

Papyri of the University Library of Basel (P.Bas. II)

Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete

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University Library of Basel
(P.Bas. II)

edited by
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May 2019

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Isabelle Marthot-Santaniello, Matthias Müller

Preface

Old manuscripts, and papyri in particular, offer unique insight into past human activities. This insight is unique not only due to the clarity of the sometimes surprisingly well-preserved hand-writing; it is also exceptional inasmuch as the aura of the words drawn by human hands merges past and present and creates an intimacy that exerts an almost magical effect on the reader. Just as our hands move our pencils, those of the distant past directed their writing tools. It is the hands of human beings living in the mists of time, which open for us the door to the past.

To be sure, these people never thought of us when they filled the papyri sheets. Perhaps their messages were quite mundane, for example, how many donkeys were sold or sacks of cereals bought. But precisely these details reinforce the intimacy. As modern readers we become involved in the daily life of the past, although we do not belong to it. While we are reading the papyri, the past begins to speak in our mind, in a different and new context. The thoughts and concerns of our ancestors take on a fresh life they themselves were unable to imagine.

In the meantime, we are at a point of human history where the future absorbs us so strongly that we easily forget the past; or rather, we are at a point where we actually regard the past as past, a time that is no longer with us. Climate change, environmental pollution and population explosion are the foci of attention. We no longer accept our natural environment as it is imposed on us. We want to transform it in order to survive. Devoting human creativity to disclose the past is considered an escape from the big challenges which mankind has to master. The retrospective view is justified only when it helps to face the challenges of today –this is a common view within and without the universities.

However, is there really a past that lies behind us when we study the writings from ancient times? Yes, of course, as far as the words and idioms are concerned, there is. Languages continually evolve, and the objects to which these languages refer are subject to the flow of time as well. But does this also apply to the contents of the language, to what human beings express through their languages? Here the matter becomes more complicated. Human beings are the only living beings equipped with a so-called ‘cognitive’ language. Human language is distinguished by the fact that it is not only a vehicle to communicate impressions and feelings as birds do by chirping and dogs by barking. It is moreover a carrier of abstract concepts like numbers and relations. *Homo sapiens* is

the only living creature known to-date that is capable of manipulating such concepts systematically. Human beings are able to apply abstract ideas to concrete objects, for example, when they count donkeys and cereal bags and ponder that the exchange of two donkeys for forty sacks of cereals is a good deal. This consideration itself has nothing to do with specific words or a special idiom. It can be carried out in any language. However, if a merchant who made a good bargain wants to put his thoughts on record for future use or desires to show his superiors or descendants that he is able to run a successful business, he must write his reflections down and thus entrust them to a particular language.

The assessment whether or not a certain deal is good was made by a particular merchant and expressed in his language –this is a fact pertaining to the past. However, whether the content of his judgment is likewise a matter of pure history, is not equally clear. For even nowadays we can engage in the same considerations and arrive at the same conclusions as the merchant– or we can disagree with them, for example, if we know from other sources that the prices were quite different at the time and that the poor merchant was shamefully deceived. Unfortunately, he did not notice that instead of forty he might have earned eighty sacks of cereals for his two donkeys. Having access to these other sources, we know more than he did, even though we were not at the market place together.

Obviously, contemporary human beings can take up the thoughts of their ancient predecessors and think them over. In this respect there is no past or future but a perpetual present. This sounds like poetry, especially for modern ears that are used to distinguishing past from future. To be sure, the deception of our merchant cannot be undone within this perpetual present. It remains an element of the past. But the questions, whether or not it was a fraud or whether or not the merchant acted wisely, can be asked now as then. The assessment of his bargain can be resumed at any time *post eventum*, provoking new and unexpected insights.

If the reference to poetry sounds somewhat dislocated in a university context where the eternal laws of science should be applied, we must realize that such laws exist in an equally timeless universe, even if the objects to which they relate are nothing but historical. The Pythagorean theorem is not correct because it was formulated by Pythagoras in a certain place at a certain time in the past, but because each of us, wherever and whenever, can understand its meaning and judge its argumentation to be sound. Plato's theory of Ideas, Descartes's notion of the *res cogitans*, or Popper's concept of an objective World III: they all emphasize the particular nature of the products of human concepts and thoughts. They effectively show that the category of time functions differently in the world of meaning and judgment than in that of sense perception.

In everyday life, perception and judgment are closely interrelated – we constantly have to decide about issues affecting us from the outside world, for

example, when upon the waiter's call in the restaurant we must decide whether we want sparkling or plain water. Thus we easily forget that making a decision or assessing an issue is not simply a natural follow-up of our perceiving the state of affairs, even though in most cases it seems so. Judging has its own reasons which are beyond the space and time that belong to the issue at hand. Since we easily lose sight of this, we have difficulties in appreciating the relevance of those disciplines that deal with timeless considerations and judgments –which are, above all, the humanities– when confronted with the great challenges of the present day. Here we need a keen eye to distinguish the different categories of time, better still, we need a trigger or bait, something which impels and draws us into the dialectics of past, present and future, opening our minds for the peculiar world of human reasoning and judgment which is beyond time.

By their fragile nature, papyri provide such a bait. Their appearance provokes astonishment, being more delicate and subtle than the rugged animal skins of the parchments or the robust paper of many other manuscripts. How could they possibly carry human thoughts from the past into the present? In this regard, the papyri from the Basel collection are no exception. However, as of now their content can be conveniently studied owing to a carefully prepared edition and translation. As such, the present volume exemplifies one of the most important tasks of the humanities today: to help us judge how we shape the world in the mirror of the past, a judgment which transcends space and time. On behalf the University of Basel, therefore, my most sincere thanks go to Professor Huebner and her devoted team as well as to the university library and its enthusiastic staff for their commitment to making our papyri available to an extensive readership within and without the University. May this remarkable volume receive a wide reception and merge our minds with thoughts that transcend time!

Maarten J.F.M. Hoenen
Vice-President of the University of Basel (2013 – 2017)

Note to the Reader

The texts are stored in the Special Collections of the University Library of the University of Basel. The papyri originally had inventory numbers (used in Rabel's edition) but the plates have been relabeled using the numbers from Rabel's edition and using consecutive numbers for the as yet unedited texts, except for the Pahlavi text. In the papyrological headers of the present edition, only the numbers from Rabel's editions (listed as the *P.Bas.* I number) and the new inventory numbers (listed as the *P.Bas.* inv. number) have been used. Since a few pieces have been quoted in publications under their old inventory number, the following concordance might be useful.

<i>P.Bas.</i> II	Old inv.-nr.	New inv.-nr.	<i>P.Bas.</i> II	Old inv.-nr.	New inv.-nr.
1	50	P.Bas. 27d	25	26	P.Bas. 38 rto
2	50	P.Bas. 27b	26	23	P.Bas. 8
3	A	P.Bas. 1a	27	14	P.Bas. 2
4	23 vso	P.Bas. 23 vso	28	22	P.Bas. 3
5	50	P.Bas. 27a	29	7	P.Bas. 7
6	50	P.Bas. 27c	30	10a-c	P.Bas. 22
7	51	P.Bas. 41	31	39	P.Bas. 24
8	1	P.Bas. 28	32	24	P.Bas. 36
9	2	P.Bas. 29	33	33	P.Bas. 43
10	3	P.Bas. 30	34	48	P.Bas.Copt. 3
11	4	P.Bas. 31	35	41	P.Bas. 48
12	5	P.Bas. 32	36	38	P.Bas. 47 rto
13	6	P.Bas. 33	37	37	P.Bas. 46
14	44	P.Bas. 51	38	40	P.Bas. 25
15	18	P.Bas. 18	39	25	P.Bas. 37
16	17	P.Bas. 35	40	38	P.Bas. 47 vso
17	16	P.Bas. 15	41	43	P.Bas. 50
18	35	P.Bas. 20	42	15	P.Bas. 9
19	8	P.Bas. 4	43	12 rto	P.Bas. 16 rto
20	13 rto	P.Bas. 13	44	12 vso	P.Bas. 16 vso
21	23 rto	P.Bas. 23 rto	45	29	P.Bas. 5
22	11	P.Bas. 6	46	27	P.Bas. 17
23	19+20	P.Bas. 10+11	47	13 vso	P.Bas. 21
24	21	P.Bas. 12	48	26	P.Bas. 38 vso

