

A New Source for the Early *Octoechos*?
Papyrus Vindobonensis G 19.934 and its musical implications

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Abstract:

On the basis of palaeographical analysis, the first editors, Kurt Treu and Johannes Diethart, dated the hymnological codex Pap. Vind. G 19.934 to the sixth century. Enough modal ascriptions are found in this fragmentary source to make an analysis of its musical structure and to compare it with other early sources for the *Octoechos* system.

Introduction:

At this first international conference held by the American Society of Byzantine Music and Hymnology I shall touch upon both music and hymnography, focussing on a specific document that might tell us something on the formation and transmission of Byzantine chant in its earliest period. Though not as old as St. John Chrysostom, to whom this conference is dedicated, the source material shall address here is probably linked to a period from before the era St John of Damascus.

Pap. Vind. G 19.934 was first published in 1993.⁴⁴³ The publication was the last part of the project "Wiener christliche Papyri" that was initiated by the Vienna scholar Peter Sanz during the years immediately before the World War II, but due to his early death at the eastern frontier, professor Kurt Treu, working in Berlin, carried on with the project. However, due to yet another infelicitous event in the European history, the split of Europe in the era of the iron curtain, the work went on only very slowly by means of correspondence and on the basis of old photographs until, finally, prof. Treu was able to spend his last summer working on the original papyri in Vienna in 1991. When the publication appeared in 1993, prof. Treu had died.

The ambition of the editors was not to deliver full description of each item, but to furnish a basis for further papyrological, philological, theological studies as well as studies in textual transmission. Musicology was not included in their list of disciplines potentially to benefit from the preliminary edition, and as it appears from the very brief comments on the modal ascriptions, this feature did not seem to have caught the interest of the editors. I shall, however, here try to explain why I think that this papyrus is an important document also for the history of Byzantine Chant and why it deserves to be included in the list of the earliest witnesses of the *Octoechos* system.

The modal indication seen in fol. 1r (Fig. 1) most likely prescribes *echos tetartos*. The modal signature placed in the margin at the level of the third line of the hymn. The entire papyrus consists of a number of fragments that probably once made up seven folios of a

⁴⁴³ Kurt Treu† and Johannes Diethart, *Griechische Literarische Papyri christlichen Inhaltes II* (Textband und Tafelband), Vienna 1993 = Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek (Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer), Neue Serie, XVII Folge.

papyrus codex. Papyrus codices were quite frequent in the fourth and fifth centuries after Christ and onwards.⁴⁴⁴ Even if parchment had taken the lead as the medium of prestigious Christian books - think of the monumental Bibles of Sinai and Alexandria - papyrus continued to be used in the Christian Middle East, frequently in single sheet documents, often in the form of a codex, and only seldom in the form of a scroll.⁴⁴⁵ This practice continued even after the Arab conquest of the region, and papyrus was also in many cases used for documentary texts, ecclesiastical and secular, in Early Medieval Europe. The favourable conditions of preservation in Egypt, however, have saved for our times an abundance of papyrus material from exactly that region.

The editors established a succession of fols. 1-4 which seems reasonable to me as a point of departure, although it might turn out that some of the folios must be 'reordered' after a more detailed analysis.

The fragmented folio chosen to be no. 1 includes the following items:

Fol. no./ no. of lines	Incipit	Genre	Occasion	Modal assignment
Ir / 18	- inc. mut.	Strophic hymn, acrostic M-Ω, three letters in each 'strophe'	Christmas? (Christological content)	[ἦχ.] Δ'
Ir / 7	[Τ]ίνα σε καλέσει[ι] ὁ λαός σου	Troparion (Sticheron)?	Peter of Alexandria, Archbishop, Martyr, Nov. 25	?
Ir / 11	Εὐλογητὸς εἶ κ(ύρι)ε ὁ θεός	Ode 8 (Dan. 3, 52-56)	Orthros?	?

