

A PROPOSED READING AT I CORINTHIANS 2:1 IN PAPYRUS \mathfrak{P}^{46}

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Papyrus \mathfrak{P}^{46} has been an object of study since I began my work on First Corinthians. As I began work on I Cor. (in 1992) I endeavored to secure copies of this papyrus. I had one excellent B&W photograph which I purchased from the University of Michigan in 1989, and that was all I then possessed.

So, in 1990, I boldly entered a library in Portland Oregon with my trusty 35mm camera. I went to the Chester Beatty volumes and took the one which contained the facsimiles I needed. I went downstairs and in the sunlit room photographically reproduced the portions of \mathfrak{P}^{46} I needed; this for—and in the name of—private research.

These images/copies served me well over the years. But there were instances in which I required better quality images. I needed better resolution, and high color discrimination. So I bought one digital image from the castle in Dublin (which holds that portion of the manuscript from folio 39^r onward). I purchased a copy of folio 39^r which contains First Corinthians 1:24 - 2:2.

There is, on this leaf, TWO corrections which I would like to submit. The first which I shall briefly mention is in verse 31 of chapter one. In Kenyon's 1936 transcription (which is on his page 54), he shows this line:

γεγραπται ο καυχωμενος εν $\overline{\theta\omega}$ καυ

The line should read:

γεγραπται ο καυχωμενος εν $\overline{\kappa\omega}$ καυ per my reading

This would be line 21 in his facsimile. Using the digital image, and zooming in, it is clear to me that the straight back of the kappa is visible, as well as portions of the upper and lower right side extenders. Here is a large "blow-up" of the abbreviation. $\overline{\text{K}\omega}$



The digital image is probably clearer and easier to read than this PDF converted image! The whole line is visible in line 11 from the top in the following images which are presented so as to clarify the next reading, which reading is the focus of this paper.

Over the years I have noticed that various authors and scholars have often commented upon the variant seen in I Corinthians 2:1. They basically display these variant options:

ρυστηριον **OR** μαρτυριον
 per the $\overline{\text{K}\omega}$ per most other
Greek texts

So we are basically presented with two options:

(1) Paul came proclaiming to them the MYSTERY of God [or from God]

OR....

(2) Paul came proclaiming to them the TESTIMONY of God [or from God]

Most modern critics prefer MYSTERY - μυστηριον, and you can read the literatures for their various justifications. As far as I know those who have closely examined this passage also present just these two options mystery/testimony (such as Comfort *et al*). However there are other options. One is seen in about six minuscule manuscripts: notably

489 and 927

These are sister manuscripts, and hence reflect a single exemplar, not two. These minuscules read the abbreviation:

σωριον which is the abbreviation for - σωτηριον

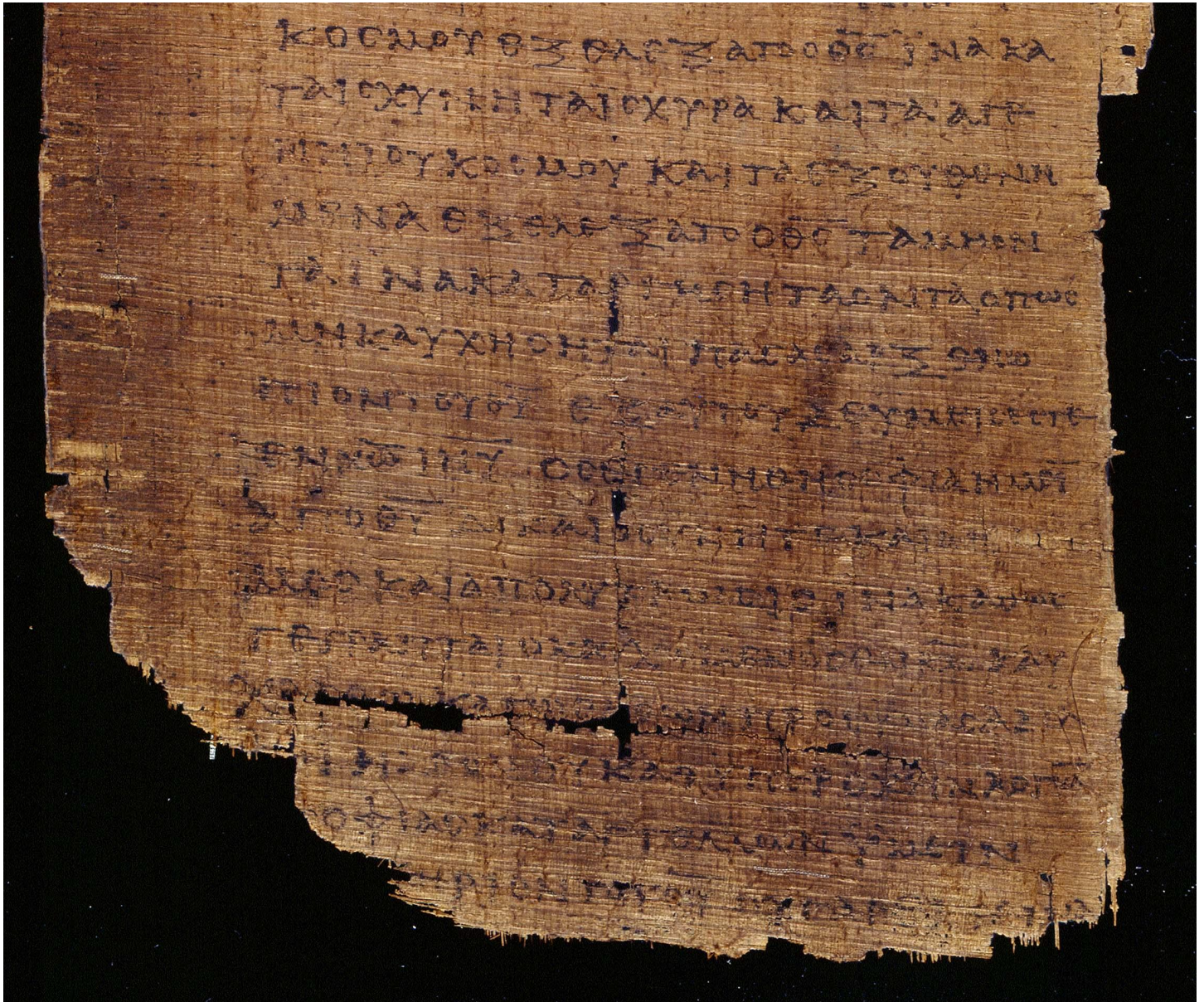
Also agreeing with these two minuscules are several lectionaries - 4598, 4593, 4599 (each as per the UBS₄ apparatus). Minuscule 2629 also reads σωτηριον. In my research I have (as yet) found no versions which indicate a reading for σωτηριον which of course means "salvation". Yet this is an excellent overlooked reading, σωτηριον:

(3) Paul came proclaiming to them the SALVATION from God [note ablative]

I have always preferred this, little supported, reading; especially as I am somewhat certain that is also the reading in our papyrus - P⁴⁶. Additionally there is another option, seen in

