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## Fragments of an Unknown Passion of St. Theodoret of Antioch in a Late Antique Greek Parchment\*

*with 1 plate*

**ABSTRACT:** This article presents the first edition of an unpublished fragmentary Greek parchment housed in the Papyrus Collection of the Austrian National Library. The fragment, dated to the sixth century, contains portions of the *Passion of St. Theodoret of Antioch*, who was martyred in 362 CE during the reign of Emperor Julian the Apostate. The discovery of this Viennese text is of considerable significance, since no account of Theodoret's martyrdom was previously known to predate the 10th–11th century CE. Moreover, the version of the passion preserved in this parchment appears to be otherwise unattested and is not represented in the medieval manuscript tradition.

**KEYWORDS:** Theodoret of Antioch; martyrdom; passion; unattested version; manuscript tradition; parchment; Egypt (Arsinoite or Herakleopolite nome)

### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PARCHMENT

The parchment P.Vindob. G 19912 is medium brown and consists of three distinct fragments, broken on all sides, with small wormholes scattered throughout. The script appears on the flesh side, while the hair side remains blank. The first fragment measures 6.2 × 6.2 cm. Although broken on all sides, parts of the original left margin are preserved (0.6–0.9 cm), while the other margins are entirely lost. The second and third fragments are also in very poor condition, broken on all sides, and measure 5.1 × 4.3 cm (fr. 2) and 5.2 × 6.2 cm (fr. 3) respectively. The line spacing is approximately 0.3 cm. There are no signs of punctuation or any other diacritical signs. As neither the upper nor the lower margin has been preserved, it is not possible to determine the original height of the leaf from which the fragments originate.

The parchment appears to have been in better condition when it first entered the Vienna Collection. In his handwritten inventory journal of the Papyrus Collection of the Austrian National Library, K. Wessely notes that the text originally consisted of two (not three!) fragments and provides a more complete version of the fourth line of the first fragment: ]εκελευεν αυτουε[. In its current state, the parchment preserves only εκελευσεν αυτ[, indicating that a small piece containing three letters broke off over time. Regarding the different number of fragments, one possible explanation is that Wessely believed the second and third fragments originally belonged together, preserving parts of the same lines, and therefore counted them as a single fragment. However, this is not the case, as the first half of the second fragment seems to contain a dialogue between Theodoret and his persecutor before his passion, whereas the first half of the third fragment already describes the saint's martyrdom. Unfortunately, the exact extent of the text missing between the second and third fragment cannot be determined.

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\* We wish to thank the University of Athens (Research Programme NKUA, ELKE 20049 [Katapisteuma K. A. Tsankada]) for financial support which allowed us to study the original parchment in Vienna. We would also like to express our gratitude to Prof. Bernhard Palme for granting permission to publish this text, and to Dr. Karen Symonds for proofreading the English of this paper.

## PROVENANCE AND DATE OF THE PARCHMENT

Although the text itself provides no indication of its provenance, K. Wessely notes in his handwritten inventory kept in the Austrian National Library, that the parchment is part of the 1883 acquisition (“ex 1883”), i.e. the so-called first batch of finds from modern-day Fayum (‘erster Fayumer Fund’), which includes papyri and parchments from the ancient Arsinoite and Heracleopolite nomes<sup>1</sup>.

Wessely dates the parchment to the sixth or seventh century CE, and the palaeographic features of the text further support this attribution, although we consider a date in the sixth century to be more likely. The text is written in a trained literary hand, characterized by uniformity and experience in crafting literary works, though it is not entirely free from errors, as evidenced by two spelling mistakes in lines 2 and 17. A distinctive feature of this hand is the shape of the ε (and occasionally the σ), which includes an additional dot in the upper right part (see ll. 2–5, 10, 12, 18, 19, 21–23). The script shares many characteristics with biblical scripts found in papyri and parchments from the period, particularly with the so-called *maiuscula biblica*; cf. P.Amh. 192 (*LXX, Deuteronomy*; G. CAVALLO – H. MAEHLER, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period: A.D. 300–800*. London 1987, pl. 8e; mid-6<sup>th</sup> cent. CE); PSI inv. 535 (*Oration on Christ’s Passio?*; G. CAVALLO – H. MAEHLER, pl. 19c; 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 5<sup>th</sup> cent. CE); P.Vindob. G. 36102 (*John 4, 9, 12*; G. CAVALLO, *Ricerche sulla maiuscula biblica*. Florence 1966, pl. 105; 6<sup>th</sup> cent. CE); P.Berol. inv. 5015 (= F. BLASS, *Fragmente griechischer Handschriften im Königlichen Ägyptischen Museum zu Berlin, Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 19 [1881] 23–24, no. 13 [*TrGF* 2 677, ed. R. KANNICHT – B. SNELL]) (*Tragedy?*; photo in [https://berlpap.smb.museum/Original/P\\_05015\\_V\\_3\\_001.jpg](https://berlpap.smb.museum/Original/P_05015_V_3_001.jpg) [accessed: 26.12.2025]; 6<sup>th</sup> cent. CE); BKT VI 2.2 = P. Berol. Inv. 6789 (*The Shepherd of Hermas, Similitudines VIII 1, 1–12*; photo in [https://berlpap.smb.museum/Original/P\\_06789\\_R\\_001.jpg](https://berlpap.smb.museum/Original/P_06789_R_001.jpg) [accessed: 26.12.2025]; late 5<sup>th</sup>–early 6<sup>th</sup> cent. CE); P.Berol. inv. 21344 (= W. M. BRASHEAR, *Vier neue Texte zum antiken Bildungswesen. Archiv für Papyrusforschung und Verwandte Gebiete* 40 (1994) 34–35, no. 4) (*Christian Writing Exercise*; photo in <https://berlpap.smb.museum/04528> [accessed: 26.12.2025]; 7<sup>th</sup> cent. CE).