The contents seem quite mixed at first glance, but already this folio might give a hint of the environment in which the codex once were written and used, namely the Chalcedonian, Orthodox Church of Alexandria. Peter of Alexandria is a universal Byzantine saint, but we shall see more traces that might point in direction of the diocese of Alexandria as an important location in connection with this papyrus codex. I shall return to this particular chant below.

Above the *troparion* is seen an alphabetic hymn to Christ - the imagery and the poetic standard might seem somewhat primitive, but this alphabetic acrostically designed hymnographical form with one dogmatic/theological statement per letter was obviously widespread in the area of Syria, Palestine and Egypt.

⁴⁴⁴ C.H. Roberts and T.C. Skeat, *The birth of the Codex*, Oxford 1983, pp. 45-60, assume that the papyrus codex was already developed in Jerusalem or Antioch at the beginning of the second century.

⁴⁴⁵ J. van Haelst, *Catalogue des papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens*, Paris 1976.

At the 75th anniversary symposium for Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae at Copenhagen in the summer 2006, prof. Francesco d'Aiuto from Rome introduced a new project on the earlier Byzantine hymnography, of which the goal is to establish indices and catalogues of manuscripts, and he announced as an example of the possible results emerging from the project the finding of a resurrection hymn, construed in a similar manner, found recently in a fragment of a parchment manuscript of the 8th-9th century.⁴⁴⁶ The grouping together of three letters in one 'strophe' might help the singer to distinguish between middle and final cadences, a division suggested by the lay-out on the page.

If this alphabetic form reflects a genre of hymnography developed before the era of the masters John of Damacus, Andrew of Crete and Cosmas of Maiuma, we might in this papyrus codex have the possibility of studying one of the early standard forms and traditions of hymnography on the basis of which these poets worked. But why is an OT text included here in a context of hymnography? I shall try to give a tentative answer below. In the *troparion* for Peter of Alexandria, there is at the beginning a series of rhetorical questions followed by answers on the interpretation of the theological themes connected with a saint's life. This phenomenon also exists in the received Byzantine hymnography, as we can see from the following juxtaposition with examples from the standard repertory:

Pap. Vind. G 19.934, fol. Ir

Τοῦ ἁγίου Πέτρο(υ) μάρτ(υρο)ς

[Τ]ίνα σε καλέσε[ι] ὁ λαός σου

ὄν δικαίως καὶ ὁσίως ἐποίμενας εἰς σωτηρίαν []

ἄγγελον ποιμένα ἢ μάρτυρα·

ἄγγελον τὸ γὰρ σῶμα ἀπεκδύσω·

ποιμένα ἄγαθος γὰρ ὑπάρχων τὴν ψυχὴν σου ἔθεκας ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων

μάρτυρα δ[ὲ] ὅτι τὴν κεφαλὴν ὑπὲρ χρ(ιστο)ῦ παρέθηκας ἀρχιεροσύνην

ἐφύλαξας·

καὶ μαρτυρίαν τετέλεκας

πρέσβευε ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν:-

Τί σε καλέσωμεν, ὦ κεχαριτωμένη. οὐρανόν; ὅτι παράδεισον; ὅτι
(*apolytikion theotokion, first hour*)

Τί ὑμᾶς καλέσωμεν Ἅγιοι; Χερουβίμ; ὅτι ὑμῖν ἐπανεπαύσατο Χριστός.

Σεραφίμ; ὅτι ἀπαύστως (*sticheron automelon, ἦχ. πλ. δ'*)

⁴⁴⁶ F. D' Aiuto, 'Per la storia dei libri liturgico-innografici bizantini: un progetto di catalogazione dei manoscritti più antichi', *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata*, Nuova Serie 3, 53-66.

Τί σε νῦν καλέσω Γρηγόριε; πρακτικόν, ὅτιθεωρόν, ὅτι ἰκέτευε, τοῦ σωθῆναι τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν (*sticheron prosomoion*, ἦχ. πλ. δ', Nov. 1)

Turning the page, we can observe another hymn with alphabetic acrostic, this one on the theme of the Resurrection, but with only two letters in each 'section', numbered from one to twelve. This hymnographical item is without a modal indication, either due to its original absence or the bad preservation of the margins.

