

The Acquisitions of Chester Beatty

THE ARCHIVES OF THE Chester Beatty Library have made unpublished materials available that fill in many details omitted in the published German reports.

Sir Chester Beatty already had in place a procedure for the procurement and processing of Egyptian manuscripts when the Manichaean materials appeared on the market. As early as January 26, 1925, he purchased two Coptic manuscripts from the leading Cairo antiquities dealer of the day, whose ledger sheet on which the receipt was written had as its printed heading: Maurice Nahman Antiquaire, 27, Rue El-Madabegh, 27. Early in 1930, Beatty had Nahman send to Eric G. Millar of the Department of Manuscripts of the British Museum various manuscripts he acquired on approval. Beatty wrote from Cairo to J. W. Corble of his London staff to notify Millar to that effect. Beatty asked Corble to “cable his [Millar’s] opinion,” using a “code” in cables. The code consisted of “Copper Mine” for a Coptic manuscript, “Silver” for a Greek papyrus, and “Gold Mine” for “rare and valuable.” In at least one instance Millar consulted Sir Harold I. Bell, whereupon John Wooderson, Beatty’s secretary, cabled to Beatty the contents of a resultant phone conversation between Millar and himself, Wooderson. This content was also communicated orally to Edwards, a mutual friend, who must have been traveling just then from London to Cairo. Millar also wrote to Corble enclosing for Beatty a letter providing written confirmation of the oral telegraphed message. This letter graded as a “Silver Mine” a third-century Septuagint text of Daniel (Chester Beatty Biblical Papyrus X) and as a “Gold Mine” a fourth-century text of Genesis (Chester Beatty Biblical Papyrus IV).

Thus, Beatty, himself no expert in such matters, but a mining entrepreneur, had at his disposal the British Museum and its access to British scholarship.

As recently as January 23, 1930, Hugo Ibscher had sent from Berlin a bill for conservation work recently completed in London; he anticipated returning to London in June 1930 to resume this activity. Thus, Beatty had at his disposal the leading papyrus conservator of the day.

A ledger sheet with Nahman's letterhead dated March 23, 1930, and made out to Beatty, at the time in Cairo, listed prices alongside fifteen items for sale. There are also notes as to which are to be returned and which kept. A last item, offered for £1200, was separated from the rest by an empty space. It was described as follows: "Two Coptic manuscripts a[nd] two binding[s] in wood." Underneath, notes were added that read:

On approval	£700	Mss
	£500	Mss
	£40	Binding

The figure 40 was written on top of "incl."

On the back of the ledger sheet is then a list of the items to be purchased, with their prices, and a total. The last in the list reads:

Two Bindings £80

Beside this entry is the note: "Can be returned if B[ritish] M[useum] says they are later than VI century." Apparently the two bindings had originally been included in the price of the two codices, then had been priced apart as £40, then sold at £40 each. There is then a second ledger sheet, where these purchased items are listed, with the concluding handwritten note: "Settled with thanks, M. Nahman." The last in this list of acquired objects reads: "Two binding[s] in wood. 80." Thus, it seems clear that the two bindings were acquired, that they were associated with the two Coptic manuscripts taken on approval without payment at the time of the transaction, and that the covers, paid for on the spot but with the option to return them if not satisfied, were thought to be no later than the sixth century, which would also indicate the assumed date of the manuscripts. The wooden bindings indicate that at least one of the Coptic manuscripts was a codex, or

part of a codex, although the fact that the bindings could come to be priced and acquired separately indicates they were no longer attached to the manuscript.

On May 26, 1930, Nahman cabled from Cairo to Beatty in London: "Am expecting your kind answer regarding the books please wire your decision I am leaving tenth June." On May 28, 1930, Beatty replied by cable: "Ibscher Berlin only arrived two days ago expect wire you few days."

On May 31, 1930, Beatty cabled again:

Doctor Ibscher thinks can do nothing with large book [part of the *Homilies*] also smaller book for which you ask five hundred pounds [second part of the *Psalms*] will be very difficult. Prepared to give two hundred pounds for smaller manuscript which was the cheaper one otherwise prefer to return same.

If the difference in size is not merely that of thickness, but of height and breadth, then the *Psalms*, measuring 27 by 17.5 cm, is the smallest (with the possible exception of the *Acts*, whose no-longer extant book block is of unknown dimensions, but whose eight extant leaves are also small), the others being 31.5 by 18 cm.¹

On May 31, 1930, Beatty also wrote Nahman a confirming letter:

With regard to the two manuscripts in question, one of which I have the option to buy from you for £500 and the second for £700, Dr. Ibscher's opinion is that nothing can practically be done with the more expensive one as it was too difficult, but that there was a chance of doing something on the other though from what I could gather he thought the price is very high; therefore, I would not care to exercise either of the options. I would be willing however to pay £200 for the book for which you asked £500 and take the chance of making something out of it.

