

A Fresh Analysis of P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 (P22) as Artefact

L. W. Hurtado (University of Edinburgh)

P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 (Gregory-Aland P22) designates two papyrus fragments preserving portions of John 15:25–16:2 and 16:21–32. In their *editio princeps* of 1914, Grenfell and Hunt dated the manuscript palaeographically to the late third century CE, a dating now commonly accepted.¹ Although noted in several subsequent publications and cited in textual apparatuses to the Greek NT, it is not clear that the papyrus itself has received any close examination or detailed description since Grenfell and Hunt. Moreover, the papyrus exhibits some interesting features that further warrant the fresh analysis offered here.² Roberts and Skeat referred to it as “an eccentric production,” in particular for being “written on the verso of a roll the recto of which is left blank,” a matter to which I return shortly.³ The readings of P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 have received some attention, especially as evidence of the state and transmission of the text of John in the early centuries.⁴ I shall consider some variation-units later. But first, and in an effort to offer a fresh contribution, I focus on the physical and visual features with a view to

¹ Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt (eds.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume X* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1914), 14–16.

² P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 is housed in the Special Collections of the University of Glasgow Library (catalogued as MS Gen 1026/13). I was able to make an autopsy analysis in early July 2014.

³ Colin H. Roberts and T. C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983), 39.

⁴ E.g., Grenfell and Hunt (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 14) judged it as showing “a good and interesting text,” but “its affinities are not strongly marked, and it does not agree at all consistently with any one of the chief authorities” (by which they must have meant the major codices of the fourth century CE and later). P. L. Hedley, “The Egyptian Texts of the Gospels and Acts,” *Church Quarterly Review* 118 (1934): 205 (23–39, 188–230) noted general agreement with the Westcott and Hort text, and so classified it as a supporter of their “Alexandrian” text of the Gospels. More recently, however, it has been described as displaying “an independent text” by Philip Comfort, *Encountering The Manuscripts: An Introduction to New Testament Palaeography & Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Broadman, 2005), 62, but he offers no basis for this somewhat cryptic judgment.

characterizing the manuscript as an artefact of early Christianity, and with a particular concern to see what we can infer about its intended usage.⁵

The Manuscript

The dimensions of the two fragments are as follows: The smaller one (hereafter, fragment 1) measures 5 x 3.4 cm, and the larger one (fragment 2) measures 18.5 x 6.4 cm.⁶ Part of an upper margin survives on both fragments, measuring 8 mm on fragment 1 and 15 mm on fragment 2. Unfortunately, however, nothing of any other margin survives on either fragment, which makes it difficult to make precise calculations about line lengths. As noted already, on the smaller fragment we have parts of eight lines of John 15:25–16:2. On fragment 2 (the larger one) we can detect remains of twenty-nine lines of John 16:21–32. The text is written on only one side of the papyrus, and so (as long postulated) the fragments must derive from a roll, not a codex. Moreover, it appears that fragment 2 is part of a column of text that followed the column from which fragment 1 survives.

That the text is written across the fibres, however, i.e., on what would normally be the outer surface of a roll, suggests that this is a portion of a re-used roll (often referred to as an "opisthograph").⁷ There are a number of other examples of re-used rolls, e.g.,

⁵ I have laid out this approach to manuscripts at greater length in L. W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

⁶ My measurement of the width of fragment 2 differs from that given by Grenfell and Hunt (5 cm) and echoed in subsequent publications. The fragment has a long upper part and a smaller lower part that also extends farther to the right of the upper part. I suspect that Grenfell and Hunt measured the widest point of the upper part. I measured the distance between the right edge of the lower part and the left edge of the upper part.

⁷ Some scholars reserve the term "opisthograph" to refer to manuscripts in which one text is written on the inner surface and then continued onto the outer surface, and they urge that in the case of rolls originally with one text on the inner surface and another text subsequently written on the outer surface, we should perhaps simply use the term "re-used rolls." But see the recent comments on the issue by George W.

