

Earliest Important Greek Papyri

Explanation

All the books of the New Testament were originally written in Greek. Other sources, written and oral, certainly stood behind these final literary products, but in the end the good news of the ministry of Jesus Christ and his apostles was disseminated to the world in the common language of the day throughout the Roman Empire, namely Greek. Over 100 fragments of individual gospels or letters have been found by archaeologists or archivists that date before A.D. 325. Chart 18-3 lists the most famous of these early texts, which were written on papyrus. Some contain only a few words or verses, but a few are quite extensive and extremely precious.

References

Harry Y. Bramble, "Canon: New Testament," *ABD*, 1:852–61.

Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

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| PAPYRUS NUMBER | DATE | PRESENT LOCATION | CONTENTS |
|-------------------|-----------|---|--|
| ⲡ52 | early II | Manchester, John Rylands Library | Jn 18:31–33, 37–38 |
| ⲡ46 | late II | Ann Arbor, University of Michigan; Dublin, Chester Beatty Library | Large Parts of Rom, 1Cor; 2Cor; Gal; Eph; Phlp; Col; 1Th; Heb |
| ⲡ87 | II or III | Cologne, Universität zu Köln, Institut für Altertumskunde | Phlmn 1:13–15, 24–25 |
| ⲡ104 | II | Oxford, Ashmolean Museum | Mt 21:34–37, 43, 45 |
| ⲡ4 | II or III | Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale | Parts of Lk 1–6 |
| ⲡ64 [67] | late II | Oxford, Magdalen College Library [Barcelona, Fundación San Lucas Evangelista] | Parts of Mt 26 [Parts of Mt 3; 5] |
| ⲡ66 | late II | Cologne, Universität zu Köln, Institut für Altertumskunde; Cologne-Geneva, Bibliotheca Bodmeriana | Much of Jn 1:1–7:52; 8:12–21:17 |
| ⲡ98 | II | Cairo, Institut Français d'Archaeologie Orientale | Rev 1:13–20; 2:1 |
| ⲡ77 | late II | Oxford, Ashmolean Museum | Mt 23:30–39 |
| ⲡ90 | late II | Oxford, Ashmolean Museum | Jn 18:36–19:7 |
| ⲡ103 | late II | Oxford, Ashmolean Museum | Mt 13:55–57; 14:3–5 |
| ⲡ32 | late II | Manchester, John Rylands Library | Titus 1:11–15; 2:3–8 |
| ⲡ75 | II or III | Cologne-Geneva, Bibliotheca Bodmeriana | Large parts of Lk 3–7; 9–18; 22–24; and Jn 1:1–15:10 |