But on June 2, 1930, Nahman cabled Beatty, who was by then in New York, so that on June 5, 1930, Corble cabled its text to him there:

Surprised cost too high cannot accept your kind offer Professor Schmidt bought damaged one [*Kephalaia*] five hundred please keep till my arrival.

1. Ibscher, "Die Handschrift," *Manichäische Homilien*, 1:xiii. Ibscher's statement that all except the *Psalms* have the larger dimension would presumably presuppose his having measured the book block of the *Acts*, though this is not made explicit.

Meanwhile Ibscher had returned to Berlin, taking with him the smaller manuscript [the second part of the *Psalms*] to conserve, as well as a report about the two manuscripts by Sir Alan H. Gardiner. On June 3, 1930, Ibscher wrote Gardiner (a letter extant only in English translation):

In the Museum everybody was impatiently waiting for your report about the new discovery. Schubart is so glad that the beautiful papyri have gone to London. As I suspected, Prof. Schmidt has also bought a Coptic book [*Kephalaia*] from Nahman. I think it is better for everybody that no mystery should be made about it. When Schmidt showed me his purchase and I could see that it was an exactly similar book to the larger one which had been offered to Mr. Chester Beatty, I told him what I had seen in London. Upon this, Schmidt showed his bill for the book, from which I saw that he had paid for his book over £400. But I did not tell anybody about the London prices. As Schmidt is probably the greatest expert on such things, I showed him Mr. Chester Beatty's book [the second part of the *Psalms*]. He told me at once what it was, and when he called today he said that it was an exceedingly valuable purchase. The language according to him was "Achimimic II." He considers that the book originated from Assiut—at least so I understood. Mr. Beatty's book contained, from what Schmidt could see, songs about the original man. He considers the complete books are the works of the "Manichaeans," in other words, there is no other known example of this work in existence. For this reason alone Schmidt considers that it would be very advisable to buy if possible everything which can be bought. Schmidt considers the book which has been purchased by Mr. Beatty—that is to say, the book I have here—is the most valuable book of the whole lot. I am very pleased for Mr. Beatty that he has made such a lucky purchase. Since I have been told what valuable treasures these books are, I must of course put aside all my considerations and recommend him to complete the purchase.

I should also like to save the badly preserved books. Of course, Mr. Beatty should try to get a lower price on account of the great expense incurred by the restoration.

Where Schmidt's purchase will ultimately go, he does not know himself because the local collections and libraries here have no money and he will be forced to resell them very soon because he has purchased them on borrowed money. Perhaps it may be possible for this book also to be bought by Mr. Chester

Beatty. It is in better preservation than the large book which has been offered to him. Of course, this is only a suggestion of mine. Schmidt would probably be able to dispose of this book in Germany, only in case it should ultimately go to America I think it would be well if it went to its brothers in London.

Gardiner thereupon telephoned Wooderson on June 6, 1930, who passed on to Corble the phone conversation in typed form, which read in part as follows:

Dr. Alan H. Gardiner (Park 5109) rang up about the COPTIC MANUSCRIPTS for which Mr. Chester Beatty is negotiating with Mr. Maurice Nahman. He has received the MSS. from the little man (? Dr. Ibscher) who was working with the papyri in England, and who has now gone back to Berlin. This man thought at first that it was not desirable to purchase the better of these two manuscripts, but now he writes that, having found out what it is, he certainly does advise the purchase of it, as it is a very valuable MS. . . .

If he could not get it cheaper, he should pay the full price asked, i.e., £500 . . .

Of the series, it is by far the most important manuscript and of greater importance than the one Dr. Schmidt has bought. Dr. Ibscher writes very excitedly about it. The date is well known. It is the upper part of the one Mr. Beatty has already got. It was cut in two and Nahman is selling it as two manuscripts. Mr. Chester Beatty has bought one-half and it is the other half which Dr. Gardiner has in his house and is telephoning about.

The manuscript offered for £700 should be rejected.

The above is Dr. Gardiner's message verbatim.

In spite of the claim that the written text is the verbatim equivalent of Gardiner's oral report, there seems to be considerable garbling at some stage in the transmission. For Ibscher had all along advocated the purchase of the better of the two manuscripts (in terms of conservation), the one offered at £500 [the second part of the *Psalms*]. The purchase of this manuscript is considered a *fait accompli*: Ibscher in his letter called it "Mr. Chester Beatty's book," and referred to it as "the book which has been purchased by Mr. Beatty." The point at which Ibscher has changed his mind in the light of Schmidt's enthusiasm is, in Ibscher's letter, clearly the larger manuscript for which £700 was the

asking price and which Ibscher had initially described in London as not conservable and hence had left with Gardiner in London before returning to Berlin (part of the *Homilies*). The reversal of opinion is in the formulation “Schmidt considers that it would be very advisable to buy if possible everything which can be bought,” and in Ibscher’s resultant comment, “I should also like to save the badly preserved books.”

