

## A Note on the Antinoupolis Fragment of *4 Macc.* 5, 2-6

In 2008, A. Delattre, among other Coptic, Greek, and Greek-Coptic texts discovered in Antinoupolis by the Florentine mission, published a parchment fragment (74 mm wide × 80 mm high) which came from the eastern *kōm* of the North Necropolis (CLM 1187). It preserves the remains of a bifolium consisting of part of the inner margin of the first conjugate leaf and the complete second conjugate leaf. <sup>(1)</sup> The limits of the conjugate leaves can be easily identified thanks to the fold, which is clearly visible on the photograph, as well as to one hole used to sew the bifolia one to the other. The complete leaf bears the first attestation in Coptic of *4 Macc.* 5, 2-6 (recto = hair side: 5, 2-4; verso = flesh side: 5, 4-6).

The leaf measures 65 mm wide and 80 mm high. Upper margin is 8 mm high and lower margin is 12 mm high, while inner margin is 7 mm wide and outer margin is 12 mm wide on the recto and 13 mm on the verso. The writing frame therefore measures around 45 mm wide and 60 mm high. The text is written in an upright unimodular majuscule. The writing and the small format of the book led the editor to date the codex to the 5<sup>th</sup> cent. Pagination is preserved in the top-outer corner of both pages of the leaf:  $\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\Theta}$  (59) and  $\overline{\Xi}$  (60). Moreover, in the top-inner corner of both faces of the leaf, another number was written,  $\overline{\Delta}$  (4), rightly identified by the editor as the quire signature. It is, however, surprising to see both faces of a page bearing this number since, in Coptic book production, only the recto of the first leaf and (not systematically) the verso of the last leaf bear a quire signature, as research in the manuscripts section of the *Atlas of Coptic Literature* of the PATHs project shows. <sup>(2)</sup>

The presence of the pagination and of the quire numbering led A. Delattre to attempt a codicological reconstruction. Since the first 58 pages have not been preserved (which, according to him, should have been enough to bear the beginning of *4 Macc.* 1-5, 2), he estimated that the Antinoupolis leaf was the sixth leaf of the fourth quaternion of the codex, as in fig. 1 <sup>(3)</sup> and assumed therefore that quaternion 1 = pp. 1-16, quaternion 2 = pp. 17-32, quaternion 3 = pp. 33-48, quaternion 4 = pp. 49-64, and so on until the end of the text.

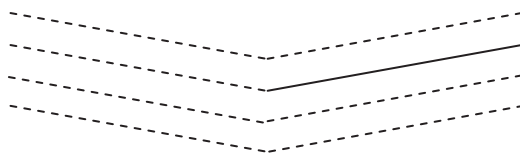


FIG. 1.

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(1) See A. DELATTRE, *Textes coptes et grecs d’Antinoé*, in R. PINTAUDI (ed.), *Antinoupolis I* (Florence, 2008), pp. 133-135 (n. 2) and plate I.

(2) Available online: <atlas.paths-erc.eu/manuscripts>.

(3) The dotted lines represent the lost leaves, while the solid line represents the preserved leaf, here pp. 59-60.

This reconstruction raises, however, a problem: for what purpose the quire numbering would have been mentioned on both faces of a leaf placed inside a quire and not at the beginning or the end of it? One can rule out the possibility of an error of the person who wrote the quire signature, precisely because both faces are signed. Moreover, lacking any parallel, we should not take into account a hypothetical writing of the quire signature on every page of the quire.

Actually, another codicological reconstruction is possible, which is supported by attestations in the contemporary Coptic book production. As suggested by the presence of the quire signature, the Antinoupolis leaf is the last leaf of the fourth quaternion (and therefore, the fragment of the inner margin of the conjugate leaf pertains to the first leaf of the quire), as in the following figure:



FIG. 2.

We must therefore suppose that the text began in the first quire on p. 1 after two blank leaves. So, quaternion 1 was composed of two blank leaves followed by 6 leaves paginated from 1 to 12; quaternion 2 corresponded to pp. 13-28; quaternion 3 to pp. 29-44; and quaternion 4 to pp. 45-60.

This situation is attested in at least three parchment codices pertaining to the Dishna Papers (Bodmer Papyri), which more or less coincide in date with the Antinoupolis fragment. In *P.Bodm. VI* (CLM 34), which contains the *Proverbs* in dialect P and is datable to the 4<sup>th</sup> cent., the first quire, a quaternion, began with two blank leaves (now lost) followed by the first page of text, numbered  $\alpha$ .<sup>(4)</sup> The case of *P.Bodm. XXII + Mississippi Coptic Codex II* (CLM 39), datable to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> or the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> cent., is more complicated.<sup>(5)</sup> The first quaternion has lost leaves 1 and 2 and the text of *Jeremiah* began on ch. 40, 3 on the third leaf, which is numbered  $\alpha$ . It is possible that ch. 40, 1-2 was written on leaf 2<sup>v</sup>, without pagination, or was written at the end of another codex. Finally, *P.Bodm. XVI* (CLM 35), datable to the 4<sup>th</sup> cent., is preserved in full, including the ancient binding.<sup>(6)</sup> It consists of 46 leaves (92 pages), organized in five quaternions (5 × 16 pages = 80 pages) and one ternion (12 pages). In the first quaternion, the first leaf is blank and was originally pasted on the inner side of the upper cover, while the second leaf, also blank, is used as a guard leaf. The third leaf bears the page number  $\alpha$  on the recto and the beginning of the *Exodus*.

(4) Edition and description by R. KASSER, *Papyrus Bodmer VI. Livre des Proverbes* = CSCO 194 (Louvain, 1960), esp. p. VIII about the first leaves. See also the codicological description I prepared within the PATHs Project (CLM 34). A complete set of reproductions is now available in the “Bodmer Lab” (<<https://bodmerlab.unige.ch/fr/constellations/papyri/barcode/1072205347>>).

(5) Edition and description by R. KASSER, *Papyrus Bodmer XXII et Mississippi Coptic Codex II: Jérémie XL, 3-LIII, 34. Lamentations. Épître de Jérémie. Baruch I, 1-V, 5 en sahidique* (Cologny-Genève, 1964), esp. pp. 7-8 about the first leaves. Cf. also CLM 39; <<https://bodmerlab.unige.ch/fr/constellations/papyri/barcode/1072205360>>.

(6) Edition and description by R. KASSER, *Papyrus Bodmer XVI. Exode I-XV, 21 en sahidique* (Cologny-Genève, 1961). Cf. also CLM 35; <<https://bodmerlab.unige.ch/fr/constellations/papyri/barcode/1072205355>>.

The comparison with these three parchment codices is sufficient evidence of the habit of keeping the first two leaves of the first quire (and of the codex) completely blank, and of writing the text from the third leaf onwards. The parchment codex from which only the Antinopolis fragment has been preserved is another example of this practice, while it seems anyway to be the first known Coptic codex to bear quire signatures on both faces of the last leaf.

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