

CHESTER BEATTY PAPYRI. The papyri named after Sir Alfred Chester Beatty (1875–1968), an American collector who in 1950 settled in Dublin, Ireland. The library which he founded, now called the Chester Beatty and Gallery of Oriental Art, was bequeathed to the Irish people at the time of Beatty's death.

#### A. The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri

The appellation refers in the first instance to the famous Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri, the largest and most sensational discovery to date of Greek biblical mss written on papyrus, acquired by Beatty in 1930-31.

**1. The Discovery.** Announcement of Chester Beatty's acquisition was made by Sir Frederic Kenyon, the *Times* (London), November 19, 1931. Though the original announcement mentioned twelve codices, the figure was low to eleven when it was found that Pap. IX (Ezekiel, Esther) and Pap. X (Daniel) form part of the same codex. Though the exact place of discovery is unknown, some Christian church or monastery near Aphroditopolis (Carl Schmidt) or perhaps less likely in the Fayum (Kenyon) has gained general acceptance. Although Chester Beatty managed to make a second acquisition from the discovery, in 1935, by no means all parts of the eleven codices found their way to his collection. Substantial segments were acquired by John H. Scheide (Princeton), the Universities of Michigan and Cologne, and the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas of Madrid. Fragments are in Barcelona and Vienna. (For all present locations of 'Chester Beatty Papyri,' consult the Bibliography. In what follows all will be counted as Chester Beatty Papyri).

**2. Popular Designation.** In spite of the official designation, "Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri," individual Papyri are normally cited as P. Chester Beatty ... in conformity with standard papyrological practice.

**3. The Manuscripts.** Since the Papyri must be dated on the basis of paleography, no absolute unanimity among experts has been achieved. Nevertheless, at least the century to which each document was assigned by its chief editor still meets with general approval. Hence the dates range from the 2d (Pap. VI) to the 4th (XI, XII) centuries, with the majority falling in the 3d.

**a. Papyrological Importance.** At the time of their discovery, prevailing opinion was that the papyrus codex did not gain general acceptance among Christians until the 4th century. The evident date of most of the Papyri altered that opinion. Along with the earlier date for the general use of the codex form, they also supplied an abundance of information on how the papyrus book was constructed. Formats are as numerous as the Papyri. Page size ranges from about 18 by 33 cm (Pap. VI) to 14 by 24.2 cm (III). Similarly, the makeup of individual codices shows much diversity, some being constructed of a single gathering (quire) of papyrus sheets (Pap. II, VII, IX + X), while in others the gathering varies from a single sheet (I) to five (V) or seven (VII). The largest codex among them (Pap. IX + X) must have counted at least 236 pages.

One of the most interesting aspects of scribal practice concerns the *nomina sacra*. In the Papyri we find diversity not only on which names are contracted and how, but also early evidence of sacral treatment of nonsacral names. So, for example, already in the 2d century (Pap. VI) [901 col. 2] "Joshua=Jesus" was treated as a *nomen sacrum*, suggesting that the sacral treatment of "Jesus" had become routine.

**b. Textual Importance.** No less than their papyrological significance is the textual importance of the Papyri. Since all but two (Pap. XI, XII) of the eleven codices are dated earlier than the 4th century, they present important evidence for the text of the Greek Bible as it existed in Egypt prior to the *translatio codicum* (the "turning in" of Christian books during the Diocletianic persecutions) and a century or more earlier than the great vellum codices of the 4th century, namely Vaticanus (B) and Sinaiticus (S). Although the Papyri supply a wealth of new information on textual detail, they also demonstrate remarkable stability in the transmission history of the biblical text. In terms of textual affiliation, they can only be described as mixed or unaligned. Only if great latitude is allowed can they be counted as members of textual groups or representatives of particular text types. For the Greek OT, their great significance lies in the fact that their text is pre/nonrecensional, that is to say, their text is untouched by the systematic revisionary activity of Lucian (III-IV) and of Origen (III) as well as other more shadowy or entirely unknown revisers.

**(1) OT Papyri.** Even though two of the Papyri (VIII [containing Jer 4:30–5:24]; XI [Sir 36:28–37:22; 46:6–47:2]) give relatively little text, so as to make textual analysis precarious, they nonetheless are the most extensive early (3d/4th cent. A.D. and before) witnesses for their respective books.

