarunterricht der griechischen Schule im christlichen Ägypten’ (Sanz, 46). This small papyrus ‘notebook,’ then, appears to have been written by beginning students, one of whom was making their own copy of a Psalm text, presumably for private use. In this sense, it is from a Christian setting, given the nature of the text and the presence of the *nomina sacra*, but it was written by quite elementary writers, and it would be unlikely that the context could have been a ‘school’ in any formal sense.

10. Fragment of roll - Psalm 11.7-14.4

London, British Library: Pap. 230; LDAB 3473; Cribiore 297 + 298; van Haelst 109 + M-P³ 1245; Rahlfs 2019; Aland, *Rep. I AT 51*. *Ed.pr.*: (anon.), *Athenaeum* 3489 (July-Dec, 1894) 319-21. See also F.G. Kenyon, *Facsimiles of Biblical Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1900) 1; P.Lond.Lit. 207(r) + P.Lond.Lit. 255(v). See also D. Barker, *The Nomina Sacra in P.Lond.Lit. 207, Pap. Congr. XXIV* (2007) 93-100

- (7) [τα] λογια κυ λογια’ αγνα
 [αργυριον π]επυρωμενον δοκιμον τη γη
 [κεκ]αταριεμενον επταπλασιον (ω above ο)
 (8) [c]υ κε φυλαξειε ημαε
 5 [και διατηρηε]ειε ημαε απο της γενεαε ταυτηε
 [και ειε] τον αιωνα
 (9) [κυκλω οι α]βεβιε περιπατου[ει]ν
 [κατα τ]ο υποε’ σου επολυ[ωρηεαε] τουε
 [υιο]υε των ανθ[ρω]πω[ν]
 (+ 28 lines to complete column)

This papyrus manuscript measures 24.5 x 25.7 cm, and comes from III-IV AD. It is a fragment of a roll containing the Greek text of Ps. 11.7-14.4 (written stichometrically) on the recto (*m. 1*) (see Barker, 100), apparently re-used for Isocrates, *Demon.* 26-28 in a less-skilled hand on the verso (*m. 2*). The Psalm text has high points added, probably as syllable dividers, by the same hand as the Isocrates text (*m. 2*). In the Psalm text there is some use of *diaeresis*, *sicilicus* between double letters, and the following *nomina sacra*: κυ (col. 1.1), κε (col. 1.4; col.2.27), κω (col. 1.26), κν (col. 2.15; col. 2.22), κc (col. 2.19), ανπν and θν (col. 1.35); and κε and θc are restored (col. 1.16), as well as θc (col. 1.30), κc (col. 1.30), κυ (col. 1.27) and κν (col. 2.37); but δαυειτ (for δαυειδ) appears *in plene* without *makron* (col. 1.11; and δαυειδ, col. 1.28; col. 2.26), as do ανθ[ρω]πω[ν] (col. 1.9), θεου (col. 2.9), ωτηρ[ιου] (col. 2.20), and [ιρα]ηλ / ιραηλ (col. 2.21, 25). A number of mistakes in the text are corrected by *m. 1*, e.g., ανπν is crossed out and θν added (col. 1.35); but some are left uncorrected. A representative sample of the text, as well as an image of the recto is given Text 10 below.

Cribiore suggests that a teacher may have written the recto of this papyrus as a model, since the large chancery hand does not indicate the work of a student. However, the columnar layout is perhaps more likely to show that it was originally a literary roll containing certain psalms, which was then reused for the Isocrates text on the verso, and later again for a student’s exercise of syllable division. If so, it was not originally a ‘school text’ used for practice in syllable division, but a Psalm roll reused for a literary text, and then again reused in a learning context, with no way of knowing what that learning context was and whether the label ‘school’ is appropriate. The use of *nomina sacra*, admittedly somewhat inconsistent, can be taken to indicate a Christian context, rather than a Jewish one.

- (7) [The] sayings of the Lord are holy sayings
 [silver] refined by fire, tested by soil
 Clean[ed] seven times
 (8) You, Lord, will guard us
 and protect us from this generation
 and forever.
 (9) [All around the un]godly are walking
 According to] your exaltation you ca[re] for
 the sons of men.

Text 10: Col. 1, lines 1-9 (Psalm 11.7-9; *ed.pr.*)



Figure 4: P.Lond.Lit. 207r. Reproduced with permission of British Library. © British Library Board (P. Lond. inv. 230r)

11. Papyrus sheet including words possibly Christian

Cologne, Fondation Bodmer, P. Bodmer LI; LDAB 5269; CPP 290; M-P³ 2741.02. See A. di Bitonto-Kasser, P. Bodmer LI recto: esercizio di divisione sillabica, *MH* 55 (1988) 112-18

This poorly preserved papyrus sheet (12.7 x 20.0 cm) contains an alphabetic word list in Greek as an exercise in syllable division on the recto, and an unidentified literary or para-literary fragment on the verso. There are no words that might have been written as *nomina sacra*. The syllables are divided by an oblique stroke and a blank space. The text on the recto is given below.

