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A Deed of Surety and the Emperor Heraclius

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Documentary papyri rarely touch upon concrete historical events. Nevertheless, in some cases papyri may become highly relevant for specific historical questions in an indirect way. In this lecture, I would like to present one of those rare papyri: CPR XXIV 27 offers a spotlight on the dramatic events during the revolt of the future emperor Heraclius (610–641 AD) against the ruling emperor Phocas (602–610 AD), where Egypt played a crucial role. I will attempt to show how the papyrological testimonies can be embedded in other traditions of narrative sources, and how information from the papyri – combined with the numismatic as well as historiographical evidence – leads us to a more precise understanding of the actual historical process.



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