

Two Selective Greek Texts of Exodus: A Comparative Analysis of Rahlfs 896 and 960

DREW LONGACRE

Abstract

In Biblical Studies there is a growing appreciation for the variety of ways ancient scribes, scholars, and readers selectively used excerpts of Judeo-Christian scriptures in antiquity. In this paper, I will examine materially and textually two fragments with excerpts in Greek from the book of Exodus that contribute to this ongoing discussion. P. Rendel Harris Inv. 54 c = Rahlfs 896 is inscribed only on the front side in an unskilled hand with high dots separating small word groups, which I suggest fits well with an educational context. P. Berlin 13994 = Rahlfs 960 comes from a small codex whose preserved contents suggest a topical collection focusing on Sabbath regulations. These two fragments are particularly interesting objects of comparative study, because they overlap in the passages with which they interact in such a way that we can observe different approaches to selectively appropriating the same sacred scriptures for different purposes. They also provide interesting glimpses into the history of the text of the book of Exodus, once complicating factors relating to their selectivity are taken into account.

Introduction*

The text of Exodus has a long history of being used selectively in both Jewish and Christian tradition. In addition to the broad continuous-text manuscript tradition of the entire book and occasional citations and/or rewritings in the context of other literary works, ancient scribes, scholars, and interested readers frequently transmitted in writing selected portions of the book apart from their full literary context. They commonly preserve long strings of text from Exodus without significant alterations. Nevertheless, the literary contexts in which these texts are preserved differ greatly from those of the continuous-text manuscripts. Their writers first decontextualize and then recontextualize the selected portions of the book for some specific purpose.

Texts primarily from Exodus 12-13 are regularly included in *tefillin* and *mezuzot*, including those from Qumran.¹ 4QDeutⁱ appears to be a small excerpt manuscript containing liturgically significant passages from Deuteronomy and Exodus 12-13.² 4QExod^e also contained excerpts from at least Ex 13, and 4QExod^d contained excerpts from at least chs. 13 and 15—the important Song of the Sea.³ 4Q175 (4QTestimonia) starts with an excerpted passage from a so-called “pre-Samaritan” form of Ex 20:21, followed by excerpts from Numbers, Deuteronomy, and the Apocryphon of Joshua in that order, and it appears to be a compilation thematically organized on the topic of the Messiah(s).⁴ The Nash Papyrus (Cambridge UL MS Or.233) from Egypt contains in Hebrew only a composite version of the ten commandments from Ex 20/Deut 5 and the *shema*’ from Deut 6.⁵

The selective use of the book of Exodus can also be documented in the Christian manuscript tradition.⁶ The *Odes* incorporate Exodus 15:1-19, and P. Berlin 16158 preserves *Odes* 1:1-2 = Exodus 15:1-2 as a Greek scriptural *incipit* in an amulet from Egypt.⁷ I would suggest that two fragments from Egypt—P. Rendel Harris Inv. 54 c =

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¹ Cf. Y. B. Cohn, *Tangled up in Text: Tefillin and the Ancient World*, Brown Judaica Series 351 (Providence, R.I.: Brown University Press, 2008), 55-87.

² J. A. Duncan, “37. 4QDeut^j,” in *Qumran Cave 4, Vol. IX: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Kings*, ed. E. Ulrich, DJD 14 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 75-91, plates XX-XXIII.

³ D. Longacre, “A Contextualized Approach to the Hebrew Dead Sea Scrolls Containing Exodus” (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 2015), 134-135. On 4QExod^d, see J. E. Sanderson, “15. 4QExod^d,” in *Qumran Cave 4, VII: Genesis to Numbers*, ed. E. Ulrich and F. M. Cross, DJD 12 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 127-128, plate XXI, esp. 127; E. Tov, “The Biblical Texts from the Judaean Desert—An Overview and Analysis of the Published Texts,” in *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries*, ed. E. D. Herbert and E. Tov (London: British Library, 2002), 139-166, esp. 149. On 4QExod^e, see J. E. Sanderson, “16. 4QExod^e,” in *Qumran Cave 4, VII: Genesis to Numbers*, ed. E. Ulrich and F. M. Cross, DJD 12 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 129-131, plate XXI, esp. 130; Tov, “Biblical Texts,” 163 n. 140; A. Lange, *Handbuch der Textfunde vom Toten Meer. Band 1: Die Handschriften biblischer Bücher von Qumran und den anderen Fundorten* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 61.

⁴ Z. Talshir, “Are the Biblical Texts from Qumran Biblical? 4QTestimonia and the Minimalists,” *Megillot* 5-6 (2008), 119-140.

⁵ Cf. G. D. Martin, *Multiple Originals: New Approaches to Hebrew Bible Textual Criticism*, SBLTCS 7 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 205-236.

⁶ For a recent survey of the broader phenomenon of excerpting texts from Greco-Roman literature, see S. Morlet, ed., *Lire en extraits: Lecture et production des textes, de l'Antiquité à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris: PU Paris-Sorbonne, 2015).

⁷ J. E. Sanzo, *Scriptural Incipits on Amulets from Late Antique Egypt: Text, Typology, and Theory*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 84 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 131-132.

Rahlfs 896 and P. Berlin 13994 = Rahlfs 960—provide further examples of the selective appropriation of passages from Exodus in newly written texts in Greek-speaking Christian circles. Transcriptions and notes for each fragment can be found in the appendix at the end of this article.

Analysis of P. Rendel Harris Inv. 54 c = Rahlfs 896

P. Rendel Harris Inv. 54 c = Rahlfs 896 of the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham was published by Manfredo Manfredi in 1985.⁸ It was not included in Wevers' edition of the Greek Exodus, which was published six years later in 1991.⁹ I had the opportunity to examine the papyrus in person in the Cadbury Research Library on 24-25 February 2015, and Catherine Martin kindly provided me with digital scans of both recto and verso at 400 dpi.¹⁰ The manuscript is preserved in one extant papyrus fragment of unknown provenance, measuring 17.0 cm in height by 12.5 cm in width between its maximally preserved edges. There is heavy deterioration on all the edges entirely around the fragment and frequently within the outline of the preserved material.

This papyrus is significant in a number of respects. First, it is inscribed in two columns only on the front (→) side, suggesting that it was either a loose sheet or constructed in a (sc)roll format. The latter format would be uncommon among the preserved Greek Exodus fragments and could suggest a Jewish provenance.¹¹ Nevertheless, for reasons discussed below, I suspect 896

⁸ M. Manfredi, "166. LXX Exodus 22-23," in *The Rendel Harris Papyri of Woodbrooke College, Birmingham, Volume II*, Studia Amstelodamensia ad epigraphicam, ius antiquum et papyrologicam pertinentia XXVI (Zutphen, the Netherlands: Terra Publishing, 1985), 1-5, plate I.

⁹ J. W. Wevers, *Exodus*, Septuaginta—Vetus Testamentum Graecum, Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991). This edition will provide the basis for the textual notes in this paper.

