

The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri

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(P45 - 3rd Century)



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THE CHESTER BEATTY BIBLICAL POPYRI DESCRIPTIONS AND TEXTS OF TWELVE MANUSCRIPTS ON POPYRUS OF THE GREEK BIBLE

FASCICULUS I
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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WITH TWELVE PLATES

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1. CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

THE Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri are a group of twelve manuscripts from Egypt, acquired by Mr. A. Chester Beatty about three years ago. Their place of origin is unknown, since they reached him through the hands of natives and dealers, whose statements as to *provenance* are not always reliable. From their character, however, it is plain that they must have been discovered among the ruins of some early Christian church or monastery; and there is reason to believe that they come from the neighbourhood of the Fayum. Some portions of the find did not reach Mr. Chester Beatty, which seems to point to a division of the spoil among different finders. Several leaves and fragments were acquired by the University of Michigan, and a few fragments are known to be in private hands. Subsequently to the first announcement of the discovery in *The Times* of November 19, 1931, several more pieces of papyrus, evidently from the same find, were acquired for Michigan; but with great generosity and courtesy the authorities of the University allowed Mr. Chester Beatty to take over these fragments, which formed parts of his manuscripts nos. I, VI, and VII. The additional fragments of the Gospels, in one case amounting to about a third of a leaf, were particularly welcome. It is, of course, very possible, in view of the fragmentary condition of all the MSS., that further portions still remain in the hands of the original finders, who will produce them as and when they think fit; but it would be useless to wait for such chances, and in any case Mr. Chester Beatty's acquisition is sufficiently extensive and substantial to deserve separate and early publication.

After their acquisition they were for some time in the hands of Dr. Ibscher of Berlin, whose exceptional skill in handling and mounting papyri is well known. By him they were mounted under glass, and were then committed to me to study at the British Museum, and eventually to publish.¹

The following is the catalogue of the collection, in which precedence is given to the New Testament MSS., since it will meet the convenience of the majority

¹ The transcripts, with the collations and introductions to the three New Testament MSS., were completed early in 1932; but various delays inter-

vened before printing could be commenced, and thus made possible the inclusion of the subsequently acquired fragments.

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of Biblical students to begin publication with them. I have attached the numbers which have been assigned to each MS. by Prof. E. von Dobschutz and Prof. A. Rahlfs, who keep the generally accepted registers of New Testament and Old Testament MSS. respectively. Fuller descriptions of each MS. are given in the separate editions of them which will follow this introductory fasciculus.

A. NEW TESTAMENT.

I. *Gospels and Acts*: 30 leaves, containing portions of Mt. xx. 24-32, xxi. 13-19, xxv. 41-xxvi. 2, 6-10, xxvi. 19-33; Mk. iv. 36-40, v. 15-26, v. 38-vi. 2, vi. 16-25, 36-50, vii. 3-15, vii. 25-viii. 1, viii. 11-26, viii. 34-ix. 8, ix. 18-31, xi. 27-32, xii. 13-16; Lk. vi. 31-41, vi. 45-vii. 6, ix. 26-41, ix. 45-x. 1, x. 6-22, x. 26-xi. 1, xi. 6-25, 28-46, xi. 50-xii. 12, xii. 18-37, xii. 42-xiii. 1, xiii. 6-24, xiii. 29-xiv. 10, xiv. 17-33; Jn. x. 7-25, x. 31-xi. 10, xi. 18-36, 43-57; Acts iv. 27-36, v. 10-20, 30-9, vi. 7-vii. 2, vii. 10-21, 32-41, vii. 52-viii. 1, viii. 14-25, viii. 34-ix. 6, ix. 16-27, ix. 35-x. 2, x. 10-23, 31-41, xi. 2-14, xi. 24-xii. 5, 13-22, xiii. 6-16, 25-36, xiii. 46-xiv. 3, xiv. 15-23, xv. 2-7, 19-26, xv. 38-xvi. 4, xvi. 15-21, 32-40, xvii. 9-17. The fragments acquired through the kindness of the University of Michigan are included in this list; they add portions of two leaves not previously represented, and assist to complete others. Every leaf is more or less mutilated, and in some cases (especially in Mt. and Mk.) only a few words are preserved on each page. The original size of the leaf was about 10 x 8 in., with about 39 lines to the page. There are a few remains of page numeration; the last page preserved is numbered 199, and the complete MS. would have comprised about 220 pages, or 110 leaves. Third century, probably in the first rather than the second half. [P⁴⁵.]

