

MARIANNA THOMA^a – AMPHILOCHIOS PAPATHOMAS^b

The First Papyrological Testimony of the Letter Collection of Isidore of Pelusium (P.Vindob. G 19923 = Isidore's Letters 1970 and 1971 ÉVIEUX)

with two figures

ABSTRACT: The present article contains the first edition of a hitherto unpublished papyrus fragment belonging to the Papyrus Collection of the Austrian National Library (P.Vindob. G 19923). This fragment, which once belonged to a papyrus codex, offers the first papyrological testimony to Isidore of Pelusium's *oeuvre*. The new Viennese fragment dates from the late fifth or the sixth century CE and preserves parts of letters 1970 and 1971 of Isidore's extensive epistolary corpus.

KEYWORDS: Isidore of Pelusium; Letters; Papyrus Codex; Manuscript Tradition

THE LIFE AND WORK OF ISIDORE OF PELUSIUM

Isidore was probably born in Alexandria (or, alternatively, in Pelusium) between 360 and 370 CE, where he studied rhetoric. He spent most of his life as an ascetic monk in a monastery outside the city of Pelusium in northeastern Egypt. He died shortly after 433 CE¹. His writing style indicates a brilliant rhetorical education². Isidore was an admirer of John Chrysostom and enjoyed a good reputation as a Christian author. The learned patriarch of Constantinople, Photios, admired and praised both the erudition and orthodoxy in his writings³. In Byzantium, Isidore was listed among

^a Marianna Thoma: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Classics, Faculty of Philology, Panepistimiopolis, Zographou, 15784 Athens, Greece; mathoma@phil.uoa.gr

^b Amphilochios Papathomas: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Classics, Faculty of Philology, Panepistimiopolis, Zographou, 15784 Athens, Greece; papath@phil.uoa.gr

¹ On the life of Isidore, see, for example, Ch. Marksches in: *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike. Altertum*, Bd. 5: Gru–Iug. Stuttgart – Weimar 1998, 1122 and B. Baldwin in *ODB* 2, 1016; P. ÉVIEUX, *Isidore de Péluse (Théologie Historique)* 99. Paris 1995, 295–377. The details about Isidore's life coming from hagiographic sources are characterized by variation. Évieux believes that Isidore was born in Pelusium, where he studied Greek, and then travelled to Alexandria to pursue rhetorical studies. For further details, see ÉVIEUX, *Isidore de Péluse* 309–310 and idem, *Isidore de Péluse. Lettres* 1214–1413, tome 1 (*SC* 422). Paris 1997, 58–60. Several other researchers, such as Treu and Runia, follow Quasten, who claims that according to Patriarch Ephraem's writings, Isidore was born in Alexandria. See J. QUASTEN, *Patrology*, vol. 3: *The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon*. Westminster 1950, 180–181; D. RUNIA, *Philo of Alexandria in Five Letters of Isidore of Pelusium. Studia Philonica Annual* 3 (1991) 295–319, esp. 295; U. TREU, *Isidore of Pelusium and the Grammaticus Ophelius. Studia Patristica* 32 (1997) 376–379, esp. 376. On the vagueness of details of Isidore's life, see also the recent discussion offered by L.I. LARSEN, *The Letter Collection of Isidore of Pelusium*, in: *Late Antique Letter Collections: A Critical Introduction and Reference Guide*, ed. C. Sogno – B.K. Storin – E.J. Watts. Oakland. California 2017, 286–308, esp. 287–289.

² On Isidore's style, see, among others, G.J.M. BARTELINK, *Observations stylistiques et linguistiques chez Isidore de Péluse. Vigiliae Christianae* 18 (1964) 163–180.

³ Photius, *Ep.* 207 (ed. B. LAOURDAS – L.G. WESTERINK, *Photii patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia*. Leipzig 1984, vol. 2, 107): Εἰ δὲ βούλει σὺν τῷ χαρακτῆρι καὶ πολλῶν ἄλλων καὶ μεγάλων συλλέξαι ὠφέλειαν, ἀρκέσει σοι Βασίλειος ὁ γλυκὺς καὶ ὁ κάλλους εἴ τις ἄλλος ἐργάτης Γρηγόριος καὶ ἡ ποικίλη καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας αὐλῆς μοῦσα Ἰσίδωρος, ὅς, ὥσπερ λόγων, οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἱερατικῆς καὶ ἀσκητικῆς πολιτείας κανὼν ἐστὶν χρηματίζειν ἀξιοχρεῶς, καὶ εἴ τις ἕτερος μετὰ τῆς ὁμοίας προαιρέσεως τὴν ἐκείνων ἰδέαν ταῖς ἰδίαις ἐπιστολαῖς ἐνεδυναμώθη μορφώσασθαι ("If, however, you wish along with their style to receive benefit from many other great men, the dear Basil will suffice for you, as well as Gregorios, the producer of beauty, if anyone else is, and furthermore, the complex muse of our Isidoros, who is deserving

the canonical letter writers together with Synesios, Libanios, Gregory of Nazianzos, Basil the Great, and Michael Psellos⁴. Isidore was declared a saint by the Christian Church, and his name is celebrated on the 4th of February.