## CHARACTER AND CONTENT OF THE TEXT

The literary nature of the text is evident from both its content and the scribe’s skilled handwriting (see above). Despite their poor state of preservation, it is clear that the fragments narrate a story involving a certain Theodoretus, explicitly mentioned in fragments 2 and 3. Many words found in the text strongly suggest that the parchment recounts the passion of a saint; including the following: δήμιος (“public executioner”, l. 5), ἀποθνήσκω (“to die”, l. 12), τάττομαι (“to settle”, “to agree upon”, and later “to promise”, l. 12), οὐρανός (“heaven”, l. 13), σχοινίον (“rope”, l. 17), τὰ μέλη τοῦ μάρτυρος (“limbs of the martyr”, l. 18), νεῦρον (“tendon”, l. 19). This impression is further reinforced by the use of direct speech, a characteristic feature of Passions; cf. the following passages of the present text: ll. 1–2: ἀποκρίνομε (l. -αι), l. 2: εὐχόμε[νος, l. 11: ὁ Θεοδώρητος εἶπε[ν, l. 12: μή?] ἀπόθανε, l. 22: ὁ Θε[ο]δώρητος εἶπε[ν, l. 23: καὶ εἶπ[έ]ν σοι ἐπιγνῶ[ναι]. The repeated mention of the name Theodoretus, along with the similarities—discussed in the commentary below—between the preserved sections of this parchment and the published Passions of Theodoret of Antioch, suggests that the Vienna parchment contains passages from a Passion of this saint. The present account of Theodoret’s martyrdom appears not to have been previously attested or preserved in any known medieval manuscript (see below).

<sup>1</sup> 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. 4–6.

## ST. THEODORET OF ANTIOCH'S MARTYRDOM

In his *Ecclesiastical History* (V 7–11), Sozomen mentions Theodoret among the martyrs and confessors who suffered under Emperor Julian the Apostate (361–363 CE). St. Theodoret's martyrdom took place in Antioch at the hands of the emperor Julian's maternal uncle, also named Julian, who served as *Comes Orientis* in 362–363 CE and took harsh measures against Christians in Antioch, including the closure of all churches<sup>2</sup>. Theodoret was a Christian priest (πρεσβύτερος) in that city and, according to Sozomen (*Historia Ecclesiastica* V 8), the keeper of the Church's sacred vessels. He was arrested, brutally tortured, and ultimately decapitated for his Christian faith by order of the *Comes Orientis*, Julian. Theodoret of Cyrhus<sup>3</sup> recounts that after a large part of Apollo's temple in Daphne, a suburb of Antioch, was destroyed by fire, Emperor Julian had the Great Church of Antioch closed, blaming the "orthodox" Christians for the event, and handed it over to the followers of Arius. During this upheaval, *comes* Julian entered the Great Church of Antioch with his associates Felix and Elpidios, stole valuable objects, urinated against the main altar and struck Bishop Euzoius on the jaw when he attempted to intervene. According to Sozomen's version of the story<sup>4</sup>, when *comes* Julian entered the Church, only the priest Theodoret remained to protect the valuable objects. As a result, *comes* Julian ordered that Theodoret be arrested, subjected to torture, and ultimately beheaded<sup>5</sup>. According to the *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, St. Theodoret of Antioch was commemorated on 2 March<sup>6</sup>, and is currently commemorated by the Greek Orthodox Church on 3 March<sup>7</sup>.

If the identification of the present parchment as a testimony to the martyrdom of St. Theodoret is correct, the Viennese text is highly significant, as no accounts of Theodoret's passion were previously known to predate the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century CE (see below). In addition, this new finding proves that this saint of Antioch was also venerated in Egypt and reinforces the view that accounts of martyrdom were highly popular in Byzantine Egypt, as evidenced by various papyri and parchments<sup>8</sup>.

THE LITERARY TRADITION OF GREEK *PASSIONS* OF ST. THEODORET

The *Bibliotheca Graeca* (BHG) records only one Theodoretus and lists three surviving Greek accounts on his *passio*: a) BHG 2424z, b) 2425, c) 2425c<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> On him, see, e.g., W. PORTMANN in: *DNP* 6 (Iul–Lee, Stuttgart – Weimar 1999) 11 s.v. Iulianus/-os 10; *PLRE* 1. A.D. 260–395. Cambridge 1971, 470–471 (s.v. Iulianvs 12).

<sup>3</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica* III 3.4–5, ed. L. PARMENTIER – G. C. HANSEN, Theodoret. Kirchengeschichte (*GCS N.F.* 5). Berlin <sup>3</sup>1998, 188.

<sup>4</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica* V 8.1–2, ed. J. BIDEZ – G. C. HANSEN, Sozomenus. Kirchengeschichte (*GCS N.F.* 4). Berlin <sup>2</sup>1995, 203.

<sup>5</sup> On Theodoret's life and death, see, e.g., W. ENSSLIN in: *RE* 2.10.5 (Thapsos–Thesara. Stuttgart 1934) 1802; B. KÖTTING in: *LThK*<sup>2</sup> 10 (Teufel–Zypern. Freiburg 1965) 32, and H. C. TEITLER, Ammianus, Libanius, Chrysostomus, and the Martyrs of Antioch. *Vigiliae Christianae* 67 (2013) 263–288, esp. 280–282.

<sup>6</sup> *Synaxarium Eccl. CP mensis Martii*, day II 7 (ed. H. DELEHAYE, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* [e codice Sirmondiano nunc Berolinensi] [*Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris*]. Brussels 1902): Τῆ αὐτῆ ἡμέρᾳ μνήμη τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Θεοδορήτου πρεσβυτέρου Ἀντιοχείας (On the same day is the commemoration of our holy father Theodoret, presbyter of Antioch).

<sup>7</sup> For the various dates of St. Theodoret's commemoration recorded in the manuscript tradition, see B. DE GAIFFIER, «Sub Iuliano Apostata» dans le martyrologe romain. *AnBoll* 74 (1956) 5–49, esp. 16, as well as the database *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity from its origins to circa AD 700, across the entire Christian world* (<http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk> [accessed: 26.12.2025]).