When Ibscher continues, “Of course, Mr. Beatty should try to get a lower price on account of the great expense incurred by the restoration,” this is not only motivated by a concern to protect funds from which his restoration work might be paid, but reflects his recognition that the manuscript Schmidt had purchased for “over £400” “was an exactly similar book to the larger one which had been offered to Mr. Chester Beatty,” in that the dimensions of both were 31.5 by 18 cm, so that the price might well be negotiated down from £700 to something “over £400.”

The second part of the *Psalms* had already begun to be conserved, as Schmidt’s reference to a manuscript containing “songs about the original man” would indicate. For among the unpublished materials that H. J. Polotsky submitted to Sir Herbert Thompson for distribution to Beatty and Crum, there is (in the Crum Archives in the Griffith Institute of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford) a leaf labeled by Polotsky “C.B.1,” containing his Coptic transcription (Crum Mss. 11.30.1) together with another leaf containing his English (!) translation (Crum Mss. 11.28.84 and Crum Mss. 11.28.122). At the top of the transcription is written “Hymns to the Primal Man.” The translation begins: “We praise our father, the Primal Man.” The psalm is numbered 213. Beside the numeral in the Coptic transcription is the appended note: “(precedes Allberry p. 1).” We apparently have before us here the beginning of both Ibscher’s and Polotsky’s work for Beatty, as “C.B.1” may suggest.

This identification of the second part of the *Psalms* as the first thing conserved for Beatty was confirmed in its publication:²

When I then succeeded in Berlin in detaching a leaf of the part acquired by Prof. C. Schmidt, he was able to conclude with certainty

Als es mir dann in Berlin gelang, eine Seite des von Herrn Prof. C. Schmidt erworbenen Teiles freizulegen, konnte dieser mit

2. Ibscher, “Die Handschrift,” *Manichaeian Psalm Book*, 2:vii.

that this discovery had to do with works of Mani. A few weeks later in London I succeeded in detaching a leaf from one of the volumes acquired by Mr. A. Chester Beatty, and the conclusion of Prof. C. Schmidt found a complete confirmation.

If the examination of the manuscript in Berlin showed that one had acquired here a part of the *Kephalaia*, the first separated leaf of the Chester Beatty possession showed us that here the *Psalms* of the Mani community lie before us.

Sicherheit feststellen, dass es sich bei dem Funde tatsächlich um Werke des Mani handelte. Wenige Wochen später gelang es mir dann auch in London, von einem der von Mr. A. Chester Beatty erworbenen Bände ein Blatt abzuheben, und die Feststellung von Herrn Prof. C. Schmidt fand eine volle Bestätigung.

Ergab die Prüfung der Handschrift in Berlin, dass man dort einen Teil der "Kephalaia" erworben hatte, so zeigte uns das erste losgelöste Blatt des Chester Beatty Besitzes, dass hier die Psalmen der Manigemeinde vorlagen.

Hence the discussion was not about whether to acquire the second part of the *Psalms*, which was already being conserved as Beatty's property, but rather whether to acquire the unconservable larger codex which was in Gardiner's home (part of the *Homilies*). One might hope to get it for about the same price Schmidt had paid for a similar-sized manuscript. This was especially true since "Professor Schmidt's manuscript is better preserved than the one which is offered to Mr. Beatty," according to Ibscher's letter. This refers to the manuscript offered at £700 that Ibscher had ruled could not be conserved. However, Wooderson misunderstood Ibscher's comment to refer to the smaller and hence cheaper manuscript offered at £500: "Professor Schmidt's manuscript is better preserved than the one which is offered to Mr. Beatty . . . If he could not get it cheaper, he should pay the full price asked, i.e., £500."

This confusion is apparently responsible for the further inaccuracy in Wooderson's report:

Prof. Schmidt thinks that it comes from Akhmim, and it contains poems about the first man. It is the upper part of the one Mr. Beatty has already got. It was cut in two and Nahman is selling it as two manuscripts. Mr. Chester Beatty has bought one-half and it is the other half which Dr. Gardiner has in his house and is telephoning about.

The grain of truth in this statement about two halves of a codex is that Nahman, or middlemen from whom he acquired the manuscripts, had broken in two the *Psalms* codex as well as the second codex (the *Homilies*, see below), no doubt to increase the profit. But Nahman intentionally or unintentionally offered Beatty part of each of two codices on March 23, 1930, and the other part of each of the same two codices in April 1931. The fact that the two offered in 1930 were from different books should have been clear from references to them as different sizes, but this detail seems here overlooked. At the time, one was in Berlin, the other in London, so that the difference in size was not immediately apparent.

