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The Bodmer Papyri and the Chester Beatty

برديات بودمير ومجموعة تيشستر بيتي ، دانييل شارب و برنت ننجبري

1 Introduction

The early Christian manuscripts most closely associated with Chester Beatty are of course the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri acquired in the early 1930s. The Beatty collection does, however, also contain many other papyrus and parchment manuscripts from Egypt, both Christian and non-Christian. Among these are a few pieces associated with another important cache of early Christian manuscripts that appeared on the Egyptian antiquities market in the 1950s, a group of papyrus and parchment books best known by the name of another collector, Martin Bodmer (1899–1971). The presence of some of these “Bodmer Papyri” in the Chester Beatty has been the cause of considerable confusion for decades, even among specialists. The chapter attempts to clarify which items in the Chester Beatty can be confidently associated with the material in the Bodmer collection.

As portable antiquities began to be discovered in Egypt with great frequency in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, wealthy European and American collectors stimulated a thriving trade in ancient manuscripts.¹ Manuscripts passed from finders to various intermediaries and eventually to more well-known dealers in Cairo and other large cities, who then sold them to eager buyers abroad.² At each of these stages, manuscripts were often divided up, that is to say, collections of items found together were dispersed, and even books themselves could be disassembled in order to raise profits by increasing the number of individual sales.³ Thus, even if an ancient book or collection miraculously survived from antiquity to the twentieth century intact, the market encouraged their mutilation upon discovery. Thus, any given modern collection of ancient papyrus and parchment manuscripts from Egypt will likely include pieces from many distinct ancient finds. At the same time, almost all collections of ancient manuscripts that were discovered in Egypt in the nineteenth and early twentieth cen-

turies were broken up and sold separately to multiple different modern collectors. Thus, one of the great challenges of trying to understand these manuscripts in their ancient contexts is identifying and trying to reassemble these ancient collections now dispersed across numerous modern repositories. It is as a part of this larger effort, sometimes termed “museum archaeology,” that we explore the relationship of the Bodmer Papyri and the collection of Chester Beatty.⁴

2 Terminology

At the outset, it is necessary to define some terms. The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri are generally thought to represent a single ancient collection of codices, books with pages as opposed to scrolls. They were found in Egypt, perhaps in the neighbourhood of the Fayum or across the Nile near Aphroditopolis, in about the year 1930. Chester Beatty bought the majority of this ancient collection, but other institutions also purchased parts of it.⁵ The collection consists of the remains of eleven distinct papyrus codices, but they are associated with twelve Roman numerals. This oddity is due to the fact that the editor of the papyri, Sir Frederic Kenyon (1863–1952), did not at first notice that manuscripts IX and X were a part of the same codex. The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri are thus designated as follows, with the unique identification number in the Trismegistos Database (TM) of Ancient Books given in parentheses:⁶

Codex I. Four Gospels and Acts (TM 61826)

Codex II. Pauline letters (TM 61855)

Codex III. Revelation (TM 61628)

Codex IV. Genesis (TM 62001)

Codex V. Genesis (TM 61952)

Codex VI. Numbers and Deuteronomy (TM 61934)

Codex VII. Isaiah (TM 61951)

Codex VIII. Jeremiah (TM 61927)

¹ See Nongbri 2018, 83–115.

² See Hagen and Ryholt 2016.

³ See, for example, the contemporary account of the discovery of the Hamuli Coptic books by David Askren (1875–1939) reproduced in Nongbri 2018, 86–91.

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⁴ On museum archaeology, see Vandorpe 1994.

⁵ For an overview of the evidence for the findspot of the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri and the institutions that purchased them, see Nongbri 2018, 116–31. For more detailed accounts of the acquisitions, see Horton 2004 and Nongbri 2014.

⁶ On the Trismegistos database, see Depauw / Gheldof 2014.

Codex IX + X. Ezekiel, Daniel, Susanna, and Esther (TM 61933)

Codex XI. Ecclesiasticus (TM 62002)

Codex XII. Letter of Enoch, Melito's *On Passover*, and the Apocryphon of Ezekiel (TM 61462)

Some confusion ensued when other “biblical” material from Egypt in the Chester Beatty began to be published in the late 1970s. The decision was made to simply continue the numbering system established in the 1930s. Thus, for example, two fragmentary copies of the Psalms in Greek were published as “Pap. Beatty XIII and XIV.” Yet, no information in the original edition of these fragments suggested any particular connection with the eleven codices that Beatty bought in the early 1930s.⁷ Nor do any of the subsequent publications of “Beatty” papyri, which now runs up to XVIII, have any obvious link to the purchases of the early 1930s.⁸ In the remainder of this chapter, then, the name “Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri” will be used to refer only to the collection of eleven codices described above.

The designation “Bodmer Papyri” is even more ambiguous. It generally refers to a collection of papyrus and parchment manuscripts presumed to come from a single discovery in Upper Egypt, perhaps near the city of Dishna, in the early 1950s.⁹ Martin Bodmer purchased the largest portion of these books, but Bodmer's collection of papyrus and parchment materials from ancient Egypt clearly contains material that was not part of the find in Upper Egypt in the early 1950s. A catalogue of Bodmer's collection published in 1947, for example, already included several papyrus manuscripts.¹⁰ At the same time, parts of the 1950s find were also purchased by other institutions. In addition, the Bodmer collection has also gifted and sold material presumed to come from this ancient collection. The result is that “Bodmer Papyri” can now be found in Germany, Ireland, Norway, Spain, the United States, and Vatican City. There is no scholarly consensus on the exact extent of the ancient collection now known as the Bodmer Papyri, but most scholars would agree that at least the following items that are presently or

formerly in the Bodmer collection are part of the ancient collection:¹¹

P.Bodmer 2: Papyrus codex, John in Greek (TM 61627)

P.Bodmer 3: Papyrus codex, John and Genesis 1–6 in Coptic (TM 107758)

P.Bodmer M: Papyrus codex, Menander (P.Bodmer 25, 4, and 26; TM 61594)

P.Bodmer C: Papyrus codex, mixed Christian texts (P.Bodmer 5, 10, 11, 7, 13, 12, and 8; TM 61420)

P.Bodmer 6: Parchment codex, Proverbs in Coptic (TM 107761)

P.Bodmer 14–15: Papyrus codex, Luke and John in Greek (TM 61743)

P.Bodmer 16: Parchment codex, Exodus in Coptic (TM 108535)

P.Bodmer 18: Papyrus codex, Deuteronomy in Coptic (TM 108536)

P.Bodmer 19: Parchment codex, Matthew and Romans in Coptic (TM 107759)

P.Bodmer P: Papyrus codex, Apology of Phileas and Psalms (P.Bodmer 20 and 9; TM 220465)

P.Bodmer 21: Papyrus codex, Joshua in Coptic (TM 108537)

P.Bodmer 22: Parchment codex, Jeremiah and related literature in Coptic (TM 108176)

P.Bodmer 23: Papyrus codex, Isaiah in Coptic (TM 108542)

P.Bodmer 24: Papyrus codex, Psalms in Greek (TM 61941)

P.Bodmer T: Papyrus codex, Susanna, Daniel, and Thucydides in Greek (P.Bodmer 45, 46, 47, and 27; TM 62928)

P.Bodmer D: Papyrus codex, the “Codex of Visions” (P.Bodmer 38, 29–37; TM 59994)

P.Bodmer 40: Parchment codex, Song of Songs in Coptic (TM 108548)

P.Bodmer 41: Papyrus codex, Acts of Paul in Coptic (TM 108121)¹²

⁷ Pietersma 1978, 1: “The provenance of P.Chester Beatty XIII and XIV is unknown according to the records of the Chester Beatty Library...Apparently...the two manuscripts in question were not part of the same acquisition as the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri from Aphroditopolis edited by F.G. Kenyon.”