P.Oxyrhynchus 654, a portion of a copy of the Gospel of Thomas in Greek written on the outer side of a roll, the inner surface originally used for what appears to have been a land survey. Among other early examples there is also P. Oxyrhynchus 657, which, together with PSI 12.1292 makes up portions of Hebrews (P13), on the outer surface of a roll, the inner surface containing a copy of Livy's *Epitome*. P.Oxyrhynchus 1079 (P18) is another example, a copy of Revelation on the outer surface of a roll, the inner surface containing a copy of Exodus.⁸ The re-use of rolls is commonly taken as reflecting the wish for a basic copy of a text for personal usage, the intended reader either uninterested in a more formal copy on fresh writing material, or unable to cover the cost of preparing one.⁹ But the oft-noted puzzle about P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 is that no text appears on the other side of the extant writing material, the side with horizontal fibres, i.e., the side of a roll normally used as the primary writing surface. Grenfell and Hunt posited that "in other parts the roll included sheets which had previously been inscribed," and, more specifically, Kurt Aland proposed that the extant fragments derive from the end-sheets of a roll that served simply to protect it, and so were not inscribed with text on their inner surface.¹⁰ On this proposal, to complete the copying of the Gospel of John additional sheets would have had to be added, or part of another roll would have had to be re-used and pasted onto the initial one from which our extant fragments come. This is still a

Houston, *Inside Roman Libraries: Books Collections and Their Management in Antiquity* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 6 (n. 24).

⁸ For a table of manuscripts of literary texts of Christian provenance commonly dated to the second or third century CE, see Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 209-29. There is still no instance of a copy of any NT writing on an unused roll. Instead, all extant copies are either codices or a small number of re-used rolls.

⁹ P. L. Hedley's reference to re-used rolls, however, as texts written "on waste paper" is perhaps a bit severe: "The Egyptian Texts of the Gospels and Acts," *CQR* 118 (1934): 227 (188-230).

¹⁰ Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 14; Kurt Aland, *Studien zur Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments und seines Textes* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967), 114.

plausible proposal as to why P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 has text only on the side of the papyrus with vertical fibres, and I cannot offer any more compelling suggestion myself.¹¹

Aland estimated that another 39-40 lines would have been required to accommodate the text of John between the last line of fragment 1 (which takes us into John 16:2) and the first line at the top of fragment 2 (which commences in John 16:21). This would have made an original column of 47-48 lines, measuring approximately 25-26 x 8-10 cm. Adding space for the upper and lower margins, he suggested a roll of about 30 cm in height, made up of papyrus sheets of about 25 cm width. Assuming that the copyist was basically consistent in the number of lines per column, Aland calculated that the entire copy of John would have required some 50 columns, the two extant fragments coming from columns 37 and 38. Estimating two columns of writing per sheet of the re-used roll, he judged that another six sheets (perhaps from another roll re-used for this task) would have been needed to complete the copying of John.¹²

Although he did not indicate it, integral to any such calculation is an estimate of the likely average number of characters per line. I tried to make my own estimates of original line-lengths, the number of lines per column and column height in an effort to check Aland's calculations. In one step, I attempted to estimate the original average number of characters per line in the 29 lines of the larger fragment, which commences in John 16:21 and extends into John 16:32. The number of characters to take into account

¹¹ A number of "magical" texts and amulets on papyrus were written across the fibres. This may have been a convention of sorts among at least some of those who prepared such items. But there is no indication that P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 was written as an amulet. At my presentation of this essay in the 2014 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Malcolm Choat and AnneMarie Luijendijk also referred me to the study by Jean-Luc Fournet, "Esquisse d'une anatomie de la lettre antique tardive d'après les papyrus," in *Correspondances. Documents pour l'histoire de l'Antiquité tardive*, eds. Roland Delmaire, Janine Desmulliez, and Pierre-Louis Gatier (Lyon: Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée, 2009), 23-66, who notes a shift in the format of letters in/after the fourth century CE, in which they came to be written across the fibres of papyrus sheets.

