

Recently Discovered Greek Papyri and Parchment of the Psalter from the Oxford Oxyrhynchus Manuscripts: Implications for Scribal Practice and Textual Transmission

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Introduction

The ancient city of Oxyrhynchus continues to yield a significant and steady number of biblical papyri from the early part of the first millennium. Given the city's early prominence, prosperity, and significant Christian influence, this is perhaps understandable. In light of accounts such as *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* (*HMA*), the late fourth-century journal of seven Palestinian monks, it is evident that Oxyrhynchus was home to many Christian monks, and hence, significant scribal activity. Illustrative of Christian influence within the city is *HMA* §5, attributed to Rufinus of Aquileia (340–410 CE).

Eventually we came to a certain city of the Thebaid called Oxyrhynchus, which was so famous for good religious activities that no description could possibly do justice to them all. We found monks everywhere inside the city and also in all the countryside round about. What had been the public buildings and temples of a former superstitious age were now occupied by monks, and throughout the whole city there were more monasteries than houses. There are twelve churches in this very spacious and populous city where public worship is conducted for the people, as well as the monasteries which all have their own chapels. But from the very gates with its battlements to the tiniest corner of the city there is no place without its monks who night and day in every part of the city offer hymns and praises to God, making the whole city one great church of God. No heretics or pagans are to be found there, for all the citizens were faithful and under religious instruction... But how can I possibly describe all the kind acts done to us by the people as they watched us going through the city, greeting us like angels, making us welcome. We were told by the holy bishop of that place that it contained twenty thousand virgins and ten thousand monks. I could not possibly tell you, not even by stretching the truth to its limits, how great was the kindness and hospitality shown to us, to the extent that the clothes

were almost torn off our backs by those who were eager to seize us and take us home as their guests.

Oxyrhynchus was a significant and evidently prosperous regional capital, situated on one of the main trade routes, thus making it a common thoroughfare for merchants and travellers.¹ Being the capital of the Nome, Oxyrhynchus was assumed by Grenfell to be the “abode of many rich persons who could afford to possess a library of literary texts.”² At its peak it was reckoned to be the third largest city of Egypt and, as already noted above, in the early period of the first millennium CE, became a hub of Christian communities and monasteries.³ These, and other factors, led two young Oxford graduates, B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt of Queen’s College, to this site in the late nineteenth century in search of papyri “for the discovery and publication of the remains of classical antiquity and early Christianity in Egypt.”⁴ Both the dry climate and the dark underground environment preserved thousands of papyrus texts (some more fragmentary than others) which were covered by the sands of time for nearly two thousand years.

The wealth of papyri was immediately apparent in the first day of official digging (January 11th 1897). The excavation reports indicate that, “papyrus scraps at once began to come to light in considerable quantities,”⁵ and that the “flow of papyri soon became a torrent.”⁶ Even to the extent that, at one point in the report, Grenfell stated that “merely turning up the soil with one’s boot would frequently disclose a layer of papyri.”⁷ Finds included the full spectrum of ancient literature; both literary (epic, lyric, elegiac, tragic and comic poets, orators, historians, writers of romance, geometry, medicine and grammar, and early Christian literature),

¹ Naphtali Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999); Roger S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

² B.P. Grenfell, “Oxyrhynchus and Its Papyri,” in *Archaeological Report 1896–1897: Comprising the Work of the Egyptian Exploration Fund and the Progress of Egyptology in the Year 1896–7* (ed. F. Ll. Griffith; London: Egyptian Exploration Fund, 1897), 1.

³ M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (3 Vols; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941, Vol. 1). A.H.R.E. Paap, *Nomina sacra in the Greek Papyri of the first Five Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1959).

⁴ J.S. Cotton, “Egypt Exploration Fund: Graeco-Roman Branch,” in *Archaeological Report 1896–1897: Comprising the Work of the Egyptian Exploration Fund and the Progress of Egyptology in the Year 1896–7* (ed. F. Ll. Griffith; London: Egyptian Exploration Fund, 1897), iii.

⁵ Grenfell, “Oxyrhynchus,” 6.

⁶ Grenfell, “Oxyrhynchus,” 7.

⁷ Grenfell, “Oxyrhynchus,” 7.

and documentary (proclamations, contracts, receipts, tax returns, petitions, sales documents, leases, wills, shopping lists, private letters, et al.).⁸

It is estimated that over 500,000 papyrus fragments were brought back to Oxford in the period between 1897 and 1910, all of which (bar a limited exception) reside in the Papyrology Rooms of the Sackler Library, University of Oxford. However, thus far approximately only 1% of material has been published, partly due to the laborious processes involved in reconstructing the fragmentary pieces and partly due to the state of the manuscripts. Several papyri and parchment fragments have ink which is significantly faded, or portions of the manuscript which are oxidized to the point of being charcoal black. It is however, equally baffling as to why so much literature, both biblical and otherwise, was “thrown out” *en masse* by the ancients, only to be found centuries later in the now famous rubbish mounds of Oxyrhynchus. In a recent article, AnneMarie Luijendijk has argued that the deliberate discarding of such material, canonical and otherwise, was unrelated to Christian persecution or issues of canonicity.⁹ Consensus on the issue, however, has eluded scholars thus far.

Background and Context

The vast majority of scholars who incorporate discussion of the Septuagint into their research (typically commentary writing and general theological studies) rely almost exclusively on the edited printed critical editions of the text of the early to mid twentieth century.¹⁰ However, the Göttingen enumeration of *Handschriften* lists over 400 papyri of the LXX which are dated at or before the eighth century CE (of which over 120 are dated pre-fourth century CE). The tangible benefit of these discoveries for research on the LXX is the textual and interpretive light shed on the history of the

⁸ See further Grenfell, “Oxyrhynchus,” 11.

⁹ AnneMarie Luijendijk, “Sacred Scriptures as Trash: Biblical Papyri from Oxyrhynchus,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 64.3 (2010), 217–254. Grenfell had hinted at the possibility in the first excavation reports that “It is not improbable that they [i.e. P.Oxy. 1 and 2] were the remains of a library belonging to some Christian who perished in the persecution during Diocletian’s reign, and whose books were then thrown away.” (Grenfell, “Oxyrhynchus,” 6.)

