A Sahidic Lectionary of the New Testament and Psalms
(Plates 7–10)

Among the as yet unpublished Coptic papyri of the Chester Beatty Library are two frames, hereby assigned the designation Papyrus Chester Beatty 2025, which belong at least in part to a Sahidic lectionary featuring an assortment of passages from the Psalms and the New Testament. Neither the date of acquisition by the Chester Beatty Library nor its provenance is known.¹

The state of conservation of both frames but especially of Frame 1 must be described, regrettably, as being very poor. Little care was bestowed by the conservator on trying to disentangle heterogeneous pieces of papyrus often belonging to several layers of folios. That these layers reflect the original make-up of a single document is, in many cases, out of the question, since one finds not only fragments upside down in relation one to another but also distinct scribal hands and practices. Nonetheless, for the sake of convenience we will refer to the composite items in Frame 1 as Fragments A and B, beginning with the ↓ side of the major fragments. (Not all show the same side.) Similarly, the two folios of the single bifolio in Frame 2 may usefully be labeled A and B. There, however, we begin with the → side. Unfortunately, the paper label on Frame 2 is between glass and consequently could not be removed, even though it covers some letters on the ↓ side, albeit of a stray fragment (see Page 3 and Page 4 below). Equally regrettable is that on both sides the lower binding strip was carelessly placed over the final line of text. Similarly, the upper binding covers part of the margin. It is to be hoped that at some future date the Library will have this document redone.

The original order of the two frames may be inferred from their respective contents. Since Frame 1 ↓ A contains I John 4:11–12 and Frame 2 ↓ B continues with vv. 14ff, it is clear that the former must be placed before the latter. Moreover, the document was apparently constructed in such a way that pages with fibers running in the same direction were made to face each other. Hence the page order for

¹The authors are grateful to the Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library for permission to publish this text. The Sahidic NT and portions of the OT were kindly made available in machine-readable form by Jay Treat of the (enter for Computer Analysis of Texts, Philadelphia.
Frame 1 is → ↓, while for Frame 2 it is the reverse. Also apparent is that the column of inscribed text must have consisted of circa 30 lines, since circa 16 lines of text are needed to link Frame 1 ↓ B (1 John 4:11–12) with Frame 2 ↓ B (1 John 4:14–16). This number is confirmed by Frame 2 → B which features the text of Acts 13:27–29 in col. i and continues col. ii with 31ff.

The manuscript was written in two columns of text per page with circa 8 letters per line. The right-hand margin measures circa 3.75 cm (Frame 1 → A, Frame 2 ↓ A) and the left-hand margin varies from 2.5 cm to 3.75 (Frame 2 ↓ and →). The preserved upper margin now measures circa 3 cm (Frame 2 ↓ and →) and spacing between the columns ranges from circa 1 cm to 2.5 cm (Frame 2 ↓ and →). The written columns are on average 7 cm in width and must have measured some 27.4 cm in height. If we assume that upper and lower margins were of roughly equal width, the original format of our document will have been circa 21.9 cmB x 33.4 cmH.

The manuscript shows the usual syllabic overlining, instances of diaeresis, medial/high stop as well as the colon. The colon (and at times the stop) is regularly followed by a dash, and in the lections from Psalms this combination often marks the end of a stich, even though each stich is also made to begin a new line. Individual lections in the document are separated by two lines of small angular brackets (equal to circa one line of text), each line closing with a dash; next comes the title-line indicating the book from which the following lection derives; then two more lines of brackets plus dash, preceded, in the margin, by a paragraph marker. The scriptural passage per se begins with a protrusion of one letter into the margin (see Frame 2 ↓ and →). Once our scribe wrote a supra-linear omicron (Frame 2 ↓ A col. i line 10 [= οΥ]) and once used overlining for line-final nu (Frame 2 → B col. ii line 17 [= ΝΗ]). Nomina sacra are contracted to ιες, ις, and ιλη respectively.

The contents of our lectionary may be delineated as follows (assigned page numbers merely reflect convenience):

Page 1. col. i = Ps 50:14–15 (=Frame 1 → A). The passage is almost certainly followed by two lines of angular brackets, indicating that the lection ended with verse 15.