¹⁰ Note that the collection has been moved from the Orchard Learning Resource Centre (the location still listed in the official online Göttingen *Verzeichnis* as of December 2012, <http://demo.multivio.org/client/#get&url=http://rep.adw-goe.de//bitstream/handle/11858/00-001S-0000-0022-A30C-8/Rahlfs-Sigeln_Stand_Dezember_2012.pdf?sequence=1%3E>, accessed 29 June 2016) to the Cadbury Research Library on the main campus of the University of Birmingham.

¹¹ Manfredi, "LXX Exodus," 1. There are no opportunities in the preserved text to determine how the scribe treated the *nomina sacra*. Of the Greek Old Testament manuscripts in (sc)roll format listed in L. W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), appendix 1, only four abbreviate the *nomina sacra* (P. Oxy. 1166 = Ra 944; P. Oxy. 1075 = Ra 909; P. Lond. Lit. 207? = Ra 2019;

probably never was a roll containing the entire book of Exodus, but was rather a single loose sheet of papyrus. Second, it is dated by Manfredi to the middle of the 3rd century CE, making it one of our earliest Greek fragments of Exodus.

Significantly, 896 consistently has high dots between small word groups (mostly verbs, nouns, and pronouns with associated articles, conjunctions, and prepositions), suggesting an educational or liturgical context where it would be helpful for readers to have the text segmented into small, meaningful strings of text.¹² The fact that the dots are inserted without additional space between the letters suggests that they may have been added after the copying of the main text. Manfredi also notes that the hand is relatively unskilled,¹³ which would be particularly suitable to an educational or informal context. While clearly not a novice hand, several letters appear laboriously and inconsistently formed, the script is somewhat large (average bilinear letter height of 4 mm), and the lines are often crooked and unevenly spaced.

But beyond its physical characteristics, its text is entirely unique. The preserved text is clearly lacking three large segments of text. After 22:27 the scribe left half a line blank and began the next line with $\kappa\alpha\iota \chi[\rho]\epsilon\alpha'$ of 22:31, lacking the entirety of 22:28-31a. After $\sigma\upsilon\kappa \epsilon\sigma\eta' \mu\epsilon\tau\alpha \pi\omicron\lambda\lambda\omega\nu'$ [επι κακια·] of 23:2, the scribe continued (apparently without leaving blank space) with the beginning of 23:14 at the start of the next line, lacking 23:2b-13. And after [εξ Αι]γυπτου'

P. Alex. Inv. 203? = Ra 850). Many other literary rolls contain Christian works, according to Hurtado (P. Oxy. 4706; P. Berlin 5513; P. Oxy. 405; P. Jena Inv. 18 + 21; P. Dura 10; P. Iand. 5.70; PSI 11.1200; P. Oxy. 412; P. Ryl. 3.469; P. Berlin 9794; P. Oxy. 2070; P. Mich. 18.764; P. Mich. 18.763; P. Lond. Lit. 228; P. Med. Inv. 71.84; P. Mich. 18.766; P. Strasb. Inv. 1017; P. Laur. 4.140?; P. Oxy. 655; P. Oxy. 3525; P. Oxy. 2949?; P. Vind. G 2325; P. Fay. 2?; P. Vind. G 29 456r + 29 828r).

¹² Manfredi, "LXX Exodus," 2. Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 210, labels the dots reading marks. He notes also P. Lond. Lit. 207 (= Ra 2019) and P. Laur. 4.140 as having syllable division marks and relates them possibly to educational contexts. He also notes PSI Inv. 1989 (= Ra 2122) as having sense-unit marks. E. G. Turner and P. J. Parsons, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (2nd ed.; Bulletin Supplement 46; London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), 7-8, 144-145 discuss some literary texts with division into word groups or clauses, which they suppose is intended to facilitate the reading of dramatic texts by performers or biblical texts by public readers. Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (American Studies in Papyrology 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 48-49, 87, lists numerous parallel examples of oblique strokes separating word groups in school texts, concluding that such division "is rarely present in Greek texts other than exercises" (p. 48) and that "When the words or word groups ... in a well written text are consistently separated, usually by oblique dashes, it is very likely that the text in question was a book used in school for reading" (p. 49).

¹³ Manfredi, "LXX Exodus," 1.

of 23:15, the scribe left a short interval blank and then appears to have continued on the same line with [και εορτην συντε] of 23:16, lacking 23:15b-16a.

Each of these three large minuses could potentially be explained by homoioteleuton (ειμι Π μοι; πολλων Π υμων; Αι]γυπτου Π σου). The unskilled hand and frequent mistakes in the preserved text could support this suggestion (cf. 22:31 εηρ[ι]αλωτα for θηριαλωτα; 23:1 γενεσθηε for γενεσθαι; 23:1 ρ is written over an incorrect υ in μαρτυς). The size and frequency of the minuses, however, suggests that the differences are not to be explained as accidental omissions. The intentionality of the shorter texts may also be supported by the fact that all three large minuses occur in 896 at section breaks visually marked with blank space and/or by beginning a new section at the left margin.¹⁴ Furthermore, the closest passage that the unidentified ink traces from the first column could possibly be identified with is 22:8 (if the first column indeed contained text from Exodus). If this identification is correct, it would require a column height reconstructed according to other known witnesses at approximately 70-75 lines, which is obviously far more than is physically plausible (this would make the inscribed columns approximately 50 cm in height). This strongly suggests that a large quantity of text from 22:8-26 was also lacking in 896.

As Manfredi mentions, it is very difficult to explain why so many long sections are lacking in 896 from a literary point of view.¹⁵ First, it should be noted that it is most improbable that 896 reflects an earlier literary stage in the growth of the book of Exodus. The shorter texts occur with a regularity that cannot be explained as early forms secondarily supplemented in the rest of the tradition. Furthermore, if the lack of these texts reflected an early stage of the development of the book, no redactor would have inserted the new texts as they occur in the other witnesses. The contents of the first missing passage (22:28-31a) are completely unrelated to the surrounding context, without anything to prompt such an interpolation. The second missing passage (23:2b-13) at first continues the context of impartiality in bearing witness and resisting the sinful majority, but quickly shifts to other unrelated discussions. The third missing passage (23:15b-16a) is problematic, because even the short text of 896 says that there are three appointed feasts, whereas 896 apparently lists only two. The fact that it also lacks the final phrase relating to the feast of unleavened bread in 23:15 (viz. “No one shall appear before me empty-handed”) makes it clear that the command to observe the festival of harvest was not simply added or repositioned in the other witnesses against a short base

¹⁴ So also A. Rahlfs and D. Fraenkel, *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments. Bd. 1,1: Die Überlieferung bis zum VIII. Jahrhundert* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum Supplementum 1,1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 44.

¹⁵ Manfredi, “LXX Exodus,” 3-4.

text like 896. Thus, we can confidently conclude that 896 must have been derived from the full, continuous running text of the book of Exodus as known from other witnesses.