¹⁰ Typically A. Brooke, N. McLean, and H.St.J. Thackeray, *The Old Testament in Greek According to the Codex Vaticanus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906–1940); A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes* (2 Vols; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1935); *Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum Graecum: Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Göttingensis editum* (20 Vols; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931-).

early transmission of the text. In J.M Dines's discussion of this predicament, she laments that it is "extremely difficult to recover the original form of the text; indeed in some places it may have been irretrievably lost."¹¹ Furthermore, because Origen's work on the LXX changed the text as understood, "any pre-Origenic manuscripts, however fragmentary, are of great importance, especially when they come from a Jewish milieu."¹² In this paper, recently discovered Greek papyri and parchment of the Psalter from the Oxford Oxyrhynchus collection are introduced, discussed and analysed. Particular attention is paid to scribal practice, manuscript transmission, and issues of textual criticism.

Cyperus Papyrus is the name given to a fibrous plant which grew in marshy areas, especially in Egypt, and from which a variety of products were manufactured. In Theophrastus' *Enquiry Into Plants* 4.8.4 (371–287 BCE), he states "ὁ πάπυρος πρὸς πλεῖστα χρήσιμος," (trans. "the papyrus is useful for many purposes" (ll. 4–5)), listing no fewer than a dozen applications for the plant, including the manufacture of boats (ll. 5–6), woven sails (ll. 7–8), ropes (ll. 8), food (ll. 9–11 "μάλιστα δὲ καὶ πλείστη βοήθεια πρὸς τὴν τροφήν ἀπὸ αὐτοῦ γίνεται," (trans. "above all, the plant is also of very great use in the way of food")), but concludes that "καὶ ἐμφανέστατα δὴ τοῖς ἔξω τὰ βιβλία," (trans. "most familiar to foreigners are the papyrus rolls made of it" (ll. 8–9)). For an ancient description of the manufacturing process, one may turn to Pliny the Elder's description in *Natural History* 13.68–82, who, writing approximately three hundred years after Theophrastus, states "Praeparatur ex eo charta diviso acu in praetenuas, sed quam latissimas philyras. Principatus medio, atque inde scissurae ordine," (trans. "the process of making sheets from papyrus is to split it with a needle into very thin strips made as broad as possible, the best quality being in the centre of the plant, and so on in the order of its splitting" (13.74)). Modern scientific analysis of ancient papyri indicate that each of these strips would be laid in a row in parallel, and then a second row of strips would be laid upon the first in perpendicular fashion. The plant's juices acted as a natural adhesive and "bonded [the strips] into a single flexible cohesive sheet."¹³ These sheets of papyri

¹¹ J.M. Dines, *The Septuagint* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 3.

¹² Dines, *Septuagint*, 3–4.

¹³ A. Wallert, "The Reconstruction of Papyrus Manufacture: A Preliminary Investigation," *Studies in Conservation* 34.1 (1989), 2.

were exported from Egypt and used all over the Mediterranean in antiquity, yet despite this wide diffusion and use, papyri have survived into modern times almost exclusively in Egypt (with some rare exceptions), and more specifically in the Nile Valley below the Delta, attributable to the region's dry and virtually rainless climate.

Papyrology (the technical art of deciphering and editing documents written on papyrus, leather and other portable objects such as ostraca and lead amulets) is a relatively young discipline by the standards of Classics. While the first papyrus was discovered in 1788 (the so-called Charta Borgiana, an unexciting list of labourers on an irrigation canal from 192 CE), it was not able to generate significant scholarly or popular interest as most considered the mundane nature of the manuscript to be disappointing. Many had hoped for a text in the grand literary classical tradition, perhaps a new play by Sophocles or the like. The field of papyrology only began to take shape with the voluminous discoveries of papyri in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Because of the scale of these later finds, the famous historian Theodore Mommsen grandly predicted that the twentieth century would be the century of papyrology, just as the nineteenth century had been the century for epigraphy¹⁴, by which he meant that papyri would have the same revolutionary impact on historical research as inscriptions did in his time. This was certainly the case with the textual tradition of the LXX.¹⁵

The Psalter at *Oxyrhynchus*

The rubbish dumps of *Oxyrhynchus* have, thus far, yielded no fewer than 30 LXX fragments, ranging in date from the first to sixth century CE. The oldest LXX published fragment from *Oxyrhynchus* is that of P. Oxy 3522 (Job 42:11–12) dated to the very early part of the first century CE.¹⁶ It includes several notable features including punctuation by spacing (i. l. 4, 5, 7), the Divine Name written as the Tetragrammaton in Paleo-Hebrew script (i. l. 2, 5), and a text which “stands closer to the LXX rather than the

¹⁴ Peter van Minnen, “The Century of Papyrology (1892–1992),” *BASP* 30 (1993), 5. Cf. N. Gonis, “Mommsen, Grenfell, and ‘the Century of Papyrology,’” *ZPE* 156 (2006), 195–196.

¹⁵ For a comprehensive listing of LXX papyri as of 2004 see D. Fraenkel, *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments* (Bd. 1: Die Überlieferung bis zum VIII. Jahrhundert; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

¹⁶ P.J. Parsons, “3522. LXX Job 42:11–12,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume L* (ed. A.K. Bowman et al.; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1983), 1.

literal accurate version of Symmachus.”¹⁷ These and many other scribal features are attested in the papyri of the LXX of the Psalter at Oxyrhynchus. It is noteworthy indeed that almost half of Oxyrhynchite LXX manuscripts are fragments of the Psalter.¹⁸ These include: P.Oxy 845, 1226, 1352, 1779, 1927, 1928, 2065, 2386, 4011, 4931, 4932, 4933, 5021, 5023, 5101. In our analysis below we will evaluate and analyze a representative portion of the Psalter at Oxyrhynchus, and comment upon the variegated scribal and textual contribution of these manuscripts.¹⁹

Published in 1908, P.Oxy 845 (Ps 68:30–37; 70:3–8) was the first fragment of the Psalter to emerge from Oxyrhynchus within the industrious program of systematic documentation of the finds undertaken by Grenfell and Hunt.²⁰ The extant fragment measures 12.5 cm (h) x 18.2 cm (w) and is estimated to have originally been part of a codex sheet measuring no less than 22 cm in width. There are legible traces of ink on ten lines on the verso and eight lines on the recto. The manuscript is written in what the first editors refer to

¹⁷ Parsons, “Job 42:11–12,” 1.