Col. ii = perhaps Matthew 4:3 (=Frame 1 → A). It is not unlikely that the left- and right-hand columns of this page were jammed into each other. To be noted is that the Acts fragment at the lower right (see Page 3 below) belongs to the right-hand column of a later page but now is partly under the Psalms fragment to
the left, which comprises the left-hand column of Page 1. (The ↓
side of the Matthew fragment offers no help)

Page 2. col. i. Lost.

Col. ii = 1 John 4:11–12 (=Frame 1↓ A). Since v. 11 is preceded by
brackets the lection must have opened with that verse.

Page 3. col. i = 1 John 4:14–16 (=Frame 2↓ B col. i). It is likely that the
lection from 1 John ran from v. 11 to the end of 16, with the last
three lines beginning col. ii, followed by the usual closing
brackets. A stray fragment of papyrus containing part of four lines
of text has been attached incorrectly on the right-hand side at the
head of the column. (See also Page 4 col. ii.)

Col. ii = Acts 13:26 (=Frame 2↓ B col. ii plus Frame 1↑ A left
down and Frame 1→ B top center; both pieces are, however, ↓).

Page 4. col. i = Acts 13:27–29 (=Frame 2→ B col. i plus Frame 1↓ A
down center and Frame 1↓ B top center).

Col. ii = Acts 13:31–33 (=Frame 2→ B col. ii). Since v. 33 is
followed by brackets, the Acts lection apparently comprised Acts
13:26–33. The stray fragment at the head of the column must be
disregarded (see Page 3 above).

Page 5. col. i = Ps 96:3–4 plus Mark 8:34 (=Frame 2→ A col. i). Since
after the Acts passage (see Page 4 col. ii above) there is space for a
mere five or six additional lines of text, while Ps 96:1–3 would
require circa 18 lines, it is probable that one or more bifolios have
gone missing at this point. (To posit a lection of half a dozen lines
is not a realistic option.)

Col. ii. Virtually lost (=Frame 2→ A col. ii).

Page 6. col. i. Virtually lost. (=Frame 2↓ A col. i).

Col. ii = Ps 31:1–4 (=Frame 2↓ A col. ii). If the lection
commenced with Ps 31:1 (excluding the Psalm's title), four lines
would have stood in col. i.

The passages may now be presented in the order given above.
The texts of C. W. Horner (The Coptic Version of the New Testament
[Sahidic]) and E. A. Wallis Budge (The Earliest Known Coptic Psalter)
serve as lemma and, therefore, are given to the left of the square bracket.
Page 1 (→) (Plate 7A)

Ps 50:14–15
Matthew 4:3

Col. ii 8

Page 2 (↓) (Plate 8A)

Col. ii 6

Col. ii 8 περάζε] περάζε 2025vid (spatii causa)
Page 3 (↓) (Plate 9B)

1 John 4:14-16
Acts 13:26
5 lines lost

Col. i 1 ἄνηγα] ἄνω 2025; 6 ἄνωξι ἄνποκμος] ἐπεκοκμος 2025; – ἀνοικολογεῖ] –ἀνοικολογεῖ 2025; 12 οὐν] ἀνοι 2025; 14 οὐν] ἀνοι 2025; Col. ii 9 νεκνύ ννεσήνυ 2025

Page 4 (→) (Plate 10B)

Acts 13:27-29
3 lines lost

Acts 13:31-33
Top of column
2Η] ΤΩΛΙΑΛΑΙ
Λ ΕΠΑΙ ΕΟΝΤΗΜ
NAI] ΤΕΝΟΥ

4 ἈΛΧΙ [ὁ]
ΚΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ] Μ
ΠΟΥ ΕΙ[Ἀ]ΛΥ
ΑΕ] ΝΟΙΟΙΕ Ἡ

8 ΜΟΥ[[ΕΠΟΥΝ]]
ΕΠΟΥΝ ΕΡΟΩ
ΛΥ]ΑΙΤΙ ΜΗ
ΛΑ]ΤΟΣ ΕΜΟΥ
12 ΟΥΤ ΜΜΟΙ:"
Page 6 (↓) (Plate 9A)