<i>P.Bas.</i> II	Old inv.-nr.	New inv.-nr.	<i>P.Bas.</i> II	Old inv.-nr.	New inv.-nr.
49	28	P.Bas. 39 rto	60	M I 4	P.Bas.Hierat. 2
50	28	P.Bas. 39 vso	61	42	P.Bas. 45
51	9	P.Bas. 14	62	??	P.Bas.Copt. 5+6
52	100	P.Bas. 19	63	??	P.Bas.Copt. 7
53	32	P.Bas. 42	64	46	P.Bas. 34
54	34	P.Bas. 44	65	45	P.Bas. 49
55	31	P.Bas. 26	66	Copt.	P.Bas.Copt. 1
56	30	P.Bas. 40	67	M I 4	P.Bas.Copt. 4
57	B+C	P.Bas. 1b+c rto	68	47	P.Bas.Copt. 2
58	B+C	P.Bas. 1b+c vso	69	M I 18a	M I 18a
59	M I 4	P.Bas.Hierat. 1	70	M I 18b	M I 18b

Tab. 1: Concordance of edition, old and new inventory numbers of the Basel papyri

In addition to the inventory numbers, each edition's header contains also a Trismegistos (<https://www.trismegistos.org/>) reference number (TM number). In the text, we occasionally refer to TM archive numbers (TM Arch ID number), geographical references (TM Geo ID number), and TM onomastic references (TM namID).

The abbreviations used for text editions are those of the Checklist of Editions (see the bibliography at the end); editions are set in italics, whereas inventory numbers are given in plain texts. The editions follow generally the Leiden Conventions given below for the convenience of the non-papyrological scholars:

- [— — —] A lacuna or gap of unknown extent in the original text, not restored by the editor.
- [α β γ] Restored letters or signs in lacuna or gap in the original text.
- [±num] Amount of letters or signs assumed to be lost in lacuna or gap but not restored by editor.
- α(β γ) Abbreviations in the text, expanded by the editor.
- <αβ>γ Letters or signs erroneously omitted by the ancient scribe.
- {αβγ} Letters or signs considered superfluous by the editor.
- . . . Traces of letters or signs visible on the surface, but insufficient for a restoration of the text.
- α\β/γ Letters or signs added supralinear.
- [[α β]] Letters or signs deleted by the ancient scribe.
- vac.* Space left empty.

To mark a broken edge, we used a separate line with — — — pattern.

Greek names are accented according to Preisigke, *Namenbuch*.

Ink analysis has been conducted with the collaboration of Tea Ghigo and Sebastian Bosch from BAM (Federal Institute of the Materials Research and Testing, Berlin) and CSMC (Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, Hamburg). DinoLite, a USB microscope equipped with near-infrared and ultra-violet light, has been used on the entire papyrus collection.¹ Near-infrared reflectography allows distinguishing the presence of carbon, which remains opaque under near-infrared light, and of iron-gall ink, which loses its opacity.² Mixed inks elude this analytical protocol and have been recently object of new investigations aimed at determining a methodological approach to univocally identify them.³ Only the Pahlavi drawing had a specific ink analysis of its own. It has not been possible to run an ink analysis on the Pahlavi text.

In six cases (**19, 42, 49, 52, 56, and 68**), the tests were not decisive and further investigation is needed (“ink analysis: undetermined” in the editions). The large majority of texts used, as expected, carbon ink (“ink analysis: carbon” in the editions). Two exceptions on literary papyri are worth underlining: **2** is an *Iliad* codex written with two metal inks (one for the text itself, one for the accents and punctuation) and **3** (medical text). Furthermore, all the Coptic literary codices, either on papyrus (**65**) or on parchment (**62, 63**) are written with metal ink (“ink analysis: iron-gall” in the editions).

The editors

¹ Rabin et al., *COMSt Newsletter* 3.

² Mrusek et al., *Naturwissenschaften* 82.

³ Colini et al., *Manuscript Cultures* 11.

1. The Basel Papyrus Collection and its History

I. The Collection

The University of Basel Library possesses a small papyrus collection comprising around 65 documents from the late Pharaonic period to late antiquity. While the texts are mainly in Greek, some are written in hieratic Egyptian, Latin, Coptic, and Middle Persian. Most of them were acquired in the year 1900 for the University of Basel Library by the *Freiwilliger Museumsverein der Stadt Basel*. These acquisitions have made Basel the only university in the German-speaking part of Switzerland that is in possession of a collection of papyri.

The papyrus documents in the Basel collection are conserved between sheets of acrylic glass in two drawers in the Special Reading Room that houses the university library's manuscript collection. In the early twentieth century, Ernst Rabel (1874–1955), the well-known legal historian and a professor in Basel from 1906 to 1910, turned his attention to the collection and worked on selected texts. Despite the ongoing war in Europe, the results of his research were published in the 1917 volume *Papyrusurkunden der Öffentlichen Bibliothek der Universität zu Basel*, with 23 documents published in full and six more described. Drawing on the support of papyrological colleagues in Germany, Rabel's editions are generally of high quality and are afforded with detailed legal commentary, befitting his training and expertise. On the other hand, only two documents were translated and two others illustrated in plates, which has limited further study of these texts. After Rabel's publication, the remaining Basel papyri lay dormant and the collection largely forgotten. One of the few exceptions was Jean Gascou's publication of *P.Bas.* I 26 (*SB* XVIII 13752) in 1986.¹ In addition, Jacques Schwartz discovered that *P.Bas.* I 6 joins with fragments in Strasbourg and published them jointly as *P.Strasb.* VII 666 in 1979. The Latin fragments *P.Bas.* I 1B+C were edited by Tjäder in the 1950s.² For nearly a century, however, there was no systematic work on the collection.

This was the point of departure for the Basel Papyrus Project (2015–2018) undertaken at the Department of Ancient History at the University of Basel. Funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and directed by Sabine Huebner, the project's purpose was to document and analyze the entire collection. Ac-

¹ Hermopolite, 7th century CE.

² Tjäder, *Papiri Latini Basel*; Tjäder, *Nichtliterarische Papyri*, II, p. 17–21. See also below.

cordingly, this volume presents full editions, including transcriptions, translations, commentary, and digital images of all the papyri for the first time, in addition to a thorough history of the collection. All of the project's texts and metadata have also been made available via papyri.info and papyrusportal.de.

II. The History of the Basel Papyrus Collection

1) Acquisition of a papyrus collection for Basel in 1899/1900

On 22 November 1899, the 25-year-old Munich archaeologist Hermann Thiersch sensed that he was closing in on his target. Only days earlier he had arrived in Egypt for the first time, finding lodging in a little guesthouse run by a feisty Austrian woman named Frau König in the Zamalek district of Cairo. Following a lead, he travelled with colleagues to the Bedouin village of Kafr el-Hamān near the Pyramids of Giza, which had become a flourishing hub in the local antiquities trade. There Thiersch met an old Bedouin named Ali, who had just the sort of antiquities he was looking for: papyri.

Thiersch's mission was to purchase papyri for the universities in Basel, Strasbourg, and Munich that would form the nucleus of teaching collections.³ By this point, European and North American collectors and researchers were racing to discover the finest material either in their own archaeological excavations or by purchasing papyri from local antiquities dealers, who were generally supplied with material by looters.⁴ The discovery of copies of classical works believed lost and of canonical and apocryphal early Christian texts sparked excitement among scholars and the general public alike. The great papyrus rush was in full swing, and international competition in the market was fierce. Two Oxford scholars, Bernard Grenfell und Arthur Hunt, had discovered around 400,000 papyri in the ancient garbage mounds near Oxyrhynchus in the final years of the nineteenth century. European and North American papyrus diggers soon followed their example, and the digging season of 1899/1900 saw thousands of papyri lifted from the desert sands of Middle and Upper Egypt. A lecture given in Lucerne in 1900 by the young Dr. Felix Staehelin, who would subsequently become professor of ancient history at the University of Basel, epitomized the excitement of the early days of papyrology:

“If the aim of historical research, according to Ranke, is not to judge the past nor to instruct the contemporary world as to the future but merely to tell how it really was, we are closer than usual to this goal today thanks to the papyrus

³ Cf. Huebner, in: *Berichte*.