¹⁸ The attestation of the LXX inscriptions displays a similar proportion of references to the Psalter in the papyrological record. Although earlier discussions were aware of the importance of LXX inscriptions (E. Böhl, “Alte christliche Inschriften nach dem Text der Septuaginta,” *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 54 (1881), 692–713; E. Nestle, “Die alten christlichen Inschriften nach dem Text der Septuaginta,” *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 56 (1883), 153–154), Jalabert’s 1914 catalogue of biblical inscriptions was the earliest attempt to develop a systematic inventory of the material (L. Jalabert, “Citations Bibliques dans l’épigraphie Grecque” in *Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Vol. III, 2; eds F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq; Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1914), cols. 1731–1756). Combined with New Testament quotations, Jalabert provided a total of 247 instances of biblical inscriptions. It is of some consequence that 143 of these are quotations from 48 individual Psalms, with only 16 other quotations covering the remaining portions of the LXX (N. Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Versions of the Bible* (Trans. W. G. E. Watson, Leiden: Brill, 2000), 267). It is truly remarkable that Psalm 120:8 occurs forty-three times; Psalm 117:20 thirty-one times; Psalm 28:3 seventeen times; and Psalm 90:1 fifteen times (P. Head, “Additional Greek Witnesses to the New Testament (Ostraka, Amulets, Inscriptions and Other Sources)” in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis* (eds B.E. Ehrman and M. Holmes; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 445).

¹⁹ P. Oxy 5023 (cento of Psalms) and 5024 (prayer with a quote from the Psalter) are excluded from our analysis due to the parchment manuscripts being stored in a separate location and there being some ambiguity as to whether the fragments were purchased or products of the excavations at Oxyrhynchus, although the two scenarios are not mutually exclusive. As admitted by C.E. Römer in the *editio princeps* there is “no guarantee that they [5023 and 5024] were found at Oxyrhynchus” (C.E. Römer, ‘5023–5024. Parchement Slips’ in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume LXXXV* (ed. H. Maehler, C.E. Römer and R. Hatzilambrou; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2010), 8.

²⁰ B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, “Psalms lxviii and lxx,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume VI* (ed. B.P. Grenfell, A.S. Hunt; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1908), 1.

as “a large and clear cursive hand,”²¹ and can be dated paleographically to 350–450 CE. In addition to the standard contractions of θεός and κύριος to their respective *nomina sacra*, the manuscript is arranged stoichiometrically. There is no evidence of versification, sense division, paragraphoi or ekthesis. Textually, the manuscript does not fully cohere with any of the extant major uncials, although it is more closely aligned with Sinaiticus (Ⲙ [fourth century]) than Vaticanus (B [fourth century]) or the Verona Psalter (R [sixth century]). See, for example, recto l. 16 where P.Oxy 845 reads υπομνησις corrected to υπομνησις (as per Ⲙ), as opposed to B and R’s υμνησις. This, however, is not surprising given the assumed Egyptian provenance. P.Oxy 845 verso l.3 (Ps 68:33 [LXX]) reads “ἰ[δ]έτ[ω]σαν”, the aorist active imperative (see/look), for the MT’s qal perfect third common plural יִרְאוּ (they will see). On no few occasions, contemporary scholars (e.g. M. Dahood,²² Johnson²³, Gunkel²⁴, Kraus²⁵) seem to amend the MT’s pointing in light of the LXX reading, in this case יִרְאוּ (perfect) to יִרְאוּ (imperative), also reflected in the New English Bible translation. M.E. Tate notes that the MT’s perfect can be retained only if read as the precative/optative (“let the poor see”).²⁶ This reading, nonetheless, does not resolve the issue of to what the object of the verb refers. The LXX resolves this by encouraging the humble (πτωχοὶ) to look (ἰδέτωσαν [imperative]), and be glad (εὐφρανθήτωσαν [imperative]).

P.Oxy 1226 (Ps 7:9–12; 8:1–4) is a fragment of the upper right portion of a codex leaf. In its extant form it measures 10.5 cm (h) x 6.8 cm (w), with eleven lines of legible text on the verso and twelve on the recto. Paleographically it is dateable to the late third or early fourth century by the distinct paleographic hand; an upright uncial of medium size, with the cursive tendency to link the ω with the following letter (recto l. 4; verso l. 2).²⁷ *Nomina sacra* for both θεός

²¹ Grenfell and Hunt, “Psalms lxxviii and lxx,” 1.

²² M. Dahood, *Psalms II:51–100* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1968), 165.

²³ A.R. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel’s Psalmody* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979), 394.

²⁴ H. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), 295.

²⁵ H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150* (Trans. Hilton C. Oswald; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 59.

²⁶ M.E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100* (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 188.

²⁷ B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, “1226. Psalms vii, viii,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume X* (ed. B.P. Grenfell, A.S. Hunt; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1914), 11.

and κύριος occur throughout (recto ll.1, 6, 7, 9; verso l.3). The insertion of an iota adscript by a second hand at verso l.8 may suggest that the text underwent some kind of textual editing or control. However, the extent, consistency or accuracy of such a process is not known. There is a coronis (κορωνίς) of sorts, in the left margin (on the recto between lines 2 and 3) marking the division of a major section in the poetic text. The title “Ψαλ[μος τω Δαυειδ],” immediately precedes this, above which (recto l.1) there are traces consistent with the numeral η (=8) representing the number of the Psalm. Of textual interest is the reading “δικαιοσύνην σου” in verso l. 2, for the typical “δικαιοσύνην μου” (⋈ B R et al.).²⁸ This significantly changes the meaning of the request from “Judge me Lord, according to my righteousness” (⋈ B R et al.) to “Judge me Lord, according to your righteousness” (P.Oxy 1226). With the publication of P.Oxy 1226, a reading which had previously only found minimal support in the later cursives (27, 156, 202, 269, 283, 284) has found significant and early attestation.