Although Isidore of Pelusium spent almost all his life in Egypt, and although his letters have reached us through a rich medieval manuscript tradition⁵, no papyrus testimony containing parts of his work has as yet been found. The present article offers the first edition of a hitherto unpublished papyrus fragment from the rich holdings of the Papyrus Collection of the Austrian National Library (P.Vindob. G 19923)⁶, presenting the first papyrological testimony to Isidore's *oeuvre*⁷. In particular, the Viennese fragment, which belonged to a papyrus codex written on both sides, preserves parts of two of his letters.

According to Severus of Antioch and the Suda, Isidore wrote about 3,000 letters⁸. What survives today is an extensive epistolary corpus of almost 2,000 letters in the original Greek, numbered from 1 to 2000, although a letter is missing⁹.

These letters are mostly addressed to monks, priests, bishops, local officials, imperial administrators, even Emperor Theodosius II, as well as other laymen, and are full of didacticism, exhortations, and words of condolence¹⁰. In this collection, Isidore proves himself a sensible exegete and

of being called a canon as of words so also of both the sacerdotal and ascetic state, and any other person with the similar disposition who was invigorated to embody their form in his own epistles"; translation by D. STRATOUDAKI-WHITE, Patriarch Photios of Constantinople: His Life, Scholarly Contributions, and Correspondence together with a Translation of Fifty-two of his Letters. Brookline, Mass. 1981, 178–179, with a minor alteration by the present authors). Characteristic for the erudition of Isidore is, for example, his knowledge of Menander's *Georgos*; see E.R. LUJÁN, A Quotation of Menander's *Georgos* in a Letter by Isidorus Pelusiota. *Philologus* 145 (2001) 352–353, esp. 353. On the use of other classical authors in Isidore's letters (Homer, Xenophon, Plato, Isocrates, Libanius and, above all, Demosthenes), see C. JONES, Isidore de Péluse en son temps. *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 159, 3 (2015) 1289–1300, esp. 1292–1293; on Demosthenes, see also A. DÜREN, Die Rezeption des Demosthenes von den Anfängen bis ins 17. Jh. Bonn 2014, 341–344.

⁴ Cf. Joseph Bryennios, *Ep.* 25, 38–40 (ed. N.B. TOMADAKES, *Ek tēs byzantinēs epistolographias. Iōsēph monachou tou Bryenniou epistolai 30 kai hai pros auton 3. EEBs* 46 (1983–1986) 283–362, esp. 346–347); A. RIEHLE, Letters and New Philology, in: *A Companion to Byzantine Epistolography*, ed. A. Riehle. Leiden – Boston 2020, 466–501, esp. 485.

⁵ On the manuscript tradition of Isidore's Letters, see, for example, the discussion of C.H. TURNER, The Letters of Saint Isidore of Pelusium. *The Journal of Theological Studies* 6 (1904) 70–86; K. LAKE, Further Notes on the Mss of Isidore of Pelusium. *The Journal of Theological Studies* 6 (1905) 270–282; M. SMITH, The Manuscript Tradition of Isidore of Pelusium. *The Harvard Theological Review* 47 (1954) 205–210; ÉVIEUX, Isidore de Péluse 3–8; M. TOCA, The Greek Manuscript Reception of Isidore of Pelusium's Epistolary Corpus. *Biblische Notizen* 175 (2017) 133–143.

⁶ We would like to thank Prof. Dr Bernhard Palme, director of the Papyrus Collection of the Austrian National Library, for his kind permission to publish this papyrus here.

⁷ One should mention here that there are also three Syriac parchments dated between the seventh and the ninth centuries which preserve a variety of texts including parts of Isidore's Letters in Syriac; see *Trismegistos* and *LDAB* 115212; 117859 and 316825 (accessed: 06.02.2023). On the Syriac tradition of Isidore's letters, which includes additional letters and some of the Greek ones with alterations, see ÉVIEUX, Isidore de Péluse 353 and IDEM, *Lettres*, tome 1, 98.

⁸ On Severus, see ÉVIEUX, *Lettres*, tome 1, 96–97. On Suda I 629 (ed. A. ADLER, *Suidae Lexicon*, vol. 2 [*Lexicographi Graeci* 1.2]. Stuttgart 1931, 668): Ἰσίδωρος, πρεσβύτερος, ὁ Πηλουσιώτης, ἀνὴρ ἐλλογιμώτατος, φιλόσοφος τε καὶ ῥήτωρ. ἐπιστολὰς ἐρμηνευούσας τὴν θεῖαν γραφὴν τρισχιλίας γέγραφε, καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ ("Isidore the elder; of Pelusium; a very distinguished man. Philosopher and rhetor. He wrote 3000 letters expounding Holy Scripture, and certain other works"; translation in <https://www.cs.uky.edu/~raphael/sol/sol-entries/iota/629>), see ÉVIEUX, *Lettres*, tome 1, 96, n. 2 and IDEM, Isidore de Péluse 302.

