

## 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Among the as yet unpublished Coptic papyri of the Chester Beatty Library are two frames, hereby assigned the designation Papyrus Chester Beatty 2025, which belong at least in part to a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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup>The 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  $\rightarrow \downarrow$ , 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 $\downarrow$  B (1 John 4:11–12) with Frame 2 $\downarrow$  B (1 John 4:14–16). This number is confirmed by Frame 2 $\rightarrow$  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 $\rightarrow$  A, Frame 2 $\downarrow$  A) and the left-hand margin varies from 2.5 cm to 3.75 (Frame 2 $\downarrow$  and  $\rightarrow$ ). The preserved upper margin now measures circa 3 cm (Frame 2 $\downarrow$  and  $\rightarrow$ ) and spacing between the columns ranges from circa 1 cm to 2.5 cm (Frame 2 $\downarrow$  and  $\rightarrow$ ). 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 $\downarrow$  and  $\rightarrow$ ). Once our scribe wrote a supra-linear omicron (Frame 2 $\downarrow$  A col. i line 10 [= OY]) and once used overlining for line-final nu (Frame 2 $\rightarrow$  B col. ii line 17 [= NΔN]). Nomina sacra are contracted to  $\overline{\text{TC}}$ ,  $\overline{\text{XC}}$ , and  $\overline{\text{I} \lambda \text{HM}}$  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 $\rightarrow$  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 $\rightarrow$  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 = I 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 = I John 4:14–16 (=Frame 2↓ B col. i). It is likely that the lection from I 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 bottom 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 bottom 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 3 (↓) (Plate 9B)

1 John 4:14-16  
 Top of column  
 ω ΔΝΟ[ΝΔΝ  
 ΝΔΥ ΔΥ[ΩΔΝ  
 ΡΜΝΤ[ΡΕ ΧΕ  
 4 Δ ΠΕΙ[Ω]Τ Τ[Ν  
 ΝΟΟΥ ΜΠΕϣ  
 ΩΗΡΕ ΕΠΚΟС  
 ΜΟС· ΠΕΤ  
 8 ΝΔΖΟΜΟΛΟ  
 ΓΙ ΧΕ ΤС ΠΕ Π  
 ΩΗΡΕ ΜΠΝΟΥ  
 ΤΕ· ΠΝΟΥΤΕ  
 12 ΩΟΟΠ ΖΡΔĪ  
 ΝΖΗТ̄· ΔΥ  
 Ω ΝТΟϣ ϣΩΟ  
 ΟΠ ΖΜ ΠΝΟΥ  
 16 ΤΕ· ΔΥΩ Δ  
 ΝΟΝ ΔΝΕΞΙ  
 ΜΕ Δ[ΥΩ ΔΝ  
 ΠΙ СТ[ΕΥΕ Ε  
 20 ΤΔΓΔ[ΠΗ ΕΤ  
 ΞΥΝ[ΤС ΠΝ  
 c. 8 lines lost

Acts 13:26  
 5 lines lost

Ν[Π]ΡΔΞΙ С  
 ] >>>>> –  
 ] >>>>> –  
 ΝΡΩΜΕ ΝΝΕ  
 СΝ[Η]Υ ΝΩΗΡΕ  
 Μ[Π]ΓΕΝΟС  
 ΝΔ[Β]ΡΔΖΔΜ  
 ΔΥΩ ΝΞ[ΤΡ  
 Ζ[Ο]ΤΕ ΖΗТ[Ε  
 Μ[Π]ΝΟΥТ[Ε  
 Ν[ΖΗ]ТТΗ[Υ  
 Т[Ν ΝТΔΥТН  
 Ν[ΟΟΥ ΝΔΝ Μ  
 c. 11 lines lost

Col. i 1 ΔΝΝΔΥ] ΔΝΟΝ 2025; 6 ΝΟΥΧΔΙ ΜΠΚΟСМΟС] ΕΠΕΚΟСМΟС 2025; –  
 ΖΟΜΟΛΟΓΟΓΕΙ] –ΖΟΜΟΛΟΓΟΓΙ 2025; 12 ΟΥΗΖ] ΩΟΟΠ 2025; 14 ϣΟΥΗΖ]  
 ϣΩΟΟΠ 2025; Col. ii 9 ΝЕСΝΗΥ ΝΝЕСНΥ 2025

