

# Graeco-Egyptian Papyrology

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**Introduction**

Around 1993/1994 the Sunrise Museum - which was in Charleston, WV - donated a papyrus, as well as many other artefacts, to Marshall University's Anthropology Department. The papyrus located within the anthropological collection of Marshall University was secured inside two panels of glass that had a yellow film on the outside to protect the document from sunlight (figure 1)\*. The manuscript did not come with much information, therefore the anthropology department was left with the task of authenticating the manuscript, properly aligning the fragments, as well as translating the manuscript.



Figure 1: Original manuscript before manipulation

With Dr. Freidins guidance, I took on the responsibility of bringing this manuscript to life. I was able to get in touch with a wonderful papyrologist, Dr. Peter Van Minnen from the University of Cincinnati, who is known for discovering the Cleopatra papyrus, who offered to assist me with revealing the history of the manuscript. Arrangements were made for me to spend October 7<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> at the University of Cincinnati's Classics Department within Blegen Library to work with Dr. Van Minnen. With Dr. Van Minnen's knowledge and expertise, we were able to obtain a glimpse into the past.

### **Theory**

The manuscript, discovered through correspondence between Dr. Freidin of Marshall University and Dr. Van Minnen of the University of Cincinnati, is of the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century AD and a Greek papyrus originating in Egypt. This estimation of 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century AD was obtained by Dr. Van Minnen through his knowledge and expertise of papyrology. Given the period of the manuscript, it is presumed to have been a patriarchal society, one where women had little to no say in their day to day lives. Also, upon translating the manuscript, it will give us a window into the past and reveal the secrets hidden within that have yet to be obtained. With thoughts of this being a tax collection, discovered through prior examination between Dr. Van Minnen and Dr. Freidin, translation would also give us the opportunity to see what type of tax document this was, and what type of payments were being made.

### **Historical Context**

One event that seemed to have an enormous effect on the political history of Egypt was the founding of Constantinople in 330 A.D. This diverted the resources Egypt produced away from Rome and the West and went mainly to the people within Constantinople. This event

created an important economical link, and the effect of these changes was to tie Egypt more uniformly into the structure of the empire, and to give it a central role in the political history of the Mediterranean world once more (Bowman, Baines, Dorman, Samuel, Wente, 2003) .

The manuscript, dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D., saw a time of conflict between the churches. The Byzantine Empire (see figure 3&4) became the center of political and religious power after the fall of Rome. There was immense conflict between the Copts of Egypt and Byzantium rulers, which began when a rivalry between Constantinople and Alexandria took way. The separation of the Egyptian Church from that of the Catholic Church was initiated by the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The Council of Chalcedon declared that Christ had not one, but two natures and that he was as equally human as he was divine. However, the Coptic Church refused this decree and rejected the bishop that was sent to Egypt. This refusal brought on a division between the Catholic Church and the Coptic Church.

For roughly two centuries, Monophysitism – which is the thought that Jesus Christ’s nature remains altogether divine and not human even though he had taken on an earthly human body with its cycle of birth, life, and death - in Egypt became the symbol of national and religious resistance to Byzantium’s political and religious authority. The church was severely persecuted by Byzantium, with some Coptic Christians being either exiled, tortured, or killed to force the Egyptian Church to accept Byzantine orthodoxy (Bowman et al., 2003).

Women within Byzantium were expected to tend to the household and the children. When not tending to the household chores or the children, they were often found harvesting crops or working in manufacturing industries. The men were the head of household, and Byzantium was a time of patriarchal rule. The fathers controlled what their daughters and wives did and had the authority to end their daughter’s marriage if they thought it was best. Men were

sole owners of land, though once widowed, the wife becomes the guardian of the estate and will become subject to taxes. In order to understand the society within Byzantium, the papyrus must be thoroughly curated and transcribed.

## **Methods**

The first step needed to work with the papyrus was to remove the tape that was currently surrounding the panels that the papyrus was originally housed in. Utilizing the white linen gloves and the spatula (refer to figure 4)\*, the tape was gently pierced and then cut, taking precautions to not insert the spatula too far into the panels to not disturb the papyrus. The top panel of glass was removed once the tape surrounding the panels was completely cut.

The strips of the papyrus were then examined, unobstructed by the panel, to determine if the document was in proper format regarding the text. Utilizing the spatula and tweezers, the strips were properly aligned, taking caution to not damage the papyri. Once the strips were reformatted into proper order, the task of revealing the folded sections began.

The folded sections were carefully revealed using the spatula to determine if any ink was noticeable, which would then add to the text within the papyri. The segments of the papyri were also turned over to determine if any ink was noted on the verso (referring to the back of the manuscript), which happened to be the case with the second strip from the left (refer to figure 5)\*.

The next step - still utilizing the gloves, spatula, and tweezers - was to double check the order of the two strips that were not attached and just seemed to be placed haphazardly during the original formatting (refer to figure 6)\*. Once reassured that the strips were properly aligned, the final steps could begin.

The new panels of glass were arranged on the table and were made clear of any dust particles. The strips of the papyri, a few at a time, were carefully transferred to the new panel, using the spatula, tweezers, and gloves. Once aligned onto the bottom panel, the top panel was placed to carefully flip the papyri without disturbing the arrangement.

The bottom panel was removed to expose the verso of the papyri. Utilizing the document repair tape, white linen gloves, and scissors the papyri strips can now be connected. The document repair tape was cut into small thin segments and used to secure the papyri strips together. This process, as well as the last section of the process above, was continued until all strips of papyri were properly secured to one another (see figure 7)\*.

The bottom panel was then placed back on the papyri to flip the papyri back to its recto (referring to the front of the manuscript). The top panel was removed, and the techniques used above were then applied to secure the papyri to the panel itself (see figure 8)\*. Once reassured that no further alignments were needed, the top panel was placed and secured to the bottom panel with the linen hinging tape. The tape was cut and applied to the panels, being sure to leave a miniscule gap in the corners for airflow.