¹² Aland, *Studien*, 114.

in the Nestle-Aland (27th edition) text of John 16:21-32 is about 1,034.¹³ If we divide this amount by 29 (the number of partially preserved lines on this fragment), this produces a rough average 35-36 characters per line. Trying the same experiment on fragment 1, however, which contains the text of John commencing in 15:25 and extending into 16:2, we have ca. 341 characters to reckon with in the full text of 15:25–16:2 as given in Nestle-Aland. If we divide this number by 8 (the number of partially preserved lines of this fragment), we get an average of 42 characters per line.

I suspect that Aland used something close to my estimate of the average number of characters per line on the larger fragment (i.e., 35-36 characters per line) in forming his calculations of the likely number of lines per column and the approximate width of the columns. For if we divide the relevant number of characters in the verses that originally stood between the smaller and the larger fragments (i.e., John 16:3-20), approximately 1,365 characters, by 35, this suggests 39 missing lines, very close to Aland's estimate of 39-40. If, however, we use an estimate of the average number of characters per line needed to accommodate the text that originally made up the eight lines of fragment 1, i.e., 42, this produces a requirement of roughly 33 lines missing between fragment 1 and fragment 2. But it may be wiser to work with the estimated average number of characters per line based on the larger fragment, simply because we have a larger body of text on which to form an estimate.¹⁴ Perhaps, however, it is wiser still to conclude that, in the absence of any side-margin, all such calculations can only be rough estimates.

¹³ These counts involved removing punctuation and writing forms of πατήρ, θεός, and Ἰησοῦς in the nomina sacra forms used in the fragments.

¹⁴ Also, at the bottom of fragment 1 we may have the now-indecipherable remains of a ninth line. If we divide the characters in John 15:25–16:2 (341) by nine, we get ca. 38 characters per line, not so far from the average of 35-36 characters per line estimated for fragment 2.

As for the original height of the roll from which the fragments derive, I would judge Aland's estimate of 30 cm as perhaps at the lower end of possibilities. By my calculations, allowing for reasonable top and bottom margins, the height of the roll may have been anything from 30 cm (a minimum) to ca. 35 cm.¹⁵ In his authoritative study of Greek literary bookrolls, William Johnson judged that in the Roman period "roll heights rarely fell below 25 cm or above 33 cm," which would allow for a roll of the approximate height as estimated either by Aland or by me.¹⁶

The Hand

I turn now to a discussion of the hand of P.Oxyrhynchus 1228, to my knowledge offering here a more detailed analysis than available previously. For example, Grenfell and Hunt briefly referred to "an upright informal hand of medium size," whereas Schofield saw "a rather rough and heavy upright semi-uncial of small size, the work of a poor scribe."¹⁷ Neither these scholars nor others subsequently have given much more detail.

The first observation easily made is that the copyist was rather unsuccessful at producing a bi-linear script. To turn to a more detailed description of the letters, they

¹⁵ The 29 lines on the larger fragment take up ca. 17 cm, or just under 0.6 mm per line. So, an estimated 47 lines for a complete column would require ca. 27.5 cm. If we then add a top margin of at least 2 cm and a bottom margin of at least 3 cm (bottom margins on rolls were typically larger than top margins), that yields an estimate roll-height of ca. 33 cm, and the top and bottom margins may have been larger. Ellwood Mearle Schofield, "The Papyrus Fragments of the Greek New Testament" (Louisville, KY: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1936) estimated a roll height of ca. 38 cm, which he judged "quite impossible for any ancient roll" (197). But his estimate would require top and bottom margins combining to amount to 10 cm, which seems just a bit excessive to me. (I thank Brent Nongbri for bringing Schofield's unpublished thesis to my notice, and for commenting on an earlier draft of this essay.)

¹⁶ William A. Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 143. Schofield ("Papyrus Fragments," 197) briefly noted as the only other options that the fragments might derive from a copy of John very different from that we know, or from some excerpt text or lectionary text, but judged that "no definite conclusions can be reached when the evidence is so fragmentary as in this case." I find the former option unlikely, and the latter likewise less probable than presuming that P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 derives from a manuscript copy of John.