<sup>8</sup> On martyrdoms in the papyri, see, e.g., P.Duk.inv. 438 (= P. VAN MINNEN, The Earliest Account of a Martyrdom in Coptic. *AnBoll* 113 [1995] 13–38), P.Mich.inv. 548 (= G. M. BROWNE, The Martyrdom of Paese and Thecla. *Chronique d'Égypte* 49 [1974] 201–205) and PSI I 26.27. See also MPER XVII 78, and A. PAPAConstantinou, Martyres ou martyria? Une relecture de P. Vindob. G 22.683 (MPER XVII 78). *ZPE* 130 (2000) 193–196.

<sup>9</sup> BHG III. Brussels <sup>3</sup>1957, 73, and BHG, *Novum Auctarium*. Brussels 1984, 261.

a) *BHG* 2424z is still unpublished. A. Ehrhard has identified a fragment of a Passion of St. Theodoret, which is distinct from *BHG* 2425 (see below) in a collection dated to 1000 CE and preserved in the Halki Codex 95 (Patriarchal Library, Agia Trias, ff. 107<sup>r</sup>–108<sup>v</sup> [*Diktyon* 33593], 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> cent.)<sup>10</sup>. On this unpublished *passio* and the manuscript Halki Codex 95, see also the entry in *Pinakes*: <https://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/cote/33593/> (accessed 26.12.2025).

b) *BHG* 2425 has already been published by F. Halkin<sup>11</sup>. It is a passion of St. Theodoret, preserved in Patmos manuscript 736 (Monē Agiou Iōannou tou Theologou, fol. 14<sup>r</sup>–25<sup>v</sup> [*Diktyon* 54974], 14<sup>th</sup> century). For more on this Passion and Patmos Cod. 736, see <https://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/cote/54974/> (accessed 26.12.2025).

c) Finally, for the Passion of St. Theodoret *BHG* 2425c, see *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* 503, ll. 19–55 (DELEHAYE), and *Acta Sanctorum Octobris* (ed. J. VAN HECKE – B. BOSSUE – V. DE BUCK – E. CARPENTIER, *Acta Sanctorum Octobris*, vol. 10. Brussels 1861, 32–35, esp. 33).

Accounts of the Passion of St. Theodoret of Antioch have also survived in Latin texts catalogued in the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* (*BHL*)<sup>12</sup>.

The version preserved in the Viennese parchment appears, broadly speaking, to follow the version attested in Halkin's edition (*BHG* 2425), in both content and vocabulary (cf. the line commentary below), despite the difference in length between the two texts. However, the two texts are far from identical: the saint's Passion in our fragments seems to be a summary, whereas *BHG* 2425 apparently offers a fuller account. One possibility is that a priest or a monk produced the present summary in order to incorporate it later into one of his own compositions, possibly a sermon. Unfortunately, the surviving portions of the parchment are too limited to allow us to determine the exact parameters of this summary's production.

<sup>10</sup> A. EHRHARD, Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts. Erster Teil: Die Überlieferung, Bd. 1. Osnabrück 1965, 575 n. 2. Cf. *BHG* Auctarium 2424z.

<sup>11</sup> F. HALKIN, La passion grecque de saint Théodoret d'Antioche (*BHG* 2425), in: F. HALKIN, *Hagiologie byzantine: Textes inédits publiés en grec et traduits en français* (*Subsidia Hagiographica* 71). Brussels 1986, 123–151.

<sup>12</sup> See *BHL* 8074–8076 (= Socii Bollandiani [eds.], *Bibliotheca Hagiographica latina: antiquae et mediae aetatis* [*BHL*]. Brussels 1900–1901, 1169–1170). See also TEITLER, *Martyrs of Antioch*, and P. FRANCHI DE' CAVALIERI, *Passio s. Theodoriti*, in: *Note Agiografiche* 6 (*StT* 33). Rome 1920, 89–101. In the opening remarks of his edition (pp. 59–88), Franchi De' Cavalieri proposes the hypothesis that the Latin *martyria* were based on an alternative Greek source, different from that of Sozomen.

