

Conservation of the Codex Sinaiticus

8 July 2009

An Overview of the Conservation
Documentation and Physical
Features of the Parchment.

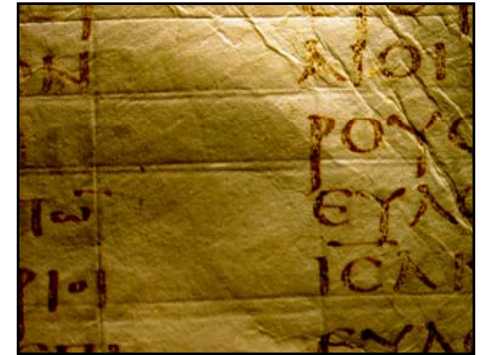
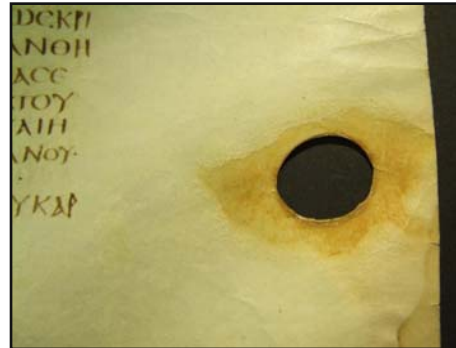
Gavin Moorhead, Conservation, British Library



Conservation Documentation

A record of information about the:

- Physical features
- Scribal phenomena
- Previous treatments & repairs
- Current condition
- 2007 Conservation treatment



Function of Conservation Documentation

- Assessment of stability and suitability for digitisation across 4 holding sites
- Aid planning and prioritisation of conservation treatment before digitisation
- Tool for scholars, conservators and the public for comparative analysis across 4 holding sites
- Reference record for future condition assessments of the Codex Sinaiticus
- Gathers information relating to the materials and methods used to make and repair the Codex



Requirements for Conservation Documentation

- A comprehensive assessment
- Incorporate relevant elements of existing documentation models
- Cater for specific objectives such as animal I.D.
- Simple to use and repeatable across the four holding sites, unhindered by different languages
- Must follow an agreed methodology and be objective
- Use standardised measurements and observations
- Be supported by a glossary of terminology
- Use non-invasive assessment techniques requiring a minimum of handling



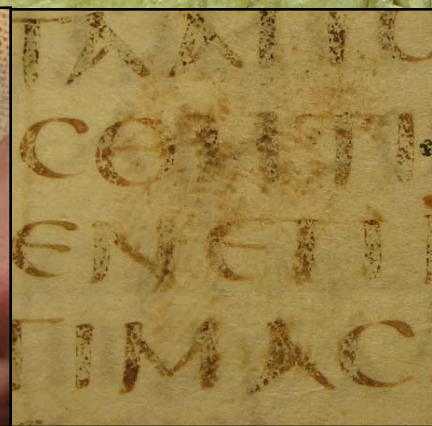
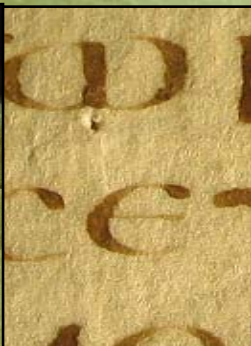
Condition Assessment

- 150 Assessment tasks in 6 general categories
- Simple observations, measurements and data entry
- All described in Methodology and supported by Glossary for standardisation and objectivity across sites and in future
- For ease of search and analysis, data was recorded onto an Excel© spreadsheet then transposed onto Website