¹⁷ Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 14; Schofield, "Papyrus Fragments," 197.

measure 3-3.5 mm for the most part, except for the *rho* in particular, which measures 3.5-4 mm, and whose vertical stroke descends well below the line of other letters, and also the *iotas*, which often extend either below or above the other letters. This fits well within the average size of letters on other third-century Christian papyri, and I would not characterize the script as small. Compare, for example, P.Oxyrhynchus 1, a codex leaf containing part of the Gospel of Thomas, which has majuscule letters mainly of ca. 2 mm height (initial letters of lines slightly larger, and "descenders" noticeably larger still), or P.Oxyrhynchus 654, which is also a portion of a re-used roll and a portion of another copy of the Gospel of Thomas, with majuscule letters varying from ca. 1.6 mm (most letters) to 3 mm (descenders such as *upsilon*), and the initial letters of lines ca. 3-4 mm.¹⁸

The letters of P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 are also somewhat irregular in size and formation. Cf., e.g., omicrons in fragment 1 line 2 and fragment 2 line 1 with fragment 1 line 3 and fragment 2 lines 20 and 27. For a striking example of variation in letter size, compare the shape and position of the two *upsilons* in fragment 1 line 5. The *theta* is written with an exaggerated cross-stroke, and is sometimes rounder and other times more oval. The mid-stroke of the *nu* often strikes the right-vertical stroke a bit up from the bottom (e.g., frag. 1 line 1, frag 2 lines 3, 4, 5, 6, 21) but cf. the instance in fragment 1 line 3.

The *alpha* was formed of one continuous movement, tending in a cursive direction. The *epsilon* varies slightly in size, and typically has an elongated mid-stroke

¹⁸ For further discussion, see L. W. Hurtado, "The Greek Fragments of the *Gospel of Thomas* as Artefacts: Papyrological Observations on Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1, Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 654 and Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 655," in *Das Thomasevangelium: Entstehung – Rezeption – Theologie*, eds. Jörg Frey, Enno Edzard Popkes and Jens Schröter (BZNW 157; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 19-32; and now also AnneMarie Luijendijk, "Reading the *Gospel of Thomas* in the Third Century: Three Oxyrhynchus Papyri and Origen's *Homilies*," in *Reading New Testament Papyri in Context / Lire les papyrus du Nouveau Testament dans leur contexte*, ed. Claire Clivaz and Jean Zumstein (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 241-67.

that sometimes connects it with the following letter. The *rho* has a curiously small head, and, as already noted, the vertical stroke descends well below the bottom line (e.g., frag. 1 line 1&3). The *iota* likewise is typically a bit larger than other letters, often extending above the upper line (e.g., frag. 2 lines 18, 19, 21, 27), but sometimes below the bottom line (frag. 2 line 3). The cross-stroke of the *eta* intersects the two vertical strokes somewhat above the mid-point, and there are sometimes hooks on these vertical strokes. There are also hooks often on the vertical strokes of the *nu* and the *pi*. The *upsilon* is formed in one pen movement, looking sometimes like a V. The *delta* is formed in a three-step movement without lifting the pen (frag. 2 lines 2, 7), and has a small hook at the top of the right-downward stroke. The *Kappa* is often slightly larger than adjacent letters, the lower, right-downward stroke elongated (e.g., frag. 1 lines 4-5, 19, 29). The *pi* has a hook in the foot of the right-vertical stroke, and the cross-stroke is written with a slight wave shape (e.g., frag. 1 line 4, frag. 2 line 5). *Sigmas* usually have a rounded top (frag. 1 lines 6-7, frag. 2 lines 3, 6, 27), but sometimes a more flattened and extended top (e.g., frag. 1 line 4, frag. 2 line 15). The top stroke of the *tau* is often written slightly lower than surrounding letters and the vertical stroke extends below them (e.g., frag. 1 lines 6-7, frag. 2 lines 2-3, 8-9).