## Page 4 (→) (Plate 10B)

Acts 13:27-29  
 3 lines lost  
 4 ΜΜΟϣ ΔΥΧ]Ο  
 ΚΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ] Μ  
 ΠΟΥ СΝ[ΛΔ]ΔΥ  
 ΔΕ] ΝΛΟΙ СΕ Μ  
 8 ΜΟΥ [[ΕΖΟΥΝ]]  
 ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΡΟϣ  
 ΔΥ]ΔΙ ΤΙ ΜΠΙ  
 ΛΔ]ΤΟС ΞΜΟΥ  
 12 ΟΥТ ΜΜΟϣ:–

Acts 13:31-33  
 Top of column  
 ΖΝ] ΤΓΔΛΙ ΛΔΙ  
 Δ ΕΖΡΔĪ ΕΘΙΧΗΜ  
 ΝΔΙ] ΤΕΝΟΥ  
 ΕΥΩ ΟΟΠΝΔϣ  
 ΜΜΝΤΡΕ ΝΔΖ  
 ΡΜ ΠΛΔΟС· ΔΥ  
 Ω ΔΝΟΝ ΖΩ  
 ΩΝ ΤΝΕΥΔΓ  
 ΓΕΛΙΖΕ ΝΗТН  
 ΜΠΕΡΗТ Ν  
 ΤΔϣΩΠΕ  
 ΝΔΖΡΝ ΝΝĪΟ

ΝΤΕΡΟΥΧΩΚ  
 ΔΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΕΤ  
 ΣΗΖ ΤΗΡΟΥ  
 16 ΕΤΒΗΗ[Τ]ϣ·  
 ΔΥΟ[ΥΔ]ϣ  
 c. 13 lines lost

ΤΕ ΧΕ ΔΠ  
 ΝΟΥΤΕ ΧΟΚϣ  
 ΕΒΟΛ ΝΝΕΥ  
 ΩΗΡΕ· ΕΔϣ  
 ΤΟΥΝΟΣ ΝΔ  
 ΜΠΧ]ΟΕΪ Σ ΤϢ  
 ΠΕΧ]Ϣ·<sup>-</sup>  
 ]>>>><sup>-</sup>  
 ]>>>><sup>-</sup>  
 ]...  
 c. 9 lines lost

Col. i 7 ΝΛΟΙΣΕ] πρ δε 2025; 10 ΔΥΔΙΤΕΙ] ΔΥΔΙΤΙ 2025; ΠΕΙΛΔΤΟΣ]  
 ΠΙΛΔΤΟΣ 2025; Col. ii 6 ΝΝΔΖΡΜ] ΝΔΖΡΜ 2025; 12 ΝΝΔΖΡΝ] ΝΔΖΡΝ 2025;  
 ΝΕΝΕΙΟΤΕ] ΝΝΙΟΤΕ 2025

Page 5 (→) (Plate 10A)

Ps 96:3–4; Mk 8:34

c. 1 line lost

]ΔϢ  
 .]Ν . Υ[ . ] . ΣΜ  
 ΧΕΕΥ ΖΜ ΠΕϣ  
 4 ΚΩΤΕ:<sup>-</sup>  
 Δ ΝΕϣΕϣΡΗ  
 ΣΕ ΡΟΥΟΕΙΝ  
 ΕΤΟΙΚΟΥΜΕ  
 8 ΝΗ ΤΗΡϢ  
 >>>>>>>>>><sup>-</sup>  
 >>>>>>>>>><sup>-</sup>  
 ΠΚΔΤΔΜΔΡΚΟΣ  
 12 >>>>>>>>>><sup>-</sup>  
 >>>>>>>>>><sup>-</sup>  
 ΔΥΩ ΝΤΕΡΕϣ  
 ΜΟΥΤΕ ΕΠ  
 16 ΜΗΗΩΕ Ν  
 ΝΕϣΜΔΘΗ  
 ΤΗΣ [Π]ΕΧΔϣ  
 ΝΔΥ Χ[Ε] Π[ΕΤ  
 20 ΟΥΩΩ [ΕΟΥ  
 ΔΖϣ [ΝΣΩΙ ΜΔ  
 ΡΕϣ[ΔΠΔΡΝΔ  
 c. 8 lines lost