⁹ The missing letter is no. 1378. See ÉVIEUX, *Lettres*, tome 1, 123 n. 1. Cf. P. ÉVIEUX, Isidore de Péluse. La numérotation des lettres dans la tradition manuscrite, *Revue d'Histoire des Textes* 5 (1975) 45–72, esp. 60. – For letters nos. 1–1213, see the old edition of *PG* 78 (Paris 1860), 177–1048. For letters nos. 1214–1413, see P. ÉVIEUX, Isidore de Péluse. *Lettres* 1214–1413, tome 1 (SC 422). Paris 1997, 182–502; for letters nos. 1414–1700, see idem, Isidore de Péluse. *Lettres* 1414–1700, tome 2 (SC 454). Paris 2000, 16–468 and for letters nos. 1701–2000, see P. ÉVIEUX and N. VINEL, Isidore de Péluse. *Lettres* 1701–2000, tome 3 (SC 586). Paris 2017, 14–410.

¹⁰ BARTELINK, Isidore de Péluse 163; C. HAAS, Isidorus of Pelusium, in: *Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity*, ed. O. Nicholson, vol. 1. Oxford 2018, 792; F. LEONTE, Didacticism in Byzantine Epistolography, in: *A Companion to Byzantine Episto-*

learned opponent of heresy, dealing with questions of dogma and taking part in the debate about Arianism and the nascent Monophysitism¹¹. After Isidore's death, his letters were initially collected, copied and circulated in various monasteries in Egypt and Palestine¹². It appears that Isidore's epistolary corpus was formed in the second half of the fifth century by the monks of the Monastery of Akoimetoï (Vigilants) at Constantinople¹³. By the beginning of the sixth century, Isidore's letters were being read and used in various areas of the Eastern Mediterranean, including Antioch, Caesarea and Alexandria. During the first quarter of the sixth century, Severus of Antioch appears acquainted with Isidore's corpus, referring to him in a very laudatory manner¹⁴. In the middle of the sixth century, Isidore's letter collection seems to already be established, according to a testimony by Facundus of Hermiana¹⁵.

THE MANUSCRIPT TRADITION OF THE EPISTOLARY CORPUS OF ISIDORE

No manuscript containing letters of Isidore's survives from the sixth to the eighth centuries, while two manuscripts have been dated to the ninth century¹⁶. The oldest and most important MS of the collection is preserved in the Monastery of Grottaferrata under the signature B α 1, gr. 84 (C) (*Diktyon* 17543) and is dated to 985 CE¹⁷. This manuscript derives from the hypothetical source S¹⁸, the collection of letters created at the monastery of the Akoimetoï in Constantinople. A small part of the total corpus of 2,000 letters is recorded in several manuscripts of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. The next manuscript of a considerable number of Isidore's letters that preserves the order of the original series is Paris, BnF, gr. 832 (P) (*Diktyon* 50418) from the thirteenth century. This manuscript contains the first 1,213 letters of Isidore's corpus (including the 400 letters which are missing from Grott. B α 1) and from which the *editio princeps* was derived¹⁹. The manuscript tradition of Isidore's letters from subsequent centuries is very rich.

THE FIRST PAPYROLOGICAL TESTIMONY OF ISIDORE OF PELUSIUM

The new Viennese fragment preserves part of letter 1970 of Isidore's collection on its recto and part of letter 1971 on its verso. The numbering of the letters adopted by Évieux in his edition follows the ancient order of the letters as attested in various manuscripts, florilegia and catenae, some-

lography, ed. A. Riehle. Leiden – Boston 2020, 227–254, esp. 234; J. ROOSE, A Commentary on the 646th Letter of Isidore of Pelusium with a Brief Introduction, Critical Edition and Translation. *Byz.* 91 (2021) 305–352, esp. 334–335.

¹¹ See, for example, A. DIHLE, Greek and Latin literature of the Roman Empire from Augustus to Justinian (transl. M. MALZAHN). London 2013, 421; ÉVIEUX, *Lettres*, tome 1, 82–86 and S. BERKMÜLLER, *Schriftauslegung und Bildgebrauch bei Isidor von Pelusium*. Berlin – Boston 2020.

¹² ÉVIEUX, *Lettres*, tome 1, 105.

¹³ On the significant role of the Monastery of Akoimetoï situated in Constantinople in the formation of Isidore's epistolary collection, see, for example, the discussion offered by TURNER, *The Letters of Isidore of Pelusium* 73–74, and ÉVIEUX, *Isidore de Péluse* 3–8 and 365. For a different view, see the recent discussion of BERKMÜLLER, *Isidor von Pelusium* 9–35.