There are numerous instances of connected letters.¹⁹ For example, the top-stroke of a *gamma* is extended to become the mid-stroke of an *epsilon* in fragment 1 line 1, and instances of an *alpha* and a following *iota* are written without lifting the pen (frag. 1 line 5, frag. 2 line 6). In fragment 1 line 6, we see the top of a *sigma* extended to become the top-stroke of a *tau* and then also the mid-stroke of an *epsilon* (frag. 1 line 6), producing a

¹⁹ In personal communication, AnneMarie Luijendijk informed me that in Medieval Studies connected letters are sometimes called "kissing letters." Though that is a more colourful expression, I shall use the more bland "connected letters" here.

three-letter connection! In fragment 1 line 7, the right-stroke of a *lambda* connects with the following *iota*, and in the same line the cross-stroke of a *theta* becomes also the cross-stroke of the following *eta*, and then the top-stroke of a *tau* becomes the mid-stroke of the following *epsilon*. In fragment 2 line 1, the letters of ὄταν appear to be connected, forming a cursive-like construction, and in line 3 the mid-stroke of an *epsilon* continues upward to form the following *iota*. In line 4 the cross-stroke of a *theta* becomes the cross-stroke of the following *eta*.

The *nomina sacra* forms are πρς (frag. 1 lines 2-3, frag. 2 line 15), πρϱ (frag. 2 line 17), ανοϛ (frag. 2 line 4), and η[ς] (frag. 2 line 27, the vertical fibre that likely had the *sigma* torn off after the *eta*). There is no punctuation, but we have instances of a *diaeresis*, over the *upsilon* of ὕμ[εῖς] in fragment 1 line 5, and in fragment 2 over the *upsilon* of ὕμῶν in line 6, and (likely) over the *upsilon* of ὕμ[εῖς] in line 18.²⁰

Overall, these numerous instances of connected, the informality and even irregularity in letter-formation, the absence of punctuation, and the obvious inability at bi-linearity combine to give the impression of a copyist capable of a certain level in what we may term “everyday” writing, but unable to produce the sort of simple book hand that we see in manuscripts such as P.Bodmer XIV-XV or even P.Chester Beatty II (or uninterested in doing so).²¹ To re-state a judgement explored a bit more fully later in this study, these features of the script, combined with the likelihood that we have here a re-

²⁰ Grenfell and Hunt (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 15) also saw a *diaeresis* over the an *upsilon* that formed part of a proposed ὕμειν in fragment 2 line 10. They were probably correct, but at present there is at most only a trace of the letter and possible *diaeresis*, perhaps due to fading since their examination of the papyrus.

²¹ In comparing the hands of several other third-century NT papyri with that of P.Oxyrhynchus 1171 (P20), Schofield described the hand of P. Oxyrhynchus 1228 as “decidedly cruder” (“Papyrus Fragments,” 190).

used roll, strongly suggest an informal copy of John quickly prepared for personal reading/study.

The Text

Given the small amount of text that survives in P.Oxyrhynchus 1228, it is perhaps unwise to try to align it with any particular textual cluster.²² Nevertheless, there have been various attempts to characterize its textual affiliation. In his survey of early witnesses to the text of the Gospels and Acts from Egypt, for example, Henry Sanders ascribed to the manuscript a "Western" textual alignment.²³ But P. L. Hedley countered that in eight out of twelve variation-units in the Grenfell-Hunt transcription, it agrees with the Alexandrian textual tradition.²⁴ In their introduction to NT textual criticism, the Alands characterized P22 as "at least normal text," by which phrasing they mean a kind of text with "a more or less distinct tendency toward the 'strict' text" (a "strict" text being one that "reproduced the text of its exemplar with greater fidelity").²⁵ In a subsequent study, Barbara Aland characterized the text of the papyrus as "on the whole excellent, because it almost always reproduces the hypothetical *Ausgangstext*."²⁶ On a scale ranging from papyri reflecting a careful and exacting copying of the *Ausgangstext* of John (P39) to

²² Recognizing current differences over whether the term "text type" remains meaningful, I adopt the term "textual cluster" from a major essay by Eldon Jay Epp, "Textual Clusters: Their Past and Future in New Testament Textual Criticism," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis, Second Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 519-77.