Quire number:		M & S	Greek	Parchment				Scribal (Conservation)				Codicology				Previous treatment				Condition				Conservation treatments				
Format	Quire leaf	BL foliation	Follicle marks	Aquila marks	Veining	Scar tissue	Pricking	Pricking Direction		Ruling		Overcasting holes	Holes in spine margin	Foreign markers	Cockerell repairs		Evidence of detached repair	Tears		Splits		Tissue Repairs: Location/number	Other Repairs: Location/number					
								Bounding lines HEAD	Bounding lines TAIL	Above, on, below	Single/Double				Parchment	Gauze		Location	Length (mm)	Location	Length (mm)							
								Location	Number of repairs to locations	Location	Number of repairs to locations				Location	Length (mm)		Location	Length (mm)									
	1	58	N N	N N	N	N	∅	▲	▼	O + A	∅	N	N	H I	+ i + g ∅ + g +	∅	N	N	N	N	N	15 + g	<6	N	N	g2 + h4 + i4 +	h=reattach par	
	2	59	g-f N	N N	N	N	∅	NK	▼	O	∅	N	N	N	fe + e	2	N	N	N	N	N	+ g <6	<6	h + a32	<30	i1 + h5 + g2 +	a35-38=tissue	
	3	60	N h	N N	h-g	N	∅	NK	▼	O	∅	N	4i	N	+ g + f	4	N	N	N	N	N	5 + f <	<6	h	N	N	f1r/v + g1	
	4	61	g-f g-f	g N	j-e	N	∅	NK	▼	O	∅	N	6i	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	+ g <5	<6	a41-43	<16	h2 + g3 + f2	a41-43=tissue	
	5	62	N g-f	N g	j-e	N	∅	NK	▼	O	∅	N	5i	N	+ h + f	3	N	N	N	N	N	+ g2 +	<6	N	N	g3 + f1		
	6	63	N N	N N	N	h	∅	NK	▼	O	∅	N	5i	N	fe-j	1	N	N	N	N	N	1 + f <1	<6	N	N	f4	c31=tissue spl	
	7	64	N g-f	N N	N	N	∅	▼??	▼	O	∅	N	7i	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	i2 + h1	<6	N	N		reattached line	
	8	65	N N	N N	N	N	∅	▲	▼	O	∅	N	1j	N	i + e	2	N	N	N	N	N	f <10 +	<6	N	N	g2 + f5 + e1	g + f=tissue + re-attach line	

Assessment Documentation Categories:

- Parchment
- Scribal
- Codicology
- Previous Treatments
- Condition
- 2007 Conservation



Parchment

- **Physical features help identify type, size and condition of the animal**

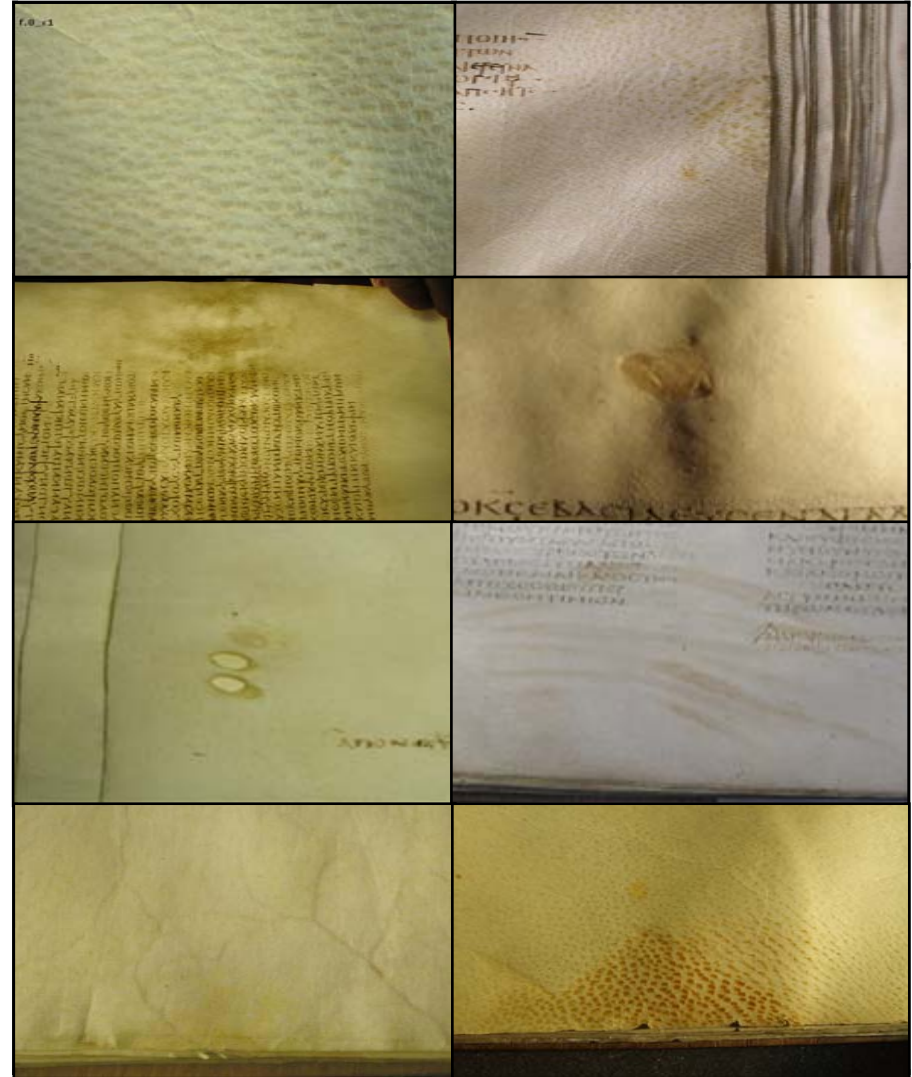
- Follicles
- Axilla
- Skeletal evidence
- Scar damage