Fol. no./ no. of lines	Incipit	Genre	Occasion	Modal assignment
Iv / 27	- fragmentary	Strophic hymn (α'-ιβ'), acrostic A-Ω + 'doxology'	Easter	?
Iv / 12	Τῆς ἀναίμου καὶ ἀσάρκου	Troparion (Sticheron)?	Anthony the Great, Jan. 17	?

After that piece follows a *troparion* in honour of the father of the monastic movement, the Great Anthony of Egypt. Specific for this piece is the relatively bad orthography. I do not mention this because an 'unorthodox' orthography is not seen in many papyri and early chant books, but it is considerably different from the orthography used in the other pieces, though they are most probably written by the same hand. One explanation of the variation could be that the pieces joined together in the codex were not copied from one single existing chant collection, but from various models, following bringing various traces of these models into the new volume. This *troparion* in honour of St Anthony the Great might point to some connection with the Alexandrian liturgical province.

Fol. no./ no. of lines	Incipit	Genre	Occasion	Modal assignment
IIr / 3 (inc. mut.)	?	Troparion?	A martyr (cf. δρόμον καλῶς [ἐ]ξε[τέλεσας	?
IIr / 4	Βαπτιστ[ὰ] κ[αὶ] μάργυς]	Troparion?	The Forerunner	?
IIr / 4	Βαπτιστὰ ...	Troparion?	The Forerunner	?
IIr / 15	Ὡς φωστῆρ [ἐ]ν κόσμῳ \ ἐ/φάνης μακάριε	Troparion (Sticheron)?	Confessor (Athanasios? Jan. 18, Μακάριος?)	πλ β'
IIr / 5 (expl. mut.)	Ὡς χρυσὸν ἐν χωνευτηρίῳ	Sticheron? (based on Sap. 3,6)	Martyr, Bishop - Peter of Alexandria?, Nov. 25?	πλ β'

In folio IIr (part of which is reproduced as Fig.2) follows a series of short *troparia*. The first one is probably for a martyr, to judge from the few readable words, and two successive pieces are addressed to John the Baptist.

I have been searching for metrical/rhythmical patterns in the alphabetic pieces and in the other *troparia*, but generally without success. In the two pieces with the *Baptistá* there seems to be, if in any of the pieces in the codex, traces of the observance of rules of *isotonía* and *isosyllabía*, but only in some of the phrase-endings. Of major interest is also the modal ascriptions of two *troparia* to the second plagal mode. One of the pieces is longer and is comparable to what later is called *sticheron*, and one is shorter, and could tentatively be called *kathisma* or *apolytikion*.

Turning the folio once more, the following list of contents can be established:

Fol. no./ no. of lines	Incipit	Genre	Occasion	Modal assignment
IIv / 7 (inc. mut.)	-	Hymn with refrain	Christmas	?
IIv / 11	[Ε]ν ὑψίστοις δόξα	Hymn with refrain	Christmas	πλ γ'
	Ζωῆς αἰωνίου κῆρ[υξ]	Hymn with refrain	Christmas	πλ γ'
IIv / 8 (expl. mut.)	Ἴδου παραγένονεν ὁ δι[ἀ] στόλου νεφέλης	Hymn, Theotokion? (with refrain?)	Christmas, Theotokos	πλ γ'

The four strophes on fol. 2v (part of which is reproduced as Fig.3) are clearly connected, they are of approximately equal length and they all end with the phrase:οὕτως πρὸς αὐτὸν ψάλλομεν..... οὕτω πρὸς αὐτὸν ψάλλοντες:καὶ διὰ τοῦτο βοῶμεν: ('choral refrain') ὁ μὴ χωρισθεὶς τῶν ἐπουρανίων, καὶ ἀναστραφεὶς δέ τοις ἐπιγείοις σ(ωτή)ρ ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου..... ..δε[ώμεθα

(choral refrain) *You, who never leaves the heavenly dwellings, come and let your face shine among men on earth, we pray to you!*

This seems to me to be efficient liturgical poetry and a quite advanced hymnographic complex, ending traditionally with a strophe focussing specifically on the role of the *Theotokos*.