Pap. IV (Gen 9:1–44:22) and V (Cen 8:13–9:2; 24:13–46:33) between them preserve four fifths of the book of Genesis, a book almost absent from both B and S. Together with the only

other substantial papyrus, 911, they are our chief early witnesses to LXX Genesis. Only sporadic corrections to the Hebrew text are its evidence.

Pap. VI (Num 5:12–36:13; Dent 1:20–34:12), though the earliest among the Papyri, postdates P. Fouad 266 (847, 848) and P. Rylands 458 (957) by several centuries. Its text, however, is much more extensive and it exhibits few readings which need have arisen under Hebrew influence.

Pap. VII (Isa 8:18–19:13; 38:14–45:5; 54:1–60:22) has a very low number of unique readings and is an exceptionally good witness to the original text of LXX Isaiah. Its chief claim to fame, however, lies perhaps in its annotations in Old Fayumic. Most interesting among the OT Papyri is Pap. IX–X. Its 3d-century date makes it the earliest substantial witness for all three books it contains: Ezekiel, Daniel–Bel–Susanna, Esther.

Ezekiel (11:25–fin.). Though clearly nonhexapharic, the text of IX–X gives evidence of having undergone correction toward the Hebrew, but whether the equation *kyrios ho theos* = *adonai-yahweh* is to be counted as such remain controversial.

Daniel (1:1–12:13)–Bel (c. 4–39)–Susanna (5–subscriptio). Since the popular text in antiquity was not LXX Daniel but the so-called Theodotonic version, the former is extant in but few witnesses, two of which are hexaplaric (88-Syh), while several others are very fragmentary. Pap. (IX–)X is the earliest by at least two centuries and, because of its age and extent, is the most important witness to LXX Daniel. Though not hexapharic, the Papyrus contains sporadic pre/nonhexaplaric corrections to the Hebrew. Uniquely, Daniel 7–8 precede 5–6, and 4:3–6, 5:18–22, [902 col.1] 24–25 are lacking as in 88-Syh but against MT. Of considerable interest is the order of the "books" and, according to the subscriptio, that Bel and Susanna were regarded belonging to Daniel.

Esther (1:1a–8:6). Not unexpectedly, the Papyrus contains the LXX rather than the so-called *L* version which is attested in only a small minority of witnesses. Additions A–D are attested in their usual locations in Greek mss.

The chief importance of Pap. XII lies in the newness of its contents.

*Enoch* (93:12–13; 94:7–8; 97:6–104:13; 106:1–107:3). The chief text is in Ethiopic translation. For Book V (91–105) and the concluding fragment from the book of Noah (106–107), the Papyrus supplies our only Greek text. Chapters 105 and 108 were never part of the text, and have been regarded as secondary. The former chapter, however, is represented among the Aramaic fragments from Qumran (4QEn<sup>c</sup>). The subscriptio reads "Epistle of Enoch."

Melito of Sardis, *Peri Pascha*. Though at the time of its discovery, Pap. XII constituted the only (original) Greek text of this treatise, it has since been supplemented by P. Bodmer XIII and P. Oxy. XIII 1600.

*Apocryphon of Ezekiel*. Though cited by Clement of Alexandria (*Paedagogus* I. ix. 84.2–4) Pap. XII supplies the only ms evidence of this work.

**(2) NT Papyri.** Pap. I (Matt 20:24–Acts 17:7) challenged the prevailing view at the time of the discovery of the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri that, prior to the 4th century, each Gospel had circulated separately. The order of the individual books in the codex was apparently the so-called Western order: Matthew, John, Luke, Mark, Acts.

Pap. II (Rom 5:17–16:23, Heb, Cor, Eph, Gal, Phil, Col, 1 Thess). The placement of Hebrews among the Pauline epistles at a time when it was widely regarded as uncanonical is remarkable, and its location after Romans is virtually unique. Equally uncommon is that Ephesians precedes rather than follows Galatians. Perhaps the object of greatest textual interest is the doxology of Rom 16:25–27, which in our Papyrus closes chap. 15. That the Pastoral Epistles were not included seems certain but does not necessarily reflect doubts about their Pauline authorship, as has been suggested.

Pap. III (Rev 9:10–17:2). As is the case for most of Genesis (cf. Pap. IV and V), ms B is not extant for Revelation. Moreover, Pap. III is at least a century older than S and, of our early (3d/4th cent. and before) witnesses, is the most extensive.

**B. Other Chester Beatty Papyri.** Although the Biblical Papyri are the centerpiece of the Library's holdings in early biblical mss, they were neither Beatty's only nor his earliest acquisitions in this field.