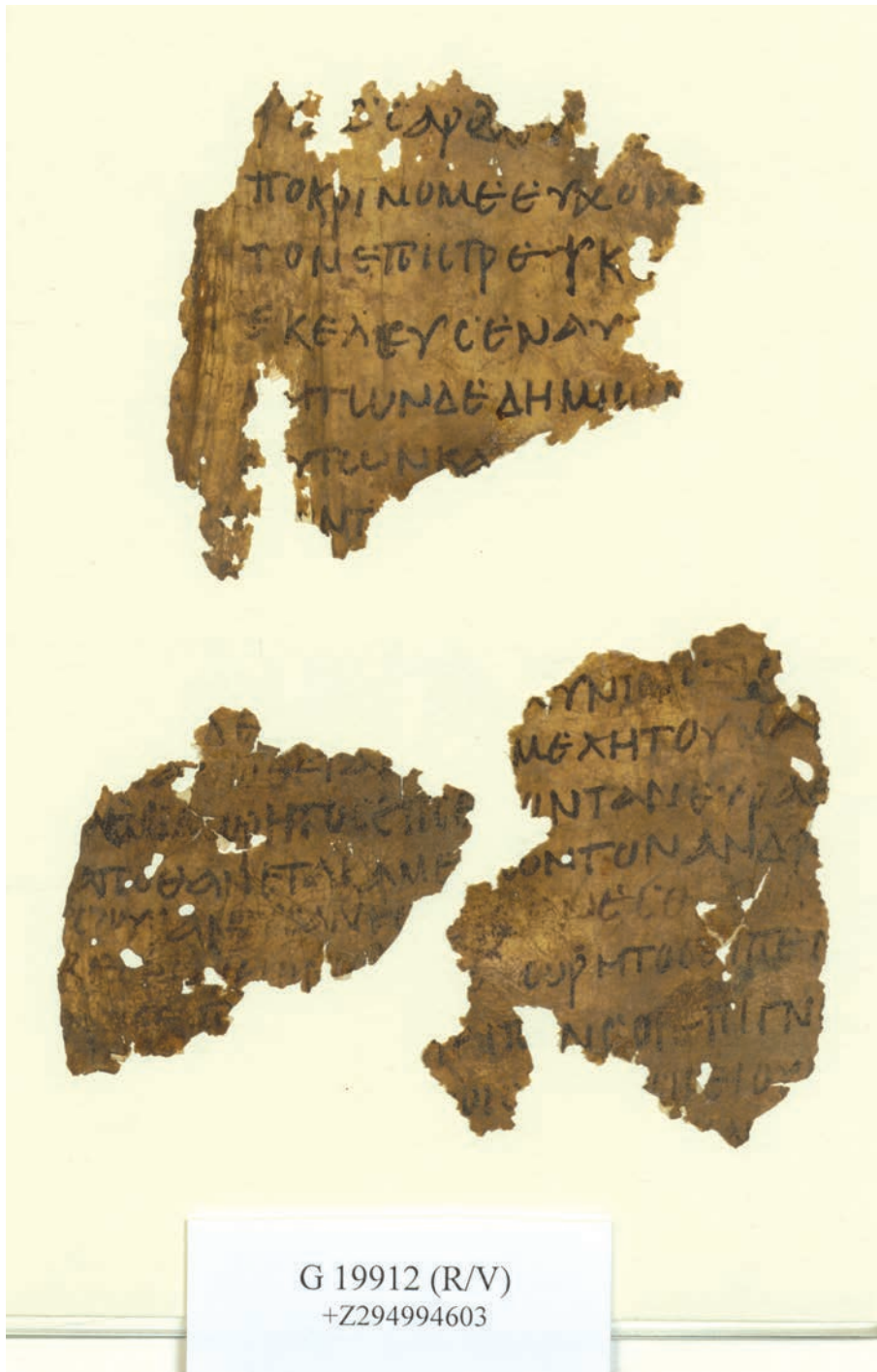


Plate 1: P.Vindob. G 19912  
(enlarged image of the original: 6.2 × 6.2 cm [fr. 1], 5.1 × 4.3 cm [fr. 2], .2 × 6.2 cm [fr. 3])  
(Austrian National Library, Department of Papyri, by courtesy of director Bernhard Palme)

## EDITION OF THE NEW PARCHMENT

P.Vindob. G 19912

6.2 × 6.2 cm (fr. 1), 5.1 × 4.3 cm (fr. 2)

6<sup>th</sup> cent. CE

Arsinoite or Herakleopolite nome

5.2 × 6.2 cm (fr. 3)

Plate 1

## Fr. 1

-----  
 1 [M]αρίας σὰρξ ἐν . ἐ[- - - ἅ-]  
 2 ποκρίνομε εὐχόμε[νος - - -]  
 3 τὸν ἐπιστρέψ<αντα> κε[- - -]  
 4 ἐκέλευσεν αὐτ[ὸν ε - - -]  
 5 μαί. τῶν δὲ δημίῳν [- - -]  
 6 οὐ τῶν κα[- - -]  
 7 ὑ . οντ[- - -]  
 8 ἐ[- - -]  
 -----

## Fr. 2

-----  
 9 [- - - ]δε[- - -]  
 10 [- - - ] . α . θεία κ[- - -]  
 11 [- - - ] ὁ Θεοδώρητος εἶπε[ν - - -]  
 12 [- - - ] ἀπόθανε ταξάμε[νος - - -]  
 13 [- - - εἰς τοῦ]ς οὐρανῶς ἀνήλ[θεν  
 14 [- - - ] βειδ . ενος . [- - -]  
 15 [- - - ]ν . εε . [- - -]  
 16 [- - - ] . [- - -]  
 25 [- - - ]κα . [- - -]

## Fr. 3

-----  
 17 [- - - σ]χνίοις πε . [- - -]  
 18 [- - - τὰ] μέλη τοῦ μάρ[τυρος - - -]  
 19 [- - - διέσυρ]ον τὰ νεῦρα ε[- - -]  
 20 [- - - ]ων τὸν ἄνδρα [- - -]  
 21 [- - - ] . γενέσθαι . . [- - -]  
 22 [- - - ὁ Θε]ο[δ]ώρητος εἶπε[ν - - -]  
 23 [- - - κ]αὶ εἶπ[έ]ν σοι ἐπιγνώ[- - -]  
 24 [- - - ]οισ[ . . . ]ισιγ, εἰ οὐκ[

1-2 l. ἀποκρίνομαι 17 l. σχοίνους

## TRANSLATION

## FR. 1

... flesh of Mary ... and I respond by wishing that ... the one who returned ... and ordered him ... while the executioners ...

## FR. 2

... Theodoret said ... die, settling ... ascended to heaven ...

## FR. 3

... with ropes ... the limbs of the martyr ... they were pulling the tendons ... the man... to become ... Theodoret said ... and told you to come to know (?) ... if not ...

## COMMENTARY

## FR. 1

**1** Μ]αρίας σάρξ: The phrase “flesh of Mary,” i.e. the Virgin Mary, refers to Jesus Christ himself. Jesus is often referred to periphrastically by reference to his mother, the Virgin Mary; cf., e.g., Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* III 12, 4 (ed. PARMENIER–HANSEN 189): ἐν ὁποίοις σκεύεσιν ὑπηρετεῖται ὁ Μαρίας υἱός. From a palaeographic perspective, the letter ξ is oddly shaped. However, other restorations (e.g., μι]αρίας Σαρδανα[π]ά[λου; cf. Zonaras, *Epitome historiarum* XII 14 [ed. L. DINDORF, *Ioannis Zonarae epitome historiarum*, vol. 3. Leipzig 1870, 119, 4–6]: διὰ ταῦτα ἐμυσήθη ὑπὸ πάντων ὁ Σαρδανάπαλος, μὴ στεγόντων τὰς μιαρίας καὶ αἰσχροπαθείας αὐτοῦ) do not offer a better palaeographic solution or provide a more coherent interpretation.