⁸ See Pietersma 1987.

⁹ The most recent and thorough discussion can be found in Nongbri 2018, 157–215, but ongoing research that we hope to publish in due course has uncovered some new data that undermines or at least complicates a few of Nongbri's conclusions.

¹⁰ Bodmer 1947, 141.

¹¹ Another confusing aspect of the Bodmer Papyri is the independent numbering of some (but not all) individual texts, which obscures the number of actual physical books in the collection. Here, we follow the naming conventions of the online catalogue of the Bodmer Papyri established by the Bodmer Lab project (<https://bodmerlab.unige.ch/fr/constellations/papyri>, accessed 25 May 2022).

¹² Two other books are generally agreed to be part of this find, although Martin Bodmer's collection only ever contained a few fragments of these books. One is a papyrus codex containing materials in Greek and Latin, the so-called Montserrat Codex Miscellaneus (TM 59453). The other is a papyrus codex containing Christian material in Coptic most often referred to as the Crosby-Schøyen codex (more properly Schøyen MS. 193, TM 107771).

In addition to these codices, there are other “P.Bodmer” items that are related to the ancient collection, though not exactly a part of the working “library,” if we may cautiously use that term. In the 1970s, one side of the leather cover of P.Bodmer 23 was taken apart, and among the papyrus sheets glued together to stiffen the cover, several inscribed pieces were found. These have been published and numbered as follows:

- P.Bodmer 51, fragment of a papyrus roll with an educational exercise, reverse used for a medical or ethnographic treatise (TM 64053 + 699689)
- P.Bodmer 52, a leaf from a Greek papyrus codex of Isocrates, *Ad Nicoclem* (TM 61364)
- P.Bodmer 53, blank papyrus with traces of ink on one side (see TM 108542)
- P.Bodmer 54, leaf of a papyrus codex containing a land register (TM 699686)
- P.Bodmer 55, leaf of a papyrus codex containing a tax register (TM 699687)
- P.Bodmer 56, leaf of a papyrus codex containing a tax register (TM 699688)

The documentary (non-literary) material, P.Bodmer 54–56, provides helpful information about the date and possible provenance of P.Bodmer 23, and (perhaps) by extension, the other books. The financial information in the documents indicates that they were written in the first half of the fourth century, which in turn means the cover of P.Bodmer 23 was constructed at some point after that. Furthermore, one of the documents mentions a man with a relatively rare name who is elsewhere identified as being “from Tentyra,” a city just east of Dishna.¹³ Again, for the purposes of this chapter, the term “Bodmer Papyri” will refer to the presumed ancient collection that includes some (but not all) of the P.Bodmer series as well as material from other institutions, including the Chester Beatty.¹⁴

¹³ For the publication of these documents, see Fournet 2015. For further discussion, see Nongbri 2018, 167–68.

¹⁴ We should note that Sharp (and to a lesser extent Nongbri) have begun to doubt whether even this more limited corpus of Bodmer Papyri all come from a single discovery representing a single ancient collection.

3 Recognition of the connections between the Chester Beatty and the Bodmer Papyri

When the extensive “biblical” Bodmer Papyri, such as P.Bodmer 2, began to be published in the 1950s, comparisons with the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri that had been published two decades earlier were inevitable. Moreover, it was already clear in the 1950s and the 1960s that parts of three of the “Bodmer” books had also been acquired by Chester Beatty among the pieces that he had been buying in the 1950s. The most substantial item of these three pieces is Beatty Ac. 1389 (CBL Cpt 2019 and Cpt 2020), a large portion of a papyrus codex containing the book of Joshua in Coptic that is completed by P.Bodmer 21. The other two items are much less impressive. The papyrus and parchment fragments collectively known as Beatty Ac. 2555 (CBL BP XIX and BP X001) include a fragment of P.Bodmer 2 and a fragment of P.Bodmer 20. Each of these can be fitted into their proper place in the more complete leaves held at the Fondation Martin Bodmer (see Figure 1).

Subsequently, more overlapping material between the two collections has been discovered. For instance, it is generally agreed that the Coptic codex now known as Schøyen MS 193 (TM 107771) was also a part of the “Bodmer” find.¹⁵ And in fact, Martin Bodmer at one time also did possess fragments of this book, though they later left his collection under somewhat dubious circumstances.¹⁶ In 2011, additional fragments of this codex were identified in the Chester Beatty as well.¹⁷ Other material common to both collections remains unpublished. In 2017, we identified fragments of Beatty Ac. 1494 (CBL Cpt 1494) (a papyrus roll containing Horsiesios letter 3) and Beatty Ac. 1495 (CBL Cpt 1495) (a papyrus roll containing Horsiesios letter 4) in the Fondation Martin Bodmer. And in 2020, we

¹⁵ On this codex, see Goehring 1990.

¹⁶ Martin Bodmer seems to have loaned fragments of this codex in his collection to William H. Willis of the University of Mississippi in 1962 (at the time, the University of Mississippi owned the bulk of the codex). Willis, however, appears to have subsequently assumed ownership of the fragments and donated them to Duke University in 1988. In 1990, Duke traded the fragments to the Norwegian collector Martin Schøyen. In 2017, however, we identified a handful of additional small fragments of this codex among unsorted fragments at the Fondation Martin Bodmer. Sharp is currently engaged in an archival project that promises to clarify the somewhat obscure history of the University of Mississippi’s papyrus collection and William Willis’s involvement with it.

¹⁷ Pietersma and Comstock 2011.