P. Bodmer LI (recto)

Col. 1	Col. 2	Col. 1	Col. 2
→	→	→	→
[i ± 1-2]c [	|| λου-καε [	[i ± 1-2]s [	|| ]ου-καε [
[i]-ρον	|| [λ]η[-]νος [	[i]-ρον	|| [l]ê[-]nos [
[i]-κων	|| [λ]ευ-κηε [	[i]-κôn	|| [l]eu-kêε [
[i ± 1-2]οε	|| [λα]κ-κος [	[i ± 1-2]οε	|| [la]κ-κος [
5. [i]-να || \mathcal{L}	|| [λ]η-στηε [	[i]-na || \mathcal{L}	|| [l]ê-štês [
[a-]—	|| a—	[a-]—	|| a—
[k ± 1-2 -]μα	|| // μαρ-κος [	[k ± 1-2 -]μα	|| // μαρ-κος [
[k ± 1-2 -]ροε	|| // μω-ροε [	[k ± 1-2 -]ροε	|| // mô-ros [
[k ± 1-2 -]ποε	|| μ[ι]-μοε [	[k ± 1-2 -]ποε	|| m[i]-mos [
[k ± 1-2 -]πη	|| μι-νοε [	[k ± 1-2 -]πη	|| mi-nos [
10. [k ± 1-2 -]νοε	|| με-λοε [	[k ± 1-2 -]νοε	|| me-los [
[k ± 1-2 -]ποε	|| μ[. -]κρο[ε]	[k ± 1-2 -]ποε	|| m[. -]kro[s]
[k ± 1-2 -]κ... [ ||	|| μαρ-τυε	[k ± 1-2 -]κ... [ ||	|| μαρ-tus
[k ? ± 3-4 ]... [ ||	|| μη-κος	[k ? ± 3-4 ]... [ ||	|| mê-kos
[ ||	|| . ο[.] . [.] . ? [ ||	[ ||	|| . ο[.] . [.] . ? [ ||

Thus, this papyrus sheet does appear to be a school text, but is written in a large, confident, although somewhat irregular, hand, and thus a ‘school hand’ but not that of a beginner (see di Bitonto-Kasser, pl. 1). Some of the words in col. 2 have links with the New Testament (e.g., [λ]ου/κα, μαρ/κος, μαρ/τυς), and on this basis the editor suggested that the papyrus may have been written ‘in ambiente cristiano’ (di Bitonto-Kasser, 117). However, these words do not definitely indicate a Christian context, and others on the papyrus are not specifically ‘Christian’ (e.g., [λ]η/ζης, [λ]ε/κης). Therefore, the papyrus may have been a ‘Christian text’ but, if so, only in a very tenuous sense, although its reuse for the binding of *P. Bodmer XXIII* (Isaiah 47-66, Coptic) may strengthen this ascription. On the whole, this papyrus sheet belongs to a learning context, but may not be Christian.

12. Alphabetic list of names with Old Testament names in Greek

London, University College, Petrie Museum 31896; *LDAB* 5680; Cribiore 112; *CPP* 291; M-P³ 2700.1. *Ed.Pr.*: P. Rainer *Unterricht Kopt.* (MPER.N.S. 18) 1990, 104. Cf. O. Crum 435; O. Petrie 410.

This incomplete ostrakon measures 10.6 x 19.3 cm, and is dated to IV AD. It contains 9 lines of an alphabetic list of proper names (none complete), divided into syllables by dashes at mid-letter level, and written in a clear hand. While the hand could be a teacher’s, or a student’s ‘rapid’ (practised) hand engaging in a writing exercise (see Cribiore, 1996, pl. XII, no. 112), the content would seem to indicate the latter. The text on the ostrakon, as well as a photograph, follows:

MPER 18.104 (O. Petrie 410)

] - χος	] - chos
]ο-γος	]ο-gos
ζ]η-νω-υος	z]ê-nô-nos
ζω-ι-λος	zô-i-los
5. ζ]α-βου-λων	z]a-bou-lôn
ζ]αν-ου-χος	z]an-sou-chos
ζ]α]κ-χαι-ος	za]k-chai-os
]αc	]as
]αηc	]aês

This ostrakon is likely to have been a student’s writing exercise, and in this sense a ‘school text,’ without indicating the formality of the learning context. However, the basis on which it is called ‘Christian,’ i.e., two reconstructed names occurring in the Old Testament, – ζ]αβουλων (frequent), ζ]α]κχαιος (2 Macc 10:19) – is rather flimsy. It could be Jewish, but its setting in IV AD Egypt probably tips the balance in favour of it being written in a Christian context of some kind, although without any indication of the Christian convictions of the writer, or the teacher (if there was one).