⁴ Cf. Keenan, in: *OHP*, 59–78.

*finds and coming closer with each passing day. Today, once again, historians of antiquity can say: what a joy to be alive!”*⁵

Most famously, Ludwig Mitteis, the father of juristic papyrology, declared at the sixth Deutscher Historikertag in 1900 that the nineteenth century had been a century of epigraphy, but that the twentieth would be a century of papyrology:

*“It is remarkably gratifying to see that gatherings of philologists and historians have recently started to grant time for the discussion of papyrus research and to take a keen interest in it. This is completely commensurate with the significance it has taken on following the major finds of the last two decades and will surely continue to gain to an even greater extent as the great Egyptian repositories are explored further in ongoing work, the ruins of the old cities of Arsinoe, Heracleopolis Magna, Hermopolis, Oxyrhynchus, the villages of Soknopaiou Nesos, Karanis, Bakchias and others. If we tend to say today that the era of iron has been supplanted by an era of paper, we could, less sarcastically, predict for the study of antiquity that the iron and stone tablets which dominated the field in the nineteenth century will be supplanted by the hegemony of papyri in the twentieth.”*⁶

The prevalent Zeitgeist is also neatly encapsulated in the appraisal given by Ulrich Wilcken, another founding father of papyrology, on the value of papyri for the study of the ancient world more generally:

*“The pedagogical value of the papyri for introducing students to the manifold branches of research into ancient history – and not only the most obvious ones: the history of textual tradition, of the book sector, of paleography and diplomacy – cannot be estimated highly enough. It is a most desirable aim that as many universities as possible gradually acquire papyrus collections for teaching purposes.”*⁷

Wilcken’s call did not fall on deaf ears, and papyrus collections duly began to take shape in many universities and museums around the turn of the century. Scholars of ancient history in Basel seem to have followed these developments attentively as well. The initiative shown by the professors in Basel led to the University of Basel acquiring a papyrus collection of its own at a very early stage in comparison with other Germanophone universities. The German

⁵ Staehelin, “Neuere Papyrusfunde”, 42.

⁶ Martin, *APF* 46, 1–2.

⁷ Wilcken, *APF* 1, 469. Further fields can be added to Wilcken’s list today as the value of papyrology for opening up vistas onto the social, economic and religious history of ancient times as well as into gender issues, the history of everyday life and historical demography has become apparent –we have been able to gain unique insights into these central aspects of life in antiquity thanks to the Greco-Roman papyri. Cf. Keenan, in: *OHP*.

universities in Bonn, Bremen, Halle, and Giessen did not acquire their first papyri (via the Deutsche Papyruskartell) until shortly before the outbreak of the First World War.

The subject of a Basel papyrus collection is briefly raised in the “Berichte der Öffentlichen Bibliothek Basel” for 1900:

*“We have to thank the Museum Association for the acquisition of a number of pap. fragments.”*⁸

The annual report for 1899–1900 issued by the Basel Freiwillige Museumsverein is hardly less terse:

*“In the conviction that we could not pass up the opportunity to acquire examples of papyrus manuscripts in Egypt through a young Munich scholar, Dr. H. Thiersch, we approved a grant of Fr. 500. This has resulted in the University Library coming into possession of a most diverse collection of fragments of Greek, Arabic and Coptic papyri.”*⁹

The young scholar Dr. H. Thiersch can be firmly identified as the Hermann Thiersch who subsequently became a professor of archaeology in Göttingen. Thiersch, born on January 12, 1874 in Munich, was the son of August Thiersch, professor of architecture and building history in Munich. Together with his father he traveled extensively in the Eastern Mediterranean. Thiersch studied classical archeology in Munich and Berlin and after being awarded his doctorate in 1898 at the University of Munich traveled to Egypt for the first time in the winter of 1899/1900.¹⁰ He directed his first excavation for the Archaeological Society of Alexandria in the Alexandria necropolis and in Abusir and then got the chance to take part in an expedition from Upper Egypt up the Nile to Nubia, which was led by the associate professor of Egyptology in Leipzig, Georg Steindorff (1861–1951), and sponsored by the Saxon Academy of Sciences.¹¹ Steindorff was joined on the expedition by two colleagues from his student days, Heinrich Schäfer (1868–1957) and Ludwig Borchardt (1863–1938), as well as

⁸ *Berichte der Öffentlichen Bibliothek Basel 1900*, Basel 1901, 10.

⁹ See also Preisendanz, *Papyrusfunde*, 236: “The Public Library of the University of Basel received a small collection of around 60 Greek and Coptic papyri and sheets of parchment at the beginning of the century. H. Thiersch had acquired them in Egypt with funds from the Museum Association. Some are from Dimeh and Arsinoë: contracts, tax and invoicing records, letters (among them one of the oldest Christian ones, from around 250), astrological texts, all mostly from Roman and Byzantine times. E. Rabel has edited 23 of them along with the fragments that found their way to Basel’s Museum Association and from there to the Univ. library through Grynaeus and Amerbach. No work has been done on the rest of them yet.”

¹⁰ Curtius, *Göttinger Jahrbuch 1940/41*, 69–80.

¹¹ Sabine R. Huebner is currently preparing the edition of Thiersch’s travel journal stored in the Bavarian State Library in Munich.

Curt von Grüнау (1871–1939), attaché at the imperial consulate general in Cairo.



Hermann Thiersch (1874–1939)

But what prompted the professors in Basel to entrust the task of purchasing papyri to Dr. Hermann Thiersch, a young classical archaeologist with no experience as a purchaser or editor of papyri and who had never set a foot into Egypt? And which of the professors in Basel was responsible for this move? Rich finds in the *Nachlass* of Hermann Thiersch in the Bavarian State Library in Munich, the archive of the National and University Library in Strasbourg, in the State Archive of Basel-Stadt as well as in the University Library of Basel have shed light on these questions. It was Jacob Wackernagel (1853–1938), the professor of Greek philology in Basel at the time, who commissioned the papyrus purchases and requested the necessary funding

from the Museum Voluntary Association. Wackernagel was from Basel and had completed some of his studies there. He served as an associate professor of Greek philology in Basel from 1879–1881 and subsequently as full professor from 1881–1902. In 1902, however, only two years after acquiring the Basel papyrus collection, he left Basel for Göttingen. This explains why he does not seem to have done any work on the Basel papyri himself.

Wackernagel's project of purchasing papyri took shape in the autumn of 1899 as Hermann Thiersch was planning his first journey to Egypt. At the end of September in 1899 Wackernagel invited Thiersch, who visited relatives in Basel frequently, to join him for dinner in Schönthal, a former cloister in Basel-Land, where the Wackernagel family resided.¹² Research in the State Library in Munich and in the State Archives in Basel uncovered a complex web of friendships and family ties connecting Thiersch with Basel. Thiersch mentions buying a souvenir for "Willy" in Basel during his journey through Nubia in his diary entry for 26 March, for example. This "Willy" was most likely his cousin

¹² Letter (29 September 1899) to Thiersch's aunt.

Wilhelm Thiersch, whom he visited several times in Basel in 1899 and 1900.¹³ Thiersch's closest family link to Basel, however, was most likely through his cousin Bertha Bruckner (née Thiersch); he kept in regular touch with her even during his stay in Egypt.¹⁴ A letter from Thiersch to Bertha shortly before he departed from Upper Egypt for home at the end of April 1900 gives a retrospective account of his stay in Egypt and his journey through Nubia.¹⁵ The mother of the siblings Willy and Bertha was probably the aunt Thiersch was visiting in Basel when Wackernagel invited him to dinner and also the aunt who funded his Egyptian journey: in November 1899 in Cairo, Thiersch told the Danish couple Hans Ostenfeldt and Jonna Lange that it was his aunt who had provided him with the financial wherewithal making his stay in Egypt possible.¹⁶

During the dinner at Wackernagel's house at the end of September, the professor must have asked Thiersch to purchase papyri for Basel for a sum of 500 Swiss Francs in Egypt, a sum roughly equivalent to 400 marks (Mk) at the time. This is how Thiersch reports the conversation in a letter to Georg von Laubmann, the director of the Court and State Library in Munich, from 19 October 1899:

*"I have also just received a credit for 500 frcs and more from the University of Basel, at the suggestion of Prof. Wackernagel, to be used to purchase papyri if suitable opportunities arise."*¹⁷

Wackernagel had sought advice from his Strasbourg colleague Reitzenstein on purchasing papyri for a collection. The Strasbourg professors Richard Reitzenstein, professor of classical philology, and Wilhelm Spiegelberg, professor of Egyptology, had established the nucleus of the Strasbourg papyrus collection in the winter of 1898/99 with purchases from dealers in Cairo and Luxor. But Spiegelberg and Reitzenstein had had 12,000 marks at their disposal.¹⁸ The sum of 400 marks Wackernagel had managed to secure for the creation of a papyrus collection in Basel seems paltry in comparison. Reitzenstein replied to Wacker-

¹³ Correspondence (23 February 1899, 25 January 1900, 27 February 1900) between Thiersch and his cousin Wilhelm Thiersch.

