

A Delicate Balance: Preparing a Parchment Fragment for Posterity

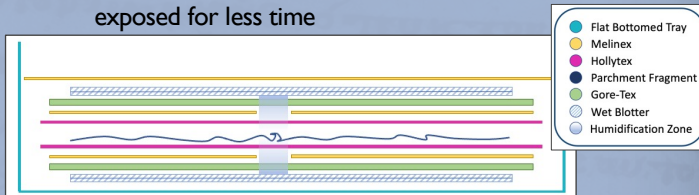
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Context

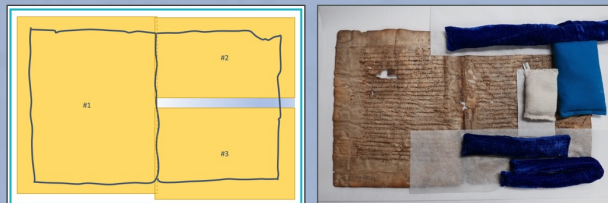
- Greek manuscript fragment approx. 12th - mid 13th c.
 - Initial study indicates the text is theological, very possibly unknown, & unpublished
 - Newly acquired by the Hesburgh Libraries to support the Medieval Institute's Byzantine studies
 - Utilized in paleography & codicology classes
 - Studied with intent to publish by curator Dr. David Gura
 - Treatment prioritized given this potential discovery of an unknown ancient text, and its value to teaching and research at Notre Dame and beyond
- Condition Issues:
 - Some text obscured due to creases resulting from moisture damage
 - Surface of parchment is flaking in areas
 - Areas of staining and accretions
 - Vulnerable tears and areas of loss
 - Treatment Goals:
 - Flatten parchment to reveal hidden text as possible
 - Remove staining to improve text legibility as possible
 - Mend tears to stabilize
 - Provide handling for housing and support

Humidification

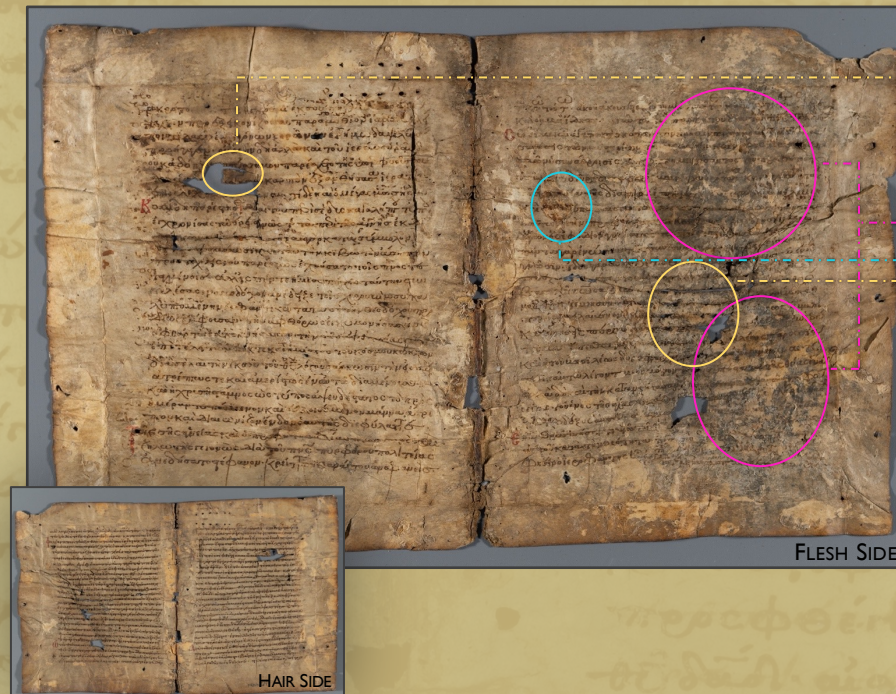
- Identified 4 areas where text was obscured by the parchment folding over itself (*indicated in orange*)
- Gortex Pack Sandwich:
 - Allowed even & gentle humidification
 - Moisture from top & bottom meant the parchment was exposed for less time



