



PAHLAVI PAPYRI

PAHLAVI PAPYRI, documents written exclusively in Egypt during the Persian (Sasanian) occupation under *Ḳosrow II* between 619 and 629 CE. A number of parchments (ca. 20 percent of all) and linen fragments (P. 144, Berlin collection, and frag. 7 of the Bodleiana, Oxford, unpublished) also belong to the material coming from Egypt. There are only 3 documents (all parchments) that are directly dated (for dating formulae, see MacKenzie, 1994): one in the Berlin collection (P. 188; Weber, 2003, forthcoming, pp. 76 f.) showing the year 35 (era of *Ḳosrow II* = 624/625 CE) and two of the Vienna collection (P. Pehl. 373a and *P. Pehl. 2; Weber 2003d, forthcoming) showing the years 35 and 32 (?) respectively. The Philadelphia parchment P. 19 (Weber 1992, pp. 133 ff.; reading improved, Weber, 2003d, fn. 2) mentions a date of the year 37 (=626/627 CE) in an uncertain context. Indirectly, the documents can be dated by the occurrence of the name of the Persian official *Šahr-Ālānyōzān* in both Pahlavi and Greek (dated) documents (Weber, 1991). Of the existing material the greatest part is fragmentary, in many cases badly preserved; only a few documents are complete—with certainty only four in the Berlin collection (P. 141, P. 157, P. 188, P. 193, three of them with lacunae), one in the Vienna collection (P. Pehl. 373a), one in the Heidelberg collection (P. 81), one in the Strasbourg collection (P. 45), and finally the Bâle parchment (P. 55). The script used in the documents is a difficult cursive variant of that of late Sasanian Pahlavi (Henning, 1958, p. 49; Weber 1992, pp. 209-31).

Collections.

Place Items



Vienna (Papyrussammlung Erzherzog Rainer, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek) 604

The largest existing collection of Pahlavi papyri and parchments belongs to the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna but, unfortunately, is preserved, by circumstances of World War II, in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg (described in full by Weber, 2003b). Only few ed.: P. Pehl. 14 (Weber, 1983, p. 216 with pl. 18), P. Pehl. 15 (Weber, 1983, p. 217 with pl. 20), P. Pehl. 68 (Weber, 1983, p. 217 with pl. 19), P. Pehl. 67 (Weber, 1983, p. 217 with pl. 20), P. Pehl. 68 (Weber, 1983, p. 217 with pl. 19), P. Pehl. 69 (Weber, 1983, p. 217 with pl. 19), P. Pehl. 70 (Weber, 1983, p. 217 with pl. 20), P. Pehl. 71 (Weber, 1983, p. 217 with pl. 19), P. Pehl. 72 (Weber, 1983, p. 217 with pl. 19), P. Pehl. 222 (Weber, 1983, p. 218 with pl. 28), P. Pehl. 247a (Weber, 1983, p. 218, pl. 20), P. Pehl. 247b (Weber, 1983, p. 218, pl. 19), P. Pehl. 304 (Weber, 1983, p. 218, pl. 18), P. Pehl. 306 (Weber, 1983, p. 218, pl. 18), P. Pehl. 307 (Weber, 1983, p. 218, pl. 18), P. Pehl. 327 (to be published in Weber, 2003c, fig. 15), P. Pehl. 344 (Weber, 2003a, p. 12 with fig. 2), P. Pehl. 345 (Weber, 1983, p. 219, pl. 21), P. Pehl. 346 (Weber, 1983, p. 219 with pl. 22), P. Pehl. 347 (Weber, 1983, p. 219f. with pl. 22), P. Pehl. 348 (Weber, 1983, p. 220 with pl. 22), P. Pehl. 373a (facs. Karabaček, 1894, pl. III; ed. Weber, 1983, p. 220 with pl. 22, and Weber, 2003d), P. Pehl. 414 and P. Pehl. 559 (presented at the 23rd International Congress of Papyrologists in Vienna, and to be published in Weber, 2003b), P. Pehl. 414 also to be published in Weber, 2003c, fig. 16), P. Pehl. 559 R (ibid., Weber, 2003c, fig. 17), P. Pehl. 571 (ibid., Weber, 2003c, fig. 19), P. Pehl. 572 (Weber, 1983, pp. 220 ff. with pl. 24), P. Pehl. 577 (Weber, 1983, pp. 222 f. with pl. 25), P. Pehl. 579 (Weber, 1983, pp. 223 f. with pl. 26), P. Pehl. 581 (Weber, 1983, p. 224 with pl. 27), P. Pehl. 582 (Weber, 1983, p. 225 with pl. 28), P. Pehl. 583 (Weber, 1983, pp. 225 f. with pl. 29), P. Pehl. 584–P. Pehl. 594 (Weber, 1992 as P. 114–P. 124); two palimpsests: P. G 19802 (Weber, 1983, p. 226 with pls. 30, 31), P. K 8691 (Weber, 1983, pp. 226 f. with pl. 32). An edition of all fragments is in course of preparation.