¹⁴ Correspondence (11 January 1898, 3 July 1900, 8 November 1900) between Thiersch and his cousin Bertha Bruckner. Bertha's husband, Wilhelm Bruckner, had completed his postdoctoral thesis at the University of Basel in 1899 and later went on to become an associate professor of German Linguistics in Basel in 1905.

¹⁵ Letter from 25 April 1900 sent from Keme in Upper Egypt.

¹⁶ Lange and Lange, 1899–1900 diary, 146–147. Hagen and Ryholt by personal email correspondence May 2017.

¹⁷ Laubmanniana V, Thiersch H. (BSB München): Letter (19.10.1899) from Thiersch to Georg von Laubmann.

¹⁸ Cf. Colin, *Revue de la BNU* 2, 29–30. The Prussian state even made 30,000 marks available to the Royal Museums in Berlin for the acquisition of Greek literary papyri in 1901.

nagel on 25 November 1899; by this time, Thiersch was already in Cairo and searching for papyri:

Strasbourg 25 Nov 99

Most esteemed colleague,

Thank you very much for consulting me... as a sort of authority on Egypt... Rest assured that I will do anything that is within my powers to ensure that a number of papyri come to Germany again.

You have asked if it is possible to assemble a small collection for 1000–2000 marks. It is hard to say; firstly, everything depends on the individual texts, and, secondly, I don't know whether you want to pursue paleographic, historical or literary interests. Individual sheets from the major dealers are terribly expensive and Ali, for example, will never go below 100–200 marks for an individual papyrus (Footnote: The Latin letter Bresslau told you about cost 180 marks, for example). So here it is only possible to either operate with very large sums like the Americans, or to buy only literary stuff [sic].

With more restricted means, one always ends up relying on opportunities to buy small boxes one can only take a glancing look at beforehand, not scrutinizing them too closely for fear of driving the price up to stratospheric levels. That way about £100 = 2000 Mk could, in my estimation, suffice for a very good collection of 200–300 documents –and with luck, there would be literary texts lurking in amongst them. It is difficult for an individual German library to hold its own in the international market, but perhaps all of them together have a chance.

The question as to who I can recommend to you is more difficult. Up to now, there was a Dr. Reinhardt at the General Consulate, a collector himself and an expert on the Egyptian antique trade; he advised me and would definitely also have set up purchases for you or advised Dr. Thiersch, but unfortunately, he has been dispatched to Persia as a consul now.

Dr. Borchardt would be the second-best expert, but he is the permanent agent for Berlin and I don't know if he would do anything at all for other libraries. But he will certainly be happy to advise Dr. Thiersch. It is beyond doubt that digs are the only rational option, but for that 2–3 assistants are needed, as is experience, lots of money and the ability to bear one or more severe disappointments patiently. The best option for those dependent on dealers is probably to keep an eye on the market in Cairo and Luxor. There are two major dealers in Cairo, Ali and Farrak, and a few smaller ones who have something every now and again. I don't know their names, however, as Dr. Reinhardt looked after the negotiations with them. Miguel Kasira sometimes had Coptic and Arabic texts. The dealers in Luxor are all known. They are all

scoundrels, and the consular agents are the worst of the lot. I didn't visit smaller places much – and I had little success when I did. It's hard to guess what you might find there. You would only encounter the finders through most remarkable coincidences, and what the dealers have ends up in Luxor or Cairo eventually. – So you see that I cannot lay claim to much experience; Reinhardt took a lot off my hands, and much of what was going on escaped me because of my inadequate language skills. I was cheated quite a few times, but at least I avoided falling for forgeries. I would urgently advise that you make sure your representative has some paleographic training and heeds the principle of not buying anything written in a completely unfamiliar script. Forgery is rife.

If I hear any more favorable news by autumn, esteemed colleague, I will naturally write to you. I would also like to advise Dr. Thiersch as best as I can on the state of the country and on dealing with individual sellers and to ask him for the odd favor that ought not to rob too much of his time.

To sum up: if you were sending somebody especially, it would require a much larger sum to make it worthwhile. But if Dr. Thiersch is travelling there in any case, taking a ticket in this huge lottery can be highly recommended. There are no losing tickets.

Please remember that I am completely at your disposal if you require any information about little places I visited or anything else. I send you my best greetings, dear esteemed honorable colleague, and remain

Respectfully yours,

R. Reitzenstein¹⁹

Before embarking on his journey to Egypt, Thiersch was also in touch with the Berlin Coptologist Carl Schmidt, who wrote to let him know that a host of nations had now joined the hunt for papyri. Finding valuable Greek papyri under these conditions would, he remarked, take a lot of luck and skill. Schmidt also names the dealers Ali and Farrak/Farag. They lived near Cairo, he reported, but understood only Arabic. Schmidt cites Reinhardt and Borchardt as knowledgeable experts. Dr. Carl Reinhardt was a diplomat at the Imperial German Consulate General in Cairo at the end of the nineteenth century and acquired many papyri in Egypt for the collection in Berlin.²⁰ The Egyptologist Ludwig Borchardt from Berlin had joined the German Consulate General in Cairo as an academic attaché in October 1899. But Borchardt, Schmidt writes, bought papyri only for Berlin, as already Reitzenstein knew.

¹⁹ Archiv UB Basel: A I 34m.

²⁰ See Köpstein, *MittWb* 5, 37–47.

2 Jul 99
Passauerstr. 35

Dear Doctor!

Having received your kind lines, I will take the liberty of remarking in response to your queries that acquiring genuinely valuable papyri in Egypt these days depends greatly on luck and skill. With all the nations that have joined this tremendous hunt, prices have become exorbitant. The competition from the English, in particular, is making everything more expensive. If you are in Egypt in the winter..., look for the Arab dealers Ali and Farag in the village of Giza near Cairo. This is the center of the trade in papyri. Unfortunately, they only understand Arabic. You will hear horrendous prices at first when you try to buy anything, but you should not be put off. You will undoubtedly get what you want for half the price.

I truly regret that my friend Reinhardt is no longer in Egypt, as he would have provided you with strong support. Dr. Borchardt is in Cairo now, but he will be of little use to you, as he only purchases valuable papyri for the Berlin museum.

I would be happy to provide you with more information and send you warm greetings.

Respectfully yours,

C. Schmidt

In mid-October Thiersch set out for his travels to Egypt via Vienna. As he wrote in a letter to Wackernagel on October 18, 1899, he made a stop-over in Vienna to visit the papyrus collection established by Archduke Rainer in order to examine original papyri, which he had never seen. Thiersch also assured Wackernagel as well as the other members of the Museumsverein that they should not fear competition from Munich. Thiersch promised to keep the two mandates of acquisition separate and directly ship the papyri acquired for Basel to Wackernagel.²¹

Around early November, Thiersch then departed for Egypt. Only a week after his arrival in Cairo, he found his first opportunity look at papyri through the assistance of a Danish colleague, the 36-year-old Egyptologist Hans Ostenfeldt Lange (1863–1943), who was, together with his wife Jonna (1870–1955), resident in the same guesthouse as Thiersch.²² Pension König was popular with Eu-

²¹ PA 706 1.13 6 (Staatsarchiv Basel): Letter (18.10.1899) from Thiersch to Prof. Wackernagel in Basel.