The most reasonable assumption is that the manuscript in Gardiner's home is the one offered at £700, which Ibscher initially ruled was not conservable, and hence which he did not take to Berlin to conserve, and which, as a result, Beatty proposed not to buy, but which now Ibscher (and no doubt Gardiner, assuming the situation was clear to him) was recommending should be bought. Wooderson, misunderstanding the situation, would have inferred, based on his misunderstanding, that "the manuscript offered for £700 should be rejected." The whole point of Ibscher's letter (and Gardiner's phone conversation) was apparently just the reverse: to urge the purchase of the larger codex offered at £700, part of the *Homilies*, for whatever price it would take, but presumably about the amount Schmidt had paid for another manuscript of the same larger format, the *Kephalaia*, namely somewhat "over £400." This figure suggesting £500 may have in part led to the false identification of the manuscript in question with the one offered at £500.

On June 6, 1930, Corble cabled Beatty what was wrongly taken to be Ibscher's (and Gardiner's?) recommendation—that the smaller manuscript, the second part of the *Psalms*, be acquired "whatever the price."

Doctor Gardiner hears from Ibscher that after further study he advises you purchase Coptic manuscript offered by Nahman five hundred pounds. Manuscript bought by Professor Schmidt better preserved but one offered by Nahman of greater importance and they think you should purchase it whatever the price. Schmidt thinks manuscript comes from Akhmim and contains poems about first man.

On June 9, 1930, Beatty cabled Corble (“have answered Nahman direct”), though the decision, much less the price offered, is not recorded, neither is the cable nor hence the price preserved (presumably “over £400”). Nahman cabled Beatty the same day: “Accept your offer for small manuscript many thanks if you are interested in large one will accept same price will be in London end June.”

Nahman arrived in London July 9, 1930, and in the coming days settled his accounts with Beatty’s staff. A sheet in Nahman’s hand reads:

Mr. Chester Beatty

Two Coptic manuscripts on papyrus.
Fayoumic language and two wood binding of a Coptic manuscript on approval in London £1200

An appended note reads, in another hand, “One purchased and paid for at £500-0-0.” Other scrawled notes coordinating with other acquisitions of that time tend to indicate that Nahman submitted this document in July 1930, and hence that the acquisition of the smaller codex, the second part of the *Psalms*, was completed then. This would indicate that Beatty had not quibbled further about the price Nahman asked for the smaller codex, but had followed fully what was taken to be Ibscher’s advice to “pay the full price asked, i.e., £500” (Ibscher had actually proposed negotiating down the price of the part of the *Homilies* for which Nahman had asked £700), and that Nahman had hence returned to his original asking price for the second, larger codex (£700), after having in fact come down to £500 in his cable to Beatty of June 9, 1930.

On July 16, 1930, Wooderson handed Nahman a letter from Beatty:

I understand you wish to leave the damaged Coptic manuscript . . . with me so that I can study them further . . . If you decide to do this Miss Kingsford will give you a receipt for them and will hold them subject to your instructions.

A two-ring binder that seems to have served in the early years as a kind of accessions book at the Chester Beatty Library has a page dated “1930—July,” that apparently refers to this manuscript and to one of the wooden covers:

Sent by Nahman, belonging to him.
Papyrus with 1 cover. Safe B.
(Ibscher 1930)

Given to Dr. Ibscher for Nahman.

A similar entry is on another page, completely marked through, apparently when its contents were transferred to another filing system:

—Coptic Ms. With 1 cover
belonging to Nahman in Box. [Marked out: Study Safe B]
—2 Magical vellum fragments,
10 pages in each (Marked out: BM)
belonging to Nahman. Both given to Dr. Ibscher
for Nahman, May 10, 1932

The cryptic reference to giving the material to Ibscher for Nahman on May 10, 1932, can be explained by tracing the story from 1930 to 1932 as follows: At about the end of June 1930, Ibscher wrote Gardiner from Turin (a letter conserved only in an undated English translation):

I hope you received my letter from Berlin, when I wrote to you about the Coptic manuscripts. Schmidt's hope to dispose of his book in Berlin or Germany has become rather doubtful, after the death of Harnack [June 10, 1930], on whose support he counted a lot. The Berlin Library intended to buy the book, and Harnack's decision would have been the determining factor. Has Mr. Chester Beatty bought both books?

On May 19, 1931, Ibscher wrote Beatty from Berlin (with the English translation made at that time):

The Berlin purchases are still in Egypt. Prof. Schmidt has brought with him only one very badly preserved volume which looked quite hopeless [part of the *Kephalaia*]. Nevertheless I have succeeded in saving some more or less complete pages. I therefore would still advise you to acquire the volume that is still at the British Museum. Certainly one should obtain more from this volume than from the indifferent purchase of Prof. Schmidt.

Die Berliner Ankäufe sind noch in Ägypten, nur einen sehr schlecht erhaltenen Band hat Prof. Schmidt mitgebracht, der hoffnungslos aussah [part of the *Kephalaia*]. Trotzdem ist es mir gelungen, auch daraus ziemlich vollständige Seiten zu gewinnen. Daher möchte ich doch raten, dass Sie den noch im British Museum befindlichen Band erwerben. Sicher muss daraus noch mehr zu holen sein, wie aus dem schlechten Ankauf von Prof. Schmidt.