The properly formatted papyrus was then taken to a computer to scan an image, using originally 800 DPI then 1200 DPI with the VueScan application (see figure 9)\*. The detail of the scan itself was not of acceptable quality, therefore a photo booth was set up to take pictures of the papyrus (see figure 10)\*.

## **Discussion**

Upon examining the manuscript after the frame was removed, it was noted that the first strip of the papyrus was angled in towards the 2<sup>nd</sup> strip and slightly behind it – hiding a good

portion from view, strips 5A and 5B were misaligned, and strip 7 was almost completely hidden from view. The tape around the frame also covered a vast majority of the 9<sup>th</sup> strip (refer to figure 1 for the misalignments)<sup>1\*</sup>. A few of the strips had contorted sections which were properly corrected upon transferring to a new frame.

The restoration, conservation, and translation all took place within a very spacious and well-lit room of Blegen Library at the University of Cincinnati. Conservation is one of the most important factors when it comes to working with papyri. The need to prevent further decomposition of the material is crucial, since papyri can be brittle and frail. Per Bagnall (2009), once the papyri are taken from the safe surroundings of the extremely dry sand of the desert, the organic material starts to oxidize and decompose immediately, and around 80-90 percent of all surviving papyri consist of the so-called normal papyrus material, which can be subjected to a simple, neither time-consuming nor expensive, conservation treatment (81). Caution was taken to not overexpose the papyrus to direct sunlight, and the papyrus was placed in a secure flat drawer unobstructed by any material when not working with the manuscript directly.

During restoration, the papyrus was removed from the original panels that it was housed in. The goal of this process was to piece the papyrus back to its original form as best as we could. Extreme care was taken not to damage the delicate strips of the papyrus, so the use of linen gloves, a spatula, and tweezers were needed. There are many methods available when it comes to restoring papyri, such as using a dampening treatment on brittle papyri to have better flexibility when working with the document, as well as a cellulose treatment to strengthen the cell tissue and vascular bundles which in turn increases the elasticity of the papyrus (Bagnall 2009, 83).

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<sup>1</sup> \* Denotes pictures taken by author

Some papyri may also have pieces of repair tape that have been used previously and will need to be carefully removed with a dampening technique. Luckily our papyrus was not previously repaired and was in good shape, so these methods were not needed for restoration. Once the original panels were removed, and the papyrus exposed, the repositioning and proper alignment of the strips could begin. A few of the strips were hidden behind others, as well as strips 5A and B were not in correct order, as mentioned and noted above in figure 1. These misalignments were corrected with the use of a few tools (see Appendix A for list of tools and materials).

Translation is another crucial step when conserving and restoring papyri. In some instances, certain tools and techniques are needed to read papyri, as in the use of microscopes. Dr. Van Minnen was the key to the translation of the text, since I have little knowledge of the Greek language. Dr. Van Minnen was able to translate each line of the text, both names of individuals as well as the number of solidi, carats, and myriads paid out (see Appendix B for original text and translation). Dr. Van Minnen painstakingly viewed each individual letter and sequence of letters to obtain the information, and later would then search for names through different databases, such as online archives, to see how prevalent the names were. Literature was also used, such as Falivene's *The Herakleopolite Nome*, to see the relevance of the names and to see how frequently they popped up within other papyri.

The manuscript was dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and located in the Herakleopolite nome, a district of Middle Egypt. There were also references to two villages within the Herakleopolite nome; Phebichis<sup>2</sup> and Koba<sup>3</sup>. Phebichis (figure 11) was mentioned twice within the manuscript:

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<sup>2</sup> Phebichis is also known as el-Fashn, located south of Herakleopolis.

<sup>3</sup> Koba has an undetermined location between 330 BC - AD 640, though it is a known village within Herakleopolite sources.



*Ἰωάννης Ἄνουθος ἀπὸ Φεβίχεως (μ.) d* - Ioannes son of Anouthos from Phebichis, with a payment of sol.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; and *Ἰσὰκ ἀπὸ Φεβίχεως νο(μ.) γ''* - Isak from Phebichis with a payment of sol.  $\frac{1}{3}$ . Per Dr. Van Minnen, the text is likely an account of taxes paid in Herakleopolis, the nome capital, where a few of the villagers were paying them as well. It is thought to be a personal tax since only men are listed as paying the taxes. The payments were listed in solidi, carats (1 carat =  $\frac{1}{24}$  of a solidus), and myriads (of denarii). Only amounts of 3,750 myriads of denarii are recorded, which may represent 1 solidus. The fractions of solidi may go down to  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and there is one entry for 4 carats. The solidus was originally a pure gold coin issued in the Late Roman Empire and had a weight of about 4.5 grams when it was introduced by Constantine I after A.D. 312, though originally introduced by Diocletian in A.D. 301. In late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, the solidus also functioned as a unit of weight equal to  $\frac{1}{72}$  of a pound.

As noted within Appendix B, column 1 line 25: *υἱοὶ Ἀμμωνίου γναφεδῆς νο(μ.) S* – the sons of Ammonios the fuller. This excerpt gives us a look into a craft within the Herakleopolite nome. A fuller, at that time, was one who cleanses wool through the process of fulling, which in turn is the elimination of impurities such as dirt and oils. Another craft that was listed is noted within column 2 line 25: *Πραοῦ Ταῆσι πλουμάριος νο(μ.) γ''* - Praous son of Taesis the embroiderer. An embroiderer at that time was very similar to embroiderers now. The craftsmen would decorate the fabric with patterns of stitching or needlework. Cosgrave (2000) details the importance of embroiderers within the Byzantine Empire: “The art of embroidery was fully realized during the time of the Byzantine Empire when embroidered fabric, trim pieces, and decorative patches became essential for Byzantine costume” (156).

Another interesting find within the manuscript was the mention of females. Though the manuscript consists mostly of men, adhering to the patriarchal regime at the time, the name

Hellen appears twice within the papyrus, in column 1 line 13: Παῦος Ἑλληνοσ νο(μ.) α d -

Paulos son of Hellen, with a payment of sol. 1 ¼; and column 3 line 17: Πέτροσ Ἑλληνοσ νο(μ.)