²² Hagen/Ryholt, *Antiquities Trade*, 85–86.

ropean travelers at the time,²³ and several other travelers mention it in their travel reports from Cairo in the late 19th and early 20th century.²⁴ The guesthouse offered full board, and while the rooms were small and modest, the mostly European guests were very satisfied with Frau König's cooking and her dining area with its adjacent patio.²⁵

H.O. Lange and Jonna had arrived in Pension König on 15 October 1899,²⁶ and Hermann Thiersch arrived around a month later; Thiersch remained there until his excavations in Alexandria started in early December 1899. Thiersch had asked his Danish colleague and fellow lodger for assistance with his papyrus purchases because he was afraid the Bedouins “*would try to rip him off with their prices.*” Unknown to Thiersch, Lange kept a record of the occasion in his diary:

“These days I am not writing as much in the diary as I should, and the reason for that is that my time is entirely taken up by looking at antiquities with Arab dealers, and trading with them. I have not myself made any purchases, but I am assisting Dr Thiersch from Munich who is buying papyri; he prefers to have me along because he thinks that I am good at pushing the Bedouins’ prices down.”

Lange was a rather odd choice of helper for Thiersch, as he had only arrived in Egypt himself a month earlier and spoke practically no Arabic. But Lange and his 29-year-old wife Jonna, who accompanied her husband on all his travels, had obviously taken a shine to the young archaeologist. In Lange's diary entry from 22 November 1899, Jonna, who often wrote entries for her husband, writes about Thiersch:

*“Dr Thiersch, who lives here, is an unusually nice man, of whom we are particularly fond. He has studied classical archaeology, and an aunt of his has given him money for this trip to Egypt, where he will stay until spring. In January and February, he will assist in the excavations at Abusir, and afterwards he will travel to Upper Egypt. He has been commissioned to buy Greek papyri for the libraries of Munich, Strasbourg and Basel. He sometimes drinks tea with us here, and we have in a sense bonded.”*²⁷

Thiersch traveled to Giza together with the Langes on Wednesday, November 22, 1899 and called into the shop kept by an antiquities dealer there, Ali. A

²³ Hagen/Ryholt, *Antiquities Trade*, 85.

²⁴ Neumann, *Reise nach Ägypten*; Roth-Lochner, in: *Voyages en Égypte*, 245–258.

²⁵ Hagen/Ryholt, *Antiquities Trade*, 86.

²⁶ Hagen/Ryholt, *Antiquities Trade*, 90.

²⁷ Lange and Lange, 1899–1900 diary, page 146–147. Hagen and Ryholt by personal email correspondence May 2017.

cousin of Ali's, Abdallah, accompanied the group as an interpreter; Ali himself spoke no English. According to Jonna Lange's diary entry, the group was shown mainly ostraca during this visit,²⁸ but Thiersch also managed to buy some papyri. Ali, the papyrus seller, can conclusively be identified as Mohammed Ali Abd el-Haj in Giza, a well-known and, indeed, notorious dealer.²⁹

A week later, on Monday, 27 November 1899, Lange showed Thiersch some Greek papyri in their hotel. He had purchased them that same morning from the dealer Farag Ismain/Ismail in Giza.³⁰ Thiersch's interest was piqued immediately and he swapped some of the Coptic and Egyptian manuscripts he had already purchased for Greek papyri of Lange's. Lange reports in his diary that these Greek papyri had been in a "rag" together with papyrus fragments from the Middle Kingdom.

*"Suddenly he (i.e. Farag Ali) held forth a rag which contained a mass of papyrus fragments and said that they had been found together in one spot. I untied the piece of cloth the four corners of which were bound together and immediately saw that there were several pieces of a letter from the Middle Kingdom, a period from which papyri were very rare and precious; there were moreover some Greek bits among them."*³¹

Farag, the dealer, assured Lange that the papyri in the sack had been found at a single location. Lange kept the papyri from the Middle Kingdom for himself and gave the Greek ones to Thiersch.

*"When I came home with it sometime before noon, I singled out the Greek pieces and showed them to Dr. Thiersch. He found them very interesting with the result that I traded them with him in return for some Coptic and Egyptian bits."*³²

It later became apparent that the papyri Lange had acquired from Farag Ali were from El-Lahun, a village in the Fayum associated with the pyramid of Sesostris II. This prompted Lange to reluctantly hand over his papyri to Borchardt for the Berlin collection so the finds from the temple archive in Lahun would be together. But Thiersch seemingly held on to his Greek papyri. It is not at all clear how it was possible for Greek papyri to become mixed up with documents from

²⁸ Lange and Lange, page 143 (Wednesday, 22 November 1899), Hagen/Ryholt, *Antiquities Trade*, 165.

²⁹ Hagen/Ryholt, *Antiquities Trade*, 165.

³⁰ Hagen/Ryholt (*Antiquities Trade*, 166) confuse Farag Ismain in Giza with Farag Ali in Cairo. On page 213 they then state correctly that Lange on this occasion visited the shop of Farag Ali in Cairo, who might have been the otherwise well-known son of Farag Ismain/Ismail.

³¹ Hagen/Ryholt, *Antiquities Trade*, 166.

³² Hagen/Ryholt, *Antiquities Trade*, 166.

the temple archive of Lahun, since all the papyri found there were from the Middle Kingdom.³³

The same afternoon a young dealer based in Cairo named Farag Ali paid a call on Thiersch in the latter's hotel to show him some of his papyri, but he just found Lange. Lange and his wife went with him to his small store close to their Pension in Zamalek. The next day on Tuesday, November 28, Lange and his wife returned to Farag Ali's shop close to their hotel, and this time Thiersch, Schäfer, and Borchardt came along.³⁴

A few days later, on Saturday, December 2 and Monday, December 4, 1899, Thiersch and Lange paid another visit to the papyrus dealers of Giza. In his diary for December 4 1899, Lange noted:

*"Monday afternoon we went off again: Thiersch, Dr Bissing³⁵ and me, this time too to the village of Giza to the largest antiquities dealer in Egypt, an old Bedouin named [Mohammed] Ali [Abd el-Haj], where we have been before. He is a very wealthy man, in contrast to Farag [Ismain], who is said to be in financial trouble and therefore wants to sell at reasonable prices. Ali, on the other hand, charges ludicrous prices, but then he does have the nicest things. Thiersch would like to buy from him for 50 pounds, and had already on Saturday put a small pile [of papyrus, presumably] to one side, but when he asked Ali about the price, the answer was 1,000 pounds. Now a slow and difficult negotiation began; eventually the pile was reduced, and finally the result was that Thiersch bought for 13 ½ pounds. Bissing was with us to conduct the negotiations, as Ali only speaks Arabic."*³⁶

These purchases were papyri destined for the Basel collection: Thiersch purchased papyri for Munich only after his return from Nubia in May 1900, and while he was also tasked with spending 600 marks on papyri for Strasbourg, we know that he used this money only for two purchases: 6.5 pounds (approx. 130 marks) he spent on a papyrus in Sennures in the Fayum and 78.8 piasters (approx. 1.2 pounds or 24 marks) for another papyrus in Akhmim.³⁷ He handed the remaining funds over to Borchardt (presumably before his departure from

³³ Borchardt, ZÄS 37, 89–90.

³⁴ Hagen/Ryholt, *Antiquities Trade*, 213. Borchardt recorded this visit as well in his diary.

³⁵ Freiherr Friedrich Wilhelm von Bissing, a German Egyptologist who was then 26 years old.

³⁶ Lange, diary 1899–1900, p. 156; Hagen/Ryholt, *Antiquities Trade*, 166.

³⁷ *P.Stras.Gr. Inv.* 1017, a collection of Christian sayings. Cf. Chang-Ruey, *Dossier fiscal hermopolitain*, 417.