- **Manmade features from the making process can reveal methods and reflect finesse**

- Holes
- Striations
- Veining
- Thinness

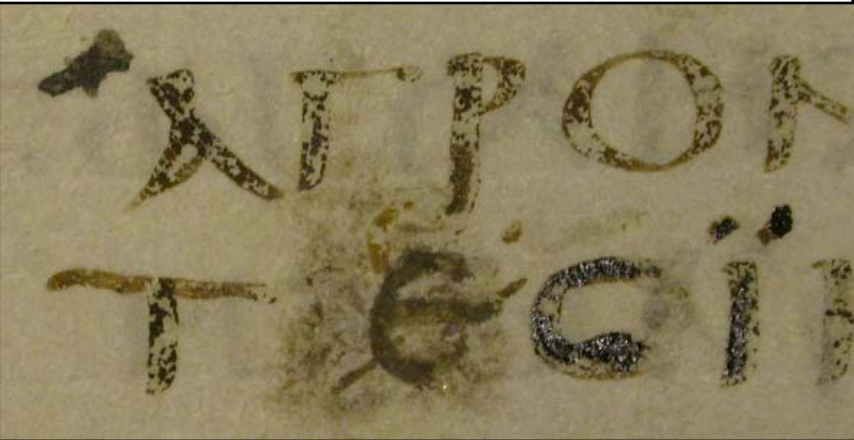
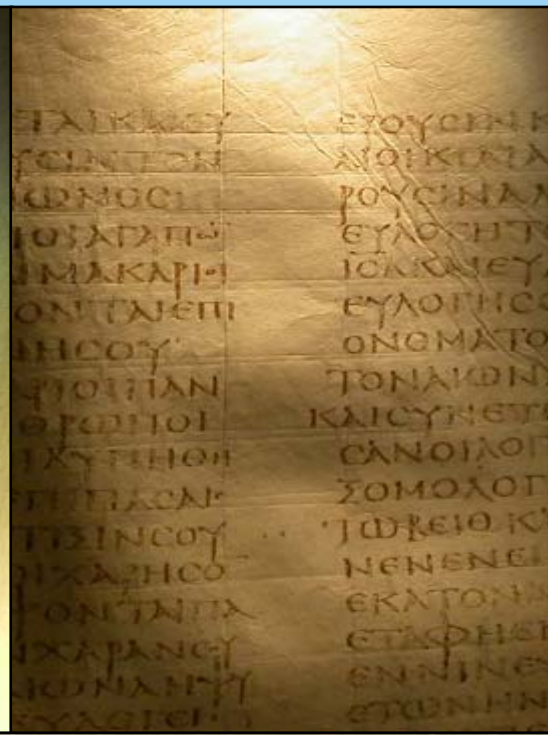
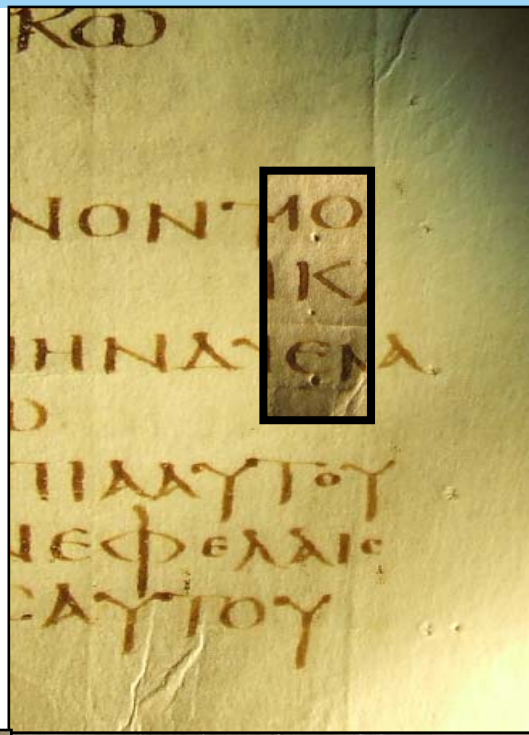
- **Condition and degradation levels can be assessed by measurement of:**