II. *Pauline Epistles*: 10 leaves, of which eight are in conjugate pairs. The other two also originally formed a conjugate pair, but are now separated; the fragments of the second of these two leaves had not reached London from Berlin when the collection was first publicly reported. The first four of the conjugate leaves and one detached leaf contain Rom. v. 17-vi. 14, viii. 15-35, ix. 22-xi. 33, with, however, lacunae caused by the loss of 2-5 lines from the bottom (and in one case also from the top) of each page. The other four leaves and the detached fragments contain Phil. iv. 14-23, Col. i. 1-iii. 11, and small fragments of Col. iv. 16-18, 1 Thess. i. 1, 9, 10, ii. 1-3, v. 5-9, 23-8. Original size of leaf about 11 x 6½ in., with 25-8 lines to the page in the first

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half, and 29-32 in the second. Some remains of page numeration: the last leaf of Romans has the page numbers 28, 29, and that to which it is attached, containing the end of Philippians, has on its first page the number 17[.], which must be one of the even numbers from 170 to 178 inclusive. There are therefore 70-4 leaves missing from the centre of the MS., which formed a single quire of 92-6 leaves. Third century. [P⁴⁵.]

III. *Revelation*: 10 leaves, forming either a single quire (the middle one of three) or the centre of a large quire, containing Rev. ix. 10-xvii. 2. From 1 to 4 lines are lost at the top of each page. Original size of leaf about $9\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ in., with 23-30 (usually 26-8) lines to a page. Late third century. [P⁴⁷.]

B. OLD TESTAMENT.

IV. *Genesis*: 44 leaves, containing Gen. ix. 1-xiv. 13, xvii. 7-xlii. 2, with mutilations at the bottom of each leaf, and sometimes elsewhere. Original size of leaf about 11×7 in., with double columns on each page of about 40 lines. Page numeration, but most of the numbers are lost; those preserved range from 33 (xviii. 3) to 82 (xxxiv. 7). When complete the codex consisted of 66 leaves. Early fourth century. [961.]

V. *Genesis*: 22 leaves, containing Gen. xxiv. 13-xxv. 21, xxxi. 50-xxxv. 16, xxxix. 4-19, xli. 9-xlvi. 33, with not very extensive mutilations. Original size of leaf about $8\frac{1}{2} \times 6$ in., with 17-20 (generally 18 or 19) lines to a page. Pages numbered in a later hand. When complete the codex consisted of about 82 leaves. Written in a document hand, of the latter part of the third century. [962.]

VI. *Numbers and Deuteronomy*: substantial portions of 33 leaves, with smaller portions of 22 more, and a large number of small fragments which have not yet been placed. Some fragments of Num. xxix, xxx were among those acquired by Mr. Beatty from Michigan, and some fragments from the latter part of Deuteronomy are at Michigan as part of their earlier acquisition. Contains Num. v. 12-viii. 19, portions of xiii. 4-6, 17, 18, xxii. 11-38, xxv. 18-end; Deut. i. 20-vii. 19, and portions of ix-xii, xviii, xix, xxviii-xxxiv. Original size of leaf about $13 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ in., with two narrow columns on each page of 31-8 lines (36 usually in earlier part of MS., 32 in later). Page numeration preserved from 17 to 136 (Deut. vi. 20); about 80 more pages would have

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been needed to complete the book, which would therefore have contained about 216 pages, or 108 leaves. Written in a fine hand, of the second century, perhaps of the first half of it. [963.]