S - Petros son of Hellen, with a payment of sol. ½. Although the female names follow that of male names, which are noted to be their sons, it is still remarkable that they were listed at all.

This could possibly be due to a potential death of the father; therefore, sons may have had to end their name with that of their mother's name. Further research regarding women within the Byzantine Empire revealed that women were, in fact, able to take on property under certain circumstances. Many women achieved power and status in their middle age after the death of their husband, where they then went on to become head of household, become landowners, and in turn are subject to taxation just the same. As Talbot (2001) mentions, "Widows were no longer viewed as sexual temptresses, and so were treated with respect and trust. Numerous widows achieved financial security by getting total control over their dowries; the most generous Byzantine patronesses were in fact widows who founded churches, monasteries, or commissioned works of art" (pp. 38)

## Results

The measurement of the document after completion was 37 cm W x 25 cm H – it originally would have been 30 cm which would have been the typical dimension for papyrus of the period. 13 cm from left sheet join visible, 17 ½ cm from left again another sheet join is visible. 6 ½ cm to right edge. Intercolumnium 2.5 – 3 cm (varies), left margin 0 – 0.5 cm., right margin 1 – 1.5 cm (varies). Vacat – 1 cm, 3<sup>rd</sup> column vacat 7 cm. Bottom margin is .5 – 1 cm except third column where +/- 0 cm. It is assumed with the 3<sup>rd</sup> column vacat of 7 cm., noted on strip 9 of the papyrus, that the scribe was taking down a tally of the totals to keep track but was unable to

finish the document. The document was completely translated and properly formatted and housed within a protective double paneled glass enclosure.

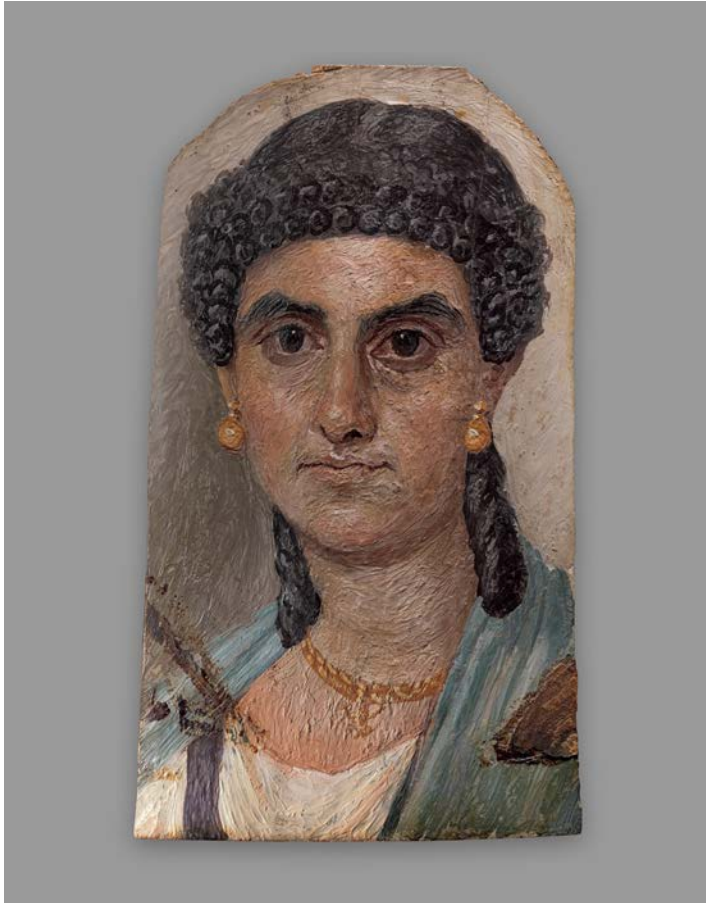


Figure 2: Panel painting of woman, from *The Met*; Web: 30 April 2019

In conclusion, the week-long venture of bringing this document back to life was an amazing experience. From reformatting, properly aligning the loose segments, and translation. It was found that this indeed, is a tax papyrus dated within the time of the Byzantine Empire. The papyrus unfortunately, however, went unfinished (refer to figure 8, strip 8) During the process of authenticating the papyrus, and restoring the papyrus, the names of women were unearthed. This led to further research to investigate the lives of the women (figure 12), and

found that they too, though when widowed, could become land owners and head of household. This restoration also led to the discovery of this being a craft guild tax, with the name of two crafts and what their taxes were. The mention of the two villages - Phebichis and Koba - further verified by other literature, revealed that this papyrus was located within the Herakleopolite nome, and during the Byzantine Empire.



Figure 2: Map of Byzantine Empire, from *Atlas of the Byzantine*; Web; 10 April 2019.