That said, there is no obvious thematic explanation for the shorter text of 896. 22:28 and 23:13 speak of other gods, which could have potentially prompted omissions for theological reasons, but this explanation cannot account for much of the omitted text in all three sections. If 896 was written in a Christian context, it would be understandable why references to animal sacrifice, Sabbaths, and Jewish festivals might be omitted, but this does not explain much of the omitted text or the fact that two festivals were included. It is also difficult to imagine what thematic purpose would be served by omitting the second half of 23:2, which is essentially a restatement of the first half. Nor do the omitted sections entail clearly defined literary units, frequently crossing over natural literary boundaries. There does not seem to be any one compelling literary explanation for why all of these sections would have been omitted.

If we examine not the omitted texts, but the included texts, the picture is not much clearer. The preserved text has no thematic continuity and inadequate transitions. Furthermore, 896 lacks even basic coherence, since it omits one of the three feasts, while still requiring observation of all three. The passages included would not be expected to be particularly prominent in either Jewish or Christian liturgical or homiletical contexts, wherein the omitted sections would actually probably be more fitting. I can only conclude that there does not seem to be any organizing literary principle justifying an intentional compilation of Exodus texts.

Instead, the creator of the short text of 896 seems to have proceeded sequentially through at least this portion of the book of Exodus, regularly omitting sections rather arbitrarily for reasons other than literary content. This seems to me to fit well with an educational context, where a student would have been expected to copy out substantial, near-contiguous excerpts of the book of Exodus. Copying excerpts of literary masterpieces is a well-known feature of Ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman scribal training. The teacher presumably would have marked out which texts to copy and which to omit from a copy of the book of Exodus or, perhaps even more likely, created a new selective text on a model to be copied and read by students. The unskilled hand of 896, the unusual format, and the secondary dots dividing word groups would also fit

well with this explanation of 896 as a school text, and 896 is more likely to be the copy of an intermediate-level student than the teacher's exemplar.¹⁶

In its preserved text, 896 is characteristically a very good witness to the Old Greek (OG), as reconstructed by Wevers. There is practically no evidence of revision towards a Hebrew text. Its four sensible singular readings (apart from the large lacking passages) all probably reflect inner-Greek corruption.

22:27 τοῦτο 2° \mathfrak{A}] > 896(vid) (According to the reconstructed space, 896 appears to disagree with the Masoretic text = MT; cf. the same error in the minuscule 126 at τοῦτο 1°)

22:27 πρὸς με] προς εμε 896; *adversus te* ^{Lat}cod 103; + ζητων 59

22:31 τῷ \mathfrak{A}] + δε 896 (896 disagrees with the MT, but the conjunction is natural to smooth out the transition)

22:31 ἀπορρίψατε] -ψετε (c var) A F F^b 15-58 b 107' 56 127 t 392 120'-128' 646 Co Syh; -ψεσθε 767; ριψετε 126; ἀποριψεται 896 (896 disagrees with the MT, but is phonologically similar to the OG)

In one case 896 seems basically to agree with ὁ ἐβρ' and the Syrohexapla in the addition of an awkward possessive pronoun found in the Hebrew, which is the best plausible evidence for revision towards a Hebrew text, though in itself quite meager.

22:27 ἰμάτιον] + αυτω 896; + (✕ Syh) αυτου (bis scr 376) 15-376 Syh, cf. ὁ ἐβρ' + αὐτοῦ Syh^{txt}

In shared readings, 896 seems to agree most closely with 707 of the *oII* group (an excellent source of hexaplaric material) and 127 of the *n* group. In three interrelated readings, it consistently reads the plural in agreement with 72-707-767, *n*⁻⁴⁵⁸, and Bo (with scattered agreement in other witnesses, particularly of the *O* group) against the singular of the Masoretic text (MT) and Wevers' reconstruction of the OG.

22:31 κρέας \mathfrak{A}] κρεα 896 *O*⁻³⁷⁶-15-707 73 44' 129 *n* 130 Bo; *quidquam* Sa

¹⁶ Criboire, *Writing*, 49, notes at least two examples of such student copies with marked word division—T.BM GR 1906.10-20.2 and P.Leiden inv. 17—alongside a larger number of teachers' exemplars. Interestingly, among the latter is the 7th century wooden tablet P.Vat.gr. 56 (= Ra 2176), which includes Psalm 28 and part of Psalm 29 according to the Septuagint, showing the use of the Greek scriptures in a Christian educational context. The similar use of scriptural excerpts for educational purposes is also well-documented in the rabbinic literature and Cairo Geniza documents; see J. Olszowy-Schlanger, "Learning to Read and Write in Medieval Egypt: Children's Exercise Books from the Cairo Geniza," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 48, no. 1 (2003): 47-69.

22:31 θηριάλωτον **¶**] pr (※ Syh) εν τω (> *f* Compl) αγρω 15-58-376 *f*^{56*} 318 Syh = Compl, cf. σ' θ' + ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ Syh^{txt}; θηριοβρωτον F^b; -λωτα 896 (with spelling error) 72-707-767 *n*⁻⁴⁵⁸ Bo; -λω^r 458; + (※ Arm^{ms}) *in agro* Arm

22:31 ἀπότο F F^b **¶**] αυτω 376 551 106-125' 619 318 319* 799; αυτα 896 F^a O⁻³⁷⁶-707 *n* 527 Bo; > 44 Arm

It is not impossible that the plural readings actually reflect the true OG in these cases. The Hebrew singular רֶשֶׁת is consistently translated with the plural of κρέας elsewhere in the Septuagint of Exodus in reference to the flesh of animals to be eaten,¹⁷ and there is a tendency in the Greek tradition to change these plurals into singulars. Furthermore, while the *n* and *O* groups are fairly closely related¹⁸ and the Boharic has heavy hexaplaric influence, 896 (unknown to Wevers) makes a strong case for the pre-hexaplaric nature of these readings. In most cases, 896 does not follow hexaplaric readings, and in these cases, neither the *O* and *n* groups, 707, nor 896 add the phrase under the asterisk εν τω αγρω into their main texts. If the plural readings reflect the OG, then they have little to say about the relationship between 896 and the *O* and *n* groups, except that they both preserve an old text for this passage. If the plurals are indeed secondary, however, they may suggest genetic relationships between these manuscripts; possibly Origen used an old Egyptian text for his Septuagint column.

Four other shared readings only serve to reinforce this general profile.

22:27 ἀποτοῦ 1^o] αυτω (-το 610 318 799 Phil 224^{ap}) 896(vid) 767-*oI* Cⁿ 107'-125 127 85^{txt}-130-321-343' *y*⁻⁵²⁷ 128'-628 59 426 646' Phil III 224 226 228; αυ^r 458; > 75

23:2 πλειόνων 1^o] πολλων 896 707-767 *b n* 527 Phil II 175 280 Chr VII 186 XIV 266 Clem I 252 (sed hab Compl); ^o2^o 72 318

23:14 ἐορτάσατέ (-ται 319) B 58 52'-73 44' 53-56*-246 *n*⁻¹²⁷ 84 *x* 527 120'-122-128* 18 46 59 76' 426 Cyr *Ad* 1064 Or *Sel* 293] εορταζετε 551 = Compl; inc 664; -σετε (c var) 896 ^{Lat}Hi *Agg* I 1 *Gal* II 3 rell

23:15 τὸν καιρόν] των καιρων 618 44* 128; om τόν 896 707 127

¹⁷ Cf. J. W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus* (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 30; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 357.