¹⁴ See ÉVIEUX, *Lettres*, tome 1, 60 with note 3 and 61 with notes 1–2; LARSEN, *Isidore of Pelusium* 296.

¹⁵ *Pro defensione trium capitulorum* 2,4 (see *PL* 67 [Paris 1865], 571–574).

¹⁶ See Pinakes (<https://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/recherche-generale>, accessed 07.02.2023): Mount Athos, Pantokrator Monastery 28 (Lambros 1062) (*Diktyon* 29047); Moscow, Gosudarstvennyj Istoričeskij Muzej (GIM), Sinod. gr. 137 (Vlad. 82) (*Diktyon* 43762).

¹⁷ For further details, see TURNER, *The Letters of Saint Isidore* 74 and ÉVIEUX, *Lettres*, tome 1, 129–131.

¹⁸ This hypothetical source is designated as S by Lake, *Mss of Isidore of Pelusium* 270–272, while Évieux, *Lettres*, tome 1, 174–175 uses the siglum c.

¹⁹ See TURNER, *The Letters of Saint Isidore* 75. It is noteworthy that there are two other manuscripts, earlier than Grottaferrata B α 1, gr. 84 (C), namely Athens, EBE 468 (10th c.) (A) (*Diktyon* 2764) preserving 182 letters, and Patmos, Monastery of St. John the Theologian 118 (11th c.) (D) (*Diktyon* 54362) preserving about 400 letters, which also reflect the order of the initial collection. See ÉVIEUX, *La numérotation des lettres* 49–50.

times with variations²⁰. Letter 1970 (ÉVIEUX, tome 3, 356–357 = *PG* 78, 1219–1220, Epist. IV 139) is addressed to a presbyter Theognostos and letter 1971 (ÉVIEUX, tome 3, 358–359 = *PG* 78, 1285–1288, Epist. IV 198) to a comes Domitius.

The identification and present publication of the new Viennese papyrus fragment is important, not only because it constitutes a very ancient direct attestation of Isidore's work, but also because it sheds further light on the spread of Isidore's epistolary corpus and his teaching in Middle and Upper Egypt a few decades after his death, probably during the sixth century CE (on the date and provenance of the fragment, see below). In addition, the new papyrus fragment offers a very early testimony to the order within Isidore's epistolary corpus. Finally, the fact that the fragment contains parts of two letters from the last part of the collection is an indication that the codex of provenance contained the final part of Isidore's letter collection. It cannot, of course, be precluded that the surviving fragment did not come from a collection of the letters, but was a copy of isolated letters²¹; nevertheless, the fact that the two letters follow each other in Isidore's manuscript tradition supports the provenance of the fragment from a codex of his letter collection. However, it is improbable that the codex contained the full corpus, since a papyrus codex would have hardly enough space for 2,000 letters. The complete collection would probably have required another two or three codices, of which the one containing the present fragment would have been the last. The owner of these codices could have been a Christian scholar, a cleric or a monastery, probably located in Middle Egypt in Hermoupolis Magna or in the Hermopolite nome (see below).

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PAPYRUS

The papyrus is damaged on three sides. Small wormholes are scattered throughout the fragment. It is written on both sides and was part of a papyrus codex. Its colour is medium brown, and it measures 10.1 × 10.8 cm. The script runs along the fibres on the recto, and across the fibres on the verso. The right margin of the recto and the left margin of the verso both measure 5 cm. The dimensions of the preserved margins indicate that the codex containing the fragment was of a rather large size and, as mentioned above, it may have contained a substantial part of the final part of Isidore's collection of letters. There is no evidence of punctuation. A single spiritus asper is found at l. 9. In two cases (ll. 6 and 9), the final *v* takes the form of a superscript horizontal stroke.

DATE AND PROVENANCE OF THE PAPYRUS

The papyrus can be dated by applying palaeographical criteria. In his unpublished handwritten inventory of the Vienna Papyrus Collection, Carl Wessely dated the fragment to the sixth century CE. The handwriting of the fragment seems to confirm this proposal, suggesting sometime during the late fifth or the sixth century CE. The script appears to be a hybrid, a kind of compromise between the "biblical" and "Alexandrian" majuscules. Letters with horizontal strokes, such as Γ, Δ, Ζ, Π, Τ are broad, while Ε, Θ, Ο, C are narrow. Μ is typical of the "Alexandrian" majuscule; it is formed with a curve replacing the two oblique central strokes. Α is written in a single, complex stroke. In addition, there is a contrast in the boldness of the strokes that compose a letter (there are thick, thin and intermediate strokes), which is common in the "biblical" majuscule. The scribal hand is comparable to the hands of P.Oxy. XIII 1600 (*Treatise on the Passion*; G. CAVALLO, *Ricerche sulla maiuscola biblica*. Florence 1966, pl. 47; 4th/5th c. CE.); P.Heid. 59 = P. Bad. IV 59 (Manethon's *Epitome*; R. SEIDER, *Paläographie der griechischen Papyri*, II: Literarische Papyri. Stuttgart

²⁰ See ÉVIEUX, *Lettres*, tome 1, 97–99, 122–123 and idem, *Isidore de Péluse* 5–6 and 349–350. On a detailed discussion of the enumeration of Isidore's letters in medieval manuscripts, see ÉVIEUX, *La numérotation des lettres* 45–72.