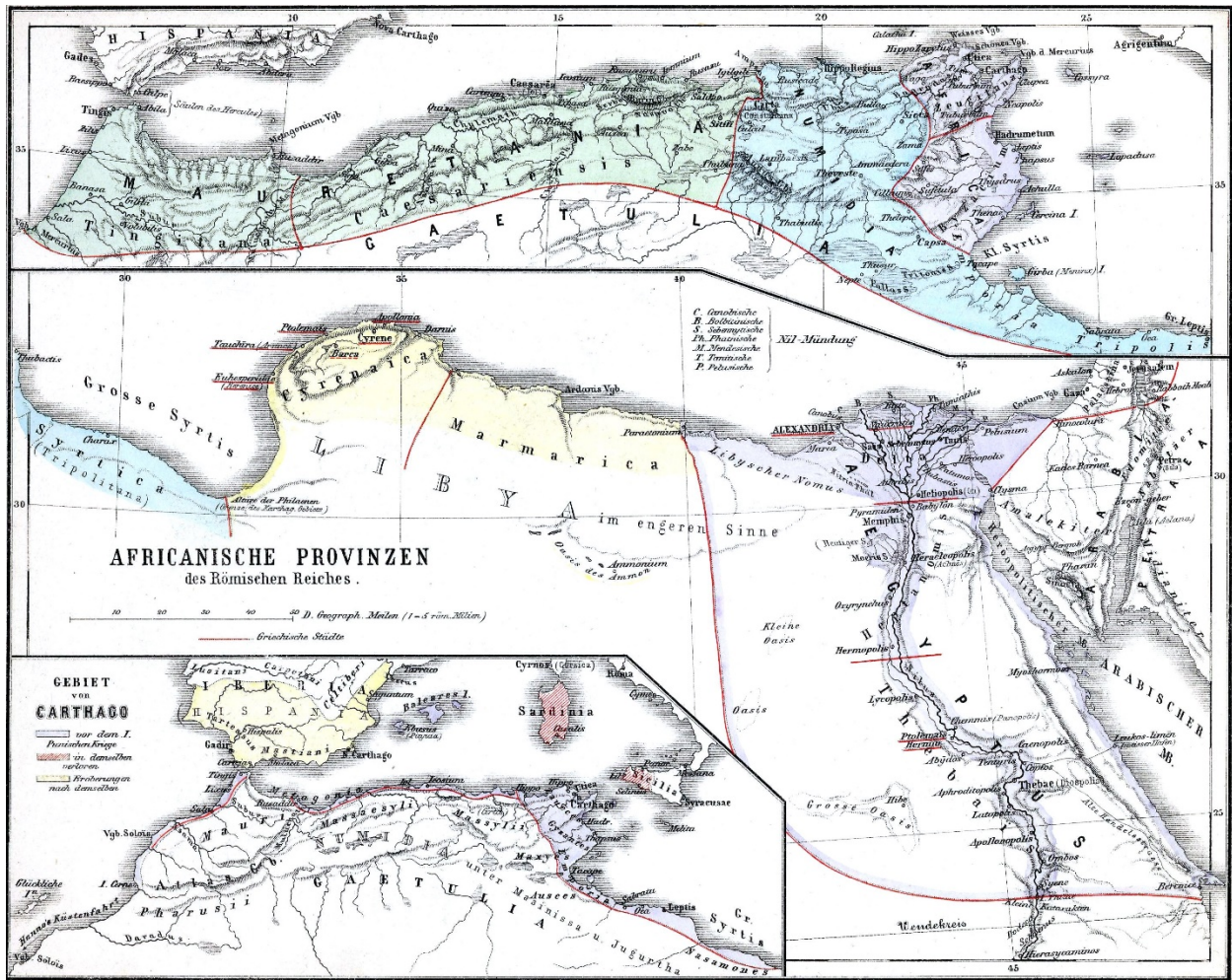


Figure 3: Map of Byzantine Empire, from Atlas of the Byzantine; Web; 10 April 2019.

