

A PTOLEMAIC SCRAP OF PLATO, *SOPHISTES*

Shortly before the publication in May 1955 of *The Hibeh Papyri* Part II, I identified the contents of two small scraps printed therein as No. 228 as from Plato, *Sophistes*. I had time to insert a slip stating the identification, but not to revise or assess the value of the text, and I attempt that revision and evaluation here.

The two scraps join together, forming a piece measuring 10 cm. wide and 9 cm. high, and offering parts of two columns, the lower margin being preserved. The writing (like most cartonnage from Hibeh, much effaced) is large and handsome, a hand of the same general appearance as P. Hib. 5, but more regular and controlled, clearly meriting the description 'book-hand' rather than 'cursive'. I should assign it within the limits 270 and 230 B. C. For punctuation I believe I can see traces of a marginal paragraphus, but neither spaces inside the line nor the double dots customarily used later to separate the speakers in dialogue. One correction has been made by the original scribe. There are 14-18 letters to a line, measuring about 6.5 cm. Between the foot of col. i and the first surviving line of col. ii, 264 letters (248, if one were to accept Burnet's deletion of *καὶ πηρασκομένην* exactly a line long) are lost, equivalent to between 17 and 19 lines. Each column therefore contained 23-26 lines, and the MS must have been a handsome one. This impression is sustained by the generous 3 cm. margin at the foot of col. i. If there were a similar margin at its head, the total height of the roll will have been about 28 cm.

In so far as can be judged from so small a piece, the text is close to the Oxford text of Burnet, and offers no support to the deletions, alterations and inversions of nineteenth century editors. If it is in fact correct, the papyrus is distinguished from the notoriously capricious Petrie *Phaedo* and *Laches*, which are of comparable age.

Col. i

[... πως] το[υ]το λεγε[ι]ς 223 E 4
 [το περι] την ψυχην ισως
 [αγνοου]μεν επει το γε
 [ετερο]ν που συνιεμεν
 5 [να]ι μουσικ'η'ν τεινυν 224
 [απ]ασαν λεγωμεν ε[χ]
 [π]ολεως εκαστ[ο]τε

Col. ii

...[
 ουκο[υν και τον μα] 224 B
 10 θημ[ατα συνωνου]
 μεν[ον πολιν τε εκ πο]
 λεως [νομισματος]
 αμειβο[ντα ταυτον]
 προσ[ερεις ονομα σφο]
 15 [δ]ρα γε

2. The upper part of the vertical of ψ was taken in the original publication to be part of a descender from the line above.
5. [να]ι: ι is represented only by a high dot of ink. This could be a high stop, but iota ends elsewhere in just such a dot, and there are no other stops. μουσικ'η'ν τεινυν: μουσικήν τε τείνυν, codd. The correction is by the original scribe.
6. [απ]ασαν: there is no room for the συνάπασαν of the majority of codd. Vindob. 54 has λέγομεν συνάπασαν.
8. I cannot verify the scanty traces as αλη[θεστατα λεγεις].
- 11-13. νομισματος del. Ast. But the word is needed in the papyrus to fill up the line. There is not room for <εἰς> πόλιν τε ἐκ πόλεως (Baumann), or πόλιν τε ἐκ πόλεως νομισματος <πωλοῦντα> ἀμείβοντα (Richards).
- 14-15. The paragraphus is not entirely certain.