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Linen shroud, 2nd century AD, Thebes
Acquarulo Canettoli collection, Inv. no 133.159, MANN
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Current and past research between Tebtynis and Padua: from sand to aerospace

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The project and Anti's archive (Paola Zanovello, Giulia Deotto)

This publication is the result of a multidisciplinary research realized by an international team of scholars of the University of Padua, with the Museum of Archaeological Sciences and Arts (since now MSA), the "Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere e Arti" in Venice (since now IVSLA), the Trent University in Canada and the Museo Egizio in Turin. Its focus is the study of Carlo Anti's life and activities in Egypt, especially related to the reconstruction of his archaeological excavations in Tebtynis. Carlo Anti (Villafranca di Verona, 1889-Padua, 1961) was professor of archaeology and Rector of the University of Padua (Polacco 1962; Ghedini and Biondani 1990, Nezzo 2008, Zampieri 2011). He was appointed to direct the Italian Archaeological Mission in Egypt (M.A.I.) in 1928, when Ernesto Schiaparelli, his predecessor in the role, died leaving the publication of his discoveries incomplete: as consequence, he dedicated a first year to improve his knowledge of the Egyptian culture and collect the data left unpublished by his predecessor; then he decided to conduct excavations in Ptolemais of Upper Egypt (Menschiah) in 1929 and from 1930 to 1936 in Tebtynis, in the southern area of the Fayum oasis. His discoveries were well documented with photographs, notes, plans and one cinematographic film, but they were never published, so Anti's excavations in Tebtynis remained mostly unknown for decades. The original archive, created by Anti for his personal use, contained several sections devoted to Anti's personal folders, correspondence, scientific activity and teaching: amongst them, Tebtynis was just a small part of the section dedicated to the research activities, together with Anti's studies on Cyrene, Greek and Roman sculptures and theatres.

The archive was split, after Anti's death, into different locations (University of Padua, Civic Library of Padua and the Istituto Veneto) and was only recently rediscovered and studied thanks to a PhD thesis (Deotto 2015) and a series of researches here presented. The folders dedicated by Anti to the seven missions in Tebtynis are now located between the MSA and the IVSLA: it is composed of 1769 photographs, 121 diapositives, 26 plans and technical drawings, 1514 papers, including notes, letters, reports, preliminary studies and one cinematographic film. Recently a new folder, composed of at least 116 papers and 57 photographs, has been found at the University and can be added to the Tebtynis section of Anti's archive.

Anti was present on the site of Tebtynis from 1930 to 1932, when he was appointed as Rector of the University of Padua; therefore, the documents are mainly related to that time span. After 1932, Anti followed from Padua the research conducted at the site by his colleague Gilbert Bagnani. Since then, the documentation of the activities in Tebtynis were kept by Gilbert Bagnani himself in his archive, now kept in the Trent University and in the Art Gallery of Ontario (Canada).

Carlo Anti's archive in Padua: rediscovery and conservation (Alessandra Menegazzi)

As Rector and Professor of Archaeology in Padua, Anti collected an important amount of documents related to his personal and academic activities. As regard to his excavation campaigns in Tebtynis, the documents were originally stored at the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Padua and after Anti's death, his successor, Luigi Polacco, gave them a new assessment and split the archive (Urbani 2014,155-60). A part was lost, and it has recently been found at the Istituto Veneto (Deotto 2015). Some documents regarding the excavations (papers, plans, printed photographs negatives and plates) were kept in the research laboratories of the University while archaeological items and papyri from Tebtynis remained for a long time in the storage of the academic archaeological museum. Finally, all the diapositives created for didactic purposes (images for lessons, conferences, etc.) were available in the Photographic Archive of the Institute of Archaeology (University of Padua). All the archival documents and finds at the University were rescued,

restored and promoted from 1978 (papyri's rediscovery: Avezzi 1978) and more from 1995 (archival material, finding: Menegazzi forthcoming), thanks to a series of various activities pursued by the MSA: unfortunately, the different locations have not helped the conservation of the documents, as was verified by a survey conducted ten years after the first discovery. They were in general badly preserved and, for the most part, in great disorder. It was for this reason that the Department of Archaeology decided to collect in the MSA documents and finds in order to preserve the archive and promote its awareness since 2006. Shortly after, some research projects had started, involving the material from Tebtynis in new international perspectives (Zanovello, Menegazzi 2014, 95-100).