¹⁸ J. W. Wevers, *Text History of the Greek Exodus* (Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens XXI; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 36, 63. I would particularly note that 707 shares many of the distinctive (even dittographic, e.g., 33:7 σκηνη σκηνη) additions of the Byzantine groups (*d n t*) that Wevers discusses on p. 59 (see, e.g., 22:14; 25:36; 29:1; 30:15, 16; 35:24; 36:13).

The probable reading *αυτω* in 22:27 is in agreement with an old Egyptian reading popular among the hexaplaric witnesses and may well go back to the Old Greek. The reading *πολλων* in 23:2 reflects a more literal translation of the Hebrew רבים, which could suggest inconsistent revision towards the Hebrew. Nevertheless, since *πλειόνων* is used later in the verse in all extant witnesses, it is possible that the original translator varied his terminology intentionally to avoid redundancy. At very least the agreement of 896, Philo, and Clement of Alexandria suggests that *πολλων* was an old Egyptian reading, and it should be noted that 896 agrees once again with 707 and the *n* group. 896 reads the future indicative with the majority of manuscripts (including 707 and 127, the latter against the rest of the *n* group) against the aorist imperative in 23:14. Wevers suggests the OG read the imperative, possibly under the influence of *φυλάξασθε* in 23:13.¹⁹ In that case, the future would either reflect revision towards the Hebrew or phonological confusion within the Greek tradition. Nevertheless, it is equally possible that the future indicative was the original translation, since the Septuagint translates with the future *ἐορτάσετε* twice in the other two similar contexts in 12:14 and has a tendency to vary between imperative and future indicative. Either way, the corruption is probably inner-Greek and likely occurred multiple times independently in the tradition. The lack of the article before *καιρόν* in 23:15 also agrees with 707 and 127, and though the Hebrew construct noun also does not have an article at this point, none of these manuscripts agrees with the Hebrew texts for the entire construct chain. Undoubtedly secondary, this reading may perhaps have been created multiple times independently, but the agreement of 896 with 707 and 127 in other possibly secondary readings in other variation units decreases the likelihood of coincidental agreement in this case. Whatever the precise relationship of 896 with 707 and 127, at least it can confidently be said that 896 agrees most closely with these two manuscripts.

To sum up the textual character of the preserved text of 896, it is a very good witness to the OG text, with a few singular readings reflecting inner-Greek corruption and occasional agreements with members of the *O* and *n* groups against Wevers. In these latter cases, 896 most consistently agrees with 707 and 127.

¹⁹ Wevers, *Notes*, 365.

Analysis of P. Berlin 13994 = Rahlfs 960

P. Berlin 13994 = Rahlfs 960 was published by Otto Stegmüller in 1939.²⁰ I had the opportunity to examine the manuscript in person in the *Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung* of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin on 23 December 2014.²¹ It is dated by Stegmüller to the 5th-6th centuries CE, and by Cavallo and Maehler more precisely to the middle or latter half of the 6th century CE.²² 960 is preserved in one extant parchment fragment of a bifolium, measuring approximately 8.5 cm in height by 9.5 cm in width, preserving a substantial proportion of one leaf and a small, unscribed portion of the innermost margins of the opposite leaf. There is evidence of folding and stitching between the two folia. Written on both front and back, the manuscript can be reconstructed as a small, well-prepared codex with one column per page of about 18 lines. The writing block would have measured approximately 11 cm in height by 8 cm in width, and the entire closed codex approximately 12 cm x 9 cm.²³ While Stegmüller argues that the high quality preparation of the parchment suggests a Bible codex, at the reconstructed dimensions, the rest of Exodus alone would have required over 300 pages, making the book nearly as thick as it was wide. The infeasibility of this reconstruction suggests instead that 960 never contained the continuous running text of the entire book of Exodus in any textual form. The late date, (inconsistent) abbreviation of *nomina sacra*, and codex format all suggest a Christian origin for 960.²⁴ Additionally, 960 exhibits regular punctuation with high dots between sentences.

One of the most distinctive features of 960 is the complete lack of Exodus 23:14-31:11. On the front side of the inscribed leaf it reads the continuous text of Exodus 23:10-12. On the back, however, the text of 23:12-13 runs to the end of a line and is followed by Exodus 31:12-13 on the following line without

²⁰ O. Stegmüller, *Berliner Septuagintafragmente* (Berliner Klassikertexte 8; Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1939), 10-15, plate II.

²¹ Thanks especially to Marius Gerhardt for his hospitality during my visit and subsequent comments on the readings of the papyrus. The fragment had been thought to have been lost (as still stated in the December 2012 online Göttingen *Verzeichnis*), but has since been located again. As of the last time I checked (28 June 2016), the fragment had not yet been digitally photographed and uploaded on the museum website.

²² G. Cavallo and H. Maehler, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period: A.D. 300 – 800* (Bulletin Supplement 47; London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), 84-85.

²³ Stegmüller, *Berliner Septuagintafragmente*, 10.

²⁴ Furthermore, Cavallo and Maehler, *Greek Bookhands*, 84, note that the type of script found in 960 was typically used for Coptic manuscripts or Greek-Coptic diglots. This possible association would also argue for a Christian context.

any evident visual marks or blank space. Only the right margin is preserved, so it is possible that there was some visual indication of the jump from chapter 23 to chapter 31 in the now-lost left margin, but reconstruction requires the placement of the beginning of 31:12 at the left margin.

Stegmüller insightfully notes, however, that there is a dicolon that seems to be misplaced at the end of the line before the last line of 23:13 after *μη ακουσ]θησονται*.²⁵ Stegmüller is almost certainly correct that this punctuation mark is misplaced, since this is not the end of the sentence and there is no punctuation at the end of the sentence, both contrary to the normal pattern of punctuation in the manuscript. But he does not draw any inferences from this conclusion for the nature of the arrangement of the text. The erroneous placement of the punctuation mark probably implies that the punctuation was inserted after the text was initially copied. If the copyist had been inserting punctuation as he wrote or copying it from a correct exemplar, he would have been unlikely to misplace the mark, since *σου* would have been the last word he had written before writing the dicolon. Thus, the punctuation was probably added either by the original copyist or a later punctuator *after* the text had been copied with its shift from 23:13 to 31:12. It should also be noted that this punctuation mark is a dicolon, rather than the high dot normally separating sentences in this fragment. It may very well have been intended to mark a more significant section break, suggesting that either the copyist or a later reader recognized a major literary break in the text at this point.