**1–2** [ἀ]ποκρίνομε εὐχόμε[νος]: The first-person singular suggests direct speech rather than narration. Instead of [ἀ]ποκρίνομε, one could also consider the restoration [ὕ]ποκρίνομε, although this seems less likely to us. On ἀποκρίνομαι, cf. *Passio sancti Theodoretii Antiocheni* (BHG 2425) 7, ll. 13–16 (ed. HALKIN): παῖξαι ἠβουλήθης, οὐ | κολάσαι, δικαστά, ἀποκρίνασθαι, τὴν τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς καταμα|λάξαι στερρότητα τῇ βραχεῖα ταύτῃ ὡς ἔοικεν ὑπειληφῶς | παιδιᾷ; 8.38–40: καὶ ὁ Θεοδώρητος: «Περὶ τούτου δέδωκά σοι πρὸ | μικροῦ τὴν ἀπόκρισιν· καὶ νῦν οὐκ ἦν εἰκὸς περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν | καὶ πάλιν σοι διαλέγεσθαι κτλ. Cf. also *Passio sanctorum Leontii, Hypatii, Theoduli et sociorum* (BHG 986a) 11, ll. 11–13 (ed. F. HALKIN, *Passion et miracle posthume de Saint Léonce, martyr à Tripoli en Phénicie*. *AnBoll* 82 [1964] 322–340): ἐπὶ πολὺ δὲ ξεομένου τοῦ | μακαρίου Λεοντίου καὶ μηδὲν ὄλως ἀποκρινόμενου αὐτοῦ | εἰ μὴ μόνον εὐχομένου καὶ λέγοντος.

**3** τόν: On the reading of ν instead of μ, cf. the ν in [ἀ]ποκρίνομε (l. 1–2).

ἐπιστρέψ<αντα>: We suggest this restoration based on the presence of τόν at the beginning of the line. For the use of ἐπιστρέφω in an early Christian context, cf., e.g., *Acta Joannis* (ed. T. ZAHN, *Acta Joannis*. Erlangen 1880, 67, ll. 4–6): καὶ ζητεῖ σε θανατῶσαι. καὶ εὐθέως ἐξῆλθον καὶ κατεδίωξέν | με ἕως ἔξω τῆς πόλεως, καὶ οὐκέτι ἔασέν με ἐπιστρέψαι, | λέγων πρὸς με; *Martyrium sanctorum Carpi, Papyli et Agathonicae* (BHG 294) 5, ll. 29–30 (H. DELEHAYE, *Les Actes des martyrs de Pergame*. *AnBoll* 58 [1940] 158–176): καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις συνανεστράφη καὶ ἐδίδαξεν ἡμᾶς, | ὥστε ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ τῶν ματαίων εἰδώλων καὶ γινώσκειν αὐτόν. In the version of Theodoret’s Martyrdom published by Halkin, the verb ἐπιστρέφω appears only in 11, ll. 8–10: ἐκείνου δὲ μηδὲ μικρὸν τῆς τούτου ἐπιστρεφο|μένου δεήσεως, ἔμενεν οὗτος περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν καὶ πάλιν μετὰ | θερμότερας ἀξιῶν παρακλήσεως.

**4** ἐκέλευσεν αὐτ[ὸν ε - -]: As previously mentioned, in Wessely’s handwritten inventory this passage is written as follows: ]εκελευσεναντονε[. In the current state of the fragment, we can only read the first two letters of αὐτόν and some traces of the τ. It is likely that αὐτ[όν], as the object of κελεύω, refers to one of the executioners who tortured Theodoret upon receiving the order from Julian; cf. *Passio sancti Theodoretii Antiocheni* 4, ll. 12–15 (ed. HALKIN): ταύτην οὐκ ἐνεγκὼν τὴν παρρησίαν, τύπτεισθαι κατὰ τὰ στέρνα τὸν ἅγιον ὁ σκηπτῶν μυρίων ἐκέλευσεν κτλ. The verb κελεύω is frequently attested in Martyrdom accounts, cf. *Acta et martyrium Apollonii* 11 (H. MUSURILLO, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*. Oxford 1972, 90–104): καὶ μεθ’ ἡμέρας τρεῖς ἐκέλευσεν αὐτὸν ἀχθῆναι; *Acta Joannis* 144, ll. 14–17 (ZAHN): ἀκούσας δὲ ταῦτα ὁ ἀνθύπατος περὶ | Ἰωάννου ἐκέλευσεν αὐτὸν ἀσφαλῶς κρατηθῆναι καὶ ἐνεχθῆναι | καὶ ἄλλα δέρματα ὑγρὰ καὶ θηρία θανατικά, ὅπως τῇ τιμωρίᾳ | Σωσιπάτρου καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην ὑποβάλλῃ ὡς συνίστορα αὐτοῦ; *Martyrium Petri* 36, ll. 12–13 (ed. L. VOUAUX, *Les actes de Pierre*. Paris 1922, 398–466): ἀπήγαγον τῷ Ἀγρίππᾳ. Κἀκεῖνος διὰ τὴν νόσον αὐτοῦ ἐπ’ αἰτία | ἀθεότητος ἐκέλευσεν αὐτὸν σταυρωθῆναι. The verb is also common

in the New Testament, cf. *Matthew* 18.25: ἐκέλευσεν αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος παραθῆναι καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἔχει; *Luke* 18.40: σταθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐκέλευσεν αὐτὸν ἀχθῆναι πρὸς αὐτόν. For evidence from documentary papyri, cf., e.g., P.Cair.Isid. 64.11–13 (298 CE): καὶ ἐκέ[λ]ευσεν αὐτὸν ἅπαντα τὰ καταλιφθέντα (l. -λει-) ὑπὸ τ[ο]ῦ ἡμῶν πατρὸς ταῦτα ἡμῖν | πα[ρ]ασχεῖν.