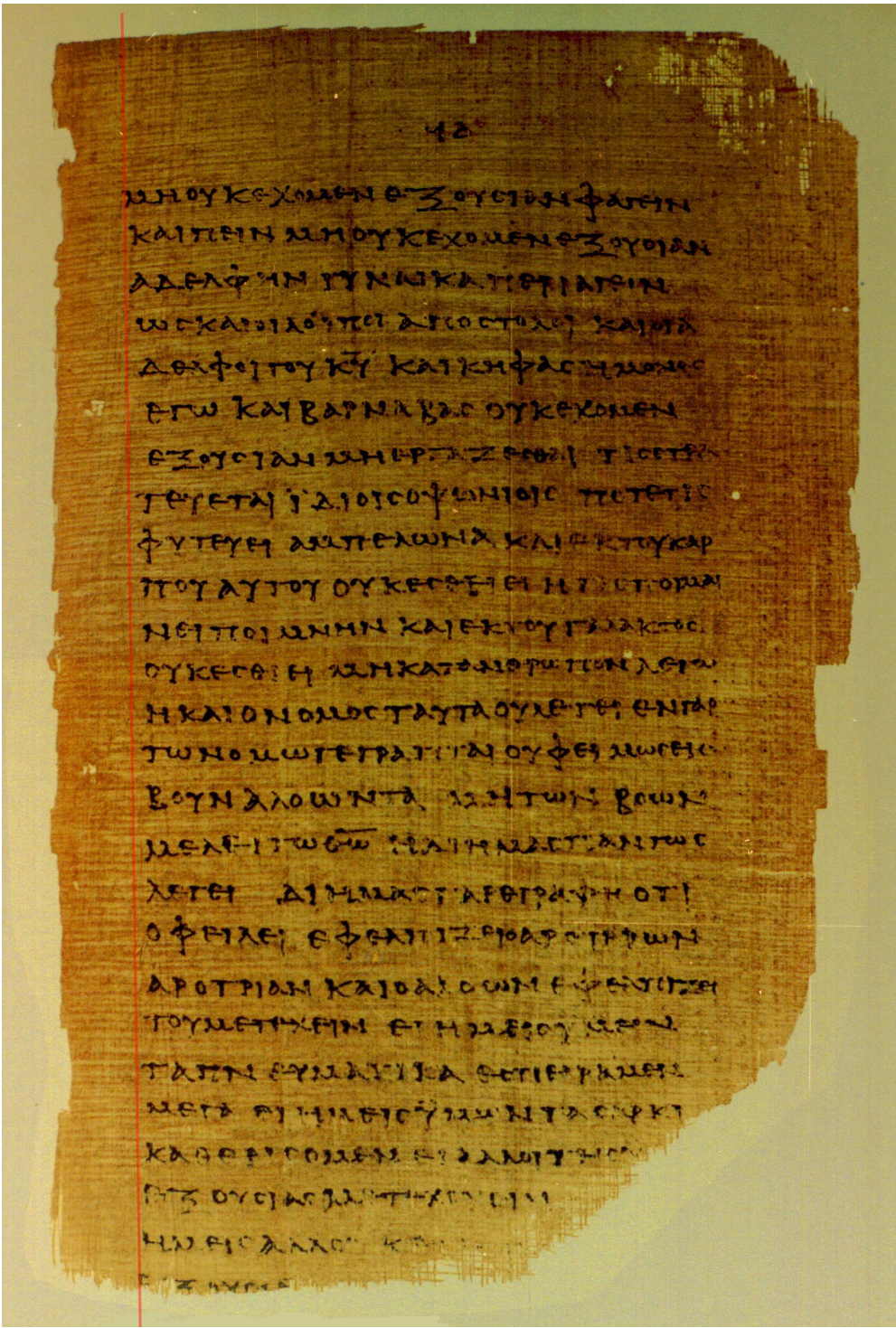
one minuscule, and that is the reading - ευαγγελιον, "GOSPEL" seen in MS 2012. But this is certainly a scribal alteration, and not the original reading, in my judgment.

Here is a portion of the wonderful digital image which I bought from the Castle in Dublin (see references). I show only a portion so as to be within copyright "fair use" laws.



In this lower portion of this leaf, 15 lines are visible. Recall that in line 11, lies the first reading discussed in this paper. However, we now focus upon the bottom line, and the left

margin. Note that at line 9 (as counted in the above image), the left margin extends out to the left slightly. This is a bit unusual for this papyrus. Normally the margin is rather straight, as shown in the next image below:



Note that the left margin is rather straight (as indicated by the red line). This is typical for the manuscript.