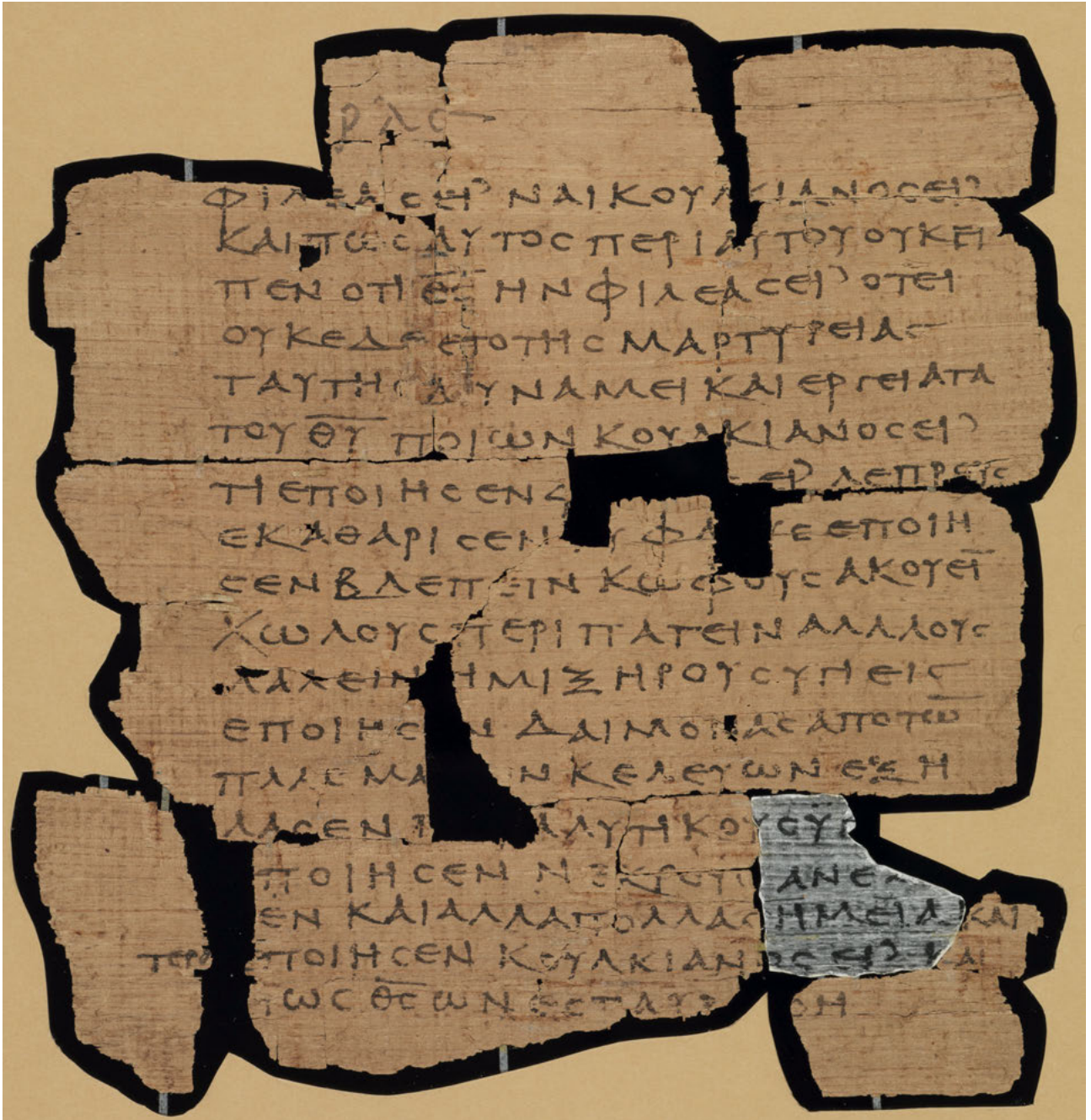


Figure 1: A leaf of P. Bodmer 20 with a black and white photograph of Beatty Ac. 2555 (CBL BP X001) inserted in place. Image appears courtesy of the Fondation Martin Bodmer, Creative commons CC-BY-NC, 4.0.

noticed that among the small unidentified papyrus fragments at the Chester Beatty Library framed collectively under the title “CBL Pap 1991.20” there is another fragment that almost certainly belongs to P. Bodmer 20 (see Figure 2). Unfortunately, nothing is known concerning the circumstances or date of the acquisition of the fragments in this frame. Finally, as recently as 2022, a portion of a papyrus roll containing Athanasius’ letter to Dracontius (TM 749338) has been identified among the Chester Beatty

holdings. We have also identified fragments of this roll in the Bodmer collection (Torallas Tovar 2018).¹⁸

¹⁸ Personal communication from Sofia Torallas Tovar; the identification is credited to Alin Suciu.



Figure 2: An additional fragment of P.Bodmer 20 (circled in white) in the Chester Beatty Library framed as CBL Pap 1991.20.

4 James Robinson's expansion of the connections

Given these overlapping materials, it is understandable that some scholars entertained the idea that the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri and the Bodmer Papyri formed part of a single ancient collection.¹⁹ This hypothesis has, however, fallen out of favour largely due to research carried out by James M. Robinson in the 1970s and 1980s.²⁰ Robinson was able to show – without knowledge of the contents of the papyri extracted from the cover of P.Bodmer 23 – that it is likely that the “Bodmer” books were found as the result of illicit excavations in Upper Egypt in the vicinity of Dishna in 1952.²¹ His research in the Chester Beatty archives helped Robinson to confirm this conclusion. While looking into Beatty's acquisition of Ac. 1389 and the Beatty fragment of P.Bodmer 2, Robinson was led to what he referred to as the Registry of Accessions for the Chester Beatty, a listing of the printed books and manuscripts that Chester Beatty had bought over the years. The “Ac.” numbers mentioned above refer to entries in this Register. In the second volume of the Register, next to the entry for Ac. 1390 (CBP BP XXI) (a papyrus codex containing mathematical exercises in Greek and a portion of the Gospel According to John in Coptic) there is a type-written note with the following information (Figure 3):

Small Village DESHNA just after NAGHI HAMADI about 2 hours before LUXOR by train. Probably from a Library of a Monastery. Found in a jar in a cemetery.

As mentioned earlier, Robinson had concluded on other grounds that Dishna was the source of many of the Bodmer pieces, and he saw this note as confirmation that Ac. 1390 stemmed from the same find.²² Furthermore, the handwritten notes for Ac. 1390 in the Accessions Register state

¹⁹ See, for instance, Turner 1980, 52: “Within the thirty-year period 1930 to 1960 a considerable number of intact or nearly intact papyrus books were acquired, some by M. Bodmer, some by Sir Chester Beatty...It is an economical hypothesis that all these papyri, whether works of Greek literature, documents, or Christian texts, are from one source and constitute a unitary find.”

²⁰ Robinson's research on this topic has been published in many different outlets and forms over the years. His most detailed treatment can be found in Robinson 2011. The book is full of helpful data, but it is plagued by confusing repetition and internal inconsistencies. For specific details relating to the material at the Chester Beatty, Robinson's most reliable account is found in his introduction to the publication of Ac. 1390: Robinson 1990, 15–29.