Ps 31:1-4
c. 2 lines lost
ε[ε] Ινέγ[νο
βε:
Ν ΄ ΔΤ 9γ

4 ] . .
]Τέ
]π
] . ?ε
]Μπ
]Ηδ
]Μι

12
ΔΝΑΚΕΕΣ Ρ
ΔΣ:
ΜΧ[ι] ΟΚΑΚΕ
ΒΟ[Λ] ΜΠΕ20

16
ΟΥ ΤΗΡΩ:
ΧΕ ΑΜ] ΝΕ20
ΟΥ ΜΗ] ΤΕΥ
c. 10 lines lost


An assortment of unplaced fragments can be isolated, primarily in Frame 1. Some of these may belong to our lectionary but others clearly do not, judging from handwriting, line length or other scribal characteristics. We begin with the former group.

1. Fragments that may belong:
   Frame 1→ A (Plate 7A)
   a. (↓; upside down)
      ]Κέ . [
      ]ΕΒΩΛ[
      ]ΜΩ[ε[
      ]ΡΟ[Ψ[
      ]ΧΩ . [
   b. (↓; rightside up)
      Υ[
      Ν . [
      ΡΦ[
      Πι . [
      Χ[
Frame 1→ A (Plate 7B)
c. (→; rightside up)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ΓΩΜ</th>
<th>ΤΕΙΛ</th>
<th>ΤΑΩΝ ΑΥ</th>
<th>ΦΑΤΑΩΜ</th>
<th>ΠΟΥΤΩΣ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

d. (↓; rightside up)

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<tr>
<th>. ΤΕ</th>
<th>. ΤΕ</th>
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<th>. ΤΕ</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Frame 1↓ B (Plate 8B)
f. (↓; rightside up)

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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

g. (→; rightside up)

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<th>. Ο .</th>
<th>. Ο .</th>
<th>. Ο .</th>
<th>. Ο .</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

h. (→; rightside up)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>.</th>
<th>.</th>
<th>.</th>
<th>.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Frame 2↓ B (Plate 9B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ΤΕΙ</th>
<th>ΝΠ</th>
<th>ΕΜ</th>
<th>ΧΕΨ</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Frame 2→ B (Plate 9B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ΝΕΙ</th>
<th>ΝΕΙ</th>
<th>ΝΕΙ</th>
<th>ΝΕΙ</th>
<th>ΝΕΙ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Frame 1↓ A (Plate 8A)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>. A</th>
<th>. A</th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
</table>

2. Fragments that do not belong:

Frame 1→ A (Plate 7A)
a. (→; upside down)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>=</th>
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<th>=</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ΛΘ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. (↓; rightside up)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&gt; Π</th>
<th>&gt; Π</th>
<th>&gt; Π</th>
<th>&gt; Π</th>
<th>&gt; Π</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Λ</td>
<td>Π</td>
<td>Π</td>
<td>Π</td>
<td>Π</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&gt; ΘΥΨ</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Α</th>
<th></th>
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</table>
Frag. c of the first group may possibly be reconstructed to yield II Tim 1:8–9: ἐγόμ ἐννοεῖ/τις ΠΔ ΠΔ ΠΔ ΠΔ /ΤΔΝΩΝ ΦΔΦ ΔΗΤΔΗΜ /ΖΝ ὁγοτωδὴ /ἐνογυαλάτ ἂν. In that case, however, we have to assume that our scribe 1) failed to place a medial/high stop after ἐννοεῖ/τις, even though there is a break in sense, 2) mistakenly wrote –ΤΔΝΩΝ for –ΤΔΝΩΝ and 3) inserted punctuation after –ΤΔΝΩΝ and ἐνογυαλάτ, though the sense units continue.

In the second group as well Frag. c is of special interest, since it apparently derives from a lectionary. However, both the handwriting and the design used to separate the lections mark it as being distinct from our main text. Furthermore, the last line more than likely
introduces a lection from one of the Gospels, but under a heading at variance with the usage of our chief scribe (cf. on Page 5 col. i line 11). Frag. g gives us Mt 16:13, though in a format and scibal hand distinct from our main document. The only variant from Horner to be noted is Ⲫ (ΦΙΑΠΠΟϹ) for Ⲫ—.

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A. Pietersma

S. T. Comstock
Plate 23

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