The virtually complete parchment codex leaf of P.Oxy 1352 (Ps 82:6–19; 83:1–4) measures 13.1 cm (h) x 10.5 cm (w) and is presented as a single column. There is relative consistency in letter formation, with only an occasional lapse into a sloping style in verso l.21.²⁹ Based on the predominant and distinctive upright pointed majuscule hand, the manuscript is datable paleographically to the early part of the fourth century (300–325 CE). Both P.Oxy 1226 and 1352 denote stoichiometrical divisions, the former using line division and the latter *dicola* (double dots). There is evidence of pagination in the right upper margin on both sides (ροθ [= 179]; ρπ [=180]). Recto l.14 has the beginning of Psalm 83 marked with the equivalent Greek numeral (πγ) in left margin. Lines boundaries were drawn to aid the scribe. From these features, one can assume that the codex leaf was a portion of, at least, an entire professional copy of the Greek Psalter. As is typical, θεός and κύριος contract to their respective *nomina sacra*, however verso l.8 (82:9 [LXX]) and

²⁸ The Psalmist’s apparent appeal to his own righteousness is precisely the issue that Calvin takes up in his commentary (*Commentary on Psalms* §7:8). In attempting to ease the apparent acute theological problem, Calvin states, “The solution is easy, because this does not treat the question how he should respond if God should demand from him an account of his whole life; but, comparing himself with his enemies, he maintains and not without cause, that, in respect of them, he was righteous.” Calvin, of course, was unaware of the broader textual tradition which we are treating in our analysis.

²⁹ B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, “1352. Psalms lxxxii, lxxxiii,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume XI* (ed. B.P. Grenfell, A.S. Hunt; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1915), 2.

recto l.15 (83:1 [LXX]) do not contract *υίός* as the references are to that of the sons of Lot/Kore. The original scribe is actively seen to be checking and editing the text, evident through the cancellation of letters through supralinear dots (verso l.14, recto ll.7 and 12), erasure of letters (recto l.12), and even an attempt to remove a case of dittography 83:17–18 (recto ll.5–8), “*πλήρωσον τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν ἀτιμίας, καὶ ζητήσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα [α [αὐτῶν ἀτιμίας, καὶ ζητήσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα σου, κύριε]] αἰσχυρῶν ἠγάπησαν καὶ...*” Later scribal activity is also evident in making corrections in a small cursive script at various points including 83:10 [LXX] (verso l.11), where the first plural subjunctive *ποιήσωμεν* (let us make) is amended to the second aorist active imperative, *ποίησον* (make). Furthermore, this later scribe also introduces a previously unattested reading in the addition of *γη* after *τῆ* (verso l.11). These and other examples amply illustrate that the scribal process was evidently dynamic and fluid rather than static and fixed.

P.Oxy 1779 (Ps 1:4–6) consists of one fully intact papyrus codex sheet measuring 11.5 cm (h) x 7.7 cm (w). The hand is characterized by several irregularities, but can be safely dated to the mid fourth century CE.³⁰ The unusually large letter formations result in 7–12 letters per line. Although there is no stoichiometric division, there is evidence of punctuation, in particular the use of high stops on recto l.8 (Ps 1:4 after “*προσώπου τῆς γῆς*”) and verso l.3 (Ps 1:5 after “*ἀσεβεῖς ἐν κρίσει*”). A rough breathing mark is found on *ὡς* of recto l.8 (Ps 1:4). Previously unattested before the eleventh century (cursive manuscript 281), recto l.4 reads “*ὡς χνοῦς*” for “*ὡς ὁ χνοῦς*” (Ps 1:4), a helpful reminder that early readings can indeed be preserved in the singular readings of later cursives. This and other examples like it provide further grounds for caution with regard to the manner in which textual critics often discount the possible contribution of singular readings for reconstructing the “earliest” or “original” text.

P.Oxy 1927 is a liturgical cento of the Psalms measuring 11.1 cm (h) x 30 cm (w), dated paleographically to the late fifth century.³¹ The cento phrase segments on the verso are largely drawn from

³⁰ B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, “1779. Psalm i,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume XV* (ed. B.P. Grenfell, A.S. Hunt; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1922), 6.

³¹ B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, “1927. Liturgical Fragment,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume XVI* (ed. B.P. Grenfell, A.S. Hunt; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1924), 206–207.

Psalm 32:21–33:2 [LXX] with only minor additions from elsewhere in the Psalter (*l*.11 [32:15; 16:4; 32:20]; *ll*.12–13 [32:21; 105:48]; *ll*.14–16 [32:22; 33:2; 103:33; 145:2]). Of interest is the substitution of “ἕως ἔτι ὑπάρχω” (as long as I live; cf. 103:3; 145:2) for “ἐν παντὶ καιρῶ” (at all times; 33:2) in the phrase “εὐλόγησω τὸν κύριον ἐν παντὶ καιρῶ” (*ll*.14–16). This reading supports Kraus’ suggestion that 33:3 functions as a formal vow,³² abolished only by the death of the speaker, rather than simply being fulfilled in the recitation of the Psalm. The recto displays greater variety of verse selection, with additions from 34:27 (*l*.4); 65:2 (*l*.4); 32:4 (*ll*.4–5), 13:2 (*l*.6); 101:20 (*l*.6); and 17:7 (*l*.6). Of interest are the multiple hands that have contributed to the eclectic text. Recto *ll*.1–5 are written in a standard cursive of the late fifth century, followed by a more angular second hand in *l*.6. A third hand is apparent on the verso *ll*.1–6 and displays some formal features of a sloping script. There is only minimal evidence of punctuation; a high stop after “ἠλπίσαμεν” on verso *l*.12 and “ὑμᾶς” on *l*.14. Given these reading aids, and some liturgical type phrases on the verso, “ἡ ψυχὴ ἡμῶν ὑπομένει σε κύριε” (*l*.11; cf. PS 32:20), “γένοιτο ἔλεός ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς” (*l*.14; cf. Ps 32:22), one might assume an ecclesiastical use for the composition. There is one typographical correction on recto *l*.6, where the initial τ has a cancelling diagonal stroke through the vertical. The reconstructed reading, however, is uncertain due to the fragmentary nature of the preserved manuscript.