The GIS project on Tebtynis (Andrea Meleri)

After the collection of data and a first reconstruction of the activities carried on in Tebtynis, the project focused on specific areas investigated by Anti in order to analyse Anti's own personal view of the site, so the archaeological team, in cooperation with the aerospace engineers of the University, created a GIS project on Tebtynis, assembled to collect, compare and analyse in a georeferenced format all the available planimetric documentation coming from the dig campaigns of the 1930s'. In order to put together this historical source material in a modern GIS project, the first step is to select an authoritative georeferenced cartography of the area that will be used as a baseline reference. We decided to acquire a Worldview satellite set of images of the area from Digital Globe (both in visible and multispectral range), as they are able to provide pictures whose resolution is sufficient to identify individual structures within the site. All historical source material is georeferenced directly against Worldview satellite imagery, using visible structures in the area as control points. In particular, we focused on the great map of the temple of Soknebtynis, drawn by Anti's team in Tebtynis, and on two set of aerial photographs shot over Tebtynis by the Egyptian Air Force in 1934 and 1936 (Brenningmeyer, Begg, 2007: 338-43). The original map was digitalized (Carpinelli *et al.* forthcoming) and then vectorialized (Fig. 3), the aerial photographs were used to create a visual 3d reconstruction of the structures in the form of a printed red-cyan 3d anaglyphs, visible using standard 3d red-cyan goggles. This visual 3d reconstruction was useful to better discriminate between standing structures from the fallen ones, to recognise seemingly artificial elevated areas, like mounds of sands carried over from the nearby digs in 1934 and 1936.

The study of the aerial photographs over Tebtynis (Luca Toninello)

The aerial surveys were conducted by the back then recently founded Royal Egyptian Air Force as confirmed by Bagnani's correspondence with Carlo Anti in 1935. Actually, on the 3rd of April 1935 Bagnani wrote: «03/04/1935/ Caro professore... Accludo anche una dalle fotografie aeree fatte dall'Egyptian Air Force. La prego di ricordare il Ministro della Guerra egiziano e la Egyptian Air Force quando la proietta.» (IVSLA, fondo Anti, busta 6, fascicolo 1, n. 10).

The Egyptian parliament had proposed the creation of an Egyptian Air Force in 1928 as a branch of the Egyptian Army. Egypt was under a significant British political influence and the Egyptian Air Force was not different in this regard: Bagnani probably exploited both his personal connections in Egypt and his double nationality (he was the Italian and Canadian son of an English official), as well shown by Begg (*infra*). Unfortunately, it is not possible to clearly identify the plane used for the flights and the camera chosen to document Tebtynis, but the Egyptian Air Force had only a limited number of models at their disposal: the de Havilland DH.60 Moth since 1931, the Avro 626 and Hawker Audax since 1934, the Avro Anson since 1935. For the camera there is even less certainty but an educated guess would be either the F8 of 1919 or the F24 of 1925 since they were common in the British Air Force and thus likely to be employed by the Egyptians as well.

The two sets of pictures appear to have been created in order to allow the reconstruction of a three-dimensional model of the area (Fig. 2). It is a technique still in use today for aerial imagery where several pictures are taken while flying over an area, each picture partially overlapping the next ones in all directions: this allows to reconstruct the third dimension from a set of two-dimensional images. The mathematical process requires very few data besides the pictures themselves: among these the most crucial missing value is the camera's focal length as it represents a scaling factor for the potential third dimension extracted from the pictures. The absence of such parameter prevents the reconstruction of a realistic model of the site: to

cope with this issue either historical sources or some reference environmental elements might be used. It is unlikely that any document remains today registering the particular technical detail of the camera used during the mission but identifying the instrument might help restricting the available options. The second approach involves the use of a known reference point in the site: if the dimensions of a structure of other object in the pictures are known or can be determined, it would be possible to determine the focal length which generates a model matching this particular reference. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive and can be integrated, as it is possible to see in the first case study here presented (Fig. 3).