**1. Coptic Vellums.** In 1924–25 Chester Beatty acquired three Coptic (Sahidic) volumes evidently produced in the monastery of Apa Jeremias at Saqqara. (Two more of the same find were bought by the University of Michigan.) All three volumes were in their original bindings, and written, not on papyrus, but on vellum. P. Chester Beatty 2003 (=813) contains the Pauline Epistles (Rom, Cor, Heb, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, Thess, Tim, Phlm) and the Gospel of John; P. Chester Beatty 2004 (814) has Acts and the Gospel of [902 col. 2] John, and P. Chester Beatty 2005 (=815) the first fifty psalms plus Matt 1:1–2:1 (ined.).

**2. Manichea.** Roughly contemporaneous with the Biblical Papyri was Beatty's acquisition of Manichean mss in Coptic (Sub-Achmimic) translation (ca. 400+ A.D.). Though part of the find of papyrus codices, reputedly from Medinet Madi in the S Fayum, ended up in Berlin (and Vienna), Chester Beatty gained possession of the Homilies and the Psalm Book. Part I of the latter remains to be **edited**, as well as the Synaxeis Codex now in Berlin.

**3. Later Acquisitions.** Acquisitions of papyri (and some parchments) continued, notably around the middle 1950s. Not only were some of these materials bought through the same dealer Martin Bodmer engaged, but like the bulk of the Bodmer Papyri, they were from the discovery near Dishna in 1952. In two instances, a fragment each from Bodmer Papyri was bought by Beatty, namely from P. Berliner II (John 19:25–28, 30–32) and from P Bodmer XX (*Apology of Phileas* 135, 13–16 and 136, 14–17). In a third case, a substantial portion was acquired by Beatty: P. Bodmer XXI = P. Chester Beatty 2019. It is not clear which and how many mss in the possession of the Chester Beatty Library also derive from the Dishna discovery.

**a. Greek Biblical Papyri.** The series of Biblical (but cf. Pap. XII) Papyri launched by Kenyon has been continued for Greek "biblical" papyri acquired at later dates: P. Chester Beatty XIII (Ps 72:6–75:13; 77:1–88:2), XIV (Ps 31:8–11; 26:1–6, 8–14; 2:1–8), XV (*Acts of Phileas* plus Ps 1:1–4:2), XVI (*Apocryphon of Jannes and Jambres*), XVII (Luke 14:7–14, XVIII (Job 9:2–3, 12–13. Chester Beatty accession no. (hereafter ace.) 1499 is a Greek grammar, and a Graeco-Latin lexicon on Romans, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Ephesians and is being **edited**.

**b. Coptic Texts. (1) Biblical and related.** P. Chester Beatty 2018 (*Apocalypse of Elijah*), 2019 (Josh 1:1–6:16; 6:25–7:6; 22:2–19; 23:7–15; 24:23–33 plus Tob 14:13–15), 2021 (John 10:8–13:38 in Sub-Achmimic plus mathematical exercises in Greek), 2023 (Gen 7:13–23, 27:23–25, 27–32, 2024 (Luke 1:63–9:31, 11:1–12:48, 18:8–15, 2 Cor 1:1–12:12 [ined.]), 2025 (lectionary containing at least Ps 31–11–41, 96:3–4, Mark 8:34, Acts 13:28–29, 31–33, 1 John 4:14–16 [ined.]).

**(2) Hagiographica:** P. Chester Beatty 2022 (Cephalon), 2028 (Herai), 2029 (Phoebammon), 2030 (Hermauo).

**(3) Pachomiana:** Chester Beatty acc. 1486 (Letter 2 of Theodore [on parchment]), acc. 1494 (Letter 3 of Horsiesius [ined.]), W. 145 (Greek trans. of Pachomius' Letters 1, 2, 3, 7, 10, 11<sup>a</sup> [on parchment]), acc. 1495 (Letter 4 of Horsiesius [ined.]), no. 54 (Pachomius' Letters 11<sup>b</sup>, 10, 11<sup>a</sup>, 9<sup>a</sup>, 9<sup>b</sup>),

**(4) Miscellanea:** P Chester Beatty 2026 (nonbiblical fragment about Moses and Pharaoh [ined.]), 2027 (nonbiblical fragment about Pilate [Bohairic; ined.]), 2031 (tale featuring Pshoi s. of Jeremiah [ined.]). Various other bits and pieces still await identification.

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