**5** τῶν δὲ δημίωv: For the form of ω in δημίωv, cf. the same letter in τῶν in ll. 5 and 6. The word δήμιος (“public executioner”) in the plural is primarily attested in Martyrdom accounts. It appears five times in Theodoret’s *Passio* cf. 3, ll. 34–35 (ed. HALKIN): ὡς γὰρ χερσὶ δημίωv δοθεὶς νυκτὸς | τὴν ἐπὶ θάνατον ἤγετο, μετὰπεμπτος αὐτίκα γίνεται τῷ δικάζοντι; 5, ll. 35–37: ἀλλ’ ἀχθήτω, ἔφη στραφεὶς πρὸς τοὺς | δημίους, κόντος; 7, ll. 21–22: τὰς μὲν τῶν δημίωv ὁ δικάζων χεῖρας ἰστᾶ τῆς εἰς τὸ κολάζειν ὀρμῆς; 8.3–4: καὶ οἱ δήμιοι ἔτοιμοι; 8, ll. 22–24: θυμοῦ πλησθεὶς ἐπὶ τοῖς παρὰ τῶν δημίωv | λεγομένοις ὁ Ἰουλιανός, τὸν διὰ θαλάττης τούτοις ἐπεψηφίσαστο θάνατον. On parallels from other Martyrdom accounts, cf., e.g., Symeon Metaphrastes, *Martyrium decem martyrum qui in Creta passi sunt* (BHG 1197). PG 572.51–56: τῶν δὲ δημίωv | μετὰ τὴν τελείωσιν ὑποχωρησάντων, τῶν συγγενῶν | αὐτοῖς τινες, περὶ τὸν τόπον ὑπολειφθέντες τὰ ἱερὰ | τούτων λείψανα περιστέλλουσί τε τιμίως καὶ κατατίθενται; *Vita sancti Mamantis* 17, ll. 8–9 (ed. A. BERGER, Die alten Viten des Heiligen Mamas von Kaisareia. Mit einer Edition der Vita BHG 1019. *AnBoll* 120 [2002] 280–308): τῶν δὲ δημίωv ἐπὶ πλεῖον ξεόντων αὐτόν, ὁ Μάμας | ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐστέναξεν καὶ εἶπεν; *Passio sancti Agathonici martyris et sociorum* (BHG 40) 8, l. 15 (ed. G. VAN HOOFF, Acta sancti Agathonici martyris et sociorum, nunc primum edita ex codice Leidensi. *AnBoll* 2 [1883] 99–115): τῶν δὲ δημίωv τάχει πολλῶ τὸ κελευσθὲν ποιησάντων, ἐτελειώθησαν; *Passio sancti Hieronis et sociorum* XXXII (e cod. Marc. 349) (BHG 749) 10, ll. 23–28 (H. DELEHAYE, Acta Sanctorum [Novemberis], vol. 3. Brussels 1910, 329–335): τῶν δὲ δημίωv | τὸ κελευσθὲν ἀποπληροῦντων καὶ ἐπὶ πολλαῖς | ὥραις τοὺς ἀγίους κατακλιζόντων κτλ. For occurrences of the term in papyrus documents, cf. SB XII 15723.2–3 (late 6<sup>th</sup> cent. CE): καὶ Φοιβάμμων | δήμιος.

**6** οὐ: A genitive ending in -ου is also possible. There is no room for [τ]ούτων.

## FR. 2

**10** ] . α . . θεία κ[: Several possibilities may be considered for the restoration of this passage, for example: ] . ἄληθεία κ[ (cf. *Passio sancti Theodoreti Antiocheni* 6.2–3 [ed. HALKIN]: ἐπ’ ἀληθείας, εἶπεν, ὦ | δικαστά, τοῖς σοῖς ἐπίσης ἀνοηταίνεις θεοῖς); ] . ἄνω θεία κ[ (cf. *Historia Alexandri, Rec. Byzantina poetica* [cod. Marc. 408], ed. S. REICHMANN, Das byzantinische Alexandergedicht nach dem codex Marcianus 408 herausgegeben [*Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* 13]. Meisenheim am Glan 1963] 3940: τὴν ἄνω θείαν Πρόνοιαν χάριτας ἀπονέμω); ] . α βοηθεία κ[ (cf. *Passio sancti Theodoreti Antiocheni* [BHG 2425] 8.5–6 [ed. HALKIN]: ἀλλ’ ὁ νοῦς οὐκ εἶχε κάμνειν τῷ μάρτυρι οὔτε μὴν τὸ | στόμα σιγᾶν· ἐπεκάλει τόδε τὴν ἄνω βοήθειαν); ] ἢ ἄνω θεία κ[ηδεμονία (cf. Theodoretus, *Historia ecclesiastica* III 12, 4 [ed. PARMENTIER–HANSEN 189, ll. 9–10]: φάναι δὲ λέγεται ὡς ἔρημα τὰ Χριστιανῶν τῆς θείας ὑπάρχει κηδεμονίας).

**11** ὁ Θεοδώρητος εἶπε[v: This passage, along with l. 22: ὁ Θε]ο[δ]ώρητος εἶπε[v, is fundamental for identifying the text, as it appears to introduce the words of St. Theodoret during his martyrdom. The name of the saint may also have appeared a few lines later; cf. *Passio sancti Theodoreti Antiocheni* 4, ll. 5–6 (ed. HALKIN): καὶ ὁ ἅγιος· «Ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι, φησίν, | Θεοδώρητος κτλ.».

**12** ] ἀπόθανε: The form ἀπόθανε appears to be an imperative; cf. Antonius, *Vita Symeonis Stylitae Senioris* 7 (ed. H. LIETZMANN, Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites [*Texte und Untersuchungen* 32.4]. Leipzig 1908, 28, l. 1): ἀλλαχοῦ ἄπελθε καὶ ἀπόθανε χωρὶς ἡμῶν. It is possible that a negation

(μή) preceded the verb, yielding the meaning “do not die”. The present line may have involved the *comes* urging Theodoret to avoid execution and promising him certain rewards. Most likely, this appeal involved urging him to renounce the Christian faith. For *comes* Julian’s attempt to change Theodoret’s mind, cf. *Passio sancti Theodoretī Antiocheni* 2, ll. 29–33 (ed. HALKIN): ἔνθεν καὶ ὄλον ἀσεβείας σκευασάμενος | κυκεῶνα, θολερὰν ἐρεῖ τις ἄλλος ἀνατροπήν, ἐκροφήσαι | ταύτην μετακληθέντα ἐπιτρέπει τὸν ἅγιον, ἐκστῆσαι τῆς αὐτὸν | φρενούσης ὑγιούσ βουλόμενος πίστεως καὶ πρὸς τὸ οἰκεῖον | χοιρῶδες ἀθέσμως ἀλλοιώσασθαι θρήσκευμα.