VII. *Isaiah*: portions of 27 leaves, varying from a few letters of 3 or 4 lines to 13 practically complete lines out of a total of 25 or 26 lines to a page. The text preserved includes portions of chapters viii. 18, ix. 2, xi. 5-7, 10-12, 15-xii. 1, xii. 5-xiii. 2, xiii. 6-9, 12-14, 18-20, xiv. 2-4, 23-6, 29-xv. 1, xv. 3-5, 8-xvi. 4, xvi. 7-9, 12-xvii. 1, xviii. 1-3, 6-xix. 1, xix. 5, 6, 11-13, xlii. 1, 2, 6, 7, xliii. 1, 2, 6-8, 10-13, 17-20, 25-xliv. 1, xlv. 5-7, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19-21, 23, 24, 28, xlv. 5, liv. 4, 5, 10, 11, 17, lv. 1, 6, 7, 9-12, lvi. 1-3, 6, 7, 11-lvii. 2, lvii. 17-20, lviii. 2-4, lix. 1-3, 7-9, 12-14, 17-20, lx. 2-5, 9, 10, 14-16, 19-22. There are, besides, some much tattered and very small fragments. In addition, portions of two other leaves, containing parts of xvii. 5-7, 9-12, liv. 14-17, lv. 3-6, are in private ownership. Width of leaf 6 in., height uncertain, but about 10½ inches. Pages numbered, but only a few numbers survive, the earliest being 26 (c. ix. 2), and the latest 54 (xviii. 6). The six leaves containing pp. 35-42, 49-50, 53-4 are conjoint with the leaves containing cc. lv. 9-lx. 22. The codex must have consisted of about 112 leaves (224 pages), in a single large quire. A few marginal notes in a different hand, some of them Coptic. Probably first half of third century. [965.]

VIII. *Jeremiah*: one imperfect leaf, containing Jer. iv. 30-v. 1, v. 9-13. Probably late second or early third century. [966.]

IX. *Ezekiel and Esther*: 16 leaves in 8 conjoint pairs, containing Ezek. xi. 25-xvii. 21, Esther ii. 20-viii. 6. Original size of leaf at least 14 in. by 5 in., but about half the height of each page is lost in Esther, and about three-eighths in Ezekiel. No page numeration preserved, but the make-up of the book shows almost certainly that Ezekiel preceded Esther, which must have been followed by some other book. The complete codex would have consisted of about 78 leaves, in one large quire, with about 44 lines to the page in Esther and 50 in Ezekiel. The two books are written in different hands, probably of the latter part of the third century. [967.]

X. *Daniel*: 13 leaves, containing Dan. iii. 72-vi. 18, vii. 1-viii. 27, with large lacunae, about two-fifths of the height of each leaf being lost at the bottom. Original size of leaf about 14 × 5 in., with about 44-6 lines to a page. Pages numbered from 141 to 166. Some other book must therefore have

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preceded Daniel, and the whole would have formed a codex of about 96 leaves, in a single large quire. Chapter vii. 1—viii. 27 precedes chapter v. The text is of the original Septuagint version. Written in a good hand, apparently not later than the first half of the third century. [968.]

XI. *Ecclesiasticus*: one leaf and part of a second, containing Ecclus. xxxvi. 28—xxxvii. 22, xlvi. 6—11, xlvi. 16—xlvii. 2. The complete leaf measures $10\frac{1}{2} \times 7$ in., and the pages are numbered 73, 74. Written in a large, rough hand, probably of the fourth century. [964.]

C. NON-CANONICAL WRITINGS.

XII. *Enoch and a Christian homily*: 8 leaves and 2 fragments in the Chester Beatty collection, and 6 leaves in the possession of the University of Michigan, containing Enoch 97—107, ending with the title 'The Epistle of Enoch', and followed by a Christian homily of unidentified authorship. Original size of leaf something over $10 \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ in. Pages numbered from 15 to 36, with 4 unnumbered, which may come within this sequence. Written in a rough hand, with many mistakes, of the fourth or possibly fifth century.

2. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Before dealing with the contents of the MSS. it will be convenient to describe their external characteristics. This group of manuscripts makes a notable addition to our knowledge of the methods of book-production in the early centuries of the Christian era. All have one characteristic in common—that they are codices (i.e. in the modern book-form of leaves and pages), not rolls; and it is for the early history of the codex form of book that they are so important.

It has, of course, long been matter of common knowledge that the normal form of book during the main period of the classical literature of Greece and Rome was the papyrus roll, and that this continued in use during the early centuries of the Christian era. Eventually it gave way to and was superseded by the vellum codex, which was the normal form of book throughout the Middle Ages, until it was succeeded by the printed book on paper. Vellum was known as a material from at least the third century B.C., but was at first used mainly for note-books and inferior forms of books. The date of its advancement to the first rank as a material for the best books has been generally

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fixed at the earlier part of the fourth century, to which the first of the great Biblical codices belong; and this has, until recently, been taken as the date also of the supersession of the roll by the codex. The discoveries, however, of Greek papyri in Egypt during the last generation have revealed the existence of a transition stage, that of the papyrus codex. Among the papyri discovered at Oxyrhynchus and elsewhere, and datable to the third century or later, are a number of fragments which evidently originally belonged to codices, not rolls, and a few examples of substantial portions of such codices (chiefly of the fifth century or later) have come to light. It has also become increasingly evident that the papyrus codex was used far more commonly, and at an earlier date, for Christian writings than for pagan. The evidence, however, both as to date and the technical methods of manufacture of the papyrus codex, was very incomplete; and it is upon these points that the Chester Beatty papyri provide much new and valuable information.