P.Oxy 1928, measuring 21.5 cm (h) x 30 cm (w) contains an almost complete late fifth century copy of Psalm 90 [LXX] on the verso. In the history of the Psalm’s interpretation, several scholars have assumed an apotropaic use of the text, although, one must distinguish between the original *Sitz im Leben* and later use. W. Oesterley describes the genre as a “polemic in devotional form... to counteract the assaults of demons.”³³ This view is supported by Rabbinic interpretation, which identifies it as a “song for evil encounters”³⁴, with specific reference to averting the attacks of demons. It is, therefore, not surprising that there are distinct horizontal and vertical fold marks in P.Oxy 1928, typical of texts folded and worn or carried as amulets. Textually, the manuscript displays affinity toward agreement with the second corrector of

³² H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, Germany: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 419.

³³ W. Oesterley, *The Psalms* (London: SPCK, 1959), 407.

³⁴ Babylonian Talmud, *Shebuoth* 15^b

Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus and against Vaticanus: the omission of “καὶ” (I.5 v.5) in P.Oxy 1928, and the second corrector’s supralinear dots of Sinaiticus (folio 113, I.22) indicating erasure; the word order of “ἐν σκότει διαπορευομένου” (I.6 v.6) and the corresponding second corrected reading in Sinaiticus from “διαπορευομένου ἐν σκότει” to “ἐν σκότει διαπορευομένου” (folio 113, II.23–24). Also of interest is the *nomen sacrum* “ΚΩ” (κυρίω) in “ἔρεϊ τῷ κυρίω” (I.1 v.2), and the corresponding correction in Sinaiticus from “ΘΩ” to “ΚΩ” (folio 113, I.12).

P. Oxy 2065 is a further example of the popularity of Psalm 90, and preserves two consecutive sides of a late fifth century parchment codex leaf measuring 4 cm (h) x 5.7 cm (w), containing verses 5b-10a. The smaller dimensions of the codex could be attributed to its use as an amulet. The sixteen verses of the Psalm, with similar letter size and format could be accommodated on a single quire of four sheets. The vocative “κύριε” of verse 9 (recto col. 2, I.26) identifies the empathic you “הַתָּא” of the MT (Ps 91:9) as Yahweh, rather than those who are encouraged to trust in Yahweh.³⁵ This however introduces a textual problem as to the subject of 9b, which seems to refer to humanity rather than God. M.E. Tate resolves the issue by suggesting that verses 1–2 and 9a form an *inclusio* around verses 3–8, and that 9b “begins a new section of the Psalm.”³⁶ Despite the attractive suggestion that the pagination of P.Oxy 2065 supports this hypothesis (verse 9b begins in line 1 of the second column of the verso), the uneven carryover of “μου” from 9a on the same line makes this, at best, an ambiguous proposal.

P.Oxy 2386 is a papyrus roll measuring 12.5 cm (h) x 13.5 cm (w). The recto consists of the concluding verses of Psalm 83 (vv. 9–13) and the beginning of Psalm 84 (v.1). The text is written in squarish letters with a slight slope to the right, paleographically consistent with the late fourth or early fifth century (cf. P.Oxy 1078 for a comparable hand).³⁷ The verso, written in a different and unrelated hand, preserves a private letter in three lines. The text of the Psalter is not formatted in any particular fashion, however, stoichiometric divisions are indicated with two diagonal strokes. “Διάψαλμα”, the

³⁵ Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 448.

³⁶ Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 449.

³⁷ E.G. Turner, “2386. Psalms 83(84)-84(85)” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume XXIV* (ed. E. Lobel, C.H. Roberts, E.G. Turner, and J.W.B. Barns; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1957), 6–7.

Greek equivalent of the Hebrew “הָלַח” (*selâ*), is preceded by a single diagonal stroke alerting the reader to the pause. A horizontal line is drawn between *l*.12 and *l*.13 to divide one Psalm from the other. The standard *nomina sacra* occur, “ΘΥ” (*l*. 7); “ΘC” (*l*. 9); “KE” (*ll*. 11, 13); and “X[OY]” (*l*. 4). There is one curious case of an otherwise unattested *nomen sacrum* from Oxyrhynchus, namely the uncontracted “ΘEOC” (*l*.3) with superliner bar. Textually, the manuscript has no particular affinity with major codices, twice siding with Vaticanus (*ll*.6–7 “παρариπτεισθαι” [v.11]; *l*.11 omits “ὁ θεός” after “κύριε” [v.13]), twice with Sinaiticus (*l*.7 addition of “μου” after “θεοῦ” [v.11]; *l*.7 addition of “με” after “οἰκεῖν” [v.11]), and, on occasion, neither (*l*.5 “κρίσων” [v.11]).

P.Oxy 4011 recto consists of a Christian version of Psalm 75, albeit in an intercalated, abbreviated and periphrastic presentation. The order and arrangement is as follows: *ll*.1–2, Psalm 75:2; *ll*.2–3 paraphrase of Psalm 75:3, linking Isaiah 40:9; 52:7 and Acts 10:36 through the key terms of “Σιων”, “εἰρήνη”, and “εὐαγγελίζω”; *ll*.3–4 continue with a free rendition of Psalm 75:6; *ll*.4–5 intercalate a reference to “ἑσταύρωσαν αὐτὸν” (crucified him), reminiscent perhaps of any number of New Testament passages (Mk 15:25; Lk 23:33; 24:19–20; Jn 19:16–18, 23; 1 Cor 2:6–8; Gal 5:24); *ll*.5–6 conflate three passages (Zech 1:11, 1 Pet 3:16, and Ps 49:14). After a clear paragraphos division in *l*.8, the scribe returns to Psalm 75:4, before a final plea for God to arise and scatter the enemy in no uncertain terms, “ὁ θεός, καὶ διασκορπισας πάντες τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ” (cf. Ps 67:2). To the modern reader or exegete, this conglomeration of apparently unconnected Scriptural intercalations with Psalm 75 may seem somewhat peculiar. However, P.Oxy 4011’s fascinating amalgamation of texts preserves an authentic example of someone actually creatively engaged in the theological process. In it we see the interconnected thought of an individual who sought to bring together apparent disparate biblical textual traditions into a narrative of its own. One which begins by declaring the greatness of God’s name, recalls the work accomplished through Christ, and concludes with an eschatological note of hope for future divine intervention. As to how successful the author was in cohesively achieving this end, we will allow the reader to adjudicate.