Our Berlin volume which we already have here is 30 centimeters in height and 20 centimeters in width. As soon as the other purchases arrive I will let you know their dimensions.

I presume that the dealers have divided the individual books in order to obtain more money. Of course we shall only know the real position when we can compare all the volumes.

Meanwhile I have already been able to separate several pages of your papyri, but I must first arrange here the fibers and place pieces before I can put them under glass.

Unser Berliner Band, den wir bereits hier haben, ist 32 ctm. hoch and 20 ctm. breit. Sowie die übrigen Ankäufe eintreffen, teile ich Ihnen die Grösse mit.

Ich vermute, dass die Händler die einzelnen Bücher geteilt haben, um mehr Geld heraus zu schlagen. Genaues wird man darüber erst sagen können, wenn alle Bände beieinander sind.

In der Zwischenzeit habe ich bereits einige Blätter von Ihrem Papyrus wieder ablösen können, doch muss ich hier erst die Fasern in Ordnung bringen and Stücke ansetzen bevor ich sie verglasen kann.

“The volume which is still at the British Museum” must be the part of the *Homilies* offered at £700 that had been in the home of Gardiner.

On January 4, 1932, Sir Herbert Thompson wrote Beatty:

I have a rather urgent letter from Dr. Carl Schmidt in Berlin, asking me to send him some news as to the Mani papyrus, which you had, I believe, on approval, as scholars are very anxious—and not in Germany only—to have some public statement as to these “mysterious” Manichaeian manuscripts. But Dr. Schmidt, rightly I think, wishes to defer any such statements till the fate of this outstanding papyrus of the Mani find is settled—either by its passing into your collection—or finding an assured home, perhaps at Copenhagen, or else in Berlin. The important point is that it should be in hands where it would be accessible for study in association with those in your hands and those in the Berlin Museum.

So I venture again to trouble you with a question as to whether it is still in your custody—and if so, may I be allowed to see it? and also whether you still have any thought of acquiring it, or not? If you do not, Dr. Schmidt tells me that Nahman has given him the first option of purchase; but he fears that if the matter is delayed much longer, Nahman may change his mind, and the opportunity of fixing it in safe hands may be lost.

On January 26, 1932, Wooderson replied on behalf of Beatty to the effect “that the Mani Papyrus is still the property of Mons. Nahman and is being held in safekeeping by Mr. Beatty at Baroda House.” Thus, the manuscript must have been moved again, from the British Museum to Beatty’s home.

On March 15, 1932, Nahman wrote in his wooden English to Beatty in Cairo concerning it:

The present is to inform you that I have sold the Coptic manuscript I left towards you in London. When you honoured me of your kind visit you told me that you are not interested in this manuscript neither the magical parchemins [*sic*] Coptic and I expected two years and with my regret I missed you in London and to-day I think you will not be angry with me if I have found a buyer. Then I beg of you, Dear Sir, to be as so kind to hand to Mr. Ibscher the manuscript and the magical Coptic parchemin [*sic*].

Will you be as so kind to send the answer of this letter to me that you agree to hand the manuscript and the magical parchemin [*sic*] to Mr. Ibscher when he will be in London. Your letter will allow to me to prove to my buyer that the matter is settled.

On March 19, 1932, Schmidt, also in Cairo, wrote on his calling card a note to Beatty regretting that he had to leave the next day for Luxor and hence would not be able to see Beatty in Cairo as he had hoped. At this time in Cairo, he would have liked to have completed the transaction with Nahman.

On March 21, 1932, Beatty replied to Nahman: “I will be pleased to deliver the same to Dr. Ibscher when he comes to London.” A handwritten note at the bottom of the letter states: “Taken to Dr. Gardiner’s—May 10.”

In the initial essay presented by Carl Schmidt and H. J. Polotsky to the Berlin Academy of Sciences, published in 1933, P¹⁵⁹⁹⁹ is referred to as “the papyrus book very recently added to the corpus of Berlin Manichaica.”³ Such a designation tends to set this codex off from the others as the most recent acquisition. Wilhelm Schubart recorded in the *Inventarbuch* of the Papyrus-Sammlung: “Coptic Papyrus Codex. Acquired through Prof. Carl Schmidt in Cairo 1932. Gift of Dr. W. Kohlhammer.” The *Inventarbuch* had recorded for P¹⁵⁹⁹⁵–P¹⁵⁹⁹⁸:

3. Schmidt and Polotsky, “Ein Mani-Fund,” 30.

“Acquired through Prof. Carl Schmidt, in Cairo, 1931. Gift of Mr. August Pfeffer 1933.” The disparity in time between the acquisition in 1931 and the gift of the purchase price in 1933 reflects the difficulties Schmidt had finding funding for his initial acquisitions, a procedure that seems to have been quite independent of the acquisition of P¹⁵⁹⁹⁹ in 1932 through Kohlhammer’s gift. Thus, even though in the cases of P¹⁵⁹⁹⁵ through P¹⁵⁹⁹⁸ more than a single transaction in Egypt was involved (as many as seven transactions in the case of P¹⁵⁹⁹⁶), the manuscripts shared a common date and a common donor that set them apart from P¹⁵⁹⁹⁹. This would tend to indicate that it was P¹⁵⁹⁹⁹ that had been offered unsuccessfully to Beatty and was ultimately acquired by Schmidt for Berlin. The reference in the *Inventarbuch* to acquisition in Cairo is not contradicted by Ibscher’s securing the manuscript in London and taking it directly to Berlin. For Schmidt and Nahman had completed their negotiation in Cairo in March 1932.

Schmidt knew that Ibscher planned to be in London in April 1932 (Ibscher had written to London already on February 19, 1932), and Schmidt would have proposed to Nahman that Ibscher deliver the manuscript to the new owner on Ibscher’s return to Berlin. Ibscher’s decidedly negative assessment of possibly conserving this manuscript for Beatty is the same as the assessment of the impossibility of conserving P¹⁵⁹⁹⁹ that prevailed when the manuscript was in Berlin.

At the time Beatty released his option and thus let Schmidt exercise his option, it was not known that the manuscript was part of the *Homilies* of which Beatty by then had acquired a second, smaller part (see below), which was being actively conserved in Berlin by Ibscher and edited for Beatty by Polotsky.

Of the initial acquisition of two manuscripts on approval of March 23, 1930, we may hence conclude that one seems to have been acquired in July 1930 (the latter part of the *Psalms*, Codex A), the other to have been turned down on March 21, 1932, so that Schmidt could buy it for Berlin (part of the *Homilies*, P¹⁵⁹⁹⁹).

At some time, Beatty also acquired the rest of the *Psalms*, Codex A; the *Synaxeis*, Codex B; volume two of the *Kephalaia*, Codex C; and the smaller part of the *Homilies*, Codex D. Documentation available is inadequate to identify the actual acquisition of each of these, but some information is available.

In a letter of November 27, 1930, from Beatty to Gardiner, a co-dex is to be entrusted to Ibscher to take to Berlin for conservation:

I am sending you the tin box containing the [inserted by hand: Papyri] Coptic Book.

I suggest, before Dr. Ibscher puts it into his bag, that he carefully looks at it to be sure it is satisfactorily packed.

I hope this book will act in a more gentlemanly manner than the other, and respond to the treatment better.

On November 27, 1930, Ibscher also wrote Beatty a receipt for “the new treasures of your collection . . . handed over to me by Mr. Alan H. Gardiner,” with the hope that he can complete the conservation of much of them before his expected return to London in March 1931.

This “new treasures” must refer to an otherwise undocumented acquisition after Ibscher’s return to Berlin at the end of the spring of 1930, since at the end of May or the beginning of June Ibscher had already taken to Berlin the part of the *Psalms* codex acquired March 23, 1930, whereas the part of the *Homilies* acquired March 23, 1930, was kept on approval in London until Beatty decided on March 21, 1932, not to acquire it and turned it over to Ibscher for Schmidt on May 10, 1932.

On December 30, 1930, Beatty had £300 cabled to Nahman, no doubt the payment of a bill. A memo to Nahman while in London of July 16, 1930, confirmed a telephone conversation listing acquisitions (“the Greek Papyri and the bindings”) with the stipulation that “the balance of £600 [be paid] on or before the 1st January, 1931.” Thus the payment of £300 cannot be associated convincingly with a Manichaean purchase.

Another leaf in the two-ring binder that served as a kind of acquisitions notebook records:

1931. April. Cairo.

—Manichaean Hymns (box: 15 1/4 x 10 1/4 in.)

Ibscher.

—Manichaean Ritual (box 14 5/8 x 9 1/2 in.)

Laws Ibscher.

—3 Wooden covers [Marked out: “Safe B.” Added: “IX”]

The page with the marked-out entries reads similarly:

Brought by Mr. Beatty April 1931.

—Manichaean Ms. Hymns

[Added note: With Dr. Ibscher May 8/31] PSALMS. Codex A.

—Manichaean Ms. Ritual Laws

—3 Covers [Marked out: Safe B.] Cup X.c

A handwritten note on a large paper envelope in which three wooden boards are presently stored at the Chester Beatty Library states: “purchased Spring 1931.” This confirms that the reference “Brought by Mr. Beatty April 1931” is the date of this acquisition.

What is underlined in addition to a characterization of the contents is no doubt the reference to where the material was currently deposited. The words “Safe B” are marked through, and “IX” added, no doubt when the covers were removed from the safe. The “Manichaean Hymns” are no doubt the other part of Codex A, the *Psalms*, completing the acquisition of this codex, of which only a part had been acquired in 1930. But the identification of the manuscript referred to with the terms Ritual and Laws is less clear, as is the identify of another possible acquisition late in 1930 suggested by the following:

On May 19, 1931, Ibscher wrote Beatty from Berlin:

According to your wish I have photographed your papyri, and I am sending you proofs thereof.