All these twelve manuscripts are papyrus codices, but they exhibit several differences of structure, to explain which it is necessary to say a word about the material and the methods of handling it. Vellum and paper can be manufactured in large sheets, which can be folded in both directions, thus forming quires containing 4, 8, or 16 pages, or occasionally higher multiples in the same series. Papyrus, on the other hand, could not be manufactured in heights greater than about 15 in. (and even this is very uncommon), and double folding was practically impossible. The method employed was therefore to use sheets of twice the width of the page required, and to fold them once, thus producing a unit of two leaves or four pages. Several sheets could, however, be laid one upon the other before folding, thus producing quires of 2, 4, 6, 8, or any other number of leaves in the same series of multiples of two. In the modern paper book the usual unit is a quire of 8 leaves or 16 pages; in vellum codices (which would be governed by the size of the skins available) the usual unit (except in small volumes) is also a quire of 8 leaves. The first papyrus codices to be discovered of which the quire formation could be ascertained likewise had quires of 8 or 10 leaves; but these were of relatively late date, and it was one of the surprises of papyrology to discover evidence of the use of quires of much greater size. A fragment among the Oxyrhynchus papyri (P. Oxy. 208) consisted of a pair of leaves, of which the first contained the text of part of the first chapter of St. John, while the other contained part of the twentieth. It was thus evident that this was nearly the outermost sheet of a large quire, which must have consisted of 50 leaves and contained

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the whole Gospel. Inconvenient as this method of formation seems, it is now clear that it was not an uncommon practice. A papyrus codex could therefore be formed either of a single large quire, running sometimes, as will be seen, to more than 100 leaves, or of a number of smaller quires, composed of any multiple of two leaves, stitched together.

Another consideration entered into the composition of a papyrus codex. As is well known, a sheet of papyrus is formed of two layers of papyrus fibres, in one of which the fibres run horizontally (known as the *recto* side of the sheet) and in the other vertically (the *verso*). If a number of sheets were laid one upon the other, all with the *recto* side uppermost, it will be realized that in the quire formed when they were folded, the *verso* side of each leaf would precede the *recto* in the first half of the quire, while *recto* would precede *verso* in the second half. Also at each opening of the book, except at the actual centre of a quire or at the junction of quires, one page would be *recto* and the other *verso*. If it was desired, for the sake of uniformity of appearance, to avoid this result, two alternatives were possible. Either the codex could be formed of a number of single sheets (i.e. quires of two leaves only) fastened side by side, or a number of sheets could be laid, before folding, with *recto* and *verso* uppermost alternately. In either case, when the volume was formed, *recto* would face *recto* and *verso verso* throughout the codex.

From this description it will be seen that from the bibliographical point of view there are several varieties of codices, according as they are formed of a single large quire or a number of small ones, and according as they are arranged, by one or the other method, with *recto* pages facing *recto* and *verso verso* throughout. The twelve codices of the Chester Beatty collection show examples of all kinds. Three of them certainly and probably four (nos. II, VII, IX, and probably X) are formed of a single quire each. The Isaiah, when complete, consisted of a single quire of 112 leaves; the Pauline Epistles of 92-6 leaves; Ezekiel and Esther must have had about 78 leaves. Of the Daniel one can only say that the extant portion appears to belong to the second half of a single-quire codex of about 96 leaves. No. V appears to be in quires of 10 leaves, and no. XII in quires of 12 leaves, *verso* preceding *recto* in the first half of each quire, and *recto* preceding *verso* in the second. No. III is either a quire of 10 leaves, or (more probably) the middle portion of a single quire of 32 leaves. In three more (nos. I, IV, and VI) *recto* and *verso* are alternated so as to insure the opposition of similar pages, according to one of the methods described above. In the case of the Gospels and Acts MS. the

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fortunate preservation of two consecutive pairs of conjugate leaves makes it possible to say that it was composed of single-sheet quires of two leaves. With regard to the other two, it is impossible to ascertain which method was followed. Finally, of two MSS. (nos. VIII and XI) the remains are too small to supply any evidence of their quire-formation.

