

# Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 215

Post by "Don" of August 16, 2022 at 3:53 PM

I was working through Les Epicuriens before I have to return the interlibrary loan book and came across this in the section of Epicurus' writings. I was not aware of Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 215, but it appears to possibly be an unknown text of Epicurus although some scholars debate this attribution. It could just be a section of a known work that doesn't have the title at the end, too. It is definitely an Epicurean text, that's not debated.

The "O man" translation part includes ὦ ἄνθρωπε, μακαριώ[τα]τον which is indeed, "O human being (anthrope)," then a word directly related to the word usually translated as blessed when describing the gods in PD1 and elsewhere.

I was also skeptical of the "By Zeuz - as they say, right", but it does seem to imply this in the Greek.

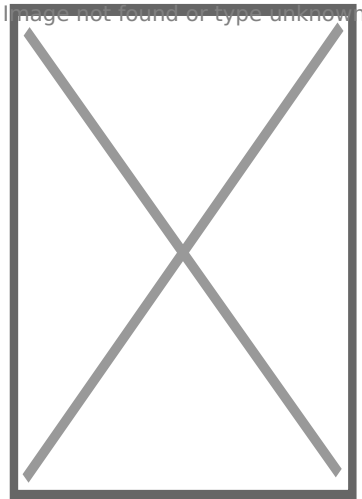
Here's the Wikipedia article on the papyrus:

[Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 215 - Wikipedia](#)

Here's the transcription on the Papyri.info site:

[DCLP/Trismegistos 59745 = LDAB 849](#)

Here's a link to the transcription at Internet Archive which also includes part of an English translation:



[The Oxyrhynchus papyri : Grenfell, Bernard P. \(Bernard Pyne\), 1869-1926 : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

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Here's the French translation from Les Epicuriens (I had to type in to Google Translate, so I figured someone else most likely has better French skills than me so I'm sharing it):

.1. Il n'y a point de vraie piété quand on (amoindrit) ce qui -- comme je l'ai dit -- est propre à la nature, ni quand du moins, pardi, les mots suivants sont (repetés) par les premiers venus: "Je crains tous les dieux (et) les vénère; et pour eux je veux faire toutes sortes de sacrifices et d'offrandes." De fait, un tel homme est sans doute de meilleure compagnie que d'autres, de simples profanes; néanmoins, ce n'est pas non plus encore ainsi que la piété acquiert une réelle solidité.

Pour ta part, o homme; tiens pour une chose au plus haut point bienheureuse le fait d'avoir la belle préconception de ce que nous sommes capables de penser comme (l'être) le meilleur parmi les êtres; admire cette claire perception et révère (sans crainte) cette perfection. Puis (missing 2 lines) comme (missing 2 words) lorsqu'ils ont l'intention de (lui) rendre un culte, mais (garde-toi) seulement de méprise une si grande majesté en l'envisageant par comparaison avec le bonheur qui est le tien. Et, pardi, à propos de cette (joie) qui découle de la ... .2. (missing plusieurs lignes) (sache profiter...?) (de ce qui est) à même de (missing 1 word) et fait plaisir, si l'occasion s'en présente, en (honorant) la contemplation même (des dieux) qui est la tienne au moyen des plaisirs naturels de la chair -- pour peu qu'ils soient convenables -- , mais parfois aussi en te pliant aux lois.

En outre, n'introduis pas ici de la crainte, en supposant que des dieux pourraient te manifester de la reconnaissance d'agir ainsi. Car, au nom de Zeus, -- comme on dit, n'est-ce pas? -- à quoi bon éprouver de la crainte? Penses-tu que ces êtres-là aient un comportement injuste? Si oui, à l'évidence tu les rabaisse: comment peux-tu donc te représenter la divinité comme un être qui ne soit pas vil, si justement celle-ci s'abaisse à ton niveau? Ou alors, ton comportement injuste t'a fait imaginer qu'en agissant de la sorte tu adouciras (un dieu), et que celui-ci, prenant la chose en compte, ferait quelquefois remise aux hommes de chatiments qu'il leur destinait? Car aussi bien, (certains) croient que, s'ils doivent les craindre et les honorer, c'est pour retenir par le (sacrifice les dieux) de s'en prendre à eux; (de la sorte), ou leur croyance est juste et ils n'auront pas du tout de ceux qui honorent (les dieux est nulle ...(?)) (missing 1 line)...

.3. (missing several lines) brûle. De fait, (être pris en faute) causerait du tort (si l'on) s'attendait à (être récompensé). Et indépendamment de ces considérations, (parce qu'ils cherchent à obtenir) par leurs prières des marques de gratitude auprès (de dieux) qui ne leur en (fournissent) pas, et (parce qu'ils ont l'espoir) qu'ils viendront (plus) facilement à eux, à eux-mêmes et à ceux (qui leur sont chers), ils (les) (invoquent) précisément de toutes les manières possibles, (en donnant des gages) pour (se protéger (?)) du chatiment et détourner d'eux la (punition. Et) il faut calculer que ... (remaining 7 lines damaged)

And here's what I got from Google Translate:

There is no true piety when one (diminishes) what -- as I said -- is proper to nature, nor when at least, of course, the following words are (repeated) by the first comers : "I fear all the gods (and) worship them; and for them I want to make all kinds of sacrifices and offerings." In fact, such a man is probably better company than others, mere laymen; nevertheless, it is not yet in this way that piety acquires real solidity.

For your part, O man; hold for a thing at the highest point blessed the fact of having the beautiful preconception of what we are capable of thinking as (the being) the best among beings; admire this clear perception and revere (without fear) this perfection. Then (missing 2 lines) as (missing 2 words) when they intend to worship (him), but (beware) only of despising such great majesty by considering it in comparison with the happiness which is yours. And, of course, about this (joy) which stems from the... (missing several lines) (know how to take advantage...?) (of what is) even from (missing 1 word) and gives pleasure, if the opportunity presents itself, by (honouring) the very contemplation (of the gods) which is yours by means of the natural pleasures of the flesh - as long as they are suitable -, but sometimes also by bowing to the laws.

Also, do not introduce fear here, assuming that gods might show you gratitude for doing so. For, in the name of Zeus, -- as they say, right? -- what is the good of feeling fear? Do you think these beings behave unjustly? If so, obviously you lower them: how can you represent the divinity to yourself as a being who is not vile, if precisely this one lowers itself to your level? Or else, your unjust behavior made you imagine that by acting in this way you would soften (a god), and that this one, taking the thing into account, would sometimes give men the punishments he intended for them? For as well, (some) believe that, if they must fear them and honor them, it is to restrain by the (sacrifice the gods) from attacking them; (so), or their belief is right and they won't have any honoring ones at all (the gods are nothing (les dieux est nulle)...(?)) (missing 1 line)...3. (missing several lines) burned. In fact, (being caught) would cause harm (if one) expected (to be rewarded). And independently of these considerations, (because they seek to obtain) by their prayers marks of gratitude from (gods) who do not (provide) them, and (because they have the hope) that they will come (more) easily to them, to themselves and to those (who are dear to them), they (them) (invoke) precisely in all possible ways, (by giving pledges) to (protect themselves (?)) punishment and divert from them the (punishment. And) it is necessary to calculate that ... (remaining 7 lines damaged)