#articleTitle

A Title of the Annunciation to the Shepherds in the Bodleian Library

#author

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#editionDCLP

#metadata

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dimensions: height | 5.6 |
| Dimensions: width | 6.7 |
| Filename | 012210 |
| DCLP | 012210 |
| dclp-hybrid | pylon;2;8 |
| TM number | 012210 |
| Descriptive title | A Title of the Annunciation to the Shepherds in the Bodleian Library |
| Images: online | https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/544855a5-3460-4dc7-83c0-9a94b1ba4838/ |
| Date of text | V-VI |
| Located: Place | Arsinoites? |

#introduction

This papyrus fragment preserves the summary heading (τίτλος) of the second chapter (κεφάλαιον) of the Gospel of Luke, the so-called Annunciation to the Shepherds (2:8–20). The lack of writing on the other side suggests that it was written in the upper margin of a codex. If this were a title from the middle of the page before the section in question, one would have expected to find writing on the other side of the leaf. A papyrus roll is not, of course, a realistic possibility at this date. The implication would be that this was a codex with lavishly wide margins, since Christian codices with margins measuring above 4 cm are relatively rare. Those with the widest upper margins include [P.Beatty 5](https://papyri.info/dclp/61952) (6 cm, papyrus, 2nd cent.), the Codex Sinaiticus (5.3–6.3 cm, parchment, mid 4th cent.), the Codex Vaticanus (3.7–4.8 cm, parchment, 2nd half of 4th cent.), [P.Köln 7 297](http://papyri.info/dclp/59464) (5 cm, papyrus, 4th cent.), and [PSI 14 1371](http://papyri.info/dclp/62072) (5 cm, papyrus, 4th/5th cent.).[[1]](#footnote-1) In literary papyrus rolls of the Roman period, upper margins can be as deep as 7.5 cm, and margins above 4 cm are associated with finer manuscripts.[[2]](#footnote-2) The earliest such section titles in the upper margin are found in the Codex Alexandrinus of the fifth century, where they are written in red ink.[[3]](#footnote-3) Unlike the marginal titles in the Codex Alexandrinus, the title here is written in tapering form over three lines in the manner of an end-title. One possible way to account for the separate preservation of the title is to suppose that the original codex was drastically trimmed when it was rebound.

The writing, in brownish ink, runs against the fibres. The hand is a medium-sized specimen of the so-called Alexandrian Majuscule.[[4]](#footnote-4) The blank spaces above and below the title are each *c*. 2 cm deep. The interlinear space measures *c.* 0.2 cm. Letters are *c.* 0.3 cm high. The widest letter is ω at 0.8 cm, the narrowest (besides ι) are ε and ο at 0.2 cm. The hand is bilinear, but ρ descends below the notional baseline. The bar of π extends beyond the uprights, which are of uneven length. μ is rounded, with the saddle level with the baseline. Uprights often end in a blob at the base. Strokes are generally thick, but some shading is observable, for instance on the first oblique of λ and the horizontal bar of π. Among dated parallels, the closest are [PSI 16 1576](http://papyri.info/dclp/131510), a paschal letter securely datable to 420/21, and [P.Grenf. 2 112](http://papyri.info/dclp/65050) = *GBEBP* 37, a paschal letter probably dating from 577.

According to the Bodleian’s handlist of papyri, the papyrus was bought from the Revd Grenville John Chester (1830–92) in 1878.[[5]](#footnote-5) Its provenance is unrecorded but is likely to be the Fayum in light of other papyri sold by Chester to the Bodleian and British Libraries in that year: see R. Luiselli, Gr.Med.Pap. 1 3 introd., pp. 37–8, on MS. Gr. class. g. 69 (P), a leaf from a codex of Galen.[[6]](#footnote-6)

#papyrologicalHeader

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Bodl. MS. Gr. class. g. 68 (P) | 6.7 (w) × 5.6 (h) cm | Fifth or sixth century |
| [digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk](https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/544855a5-3460-4dc7-83c0-9a94b1ba4838/) |  | Fayum(?) |

#text

<S=.grc

<=

1. [.?].1 <#β̄=2#> περιτωνα[.?]

2. [.?] λουντων[.?]

3. [.?] μαινω[ν] [.?]

=>

#translation

<T=.en<=

‘ … 2nd (chapter) concerning the shepherds out in the fields.’

=>=T>

#commentary

1 ] ̣. A descending oblique at one-third height. It is unclear whether this is part of an ornamental stroke or just a stray mark.

2–3 [ποι]μαίνω[ν]: read ποιμένων. For the common phonetic interchange of αι and ε, see [Gignac 1976](https://papyri.info/biblio/8813): 191–193. The word is similarly spelled in the corresponding title in the Codex Alexandrinus (fol. 45r); cf. also the index of τίτλοι on fol. 43r.

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#text

<S=.grc

<=

(1, outdent) [.?].1 <#β̄=2#> περὶ τῶν ἀ[γραυ]

2.- λουντων <:[ποι](3.-, indent)μένω[ν]|reg|[ποι]

(3.-, indent)μαίνω[ν]:>

=>

#bibliography

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[Smith, W. A. (2014)](https://papyri.info/biblio/96266) *A Study of the Gospels in Codex Alexandrinus: Codicology, Palaeography, and Scribal Hands*. Leiden.

1. On margin size in Christian codices, see [Mugridge 2016](https://papyri.info/biblio/96264): 57–60, 470–478, who does not distinguish between papyrus and parchment codices. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See [Johnson 2004](https://papyri.info/biblio/18132): 130–141; cf. p. 141: “when a somewhat exaggerated margin was desired, a range from 4–6 cm was common for the upper margin among finely written examples, as was a range of 5–7 cm for the lower margin (though several manuscripts without pretension also employ margins of this size).” Cf. also [McNamee 2007](https://papyri.info/biblio/19701): 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See [Goswell 2009](https://papyri.info/biblio/96262) and [Smith 2014](https://papyri.info/biblio/96266): 156–179. Upper marginal τίτλοι for the Book of Acts are also present in the Codex Sinaiticus of the mid fourth century, but they are not numbered; see [Milne and Skeat 1938](https://papyri.info/biblio/96265): 38 with Figure 11. Cf. also the titles in the wide upper margins of the Codex Zacynthius (probably 8th cent.), on which see [Houghton and Parker 2020](https://papyri.info/biblio/96268): 34–39. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. On the type, see [Cavallo 2005](https://papyri.info/biblio/18496): 175–202 and [Bastianini and Cavallo 2011](https://papyri.info/biblio/79030). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. On this collector and dealer, see [Bierbrier 2019](https://papyri.info/biblio/96267): 100–101 and [Seidmann 2006](https://papyri.info/biblio/96263): 145–150. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. I am grateful to N. Gonis for this reference. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)