Figure 5: O. Petrie 410 (used with permission of Petrie Museum, University College, London)

13. Papyrus sheet with Old and New Testament names

Paris, Louvre: inv. E 10285; *LDAB* 5736; *CPP* 295; M-P³ 2741.07. *Ed.Pr.*: W. Clarysse, A. Wouters, Un exercice de syllabification chrétien, in P. Bingen (2000) 85-93, no.17; F. Morelli, La raccolta dei P. Bingen, *CdE* 77 (2002) 312-21

This papyrus sheet measures 19.5 x 15.5 cm, and is dated by the editors to the second half of IV AD, although Morelli has dated it later (V-VI AD) (Morelli, 314). It contains a syllabification exercise on the recto, with spacing between syllables, but the verso is blank. It is written in the unsteady (‘evolving’) hand of a student (see Clarysse, Wouters, 2000, pl. 10, no. 17). There are no words that could have been written as *nomina sacra*.

Like the previous papyrus, this one contains some words that may imply a Christian context (e.g., αδαμ, αβελ, αηρ, δαυειδ, κηφας, παυλος), although some of these could just as easily indicate a Jewish setting. Again, it includes a range of words that are not specifically Christian (e.g., γιγας, γερων, ορος, υδωρ) and some non-Christian (e.g., ορφευς, κατωρ). However, the predominance of names familiar from the OT and NT, as well as some known from early martyr stories, especially the use of κηφας, would seem to indicate a Christian context for this school exercise.

	Col. 1	Col. 2	Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 5
	A δαμ	γι γαc	Θα μαρ	ξι φοc	το μοc
	Α βελ	γαλα	Θε κλα	Ξερ ξηc	Τυ ροc
	[A] cηρ	γερων	Ϊ cακ	ξε νοc	υρ ταξ
	[A] χωρ	γαυραc	Ϊ ωβ	ξυ cτηρ	υ μνοc
5.	[A] μωc	γο νων	ι θμοc	ξαν θοc	υ πνοc
	[B]α ρακ	δω ρον	ι χνοc	ο ροc	υ λη
	Βα ρουχ	Δο μνοc	ιπ ποc	ο φιc	υ δωρ
	[B]ι κτωρ	δη μοc	Κα cτωρ	ορ μοc	Φλω ροc
	Βε ωρ	δου κοc	Κη φαc	Ορ φευc	Φαυ cτοc
10.	[B]η cαc	Δαυ ειδ	κολ ποc	ορ κοc	Φηcτοc
		Ε νωχ	Κλη μηc	Πετροc	Φοι βη
		Ε νωc	κρι κοc	Παυλοc	Φα ραν
		Ερ μη	Λα βαν	ποντοc	Χεβρωγ
		Ε cδρα	Λα μεχ	Πουπλοc	Χωρηβ
		Ε . [.] .	[] .	Προκλοc	

	Col. 1	Col. 2	Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 5
	A dam	giant	Thamar	sword	sharp
	Α bel	milk	Thecla	Xerxes	Tyre
	[A] sêr	old (man)	Isaac	foreign	mouse(?)
	[A] chor	haughty	Job	engraving tool	hymn
5.	[A] môs	children	neck(?)	yellow	sleep
	[B]a rak	gift	sole	mountain	forest
	Ba rouch	Domnos	horse	snake	water
	[B]i ktôr	populace	Castor	chain	Phloros
	Βε ôr	leader	Cephas	Orpheus	Phaustos
10.	[B]ê sas	David	chest	oath	Festos
		Enoch	Clemens	Peter	Phoebe
		Enosh	ring	Paul	Pharan
		Hermes(?)	Laban	sea	Hebron
		Ezra	Lamech	Publios	Horeb
		Ε . [.] .	[] .	Proclos	

14. Nine wooden tablets with Christian words and symbols

Berlin, Egyptian Museum P. 14000: *LDAB 5786*; M-P³ 2737; Cribiore 404. *Ed.Pr.*: E. Ziebarth 1913² *Aus der antiken Schule*, Bonn: Marcus und Weber, 29-31, no. 48; G. Plaumann, *Amliche Berichte aus den königlichen Kunst-sammlungen* 34 (1913) 214-19; C. Austin 1973 *Comicorum Graecorum fragmenta in papyris reperta*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 333, no. 319; C. Pernigotti, *Menandri Sententiae* (Firenze: Olschki, 2008) 48, no. *889; *SB* 3.6215-18

This codex of wooden tablets (9.5 x 17.5 cm), dated IV/V (but likely later, according to Cribiore, 1996), probably had more than the nine that are extant. They contain school exercises in the form of writing and mathematical exercises, syllable divisions, numbers, a teacher’s model of a maxim (of Menander), symbols, some individual letters, as well as two words (φοc, ζωη) and the word εμμανομυλ (= εμμανοουηλ), both arranged in the form of a cross. The student’s hand is always uneven, even though the letters are confidently formed – hence, ‘evolving’ (See Cribiore, 1996, pl. LXXVII-VIII). There are no words that might have been abbreviated as *nomina sacra*.