Further, it is indicated that the strophes (at least the three last ones) are to be sung in the third plagal mode; remember that we here are dealing with material from the period before the occurrence of the ἦχος βαρύς as designation for third plagal mode in

practical chanting. The Latin borrowing of the *Octoechos* system in the 8th century resulted as well in *plagis triti*,⁴⁴⁷ whereas the Syrian tradition in the 9th century took over the Greek Byzantine eight-mode system with a sequence of modes corresponding to the numbering 1-8 in the Slavonic tradition.⁴⁴⁸

Heinrich Hussmann⁴⁴⁹ and Aelred Cody⁴⁵⁰ have in their writings convincingly demonstrated that the ascription of an Octoechos system to the sixth-century Severos of Antioch is a misunderstanding. I shall refrain from that discussion here, and solely focus on the sequence of chants on the recto and verso sides of the same folio belonging to the plagal second, followed by chants in the plagal third mode.

The following tables show the rest of the contents of the fragmented codex:

Fol. no./ no. of lines	Incipit	Genre	Occasion	Modal assignment
IIIr / 2	? (Inc. mut.)	Troparion?	Christmas (cf. [ἐν]ηνθρώπησεν	
IIIr / 14	[Σήμερον εἶδον π]αράδοξα πάντες	Troparion?	Christmas	?
IIIr / 11	Γαβριήλ ὁ ἀρχάγ[γελος]	Troparion (Sticheron)?	Annunciation, Christmas	?
IIIr / 2 (expl. mut.)	Μετ' εὐφροσύνης	?	Christmas?/ Pentecost?	?

On foll. 3 recto, the Christmas theme continues, maybe shifting to Pentecostal themes (Ascension and Pentecost) in the last and very fragmented piece of hymnography. A Pentecostal theme continues on fol. 3v, where we find the only piece of this old collection that eventually has found its way into the standard collections of Byzantine hymnography. The Troparion Ἀνέλθων εἰς οὐρανοῦς is known from the Pentekostarion as a *sticheron* in the first mode. The margins are so damaged that it is impossible to say whether the piece was also ascribed to first mode in this codex.

Fol. no./ no.	Incipit	Genre	Occasion	Modal
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⁴⁴⁷ M. Huglo, *Les Tonaires: inventaire, analyse, comparaison*, = *Publications e la Societé Francaise de Musicologie*, 3^e série, t. 2. Paris 1971

⁴⁴⁸ Cf. P. Jeffery, 'The Earliest Oktōēchoi: The Role of Jerusalem and Palestine in the Beginning of Modal Ordering', *The Study of Medieval Chant, Paths and Bridges, East and West, In Honour of Kenneth Levy*, ed. P. Jeffery, Woodbridge 2001, 147-210

⁴⁴⁹ H. Hussmann, 'Tropus und Troparion, Studien zur Geschichte der musikalischen Gattungen von Horologion und Tropologiom', *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preussischer Kulturbesitz* (1971), 7-86

⁴⁵⁰ A. Cody, 'The early history of the Octoechos in Syria', *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, edd. N. G. Garsoïan, Thomas F. Mathews et al., Dumbarton Oaks 1982

of lines				assignment
IIIv / 7	Ὡ χάριτος ἐγγ[εομένης]	Troparion, Sticheron?	Pentecost	?
IIIv / 4	Ἀνέλθων εἰς οὐρανούς	Troparion, Sticheron	Ascension	?
IIIv / 4	[Χριστὸς ἐπέβη ἐπὶ χειροβίμ καὶ ἐπε]τάσθη	Troparion, Sticheron? (cf. Psalm 17,11)	Ascension	?
IIIv / 5	- inc. mut	Troparion, Sticheron?	Ascension/ Pentecost?	?
IIIv / 6	[Μωσῆς εἶδεν βάτον κα]ιομένην	Troparion, Theotokion?	?	?
IIIv / 2	?	Troparion, Martyrikon?	(cf. rubric 'μάρτυρος')	?