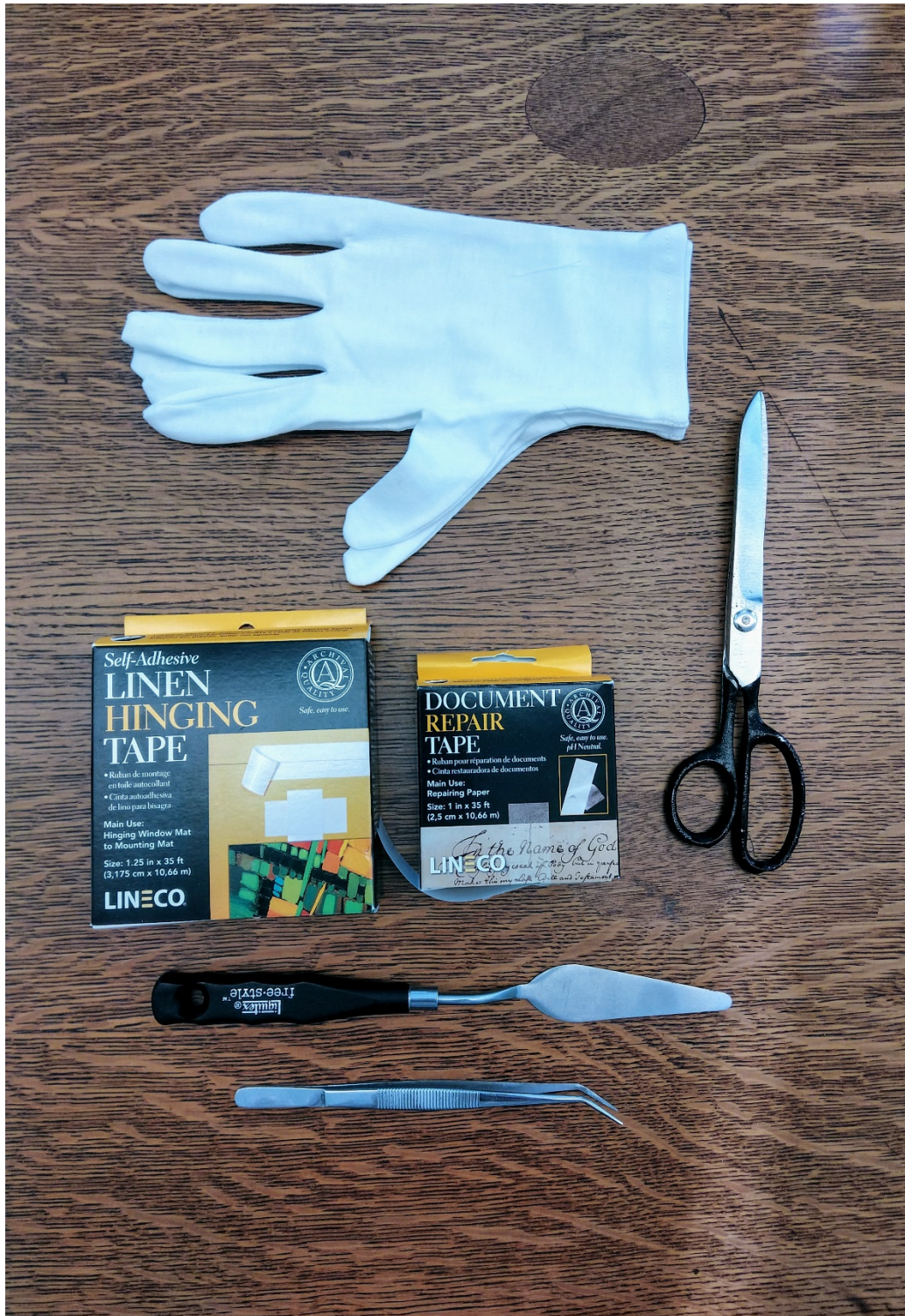


Figure 4: Materials



*Figure 5: Verso Script*

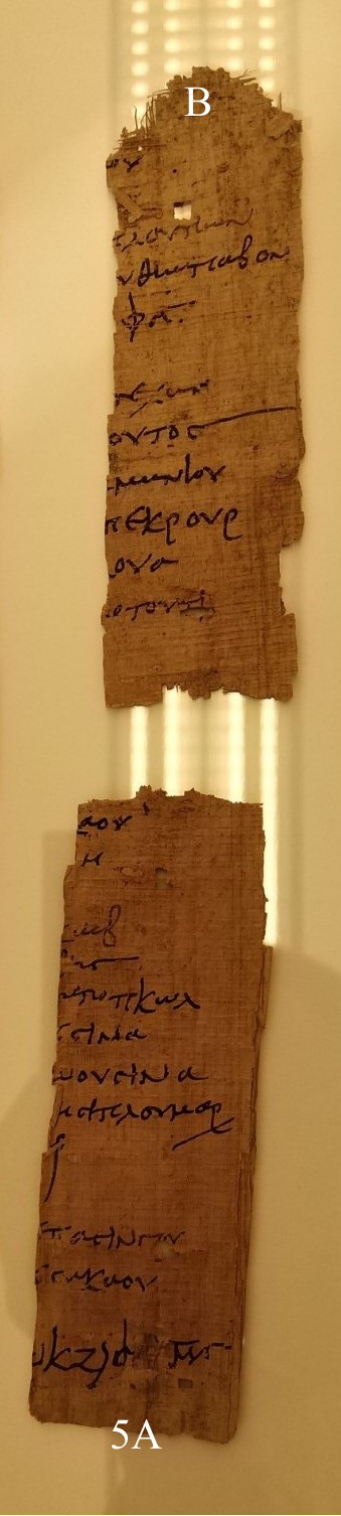


Figure 6: Detached Segments 5A(bottom)/B(top)