	† α υ ο τ ω ε	† a u o t ô e
	ρ †	r †
	° φ °	° ph°
	ζ ω η	z ô ê
5.	° c °	5. ° s °
	° ε °	° e °
	ν ο μ υ λ	n o m u l
	° μ °	° m °
	α	a

Thus, these tablets clearly belonged to a school exercise book, and the writer seems to have used φοc with ζωη as a symbol for Christ, and then εμμανομυλ under that – ‘God is with us’ (Plaumann). Hence, the vocabulary (especially the common combination of φοc and ζωη), symbols and layout show that this school text did belong to a Christian milieu in which both classical and Christian texts were used as writing exercises, although little can be said about what that context was, or if teacher or student had Christian convictions.

15. List of words containing Old and New Testament names

Oxford, Sackler Library, Papyrology Rooms: *Coptic Inscr.* 207; *LDAB 5825*; Cribiore 115; *CPP 287*. See *O. Theb. Copt.* 48; P. Rainer *Unterricht Kopt.* (*MPER* N.S. 18) 232

This ostrakon measures 8.2 x 13.5 cm, and is dated IV-VI AD. It has Greek nouns written on both sides, divided into syllables, with other letters on the recto. Some names appear on the verso. It is clearly a ‘learning text’ of some kind, going on the presence of developing word patterns. The hand is quite unpractised (‘alphabetic’), with letters of various shapes and sizes (see Cribiore, 1996, pl. XIII, no. 115). The name δα-υειτ is written for δα-υειδ, not being abbreviated as a *nomen sacrum*.

MPER N.S. 18.232

	Recto	Verso	Recto	Verso
	βο μοc	μαρκοc	altar	Markos
	βα βαc	μηνα	father?	Mena
	βι οc	μηξοαοc	life	Mêeoas(?)
	γγ γαc	ματχο	giant	Matcho(?)
5.	γα μοc	(vacat)	5. wedding	(vacat)
	γα τοc		vessel	
	γε δων		Gideon	
	δα υειτ		David	
	δο ρον		gift	
10.	δ.ρ . .		10. d.r . .	
	. η . .		.ê..	

This learning text has one word from the OT (δα υειτ), and possibly from the NT (μαρκος), but the use of μαρκος would, if anything, indicate a Christian context, rather than a Jewish one. However, little can be said about the nature of that Christian ‘learning context,’ except that OT and NT words were able to be used.

16. Limestone ostracon containing ‘Christian words’

Cairo, Egyptian Museum: JE 25/7/48/1; LDAB 5872; CPP 320. Ed.Pr. G. Wagner, *O. Bahria*. 1. Cf. SB 20.14885.

This ostracon from the Oasis Parva measures 16.1 x 12.7 cm (if the plate in *O. Bahria* is actual size), and dates from IV-VII AD. It is written on both sides and, like no. 15, contains a list of words in alphabetic format, which implies that it was written in a ‘learning’ context, perhaps a more formal ‘school’ setting. The hand is a coarse square uncial, and could be described as ‘evolving,’ if indeed a student’s hand.

Some of the words (χεβρων, βαρναβι = βαρναβας, ωβ) on this ostracon, which was used in a learning context, would seem to indicate a Christian setting. However, it is not possible to say more about that setting or, indeed, the learning context to which it belonged.

SB 20.14885:

	Recto				Verso	
	Col. 1	Col. 2	Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 1	Col. 2
	φω . .	χαλαε[	αφο . . .	[]	αιτοσ	κολοχαε
	φωρ	χρωη	ατιμοσ	[]	. . .	κα
	φωγη	χρυσοσ	απληε	[]	. . .	κα[λα]μοσ
	φωε	χρεια	. . [	βασιαε	ωβ	κ . . . ωρια
5.		χεβρων	. . . [	βαρναβι		
		χιος	. . . [	βαρθ (vacat)		
		χορ . [	. . .	βαρβ (vacat)		
		κ . [	α			
		. . [	αββαχοουμ			
10.			αρχων			
			αμαδαε			
			αθρεχαε			

	Recto				Verso	
	Col. 1	Col. 2	Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 1	Col. 2
	(phô .?)	Chalastra(?)	(apho . . ?)	[]	Aitos(?)	Kolochas
	thief	Chrôê(?)	dishonoured	[]	. . .	(ka?)
	sound	gold	aplês	[]	. . .	reed
	light	use	. . . [	Basias	Job	(k . . . ôria?)
5.		Hebrôn	. . . [	Barnabas		
		Chios	. . . [	Barth (vacat)		
		(chor . [?)	. . .	Barb (vacat)		
		(k. [?)	(a?)			
		. . [	Abbakoum			
10.			ruler			
			Ammatas (?)			
			(athrexas?)			