Berlin (Papyrussammlung, Ägyptisches Museum) 219

A complete list of all Middle Persian papyri, parchments and linen fragments then known is to be found in Hansen, 1938 where the best preserved and most eminent ones were presented with translation and commentary. Almost all fragments were bought in Cairo in the 1870s and 1880s, and most of them are said to come from the Fayyūm. There are no exact statements with regard to the places where, or the circumstances by which, they had been found. A very few are said to derive from excavations in Krokodilopolis. (Hansen, 1938; new



numbering and ed. Weber, 2003)

Heidelberg (Papyrussammlung) 48

Facs. and ed. Weber 1992, as P. 61 – 108.

Moscow (–) 40

A first notice of the collection, the former collection Golonishchev, was given by Freïman, 1918, followed by Perikhanian, 1961, who published 14 of 40 fragments mentioned there; no further information about the other fragments is available at the moment. No. 1 of her edition must be mentioned here because it is the largest Pahlavi papyrus we know of; the measurements are 15 x 75 cm with 28 lines, the width being of a standard size (normally varying from 14 to 17 cm). Ed. Perikhanian, 1961.

Philadelphia (The University Museum) 24

Facs. in de Menasce, 1957; ed. Weber, 1992, as P. 1–24, P. 60.

Paris (Lourvre) 18

The Louvre has only a small collection of Pahlavi papyri but it seems to be the oldest we know of; it is said that the collection goes back as early as 1851, and it may be possible that there are still some more fragments not yet catalogued.

Facs. in de Menasce 1957, ed. Weber 1992, as P. 26–43.

Oxford (Bodleiana), a small collection of Pahlavi fragments, only three published⁷

Facs. (of three) in de Menasce, 1957, ed. Weber, 1992, as P. 56, P. 57, P. 59 = frags. 6, 3 and 1; frag. 2 to be published in Weber, 2003c, fig. 14.

Strasbourg (Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire) 7

Facs. in de Menasce, 1957; ed. Weber, 1992, as P. 45 – 49 and P. 112, P. 113.

New York (The Brooklyn Museum), found by the way under Aramaic material³

Facs. in de Menasce, 1957; ed. Weber, 1992, as P. 51 – 53.



Göttingen (Handschriftenabteilung der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek)3

2 fragments of parchments and one nice papyrus, letter of 30 lines, almost complete but written in a very cursive Pahlavi writing; ed. Weber 1969 and 1992, as P. 44 and P. 109–111)

Cairo (Bibliothèque Universitaire) 2

Facs. in de Menasce ,1957; ed. Weber, 1992, as P. 53 and P. 54.

London (British Library) 1

Facs. in de Menasce, 1957; ed. Weber, 1992, as P. 58.

Manchester (John Rylands University Library) 1

Facs. in de Menasce 1957; ed. Weber, 1992, as P. 25.

Prague (former Wessely Collection)1

Information according to Prof. R. Pintaudi (Firenze, Italy). No details available yet.

Basel (Universitätsbibliothek) 1

There is only one magnificent parchment in the University Library that shows a list of recruitment for garrisons in various towns on the Nile; the names of the towns in Greek are the following: Elephantine, Herakleia, Oxyrhynkos, Kynōn, Theodosiopolis, Hermoupolis, Antinoeμ, Kossōn, Lykos (Lykopolis), Diospolis, and Maximinianopolis; first ed., de Menasce, 1953; facs. in de Menasce ,1957; ed. Weber, 1992, pp. 159-60 as P. 55.

Contents of the papyri and parchments. Most of the documents are letters of different kinds. Private letters (P. 44, Perikhanian 1) contain notices of question of personal relationship between members of a family (P. Pehl. 571) and were written according to a well-known scheme for Pahlavi letters as shown in the *Nāmag-nibēsišnih* (Zaehner, 1937-39; Weber, 1992, pp. 234-36) including short notices of health and greetings (P. 157). In official letters order for soldiers (P. 110) or other more general instructions are put forward, e.g., regarding the distribution of food (P. Pehl 572) or the instruction for pay for soldiers (P. Pehl. 570) or officers (P. 141), the permission for merchants to ship goods on the Nile (P. 137; Harmatta, 1974), the communication to the



inhabitants of some villages of the arrival of the chief tax-collector on a fixed day (P. 136; Weber, 1991). There are also a great number of fragments, the contents of which cannot be determined with certainty because of their too fragmentary character. Very famous is a list of daily rations of food for a household of an eminent person (P. 140). It is noteworthy that also texts of geographical interest (P. 148 with fig. 6) survived. Because of such contents, a great number of personal names is attested, which all show their late Sasanian (and, of course, Zoroastrian) character, except three names of presumably Semitic origin (Weber, 1992, pp. 241-43; Weber, 2003, p. 195; see also Gignoux, 1986; Zimmer, 1991 and 1993). The form of geographical names generally is Greek (Weber, 192, pp. 244 ff.)

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(Dieter Weber)

October 13, 2005