²¹ On the Beatty Biblical Papyri as a distinct find, see also Nongbri 2014.

²² Robinson's use of the note is somewhat selective. He nowhere addresses the claim that the book came from a cemetery.

that Ac. 1390 was purchased together with “2 boxes of loose leaves” and Ac. 1389 (=P.Bodmer 21) in the summer of 1956 from Phocion Tano, who sold Martin Bodmer most of his Egyptian materials.²³ A letter from Chester Beatty to Wilfred Merton dated 5 April 1956 provides further details about material bought from Tano in 1956 (ACB to Merton, 5 April 1956, CBP/B/05/32).²⁴ Beatty explicitly mentions three items. First, he describes “two books with the original binding.” As Robinson correctly noted, these are most likely Ac. 1389 and Ac. 1499 (CBL BP XXI).²⁵ Both came into Beatty's possession with their leather covers intact, and Ac. 1499 happens to include many blank pages, hence Beatty's assessment that it was “never finished.” Then he describes a third item: “It was evidently a scroll which was cut in pieces to make it appear like a book.” The individual pages that make up the book had been “stuck together,” but they “separate naturally.” As Robinson points out, this is a fitting description of the Panopolis tax codex (Ac. 2554, CBL PapPan I and CBL PapPan II).²⁶ And the tax codex is mentioned along with Ac. 1499 in a report prepared for Beatty by Theodore Skeat dated 4 June 1956 (CBP/B/05/48).²⁷ This same report also mentions “two small folders of papyrus fragments” (to be identified as the “2 boxes of loose leaves” mentioned in the Accessions Register?). In one of these folders Skeat identified the fragment of P.Bodmer 2. Within this cluster of materials, then, there were several connections to material that was certainly part of the Bodmer find.

From this point, Robinson began to identify other items that Beatty had acquired that may belong to the same find. Over the years, Robinson published many different versions of these arguments and speculated with varying degrees of confidence that numerous different pieces in the Chester Beatty might belong to the Dishna find along with the Bodmer Papyri. The following list contains, as far as we know, all the material in the Chester Beatty that Robinson has, at one time or another, associated with the Bodmer find.

CBL Cpt 2019 and Cpt 2020 (Ac. 1389): Part of P.Bodmer 21 (TM 108537)

CBL Cpt 2021 (Ac. 1390): Papyrus codex, math exercises and a part of John in Coptic (TM 61614)

²³ On Tano, see Hagen and Ryholt 2016, 266–67.

²⁴ Wilfred Merton (1888–1957) was Beatty's friend and a fellow collector of manuscripts.

²⁵ In fact, these are the only papyrus books in the collection with leather covers preserved intact, as Jill Unkel informs us.

²⁶ In the 1950s the tax codex had not yet been assigned an accession number. It, along with the fragments of P.Bodmer 2 and P.Bodmer 20 (Ac. 2555), seems to have first received accession numbers in the 1980s, if the purchase dates of other numbers in that range are indicative.

²⁷ See the Appendix to this chapter for the full text of Skeat's report.

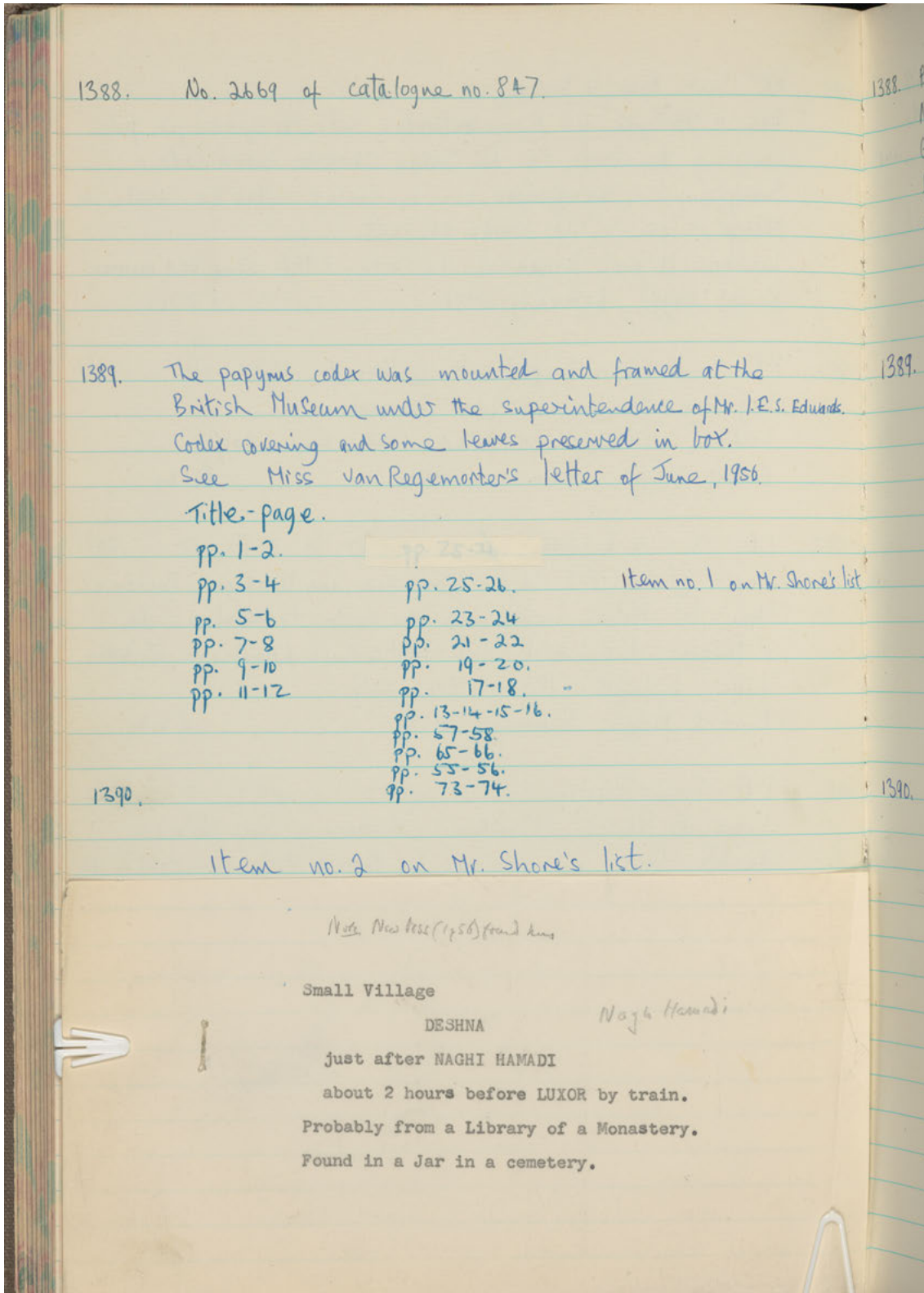


Figure 3: Chester Beatty Register of Accessions 1390, acquisitions from April 1956, CBP/B/01/2.