Egypt at the end of April 1900); Borchardt was to use it for additional purchases and to cover transport costs.³⁸

Thiersch exchanged regular correspondence with Wackernagel in Basel as his efforts to purchase a representative collection of papyri for the Basel teaching collection progressed. In mid-December, Thiersch offered to buy another document for 30–50 pounds beyond the amount of 400 Marks that he had already spent for Basel. In his reply from December 22, 1899, Wackernagel declined this offer, however. 30–50 pounds (150–250 marks) was too high a price for a document he wrote; only literary texts, if any, could merit such prices.³⁹

By 28 February, Thiersch had completed his mission. On the eve of his departure on the expedition to Nubia, a journey recorded in precise detail in a still extant travel diary, he wrote to a professor – indubitably Wackernagel – in Basel. This letter is still in the archives of the University Library in Basel today.

Cairo, 28 II. 1900

Dear Professor,

I am finally allowing myself to send you the papyri, that is to say, I am just packing them up now so their dispatch out of the country can be officially approved in Giza museum. I spent the entire assigned sum of 400 marks on the actual papyri. There will still be some charges for stamp duty and postage, but I don't yet know how high they will be and we can easily settle those in Basel at some point.

What I got shows the early and late Imperial periods, straight and slanted scripts, the Byzantine period, and Coptic, Hebrew and Arabic. So in paleographic terms, the collection gives a good impression of developments over six centuries. I have three regrets: firstly, that it was not possible to achieve more with the available sum given the current prices (England and America are to blame for that). Secondly, that no "literary" papyrus is included as far as I can see. And finally, that I did not succeed in procuring an exemplar from the Ptolemaic period. These papyri are now some of the very rarest. I hope, nevertheless, that this small selection will not be a disappointment to you and the gentlemen from the Museum Association.

The campaign in Abusir is over for now; we had better luck than expected. The museums in Giza and Berlin are going to share the reliefs we found. Tomorrow evening, a six-week expedition to Nubia mounted by the Saxon

³⁸ Letter from Reitzenstein and Spiegelberg to the Ministry of Alsace-Lothringia from 2 April 1901.

³⁹ Thierschiana VI, Schachtel 15 (BSB München): Letter (22.12.1899) from Wackernagel to Thiersch.

Academy of Sciences will set off. Dr. Schäfer and I have the good fortune of being able to join it.

In a hurry now, I send you faithful greetings and my greatest respect.

*Yours,
Dr. H. Thiersch⁴⁰*

Attentive readers may spot several discrepancies between Thiersch's account in this letter to Wackernagel and the description of the Basel papyrus collection given at the outset. Thiersch had, in fact, managed to secure both papyri from the Ptolemaic period and literary papyri for Basel, but apparently, he did not recognize them as such given their fragmentary condition. The Hebrew and Arabic papyri he mentions are, however, not present in the Basel collection. Rabel in his 1917 edition described an Arabic double seal with an Arabic papyrus fragment tied to it,⁴¹ but both are lost today. As for the Hebrew papyri Thiersch mentioned, he probably believed (or was told) that the Hieratic he had collected were written in Hebrew. The Pahlavi text (*P.Bas.* II 69) probably was not even acquired by Thiersch but reached the Basel University collection another way.

Given that Thiersch made his purchases from the same dealers as all the other European colleagues operating in Egypt at the time, it is hardly surprising that some papyri from the Basel collection have turned out to be closely related to material in other collections. For example, the fragment preserved in the Basel papyrus collection as *P.Bas.* I 6, a contract dealing with the claims of a presumably divorced woman for maintenance for her child, joins with fragments in the Strasbourg collection (*P.Strasb.* VII 666 reedited here as *P.Bas.* II 22). Furthermore, the papyrus *P.Bas.* I 9, reedited here as *P.Bas.* II 42, a receipt issued for a grain tax payment, belongs to the archive of Segastis, a priestess in the Fayum village of Soknopaiou Nesos at the end of the second century CE. Today, the archive of Segastis is scattered throughout papyrus collections in Berlin, Florence, New York, Prague, Vienna and Basel.⁴² A receipt for a camel tax, *P.Bas.* 12, reedited here as *P.Bas.* II 24, held in Basel belongs to the archive of Stotoetis, the owner of a camel herd. The remaining texts belonging to this archive, all written on the same day and in the same hand, are now in Berlin and

⁴⁰ Archiv UB Basel: A I 34m.

⁴¹ *P.Bas.* I, pages 5–6.

⁴² *BGU* XV 2556; *CPR* XV 44; *P.Amh. Gr.* II 120; *P.Prag* I 23; *P.Prag* I 55; *P.Prag* I 56; *P.Prag* II 146; *PSI* XIII 1324; *SP* II page 28–31 [A.N. 1404].

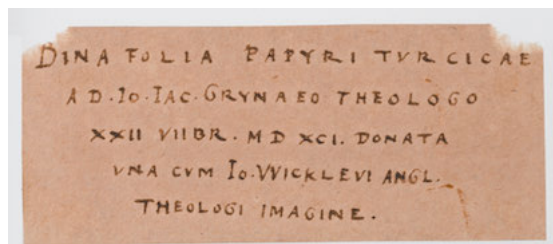
Cf. <http://www.trismegistos.org/archive/270>. Cf. Cowey et al., *P.Prag.* I, 217–218.

Munich.⁴³ *P.Bas.* I 16, reedited here as *P.Bas.* II 43, is a document that once belonged to the immense archive of Heroninos, an estate manager from third century Theadelphia in the Arsinoite. Grenfell and Hunt excavated the first documents from this archive in February 1899 in Theadelphia.⁴⁴ The document must stem from the subsequent illegal excavations by locals who then sold their finds to antiquities dealers in Giza and Cairo and constitutes the earliest of all known purchases from this archive.⁴⁵ Finally, *P.Bas.* I 7 now joins with *P.Mich.* inv. 3958f and is reedited here as *P.Bas.* II 29.

The previously unpublished texts in the Basel papyrus collection demonstrate further connections to other collections across the world. The Byzantine papyrus fragment *P.Bas.* inv. 42 from the Basel collection and the fragment *P.Lond.* 3.1053 descr. (*SB XVIII* 13584), now kept in the British library, once formed a single document (*P.Bas.* II 51). These two fragments of a single papyrus, most likely from the sixth century, were probably found together in Hermopolis towards the end of the nineteenth century, but then separated by antique dealers before they were sold. In addition, *P.Bas.* II 66 might have belonged to the same archive.

2) “Turkish paper” in Basel in the 16th century

Two papyri reached Basel by a different but hardly less interesting route. They have been in Basel since the sixteenth century and were once part of the famous Amerbach Cabinet collection. One of the papyri, in Latin script, has broken into three fragments. The other, in Greek, consists of two fragments. A handwritten note in Latin, most likely from 1591, is mounted together with all of these papyrus fragments:



“Two sheets of Turkish papyrus, a gift from the theologian, Sir Johannes Jacobus Grynaeus, on 22 September 1591, together with a picture of the English theologian John Wycliffe.”⁴⁶

⁴³ *BGU* II, 461; *BGU* II, 521; *BGU* III, 770; *P.Münch.* III, 109. Cf. <http://www.trismegistos.org/archive/324> and see Hagedorn, *Urkundenpapyri München*, 128 (introduction of no. 109); Jördens, *Arbeitstierhandel*, 66–67.

⁴⁴ Rathbone, in: *100 anni*, 18.

⁴⁵ Rathbone, in: *100 anni*, 21.

⁴⁶ *Bina folia papyri turcicae a D. Io. Iac. Grynaeo Theologo XII VII Br. MDXCI donata una cum Io. Wicklevi angli. theologi imagine.*

Rabel read this note at the beginning of the twentieth century and was bothered by the sight of spots of glue on the papyri, which he attributed to improper mounting in the nineteenth century. But when was this note written, and which two sheets of papyrus does it refer to? Why is the papyrus described as Turkish, and what is the story behind the portrait of the English theologian Wycliffe?

Until now, it was generally assumed that Grynaeus, as mentioned in the note, must have given the two papyri to Basilius Amerbach in 1591 for his famous collection. Johannes Jacobus Grynaeus was from Bern, where he was born in 1540. He was a nephew of the theologian, reformer, and humanist Simon Grynaeus. He became a professor for Old Testament exegesis in Basel in 1575 and served as chancellor of the university three times. He died in Basel in 1617.