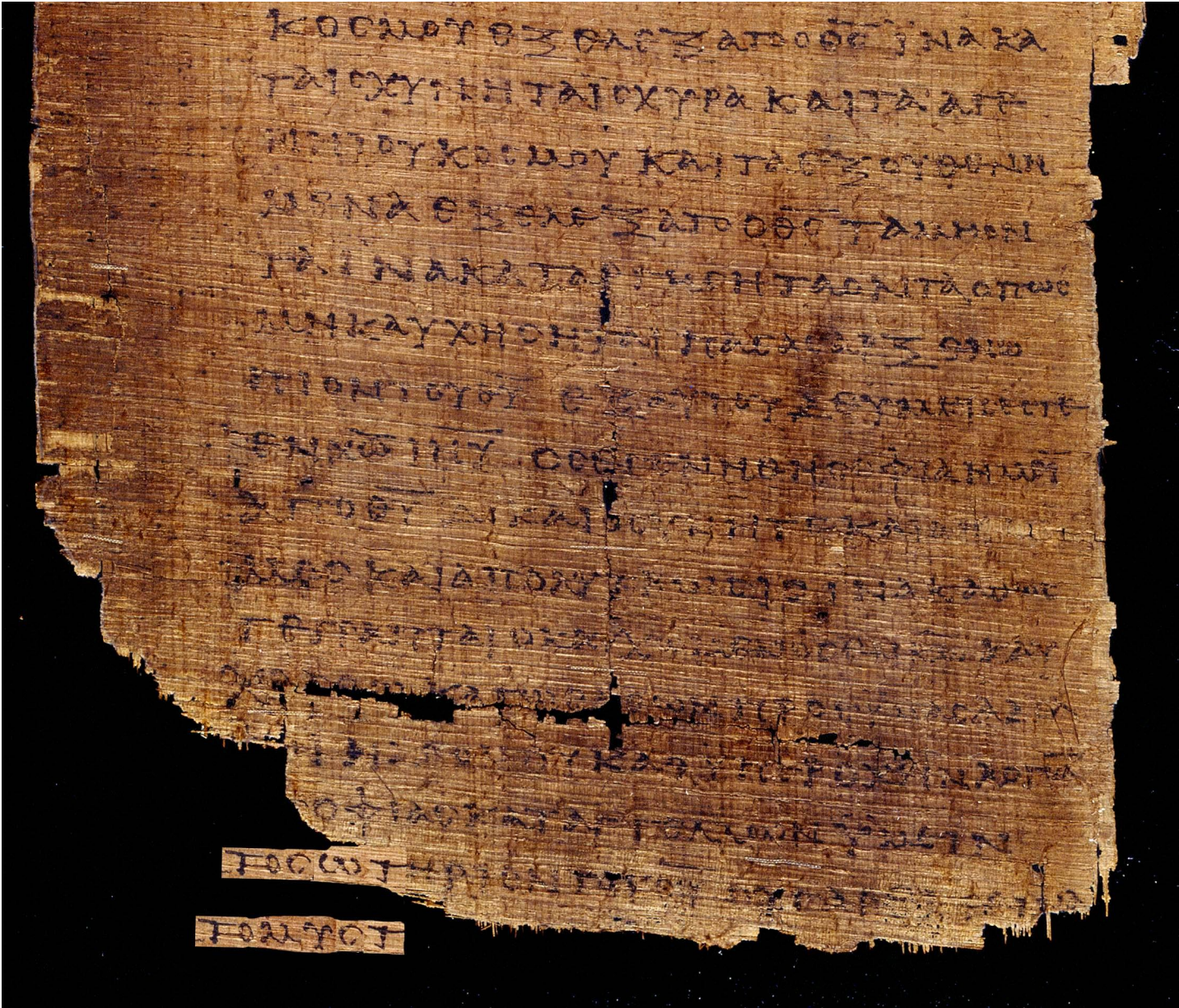
On our leaf (39^r), we note that the lower several lines extend out into the left side about 3/16 inch. Now even taking this marginal oddity into consideration, I have always realized that there is not enough room for the reading - $\mu\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu$, which is the reading nearly all critics choose here in \mathfrak{P}^{46} . Most critics apparently have not examined all of the evidence (nor have I) for this variant. Perhaps had they realized that several later Byzantine manuscripts also read $\sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu$ they MAY have modified their choice!

In the following image, I have taken several letters from the SAME leaf, (using an image editor) and have placed them with or below the line which contains our variant reading. It then becomes clear that \mathfrak{P}^{46} did not read the longer $\mu\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu$. Had this word been in our papyrus, the extension into the left margin would have been very unsightly and even gross as far as scribal practices are concerned.

Note that the manuscript clearly shows the eta - Η (η) which is the first letter visible in the missing portion:

.....]ηριον consequently the reading for TESTIMONY - $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\nu$ does not stand in \mathfrak{P}^{46} .

These three Byzantine minuscules (489, 927, 2629) and these three Byzantine lectionaries ($\mathcal{L}598$, $\mathcal{L}593$, $\mathcal{L}599$) all seem to preserve this ancient reading which is seen in this famous papyrus - \mathfrak{P}^{46} . You examine the images, and you judge for yourself.



Note that the above added words are taken from this SAME leaf, at the exact same scale. The lower fabrication shows what the line would look like with το πυστηριον, too long! The addition actually placed into the missing portion, shows my recommendation: το σωτηριον. Paul came preaching to them the SALVATION from God, and this also accords with the context! The door is opened to the Gentiles in Corinth!

REFERENCES

The digital image is from a portion of an image purchased from:

The Chester Beatty Library
Dublin Castle,
DUBLIN 2, IRELAND

The full original image on the CD was just over 48 MB in size.

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The sample image - which shows a straight margin - is from:

The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri: Descriptions and Texts of Twelve Manuscripts on Papyrus of the Greek Bible. Fasciculus III, Supplement, Pauline Epistles.

by Frederic G. Kenyon

London: Emery Walker Limited

45 Great Russell Street

plates 1937 - text 1936.

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UBS₄ is:

The Greek New Testament. Fourth Edition, 1993. Edited by: Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini and Bruce M. Metzger. In cooperation with the Institute for New Testament Textual Research, Münster/Westphalia.

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