P.Oxy 4931 consists of a papyrus codex sheet measuring 8.5 cm (h) x 5.8 cm (w), containing Psalm 90:3–8 in a formal mixed medium-

sized hand, dateable to the mid fifth century CE.³⁸ There is evidence on both the recto (l.8) and verso (ll. 2, 5) of dicola marking stoichiometric division. Other punctuation is evident in recto l.8 with a lower dot and a space between verses 4 and 5. Textually, there are two minor omissions. First, recto l.5 omits “αὐτοῦ” in the phrase “ἐν τοῖς μεταφρένοις αὐτοῦ ἐπισκιάσει” (Ps 90:4). Second, verso ll.1–2 omits a portion of verses 5–6. Depending on how one restores verso l.2, either a. “[ἐν σκότ]ει” or b. “[ἡμέρα]ς”, the scribe has either erred in homoioteleuton (skipping from “πετομένου” [v.5] to “διαπορευομένου” [v.6]), or homioarchton (skipping from “ἀπὸ βέλους” [v.5] to “ἀπὸ πράγματος” [v.6]) respectively.³⁹

P.Oxy 4932 is dated to the fourth or first half of the fifth century and consists of a papyrus leaf measuring 6 cm (h) x 14.1 cm (w) inscribed on one side with Psalm 72:21–23 written in a sloping majuscule, and on the other, an account of the gods.⁴⁰ The text on both sides runs with the fibers as the fragment for the Psalm text was cut, and turned ninety degrees to the left and written by a different hand.⁴¹ Left (1.3 cm), upper (1.1 cm), and lower (1.7cm) margins are preserved, so that one can assume that we have here the beginnings of the three written lines. Assuming a standard text, the original dimensions of the manuscript would have been unusually wide (6 cm x 30 cm), however, given the characteristic fold marks, one can assume use as an amulet. A small diagonal line (mid l.2) divides the two stoichiometric lines in verse 22. Of textual interest is the reading in l.1 “ἠὺφράνθη” [rejoice, 72:21], which was also the original reading in Sinaiticus before it was corrected to “ἐξεκαύθη” [burn]. P.Oxy 4932 preserves a heterogeneous Greek tradition in comparison to the MT’s “רַמַּח” (to be embittered).

P.Oxy 4933 is a papyrus codex leaf (10.1 cm [h] x 5.1 cm [w]) of the late third or early fourth century, consisting of a collection of excerpts from the Old Testament (verso ll.1–6, Jer 27:24–26; ll.6–18, Amos 11:11–12; recto ll.1–21, Ps 17:1–11).⁴² Such *Testimonia* were

³⁸ D. Colomo, “4931. Psalm XC 3–8,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume LXXIII* (ed. D. Obbink and N. Gonis; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2009), 1.

³⁹ Colomo, “4931,” 7.

⁴⁰ D. Colomo, “4932. Psalm Amulet: Psalm LXXII 21–3,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume LXXIII* (ed. D. Obbink and N. Gonis; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2009), 8.

⁴¹ Colomo, “4932,” 8.

⁴² D. Colomo, “4933. Collection of Biblical Excerpts,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume LXXIII* (ed. D. Obbink and N. Gonis; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2009), 12–13.

common in both Early Christianity (P.Ryl 3.460; P.Oslo 2.11)⁴³ and Second Temple Judaism (4Q175, 4Q176 cf. 4Q379). Commonly attested themes include eschatology and Messianism, with a particular Christian interest in the persecuted yet vindicated sufferer as prefiguration of Christ. Such is the case with P.Oxy 4933, for in drawing together Amos 11:11–12 (restoration of the house of David), Jeremiah 27:24–26 (God as redeemer of his people), and Psalm 17:1–11 (God’s “κατέβη” [coming down, l.29 = v.10] to rescue David from his enemies), the author has prefigured Christ’s mission in terms of redemption, restoration and future coming.⁴⁴ The lack of any stoichiometric divisions, or indeed any textual marker dividing the passages may indicate that the manuscript originated or was used in a private context. D. Colomo suggests that the smaller format of the codex would have been “very practical for travelling teachers and missionaries.”⁴⁵ The standard *nomina sacra* occur on recto ll.1–3, 6, 10–11, 16, although l.10 omits the article before “KN” (v.7).

P.Oxy 5021 consists of a papyrus codex leaf measuring 14 cm (h) x 10.1 cm (w) dated to the fifth century and inscribed with Psalm 90:12–16 (verso ll. 1–14, recto ll.1–4) and Odes 7–8 (recto ll.5–12).⁴⁶ There are traces of ink consistent with an “η” in the top left margin, indicating at least eight pages in the codex. Apart from several irregular spaces aiding word division there are no *nomina sacra* or stoichiometric marks on the manuscript. Although a common apotropaic text, the editor of the *editio princeps*, Cornelia Römer, suggests that both the dimensions of the codex and the multi-page format weighs against the possibility of this manuscript having been used as an amulet *per se*.⁴⁷ Rather, it was a personal copy to be consulted in a time of physical or mental infirmity.⁴⁸ At the conclusion of Psalm 90, the scribe adds “ἀλλήλουεῖα” a common introductory refrain found in LXX Psalms 104–106, 110–118, 134–

⁴³ See further Alessandro Falcetta, “A Testimony Collection in Manchester: Papyrus Rylands Greek 460,” *BJRL* 83 (2002), 3–19; Martin Christian Albl, *And Scripture Cannot Be Broken: The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

⁴⁴ Colomo, “4933,” 11.

⁴⁵ Colomo, “4933,” 12.

⁴⁶ C.E. Römer, “5021. Psalm XC 12–16 and Excerpts from Odeas 7 and 8,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume LXXV* (ed. H. Maehler, C.E. Römer and R. Häzilambrou; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2010), 3–4.

⁴⁷ Römer, “5021,” 3.