²¹ Cf. SMITH, *The Manuscript Tradition of Isidore* 208.

1970, pl. 61; 5th [SEIDER] or 6th [LDAB] c. CE); P.Oxy. XV 1820 (Homer, *Odyssey*; G. CAVALLO – H. MAEHLER, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period: A.D. 300–800*. London 1987, pl. 22b; mid 5th/mid 6th [LDAB] or 6th [CAVALLO – MAEHLER] c. CE); P.Aphrod.Lit. pp. 378–380 no IV 4 = P.Lit.Lond. 98 (Dioscorus, *Encomia to Romanus*; CAVALLO – MAEHLER pl. 32a; about 551 CE); P.Berol. 13994 (LXX, *Exodus*; CAVALLO – MAEHLER pl. 38b; mid or second half of 6th c. CE; this is also a hybrid script; see CAVALLO – MAEHLER pl. 84); BKT IX 83 (Euripides, *Orestes*; photo in <https://berlpap.smb.museum/04175/> [accessed: 06.02.2023]; 6th c. CE), BKT IX 85 (Theocritus, *Idyllia*; photo in <https://berlpap.smb.museum/04385/> [accessed: 06.02.2023]; 6th c. CE).

Concerning the provenance of the papyrus, the information Wessely provided in his handwritten inventory, that the papyrus joined the collection in 1886 (“ex 1886”), suggests Hermoupolis Magna or the broader Hermopolite nome as its provenance since the papyri which came to the *Papyrus-sammlung* in that year originated from Hermoupolis Magna²².

EDITION OF THE PAPYRUS

In the following, a standard edition of the fragment is offered. No new readings in comparison to the medieval tradition are present. For the reader’s convenience, we also cite the full text of the letters based on the critical edition of Évieux and Vinel (see introd. above)²³. The parts preserved on the Viennese fragment are printed in bold.

P.Vindob. G 19923

10.1 × 10.8 cm

late 5th or 6th c. CE

Hermoupolis Magna or Hermopolite nome

figures 1–2

Recto

- 1 [παρὰ τοῖς] σ[υν]ε-
- 2 [τοῖς ἀπο]δοχῆς
- 3 [ἀξιοθ]ησομένους
- 4 [γενν]αίως φερέ-
- 5 [τωσα]ν οἱ σωφρο-
- 6 [νιστὰι τ]ῶν κακῶν
- 7 [καὶ λυπ]εῖσθωσαν
- 8 [μὴ τὰ κα]θ’ ἑαυτοῦς
- 9 [ἐννοοῦν]τες ὅτι
- 10 [οὐδὲν ἔ]τερον
- 11 [ἢ τὸ δοκεῖν] μῖα-

6 κακῶ *par.* 7]εἰσθωσα *par.* 9 ὅτι *par.*

Epistula 1970 Évieux: ΘΕΟΓΝΩΣΤΩΙ ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΩΙ. Τοὺς ἐπιτιμητὰς τῶν κακιῶν οἱ μοχθηροὶ πλείους ὄντες καὶ διηχοῦντες κακῶς ἀποναρκεῖσαι πολλάκις πεποιήκασι, πρὸς τὸ μὴ τῇ παρρησίᾳ ἀναστέλλειν τὰ πταίσματα. Χρὴ τοίνυν μιν γίνουσι τῇ παρρησίᾳ τὴν προσήκειαν, καὶ τῷ ἐλέγχῳ κινῶν τὴν ἀγάπην, καὶ οὕτω νοουθετεῖν. Εἰ δὲ μὴδ’ οὕτως ὠφελοῖντο ἐκεῖνοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ κακῶς ἀπαγορεύσειαν τοὺς μεγίστων στεφάνων ἀξίους καὶ πάντως καὶ παρὰ Θεοῦ κηρυχθῆσομένους καὶ **παρὰ τοῖς συνετοῖς ἀποδοχῆς ἀξιοθῆσομένους, γενναίως φερέτωσαν οἱ σωφρονιστὰι τῶν κακῶν καὶ λυπεῖσθωσαν μὴ τὰ καθ’ ἑαυτοῦς (ἐννοοῦντες ὅτι οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἢ τὸ δοκεῖν μιᾶς περιέγονεν)**, ἀλλ’ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐκείνων διαστροφῆς καὶ μιᾶς, ὅτι ἀνίατα οὕτω νοσοῦσιν, ὥς καὶ τοὺς ἰατροὺς κακηγορεῖν.