- CBL Cpt 2013 (Ac. 1486): a parchment roll, letter 2 of Theodore in Coptic (TM 108130)
- CBL Cpt 2018 (Ac. 1493): a papyrus codex, the Apocalypse of Elijah in Coptic (TM 108402)
- CBL Cpt 1494 (Ac. 1494): papyrus roll, letter 3 of Horsiesios in Coptic (TM 108131)
- CBL Cpt 1495 (Ac. 1495): papyrus roll, letter 4 of Horsiesios in Coptic (TM 108132)
- CBL BP XXI (Ac. 1499): a papyrus codex, Greek grammar and lexicon (TM 61873)
- CBL BP XIII and BP XIV (Ac. 1501): parts of two papyrus codices containing Psalms in Greek (TM 61999 and 62000)
- CBL PapPan I and PapPan II (Ac. 2554): the Panopolis tax codex (TM 16164)
- CBL X001 (Ac. 2555b and c): fragments of P.Bodmer 2 and P.Bodmer 20 (TM 61627 and 220465)
- CBL Cpt 54 (Ac. 2556): Papyrus codex, Pachomian letters in Coptic (TM 108078)
- CBL BP XV: Papyrus codex, the Apology of Phileas and Psalms in Greek (TM 62365)
- CBL BP XVI: Papyrus codex, Jannes and Jambres in Coptic (TM 64400)
- CBL W 129 (Ac. 2557): Pachomian letters in Greek (TM 62348)²⁸
- CBL Pap 1008: Papyrus codex containing school exercises (TM 64288)

5 Complicating the picture

Robinson took a capacious approach to identifying pieces in the Beatty collection that may have been connected to the Bodmer find, but to his credit, he was usually careful to observe the tentative nature of these identifications.²⁹ Yet, Robinson's inclusive list of Beatty material that was supposedly part of the Bodmer collection has come to take on the status of fact in wider discussions of the Bodmer Papyri.³⁰ A review of the evidence will be helpful.

²⁸ This item was published as "W. 145" (Quecke 1975) and is sometimes described as "WMS 145" (for instance, in Ryan et al. 2001). The source of this designation is unknown, as W 145 refers to a different object. Thanks to Jill Unkel for the clarification.

²⁹ Thus, in his most reliable treatment of the Beatty collection, Robinson notes that his inventory includes items "listed with hesitation," and his discussion is peppered with phrases like "one may conjecture" (Robinson 1990).

³⁰ See, for example, Gamble 1995, 172–74. An exception is Nongbri 2018, 186–90, who cast doubt on the inclusion of several of Robinson's suggested additions to the list of Bodmer Papyri.

When Robinson attempted to expand the list of potential "Bodmer Papyri" in the Chester Beatty beyond the cluster of items documented as having been purchased in 1956, he proceeded by searching through the Accessions Register in the range of numbers near Ac. 1389 and Ac. 1499 (Figure 4). He sought to identify any papyrus or parchment pieces of Egyptian origin. Unless he was able to exclude such pieces for some obvious reason, he labelled them as potential Bodmer items. He eventually came to include items up to Ac. 1501.³¹ Robinson was well aware that this method was not entirely reliable. As Skeat warned Robinson in a letter written in 1985: "The basic difficulty is that Beatty did not keep any proper register of his acquisitions, and this vitiated any attempt to base conclusions on the sequence of accession numbers."³² Nevertheless, Robinson's conclusions about which Beatty items belong to the Bodmer find remain very influential.

It is, however, very important to be cautious about building too much upon Robinson's conclusions. The problem can be illustrated with a closer look at Ac. 1501. Robinson included Ac. 1501, portions of two papyrus codices containing Psalms in Greek, as a potential part of the Bodmer find for two reasons. First, as already mentioned, their accession number is in close proximity to one of the pieces bought in 1956 that he believed to be part of the Bodmer discovery (Ac. 1499). Second, a note in the Accessions Register that accompanies Ac. 1501 states that these pieces were "found in a box of miscellaneous fragments of papyri, summer, 1957. Mounted at B.M. [the British Museum] and returned to library August, 1958" (CBP/B/01/2). Based on this note, Robinson hypothesised that Ac. 1501 was part of a batch of material that had been sent to the British Museum for conservation at the end of 1956, a batch which Robinson assumed included material *purchased* in 1956.³³ But at least some parts of this chain of reasoning now seem suspect in light of newly discovered archival material at the Chester Beatty that was apparently unknown to Robinson.

The papyrus leaves collected as Ac. 1501 were published in 1978 as P.Chester Beatty XIII and XIV.³⁴ P.Chester Beatty XIII consists of eight damaged but relatively intact papyrus leaves, and P.Chester Beatty XIV consists of two

³¹ Robinson 1990, 4 and Robinson 2011, 63. As noted in footnote 25, some items purchased in the 1950s seem not to have received accession numbers until the 1980s. This is the case for Ac. 2554, Ac. 2555, and Ac. 2556.

³² Letter from Theodore C. Skeat to James M. Robinson 3 May 1985 (Dr James Robinson Papers, folder titled Chester Beatty Letters, Special Collections, The Claremont Colleges Library, Claremont, California).

³³ Robinson 2011, 67.

³⁴ Pietersma 1978.