To analyze this arrangement, we must first consider whether or not it could preserve an arrangement earlier than the other preserved witnesses. Exodus 23:10-13 gives laws requiring rest from God's people. 23:10-11 requires them to leave their fields fallow for one out of every seven years, and 23:12 requires them to rest from their work on the seventh day of each week. 23:13 is a concluding exhortation to obey these commands and not to call on other gods. Exodus 31:12-17 concludes a long, detailed passage commanding the construction of the tabernacle with a command to keep the Sabbath perpetually, before Moses descends from Mt. Sinai. The topical arrangement in 960 focusing on periods of rest—particularly the Sabbath—is self-evident. Nevertheless, in 960, the Sabbath laws are separated by the summary statement in 23:13 that only makes sense in the context of the arrangement of the book of Exodus known from our other witnesses. In other words, the presence of 23:13 in 960 implies a secondary derivation from the expected arrangement of the book, and 960 should not be considered a witness to early source material of the book of

²⁵ Stegmüller, *Berliner Septuagintafragmente*, 12.

Exodus or to an earlier, topical arrangement of the legal material within the book. This can be further corroborated by the implausibility that a later redactor would have separated these Sabbath laws and placed them in their contexts in known texts of the book of Exodus.

If the arrangement in 960 is derived from the general structure of the book essentially known from all other witnesses, then why did the text come to be arranged in this way? Accidental omission of such a large quantity of text as 23:14-31:11 in the middle of the book is completely implausible. Intentional omission in a copy of Exodus is hardly more plausible, since a text without the festivals, promises about entering the land, covenant ratification, and tabernacle could hardly still have a claim to represent a version of the book of Exodus, especially in such a late period. One of the Sabbath laws could have been relocated or duplicated adjacent to the other, but this would make it difficult to explain the intervening 23:13. The reconstruction of the small codex further mitigates against all of these possibilities.

More likely, 960 reflects the work of a compiler collecting topically related legislation regarding periods of rest.²⁶ The compiler (either the scribe of 960 or a predecessor) appears to have searched sequentially through the book of Exodus for references pertaining at least to the Sabbath, since the two passages included appear in the same order as they occur in Exodus (cf. Sabbath regulations in 16:23-30; 20:8-11; 23:12-13; 31:13-17; 34:21; 35:1-3). He transferred complete literary units from Exodus to his new compilation (retaining even parts of the narrative framework), decontextualizing and recontextualizing them by simple juxtaposition, apparently without making any other major modifications to the text or removing disruptive wording to smooth out the transitions. With the present state of the evidence, it is impossible to determine what the other contents of this small codex would have been, but the selective nature of the juxtaposition of 23:10-13 and 31:12-13 is clear. Unfortunately, there is insufficient evidence to reconstruct the social context in which such a compilation would have been constructed and used.

In addition to its selective character, 960 is also textually very interesting. Stegmüller argued based on several Hebraizing readings that 960 was an independent translation from a Hebrew text similar to, but sometimes different

²⁶ Rahlfs and Fraenkel, *Verzeichniss*, 32, note that Bickermann considered it a liturgical collection, but suggest alternatively that it could have been a school text. J. van Haelst, *Catalogue des papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens* (Papyrologie 1; Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976), 38, wonders whether it may have been a lectionary.

from—and possibly even earlier than—the MT. Despite its many distinctive features, however, the sometimes peculiar verbal agreement between 960 and the OG suggests instead a text based essentially on a Septuagint source text.²⁷ Some representative examples suggesting dependence on the OG include:

- 23:11** ἀφα[ισιν] ποιησις· και ανεσ[εις αυ]την·
23:11 τα δε] ὑπολιπομεν[α εδε]ται τα θηρια τρο[υ αγρου]
23:12 και ο π[ροσηλ]υτος
31:12 Και ελα]λησεν κς̄
31:13 εσ]τιν γαρ σημειον

The textual character of 960 is quite unique. It is not a particularly good witness to the OG, usually only agreeing with Wevers' text when joined by most manuscripts. Nor does it closely align with any other manuscripts. It seems to agree once in a Hebraizing revision (against Aquila) with several manuscripts with which it is not otherwise particularly close.

23:11 τὰ ἄγρια] της γης 126; του αγρου 960(vid)²⁸ F^b z 424 426 646 Arm Syh = 𐤀 (formally equivalent to the MT); cf. α' (inc 707; + τα 85-130-344) ζῶα τῆς χώρας M 707 14-57'-422-500-552 85'(s nom)-130-344 18 646

In two relatively innocuous details, 960 agrees with 53.

23:11 δὲ ὑπολειπόμενα] υπολελιμμενα δε 509; δε υπολιπ. B* 960 53' (itacism); δε υπολελειμμενα 68'-120' 424; om δέ 551

23:12 ἡμέρας] -ραις 960 53 628 (dative of time, rather than accusative of time); -ραι 458

Neither of these cases suggest revision towards any Hebrew texts. Furthermore, since 53 departs from the rest of the *f* group in both cases, these are likely simply to be parallel linguistic changes coincidentally preserved in 960 and 53.

960 agrees with 799 on two probable Hebraizing revisions.

23:13 comma] pr και 960 799 Aeth Arab Bo^A = 𐤀 (addition of conjunction in agreement with the MT); > 77

31:13 σύνταξον] pr λαλησον και 646; λαλησον M^{mg} 960 O⁻³⁷⁶-29'-707¹ C^{o(-54)} b d f⁻¹²⁹ n⁽⁻⁴⁵⁸⁾ 30'-85^{txt}-130^{txt}-321^{txt}-343-344^{txt} t 527 318' 46 424 509

²⁷ Cf. Rahlfs and Fraenkel, *Verzeichnis*, 32.

²⁸ Wevers does not cite 960 in support of this reading, but the reading is sufficiently well-preserved for inclusion. See the transcription in the appendix.

799^{Lat}cod 100 Arab Arm Bo Syh = \mathfrak{H} (probable hexaplaric revision towards the MT²⁹); λαλησεις 376; ταξον 59

The first of these variants, however, is very minor, and provides scant evidence either for revision towards the MT or a close relationship between 960 and 799. The second is a clear agreement in a secondary reading in agreement with the MT, but it is a popular variant, and so does not argue strongly for a close relationship between these two manuscripts.

960 also agrees twice with both n^{458} and 527 in probable revisions towards the MT and once with n^{458} and 767.

23:13 ὑμῶν = Tar] σου 960 n 527^{Lat}Tert *Idol* 20 = \mathfrak{H} Sam (possibly revision towards the MT)

31:13 σύνταξον] pr λαλησον και 646; λαλησον M^{mg} 960 O⁻³⁷⁶-29'-707^l C^{"(-54)} b d f¹²⁹ n⁽⁻⁴⁵⁸⁾ 30'-85^{txt}-130^{txt}-321^{txt}-343-344^{txt} t 527 318' 46 424 509 799^{Lat}cod 100 Arab Arm Bo Syh = \mathfrak{H} (probable hexaplaric revision towards the MT); λαλησεις 376; ταξον 59

31:13 φυλάξεσθε A B F^b M 381' 739 19-108^c 106 56-129 s⁻³⁰ 130* t⁸⁴ 527 y^{Lat}[Iren IV 16.1] -σθαι 108* 30-130*; -ξασθαι 64*-82-376 246 319 509 Aeth Arm Sa; -ξησθε 71'; -ξατε (-ξατ(αι) 960) 960 767 n^{458} (φυλαξατ(αι) in 960 is probably a phonological error for φυλαξατε, which is an inner-Greek corruption); -ξειτε 458; φυλασσεσθε 55; -ξασθε^{Lat}Hi *Ezech* VI 20 rell