²² See H. LOEBENSTEIN, Vom „Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer“ zur Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. 100 Jahre Sammeln, Bewahren, Edieren, in: P.Rain.Cent. Vienna 1983, 3–39, esp. 6–7 and 22.

²³ P. ÉVIEUX – N. VINEL, Isidore de Péluse. Lettres 1701–2000, tome 3 (SC 586). Paris 2017, 14–410, esp. 356–357 (letter 1970) and 358–359 (letter 1971).

Verso

- 12 μήτ[ε λέγειν μηδὲ]
 13 τὸ συμφέ[ρον δίκαιον, ἀλλὰ]
 14 τὸ δίκαιον [ἡγεῖσθαι]
 15 συμφέρον [*vacat*]
 16 καὶ τὸ διδόν[αι τοῦ]
 17 λαμβάνε[ιν εἶναι λυσι-]
 18 τελέστε[ρον ὅτε δ']
 19 ἡμελλο[ν εἰς ἄνδρας]
 20 τελέσει[ν ὥμνιον ὄρκον ὀλί-]
 21 [γ]α μὲν [κομιδῇ περιέχοντα]

Epistula 1971 ÉVIEUX ΔΟΜΙΤΙΩΙ ΚΟΜΗΤΙ. Ἐνέτυχόν ποτε ἱστορίᾳ Περσικῇ τοιαῦτά τινα περιεχούση, ὅτι οἱ παῖδες ἐμάνθανον μὲν μηδὲν ψεῦδος μήτε ἀκούειν **μήτε λέγειν, μηδὲ τὸ συμφέρον δίκαιον, ἀλλὰ τὸ δίκαιον ἡγεῖσθαι συμφέρον, καὶ τὸ διδόναι τοῦ λαμβάνειν εἶναι λυσιτελέστερον. Ὅτε δ' ἡμελλον εἰς ἄνδρας τελέσειν, ὥμνιον ὄρκον ὀλίγα μὲν κομιδῇ περιέχοντα ῥημάτια**, μεγίστην δὲ δύναμιν ἔχοντα ῥημάτια καὶ ὑπὲρ πάσας τὰς τῶν Ἑλλήνων φιλοσοφίας. Ὡμνυε γὰρ ἕκαστος ὡς «ἐγὼ καταφρονήσω μὲν αἰεὶ παντὸς κέρδους πονηροῦ, καταφρονήσω δὲ ἡδονῆς σώματος, καταφρονήσω δὲ δόξης κενῆς, ζηλώσω δὲ ἀρετὴν καὶ τιμήσω τὸ θεῖον καὶ γονεῖς, ἀληθῆ λέγων, ἀγαθὰ πράσσων, οὐδέ τι τούτων ὑπερβήσομαι εἰδὼς οὐδ' ἐκών.» Εἰ τοίνυν τὸ σέλας μὴ φέρων τῶν θεῶν γραφῶν, ὥσπερ οἱ ὀφθαλμιῶντες τὸν ἥλιον, οὗτ' αὐτὸς ἀναγινώσκεις οὐτε τοὺς σαυτοῦ υἱεῖς συγχωρεῖς, κἂν ταῦτα καὶ σαυτὸν καὶ τοὺς σαυτοῦ παῖδας φέρειν ἐπὶ μνήμης ἔθιζε. Πιστεύω γὰρ ὅτι κινήσουσιν ὑμᾶς καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς λόγοις ἐντυχεῖν.

A HYPOTHETICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FOLIO

The preserved text allows us to calculate the rough dimensions of the original folio. Remains of a total of 21 lines appear on the recto and verso of the papyrus. A reconstruction of the text indicates that each line contained ca. 11–14 letters on the recto, whereas the variation on the verso was larger, given that the reconstructed lines contain between 8 (l. 15) and 22 letters (l. 20). Since no upper or bottom margin is preserved in our fragment, its exact position on the leaf cannot be determined with absolute certainty. However, it is in all probability from the middle of the leaf, as the text between the preserved parts of recto and verso suggests.

The preserved text allows us to calculate the approximate dimensions of the original folio. The fact that there must have been 25 to 30 words on either side of the preserved fragment, which has a height of 10.1 cm, while 28 words are missing between the preserved parts of recto and verso, suggests that the space needed for the missing text must have been around 10 cm high. If one adds the height of the preserved fragment (10.1 cm), plus 5 cm for each of the upper and lower margins (cf. the fact that the right margin of the recto and the left margin of the verso each measure 5 cm), it could then be deduced that the original folio was c. 30 cm high, which is the typical height of a papyrus scroll in the 5th and 6th centuries CE. The width of the folio can also be calculated. Since roughly half of each line and a left-hand or a right-hand margin, respectively, of 5 cm is preserved on both sides of the 10.8 cm-wide fragment, the original leaf must have been around 22 cm wide. The codex, therefore, measured around 30 × 22 cm, which is a perfectly normal size for the papyrus codices of that time²⁴.