Ζ[  
 Ο[

Ε[  
 Π[  
 Ν[  
 Τ[

Col. i 3 Μ] ΖΜ 2025; 5 ΝΕϣΒΒΡΗΣΕ] ΝΕϣΕϣΡΗΣΕ 2025; 7 ΕΤΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΗ] +  
 ΤΗΡϢ 2025; 16 ΜΝ] Ν 2025

Page 6 (↓) (Plate 9A)

		P <sub>s</sub> 31:1-4
		c. 2 lines lost
		ε[χ]N NεΥ[NO
		βε:
		NΔ ἸΔΤϥM̄
4	] . .	ΠΡΩΜΕ M̄
	]Τε	ΠΧΟΕΙC NΔ
	]P̄	ε]ΠΝΟΒΕ Ε
	] . ρε	ΡΟϥ ΔΝ·
	]ΔΠ!	ΟΥΔΕ ΕΜN̄Κ
	]NΔ	ΡΟϥ2N ΤΕϥ
	]ΔN	ΤΔΠΡΟ·
		ΔἸΚΑΡΩἸ ΧΕ
12		ΔNΔΚΕΕC Ρ
		ΔC·
		ΜΧ[Ι]ϩΚΔΚΕ
		ΒΟ[Λ] M̄ΠΕ2O
16		ΟΥ ΤΗΡϥ:
		ΧΕ 2M] ΠΕ2O
		ΟΥ MN] ΤΕΥ
		c. 10 lines lost

Col. ii 4 ετε] om 2025; 6 ερνοβε] επνοβε 2025; 14 2M̄ ΠΤΡΔΧΙϩΚΔΚ] ΜΧΙϩΚΔΚΕ 2025.

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)

]κε . [

]εβoλ[

]μoc[

]ρoϥ[

]χο . [

Frame 1 ↓ A (Plate 8A)

b. (↓; rightside up)

Υ[

Ν . [

Ρϩ[

ΠΙ . [

ϫ[

Frame 1 → A (Plate 7B)

c. (→; rightside up)

]Ϟ̇Ϟ̇Ϟ̇[  
 ]τ̇ε̇π̇Δ[  
 ]τ̇Δ̇2̇OṄ Δ̇Υ[  
 ]Ϟ̇Δ̇9̇τ̇Δ̇2̇MN[  
 ]?̇NȮΥ̇τ̇Ϟ̇?̇[  
       ]Δ̇B[

d. (↓); rightside up)

] . τ̇ε̇  
 ]ċε̇  
 ]Ϟ̇Υ̇  
 e. (↓; upside down)  
 ]Ṅİ[  
 ]τ̇[  
 ]ṖϞ̇[  
 ]ε̇[  
 ]Ṁ[

Frame 1 ↓ B (Plate 8B)

f. (↓; rightside up)

] . . . [  
 ] . . . [  
 ]κ̇2̇[  
 ]π̇Ϟ̇Ȯ . . [  
 ]π̇ε̇ȮϞ̇[  
 ]Δ̇ε̇ṀṀ[  
 ]ẋε̇Ϟ̇Δ̇ẋ[

g. (→; rightside up)

] Ȯ . [  
 ] . Ṅ . Ṅ[  
 ] . ·̇ ε̇ . . [  
 ]Ṅε̇Ṅε̇ . [  
 ] . π̇κ̇Δ̇κ̇ε̇ . [  
 ]ṀṄε̇λ̇İ . . [  
 ] . . Ϟ̇Υ̇ . [

h. (→; rightside up)

] .  
 ]ċ:  
 ] . Δ̇ε̇

Frame 2 ↓ B (Plate 9B)

]τ̇ε̇Ṅ ?[  
       ]Δ̇τ̇ ?[  
           ]Ȯ ?[  
           ]τ̇Δ̇ . [

Frame 2 → B (Plate 9B)

Ṅε̇Ṅ . [  
 Ṅς̇İ . [  
 Ȯ . [  
 ẋ . [

2. Fragments that do not belong:

Frame 1 → A (Plate 7A)

a. (→; upside down)

] = = =  
 ] λ̇θ̇Ḣ  
 ]Υ̇Ṗ  
 ] <  
 ]Ψ̇  
 ] .