ταξάμε[νος: On the use of the verb τάπτω in a religious context, cf. *Evangelium Nicodemi* (*Recensio M 3*) II 2i, ll. 1–5 (ed. R. GOUNELLE, *Les recensions Byzantines de l’évangile de Nicodème* [*Corpus Christianorum. Series Apocryphorum, Instrumenta* 3]. Turnhout 2008, 187–321): διὰ τῆς | χάριτος τοῦ ἐλεήμονος Χριστοῦ καὶ τῆς | αὐτοῦ μητρὸς ὅπερ ἐτάξατο αὐτὸν ἠξιώθη ἐν | τούτῳ.

**13** εἰς τοῦ]ς οὐρανοῦς ἀνῆλ[θεν: Similar phrases occur in passion narratives when describing the martyr’s ascension to heaven; cf. *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopoleos, Synaxarium mensis Aprilii*, day 27, l. 14 (DELEHAYE): κάκειθεν εἰς οὐρανοῦς πρὸς τὸν ποθοῦμενον αὐτῷ σωτήρα ἐπανῆλθε. The present passage does not concern the death of Theodoret—who, in any case, has not yet died—but rather refers to the resurrection of Christ. For a comparable passage, cf. *Passio sancti Theodoretī Antiocheni* (BHG 2425) 6, ll. 10–14 (ed. HALKIN): ναί, φησί, τοῦτόν σοι τιμᾶν αὐτὸν ὑποτίθεμαι. | τὸ δ’ ἐξῆς, πῶς ἐκὼν ὑπεκράτησας ὅτι ὁ σταυρωθεὶς οὗτος | καὶ θανὼν καὶ ταφείς καὶ ἀνέστη καὶ ἀνελήφθη καὶ τῷ αὐτοῦ | συνεδριάζει πατρί, ἦξει δὲ καὶ πάλιν ἐκάστω τῶν πρακτέων | κριτής; ὃν τὸ μὴ σεβασθῆναι ἀσύμφορον τῷ παντί. For the mention of “heaven” by Theodoret, cf. *Passio sancti Theodoretī Antiocheni* (BHG 2425) 8, ll. 6–8 (ed. HALKIN): ἐπεκάλει τότε τὴν ἄνω βοήθειαν· «Κύριε ὁ | θεός, λέγων, εἰς οὐρανὸν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς | ἀνασχών, ἢ καταφυγή μου, ὁ βοηθός μου and 9.9–10: σοὶ δ’ ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ ἐγγύς καὶ παρὰ πόδας ἦξει ὀργή | ὧς τοῦ θεοῦ ἀφρόνως ἀποσκιρτήσαντι.

ἀνῆλ[θεν: Only a minimal trace of λ, from the upper part of the letter, remains visible.

## FR. 3

**17–19** σ]χνίους πε. [ | τὰ] μέλη τοῦ μάρ[τυρος | διέσυρ]ον τὰ νεῦρα ε[: This passage describes the martyrdom; cf. *Passio sancti Theodoretī Antiocheni* (BHG 2425) 5, ll. 37–41 (ed. HALKIN): τῶν δὲ σπουδαίως περανάντων τὸ | κελυσθὲν καὶ τῷ ξύλῳ ἀπλωσάντων τὸν ἀθλητὴν, τροχοῖς τε | καὶ σχοινίοις τὰ τούτου μέλη μανιωδῶς ἀποτεινάντων ἐπὶ | τοσοῦτον διεσύρη τὰ νεῦρα ὡς διπλάσιον τὸ μῆκος φανῆναι | τὸν ἅγιον; *Vita et martyrium sancti Anastasii Persae* 38 (ed. B. FLUSIN, *Saint Anastase le Perse et l’histoire de la Palestine au début du viie siècle*, vol. 1. Paris 1992, 41–91): οἴτινες ἐλθόντες ἐκέλευσαν ἀχθῆναι ἔξω τοῦ χωρίου Βηθσαλωέ, ἐν ᾧ ὑπῆρχεν ἡ φυλακή, αὐτὸν τε τὸν ἅγιον μάρτυρα καὶ ὡσεὶ ἐβδομήκοντα ἄνδρας παρὰ ποταμὸν καὶ οὕτως ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ ἁγίου μάρτυρος σχοινίοις ἀποπνίζαι ἅπαντας ἐκέλευσαν. These parallels, in which all elements of the present passage are found, confirm that σ]χνίους is a spelling error for σχοινίοις. The present error (σχνίον for σχοινίον) is very common in the documentary papyri of this period. On the interchange of οι and υ in general, cf. F. Th. GIGNAC, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, Vol. I: Phonology. Milano 1975, 197–199.

**17** πε. [: A number of possible restorations can be proposed, including the following: πεδ[ήσαντες (Callistus I Patriarcha, *Vita Gregorii Sinaitae* 16 [ed. H.-V. BEYER, *Kallistos I Patriarch von Konstantinopel, Leben und Wirken unseres unter den Heiligen weilenden Vaters Gregorios’ des Sinaiiten* [*Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geistesgeschichte* 2]. Ekaterinburg 2006, 106–226: ισχυροῖς ἰμάσι καὶ σχοινίοις πεδήσας καὶ τὰς τε χεῖρας καὶ τὸν τράχηλον ἅμα καταδεσμεύσας κλοιοῖς), περ[ιθέντες (Libanius, *Orationes* 22.8: ἅμα σχοινίοις περιθέντες τοῖς ἀνέμοις), περ[ισφίξαντες (Ps.-Jo.

Damascenus, *Vita Barlaam et Joasaph* 6, l. 135 [ed. R. VOLK, *Historia animae utilis de Barlaam et Ioasaph* (*Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* 6.2 / *Patristische Texte und Studien* 60). Berlin – New York 2006, 57]: σχοινίους τε τριγίνους ταῦτα περισφίγγας).