²⁴ On the size of papyrus codices in this period, see E.G. TURNER, *The Typology of the Early Codex (Haney Foundation Series 18)*. Philadelphia 1977, 13–34, esp. 14–22. The format of our codex corresponds to Turner's Group 3 (32/31 × ca. 23/21 cm).

What follows is a reconstruction of the leaf containing our fragment. It should be borne in mind that the allocation of the lost text to each line has a hypothetical character. We print in bold the text contained in the present fragment.

Recto

Verso

Ep. 1970

[ὠφελοῖντο ἐκεῖνοι,]
[ἀλλὰ καὶ κακῶς ἀπα-]
[γορεύσειαν τοὺς]
[μεγίστων στεφάνων]
[ἀξίους καὶ πάντως]
[καὶ παρὰ Θεοῦ κηρυ-]
[χθησομένους καὶ]
1 [παρὰ τοῖς σ[υν]ε-]
2 [τοῖς ἀπο]δοχῆς
3 [ἀξιοθ]ησομένους
4 [γενν]αίως φερέ-
5 [τωσα]ν οἱ σωφρο-
6 [νισταὶ τ]ῶν κακῶν
7 [καὶ λυπ]εῖσθωσαν
8 [μὴ τὰ κα]θ' ἑαυτοὺς
9 [ἐννοοῦν]τες ὅτι
10 [οὐδὲν ἔ]τερον
11 [ἢ τὸ δοκεῖν] μι-
[ροὺς περιγέγο-]
[νεν, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς]
[ἐκείνων διαστρο-]
[φῆς καὶ μιαρίας,]
[ὅτι ἀνίατα οὕτω]
[νοσοῦσιν, ὥς καὶ]
[τοὺς ἰατροὺς κα-]
[κηγορεῖν].

Ep. 1971

[Ἐνέτυχόν ποτε]
[ἱστορίᾳ Περσικῇ]
[τοιαῦτά τινα]
[περιεχούση, ὅτι]
[οἱ παῖδες ἐμάνθανον]
[μὲν μηδὲν ψεύδος]
[μήτε ἀκούειν]
12 **μήτ**[ε λέγειν μηδὲ]
13 **τὸ συμφέ**[ρον δίκαιον, ἀλλὰ]
14 **τὸ δίκαιον** [ἡγεῖσθαι]
15 **συμφέρον** [*vacat*]
16 **καὶ τὸ διδόν**[αι τοῦ]
17 **λαμβάνε**[ιν εἶναι λυσι-]
18 **τελέστε**[ρον ὅτε δ']
19 **ἡμελλο**[ν εἰς ἄνδρας]
20 **τελέσει**[ν ὥμνιον ὄρκον ὀλί-]
21 **[γ]α μὲν** [κομιδῇ περιέχοντα]
[ῥημάτια, μεγίστην δὲ δύναμιν]
[ἔχοντα ῥημάτια καὶ ὑπὲρ]
[πάσας τὰς τῶν Ἑλλήνων]
[φιλοσοφίας. Ὡμνυε γὰρ]
[ἕκαστος ὡς «ἐγὼ κατα-]
[φρονήσω μὲν αἰὲ παντὸς]
[κέρδους πονηροῦ, κατα-]
[φρονήσω δὲ ἡδονῆς σώματος,]
καταφρονήσω δὲ δόξης κενῆς]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Facundus of Hermiana, *Pro defensione trium capitulorum*, ed. PL 67 (Paris 1865), 571–574.
- Isidore of Pelusium, *Ἐπιστολῶν βιβλία πέντε εἰς τὴν ἑρμηνείαν τῆς θείας γραφῆς* [*Epistolōn biblia pente eis tēn hermēneian tēs theias graphēs*], ed. PG 78 (Paris 1860), 177–1048.
- Isidore de Péluse, *Lettres* 1214–1413, ed. P. ÉVIEUX, Isidore de Péluse, tome 1 (SC 422). Paris 1997.
- Isidore de Péluse, *Lettres* 1414–1700, ed. P. ÉVIEUX, Isidore de Péluse, tome 2 (SC 454). Paris 2000.
- Isidore de Péluse, *Lettres* 1701–2000, ed. P. ÉVIEUX – N. VINEL, Isidore de Péluse, tome 3 (SC 586). Paris 2017.
- Joseph Bryennios, *Epistulae*, ed. N.B. TOMADAKES, Ἐκ τῆς βυζαντινῆς ἐπιστολογραφίας. Ἰωσήφ μοναχοῦ τοῦ Βρυεννίου ἐπιστολαὶ λ' καὶ αἱ πρὸς αὐτὸν γ' [Ek tēs byzantinēs epistolographias. Iōsēph monachou tou Bryenniou epistolai 30 kai hai pros auton 3]. *EEBS* 46 (1983–1986) 283–362.
- Photius, *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, ed. B. LAOURDAS – L.G. WESTERINK, Photii patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistulae et Amphilochia, vol. 2. Leipzig 1984.
- Suda* (Suidae Lexicon), ed. A. ADLER, 4 vols. (*Lexicographi Graeci* 1.1–1.4). Stuttgart 1928–1935 (3rd reprint: Munich – Leipzig 2001).