The first does provide an interesting case of agreement in a secondary reading and likely reflects Hebraizing revision. The second is a popular Hebraizing reading, so it does not necessarily indicate a close relationship between these manuscripts. Furthermore, 527 is part of the y group until 28:7, and then changes to the x group from 28:8, so the two readings are from parts of 527 with different textual characters. The reading φυλαξατ(αι) in 31:13 in essential agreement with 767 and n^{458} is also interesting in that it reflects a relatively distinctive inner-Greek corruption. Thus, while it is highly improbable that these readings betray a close relationship between 960 and either 527 or 767, it could be said that 960 may very well have loose affinities with the n group, a slightly aberrant branch of the Byzantine tradition with a penchant for Hebraizing revisions against the majority of the Byzantine tradition.³⁰

The singular readings of 960 are even more illuminating of its textual character, if not its relationships to other manuscripts. 960 is replete with careless

²⁹ Wevers, *Text History*, 512, says that this revision is pre-hexaplaric, but the witnesses evidence strong hexaplaric influence.

³⁰ Cf. Wevers, *Text History*, 46, 57, who lists eight relatively clear examples of near-unique n -group Hebraizing readings against the rest of the Byzantine witnesses.

itacisms, misspellings, and nonsense readings. Some meaningful singular readings may simply be inner-Greek corruptions:

23:11 τὸν ἀμπελώνά A] τ[οις ἀμ]πελουσιν 960 = Sam | τὸν ἐλαιῶνά A^{mss}] [τοις] ελαιουσιν 960 = A^{mss} Sam; om τόν A (the dative plurals agree with the Samaritan Pentateuch = SP against the MT, though some MT manuscripts read the plural for the latter variation unit; the change could be inner-Greek or a revision towards a Hebrew text like the SP³¹)

23:12 τὰ ἔργα A] pr *omnia* Aeth; το εργο[ν] 960 (the singular has no documented Hebrew support and is likely inner-Greek corruption)

23:13 ἀναμνησθήσεσθε, οὐδὲ μὴ ἀκουσθῆ 4Q11 A] [αν]αμνησις ουδε [μη ακουσ]θησονται 960 = Sam (4Q11, the MT, and the OG read plural, then singular, while the SP and 960 read singular, then plural; 960 may have arrived at the same reading as the SP coincidentally via inner-Greek changes or else reflects revision towards a Hebrew text like the SP)

31:12 πρὸς A] μετα 960 (no Hebrew witnesses read px , and the change is probably inner-Greek; it is also unlikely that a reviser would have changed the preposition and left ἐλάλησεν)³²

Other singular readings reflect different translation equivalents:

23:11 ἔθνους] λαου 960 (λαός is the expected translation equivalent for ny in Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion;³³ cf. Exod 15:14; Deut 2:21; 4:19; 7:19; 32:8, 21)

23:13 ἐτέρων A] αλλοτριων 960 (the change from ἕτερος to ἀλλότριος is also seen in reference to pagan deities in Exod 34:14 in *b* and the Complutensian edition and in Deut 6:14 in 392 and the apparatus to the edition of Theodoretus Cyrensis' *Quaestiones in Deuteronomium*)³⁴

A number of other singular readings seem to demonstrate processes of revision towards a Hebrew text:

³¹ Cf. Hempel, "Review," 123.

³² Contra Stegmüller, *Berliner Septuagintafragmente*, 12-13.

³³ J. Reider and N. Turner, *An Index to Aquila* (Leiden, 1966), 66.146.

³⁴ Similarly, J. Hempel, "Review of Stegmüller, *Berliner Septuagintafragmente*," *ThLZ* 65 (1940), 122-123, esp. 123. Contra Stegmüller, *Berliner Septuagintafragmente*, 12, who proposes a Hebrew reading נכר. Cf. the addition of αλλοτριους to θεούς at 22:28 in 58' ^{Lat}cod 103 Fil CXLVII 1 and the frequent translation with ἀλλότριος, e.g. Deut 31:18, 20; 1 Kgs 9:9; Hos 3:1; Jer 1:16; et al, in which the reverse change to ἕτερος is also occasionally evidenced.

23:12 ἀναπαύση] -σις (-σις 30) B 82 30'-85-343' = Ra; -σεις 120'; σαββατισ[εις] 960 (σαββατισ[εις] could reflect the use of the verb σαββατιζω elsewhere in the OG, but it is probably a revision towards תבשת of the MT and SP; so also Aquila in Lev 25:2); + σαββατα $\bar{\kappa}\omega$ τω θ $\bar{\omega}$ σου 19' (sed hab Compl): cf. 20:10, where 120^c reads σαββατησεις

23:13 εἶρηκα] -κας 108* (sed hab Compl); ειπον 960 = A Sam (revision towards the MT and SP יתנחם); ελαλησα C⁽⁻⁷⁷⁾-126 44 646; λελαληκα (λελελακηκα 618) A F M O^{r-767}-15-29 cI^{r-126} d^{r-44} s t z 18 46 55 59 76' 424 426 509 Aeth Syh^{msg}

31:13 ὁρᾶτε καὶ τὰ σάββατά] πλην το σαββα 960 (σαββα in 960 appears to be a nonsensical error for σαββατον, unless read as an abbreviation or dialectical form; πλην implies knowledge of the Hebrew reading תס of the MT and SP); om ὁρᾶτε καὶ Arab

31:13 παρ' ἐμοὶ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν] εμου [και] ανα μεσον υμων 960 (probably an error for ανα μεσον εμου και ανα μεσον υμων, which implies knowledge of the MT and SP בני בני ובני בני)³⁵

As a general synthesis concerning the textual character of 960 based on the preserved texts, we can say that 960 is a heavily revised text with loose affiliation with the Byzantine *n* group. Multiple errors seem to have affected the text of 960 *after* these processes of revision. In four minor phrases, 960 agrees in number with the SP against all other witnesses, making the SP the closest Hebrew text to 960, though it is not entirely clear whether these agreements are revisional or accidental.³⁶ 960, therefore, reflects the relatively careless transmission of a heavily revised Greek text. This analysis of the preserved texts accords well with the lack of 23:14-31:11, which probably reflects an approach to the text without any intent to precisely reproduce a written exemplar containing the complete, continuous text of the book of Exodus.

Comparison of Rahlfs 896 and 960

³⁵ Stegmüller, *Berliner Septuagintafragmente*, 13.

³⁶ It is worth noting here that Hempel, "Review," 123, suggested that 960 reflects the Σαμαρειτικόν, possibly from a Samaritan provenance, rather than the Septuagint. Nevertheless, as noted above, the manuscript is almost certainly of Egyptian Christian origin and shows signs of dependence upon the Septuagint, even if it does reflect some Samaritan readings. The agreements with the SP are probably not distinctive enough to support Hempel's contention, and 960 frequently disagrees with the SP in significant readings.

