In 2003, the Papyrological Institute in Florence announced the identification of a fragment of papyrus containing Heb 13:12 – 13, 19 – 20. It was edited in 2008 with the label PSI 1497 (LDAB 10009) by Guido Bastianini. In 2009, it was given the Gregory-Aland number $\text{P}^{126}$. This short note summarizes the Italian description of PSI 1497, then goes on to discuss its two main features. Finally, it suggests how it could have happened that such a document was overlooked by NT scholars.

PSI 1497 has been dated by Bastianini to the beginning of the 4th century CE (place unknown), and is said to display an “elegant, librarian writing” in a “strict” style. It is a codex folio, recto-verso, measuring 9.1 cm x...
3.7 cm with a 2 cm external margin and a 2.4 cm upper margin, and numbered 161 (\(\rho\varepsilon\alpha\)) and 162 (\(\rho\varepsilon\beta\)). The codex can be presumed to have measured 16 cm x 30 cm,\(^7\) every page containing about 20 lines with 30 letters for each. Thus, the entire Epistle to the Hebrews would have taken up 45 pages, starting on page 118 and ending on page 162.\(^8\) \(\text{\Psi}^{126}\) brings the list of papyri with Hebrews to nine;\(^9\) it presents two main peculiarities.

First, the numbering of the pages indicates a place for Hebrews among the Pauline letters not attested in any other manuscript. On the one hand, the 117 preceding pages are too numerous to have contained only Romans\(^10\), as is the case with \(\text{\Psi}^{46}\); on the other hand, they do not leave enough space for any of the eight other places occupied by Hebrews as listed by Metzger.\(^11\) We have no means of taking this enquiry further,\(^12\) but \(\text{\Psi}^{126}\) apparently attests a place for Hebrews hitherto unknown in any codex, just like the recently listed minuscule 2892.\(^13\) \(\text{\Psi}^{126}\) is a reminder that one ought

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7 Bastianini compares PSI 1497 to the “group 8” described by E.G. Turner, *The Typology of the Early Codex* (Philadelphia 1977) 20. The spacing of the writing is about 12.5 cm x 24 cm per page (Bastianini, “1497” [see n. 3], 171).
8 Bastianini, “1497” (see n. 3), 171.
9 \(\text{\Psi}^{12}, \text{\Psi}^{13}, \text{\Psi}^{17}, \text{\Psi}^{46}, \text{\Psi}^{79}, \text{\Psi}^{89}, \text{\Psi}^{114}\) and \(\text{\Psi}^{116}\). \(\text{\Psi}^{46}\) offers the verses contained in \(\text{\Psi}^{126}\).
10 Romans would have occupied about 60 pages in the codex, according to the spacing of the writing.
12 Bastianini, “1497” (see n. 3), 171. Romans and 1 Corinthians would have taken up about 117 pages in this codex but we have no extant example of such an order.
13 For a description of the double place of Hebrews in 2892 (VK 908) see http://www.csntm.org/TCNotes/Archive/TwoNewManuscriptsInOne, accessed 21.09.2009.
not to overestimate the significance of the place of Hebrews in ℨ⁴⁶, as underlines Metzger’s remark about the predecessor of Codex Vaticanus, which had Hebrews after Galatians.¹⁴

Secondly, Bastianini draws attention to a unique variant in Heb 13:12, ἔξω τῆς πύλης τῆς παρεμβολῆς ἐπαθεν, “he suffered outside the gate of the camp”. He considers this to be the “introduction into the text of an inter-linear variant”,¹⁵ noting that the usual wording ἔξω τῆς πύλης is replaced in ℨ⁴⁶ and codex P by ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς,¹⁶ a feature described by Harold Attridge “as influenced by the wording of vss 11 and 13”.¹⁷ That may be so, but we have now three different variants, and it could be argued that ℨ¹²⁶ challenges an interpretation put forward notably by Tertullian¹⁸ and maintained by scholars still today: they generally reword ἔξω τῆς πύλης as “out of the city” or “out of the city gate”,¹⁹ because ἐπαθεν sounds

¹⁴ Metzger, Textual Commentary (see n. 11), 591, n. 2. Unfortunately, C.K. Rothschild does not point out this important remark in her discussion of the place of Hebrews in the list of Pauline letters (C.K. Rothschild, Hebrews as Pseudepigraphon [WUNT 235; Tübingen 2009] 146, n. 118). A careful reading of Metzger’s information, together with ℨ¹²⁶ and 2892, re-opens the debate.

¹⁵ Bastianini, “1497” (see n. 3), 172.

¹⁶ See also 104 bo⁸⁸, according to H. Attridge, The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hermeneia; Philadelphia 1989) 390.

¹⁷ Attridge, Epistle to the Hebrews (see n. 16), 390.


¹⁹ For a recent reference, see G.J. Brooke, “4Q500 1 and the Use of Scripture in the Parable of the Vineyard”, in his The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament: Essays in Mutual
like an “allusion to the historical Jesus”. $^20$ $\text{P}^{126}$ offers a sustained metaphorical interpretation of the passage, by using in v. 12 the expression τῆς πύλης τῆς παρεμβολῆς which designates in Exod 32:26 LXX the place where Moses stands when he discovers the golden calf. $^21$ Whether $\text{P}^{126}$ alludes or not to Exod 32:26, it specifies that the gate is that of the camp, not of the city. It thus attests to an early interpretation of the verse that differs from that of Tertullian.

A final comment: $\text{P}^{126}$ could have easily continued to be ignored by NT scholars because it was immersed in the 15$^{th}$ PSI volume, in a list of “literary and paraliterary texts” between astrological or magic texts (PSI 1494 – 6) and fragments of Hesiod and Homer (PSI 1498 – 9). $^22$ The preceding PSI volume was published 52 years earlier, and up to that point in this series biblical texts were always published at the beginning of the literary texts. $^23$ During the last half-century, the status of the New Testament has changed drastically in Europe, as this example illustrates. It was while looking at a papyrus about Sappho in this 15$^{th}$ volume that by chance I came across PSI 1497. This anecdote serves to show that New Testament research would do well to bear in mind that today “New Testament” means “Early Christianity” for many people: in the eyes of European con-

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20 Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews* (see n. 16), 398.
21 This expression is also found in 1 Chr 9:18 LXX: αὕται αἱ πύλαι τῶν παρεμβολῶν νῦν Δετλ.
22 PSI, *Papiri* 15 (see n. 3), IX–X.
23 The intermediary fascicules published in 1966 and 1979 do not contain any biblical texts.
temporary culture, $^\text{P}126_1$ is just one “Christian papyrus” among others, even though it is of special significance for NT scholars.

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