Basilius Amerbach was a lawyer, scholar, and art collector, who served as a professor of law at the University of Basel from 1561 on and also served as chancellor of the university three times. He died in Basel in April 1591. He is remembered as the founder of the Amerbach Cabinet, a collection of artwork and curiosities encompassing many famous paintings, including around a hundred works of Hans Holbein the Younger, along with the literary estate of Erasmus and approximately 9,000 books. He purchased art and curiosities from far and wide. With its purchase of the Amerbach collection in 1662, the Grand Council of the City of Basel paved the way for the establishment of the first public museum in Europe. Today, Amerbach's collection is split between Kunstmuseum Basel, Historisches Museum Basel, and the University of Basel Library.

The story behind the papyri known as the Amerbach papyri is, however, far more complicated than the handwritten note suggests. An Amerbach Cabinet inventory list from 1586 does indeed mention *Ein Stuck ex papyro veterum*, an ancient sheet of papyrus stored, according to the list, in a "walnut table."⁴⁷ But this papyrus is referred to in the singular, and it is unclear whether the note is referring to the Latin or the Greek papyrus. The published *Amerbachkorrespondenz*⁴⁸ contains several letters from Amerbach to Johann Jakob Grynaeus but no mention of papyri.

The portrait of the English theologian Wycliffe is mentioned for the first time on 22 September 1591 in an inventory note that up to now has been attributed to Amerbach himself.

⁴⁷ Ganz/Major, *Amerbachsches Kunstkabinett*, 52.

⁴⁸ Edited by A. Hartmann und B.R. Jenny and published by the University of Basel Library 1942–2010.

*“Doctor Johann Jakob Grynaeus gave me a picture of the English theologian Wycliffe, which he had received as a gift from Count Palatine Johann Casimir.”*⁴⁹

Is this the same portrait as the one mentioned in our handwritten note in Latin, which was mounted together with the papyri at some point during the nineteenth century? Something here is clearly not quite right: we know that Amerbach died on 25 April 1591, but the inventory entry is from 22 September 1591. In fact, this note has been wrongly attributed to Amerbach. It was probably written by Ludwig Iselin, Amerbach’s principal heir; in this case, Grynaeus would have presented Ludwig Iselin with the portrait of Wycliffe. Can we infer from this that it was also Ludwig Iselin who penned the handwritten note still mounted together with the papyri today that refers to two papyri and a portrait of Wycliffe given by Grynaeus to the author?

In 1662, around 70 years after Amerbach’s death, the Council of the City of Basel bought the Amerbach Cabinet from Amerbach’s heirs and had an inventory of it prepared. The portrait of Wycliffe is mentioned again here: *“No. 58. Joannis Wicklef Bildtnis auff Pergament.”*⁵⁰ Two papyri are also listed in this 1662 inventory produced by the council: *“In dem Tisch... Item zwey Bletlin Türkisch Papier”* (Henrici). So here we have two sheets of “Turkish paper” stored in a table, whereas Amerbach’s inventory note from 1586 had mentioned only one sheet of papyrus in a walnut table. Was this the same papyrus, which had by now disintegrated into two fragments? Or had Amerbach or one of his heirs managed to acquire another papyrus? Was it apparent that the two Greek fragments and the three Latin fragments belonged together? Or were the papyri in better condition at that point, so that there really were only two sheets? And why are they called “Turkish paper” again here? Surely it was obvious that the writing on the papyri was in Latin and Greek? Rabel supposed that someone had brought them along from a journey to the Orient.⁵¹

In the early 1860s, the Egyptologist Johannes Zündel produced an overview of Egyptian antiquities in Switzerland. At the time, he had knowledge of only two papyri in Switzerland, one with Greek writing in a private collection in Aarau and the other a papyrus fragment in the municipal museum in Basel. *“A little scrap in the museum in Basel with the yellowed label papyrus turcica.”*⁵² Zündel had obviously seen the same discolored handwritten note that is still mounted together with the papyri today. But, despite the note attesting to two

⁴⁹ *Dn. Doct. Jo. Jacobus Grynaeus mihi donavit effigiem Dn. Jo. Wicklevi Theologi Angli, quam ipse Dn. Grynaeus dono acceperat ab illustriss. Principe Dn. Casimiro, Com. Palatino ad Rhenum* (Ganz/Major, *Amerbachsches Kunstkabinett*, 28).

⁵⁰ Ganz/Major, *Amerbachsches Kunstkabinett*, 64.

⁵¹ Rabel, *Papyrusurkunden Basel*, 4.

⁵² Zündel, *ZÄS* 2, 46–47; cf. Preisendanz, *Papyrusfunde*, 68.

leaves, he only mentions a single scrap. It can no longer be determined which papyrus Zündel saw or whether his examination was so cursory that he did not take note of the two separate papyri.

In 1909, the papyri (or the papyrus) in the historical museum were then “discovered” by senior librarian Carl Christoph Bernoulli and brought to the University of Basel library, where they were presumably stored with the newly acquired collection of Egyptian papyri. All five fragments might have been mounted together already earlier. In his 1917 publication, Rabel refers to “a glass display panel, presumably made in the nineteenth century” for which “the three fragments A–C had been stuck with glue(!) between sheets of glass.”⁵³ The fragments were mounted together with the yellowed inventory note in Latin, which now gives the impression that all fragments were part of Grynaeus’ gift.

To summarize: we deduce that Amerbach possessed at least one papyrus during his lifetime and that his heir Ludwig Iselin received a portrait of the English theologian John Wycliffe as a gift from Johannes Jakob Grynaeus shortly after Amerbach’s death. At least one of the papyri and the portrait were incorporated into the Amerbach Cabinet collection that was subsequently purchased by the Council of the City of Basel in 1662. The inventory produced by the council then lists two sheets of papyrus.

Rabel made both of these papyri known to the public in his 1917 publication and dated the *recto* of *P.Bas.* I 1 B+C tentatively and with the help of colleagues to the fourth century (Bresslau) or the fifth (Wilcken). Rabel did not, however, edit and publish this text. In the early 1950s, the Latin papyrus in Basel was examined by Jan-Olof Tjäder, a specialist of Italian papyri, who was able to show how the fragments joined together. He published his findings in his 1953 monograph and later republished the papyri as *P.Ital.* II 54 (*recto*) and *P.Ital.* II 53. Tjäder revised the dating of the *recto*, placing it around the year 500 (compared with Bresslau and Wilcken’s respective fourth and fifth century estimates), and argues that the text is an inventory list from a monastery or church listing various textiles.⁵⁴ Rabel did not look at the *verso* in detail; Tjäder dates the reuse of the papyrus to approximately 700 CE, two centuries after the writing on the *recto*.⁵⁵

According to Tjäder, this Latin papyrus is one of the so-called “Ravenna Papyri,” a group of documents in Latin from the chancellery of the Archdiocese of Ravenna. Dating to 445–700, these papyri were preserved by chance up to the

⁵³ *P.Bas.* I, page 7.

⁵⁴ Tjäder, *Revisione*, *recto P.Ital.* II 54. Perrat had concluded that the text was a quotation from a sermon given by the bishop Claudius of Sanctus Eugendus (Saint-Oyend, subsequently renamed Saint-Claude after Claudius himself) in the province of Lyon (Perrat, *Bibliothèque d’humanisme et renaissance* 12, 114–116).

⁵⁵ Tjäder, *Revisione*.

end of the fifteenth century. Sometime around this point, they were removed from the archive under unknown circumstances – perhaps when the city was plundered by the French in 1512 – and became scattered throughout Europe after finding their way into the hands of sixteenth-century humanists.⁵⁶ While these scholars could not make much sense of the unfamiliar writing material, which they called Chinese, Arabic, Syrian or, as in the note penned by Ludwig Iselin in 1591, “Turkish” paper, they valued the papyri since they were obviously ancient and a legacy of antiquity. The Latin papyrus of Basel belongs to the relatively small group of papyri that were preserved not in the dry sands of Egypt but in the Western Europe, probably in the archive of the Archdiocese of Ravenna. Dario Internullo offers a reedition below as *P.Bas.* II 58.