Multispectral Analysis of the Tebtynis Near-site (Luigi Magnini, Laura Burigana, Armando De Guio)

Analysing the site at a wider scale by means of using satellite multispectral images, we were also able to investigate the near-site and off-site of Tebtynis. The WorldView 2 data were chosen because they provide a good compromise between spatial and spectral resolution. In fact, the satellite is equipped with an 8-band sensor, ranging from visible to near infrared in the electromagnetic spectrum (Tarantino *et al.* 2012). The potential offered by the eight-band data is of particular interest if we consider the wide range of possible archaeological feature types scattered throughout the territory.

Generally digital colour images are displayed in a composition of three bands corresponding to the three additive primary colours: red layer / red band, green layer / green band and blue layer / blue band (RGB), respectively corresponding to Worldview bands 5, 3 and 2. Knowing the frequencies corresponding to the characteristic reflection of certain categories of archaeological objects, we have selected three bands for RGB visualization in order to bring out a specific type of information. First of all, the most typical false colour composition was tested, mapping on the red layer the Near Infrared 1 band, on the green layer the red band and on the blue layer the green band. This composition is very useful for monitoring the health state of the vegetation that is affected by the presence of buried structures and anthropogenic deposits. Another composition, focused on the infrared spectrum, is the Near Infrared 2, Near Infrared 1 and Red Edge bands composition which allows to highlight, with a higher degree of contrast, vegetation, water and buildings. The data clearly indicate the presence of a palaeoriver branch running from north to south and of some secondary palaeochannels departing from the river itself in west direction.



Figure 1. WorldView 2 multispectral satellite image of Tebtynis; composite bands; infrared 1, infrared 2 and red edge. The arrows highlight the paleo-river branch and two channels.

Obviously, it is not possible to identify the precise chronology of the hydrological structures from remotely sensed observations. However, there are some clues that allow us to tie at least one period of occupation of the Tebtynis site to the river branch chronologically. First, the northernmost part of the village seems to be interrupted by the presence of the river that creates a sort of natural limit. A second indication of possible man exploitation of the river is indicated by the regular linear traces that extend perpendicularly from the main course in the east and west directions. These regular evidences, interpreted as irrigation channels, affect a rather large portion of the territory south of Tebtynis, located mainly west of the river branch. In fact, these infrastructures seem to create a complex system of fields around the site, which has partially survived until today.

Another efficient image enhancing strategy for multispectral images involve the treatment of individual bands as algebraic expression values (map algebra). The calculation of the Iron Indices helps to map iron-rich areas (Segal 1982), especially in arid environments. Specifically, we employed the WorldView Iron Index that involves in the calculation the Green, the Yellow and the Blue bands. The spectral variations presented by this index are often linked to anthropic origin as the Tebtynis site seems to confirm. The grey scale distribution highlights the presence of four main areas: the sanctuary, the Graeco-Roman village, the post-Roman village and the near-site area of the fields. Though chronologically the four areas were already known by previous excavations, the analysis has allowed to define the topographical evolution of the site at a spatial and more detailed level.