Should you wish to have more proofs, I will gladly have several more made.

Besides these three books I have another thinner one which certainly belongs to the smaller book. Should you wish to have the photograph of that I will also have it done. I have already taken a few leaves from the books which are already under glass.

It is unclear what the reference to three books in Berlin belonging to Beatty envisages. If the “smaller” book means the *Psalms*, the only codex with smaller dimensions, then what is referred to as “another thinner one” that “belongs to” that codex would be the part of the *Psalms* acquired in April 1931. Then the “three books” would be the *Psalms*, part of which was taken to Berlin in May and June of 1930 and the rest after its acquisition April 1931; the unidentified codex taken to Berlin November 27, 1930; and the part of the *Homilies* acquired in April 31 and taken to Berlin shortly thereafter.

On June 11, 1931, Thompson met with Schmidt, and on June 15, 1931, wrote to Beatty:

He [Schmidt] has been recently in Egypt, making inquiries about the find, and he is satisfied that the whole find was divided into 8 parts, between 3 dealers, of which I understand 5 are coming to Berlin, and he declared you had two Mss. and one on approval, viz. your Hymn book, now in Ibscher's hands and another (?). Is this so? and if so, would you let me see it—and also the papyrus on approval? I should very much like to get some idea of its (their?) size and contents, if possible.

On January 4, 1932, Thompson again wrote Beatty inquiring whether Beatty still had in his custody the manuscript on which he had an option, and, if so, whether Thompson could see it. Apparently, Beatty did not respond to this part of either letter. In the same way that Beatty's unresponsiveness to Thompson is unintelligible, Thompson's identification of Schmidt's material is unclear. The two manuscripts Thompson writes about could be the two parts of the *Psalms*, counted as one or as two, and the part of the *Homilies* acquired in April 1931, without reference to the unidentified codex taken to Berlin on December 27, 1930; or it could be counted, but the part of the *Homilies* not counted as a separate book.

Ibscher's translation of a report of February 19, 1932, concerning the state of his conservation gives evidence that by then, Beatty had acquired the three and a half codices that were ultimately to be his part of the Manichaean discovery, in addition to the part of a codex that he held but finally did not acquire:

Now as regards your question, how many leaves are still [to] be expected. From my Report herewith (draft of proposed paper for the Berlin Academy) on the Mani-books, you will see how many leaves I have been able to reckon on in the Berlin *Kephalaia-book* (viz. 498 pages—c. 250 leaves), and I expect that all the volumes were of approximately the same size. If we assume that the Hymnbook [Codex A, the *Psalms*] was so, as would appear from its external appearance, there should result from it a further 150–200 leaves. The other two volumes [Codex B, the *Synaxeis*; Codex C, volume two of the *Kephalaia*], which Mr. Beatty has purchased, may contain as much. If therefore fortune favours me, I may hope to get 450–600 leaves from the entire property of Mr. Chester Beatty, of which about 100 are already separated. The *Homilies* [the

part of the codex that Ibscher had left in London in 1930 as not conservable] are not included in this calculation (?). It was a hopeless-looking mass which lay beside the Hymn-book. At first I did not think that anything could be done with it—and yet you see what important things have come out of it. I am proposing now first to finish up the 37 leaves which constitute it, as that will exhaust it. These leaves do not belong to any of the others here—nor I expect to the volume which is still in Mr. Beatty's possession [actually they do belong to the same codex: the *Homilies*]. Perhaps I shall be able to establish this point, when I come to London in April and we may perhaps be able to see the volume together. I shall certainly bring over a number of the completed Homily leaves. I think you will also agree that I had better finish up this portion of the collection first; and the next work will be to complete the Hymnbook, at the same time working on the two other books, from which it may be that more important results will come.

The comment that the *Homilies* “lay beside the Hymn-book” would tend to identify the second manuscript acquired in April 1931 (“Manichaeon Ritual Laws”) as the *Homilies*. This would mean that in March 1930 and in April 1931 Nahman offered Beatty parts of the same two codices—the *Psalms* and the *Homilies*. The reason for Beatty's not acquiring the part offered in 1930 was no doubt Ibscher's initial opinion that it could not be conserved, and Ibscher's failure to communicate his subsequent willingness to attempt it. This is much the same reaction as that reported concerning the part acquired in 1931: “a hopeless-looking mass . . . At first I did not think that anything could be done with it—and yet you see what important things have come out of it.” This would hence be an added confirmation that one has to do in both cases with the same hopeless-looking codex. On March 21, 1932, Beatty released his option on the second manuscript of 1930; he no doubt did not yet realize that it completed a manuscript he had bought in 1931. For Ibscher was not yet aware of it on February 19, 1932, but hoped to investigate the question when in London in April that year. By this time Beatty had released his option, and Schmidt had closed his deal with Nahman.