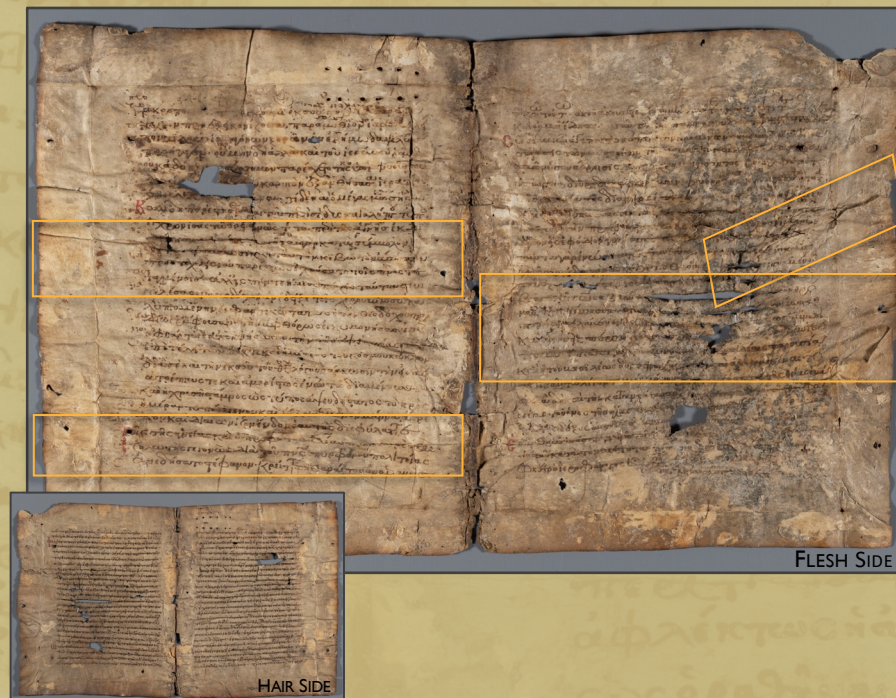
- Independently positionable pieces of Melinex allowed for targeted humidification
 - Time was tailored to the condition of the parchment in each area
- Small bag weights held parchment in position during drying



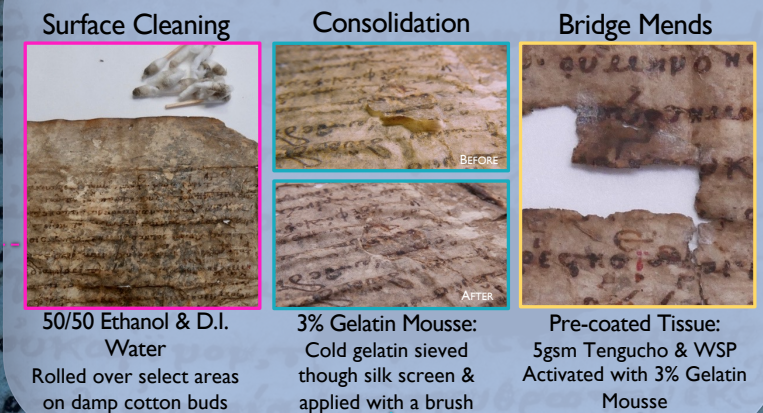
Before Treatment



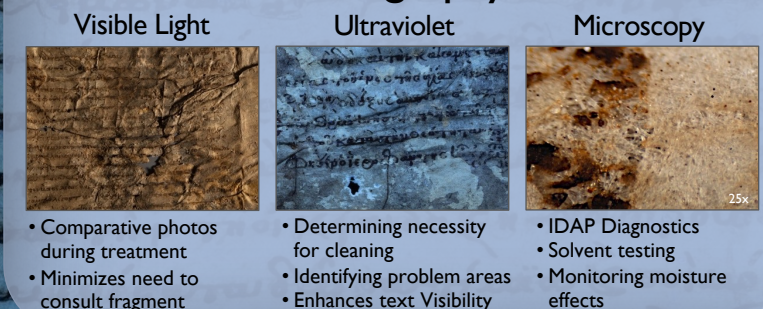
After Treatment



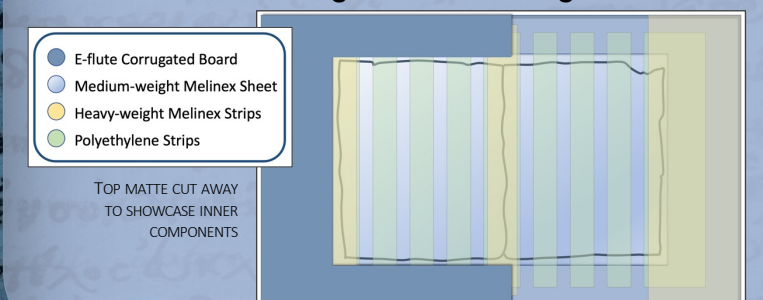
Further Treatments



Photography



Double-sided Window Matte:^{*} For Storage & Safe Handling



Outcomes

- Previously obscured text is now visible
- Vulnerable areas of parchment stabilized
- Housing facilitates safe active use
- UV imaging heightens text visibility
- Digitization increases access to text