⁴⁸ Römer, “5021,” 3.

135, 145–150, derived from the transliteration of the Hebrew “הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה” (lit. praise Yahweh). Two rows of arrows, one left facing and the other right, divide the Psalm text concluding on recto *l.*4 from the selection of Odes on recto *l.* 5 and following.

P.Oxy 5101 consists of Psalm 26:9–14; 44:4–8; 47:13–15; 48:6–21; 49:2–16; 63:6–64:5 and is dated to the late first or early second century CE. The editors note that “it is probably the earliest extant copy of the Septuagint Psalms.”⁴⁹ Its present fragmentary state is exceedingly complex and consists of four main fragments (A-D) covering six columns of a papyrus roll.⁵⁰ One of the significant features of the manuscript is that the Tetragrammaton is recorded in Paleo-Hebrew script, “𐤀𐤏𐤍𐤏” (frag. A *ll.*12, 14; frag. D *l.*14). Although this is not an unattested feature at Oxyrhynchus, as noted above in our discussion of Job 42:11–12 (P.Oxy 3522), there are several notable elements in P.Oxy 5101 which deserve attention. First, the Tetragrammaton is preceded by the Greek definite article, which may indicate that “κύριος” was used in the Greek *vorlage* and was replaced with the Paleo-Hebrew form in P.Oxy 5101. Second, D.B. Capes raises the possibility that even the spaces around the divine name were treated differently⁵¹, perhaps evident in the excess physical space into which the Tetragrammaton is inserted. Third, there is a growing body of evidence from first century Jewish writers that “κύριος” functioned as the oral substitute for יהוה.⁵² There are no attested *nomina sacra* in P.Oxy 5101, but there is a curious abbreviation of τε^λ for τέλος in frag. D *l.*13. It has been noted that textually “several readings...correspond more closely to the Masoretic Text (MT) than...Rahlfs’s edition.”⁵³ However, at other points, certain readings are not in accord with the MT, for example frag. C *iii. ll.*20, 27.

⁴⁹ D. Colomo and W.B. Henry, “5101. Psalms (Fragments)”, in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume LXXXVII* (ed. A. Benaïssa; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2011), 1.

⁵⁰ Colomo and Henry, “5021,” 1.

⁵¹ D.B. Capes, “YHWH Texts and Monotheism in Paul’s Christology,” in *Early Christian and Jewish Monotheism* (ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Wendy North; London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 124.

⁵² Martin Rösel, “The Reading and Translation of the Divine Name in the Massoretic Tradition and the Greek Pentateuch,” *JSOT* 31 (2007), 411–428; James R. Roysce, “Philo, Kyrios, and the Tetragrammaton,” *The Studia Philonica Annual* 3 (1991), 167–183; Albert Pietersma, “Kyrios or Tetragram: A Renewed Quest for the Original Septuagint,” in *Studies in Honour of John W. Wevers on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. Albert Pietersma and Claude Cox; Mississauga: Benben Publishers, 1984), 85–101.

⁵³ Colomo and Henry, “5021,” 2.

P.Oxy 5127 (Psalm 90:4–13) is the most recently published text of the Psalter from Oxyrhynchus and consists of a late fifth century parchment codex leaf measuring 3.8 cm (h) x 8.6 cm (w). The roughly bilinear slightly sloping hand displays no punctuation or other textual divisions. Both the popularity of Psalm 90 as an amulet text and the fold marks indicate that the manuscript was folded into a small packet of approximately 1.1 cm x 3.8 cm, and possibly carried on the person inserted in a tubular capsule.⁵⁴ Miniature amulets of this kind were common in the period, and have been thoroughly explored by recent commentators.⁵⁵ Textually, the manuscript displays high levels of heterogeneous readings throughout, with several verses omitted (vv. 9, 10a) or displaced from their typical sequence (v. 8). There is an interesting conflation pertaining to verse 6 where both word orders of “ἐν σκότει διαπορευομένου” (P.Oxy 1928; P.Oxy 2065; P.Ryl 1.3; P.Laur 141; P.Bodm XXIV), and “διαπορευομένου ἐν σκότει” (P.Gen 6; BKT VIII.12; BKT VIII.13; P.Vondob G.348; P.Duke 778) appear as “ἐν σκότει διαπορευομένου ἐν σκότει” (ll.12–15). F. Maltomini suggests the fascinating possibility that the conflation has arisen because of the use of two exemplars.⁵⁶

Table 1. Summary of Manuscript Evidence

Manuscript	Reference	Date (circa)	Form	Material	Features
P.Oxy 845	68:30–37; 70:3–8	350– 450 CE	Codex	Papyrus	Stoichiometric divisions; nomina sacra
P.Oxy 1226	7:9–12; 8:2–3	275– 325 CE	Codex	Parchment	Stoichiometric divisions; nomina sacra; editing; larger first letter, title number

⁵⁴ F. Maltomini, “5127. LXX, Psalm XC 4–13 (Amulet)” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume LXXVIII* (ed. R.-L. Change, W.B. Henry, P.J. Parsons and A. Benaissa; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2012), 1.

⁵⁵ M.J. Kruger, “P.Oxy 840: Amulet or Miniature Codex?” *JTS* 53 (2002), 81–94; T.S. de Bruyn and J.H.F. Dijkstra, “Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements,” *BASP* 48 (2011), 163–216.

⁵⁶ Maltomini, “5127,” 3.