Rahlfs 896 and 960 provide a rare opportunity for comparison and contrast. Not only are they typologically very similar, but they actually overlap in specific passages with which their writers interacted (at least 23:10-16). What is particularly interesting is that, while both adopt the text of Exodus selectively, they do so in different ways and choosing different texts. 896 omits 23:10-13 and 23:15b-16a, but retains 23:14-15a and 23:16b. 960, on the other hand, retains 23:10-13, but omits 23:14-16. In other words, both omit 23:15b-16a, 896 omits 23:10-13 retained in 960, 960 omits 23:14-15a and 23:16b retained in 896, and never do the two retain the same text. This mixed pattern of agreement and disagreement further corroborates the conclusions based on the intrinsic material and textual evidence that these manuscripts cannot reflect earlier stages in the literary development of the book of Exodus, but rather can only be adequately explained by the selective use of the book of Exodus essentially as known in other witnesses.

Both 896 and 960 clearly reproduce Exodus *selectively*. In the case of 896, the selection seems somewhat arbitrary and may not even reflect a particular literary intention, if it was indeed a school exercise. 960 seems to reflect an intentional compilation of passages relating to periods of rest. Perhaps this topical selection should be understood in the context of personal study. The texts of 896 and 960 differ on which texts to retain and which to omit, no doubt based on the different underlying purposes for their creation.

The writers of the texts of both 896 and 960 also *sequentially* select passages from Exodus, retaining the sequence of their base texts in the resulting texts. The same phenomenon can be seen in other excerpted texts, such as 4Q175 and 4QExod^d. This may suggest a tendency to construct such selective texts while reading through the book of Exodus sequentially, rather than sporadic spot-checking, as might be more feasible with modern referencing tools. The person who created the short text of 896 appears to have worked through this passage of Exodus sequentially, omitting large quantities of text as he advanced through the book. The compiler of the text in 960 appears to have read through the book of Exodus and sequentially excerpted passages relating to periods of rest.

Both 896 and 960 also contain passages from Exodus *substantially* and *exclusively*. The writers of these texts retain large portions of text from Exodus, rather than merely occasional small snippets and citations. The selections are apparently not reworked into the running narrative or structure of a different work, nor do the writers alter the text to smooth out transitions between selected passages. Neither do they select passages from other books of the Greek Old Testament in the preserved portions of these manuscripts, although we

cannot exclude the possibility of selections from other books in the now-lost portions.

Conclusion

Rahlfs 896 and 960 illustrate well how literary texts were selectively reused in Greek-speaking Christian circles in Egypt in late antiquity. These two manuscripts serve as important reminders of the variety of media in which the texts of ancient literary works have been preserved and that these texts can only be fully understood in light of the diverse material contexts in which they are preserved.

DREW LONGACRE

University of Helsinki

Helsinki, Finland

drewlongacre@yahoo.com

Appendix: Transcriptions of Rahlfs 896 and 960

Rahlfs 896 = P. Rendel Harris Inv. 54 c (front →)

Column I	Column II
<p style="text-align: right;">... 22⁸⁷ εαν δε</p> <p>μη ευρεθη ο λεψας, προς ελευσεται ο κυριος της οικιας ενωπιον του θεου, και ομειται, η μην μη αυτο]ς πεⁱ πονηρευσθαι εφ' ολης της παρακ]αταⁱⁱ θηκης του πλησιον. ⁹ κατα παν ρητον αδικημα περι τε μοσχου και υποζυγιου και προβατου και...ⁱⁱⁱ</p>	<p>²⁶ σεις αυτω·] ²⁷ εστιν^{iv} [γαρ] τρ[υτο Περιβο]λαιον·^v αυτω^{vi} μον[ον^{vii} το ι]ματιον· αυτω· ασχημο συ]γης· αυτου· εν τινι· κοιμη θη]σεται· εαν ουν· καταβο]ηση π[ρ]ος^{viii} εμε· εισακουσο[μαι αυτου· ελ[ει]μων· γαρ ειμι· ^{ix x} ³¹ και κ[ρ]εα· εηρ[η]αλωτα·^{xi} ουκ εδεσθε^{xii} τω δε κυνι· αποριγεται· αυτα^{xiii} 23 ¹ Ου πα[ρ]αδεξη· ακοην· μ[αταιαν· ου συνκα[τ]αθηση· μετ[α του αδι κου· γενεσθε·^{xiv} μαρτυς·^{xv} α]δικος. ² ουκ εση· μετα πολλων·^{xvi} [επι κακια· ^{xvii} ¹⁴ Τρεις· καιρους· του εν[ιαυτου εορ τασετε μοι· ¹⁵ την εορτη[ν των α ζυμων· φυλαξασθε [ποειν· επτα ημε ρας· εδεσθε· α]ζυ[μα, καθατερ ενε τειλαμην σο]ι, ^{xviii} κ]ατα καιρο[ν του μηνος των γεων· εν γα[ρ αυτω εξηλθες εξ Αι γυπτου· ^{xix xx} [¹⁶ και εορτην συντε λειας· επ ε]ξο[δου του ενιαυτου εν τη συναγωγη^{xxi} [των εργαων σου των εκ] του· αγρο[ν σου. ¹⁷ τρεις καιρους</p>

ⁱ Manfredi transcribes this line as “[...]”. Paleographically, the traces on this line are most easily read as σγα, but there are no possible identifications for this string of letters in the immediate context. Other possibilities are σπε (22:8) or σπο (21:24), both of which could allow for the reading ατα in the following line. There do not seem to be any viable identifications in the context immediately preceding the passages preserved on column II, so it is very unlikely that column I simply preserved the uninterrupted text of chapter 22. I have transcribed the closest possible identification to the beginning of column II, though it remains uncertain. If this was indeed a school exercise or other type of anthology, the text may not even be from the book of Exodus. There is a 1.9 cm intercolumnar margin between the ends of both of these lines and the left margin of column II. 2.3-2.4 cm of uninscribed papyrus from the intercolumnar margin is preserved elsewhere above and below these lines, so they clearly jugged out far to the right of a jagged right margin, if indeed it was a full column. The notional right margin of column I does not appear to be preserved.

ⁱⁱ Manfredi transcribes this line as “[...]α”.

ⁱⁱⁱ There may be a tiny trace at the edge of the fragment at this point, but it is impossible to identify.