- Colour
- Opacity
- Surface appearance



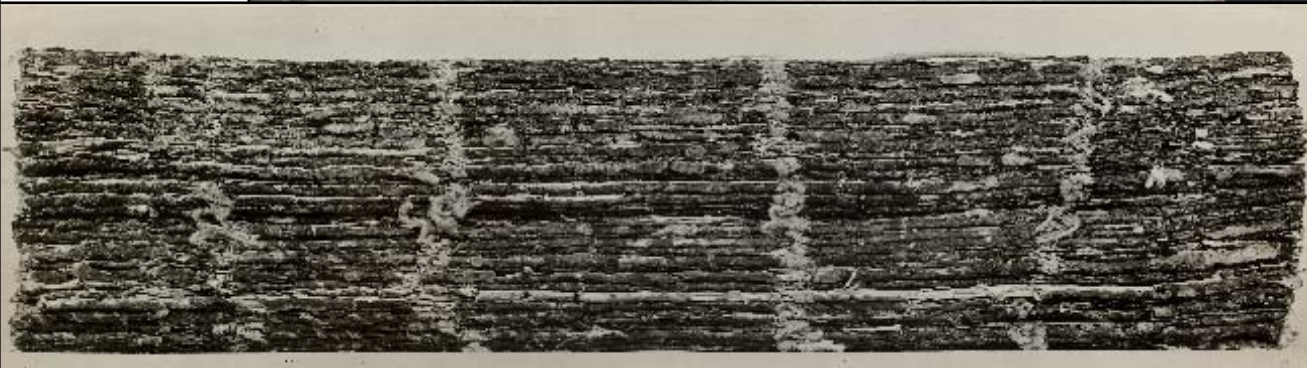
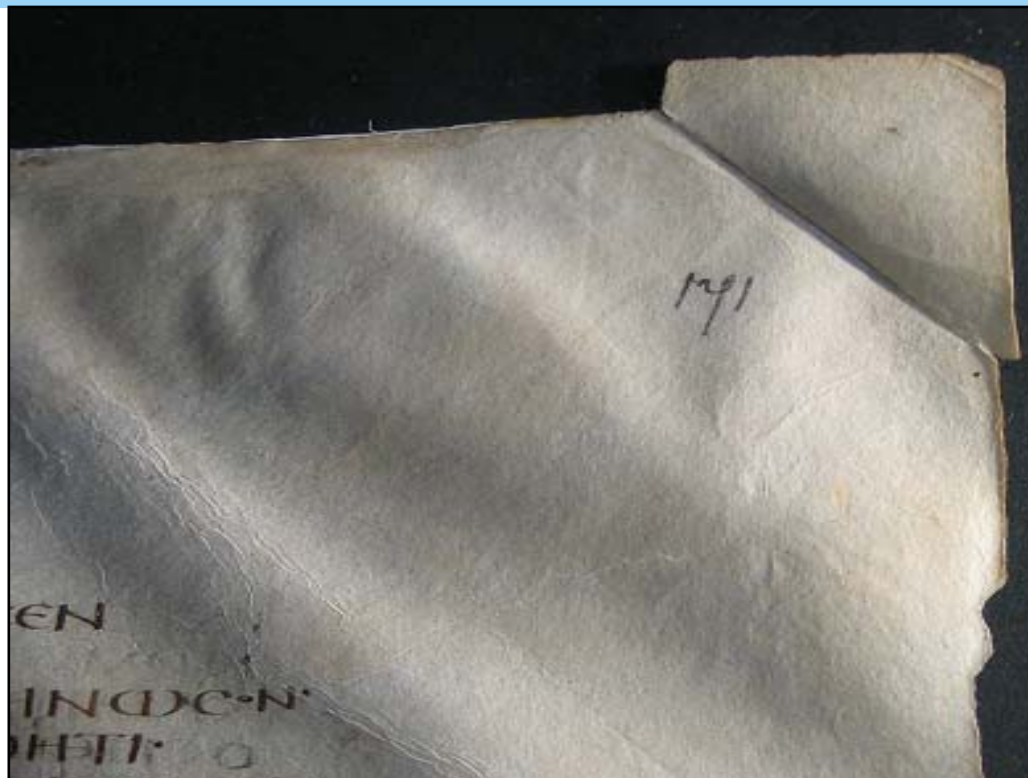
Scribal