Figure 7: Verso Papyri Strips Secured Together

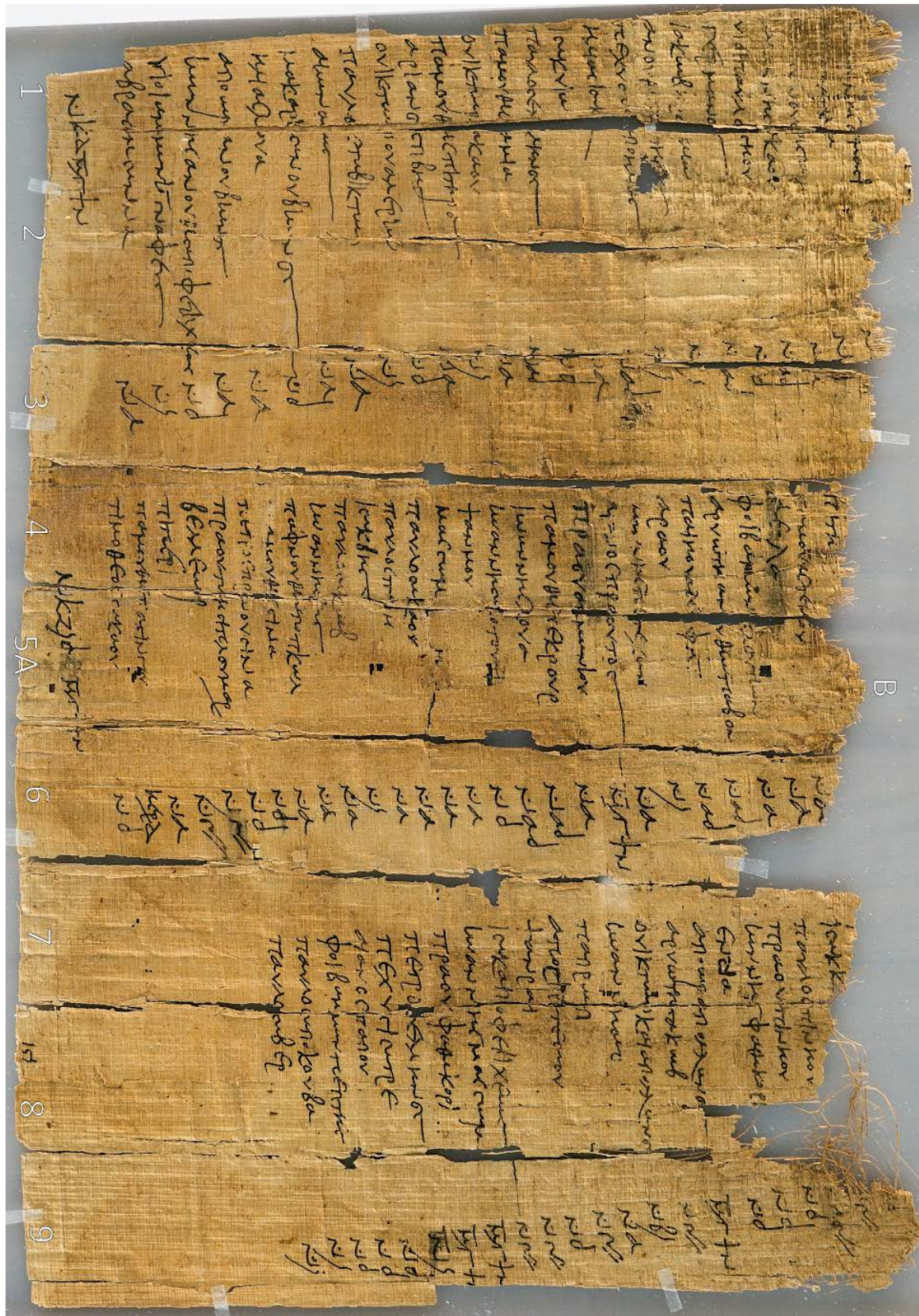


Figure 8: Recto of Papyri

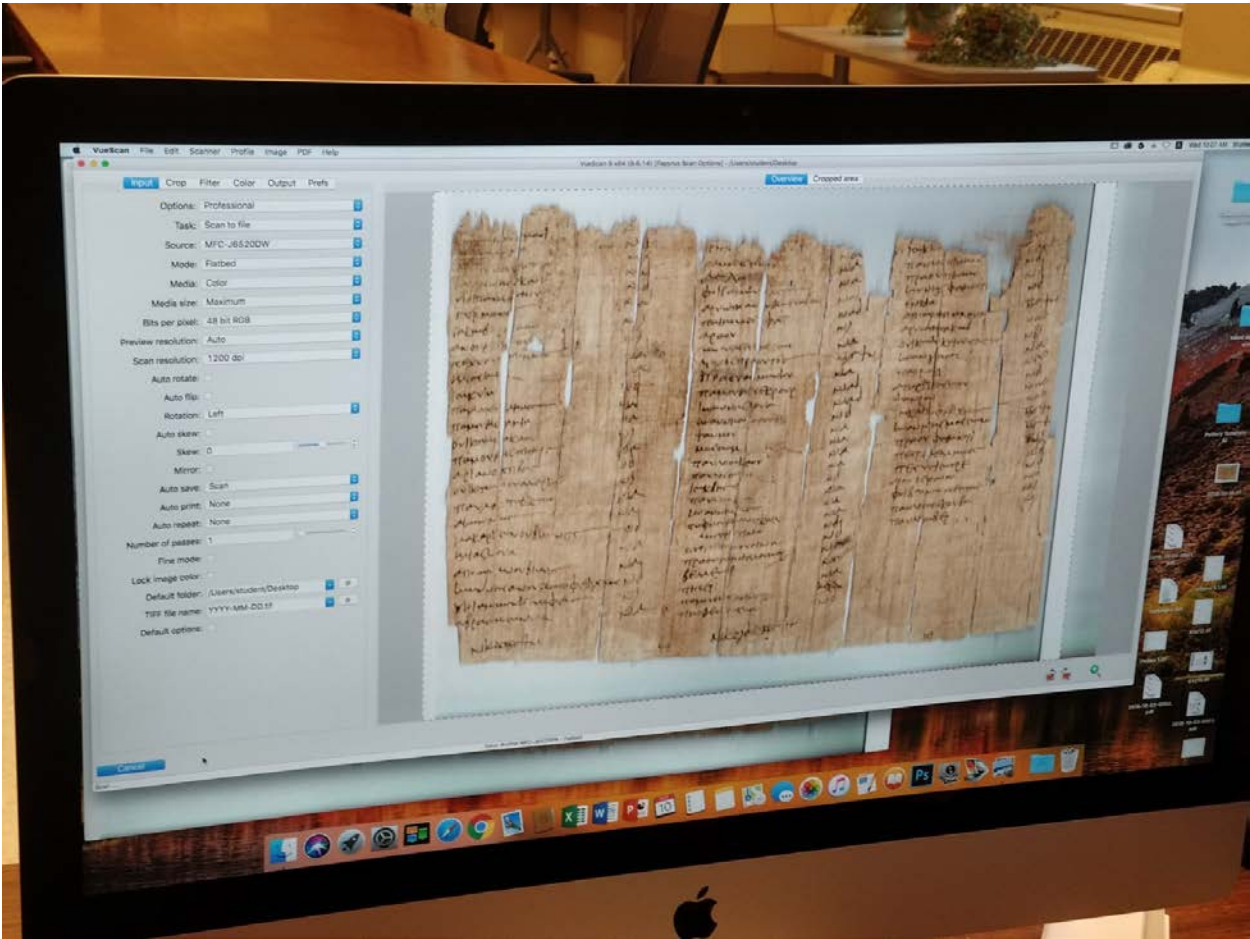


Figure 9: VueScan of Papyrus



Figure 10: Photo booth

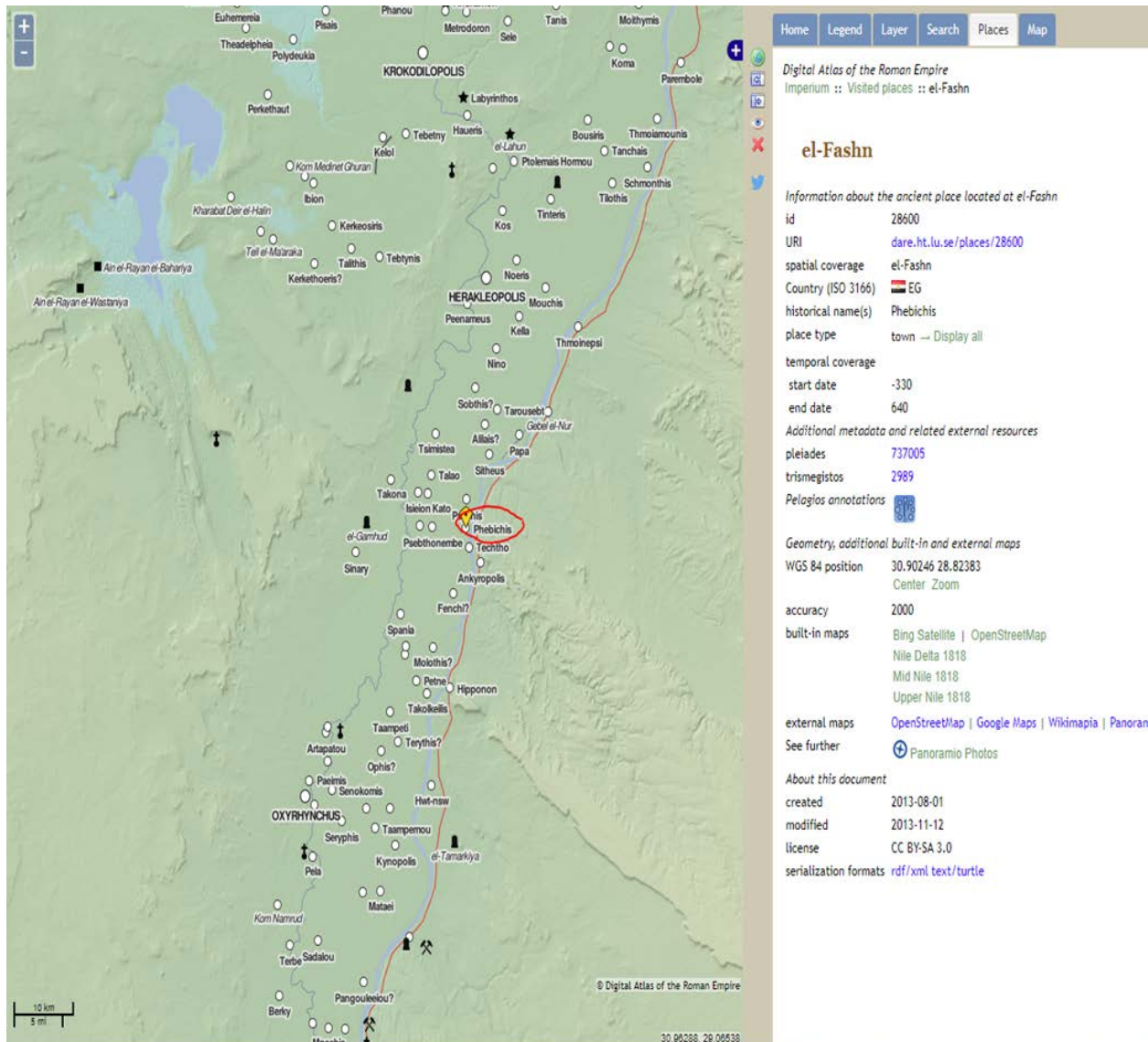


Figure 4: Location of Phebichis, from TM Places; Web; December 2018

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## Appendix A

### Tools and Materials Used:

- Scissors
- Spatula
- Tweezers
- Document Repair Tape
- Linen gloves
- Linen Hinging Tape – 3.175 cm
- Two panels of glass - 40.64 cm x 35.56 cm





20. Αἰων Αως	νο(μ.) α
21. Μακάρις Ἀνουβίωνος	νο(μ.) d
22. Ἡλίας Λουα	νο(μ.) α
23. Ἐπο Ὄρ Ἀνουβίωνος	νο(μ.) α
24. Ἰωάννης Ἐνουθος ἀπὸ Φεβίχεως	νο(μ.) d
25. υἱοὶ Ἀμμωνίου γναφεὺς	νο(μ.) S
26. Ἀβραὰμ Σαννα	νο(μ.) α
<i>vacat</i>	
27. νο(μ.) κδ μ(υριάδες) , Γψν	

12 νίω: υἱός

Col. 2

-----	
