

Complementary note to the article of Prof. Roca-Puig

In 1953 I published in the «Harvard Theological Review», Vol. XLVI (1953), pages 233-37, an article entitled «An Early Papyrus of the First Gospel». The text in questions consisted of some small fragments of a papyrus codex in the possession of the Library at Magdalen College, Oxford; it contained parts of Chapter xxvi of St. Matthew, and was written in an elegant literary hand in two columns. When in 1956 Professor RAMON ROCA-PUIG published a booklet entitled *Un Papiro Griego del Evangelio de San Mateo*, with an edition of the papyrus in the possession of the «Fundación San Lucas Evangelista», I suspected that the hand in which the two papyri were written was one and the same, and correspondence with Professor Roca-Puig confirmed this beyond a doubt.

The Barcelona fragments are part of two leaves covering in part Chapters iii and v of the Gospel. It is unlikely that either leaf was conjoint with the Magdalen College leaf, and it therefore remains uncertain whether or no the codex was a single quire codex or no. The whole Gospel would have occupied some 90 pages.

The hand in which the text is written is a carefully written book hand that may be regarded as a precursor of the style commonly known as Biblical Uncial. Some papyri written in this kind of hand can be dated to the second century A. D. e. g. *P. Oxy. IV. 661*, and if the hand of the St. Matthew fragments is compared with the hands in this style that can be ascribed to the third century, e. g. *P. Berol 7499* (W. SCHUBART, *Griechische Paläographie*, page 136), or with the Dura fragments of Appian (C. H. ROBERTS, *Greek Book Hand*, Plate 16 c), it will be seen that they are by comparison less uniform and regular and have a distinctly earlier look; two other papyri with which they may be compared are *P. Oxy. IX 1179*, a MS. of Apollonius Rhodius, dated by Grenfell and Hunt to early third or late second century and a small fragment of Irenaeus (*P. Oxy. III. 405*). It can be noted that in this text, as in the St. Matthew fragments, the smaller omikron and the flat omega, both common in third century hands, are absent. A date in the late second century for the St. Matthew fragments would best suit the available evidence, and this judgement was confirmed by Sir Harold Bell, Mr. T. C. Skeat and Professor Turner, who independently pronounced in favour of such a dating. This papyrus, whose fragments are divided between Barcelona and Oxford, can therefore be regarded as the earliest witness to the first Gospel.

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