Frame 1 ↓ A (Plate 8A)

b. (↓; rightside up)

> π̇ . [  
 ]λ̇ > π̇Ȯ[  
 ] . > Ϟ̇Υ̇Ϟ̇[  
           ]Υ̇Ϟ̇ . [

	Frame 1→ A (Plate 7B)
c. (→; upside down)	d. (→; rightside up)
] . [	]ΠΙ Δ[
]ΧΟ[	] Ν[
] . ΛΩ[	]ΚΟΝ[
]ΝΝΔ[	
] . ΩΔΔ[	
] ¯ω¯[	
] ¯ω¯[	
]ΥΔΓΓΕ[	
e. (→; rightside up)	f. (→; upside down)
]ΝΧΟ[	] . . [
]ΔΧΝ[	] . ε2ΡΔī . [ . . . . ]ΟΥ
]ΤΗC[	] . ΥΔ . ΠΜ[ . ]C . ΕΜ
]Φ[	]ΤΕΝΧΕ . ΙΚΝΜ
]ΗΤΕ[	]ΜΔΝ ΤC . ΕΝ . . [
] . ΜΔΔΥ[	] . . . C I M[ . ]Ν . . [
] . . Υ . Π . [	]ΔΥΧΩ . ΡΩΤC
] . ΠΔ! [	] . . . . [
Frame 1↓ B (plate 8B)	
g. (↓; upside down)	h. (→; rightside up)
. [ . . . . ] . . [	]ΝΕ
Ε[Ι] Ε[2Ρ]Δ! [ΕΜΜΟΟ	] . ΜΗΝ
ΩΕ ΝΤΚ[ΔΙ C Δ Ρ Ι Δ	] . . .
ΝΦΙΛΙΠΠΟC[ Δϣ	]ΜΕ
ΧΝΕ ΝΕCΜΔ[ΘΗ	
ΤΗC ΕCΧΩ [ΜΜΟC	
ΧΕ ΕΡΕ ΝΡ[ΩΜΕ	
ΧΩ ΜΜΟC[	

Frag. c of the first group may possibly be reconstructed to yield II Tim 1:8–9:  $\text{COCM } \overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{Y}}/\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{E}} \quad \overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{I}} \quad \overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{C}} / \overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{Z}}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{N}} \quad \overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{Y}}/\overline{\text{O}} \quad \overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{C}}\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{Z}}\overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{N}} / \overline{\text{Z}}\overline{\text{N}} \quad \overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{Y}}\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{Z}}\overline{\text{M}} / \overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{C}}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{Y}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{B}} \quad \overline{\text{N}}$ . In that case, however, we have to assume that our scribe 1) failed to place a medial/high stop after  $\overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{P}}\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{Y}}/\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{E}}$ , even though there is a break in sense, 2) mistakenly wrote  $-\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{Z}}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{N}}$  for  $-\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{Z}}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{N}}$  and 3) inserted punctuation after  $-\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{Z}}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{N}}$  and  $\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{C}}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{Y}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{A}}\overline{\text{B}}$ , 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