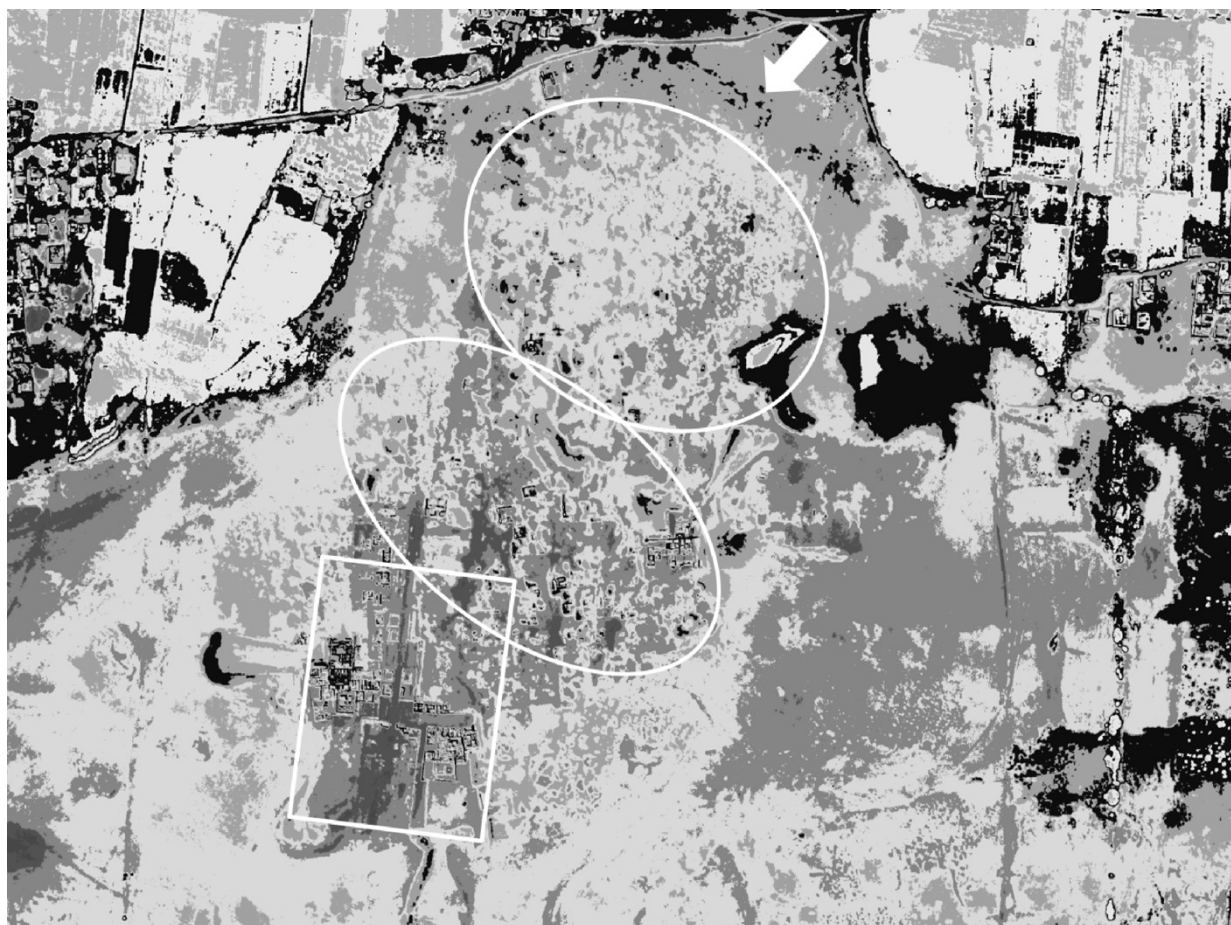


Figure 2. WorldView 2 multispectral satellite image of Tebtynis; classified WorldView iron index. Three main areas are highlighted.

First case study: the vestibule of the temple (Giulia Deotto, Giuseppe Salemi)

The vestibule was a small open court in front of the main entrance to the sanctuary of the god Soknebtynis. It is still visible on the site, even if most of its wall, decorated with carved reliefs, was destroyed after Anti's missions. Anti's documents are the last surviving elements to illustrate this structure as it was preserved at the time of the investigations conducted by Anti. For this reason, a multidisciplinary research conducted on

this building, collecting historical plans, aerial photographs, satellite images and historical lateral pictures compared with Anti's notes on the excavation, is particularly helpful to reconstruct the status of the vestibule at the time of the excavation. Anti called the vestibule "sala a rilievi / hall with carved reliefs" due to the presence of beautiful decorations on its walls. Bagnani, in a letter to his wife, reported the discovery of "a building with yards and yards of apparently Ptolemaic reliefs". According to Anti's journal, it was excavated between the 1st and the 14th of February 1931.

Through the use of the GIS project, it is possible to give the exact measurements of the vestibule, thanks to the overlay of the vector file of the map with the aerial photos.