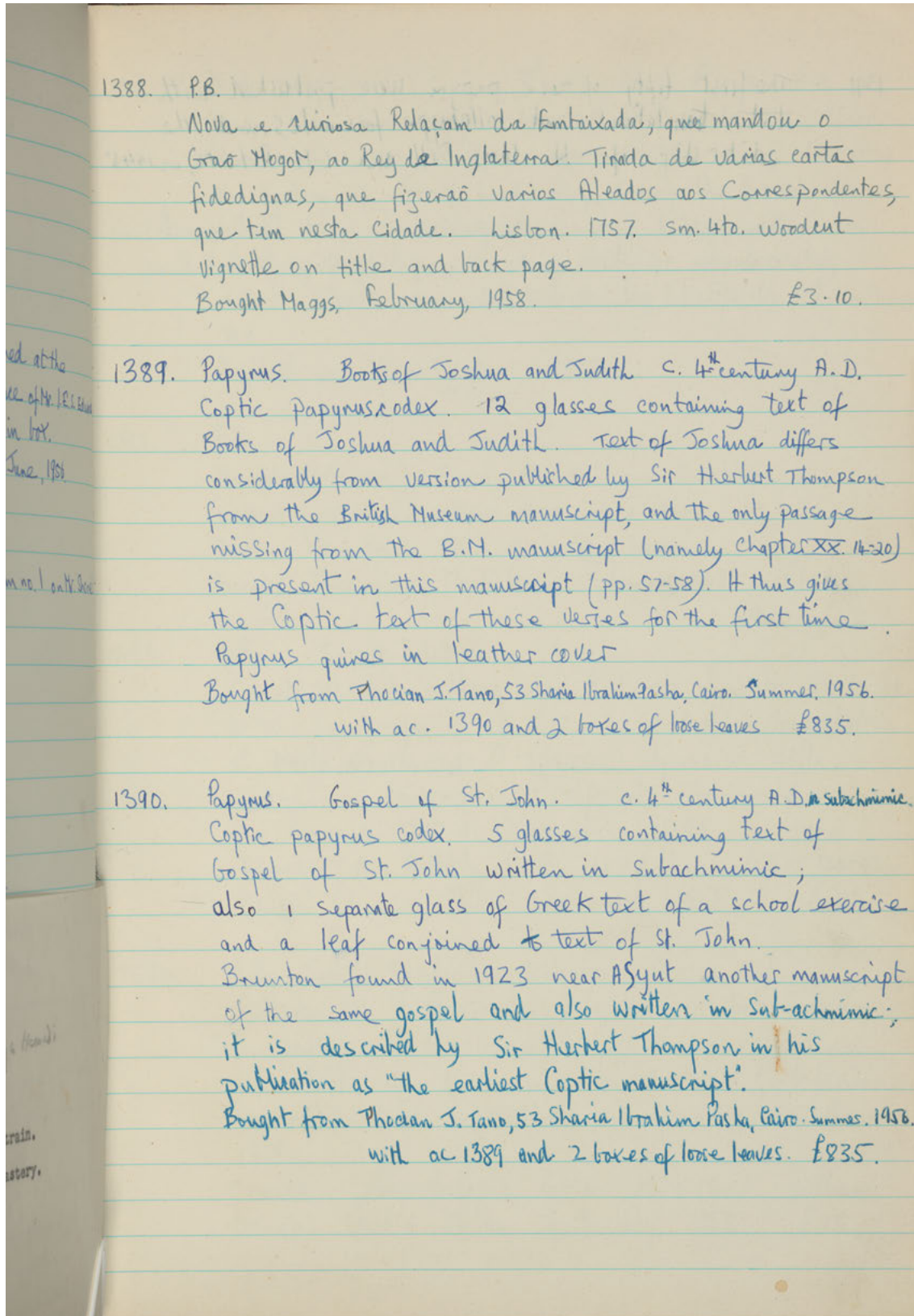


Figure 4: One of the Chester Beatty Accession Registers, opening that shows Ac. 1389 and 1390.

small fragments of a single leaf copied in a different hand from that of P.Chester Beatty XIII. While it is true that Ac. 1501 was likely entered into the Accessions Register late in 1958, around the same time as some material that may come from the Bodmer discovery, this fact does not necessarily indicate that the materials were purchased at that time. A ring binder in the Beatty Library with notes about various purchases contains an entry for the year 1938 that runs as follows:

1938 Sent by Mr. Beatty from Cairo with Mr. Mansor³⁵ Received Feb. 16.

–Large parcel containing Coptic fragments. GOSPELS, etc. 4th–5th cent.

–Small parcel. 8 folios of PSALMS (3rd cent.); fragments of PSALMS. + other fragments (larger script) (CBP/B/02/2/18)³⁶

The 1938 entry for the Psalms seems to match the description of Ac. 1501 quite well. If these leaves of the Psalms were in fact bought in the late 1930s, it is most unlikely that they should be associated with the Bodmer discovery, which, again, is generally believed to have taken place around 1952.³⁷

A second reason for caution with Robinson's conclusions involves the possibility that Beatty was buying from more than one of the multiple different finds of Egyptian papyri that were on the market in 1956. Consider the example of the Beatty tax codex (Ac. 2554) mentioned in Beatty's letter to Merton and in Skeat's report. This codex, which records a family's tax receipts for the years 339–345 CE, forms a part of a relatively coherent collection, the so-called "archive of the descendants of Alopex." This archive consists of over thirty documents from various members of this family that have ended up in different modern collections.³⁸ If the tax codex really is a part of the Bodmer Papyri, then the other documents in this archive should also be included in the find. However, a recently published piece from this archive is said to have been acquired already in 1953, suggesting that this material was on the market at least two years before Martin

Bodmer made his first purchases of "Bodmer Papyri" in 1955.³⁹ It may well be the case, then, that Beatty happened to acquire material from more than one Egyptian find in the 1950s.⁴⁰

Conclusions

To conclude, then, we offer a set of suggestions for working with the Accession Registers at the Chester Beatty:

1. The Registers preserve institutional memory, and while not infallible, ought to be considered as accurate unless there are compelling contemporary sources that suggest otherwise.
2. Items are not entered into the Register until after they are purchased.
3. An item may be entered into the Register years (or even decades) after it was purchased. The date an item was entered into the Register provides only a terminus ante quem for acquisition.
4. Proximity of accession numbers in the Register only means that items were entered into the Register around the same time and does not necessarily confirm that items were purchased around the same time.
5. It must also be remembered that (ancient) items purchased at about the same time may not necessarily have originated from the same (ancient) collection.

With these cautions in mind, we approach Robinson's hypotheses about which materials in the Chester Beatty should be regarded as part of the "Bodmer Papyri" find with some scepticism. We acknowledge that scholars of early Christian manuscripts owe a great deal to James Robinson's tireless and industrious work on the knotty problem of the Bodmer Papyri. Yet, it seems to us that at times, his enthusiasm got the better of him and led him to draw conclusions unwarranted by the ambiguous evi-

³⁵ This is perhaps a reference to Mansur Abd el-Sayyid Mansour (1881–1968), a Cairo antiquities dealer, on whom see Hagen / Ryholt 2016, 237–38.

³⁶ We are grateful to Jill Unkel for drawing this entry to our attention. Pietersma made no mention of this record in his edition of P.Chester Beatty XIII and XIV (Pietersma 1978).

³⁷ A date of purchase in or before 1938 does, however, reopen the question of whether these leaves might have some association with the materials that Beatty was purchasing earlier in the 1930s, namely the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri. That Beatty and Kenyon made no such connection perhaps suggests they had reasons to suspect a different origin for these leaves.

³⁸ For an overview of this archive, see Geens 2007.

³⁹ See Hickey 2017, 105.