²³ Henry A. Sanders, "The Egyptian Text of the Four Gospels and Acts," *HTR* 26 (1933): 77-98 (esp. table on 90).

²⁴ Hedley, "Egyptian Texts," 205.

²⁵ Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (trans. E. F. Rhodes; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 93, 95, 99.

²⁶ Barbara Aland, "Der textkritische und textgeschichtliche Nutzen früher Papyri, demonstriert am Johannesevangelium," in *Recent Developments in Textual Criticism: New Testament, Other Early Christian and Jewish Literature*, eds. Wim Weren and Dietrich-Alex Koch (STAR 8; Assen: Royal van Gorcum, 2003), 20 (19-38), translation mine. "*Ausgangstext*" = the earliest attainable form of the text from which all extant copies ultimately derive. She considered twelve variation-units where the text of P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 can be checked.

those papyri reflecting a much freer practice (P95, P80, P45), she placed P22 (P.Oxyrhynchus 1228) with a number of others “Dazwischen” (“in between”).²⁷

Let us now consider variation-units where I found the text of P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 to be readable.²⁸ I list them below, in each case giving first the reading preferred in Nestle-Aland (27th edition) with major witnesses that support it, followed by other variant-readings and their principal witnesses.

15:25 ἐν τῷ νόμῳ αὐτῶν γεγραμμένος (P22^{vid} κ^{(*)2} B D L Ψ *et al*): γεγραμμένος ἐν τῷ νόμῳ αὐτῶν A Θ f13 **¶** | ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γεγραμμένος P66^{vid}.

15:26 ὅταν ἐλθῆ (P22 κ B Δ *et al*): ὅταν δὲ ἐλθῆ A D K L Γ Θ Ψ **¶** *et al*.

16:21 Θλίψεως (P22 κ B *et al*): λύπης D 579 *pc*.

16:22 οὖν νῦν μὲν λύπην (P5 P22^{vid} P66 κ² B C* D L W Ψ *et al*): νῦν μὲν οὖν λύπην κ* | οὖν λύπην μὲν νῦν A C³ Θ **¶** | μὲν οὖν λύπην νῦν f13.

ἔχετε (P22 κ* B C f13 **¶** *et al*): ἔξετε P66 κ² A D N W* Θ Ψ *et al*.

αἶρει (P22 *et al*): ἀρεῖ P5 B D* Γ *et al* | ἀφαιρεῖ W.

16:23 ἂν τι (P5 B C L *et al*): ὅ τι (οτι?) (ε)αν P22^{vid} A D² W *et al* | ὅτι ὁ (ε)αν κ Θ 33 *et al* | ὅτι ὅσα (ε)αν f1 f13 **¶**.

16:28 ἐξῆλθον παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς (P5 P22^{vid} κ A C² Θ f1 f13 **¶**): omit D W *et al* | ἐξῆλθον ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς B C* L Ψ 33 *et al*.

16:32 ἐλήλυθεν (P22^{vid} P66 κ² A B C* D* L W *et al*): νυν ἐλήλυθεν C³ D¹ Θ Ψ f1 f13 **¶** *et al* | ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὥρα κ*.

κἀμὲ (κ B *et al*): καὶ ἐμὲ P22^{vid} A C³ D W **¶** *et al*.

²⁷ Aland, “Der textkritische Nutzen,” 37.

²⁸ The Grenfell and Hunt transcription also posits a number of partially readable letters in fragment 2 lines 15-29 for which I could not detect sufficient remaining traces now. I have, thus, included here only readings of P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 that can be verified with reasonable confidence at present either by autopsy inspection or by use of good-quality photos, e.g., from the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, http://www.csntm.org/Manuscript/View/GA_P22. So, I list ten variation-units, whereas Grenfell and Hunt’s transcription offered previous scholars a basis for twelve. But I doubt that this will make any substantial difference to the characterization of the text.