**18** τὰ] μέλη τοῦ μάρ[τυρος: The limbs of Theodoret are mentioned in his *Passio*, as published by Halkin, cf. *Passio sancti Theodoretii Antiocheni* 5, ll. 37–41 (cited above in the note to ll. 17–19). On the restoration μάρ[τυρος, cf. also 12.16–18: οὕτως οὐκ ἔμελλον οἱ λόγοι τοῦ μάρτυρος εἰς μάτην τῶν χειλέων ἐκφέρεσθαι, ἀλλ’ ἐνεργεῖς ὡρῶντο | καὶ ἀληθεῖς, ὡς λόγοι πάντως ζῶντος θεοῦ. The present phrase is frequently attested in different wordings in descriptions of saints’ martyrdoms; cf. Symeon Metaphrastes, *Passio sancti Mercurii* (BHG 1276) 11 (ed. H. DELEHAYE, *Les légendes grecques des saints militaires* [Appendix IX]. Paris 1909 [repr. New York 1975], 243–258): ἐπὶ τούτοις τὸ πεπαρησιασμένον καὶ θαρραλέον τοῦ | μάρτυρος οὐκ ἐνεγκῶν ὁ παρανομώτατος βασιλεύς, θυμῷ μερίσασθαι τοὺς δημίους τὰ μαρτυρικὰ τούτου μέλη προσέταττε καὶ | τοὺς μὲν πλήκτροις τισὶν ὀξυτάτοις τοῦτον κεντεῖν; *Passio sanctorum Acepsimae, Iosephi et Aeithalae* (BHG 19) 39, ll. 8–9 (ed. H. DELEHAYE, *Les versions grecques des actes des martyrs Persans sous Sapor II* [*Patrologia Orientalis* 9 (2.4)]. Paris 1905, 534–546): καταφιλοῦσα μὲν τὰ μαρτυρικὰ μέλη καὶ τούτοις | ἐπιδακρύουσα, ἰχῶρι δὲ τῷ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀποστάζοντι ἑαυτὴν ὑπαλείφουσα; *Miracula xlv sancti Artemii* p. 55, ll. 5–7 (ed. A. PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS, *Varia graeca sacra*. St. Petersburg 1909 [repr. Leipzig 1975], 1–75): ὑπάρχει καὶ λάρναξ ἔχων ἐνδὸν ἀθλητικῶν ἀγωνισμάτων Ἀρτεμίου τοῦ μάρτυρος μέλη τίμια | ἰάσεις χορηγοῦντα.

**19** διέσυρ]ον τὰ νεῦρα: The supplement διέσυρ]ον is based on *Passio sancti Theodoretii Antiocheni* 5, ll. 39–40 (cf. note on ll. 17–19) (ed. HALKIN): ἐπὶ | τοσοῦτον διεσύρη τὰ νεῦρα. However, the restoration ]οντα νεῦρα cannot be entirely ruled out. On the mention of tendons in passion narratives, cf. also *Regula sancti Christoduli* 8, l. 14: καὶ διέσπα τὰ νεῦρα, καὶ τὰς σάρκας διεμερίζετο; *Passio sancti Theodori stratelatae* (BHG 1751) 11, ll. 5–7 (ed. H. DELEHAYE, *Les légendes grecques des saints militaires* [Appendix III]. Paris 1909 [repr. New York 1975], 151–167): ταῦτα δὲ τοῦ ἀγίου πάσχοντος, ὡμῶς τε καὶ ἐπιπολὺ διεσπῶντο | μέλη, διελύετο νεῦρα, ἐξηρθροῦντο χεῖρες, συνεθλῶντο ὀστᾶ | ταῖς τῶν σφαιρῶν βαρεῖαις καταφοραῖς.

**21** γενέσθαι: Almost nothing of γ is preserved, and only minimal ink traces of the first ε remain. Another possibility is to read ἀνέσθ[ and restore ἀνέσθητος (“without clothes”, see *LBG* s.v.; cf. Theodorus Studites, *Epistle* 11.33–34 [ed. G. FATOUROS, *Theodori Studitae Epistulae*, vol. 1 (*CFHB* 31). Berlin 1992, 51–87]: πολυ|κτημόνων τε καὶ ἀνεσθητῶν) or ἀνέσθιος (“without food”, see *LBG* s.v.; cf. Theophanes Metropolitā Peritheorii, *Vita s. Maximi Causocalybitae* 9, ll. 18–19 [ed. F. HALKIN – E. KOURILAS, *Deux Vies de S. Maxime le Kausokalybe ermite au Mont Athos* (XIVe s.). *AnBoll* 54 (1936) 65–109]: αὐτὸς ἐκεῖσε προσεκαρτέρησεν μόνος ἐν νυχθημέροις τρισὶν πάλιν | ἀνέσθιος καὶ μονόχιτος). Both restorations would imply that Theodoret was in poor physical condition as a result of his martyrdom.

**23** ἐπίγνω[ : One should restore a form of the verb ἐπιγνώσκω (e.g. ἐπίγνωθι, ἐπιγνώναι etc.) or a form of the substantive ἐπίγνωσις; cf., e.g., *Passio sancti Theodoretii Antiocheni* 4, ll. 43–44 (BHG 2425) (ed. HALKIN): ἐπίγνωθι οὖν ὃν αὐτός | σοι καταγγέλλω θεόν, 6, ll. 5–7: σὺ καὶ πάλιν | τῇ αὐτῇ προσηγορία τούτους τιμᾶς καὶ τὸν ἐπιστημόνως ἄγαν | τόδε τὸ πᾶν οὐ βούλει ἐπιγνώναι τεχνιτευσάμενον; Halki Codex 95, ff. 107r–108v (EHRHARD I 575 n. 2): σὺ μᾶλλον μεταμελήθητι καὶ ἐπίγνωθι τὸν θεόν; Symeon Metaphrastes, *Vita et conversatio sanctae Melanae Romanae* (BHG 1242), *PG* 116, 784.37–39: ὥστε δὴ καὶ εἰπεῖν μετὰ | τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας ὡς, εἴ γε τοιοῦτους τρεῖς | ἡ Ῥωμαίων εἶχεν, οὐδ’ ἂν ἐκεῖ οὐδὲ ὄνομά ποτε | Ἑλλήνων τινὸς ἠκούετο.

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## PLATE

Plate 1: P.Vindob. G 19912 (© Austrian National Library, Department of Papyri, by courtesy of director Bernhard Palme).