It is not possible to prove any progressive development in the technique of codex manufacture from the dates of the MSS., but the probability is that both the single-quire codex and the quire of two leaves were early experiments, and that the use of quires of eight or ten leaves was eventually adopted, partly perhaps under the influence of the example of vellum codices. Certainly the papyrus codices, previously known, of the fifth to the seventh centuries, all show this method. Fuller particulars of each MS. are given in the introductions to the several texts.

Apart from these details of book manufacture, the Chester Beatty papyri supply evidence on another bibliographical point, which is of more general importance. Not only do they confirm the belief that the Christian community was addicted to the codex rather than to the roll, but they carry back the use of the codex to an earlier date than there has hitherto been any good ground to assign to it. The evidence of papyri from Graeco-Roman Egypt has hitherto shown an exclusive use of the roll throughout the second century, and an immense preponderance of it for pagan literature throughout the third. Christian literature, on the other hand, showed a slight majority for the codex over the roll in the third century, while there was no evidence of earlier date. The Chester Beatty papyri not only add a large number of examples from the third century, but also, if the dates given above are accepted, show that the codex form was in use in the second century, and even probably in the earlier part of it.

This is not a matter of merely formal interest. So long as the roll was the form of book in use, no work of materially greater length than one of the Gospels could be contained in a single roll. Consequently the four Gospels during their early existence must have circulated in separate rolls, which made it easy for one Gospel to be more generally known than another, for different Gospels to predominate in different localities, and for different textual traditions to be established. Further, these four Gospels could not so readily be marked off as a single unit. Hitherto it has been natural to believe that the combination of the Gospels in a single volume was the result of the supersession of the papyrus roll by the vellum codex in the fourth century. We

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now (again if the dates assigned to the Chester Beatty papyri are accepted) have a concrete example of a codex containing all four Gospels and the Acts in the third century, and evidence of the use of the codex form by the Christian community as much as a century earlier. When, therefore, Irenaeus at the end of the second century writes of the four Gospels as the divinely provided evidence of Christianity, and the number four as almost axiomatic, it is now possible to believe that he may have been accustomed to the sight of volumes in which all four were contained.

In this respect purely bibliographical facts have their bearing upon Biblical criticism.

3. PALAEOGRAPHY

The arguments just used depend on the dates assigned to the manuscripts; and these dates depend on palaeographical considerations, since no external evidence is available. It is, consequently, necessary to say something of the hands in which the papyri are written, for which purpose the specimen plates attached to this Part will greatly facilitate both description and comprehension.

The dating of literary hands on papyrus is by no means so securely established as the dating of documentary hands. Documents are vastly more numerous than works of literature, and a large proportion of them necessarily bear dates. There is, therefore, a great body of evidence for the dating of documentary hands, from the third century B.C. to the seventh century A.D. Book hands are rarely dated, and only occasionally (as when a dated document is inscribed on the other side of the same papyrus) is definite evidence available. Fixed points are, therefore, not plentiful; at the same time some exist, and a science of papyrus palaeography has been gradually built up. Certain broad distinctions of style and date can be established, and within these certain sequences can be observed. Also, as in palaeography generally, experience gives a certain capacity for estimating age, which rests not so much on particular forms of letters (a precarious foundation) as on a general sense of style. Nevertheless, again as in palaeography generally, those who have most experience are generally the least anxious to dogmatize, and are ready to admit that a fragment of objective evidence must be preferred to any amount of subjective estimates. The estimates of date given in respect of these papyri are therefore offered with due reserve; though it is fair to add that they have been independently confirmed by papyrologists of unquestionable experience.