17. Eight leaves from papyrus codex including Romans 1.1-8, 13-15 and Job 1.1

Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Papyrus Collection: inv. 926; LDAB 107875. Ed.Pr.: E.M. Husselman, A Bohairic school text on papyrus, *JNES* 6 (1947) 129-51. Cf. M. Hatsitzka, in *P. Rainer Unterricht Kopt.* (MPER N.S. 18) no. 207

This papyrus consists of eight papyrus leaves from a codex (17.5 x 27.0 cm), written in Coptic (Bohairic) and containing a syllabary, biblical names and the text of Rom 1.1-8, 13-15 and Job 1:1. The papyrus is dated to IV AD. The hand is not inexpert, but there seems to be another hand as well, perhaps the teacher providing a model. There are some omissions and a small number of corrections. The biblical texts are written carefully, with shading and occasional knots to finish off the letters. A number of *nomina sacra* appear with superior *makra*: $\overline{\text{IHC}}$ (5v.25, 40; [6r.5]), $\overline{\text{XC}}$ (5v.26, 40; 6r.5), $\overline{\text{PNA}}$ (5v.37), $\overline{\text{OC}}$ (5v.41; 6r.4), and interestingly $\overline{\text{IWB}}$ (6r.18) is also given a superior *makron*. A sample of the papyrus follows (fol. 6r), together with a photograph.

(fol. 6r, Rom 1.7, 13-15; lines 1-14 only)

(7) [NIMENP]Α† ΝΤ[Ε Φ]† ΝΗ ΕΘΑΖΕΜ
 [ΕΘΟΥΔ]Β ΠΣΜΟΤ ΝΩΤΕΝ
 [ΝΕΜ Τ]ΖΙΡΗ[ΝΗ] ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΤΕΝ
 [Φ† ΠΕΝΙ]ΩΤ Ν[ΕΜ Π]ΕΝΩΣ
 5. [ΙΗΣ] ΠΧΣ (13) ΙΣ ΟΥΜ]ΗΩ ΓΑΡ
 [ΝΣΟΠ †ΣΟΒ† ΜΜΟΙ ΕΙ Ζ]ΑΡΩΤΕΝ
 [ΟΥΟΣ] ΔΥ[ΤΑΖΝΟ Μ]ΜΟΪ ΩΔ
 [ΕΒΟΥ]Ν Ε†ΝΟΥ [Ζ]ΙΝΑ ΝΤΑ
 ΣΙ [ΝΟ]ΥΤΑΖ Ν[. . .] ΕΝ ΘΗΝΟΥ
 10. ΖΩ[Τ]ΕΝ ΜΦΡΗ† [Μ]ΠΣΩΧΠ
 ΝΝΙΚΕΕΘΝΟΣ (14) ΝΙΟΥΙΔΑΪ
 ΝΕΜ ΝΙΟΥΕΪΝΙΝ ΟΥΟΝ ΕΡΟΪ
 (15) ΚΑΤΑ ΠΑΟΥΩΩ Ν[Β]ΗΤ
 ΕΣΙΩΕΝΝΟΥΧΙ ΝΩΤΕ[Ν]
 > > > > > >

[+ 9 lines [Job 1:1] to complete page]

(7) Loved by God,
 called to be saints.
 Grace to you and peace
 from God and Father
 and the Lord Jesus
 Christ. (13) that I have
 often made plans to
 come to you, but was
 prevented up
 until now. (14) I am
 obligated to you also.
 (15) So I am ready to
 preach the gospel to
 you
 > > > > > >

[+ 9 lines [Job 1:1] to complete page]