- Pricking
 - column boundaries
 - text lines
- Ruling
- Ink variance
- Surface preparation

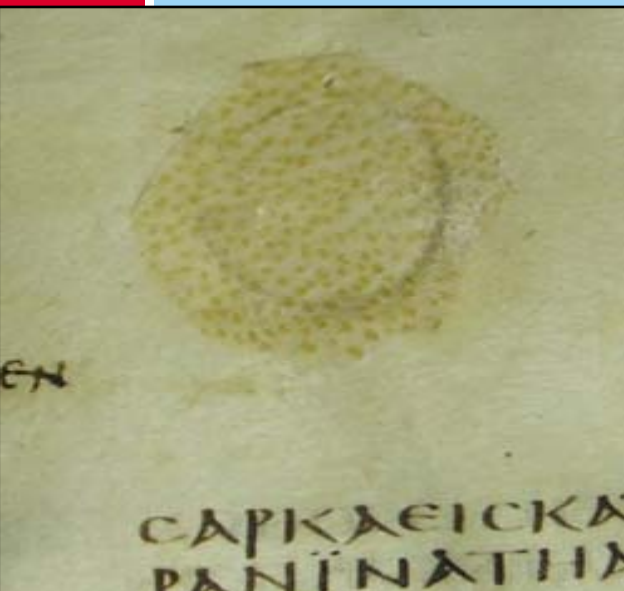


Codicology

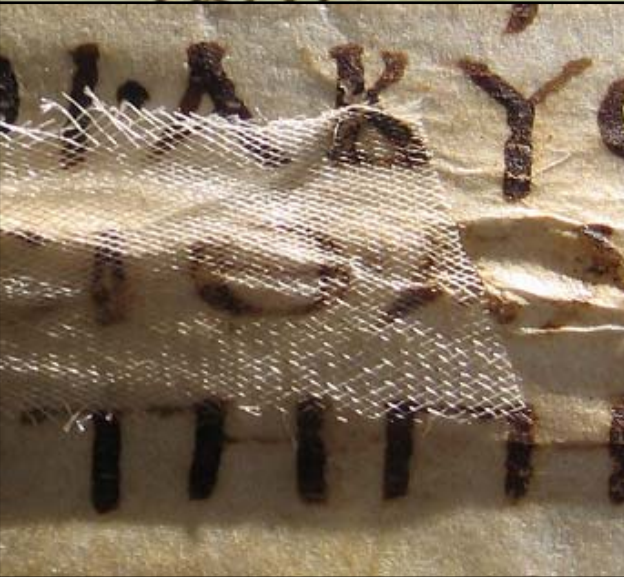
- Previous sewings
- Previous bindings
- Trimming evidence
- Douglas Cockerell