Manuscript	Reference	Date (circa)	Form	Material	Features
P.Oxy 1352	82:6–19; 83:1–4	300– 325 CE	Codex	Parchment	Stoichiometric divisions; nomina sacra; editing; page numbers; dicola
P.Oxy 1779	1:4–6	350 CE	Codex	Papyrus	Breathing marks; high stops
P.Oxy 1927	13:2; 16:4; 17:7; 32:4, 15; 32:20– 33:2; 34:27; 65:2; 101:20; 103:33; 105:48; 145:2	475 CE	Codex	Papyrus	Cento; multiple hands; high stops; editorial marks
P.Oxy 1928	90:1–16	475 CE	Codex	Papyrus	Amulet; nomina sacra
P.Oxy 2065	90:5b-10a	475 CE	Codex	Parchment	Amulet
P.Oxy 2386	83:9–84:1	375– 425 CE	Roll	Papyrus	Stoichiometric divisions; spaces; nomina sacra
P.Oxy 4011	75:2–3, 4, 6	550 CE	Roll	Papyrus	Paragraphoi; nomina sacra; intercalation
P.Oxy 4931	90:3–8	450 CE	Codex	Papyrus	Amulet?; stoichiometric divisions; punctuation
P.Oxy 4932	72:21–23	350– 450 CE	Roll	Papyrus	Amulet; paragraphoi
P.Oxy 4933	17:1–11	275– 325 CE	Codex	Papyrus	Nomina sacra; <i>testimonium</i>

Manuscript	Reference	Date (circa)	Form	Material	Features
P.Oxy 5021	90:12–16	450 CE	Codes	Papyrus	Amulet; page number; paragraphoi
P.Oxy 5101	26:9–14; 44:4–8; 47:13–15; 48:6–21; 49:2–16; 63:6–64:5	75–125 CE	Roll	Papyrus	Tetragrammaton
P.Oxy 5127	90:4–13	475 CE	Codex	Parchment	Amulet

Summary, Implications, and Conclusion

The Psalms from Oxyrhynchus are an exceptional and fertile area of Septuagintal research. We have seen in our analysis that the scribal process of textual transmission was dynamic and fluid rather than static or fixed. The papyrological record demonstrably illustrates scribes actively participating in the theological enterprise. Attention to the Greek text of the Psalter offered clarifications or resolutions to certain grammatically ambiguous Hebrew traditions (P.Oxy 845; P.Oxy 1927; P.Oxy 2065), or even alternatives to it (P.Oxy 1226; P.Oxy 4932). Scribes were seen to be actively involved in the mechanics of editorial revision, either during or after the copying process (P.Oxy 1226; P.Oxy 1352; P.Oxy 1927). Text critically, variant readings previously unattested before the eleventh century minuscule, found attestation in much earlier manuscript traditions (P.Oxy 1226; P.Oxy 1779). Several curious cases of correspondence between the Oxyrhynchus papyri and the second corrector of Sinaiticus were evident (P.Oxy 845; P.Oxy 1928), although not unanimously so (P.Oxy 2065; P.Oxy 4932). Without a fuller analysis, and larger textual papyrological base, it would be difficult to go beyond this observation and posit a connection, albeit tentative, between the two streams of tradition. Scribes were seen to be creatively involved in the theological endeavor, both in the construction of theological narratives (P.Oxy 4011; P.Oxy 4933), and readily drawing on Psalm 90 for apotropaic purposes (P.Oxy 1928; P.Oxy 2065; P.Oxy 4931; P.Oxy 5021; P.Oxy 5127).

As noted above, there remains a vast amount of excavated, yet unpublished, material that requires scholarly attention. The current

curator of the Oxyrhynchus papyri estimates that of the papyri excavated by Grenfell and Hunt in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, approximately ten percent is theological in nature, including such items as biblical fragments, Christian private letters, and liturgical texts. Of continued need are able scholars trained in biblical studies, ancient languages, paleography and ancient history to devote themselves to the careful and painstaking process of analysis and publication of the *editions principes*. The raw data of these newly published fragments is crucial in the study of ancient societies as it continually refines, expands and sometimes redefines our understanding of textual traditions and the way new ideas were developed and old ideas were preserved.

Related to this endeavour, the discipline is also in need of a thorough discussion on what constitutes a quotation from the LXX. That is, to what extent is a 'quotation' governed by a strict definition of verbatim reproduction? Quantifiable and transparent criteria must be established so as to more carefully nuance and distinguish a quote, allusion, echo, or indeed the complexity of the oral dimension. In particular, further research is required of the definition of a quotation from a meaningful ancient perspective.

Attention is also required as to the definition of LXX papyri as being 'Jewish' or 'Christian'. Several discussions have provided helpful clues,⁵⁷ however the criteria are often muddled by the less than clear boundaries between the two groups in the early Christian period. A recent article by E.L. Gallagher has explored the possibility that Christian scribes preserved the representation of the Tetragrammaton in Paleo-Hebrew within the Septuagintal tradition (cf. P.Oxy 5101).⁵⁸ Further work on the paleography of Greek during the relevant periods would help to bring sharper definition to this debate.

Our present study also seeks to stimulate commentators to consider more closely the nature of relationship between the current form of the MT and the ancient Greek translations. H.-J. Kraus notes, "It is striking especially in the commentaries of the Psalter how drastically the basic positions and methods of treating the text differ

⁵⁷ C.H. Roberts and T.C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983); Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Sheffield: Eerdmans, 2006).

⁵⁸ E.L. Gallagher, "The Religious Provenance of the Aquila Manuscripts from the Cairo Geniza," *JJS* 64 (2013), 283–305, see especially pages 303–304.

from one another.”⁵⁹ A. Salvesen provides the most recent methodological treatment of this issue and brings her wealth of knowledge to bear in analysis of particular passages in eight major commentaries on various biblical books.⁶⁰ Salvesen encourages commentators to go beyond harvesting the Greek versions for pre-Masoretic vocalizations, and semantic information regarding the MT, to a more thoroughgoing engagement and analysis of the Jewish and Christian Greek traditions in their own right.

As can be readily appreciated from our overview, papyri of the Psalter are variegated and fascinating. Complications abound in almost every dimension of investigation. Despite this however, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the papyrological testimony in providing an admittedly fragmentary, but genuine snapshot of the LXX text as it existed at a certain point in antiquity.

⁵⁹ H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms 1–59: A Commentary* (Trans. H. C. Oswald; Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 13. See further, R.J.V. Hiebert, C.E. Cox and P. Gentry, *The Old Greek Psalter: Essays in Honour of Albert Pietersma* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012); A. Schultz, *Kritisches zum Psalter* (Munster : Aschendorffschen, 1932).

⁶⁰ A. Salvesen, “The Role of Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion in Modern Commentaries of the Hebrew Bible,” in *Let Us Go Up to Zion* (ed. Iain Provan and Mark Boda; Brill: Leiden, 2012), 95–109.