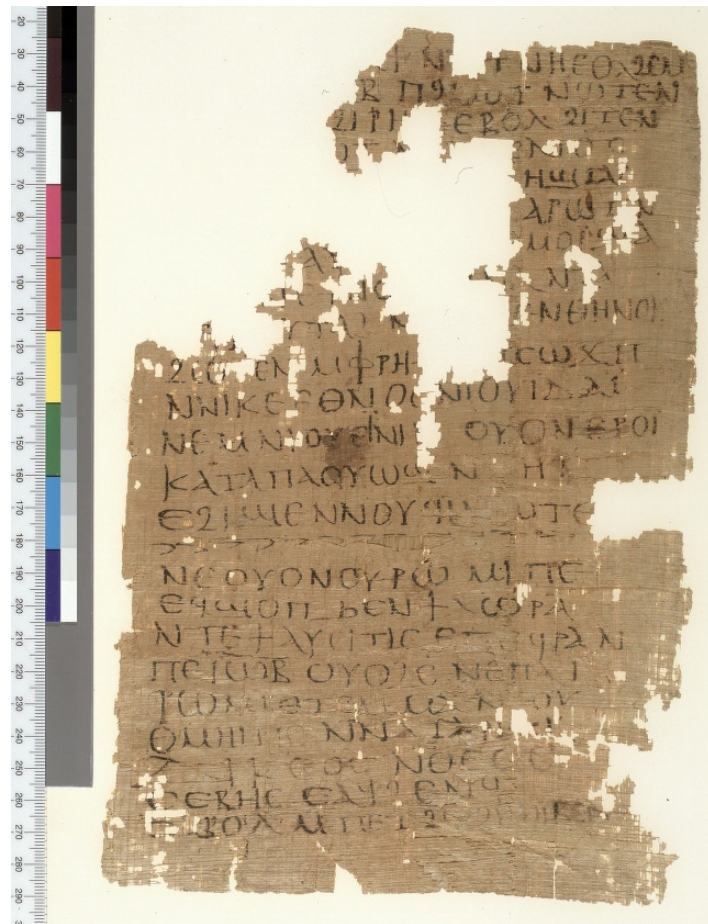


Figure 6: P. Mich. inv. 926 (fol. 6r) (used with permission of University of Michigan)

Like the codices of wooden tablets above (nos 1, 2, 3, 8, 14), this papyrus codex includes, among a range of learning exercises, sections of OT and NT text. Whatever the learning context in which this codex was written, it was

apparently acceptable to use Christian texts as part of a student's exercises. We know no more about the learning context or the Christian conviction of the student or of the teacher, if there was one.

Issues arising

A number of issues arise as a result of our review of those papyri which might have been written up to the end of IV AD (and possibly beyond), which are called 'school texts,' and whose religious orientation is given as 'Christian.' Firstly, is 'school text' an appropriate description for them all, or might this be a misleading description in some cases, since it could be taken to imply a more formal setting than is warranted? Could it lead to false conclusions being drawn as to their nature and role in education in antiquity? Secondly, what does it mean to call them 'Christian'? Were they written as an expression of Christian conviction, either on the part of the teacher, if there was one, or on the part of the student? If not, what do they imply about the setting in which a Christian text or Christian words could be used in an educational setting, often alongside Classical texts?

Conclusions

With respect to these papyri being called 'school texts,' a number of points should be made. *First*, it appears that, originally, two of them were 'literary' texts, not 'school' texts at all. The quality of the hand in no. 7 and the columnar layout of no. 10 show that initially they were both rolls containing Psalms for reading. It is possible that the syllable division marks on no. 7 might have been added to help a church lector but, if not, they were added as an exercise in syllable division, thus showing that part of a Psalm roll was reused in a learning context. Such rolls were presumably discarded when they had become unusable in public reading contexts, but retrieved for various uses, including educational ones; only later did they find their way to the town rubbish heap, a well known phenomenon, of course, at Oxyrhynchus.

Second, no. 4 was originally a 'school' book containing mathematical exercises in Greek, but a second hand has written substantial portions of John's Gospel (beginning from John 10.7) in a dialect of Coptic on blank pages in the book after the school exercises. This is an instance of the 'reuse' of a codex in quite a different way from nos 7 and 10. In this case, a Christian text was written in a codex that was initially a school papyrus exercise book. Hence, the Gospel text cannot really be called a 'school text,' even if it is written in a student's exercise book, since the writer placed it there presumably because he or she needed space to write and there were blank pages in a book which was close at hand.

Third, no. 6 was certainly written by someone wanting to learn, as shown by the conjugation of Greek verbs. It is not clear, however, whether the Pauline Greek-Latin phrase section shows that he or she also wanted to learn Latin or Greek, or just extend his or her knowledge of NT Pauline letters. Hence, the papyrus shows that the writer certainly wanted to practise grammar, but it is unclear how the second section fits with this, although a 'school' setting would seem to be unlikely.

Fourth, the writers of no. 9 were quite inexpert, but the small size of the codex, and hence the small amount of text included, would imply a private setting in which a copy of the Psalm text was wanted for some reason. It does not seem to have been a writing exercise, so it should not be called a 'school text,' even though the writers were highly unskilled.