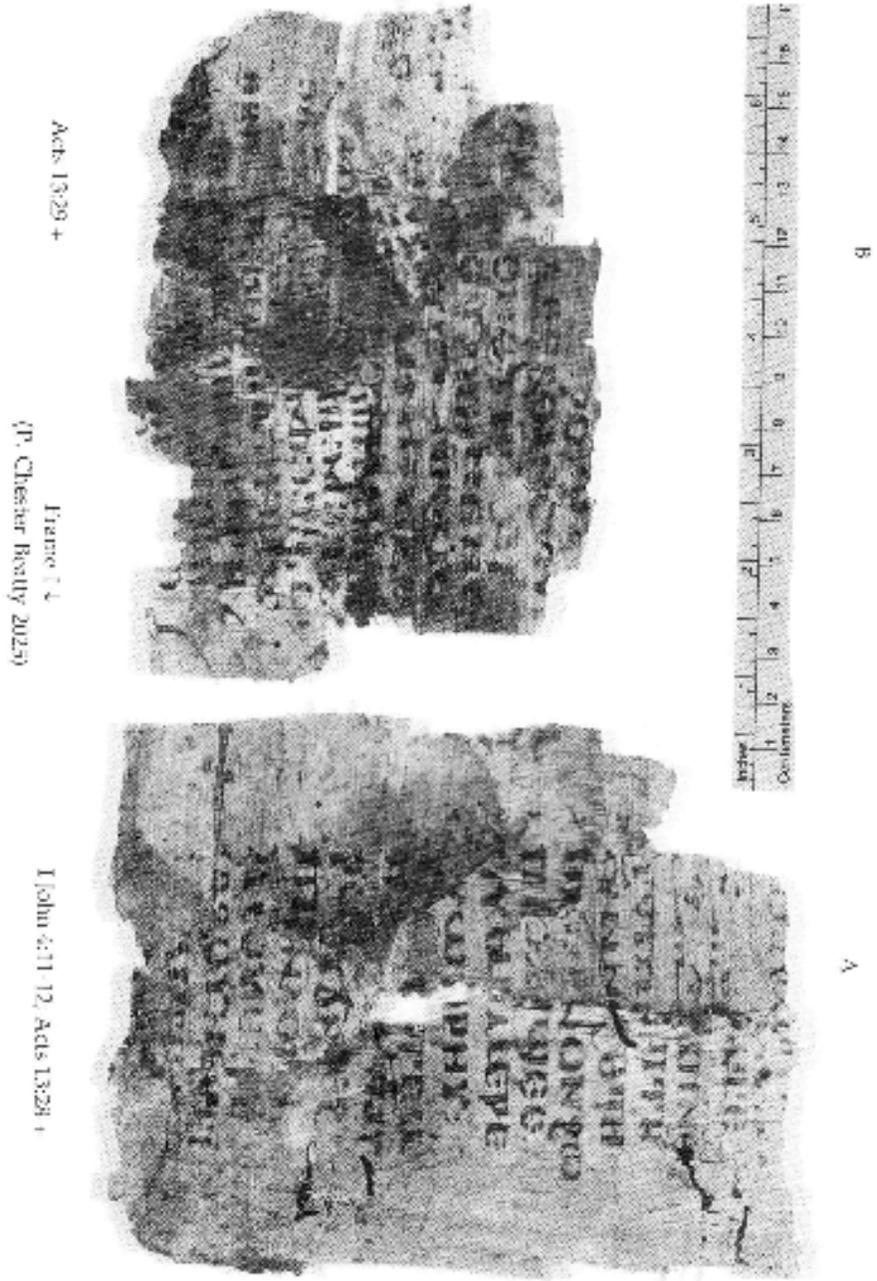
introduces a lection from one of the Gospels, but under a heading at variance with the usage of our chief scribe (cf. on Page 5 col. i line 11). Frag. g gives us Mt 16:13, though in a format and scibal hand distinct from our main document. The only variant from Horner to be noted is  $\bar{N}$  ( $\phi\lambda\iota\pi\pi\omicron\varsigma$ ) for  $\bar{M}$ .

*University of Toronto*

A. Pietersma  
S. T. Comstock



Plate 8 (to Pietersma/Comstock, "Sahidic Lectionary," pp. 57-66)



Acts 13:29 +

Figure 1  
(p. Chester Beatty 2025)

John 4:11-12, Acts 13:28 +



Plate 10 (to Pietersma/Comstock, "Sahidic Lectiunary," pp. 57-66)

