

P.Oxy. 3.407

Oxyrhynchus

end III/IV

London, British Museum, inv.1189 E. Ed.pr. B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt (1903); *F. Pedretti, 'Papiri cristiani liturgici', *Aeg.* 36 (1956) 247-53; P.Lit.Lond. 230 descr.; VH 952; LDAB 5531; DACL XIII.1 (1937) 1439; AMC I.21 (p.195).

Single sheet; almost square, 15.7 (B) x 14.5 (H) cm. 8 vertical folds; distances between creases suggest that the folding was done inwards from both left and right. Recto (→): 7 lines located towards the top, followed by free space of *c.* 8 cm. Margins: upper, 2.5cm; left, 1.25 cm; right, 1.7 cm. Some indentations and large holes which do not greatly affect the text. Informal hand with literary effect, comparable to the chancery style in P.Berl.inv. 11532 (= SB 1.4639 = Montevicchi, *Papirologia*, tav. 72; Letter of a Prefect, AD 209), but here later; ed.pr. end III or IV; 'III or beginning of IV' AMC (an error?). Final sigma small and raised in αυτοις (2) and τους (6; cf. the similar practice in P.Berl.inv. 11532). *Nomina sacra*: θεος (1), ουρανον (1) κυριου (5), σωτηρος (5), Ιησου (5) and Χριστου (6) uncontracted. Verso (↓): the word προσευχή, followed by a two-line account, in a different hand(?).

Recto: → ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντ[ο]κράτωρ ὁ ποιήσας τὸν οὐρανὸν
καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς·
βοήθησόν μοι ἐλεήσον με [[εξ]] ἐξάλειψον μου τὰς
ἁμαρτίας σῶσόν με ἐν τῷ νῦν καὶ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι
5 αἰῶνι διὰ τοῦ κυρίου κα[ὶ] σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ
Χριστοῦ δι' οὗ [καὶ] ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας
τῶν αἰώνων[ν.] ἀμήν.
(vac.)

Verso: ↓ προσευχή
(δραχμαὶ) Ἑβρλς
10 χωρ() λί(τραί) ἐ (ἡμίου?)

God almighty, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, help me, have mercy on me, wipe away my sins, save me in the present and in the coming ¹⁵ age, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, through whom are the glory and the power to the ages of ages. Amen.

Verso:

Prayer 2,136 drachmae ¹⁰ make (?) 5 (1/2) (?) litrai

3 [[εξ]]: the letters appear to have been scribbled out (?) by the scribe *l.* ἐξάλειψον 2 θάλατταν ed.pr. 5 Ἰησου pap. 6 Χριστοῦ AMC Χρ[ε]ιστοῦ Pedretti [καὶ]: lacuna is overlooked in the ed.pr. and subsequent texts 9 β pap. (?) 10 χωρεῖ or χωρίς suggested ed.pr.

In seeking help, mercy, cleansing and salvation, this prayer draws on the language of the Psalms in lines 1 (Ps. 145:6; cf. Neh. 9:6, Rev. 14:7) and 2 (Ps. 50:11), and that of liturgy. The doxological formula ἡ δόξα καὶ ὁ κράτος echoes Egyptian liturgical usage, according to Ghedini (672-3, with references), but as the use of the formula is widespread even at the date of this text, it may not prove the prayer's Egyptian origin (as suggested by Pedretti, 251) The impressive hand is a notable feature. The papyrus has been regarded as an amulet (so van Haelst; Milne in P.Lit.Lond.); but for carrying on the person it could have been made much more compactly: the free space beneath the text is over half the height of the papyrus, and the folding was done only vertically, leaving the piece at its full height when folded. Evidence of connection of the formulae with a particular rite (e.g. baptism) would be useful. The individual sheet is a typical format for liturgical texts used in public recitation, a setting not necessarily ruled out by the use of the first person singular.

G. Ghedini, 'Frammenti liturgici in un papiro milanese', *Aegyptus* 13 (1933) 667-673*Papyri from the Rise of Christianity in Egypt*

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