The rest of the codex is so fragmentary, that a description cannot claim to . However, an *alpha* might be read in the margin of folio 4v, a possible indication of ascription to first mode. Therefore folios 3 or 4, or both, may have to be placed before the folios now numbered 1-2, if in fact this papyrus codex is a very early modally ordered manuscript of some kind.

If we play with this idea, I think that a designation as a very early kind of Tropologion is not out of place. It has before been mentioned, that a chant book with Troparia should rightfully have been termed a Tropariologion. The chants do not conform in their themes, local saints, common saints, feast of the fixed Church Year (the Menaion), and feasts of the movable one (Pentekostarion), appear side by side. Further, a variety of types of Troparia are represented; short forms, reminding of what became *apolytikia* or *kathismata*, longer forms reminding of the sticheraric genre, and complexes of strophes, either organised in couplets or triplets according to alphabetic acrostic, or building up a *kanon*-like structure of three troparia with common refrain (though not with metrical identity, followed by a *theotokion*. In addition, the eighth Biblical ode is included, perhaps a hint to the fact that these *troparia* were sung with psalmody?⁴⁵¹ The old idea of *tropos* as connected with modally organised chants to be performed with psalmody , and the generic term *troparion* discussed already by among others

⁴⁵¹ C. Troelsgård, 'Simple Psalmody in Byzantine Chant', *Papers Read at ther 12th Meeting of the IMS Study Group Cantus Planus, Lillafüred/Hungary, 23-28 Aug. 2004*, ed. László Dobszay, Budapest 2006, 83-92

Oliver Strunk⁴⁵², Heinrich Husmann⁴⁵³, Lukas Richter⁴⁵⁴ and Jørgen Raasted might deserve to be taken up again in this context. The collection might fit into a picture of a primitive Tropologion, composed of exemplary pieces to be sung in all eight modes, perhaps to furnish study material for training of various styles of *troparia* to be used with psalmody. However, the discussion of the nature of this apparently heterogeneous chant collection must continue; the suggested interpretation might just be one among others.

The question of purpose and scope addresses many problems of the formation of Byzantine chant in its earliest phase: we cannot know how the music was thought to sound, but we might observe some of the means of fixating the repertoires and the single chants and whole genres. A manuscript like this gives the text, the mode, the genre, but the actual constitution of the melody, be it improvisation or re-creation of the melody according to some more or less fixed rules transferred from one generation of the chanting community to the next one, was left to the oral sphere. By this I mean that one should perhaps not describe Byzantine chant in the period before the earliest traces of melodic notation in the late 9th or early 10th century as purely oral. There was even before that time a strong element of chant administration by means of writing, and in addition a 'theory' of chanting considering performance of chants to specific modes. Therefore an expression as a semi-oral transmission, where writing and memory work together seems to me to be fair description. No notation, by the way, is capable of transmitting the niceties and smaller nuances of the actual music, be it jazz, baroque music, or any branch of chanting belonging to the greater family of Byzantine liturgical chanting.