There is a very considerable diversity of hands in the collection. Calli-

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graphically the finest is also the earliest, the MS. of Numbers and Deuteronomy (no. VI). This is written in a small, square, upright hand, with light, flowing strokes and well-rounded curves. It is a definitely Roman type of hand, with affinities to the great Hyperides MS. and the Herodas MS., which are of the latter part of the first century. It is the work of a good professional scribe. Next to it come the Pauline Epistles (no. II), the Isaiah (no. VII), and the Jeremiah fragment (no. VIII), which are all in rather large, free, and somewhat stylish hands, well spaced out, and elegant in type though not severely regular. They have lost a little of the simplicity of the best hands of the Roman period, but do not approach either the mannerisms or the roughness of the Byzantine period. None of the other MSS. approach these in quality of workmanship. The Gospels and Acts MS. (no. I) is quite unlike all the others, in a small, light, rather sloping hand, fluently formed but not calligraphic. The Daniel (no. X) is closer to the style of the Pauline Epistles and Isaiah, but is more irregular, less elegant, and smaller. The smaller Genesis MS. (no. V) is a document hand, with more exaggeration of certain letters, clear and flowing. All the rest are in a heavier, rougher style, evidently not the work of accomplished scribes. The Esther (no. IX) is a large, square, rather irregular hand, with widely spaced lines; the Ezekiel which forms part of the same codex is heavier and duller, with letters solidly formed, and both lines and letters closer together. The Revelation (no. III) is a medium-sized hand, rough and unpolished. The larger Genesis (no. IV) is a very heavy, square uncial, recalling the great vellum uncials but much less ornamental. The Ecclesiasticus (no. XI) is a large, rough, sloping hand, with no marked exaggeration of letters, but with no pretence to style. Finally, the Enoch (no. XII), which is perhaps the latest of all, is a large, plain hand, slightly sloping, poorly written, with many mistakes by a scribe deficient in education.

Other palaeographical details will be given severally in the edition of each manuscript.

4. TEXTUAL IMPORTANCE OF THE COLLECTION

Textually, the importance of the collection lies in its early date. Though none of the manuscripts approaches completeness, all except the Jeremiah and Ecclesiasticus are sufficiently substantial to show definitely the character of the text, and its relation to those of the manuscripts previously known. Hitherto our direct knowledge of the text of the Greek Bible has rested ultimately on manuscripts of the fourth century, of which the most important, for both Old

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and New Testaments, are the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. Before that date we have had only a few very small fragments, and such evidence as can be derived from the early Christian fathers and by deduction from the evidence of versions. The Chester Beatty papyri carry back the direct tradition well into the third century, and in some instances into the second. Their examination will throw much valuable light on the history of the text of the Greek Bible during the vital period of the two centuries and a half which separate the composition of the canonical scriptures of Christianity from the main authorities on which our knowledge of their text is based.

The first and most important conclusion derived from the examination of them is the satisfactory one that they confirm the essential soundness of the existing texts. No striking or fundamental variation is shown either in the Old or the New Testament. There are no important omissions or additions of passages, and no variations which affect vital facts or doctrines. The variations of text affect minor matters, such as the order of words or the precise words used. On these matters, which are of high interest rather than of fundamental importance, they offer evidence of great value to Biblical critics. But their essential importance is their confirmation, by evidence of an earlier date than was hitherto available, of the integrity of our existing texts. In this respect they are an acquisition of epoch-making value.

The most important of them from the textual point of view are the Daniel and especially the Gospels and Acts. The Daniel MS. gives us third (or possibly even second) century authority for the original Septuagint text of this book, which at a very early date was practically superseded by the translation of Theodotion, and for which our only Greek witness has been a single manuscript not earlier than the eleventh century. It is satisfactory to find that (except in respect of the relative order of two episodes) the text of this later MS. is shown to be substantially sound.

The Gospels and Acts MS. will be found to be of the first importance for its bearing on the early history of the text of these books. Half a century ago, at the time of the production of the Revised Version of the English Bible, the main controversy lay between the supporters of the traditional 'Received Text', embodied in the vast majority of extant manuscripts and reproduced in our Authorized Version, and those who followed Hort and other scholars in preferring the evidence of the older authorities, notably the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS. and the early versions, which had become known in the course of the nineteenth century. When, however, the Received Text was decisively

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shown to be of relatively late origin, and the superiority of the earlier authorities was accepted by practically all scholars, a difference developed itself between the champions of Hort's 'Neutral Text', resting almost wholly on the Codex Vaticanus and its close allies, and those who saw in the so-called 'Western Text' evidence of a yet earlier type, of which the most notable features were marked variants in the text, especially of Luke and Acts. It is for its bearings on this controversy that the new MS. will be most eagerly examined. It would be presumptuous for the first editor to dogmatize as to the verdict given by it. This much, however, can be said without hesitation. On the one hand, it is not an out-and-out supporter of the 'Neutral' or Vatican type of text; but neither is it, on the other hand, an out-and-out supporter of the 'Western' type. It has stronger affinities with other MSS. than the Vaticanus; but it confirms none of the more noticeable readings of the Western text, such as are found in the Codex Bezae and the Old Latin and Old Syriac versions. Its closest affinities are with the group of authorities which have only of recent years been recognized as such, and which have received the title of 'Caesarean' from the proved use of authorities of this type by Origen in his later years at Caesarea, and which consequently may be presumed to have been found in the library formed at that place by Pamphilus and Eusebius.