⁴⁰ In fact, a third relatively coherent group of manuscripts also seems to have been circulating on the market at the same time. One of Beatty's other purchases of 1956, Ac. 1486, is a parchment roll containing a letter of Theodore, a Pachomian monk. Several letters associated with Pachomius and his followers came to light in the 1950s and were purchased by different collections, many of them the same institutions that hold undisputed Bodmer Papyri. Robinson has argued that this Pachomian material was a part of the Bodmer Papyri find, but scholars are divided on the question (see Robinson 2011, 130–84; for reservations and further bibliography, see Fournet 2015, 12 and Nongbri 2018, 190–91). In any event, we must face the possibility that Beatty (and other buyers of Bodmer Papyri in the 1950s) were purchasing materials from multiple distinct ancient finds.

dence that is actually available. Robinson's various lists of Beatty manuscripts that were part of the same find as the bulk of the Bodmer Papyri are without doubt overly inclusive. It is our hope that further archival work on the acquisition of the pieces in question might further clarify which pieces in the Chester Beatty may actually belong to the find.⁴¹ It is clear that some of the manuscripts that Beatty purchased in the 1950s that are physically connected to material currently or formerly at the Bodmer can be considered as part of the "Bodmer Papyri" find (at least, to the degree that we can be confident these books themselves constitute a unitary find):⁴²

Ac. 1389: A substantial portion of P.Bodmer 21

Ac. 2555: Fragments of P.Bodmer 2 and P.Bodmer 20

CBL Cpt 2026: Leaves of Schøyen MS 193

In addition, the fact that Ac. 1390 was purchased together with Ac. 1389 *and* contains a note connecting it to Dishna likely means that this piece should be added to this list. Ac. 1499, although apparently purchased at the same time as these books, lacks any explicit connection with Dishna.⁴³ Ac. 1494 and 1495 are now connected to the recently discovered fragments in the Bodmer collection, but the question of whether these Pachomian materials belong with the undisputed Bodmer Papyri in the first place continues to divide scholars, including the authors of this chapter: Sharp would include Ac. 1494 and Ac. 1495 as a part of the Bodmer Papyri find, but Nongbri remains hesitant. While

it is possible that other material at the Chester Beatty *may* be connected to the "Bodmer" find, there is, to our knowledge, no positive *archival* evidence in favour of connecting any other pieces in the library to the Bodmer find.

There is, of course, more work to be done. Untangling the intertwined acquisition histories of modern collections forms an important component of establishing the profiles of these ancient collections. It can be easy to assume that modern collections correspond in a simple or direct way with ancient collections. Disciplinary practices like informal naming conventions ("Beatty Papyri," "Bodmer Papyri") can encourage the idea that the collections represent coherent groupings of ancient manuscripts. Collectors can, in a way, become identified with the materials in their collections.⁴⁴ By closely examining archival records, the approach of museum archaeology helps to strip away any veneer of uniformity about collections and to more clearly show the variegated and sometimes haphazard way that acquisitions happened. The operations of the antiquities market rarely worked to preserve the coherence of ancient collections of manuscripts. If we wish to study these ancient materials responsibly, we must first do the sometimes tedious work making sure we have reconstructed the ancient collections as accurately as possible.⁴⁵

⁴¹ An untapped resource in this investigation is the archival documentation at the Fondation Martin Bodmer in Cologne. We are aware of correspondence there pertaining to these purchases (including the correspondence of both Martin Bodmer and his secretary Odlie Bongard), but we have not been able to access this material, which could potentially answer a number of lingering questions about these manuscripts.

⁴² As noted above, there are also fragments of Beatty Ac. 1494 and 1495, papyrus copies of letters of Horsiesios, at the Fondation Martin Bodmer. As far as we are aware, however, nothing is known about the date or circumstances when these pieces were acquired.

⁴³ It seems clear from Beatty's letter to Merton and Skeat's report that Ac. 1499 was also purchased in 1956. Next to its entry in the Accessions Register, however, is a note written in pencil: "1953 Greek-Latin Dictionary." We are uncertain who entered this note, when they entered the note, and what the significance of the date is. Earlier scholars have also mentioned this note (Wouters 1988, xi and Robinson 2011, 58), but nobody has attempted to explain its presence or meaning.

⁴⁴ It is perhaps noteworthy in this connection that the editors of this volume have changed all our references to "the Chester Beatty Library" to simply the "Chester Beatty."

⁴⁵ We are grateful to Jill Unkel and Hyder Abbas for their collegiality and willingness to share their extensive knowledge of the Beatty archives. Nongbri's research was conducted as a part of the EthiCodex project funded by the Research Council of Norway (project number 314240).