Now, leaving these terminological considerations aside, I shall try to discuss the possible dating of the codex. Kurt Treu and Johannes Diethart, who had a long experience in the dating of papyrus fragments had no doubts in assigning this codex to the sixth century, i.e. the age of Romanos rather than the age of John of Damascus. But their preliminary publication has no really discussion of the dating. The script is a 'Sloping majuscule', and the codex is in fact quite beautifully written, with some presumptions of presenting a book of some status. Compared to for example the Papyrus no. 466 in John Ryland's Library,⁴⁵⁵ Manchester, a papyrus that is often referred to in the literature as the earliest document for both the *oktoechos* and the *kanon* poetry, this Vienna papyrus is much more "bookish". The Ryland's papyrus has been described as a "choir slip", probably meant to be used in a local church in the neighbourhood of Fayoum, where the papyrus was bought. The script has more ligatures than seen in the Vienna papyrus and is generally more carelessly written. It is reported by Edoardo Crisci that the vast majority (around 80

⁴⁵² O. Strunk, 'Tropus and Troparion', *Speculum Musicae Artis, Festgabe für Heinrich Husmann*, ed. H. Becker and R. Gerlach, Munich 1970

⁴⁵³ op.cit.

⁴⁵⁴ L. Richter: 'Zur Lehre von den byzantinischen Tonarten: Kenntnisse, Erkenntnisse und Probleme (Teil I)', *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preussischer Kulturbesitz* (1996), 211-260 ; 'Zur Lehre von den byzantinischen Tonarten: Kenntnisse, Erkenntnisse und Probleme (Teil II)', *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preussischer Kulturbesitz* (1997), 325-390.

⁴⁵⁵ C.H. Roberts (ed.), *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Ryland's Library, Manchester*, Vol. III. Theological and Literary Texts (Nos. 457-551), Manchester 1938.

percent) of the preserved hymnographic manuscript items from the 6th-8th centuries are single sheets.⁴⁵⁶ A better match for the Rainer codex is the Berlin papyrus no. 21319, dated to the sixth-seventh centuries⁴⁵⁷ The *troparia* are written in a nice book hand on both sides of that fragment, and one modal indication is present. However, precise dating of this type of papyrus scripts is generally difficult.⁴⁵⁸

- Kappas with 'air' between the stem and the angle-stroke are normally dated in the 6th century or later - in our codex there is generally less air than in the Berliner papyrus, pointing to a slightly earlier date.
- Broad phi's resemble those the Berlin papyrus
- Stem of ypsilons generally not crossing the base line - little earlier
- Occasionally, a minuscule alpha is used in our codex, though the alpha in general use is the well-known shape of the biblical majuscule script. - little later

My guess therefore would be that the codex stems from the sixth or seventh centuries, and I shall leave it to more skilled palaeographers and /or papyrologists to make further and more detailed observations and conclusions. I add here a small table of the dating of early papyrus fragments with modal ascriptions:

P. Vindob. G 19.934	6 th c. (or 6 th -7 th c.)
P. Berol. 21319	6 th -7 th c.
P. Vindob. G 41.261 ⁴⁵⁹	6 th -7 th c.
P. Amherst I.9 ⁴⁶⁰	7 th -8 th c.
P. Ryl. 466	7 th -8 th c.

This little known Vienna papyrus codex seems to me to be a very important witness of the early *Octoechos*. It offers an interesting fund of hitherto unknown early hymnographic pieces, though it — as it is often the case when studying fragmented sources — poses even more questions and riddles to the historians of Byzantine chant than it answers.

⁴⁵⁶ E. Crisci, 'La produzione libraria nelle aree orientali di Bisanzio nei secoli VII e VIII', *I manoscritti Greci tra riflessione e dibattito, Atti del V Colloquio Internazionale di Paleografia Greca, Cremona 4-10 ottobre 1998*, ed. Giancarlo Prato = *Papyrologica Florentina*, 31 (Florence 2000), I, 3-28.

⁴⁵⁷ P. Sarischouli (ed.), *Berliner griechische Papyri, Christliche literarische Texte und Urkunden aus dem 3. bis 8. Jh.n.Chr.*, = *Serta Graeca* 3, Wiesbaden 1995.