Fifth, a number of the papyri reviewed here were indeed learning exercises, since they include lists of words with small variations, apparently as exercises of some kind. Thus, two papyrus sheets (nos 11 and 13) and three ostraca (nos 12, 15 and 16) have such word lists, presumably to practise some skill. The assumption that the learning was in a formal 'school' does, however, go beyond the evidence.

Sixth, five codices of wooden tablets (nos 1, 2, 3, 8 and 14) and a papyrus codex (no. 17) are clearly from a learning context with some formality, which implies that they were 'school texts.' One papyrus sheet (no. 5) also seems to be a writing exercise, perhaps from a similar codex with a comparable purpose, although it not possible to be more definite about the specific nature of the learning situation in which it was written, since the writers could well have been practising to write on their own.

Hence, with regard to this group of papyri called 'school texts' on *LDAB*, only this last group, along with the first text in no. 4, were clearly part of a formal 'school setting.' Others belonged to a learning context of some kind, but it is unclear that 'school' is the most appropriate description of that setting. Indeed, the function and context of nos 6 and 9 are not at all obvious, and others were Psalm rolls reused for learning purposes. Thus, as a label for papyri, the designation 'school texts' can cover a range of different kinds of texts, uses and purposes, and is often in need of refinement. Further, even those papyri that were clearly 'school texts' should not be used to support the suggestion that they formed a part of formal 'Christian' educational contexts, since so little is known about the actual circumstances in which they were written.

It is also appropriate to make some observations with regard to describing the religious orientation of these papyri as 'Christian.' *First*, it is often taken as axiomatic that the presence of *nomina sacra* are a clear indication of a papyrus being Christian, rather than Jewish, on the basis that there are no definitely Jewish papyri that employ *nomina sacra*. However, an inscription from late IV AD in the synagogue in Sardis seems to include one *nomen sacrum* ($\theta\upsilon$), perhaps contradicting the axiom (Edwards 2009; cf Treu 1973); but even this might only show the influence of Christian practices on Jewish ones. Indeed, another abbreviation in the synagogue ($\kappa\upsilon$ for $\kappa\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ in Inscr. 71) has no superior makron but a following abbreviation mark (Kroll 2001: 45, cf. fig. 73), so the apparent *nomen sacrum* might just be a Jewish adaption of a Christian practice, just another way of indicating an abbreviation. Hence, no. 1 has been taken to be more

likely Christian in this study, and the presence of *nomina sacra* normally indicative of a Christian papyrus.

Second, the school exercise books that include Christian texts (nos **1, 2, 3, 8, 14, 17**, and possibly **5**) show that they belonged to a formal ‘school’ setting in which it was acceptable for students to use such texts as writing exercises. We do not know if the students chose the texts themselves, or whether the texts were set for them by the instructor, although I would suggest that the latter is more likely in antiquity. It could be asked why a number of these (nos **1, 2, 3, 8**) used Psalm texts, but I am aware of no answer to this question. Further, as we have noted above, the use of Christian texts in such settings shows little with respect to the Christian convictions of either student or teacher.

Third, the writer of no. **4** was certainly wishing to produce a text of (at least part of) John’s Gospel, but the only link with a learning situation of any kind was simply that he reused pages from a school exercise book. The writer of no. **6** certainly had some purpose in understanding the Greek (or Latin) of some NT Pauline letters, but using the same ‘school’ codex in which he had written verb conjugations might have been only accidental. No. **9** shows at least one writer with Christian conviction, although the link with ‘learning’ is tenuous. In these cases, the writer’s Christian conviction is clear, although the link with a learning context is not.

Fourth, nos **7** and **10** appear to have been literary rolls written with Psalm texts, and the presence of *nomina sacra* in both papyri show that they were originally Christian, rather than Jewish. They had probably worn out, and were placed in a fitting storage location, as was the case in some Jewish synagogues, and then reused in learning settings. In this case, they do show that Christian texts were reused for learning, although the connection between ‘Christian’ and ‘learning’ in this case is a tenuous one.

Fifth, a small number of papyri (nos **11, 12, 13, 15, 16**) contain lists of words, with varying degrees of linkage to the OT or NT, and hence to Christian contexts. They cannot be shown to betray Christian conviction on the part of the writers, probably students, and some of them have a very slim claim to contain ‘Christian’ words at all. In this case, the link between the learning context in which they were written and the Christian conviction of anyone concerned is quite unknown.

Sixth, the use of *nomina sacra* in some school papyri poses the question as to why students were practising such specific Christian content. It implies that, either learning the *nomina sacra* had become a part of learning to write, or the papyri in question might have been a part of a very different learning situation.