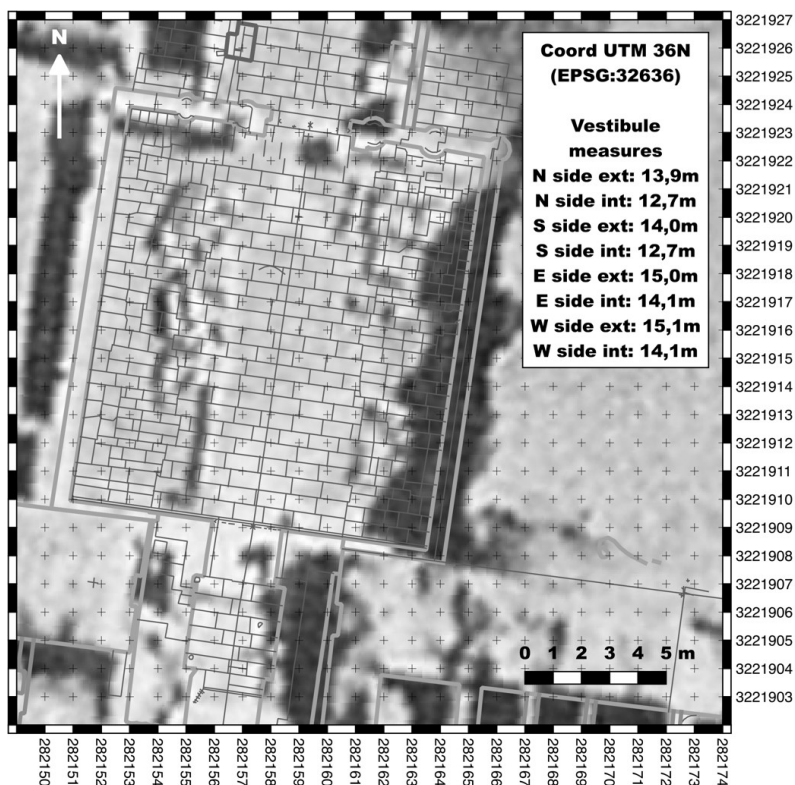


Figure 3. The vestibule seen through an overlay of the historical map and the aerial photographs (created by A. Meleri).

Anti reported also the height of the walls, more than 1 m high and in the archive a technical drawing made by Fausto Franco in 1931 is present, so it is now possible to work on a first 3D reconstruction of the structures, which will be the next step of the project. A first attempt was made by reporting in AutoCad the vestibule's outline taken from Anti's map and then by extruding the walls from the plane.

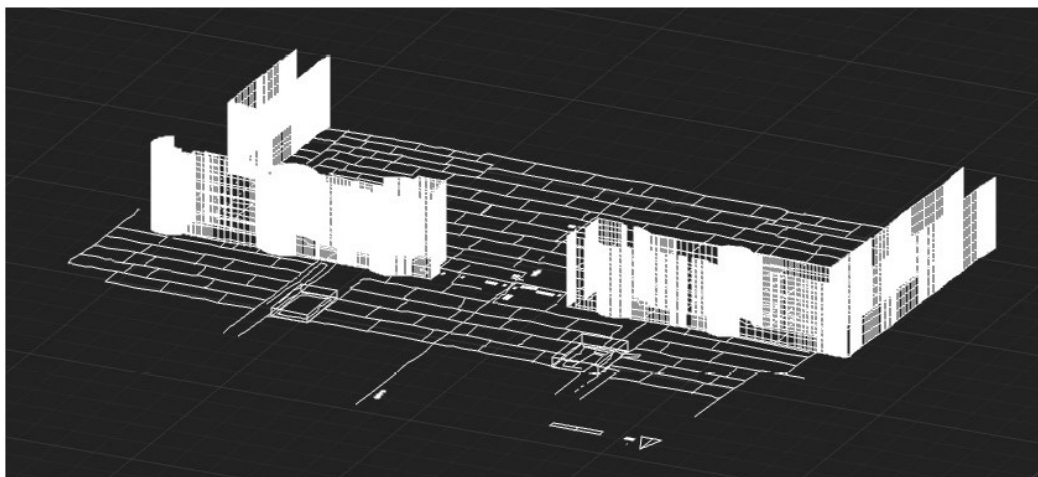


Figure 4. A first 3d model of the vestibule.

Second case study: the so-called insula of papyri (Ian Begg)

In 1934, when Carlo Anti was in Padua as the Rector of the University, Gilbert Bagnani was in Egypt resuming the Italian excavations at Tebtunis although his financial resources for continuing the field work were running out. At the same time, however, the Milanese papyrologist, Achille Vogliano, was staying with Gilbert and Stewart Bagnani at the dig house awaiting approval of his request to excavate at the nearby site of Medinet Madi, ancient Narmouthis, where Vogliano had full funding for his projected excavations. So Bagnani had little choice but to accept Vogliano's generous offer of financial support to continue digging at Tebtynis.