⁴⁵⁸ This warning is issued by H. Maehler, 'Zur Datierung griechischer Buchschriften des 4. bis 8. Jahrhunderts aus Ägypten', *Paleografia e Codicologia greca. Atti del II Colloquio internazionale Berlino-Wolfenbüttel 17-21 ottobre 1983*, Vol. 1, edd. D. Harlfinger and G. Prato, Alessandria 1991, 31-40

⁴⁵⁹ This Vienna papyrus is published as no. 44 by Diethar-Treu, see above, note 1

⁴⁶⁰ B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt (edd.), *The Amherst Papyri, Being an Account of the Greek Papyri in the Collection of the Right Hon. Lord Amherst of Hackney, Vol. 1, The Ascension of Isaiah and Other Theological Fragments Nos. 1—9*, London 1900

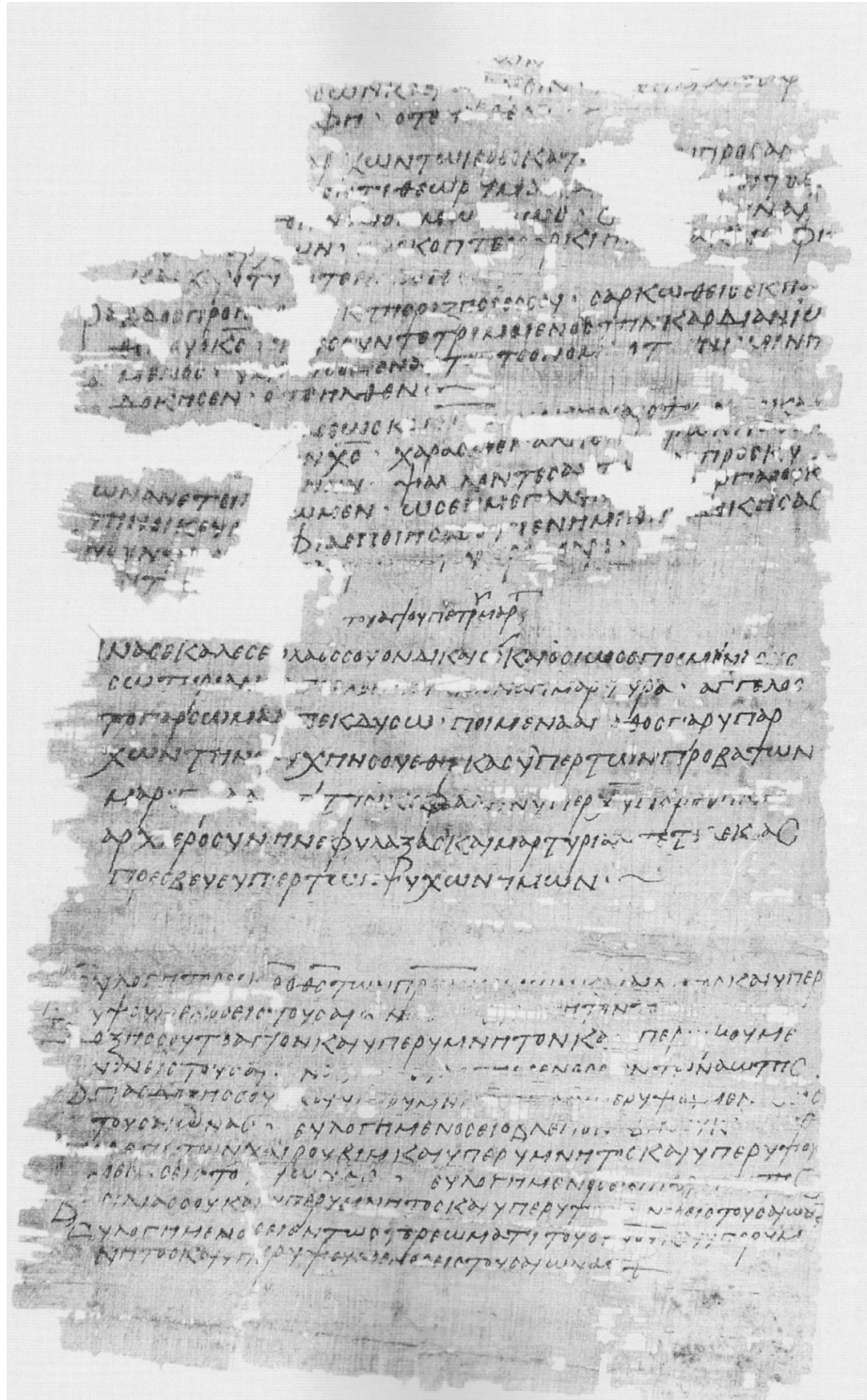


FIGURE 1

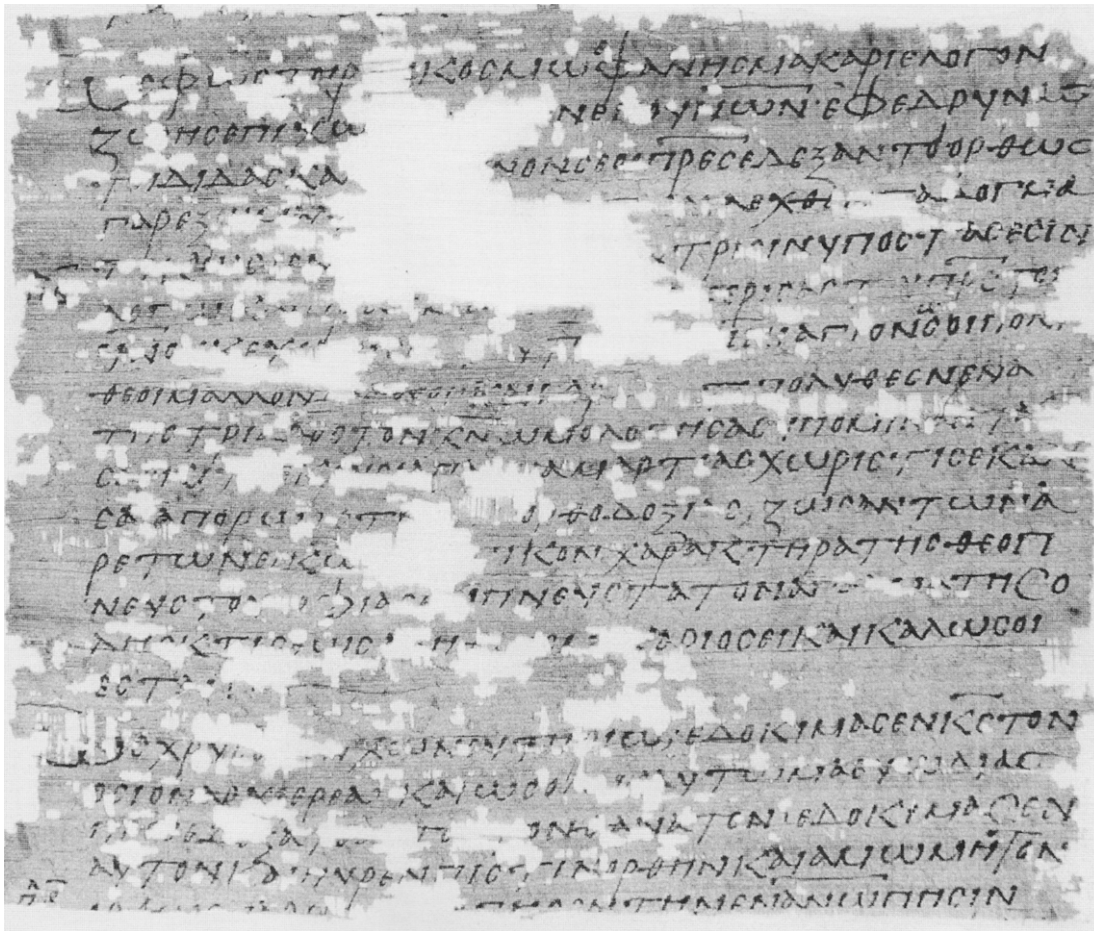


FIGURE 2