Ibscher's reference to “the two other volumes, which Mr. Beatty has purchased,” would seem to envisage complete codices, since they are assumed to be the same size as the *Kephalaia*, yielding some 150–200 leaves. They would then be Codex B, the *Synaxeis*, and Codex C,

volume two of the *Kephalaia*. The details of their acquisition are not known, beyond the reference to one being taken by Ibscher to Berlin in the autumn of 1930.

A document entitled “Notes of Conference Mr. A. C. B. had with Dr. Alan Gardiner on Sunday, 8th May, 1932” (in which, according to a letter of May 10, 1932, from Beatty to Thompson, Ibscher was also involved), confirms the identity of the manuscript not acquired by Beatty with the Berlin manuscript P¹⁵⁹⁹⁹, in the context of an imprecise overview of all the holdings (no doubt a garbled version of Ibscher’s view reported more accurately in his letter of February 19, 1932, quoted above):

It seems that Berlin has four manuscripts; one is the epistles [P¹⁵⁹⁹⁸], one seems to be about the life of Mani [P¹⁵⁹⁹⁷], one seems to be of the principles of the Mani religion [P¹⁵⁹⁹⁶—this latter manuscript consists of two parts which were bought separately, and really represents one book of about 500 leaves [read: pages]. The other two are of about 200 leaves each. [P¹⁵⁹⁹⁵ involves only thirty-one leaves; there is no further Berlin codex, other than P¹⁵⁹⁹⁹ treated below. A handwritten note in the margin reads: “This makes five in all.”]

Schmidt has recently bought, I assume through Berlin, another manuscript [P¹⁵⁹⁹⁹] from Nahman which was the one stored with Mr. A. B. C.

The Manichean manuscripts owned by Mr. A. C. B. consist of four: one is in the form of homilies of about 200 pages; one seems to be an epistle of 200 pages; one is a book of travels and journeys of about 500 [above the figure is written by hand: 50] pages, and one which was in two parts of about 400 pages [added in hand: “? in the form of hymns;” hence Codex A, the *Psalms*].

Søren Giversen quoted the third paragraph above about Beatty’s acquisitions and interpreted it as follows:

The book of travels and journeys is apparently identical to the *Homilies*, later published by Polotsky, and in a letter of 12 May 1932 Alan H. Gardiner speaks of “the 50 leaves relating to the journeyings of Mani” which Polotsky was going to publish. In a formal letter of 13 May 1932 A. Chester Beatty writes: “I am to cede to Dr. Polotsky publication rights in the 50 leaves relating to the journeyings of Mani provided he produces his work within a reasonable time.”⁴

4. Giversen, *Manichaean Coptic Papyri*, 2: ix.

This identification of the third item as the *Homilies* is in part based upon accepting the correction of “500 pages” to read “50.” A page of handwritten notes on which the formal typed report is apparently based does in fact use the figure 50. This figure and the reference to travels are clearly used in the later quotations to refer to Codex D, the *Homilies*, Polotsky’s first publication. This would mean that the first item listed in the Notes of May 5 1932 as belonging to Beatty, though described as “in the form of homilies,” is not Codex D, the *Homilies*. It and the second item (“an epistle”) would have to be, one, Codex B, the *Synaxeis*; and the other, Codex C, volume two of the *Kephalaia*. For the fourth item “in two parts” would be, as the handwritten note (“? in the form of hymns”) would indicate, Codex A, the *Psalms*. Thus, between March 23, 1930 (when one part of Codex A, the *Psalms*, was acquired), and February 19, 1932 (the date of Ibscher’s report mailed from Berlin), Beatty must have acquired four additional items: a second part of Codex A and Codices B–D. If the second part of Codex A and Codex D were acquired in April 1931, the details of the acquisition of Codices B and C remain unknown.

Rolf Ibscher has indicated that the nomenclature of Beatty’s codices as A, B, and C was used by Hugo Ibscher, but that the designation of the *Homilies* with a letter D was first introduced by himself.

Hence, up until 1938, of Sir Chester Beatty’s part of the discovery, fully conserved were only the pack of the *Psalms* and the incomplete *Homilies* that lay beside it at the acquisition of the discovery, which also as the first publication could be presented by Polotsky to an expectant public.

Of the three codices, which my father had designated A, B, C as working titles (whereby the independent *Homilies* should actually have been designated D), A, B, and C were only partially restored.⁵

This is a further reflection of the sense in which the minor part of the *Homilies* codex that Beatty actually purchased, though it was the first thing that Hugo Ibscher completely conserved and that Polotsky published, was not fully recognized as an entity in its own right but was associated with the *Psalms*, in light of the fact that the *Psalms* and the *Homilies* had been acquired together.

5. Ibscher, “Mani und kein Ende,” 220.