1. [ . ( . ) ] . [	]
2. Πιτήρου [	]
3. Παμουᾶς Τεμου	νο(μ.) α
4. Αελα	νο(μ.) α
5. Φοιβάμων Πλουτίων	νο(μ.) α
6. Ἄρυωτη Ἀν[ο]υθίων Παβον	νο(μ.) α d
7. Παηου ἀδελφός	νο(μ.) α d
8. Αραου	νο(μ.) S
9. [Ι]ωάννης Πετεχών	νο(μ.) α
10. Αιανός Πραουῖτος	μ(υρ.) Γψν
11. Πραου Ἀμμωνίου	νο(μ.) α

12. Πάμουθος Τεκρωρ	νο(μ.) α d
13. Ἰωάννης Λουα	νο(μ.) α d
14. Ἰωάννης Ἰαπο Τουτι	νο(μ.) d
15. Ψαν Μου	νο(μ.) α
16. Μας Σωμ	νο(μ.) α
17. Παῦλος Ακαου	νο(μ.) α
18. Παῦλος Παρη	νο(μ.) α
19. Ἰσακ Βῆς	νο(μ.) S
20. Παῦλος Ακωβ	νο(μ.) α
21. Ἰωάννης Βῆς	νο(μ.) α
22. Πάφνουθος Ἰαπο Πκωλ	νο(μ.) α
23. Πάμουθος Σινα	νο(μ.) d
24. Πέτρος Πρωω Σινα	νο(μ.) d
25. Πραου Ταησι πλουμάρ(ιος)	νο(μ.) γ''
26. Βελλε Ἰωρ	νο(μ.) γ''
27. Πιπερι	νο(μ.) α
28. Πάμουθος Πασινγου	κερ(άτια) δ
29. Τιμόθες σ Ακαου	νο(μ.) d

*vacat*

30. νο(μ.) κζ Σ δ [[ . ]] μ(υριάδες) ,Γψν

---

10 μ(υρ.) corr. ex νο(μ.)