Previous Treatments



- Pre-Cockerell

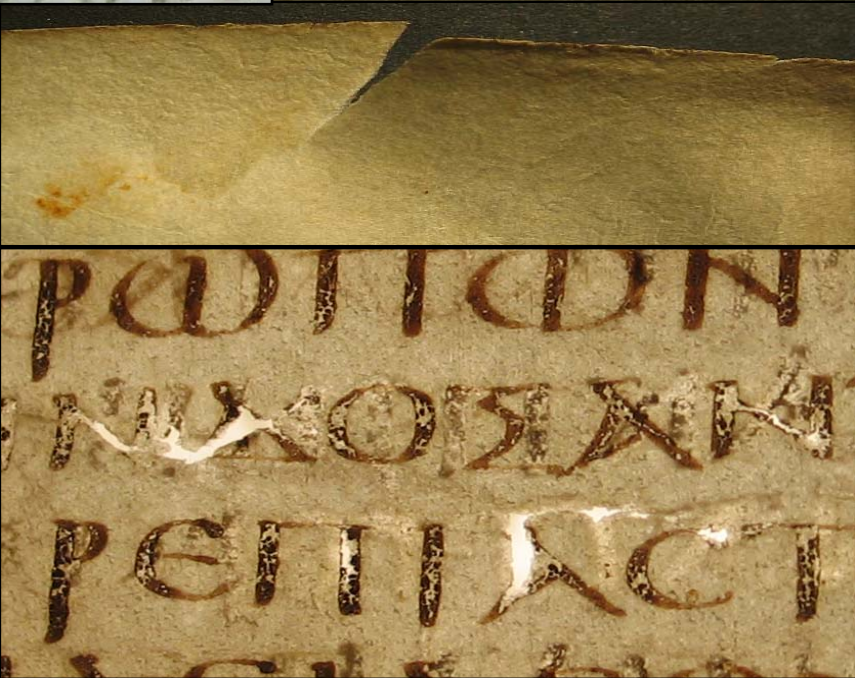
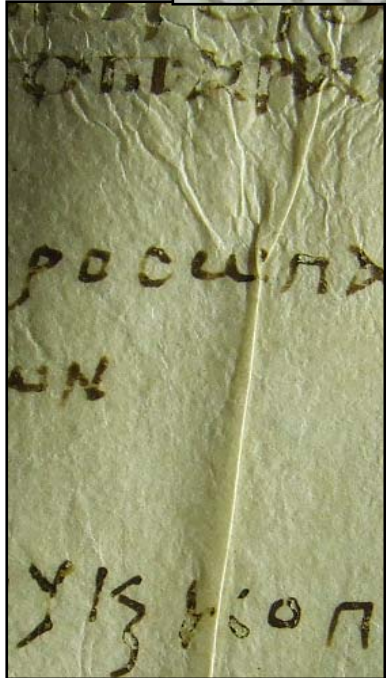
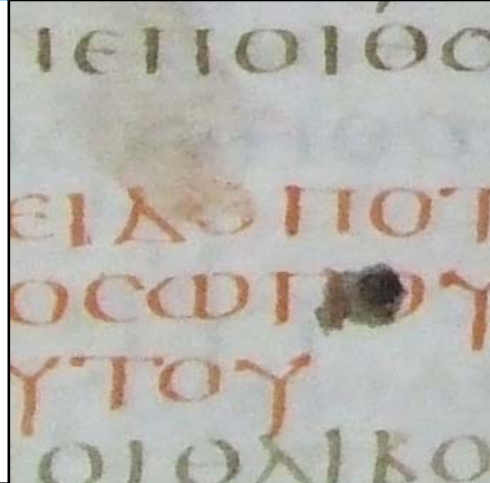


- Douglas Cockerell 1937



Condition

- Stains and Accretions
- Ink corrosion
- Ink loss
- Ink offset
- Weak areas
- Tears and Splits
- Cockling
- Pleats