Appendix: Theodore Skeat's 1956 Report

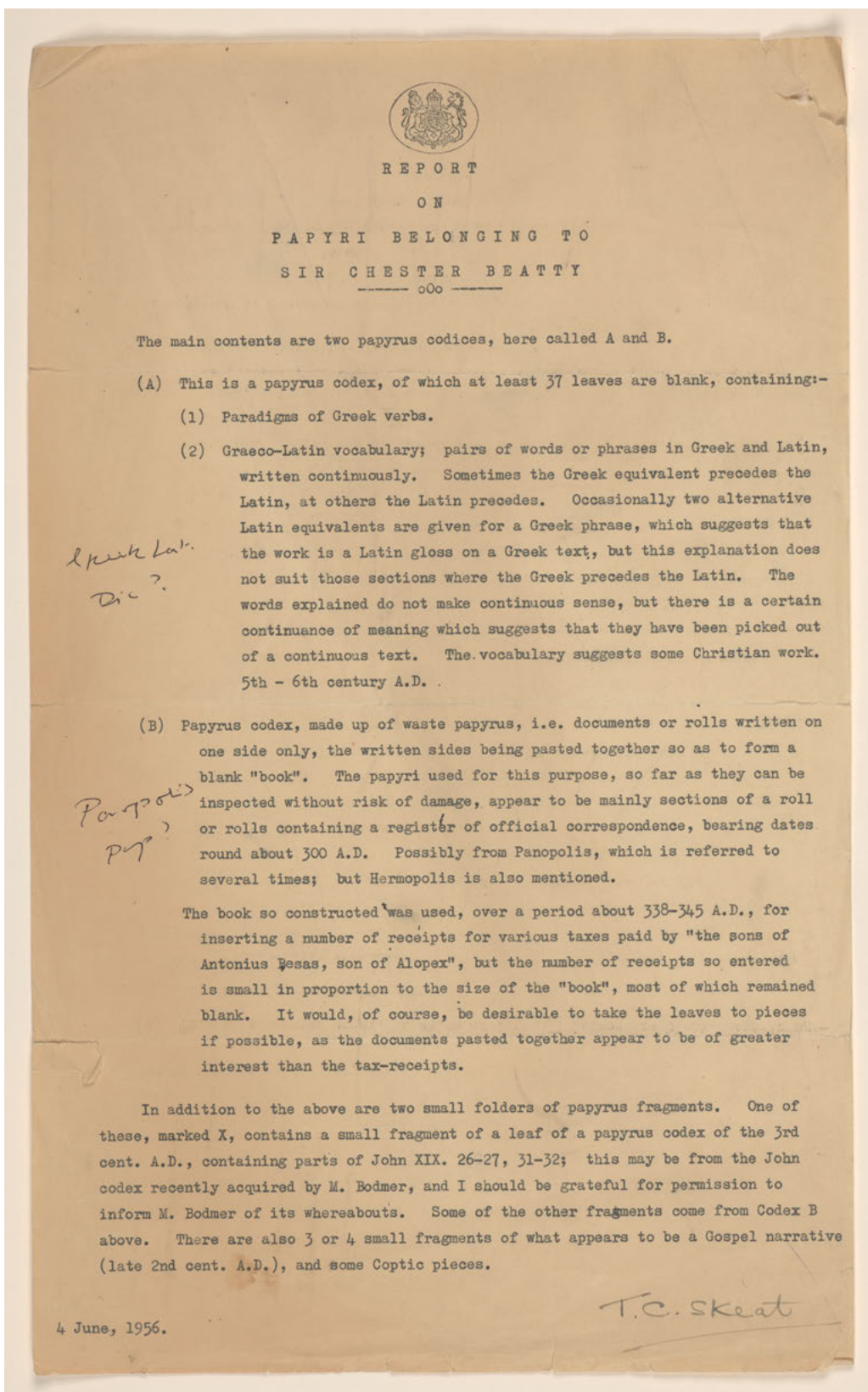


Figure 5: Report on papyri by T. C. Skeat.

REPORT ON PYPYRI BELONGING TO SIR CHESTER BEATTY

The main contents are two papyrus codices, here called A and B.

(A) This is a papyrus codex, of which at least 37 leaves are blank, containing:-

- (1) Paradigms of Greek verbs.
- (2) Graeco-Latin vocabulary; pairs of words or phrases in Greek and Latin, written continuously. Sometimes the Greek equivalent precedes the Latin, at others the Latin precedes. Occasionally two alternative Latin equivalents are given for a Greek phrase, which suggests that the work is a Latin gloss on a Greek text, but this explanation does not suit those sections where the Greek precedes the Latin. The words explained do not make continuous sense, but there is a certain continuance of meaning which suggests that they have been picked out of a continuous text. The vocabulary suggests some Christian work.
5th–6th century A.D.

(B) Papyrus codex, made up of waste papyrus, i.e. documents of rolls written on one side only, the written sides being pasted together so as to form a blank "book". The papyri used for this purpose, so far as

they can be inspected without risk of damage, appear to be mainly sections of a roll or rolls containing a register of official correspondence, bearing dates round about 300 A.D. Possibly from Panopolis, which is referred to several times; but Hermopolis is also mentioned.

The book so constructed was used, over a period about 338–345 A.D., for inserting a number of receipts for various taxes paid by "the sons of Antonius Besas, so of Alpex", but the number of receipts so entered is small in proportion to the size of the "book", most of which remained blank. It would, of course, be desirable to take the leaves to pieces if possible, as the documents pasted together appear to be of greater interest than the tax-receipts.

In addition to the above are two small folders of papyrus fragments. One of these, marked X, contains a small fragment of a leaf of a papyrus codex of the 3rd cent. A.D., containing parts of John XIX. 26–27, 31–32; this may be from the John codex recently acquired by M. Bodmer, and I should be grateful for permission to inform M. Bodmer of its whereabouts. Some of the other fragments come from Codex B above. There are also 3 or 4 small fragments of what appears to be a Gospel narrative (late 2nd cent. A.D.), and some Coptic pieces.

4 June 1956

[Signed] T.C. Skeat

يلتقط المؤلفان في هذا المقال الخطوط العريضة لتاريخ علم البردي وللحبكة المركزية الغربية في علم البردي ، وهي الحبكة التي فسرها المؤلفان السابقان، ويعرضوا لنا في هذا المقال العديد من التفاصيل الدقيقة حول النتائج السنية للغاية التي خلفها شراء البرديات مجهولة المصدر (مكان العثور عليها) من تجار الآثار المصريين في بدايات ومنتصف القرن العشرين ومن ثم تقسيمها بين المتاحف الغربية وغيرها من المؤسسات المولعة بالتراث المصري وبين الكثير من الأفراد المولعين بتجميع أنواع معينة من هذا التراث مثل مارتن بودمر وتشيستر بيتي. فمثلاً يعرض المؤلفان لحقيقة تقسيم الكتب القديمة المكتوبة على أوراق البردي إلى أوراق متفرقة من أجل مضاعفة سعر البيع أو من أجل توزيع الحصيلة على من عثر أو من سرق هذا الكتاب أو هذه البرديات، وعلى هذا فإن سوق البرديات قد ساعد بشكل أو بآخر أولاً في تدمير العديد من المكتشفات الأثرية وثانياً في تشكيل أجندة البحث العلمي حتى وقتنا الحاضر. ومن خلال استخدام المنهج الذي يطلق عليه البعض اسم "حفریات المتاحف" يعرض المؤلفان هذه الحقيقة من خلال الغوص في أرشيفات واحدة من أهم المجموعات التي تحتوي على برديات إنجيلية وهي برديات بودمير وثيقة الصلة بمجموعة تشيستر بيتي ، ويوضحان كيف أن قصص العثور على هذه البرديات أخفت، أحياناً بقصد وأحياناً بدون قصد، مجموعة مهمة من الحقائق حول أماكن العثور على هذه البرديات ومن ثم السياق التاريخي والأثري لهذه الوثائق. يقدم الباحثان في بداية مقالهم محاولة لضبط المصطلحات وذلك من خلال عرض عام لمجموعة الكودكس البردية (أي أوراق البردي المجمعة على هيئة كتاب خلاف لأوراق البردي المجمعة على هيئة لفة (رول) من الأوراق الملتصقة ببعضها البعض) والملابسات المزعومة للعثور على هذه المخطوطات وهي المجموعة تضافى على المجموعة محل الدراسة أهميتها العلمية والتفافية ثم يعرضان بعد ذلك لمجموعة الكودكس في برديات بودمير قبل أن يشرعا في الربط بين المجموعتين من خلال بحثهم العلمي الذي يشبه أسلوب المحققين الصحفيين في تتبعهم لخيوط القصاص والإنتباه الجيد للتفاصيل الدقيقة . المقال يكاد يكون دعوة صريحة لكل المتخصصين من أجل المزيد من العمل على كشف ملامسات اكتشاف هذه البرديات من خلال البحث في أرشيفات المجموعات المختلفة وعدم الاكتفاء فقط بذكر أسماء المدن أو القرى التي يقال أنها مصدر هذه البرديات. مثل هذه الأبحاث مهمة ليس فقط لكشف الأماكن الدقيقة للعثور على هذه البرديات بل لكشف الملامسات التاريخية الحديثة والدوافع المختلفة لمن قاموا بتجميع هذه البرديات. المقال مهم لكل من يريد أن يعرف على وجه الدقة برديات تشيستر بيتي التي لها علاقة واضحة وصريحة مع برديات مارتن بودمير.

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