Col. 3

-----

- |                          |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| 1. . [                   | ] νο(μ.) d   |
| 2. Ἰάσκ Κ . [            | ] νο(μ.) γ'' |
| 3. Παῦλος Πινηου         | νο(μ.) α γ'' |
| 4. Πραου Πινηου          | νο(μ.) d     |
| 5. Ἰωάννης Φαθακορι      | νο(μ.) d     |
| 6. Ενδια                 | νο(μ.) d     |
| 7. Ἐπο Ὄρ Ἀπόλλωνος      | μ(υρ) , Γψν  |
| 8. Ἀρυώτης Ακωβ          | νο(μ.) γ''   |
| 9. Οὐίκτωρ Καὶ Ἀπόλλωνος | νο(μ.) β S   |
| 10. Ἰωάννης Αο           | νο(μ.) α     |
| 11. Παπρω Απ             | νο(μ.) γ''   |
| 12. Ἐπο Σιρ Στεσαου      | νο(μ.) d     |
| 13. Ψαν ῥαι              | νο(μ.) γ''   |
| 14. Ἰσὰκ ἀπὸ Φεβίχεως    | νο(μ.) γ''   |
| 15. Ἰωάννης Μας Σωμ      | μ(υρ) , Γψν  |
| 16. Πραου Φαθακορι       | μ(υρ) , Γψν  |
| 17. Πέτρος Ἑλληνος       | νο(μ.) S     |
| 18. Πέχυσις Ἄτρε         | νο(μ.) d     |
| 19. Αἰανὸς Πάπου         | νο(μ.) d     |
| 20. Φοιβάμμων Πέπτης     | νο(μ.) d     |

21. Παῦλος ἀπο Κουβα νο(μ.) S

22. Παῦλος Αβερ νο(μ.) S

*vacat*

23. ις S

3 γ'' corr. ex d 12 Σιρ: σ corr. 17 νο(μ.) corr. ex μ(υρ.)

Verso

ιγ S γ''

Recto

Col. 1

-----

1. ...
2. Ioannes son of Amasis sol. .
3. Praous son of Tila (?) sol. ¼
4. Oursenouphis(?) son of Pare sol. 1
5. Ioannes son of Akaous sol. 1 ¼
6. the sons of Paulos son of Eous sol. ¼
7. Germanos sol. 1
8. Iakob son of Herakleios sol. ½
9. Anouthos son of Piteros sol. ½

10. Pechysis son of Apa Elias	sol. 1 ¼
11. Elias son of Isak	sol. 1
12. Isak his son	sol. ¼
13. Paulos son of Hellen	sol. 1 ¼
14. Pamouthos son of Amias	sol. 1
15. Victor son of Akaous	sol. ½
16. Pamouthos son of Piteros	sol. 1
17. Arrianos son of Pbes	sol. ¼
18. Victor son of Valerius	sol. 1/2
19. Paulos son of Tavictor(?)	sol. 1
20. Aion son of Aos	sol. 1
21. Makarios son of Anoubion	sol. ¼
22. Elias son of Louas	sol. 1
23. Apa Hor son of Anoubion	sol. 1
24. Ioannes son of Anouthos from Phebichis	sol. 1/4
25. the sons of Ammonios the fuller	sol. ½
26. Abraham son of Sannas	sol. 1

*vacat*

27.	sol. 24, myr. 3/750
-----	---------------------

Col. 2

-----

1. ...	...
2. Piteros	sol. 1
3. Pamouas son of Temous	sol. 1
4. Aela	sol. 1
5. Phoibammon son of Ploution	sol. 1
6. Haryotes son of Anouthios Pabon	sol. 1 ¼
7. Paieous his brother	sol. 1 ¼
8. Araous	sol. ½
9. Ioannes son of Petechon	sol. 1
10. Aianos son of Praous	myr. 3,750
11. Praous son of Ammonios	sol. 1
12. Pamouthos son of Tekor	sol. 1 ¼
13. Ioannes son of Louas	sol. 1 ¼
14. Ioannes from Touti	sol. ¼
15. Psan son of Mou	sol. 1
16. Mas son of Som	sol. 1
17. Paulos son of Akaous	sol. 1
18. Paulos son of Pares	sol. 1
19. Isak son of Bes	sol. ½
20. Paulos son of Akob	sol. 1
21. Ioannes son of Bes	sol. 1
22. Pamouthios son of Apa Pkol	sol. 1
23. Pamouthos son of Sinas	sol. ¼

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 24. Petro son of Proous Sinas            | sol. $\frac{1}{4}$ |
| 25. Praous son of Taesis the embroiderer | sol. $\frac{1}{3}$ |
| 26. Belles son of Hor                    | sol. $\frac{1}{3}$ |
| 27. Piperi                               | sol. 1             |
| 28. Pamouthos son of Pasingos            | car. 4             |
| 29. Timotheos son of Akaous              | sol. $\frac{1}{4}$ |

*vacat*

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 30. | sol. $27 \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{4}$ , myr. 3,750 |
|-----|--|

Col. 3

-----

- |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. ...                   | ] sol. $\frac{1}{4}$ |
| 2. Isak son of K-        | sol. $\frac{1}{3}$   |
| 3. Paulos son of Pineous | sol. $1 \frac{1}{3}$ |
| 4. Praous son of Pineous | sol. $\frac{1}{4}$   |
| 5. Ioannes Phatakori     | sol. $\frac{1}{4}$   |
| 6. Endia                 | sol. $\frac{1}{4}$   |
| 7. Apa Hor son of Apollo | myr. 3,750           |
| 8. Haryotes son of Akob  | sol. $\frac{1}{3}$   |
| 9. Victor and Apollo     | sol. $2 \frac{1}{2}$ |
| 10. Ioannes son of Aos   | sol. 1               |
| 11. Papro son of Ap      | sol. $\frac{1}{3}$   |

12. Apa Sir son of Stesaous	sol. $\frac{1}{4}$
13. Psan son of Rai	sol. $\frac{1}{3}$
14. Isak from Phebichis	sol. $\frac{1}{3}$
15. Ioannes son of Mas Som	myr. 3,750
16. Praous Phatakori	myr. 3,750
17. Petros son of Hellen	sol. $\frac{1}{2}$
18. Pechysis son of Hatres	sol. $\frac{1}{4}$
19. Aianos son of Papos	sol. $\frac{1}{4}$
20. Phoibammon Peptes	sol. $\frac{1}{4}$
21. Paulos from Kouba	sol. $\frac{1}{2}$
22. Paulos son of Aber	sol. $\frac{1}{2}$

*vacat*

23. 16  $\frac{1}{2}$

Verso

13  $\frac{1}{2}$   $\frac{1}{3}$