During February 1934, Bagnani had already begun clearing the area between the south (Ptolemaic) and north (Roman) kiosks along the west side of the processional dromos and had uncovered the southern two thirds of a large rectangular compound enclosing small houses. With the arrival of Vogliano, Bagnani began a new excavation notebook dated to Sunday 4th of March entitled "Campagna di scavo della R.Università di Milano." In the same day, Bagnani himself began excavating a similar rectangular compound (the so-called "horrea") immediately to the north of the previous one, leaving Vogliano to finish the southern insula. As the remaining northern third of the insula was cleared, Vogliano claimed the discovery of an enormous mass of Greek papyri in one of its basement compartments; as a result, it was called the Insula of the Papyri. The documentation of this excavation consists of Gilbert's excavation notebook, his letters and photos sent to Carlo Anti, his preliminary publication *Gli scavi di Tebtynis* (Bagnani, 1935), weekly letters from Gilbert Bagnani to his mother in Rome, and from his wife Stewart Bagnani to her mother in Cairo. There is a large album at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto containing photographs arranged according to their format size with two, three or four, and later six prints to a page. Within each of these sections, they proceed generally from south to north in the insula as did the excavation itself. In the intervening decades since the photographs were taken, the stonework and woodwork have been removed, and the mudbrick walls eroded, removed, or covered once again with sand. In addition, Bagnani arranged through his friend Rex Engelbach, the Curator of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, and Sir Charlton Spinks, the Canadian Inspector-General of the Egyptian Army and Air Force, to have sets of aerial photos taken over the entire site. A plane flew over reconnoitring the site and a series of aerial photos was taken and Bagnani later received twenty-two black and white prints. They cover the entire site from the inhabited cultivated area along the canal in the north over to the desert in the south and west. After Bagnani finished digging in 1936, he arranged for a second set of aerial photos to be taken over the site. Combining the overlapping aerial photos has also enabled 3D analysis of the then standing walls. The plan of the Insula of the Papyri reveals that it was a walled rectangular compound enclosing one large house, three little houses, and two medium houses, each identical in plan and orientation but differing in size suggestive of a hierarchy. Indeed, analysis of the mass of papyri found in a basement compartment suggests that the compound was owned in the second century AD by the rich family of Patron, formerly known as Laches. The papyri intermingled the archives of three families who worked the farms (Pakebkis, Kronion, Turbo), evidently Patron's estate managers. As one possible hypothesis, the largest house might have been used by the family of Patron when visiting Tebtunis and the smaller houses by some of their managers. Thus the Insula of the Papyri at Tebtunis is uniquely well documented by written descriptions of the archaeological research and terrestrial and aerial photos of the area as well as and by one of the largest hoards of papyri ever recorded in an excavation. One day soon, we may be able to reconstruct its walls and repopulate it with named individuals.

Future perspective of the current research (Paola Zanovello)

The study of the archival data offers a starting point to better contextualize the archaeological evidences (both materials and structures) which were excavated by Anti during the seven campaigns in Tebtynis. Most of the objects are now preserved between Egypt and Italy, especially in the Museo Egizio in Turin. They are studied thanks to a joint project supervised by Paola Zanovello and Christian Greco and realized by Giulia Deotto together with Alessia Fassone. In connection with this research a PhD thesis, still in progress, had been realized by Cinzia Bettineschi (supervised by Ivana Angelin, Gianmario Molin and Paola Zanovello) and dedicated to the "Archaeometric study of Egyptian vitreous materials from Tebtynis: integration of analytical and archaeological data", by means of an interdisciplinary and multi-methodological approach (Bettineschi *et al.*, forthcoming; Deotto *et al.*, forthcoming). A new research on the sculptures, made with

Giorgia Cafici (Scuola Normale, Pisa) has permit to analyse and contextualise the three statues found by Anti in the area near and inside the vestibule (Cafici, Deotto, 2017).

Concluding, the study of the artefacts retraced by Anti is contributing to fill the gaps in the archival data and, vice-versa, the investigation of Anti's documentation is significantly improving our knowledge on the considered materials, giving new hints for the reconstruction of the life and the history of this village in the Fayum oasis.

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