From such a small number of variation-units, it is perilous to posit any strong textual alignment. In eight of these ten variation-units, however, \mathfrak{P}^{22} (P.Oxyrhynchus 1228) bears the readings preferred also in Nestle-Aland as more likely those of the “*Ausgangstext*.” In six instances, \mathfrak{P}^{22} agrees with principal “Alexandrian” witnesses (\aleph and B), in two of these with support also from D (whether original hand or correctors) and some other witnesses. In three variation-units \mathfrak{P}^{22} agrees with \aleph and B against D and some other witnesses, and in two other cases it agrees with D against \aleph and B.

As to the nature of these variation-units, they mainly involve differences in word-order and minor stylistic preferences. It is worth noting that in at least some clear cases, \mathfrak{P}^{22} supports what some ancient readers may have judged to be less elegant syntax (e.g., 15:26; 16:32). Likewise, note \mathfrak{P}^{22} ’s support for present-tense verbs in 16:22, in contrast with the future-tense preferences of some other witnesses, the latter likely reflecting readers’ efforts to smooth out the sense of the text. In at least one other case (16:21), we likely see a variant that represents a harmonization with the immediate context, the $\lambda\upsilon\pi\tau\eta$ in Bezae (D) and some other witnesses perhaps reflecting the use of the same word to describe a woman’s labor pains earlier in the verse. In this case, note that \mathfrak{P}^{22} does not support this variant, but instead has what might have seemed to some ancient readers a slightly more unusual term to describe labor pains, $\theta\lambda\acute{\iota}\psi\iota\varsigma$.

In sum, then, with due allowance for the very limited body of text extant for analysis, P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 (\mathfrak{P}^{22}) exhibits a text of John that is by no means aberrant, but, instead, seems on the whole one made up of readings that enjoy support from other important witnesses. Moreover, in several cases where we may see efforts of ancient

readers to smooth out minor stylistic matters in some other witnesses, P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 supports what we could describe as the more "difficult" readings. So, Barbara Aland's characterization of the text of this papyrus cited earlier as in general reflecting a concern for faithful copying seems to me valid.

Implications

Let us now attempt to draw together results of this analysis. From our examination of the physical and visual properties of P.Oxyrhynchus 1228, it is rather clear that we have remnants of a copy of John made for someone's personal reading, not a copy intended for public/liturgical usage. Moreover, that it may be a re-used roll combines with the informal nature of the hand to suggest someone either uninterested in a more elegant copy or unable to acquire or produce one. So, we may surmise that this may have been a reader of limited financial means, but with a strong interest in having his/her own copy of John for personal reading/study. If we entertain this possibility, then P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 (along with other papyri of the period) may give us artifactual evidence of a body of sub-elite Christians in the third century who, though of limited financial resources, were keenly interested in reading texts such as the Gospel of John.²⁹ To posit that many Christians in that period were sub-elite is nothing new; but papyri such as P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 may comprise one kind of artefact of their participation in, and commitment to, their faith, with a particular interest in having direct access to texts such as John.

²⁹ For another attempt to probe the physical/visual features of early Christian biblical manuscripts for implications about their intended usage, see Larry W. Hurtado, "Manuscripts and the Sociology of Early Christian Reading," in *The Early Text of the New Testament*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 49-62.

Given the sub-elite nature of P.Oxyrhynchus 1228, it is all the more interesting that it exhibits a copy of John that seems to reflect a concern for faithful transmission of the text. Granted, there is not much text in P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 on which to make a judgment, but what we have gives us no indication of a free-wheeling attitude toward the transmission of the text of John. In the variation-units where the papyrus is extant, we have noted that it does not generally support the readings favoured in some other manuscripts that seem to have arisen as stylistic "improvements" or corrections. Instead, we appear to have a product that reflects a concern simply to have a copy of the text for the personal edification of some third-century Christian, apparently someone more concerned with the content of John than with what some other readers may have seen as minor stylistic infelicities. This may be significant. The papyrus seems to have been produced under "informal" conditions, not for liturgical/formal usage, and so not likely under the supervision of any ecclesiastical authority. So, the quality of the text of this privately produced copy of John is all the more interesting in witnessing to the care with which at least some Christians handled the transmission of this text in the early period from which P.Oxyrhynchus 1228 derives.