SECONDARY LITERATURE

- G.J.M. BARTELINK, Observations stylistiques et linguistiques chez Isidore de Péluse. *Vigiliae Christianae* 18 (1964) 163–180.
- S. BERKMÜLLER, Schriftauslegung und Bildgebrauch bei Isidor von Pelusium. Berlin – Boston 2020.
- H. CANCIK – H. SCHNEIDER (ed.), Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike, Band 5. Stuttgart – Weimar 1998.
- G. CAVALLO, Ricerche sulla maiuscola biblica. Florence 1966.
- G. CAVALLO – H. MAEHLER, Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period: A.D. 300–800. London 1987.
- A. DIHLE, Greek and Latin literature of the Roman Empire from Augustus to Justinian (transl. M. MALZAHN). London 2013.
- A. DÜREN, Die Rezeption des Demosthenes von den Anfängen bis ins 17. Jh. Bonn 2014.
- P. ÉVIEUX, Isidore de Péluse. La numérotation des lettres dans la tradition manuscrite. *Revue d'Histoire des Textes* 5 (1975) 45–72.
- P. ÉVIEUX, Isidore de Péluse (*Théologie Historique* 99). Paris 1995.
- C.M. FOUSKAS, Saint Isidore of Pelusium, his Life and his Works. Athens 1970.
- C. HAAS, Isidorus of Pelusium, in: Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity, ed. O. Nicholson, vol. 1. Oxford 2018, 792.
- C. JONES, Isidore de Péluse en son temps. *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 159, 3 (2015) 1289–1300.
- K. LAKE, Further Notes on the Mss of Isidore of Pelusium. *The Journal of Theological Studies* 6 (1905) 270–282.
- L.I. LARSEN, The Letter Collection of Isidore of Pelusium, in: Late Antique Letter Collections: A Critical Introduction and Reference Guide, ed. C. Sogno – B.K. Storin – E.J. Watts. Oakland, California 2017, 286–308.
- F. LEONTE, Didacticism in Byzantine Epistolography, in: A Companion to Byzantine Epistolography, ed. A. Riehle. Leiden – Boston 2020, 227–254.
- H. LOEBENSTEIN, Vom „Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer“ zur Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. 100 Jahre Sammeln, Bewahren, Edieren, in: P.Rain.Cent. Vienna 1983, 3–39.
- E.R. LUJÁN, A Quotation of Menander's Georgos in a Letter by Isidorus Pelusiota. *Philologus* 145 (2001) 352–353.
- J. QUASTEN, Patrology, vol. 3: The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon. Westminster 1950.
- A. RIEHLE, Letters and New Philology, in: A Companion to Byzantine Epistolography, ed. A. Riehle. Leiden – Boston 2020, 466–501.
- J. ROOSE, A Commentary on the 646th Letter of Isidore of Pelusium with a Brief Introduction, Critical Edition and Translation. *Byz.* 91 (2021) 305–352.
- D. RUNIA, Philo of Alexandria in Five Letters of Isidore of Pelusium. *Studia Philonica Annual* 3 (1991) 295–319.
- R. SEIDER, Paläographie der griechischen Papyri, II: Literarische Papyri. Stuttgart 1970.
- M. SMITH, The Manuscript Tradition of Isidore of Pelusium, *The Harvard Theological Review* 47 (1954) 205–210.
- D. STRATOUDAKI-WHITE, Patriarch Photios of Constantinople: His Life, Scholarly Contributions, and Correspondence together with a Translation of Fifty-two of his Letters. Brookline, Mass. 1981.
- M. TOCA, The Greek Manuscript Reception of Isidore of Pelusium's Epistolary Corpus. *Biblische Notizen* 175 (2017) 133–143.
- M. TOCA – J. LEEMANS, The Authority of a «Quasi-Bishop»: Patronage and Networks in the Letters of Isidore of Pelusium, in: Episcopal Networks in Late Antiquity: Connection and Communication across Boundaries (*Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte* 137), ed. C.A. Cvetković – P. Gemeinhardt. Berlin – Boston, Mass. 2019, 83–100.
- U. TREU, Isidore of Pelusium and the Grammaticus Ophelius. *Studia Patristica* 32 (1997) 376–379.
- C.H. TURNER, The Letters of Saint Isidore of Pelusium. *The Journal of Theological Studies* 6 (1904) 70–86.

E.G. TURNER, *The Typology of the Early Codex (Haney Foundation Series 18)*. Philadelphia 1977.

FIGURES

Figure 1: P.Vindob. G 19923 Recto, published with the kind permission of the Austrian National Library ©.

Figure 2: P.Vindob. G 19923 Verso, published with the kind permission of the Austrian National Library ©.