Finally, what does it mean to label papyri as ‘Christian’? One implication of this study is that certain papyri may

only be called ‘Christian’ in very broad terms, in that they contain a few words that can be seen as specifically Christian, probably because they belong to the period of the post-Constantinian ‘Peace of the Church,’ and not because they are an expression of the Christian conviction of the author or copyist. On the other hand, some manuscripts are truly school texts and contain known Christian works as part of their learning exercises, although again this indicates little of certainty about the writer. One implication of the latter is that, while these texts are assigned numbers on the lists of OT or NT manuscripts, they may only be used with caution in the task of textual criticism for establishing the original text of those works, since they are, after all, the products of a school student’s hand, which was not only somewhat shaky or ‘evolving,’ but was not necessarily aiming to reproduce a work either for use in a church setting or for posterity. Thus, the manuscripts assigned Rahlfs numbers for Septuagint MSS – no. **2 (2175)**, no. **3 (2174)**, no. **8 (2224)**, and no. **9 (2090)** – should be used with caution, when attempting to establish the text of the Greek OT. The same can be said for the NT papyri, no. **5 (P¹⁰)** and no. **6 (P⁹⁹)**, as well as the Coptic versional evidence supplied by nos. **1, 4** and **17**. This ought to be a sobering thought for those using such ‘Christian’ school texts in text critical work on the Greek OT and the NT.

A final implication to be drawn from this study is that the latter group of ‘school’ or ‘learning’ manuscripts which include known Christian works should not be used in the study of the palaeography of early Christian manuscripts and the professionalism with which they were reproduced. They should only be retained in such a study as a control group of manuscripts of quite another kind, since they were not copied for the purpose of disseminating those texts, or making the contents available to a wider illiterate group via a church lector reading in the service. They are in a different category altogether.

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Acknowledgements

I acknowledge with gratitude the financial assistance provided by the Ingram-Moore Fund of the Australian Institute of Archaeology, which enabled the purchase of a number of books and photographs of manuscripts that were crucial for my doctoral research on *Stages of Development in Scribal Professionalism in Early Christian Circles* at the University of New England, Armidale, NSW, completed in 2010, under the supervision of G.H.R. Horsley.

Abbreviations

CPP Corpus of Paraliterary Papyri (available at <http://cpp.arts.kuleuven.be/>)

M-P³ Mertens-Pack Database of Papyri (available at <http://www2.ulg.ac.be/facphl/services/cedopal/pages/mp3anglais.htm>)

LDAB Leuven Database of Ancient Books (available at <http://www.trismegistos.org/ldab>)

LXX Septuagint

NT New Testament

OT Old Testament

Other abbreviations are in accord with the *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*, available at <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html> (June, 2011)

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Endnotes

- 1 On school texts in the papyri see esp. Criore (1996); ead. (2001); T. Morgan (1997); ead. (1998). See also the bibliography available at http://promethee.philo.ulg.ac.be/cedopal/Bibliographies/Exercices_scolaires_écriture.htm through the Mertens-Pack³ database.
- 2 The University of Münster *New Testament. Virtual Manuscript Room* is available at <http://intf.uni-muenster.de/vmr/NTVMR/IndexNTVMR.php>.
- 3 A small number of items have been omitted from this study.
 - a. **LDAB 85073** (*P. Med. Copto* inv. 247a-b + 251a-b) is a school text comprising 8 leaves, with mathematical and vocabulary items in Coptic (Sahidic), including some Christian vocabulary. It was published as *MPER* XVIII 305a + 290a + *Aeg.* 68 (1988) nos 5, 6 and *Aeg.* 74 (1994) nos 1, 2, and dated consistently VI/VII or VI-VII AD (cf. *SB Kopt.* 2.1257-58). Its dating on *LDAB* as IV AD appears to have been a mistake, so it is omitted from this study.
 - b. **LDAB 107876** (*P. Mich.* inv. 4949v) consists of fragments of a Greek-Coptic glossary on the verso of a Greek document (*P. Mich. Copt.*, p. 20; descr.), but it is as yet unpublished. It is dated VIII-X AD on *APIS* and IV-X AD on *LDAB*. In view of the uncertainty of its date – indeed, its probable dating well after IV AD – and since there is no information to indicate any Christian content, it is also set aside here.
 - c. **LDAB 113825**. Little is known about this papyrus, other than that it is a papyrus codex in Greek containing a mathematical handbook from IV AD, and that some of its 17 folios are housed at the University of Princeton (Cotsen Library inv. Q 87167). *LDAB* reports that Roger Bagnall is preparing a full edition, but in view of the present paucity of information about its contents, it cannot form a part of this study.
- 4 In accord with E.G. Turner (1977: 13) I refer to the breadth before the height.
- 5 Bucking (1997: 136) reports a personal letter from C. Gallazzi to this effect.