

Earliest Important Greek Papyri

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

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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).