The Greek papyrus that in all likelihood also belonged to the Amerbach Cabinet is known as *P.Bas.* I 1A.⁵⁷ The writing it contains is in Greek uncials and was first published by Rabel in 1917. This papyrus, which has disintegrated into two fragments, was thought to be a Christian text in mirror writing, i.e. written from left to right.⁵⁸ Examination under UV light showed, however, that it consisted of several layers of papyri glued together, suggesting that it was most likely used as a bookbinding and the mirror writing might be in fact migration of ink from one papyrus layer to another. A restoration of the papyrus led to the discovery of an unknown medical text dating most likely to the third or fourth century CE. Isabelle Marthot-Santaniello offers the first edition of this papyrus (*P.Bas.* II 3).

3) *The first edition of the Basel papyrus collection in 1917*

Hermann Thiersch received great support from the German scholarly community both at home and abroad when he was looking to buy papyri in Egypt in 1899. Equally impressive is the interdisciplinary collaboration on the first edition of the Basel papyri. The circle of colleagues who helped the jurist Ernst Rabel to edit the Basel papyri reads like a “Who’s Who” of German papyrology in its pioneering days and of the larger German academic world. Ulrich Wilcken (1862–1944), a student of Theodor Mommsen and one of the founding fathers of papyrology, read and commented on all 26 papyri that Rabel included in his edition. Wilcken’s student, Wilhelm Schubart (1873–1960), who was the head of the Berlin papyrus collection at the time, contributed several critical readings as well. Wilhelm Spiegelberg (1870–1930), professor of Egyptology in Strasbourg and one of the first experts in Demotic papyrology, contributed the edition of the Coptic papyrus. His Strasbourg colleague, the medievalist Harry Bresslau

⁵⁶ *P.Ital.* II, pages 17–21.

⁵⁷ *P.Bas.*, pages 7–9; 11–12.

⁵⁸ *P.Bas.*, pages 7–11.

(1848–1926), offered help on the late antique Latin papyrus. Otto Eger (1877–1949), who succeeded Rabel as the chair of legal history at the University of Basel, added comments on juristic aspects. Eger had written his Habilitation on Egyptian land registers in Roman time with Ludwig Mitteis (1859–1921), the pioneer of juristic papyrology. Franz Boll (1867–1924), eminent specialist on astrology added his comments on *P.Bas.* I 23 (reedited here as *P.Bas.* II 4). Finally, Rabel received immense support from Friedrich Preisigke (1856–1924), a key figure who developed a number of the most important tools in papyrology.

Although he worked on the collection shortly after its acquisition, Rabel knew little about its provenance and history, nor was he specifically interested in it. He was apparently not aware that Dr. H. Thiersch was his Freiburg colleague, the professor of classical archeology Prof. Hermann Thiersch, nor does he seem to have known that it had been Prof. Jacob Wackernagel, who left Basel two years before Rabel arrived who had given the initiative for establishing a study collection of papyri from various periods of Egyptian history for teaching purposes. Rabel just assumed in his introduction that this small compilation of papyri might have been bought for teaching purposes. In his concluding words, Rabel expressed the wish that this collection might instill enduring sympathy for papyrology both at the renowned University of Basel as well as in the Rhine town distinguished by its community spirit and love of scholarship. However, after Rabel's departure from Basel in 1910 and his publication of 1917 the Basel papyri slowly sank into oblivion both among classical scholars and the general public. We therefore hope that our project and related efforts can finally fulfill Rabel's wish. To this end we organized a papyrological exhibition in the University Library entitled "Ein Jahrtausend am Nil: Die Basler Papyrussammlung" (February–April 2017), introduced papyrology classes into the university curriculum, organized the first Schweizer Papyrologentag, and have several Master-of-Arts theses and dissertations drawing on papyrological evidence underway. Rather than marking an end to its more than 400-year history, we intend this edition of the Basel papyri to signal the rebirth of papyrology in the city and university of Basel.

Sabine R. Huebner

2. Texts

Greek Literary Texts

1. Homer, *Iliad* T 147–154 and T 214–229

P.Bas. inv. 27d
TM 827766

9.6 × 10.6 cm

I CE (?)
Unknown provenance

A yellow-brown papyrus of fine quality. Only the lower margin is preserved to a maximum height of 3.3 cm. Three (maybe four) horizontal folds are visible, the first one starting ca. 2 cm from the lower margin, the two others following at a regular spacing of 2 cm. The fragment consists of two columns of text written on the recto along the fibers, and preserves parts of the nineteenth book of *Iliad*: line endings of T 147–154 and large parts of T 214–229. The verso is blank. Only a few traces of the first column are extant while the second column is almost fully preserved. The width of the second column is approximately 13 cm, which falls within average column widths for hexameters.¹ Maas' law cannot be observed. The intercolumnar space varies from a minimum of 1 cm to 2.6 cm at its widest point. Ink analysis: carbon.

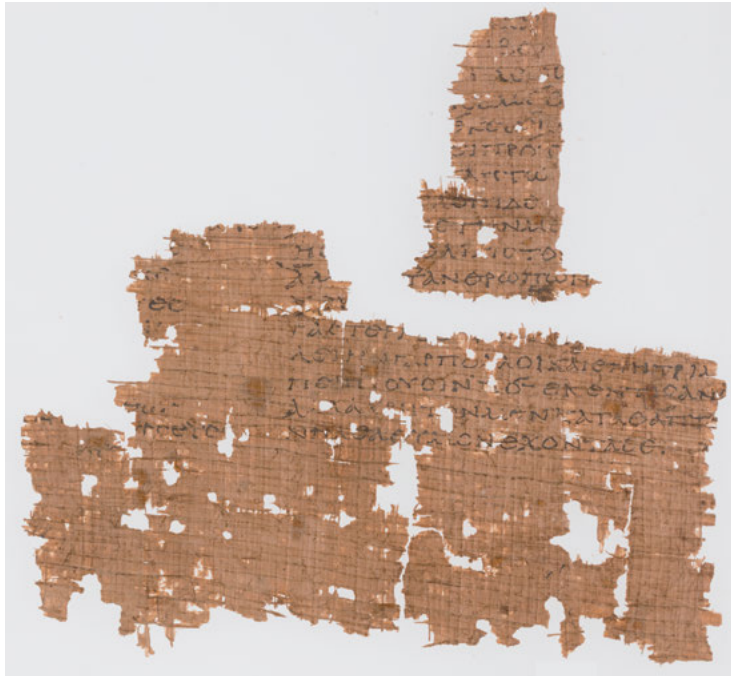
The handwriting is a round, regular, and careful uncial script, which suggests that the scrap belonged to a roll made in a professional scriptorium. Some letters have serifs. The hand is perfectly bilinear and may be compared to the script of P.Duk. inv. 59 assigned by A. Mirończuk to the first century.² The manuscript carries lectional signs, apparently added by another scribe: elision mark (T 225), which in one case is indicated with an apostrophe (T 224), as well as acute accents (T 217, 218, 219 and 228), high points (T 147, 150, 153 and 154), two slashes (placed above and under T 222), and a *paragraphos* (placed between T 222 and T 223). In addition, there are two marginal notes written in a more cursive hand, perhaps by the same second scribe (end of T 146 and below T 154). The leading measures ca. 0.3 cm and the line-spacing ca. 0.2 cm. It is not possible to know how many lines each column originally contained. Since column I preserves endings of T 147–154, column II would have contained no

¹ Johnson, *Bookrolls & Scribes*, 116.

² Mirończuk, *ZPE* 184, 8–9.

less than 75 lines, which would be very unusual, since the average number of lines in a column for this type of text is between 24 and 45.³ Most likely the copyist's eye skipped one column, or even two, while copying the manuscript: in the first hypothesis each column would have contained ca. 37 lines whereas in the second case each column would have contained 25 lines.

The text contains two spelling mistakes due to iotacism (T 226 λείην instead of λήην and T 227 πείπτουσιν instead of πίπτουσιν) as well as a grammatical error (in T 149 the copist wrote the nominative ἐόν]τες instead of the expected accusative ἐόν]τας).⁴ There is no other papyrus overlapping with the text of this fragment. The only ancient manuscript overlapping with it is P⁹, a Syriac parchment codex palimpsest from the sixth century CE. The papyrus presents the vulgate reading throughout.



P.Bas. II 1

³ Johnson, *Bookrolls & Scribes*, 83–84.

⁴ On this kind of mistake, see Gignac, *Grammar II*, 46–47.