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- iv There is a small trace of ν not mentioned by Manfredi.
- v There is a small trace of λ on the single strand to the left of α not mentioned by Manfredi, and possibly another on the section of papyrus connected by a single strand just above it (the strand should be repositioned to be vertical). The loose strand above and to the left of these strands I cannot identify, but there is an ink trace.
- vi These traces could alternatively be read $\omega\tau\omicron\upsilon$ with Manfredi, who does not note the final traces. These traces somewhat favor ω , and the fact that the scribe adds $\omega\tau\omicron$ in the next line may further support this argument.
- vii There small traces of $\mu\omicron$ not mentioned by Manfredi.
- viii There is a small ink trace at this point visible from the back side due to a twisted papyrus strand, but I cannot place it in its proper location on the front.
- ix The entirety of this interval is preserved on the papyrus.
- x Exodus 22:28-31a is lacking in 896.
- xi Manfredi suggests this is incorrectly written for $\theta\eta\rho[\square]\alpha\lambda\omega\tau\alpha$. I have confirmed the reading on the fragment. The surface is preserved without ink between both upper and lower arcs and the central horizontal, so it cannot be a θ .
- xii This middle dot/dash is slightly longer than most of the high dots in this manuscript (2 mm vs. an average of 1 mm), but is very similar to the dot after $\epsilon\mu\iota$ on the previous line. I suspect there was no intended difference between these various dots. There is also an additional 5 mm of blank preserved papyrus following, such that we clearly have the right margin at this point.
- xiii This word is followed by 4 mm of blank preserved papyrus, such that we clearly have the right margin here. Note that the right margin is jagged, as is the right margin of the preceding column.
- xiv Manfredi suggests this is incorrectly written for $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha$. Indeed, the traces cannot fit $\sigma\theta\alpha$. The final traces have blank space between both the upper and lower arcs and the central horizontal, so it was clearly an ϵ .
- xv Manfredi notes that ρ is written over an incorrect ν . The error was probably prompted by the high frequency of the diphthong $\alpha\nu$ in the preceding lines.
- xvi The dot after this word is somewhat longer than average, but less than the dash after $\epsilon\delta\epsilon\sigma\theta\epsilon$ on line 8.
- xvii Exodus 23:2b-13 is lacking in 896.
- xviii This interval is not preserved on the papyrus, but is likely. Wevers does not cite any longer texts at this point. So also Ralhfs and Fraenkel, *Verzeichnis*, 44.
- xix Part of this interval is preserved on the papyrus. There is a dark spot immediately after $\gamma\upsilon\pi\tau\omicron\upsilon$ in line with the letters, which could perhaps be similar to the dots after $\epsilon\mu\iota$ on line 7 and $\epsilon\delta\epsilon\sigma\theta\epsilon$ on line 8. It is perhaps interesting that this is also a point where a long passage is lacking. Nevertheless, the facts that a clear dot is visible above $\gamma\upsilon\pi\tau\omicron\upsilon$ and the dark spot here is fainter and may not even be ink argues against its significance.
- xx Exodus 23:15b-16a is lacking in 896.
- xxi There are dark spots that may be traces of the last two letters at this point.

Rahlfs 960 = P. Berlin 13994

Front	Back
<p>23¹⁰ λυτοιητε εν γη Αιγυπτω. σο]υ· και συ[ν]αξ[εις τα γενηματα αυτη[ς·¹¹ τω δε εβδομω αφα[ισιν ποιησις· και ανεσ[εις αυ την· και εδοντ[αι οι πτω χοι του λαου [σου· τα δε ὑπολιπομεν[α εδονⁱ ται τα θηρια τρο[υⁱⁱ αγρου, ουτως ποιησις· τ[οις αμ πελουσιν σου και [τοις ελαιουσιν σου·¹² ς̄ ημ[ε ραις ποιησις το εργο[ν σου·ⁱⁱⁱ τη δε ημερα τη ε[βδομη σαββατισ[εις, ...? ινα αναπαυσηται ο βους σου και το υποζυγιον σου, και ινα αναψυξη ο υιος της</p>	<p>παιδισκης] σου και ο π[ρος ηλ]υτρος·¹³ και παντα οσ]α ειπον προς υμας φ]υλαξεται·^{iv} και ονο μα θεων^v αλλοτριων ουκ α]γαμνησις^{vi} ουδε μη ακουσ]θησονται·^{vii} εκ του στ]ροματος σου^{viii} 31¹² Και ελα]λησεν κς̄ μετα^{ix} Μου]ση λεγων¹³ Και συ λαλησον τοις ὑιοις^x ι]ηλ̄ λεγων πλην το^{xi} σαββα^{xii} μου φυλαξεται(αι)^{xiii} ε]στιν γαρ σημιον εμου και] ανα μεσον υμων εις τας γενεας υμων, ινα γνωτε οτι εγω κυριος ο αγιαζων υμας·¹⁴ και</p>

ⁱ Stegmüller says spacing suggests either υπολιπομεν[α εδον]ται or more probably υπολιπομεν[α αυτων εδε]ται. There does not seem to be room for αυτων, but the longer reconstruction of the verb is somewhat more likely.

ⁱⁱ There are rounded traces of the left edge of ο that cannot fit α. Stegmüller correctly suggests this reconstruction without noting the traces.

ⁱⁱⁱ There are three dots around the υ that may be ink, but none of them can be interpreted as a high dot. One most probably is intended as a low dot to mark punctuation, while the other two are probably not intentional.

^{iv} Stegmüller suggests that φ]υλαξεται is written instead of the imperative φ]υλαξατε, suggesting that the OG had the middle voice. Only 458 actually reads the expected φυλαξετα. More probably, φ]υλαξεται is simply a phonetic misspelling of φ]υλαξατε.

^v The full spelling of θεων here is not entirely unexpected in reference to pagan deities. For a parallel situation, see 1 Cor 8:5-6 in P46, as pointed out in a recent paper by Benjamin Overcash.

^{vi} Stegmüller prefers the active form here as more appropriate for the OG, but this is unlikely.

^{vii} Stegmüller notes that this dicolon appears to be misplaced and probably was supposed to be at the end of the following line. See the main body of this article for further discussion.

^{viii} Stegmüller notes that the singular reading σου is related to the prior reading αν]αμνησις.

^{ix} Stegmüller suggests that μετα is intending to faithfully translate the Hebrew preposition נס, as in 31:18, but this is unlikely.

^x Stegmüller transcribes ὄϊοις. Cavallo and Maehler, *Greek Bookhands*, 136 transcribe ὄϊοις. There appear to be two faint dots above the υ, but it is not entirely clear what is ink and what is deterioration on the surface. Furthermore, the dots are not centered as are the other rough breathing marks on this page. If ink between the two dots has deteriorated, they match the squiggly mark of ὕπολιπομεγ[α on the previous page well.

^{xi} Stegmüller suggests the abbreviation το(ν) here, though this is not visibly indicated.

^{xii} Stegmüller considers the form σαββα to be a scribal error, though noting a Pontic form σαββα, -ατος. There are a number of examples in the Exodus tradition of scribal errors where σαββα is written first without the rest of the word; cf. 16:25 (Ra 458, 72, 426); 20:10 (Ra 107); 31:15 (Ra 381).

^{xiii} There is a well-known vertical squiggly symbol indicating this abbreviation after the τ. Cf. C. Faulmann, *Das Buch der Schrift* (2nd ed.; Vienna: Druck und Verlag der kaiserlich-königlichen Hof- und Staatsdruckeri, 1880), 175. This disambiguation indicates the same spelling as in 23:13, which appears to be simply an incorrect form for the imperative. Stegmüller notes that λεγων πλην το σαββα μου φυλαξατ(αι) agrees mostly with the MT, though “Sabbaths” is plural in the Hebrew. Stegmüller thinks the singular may in fact be correct.