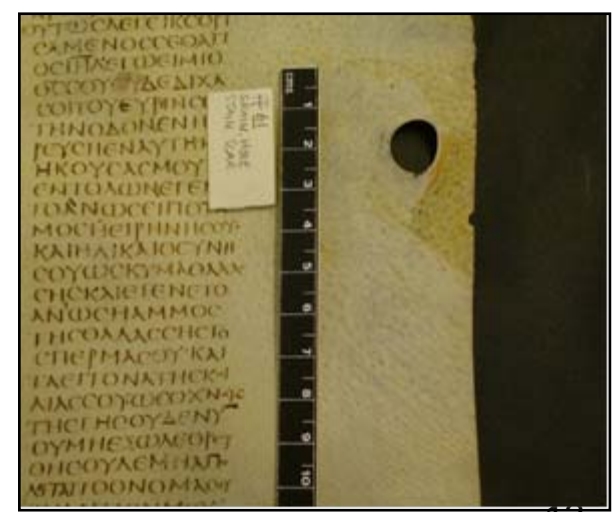
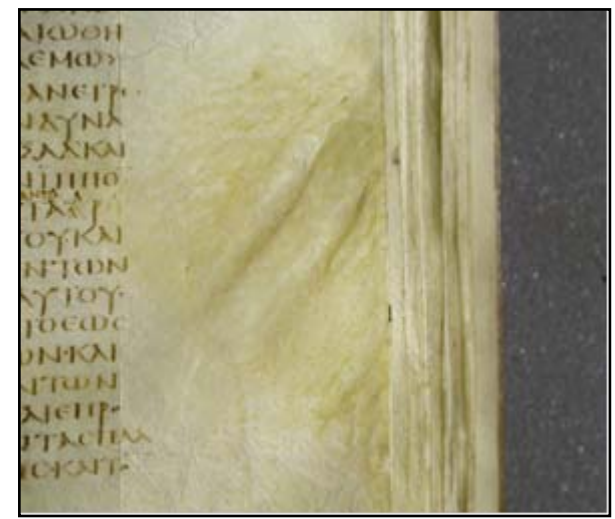
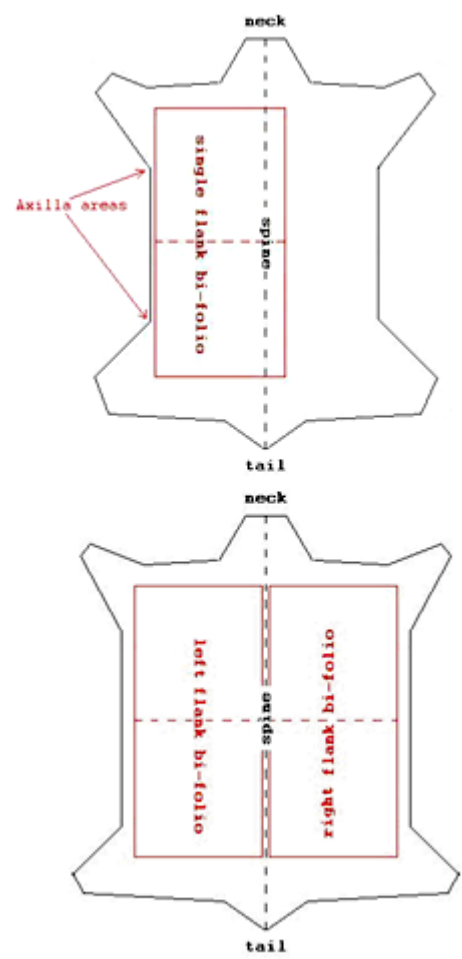
2007 Conservation Treatment

- Tissue repairs
- Splint repairs
- Visual record
 - Mylar™ tracings
 - Before & After imagery
- Record of materials
- Record of quantity & location of repairs



Overview of British Library folios Parchment Features

- Follicles
- Axilla
- Skeletal evidence
- Scar damage
- Holes
- Striations
- Veining
- Thinness
- Colour
- Opacity
- Surface appearance



Summary of British Library Parchment folios

The parchment is:

- Of known origin.
- Exceptionally uniform in thinness.
- Supple and flexible in quality.
- Generous in bi-folio size and lavish in layout.
- Characterised by a sparse quantity of visual imperfections and blemishes.



The parchment features reflect:

- A well resourced enterprise.
- The idea of excellence in the animal husbandry.
- High standards in the selection of skins.
- High degree of manufacturing finesse.

The parchment condition is:

- Exceptional for its age.
- Low in levels of significant degradation.
- Affected by long-term ink corrosion.
- Affected by gelatinisation.