The fuller discussion of this conclusion must be reserved for more competent scholars after more detailed examination of the evidence, which will be set out in the edition of this papyrus. For the moment it must suffice to point out that the occurrence of this type of text in a manuscript from Egypt contemporaneous with, or at latest not much later than, Origen seems to show that the type did not take its rise at Caesarea, but existed already in Egypt. It points, perhaps decisively, to the conclusion that the Vatican MS. does not represent a text of original purity dominant in Egypt throughout the second and third centuries; that other texts, with many minor variations, existed during that period in Egypt as well as elsewhere; and that the Vatican text represents the result, not of continuous unaltered tradition, but of skilled scholarship working on the best available authorities. It may still be, in result, the best single representative of the original text; that problem remains open as before: but the claim made for it of almost exclusive predominance and primitive purity is shaken.

On the other hand, the new evidence would seem to go far towards completing the disintegration of the so-called 'Western' text considered as a single family. Criticism had already shown that the term 'Western' was a

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misnomer, if it was intended to cover all texts, earlier than the Byzantine or 'Received' text, which differed from the 'Neutral' type, since such texts were found in the Old Syriac and other eastern authorities. It had further shown differences between the eastern and western representatives of these non-Neutral early texts; and that the more marked variations found in some of them were not to be regarded as characteristic of the whole group. It is this last conclusion which is more definitely confirmed by the Chester Beatty papyrus. It has many readings in common with Codex Bezae and other 'Western' authorities; but it has none of their more striking variations. It seems to confirm the view that the notion of a single 'Western' type of text must be given up, and that we must recognize that throughout the second and third centuries there was in existence a considerable variety of readings which had not yet crystallized into families. Some of these may well be superior to some which eventually found a place in the Vatican recension; but the recognition of this does not carry with it the acceptance of those other and more marked divergences which are found in some early authorities, both western and eastern. The most that can be said is that all readings which can be shown to be of early date must be considered on their merits, without being absolutely overborne by the weight of the Vatican MS.

Such are some at least of the problems to which the Chester Beatty MS. makes an important contribution. Their elucidation must be left for fuller and more mature discussion. In particular, it will be necessary to examine the relations between the papyrus and the early versions, especially the Sahidic and Bohairic, which is not attempted here.

Of the other MSS. in the collection it need only be pointed out that the textual criticism of Genesis is very materially reinforced by two substantial new witnesses of the fourth century or earlier, which are the more welcome because of the almost complete defection of both the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS. in this book. They appear on a first examination to align themselves rather with the Cottonian and Bodleian MSS. than with the Codex Alexandrinus; but it is still more significant to observe that they are closely allied to one another, and show affinities with the MSS. representing the Origenian recension of the Septuagint. In Deuteronomy textual questions of the first importance hardly arise, but it is noteworthy how much the early evidence for this book has lately been increased through the discovery of the Freer MS. (now at Washington) of the fifth century, the British Museum Coptic papyrus codex (Or. 7594, edited by Budge) of the early fourth century, and now the

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Chester Beatty papyrus of the second. The Isaiah MS. has the special interest of containing marginal notes in Coptic, which will be dealt with in their own place; but the MS. is unfortunately of small extent. The Ezekiel-Esther MS. has as yet been too slightly examined to warrant any conclusions about it, except that it contains no very marked variants. The MS. of the Apocalypse ranges itself rather with the earlier than the later extant authorities, but has an independent character of its own. Finally, the Enoch MS. is of special interest as adding the eleven final chapters to the extant portions of the original Greek of this important apocryphal book. The homily which follows in the same MS. does not appear to be otherwise known. It is rhetorical in style, but does not seem to be doctrinally or historically novel. It is to be hoped that some more competent patristic scholar may be able to identify its author.

The object of the present fasciculus is to give a general description of Mr. Chester Beatty's collection, which may serve as an introduction to the separate editions of the several papyri which are intended to follow it. The section with regard to the technique of the papyrus codex will save some repetition in the subsequent parts. It is proposed to commence the publication of the texts with the Gospels and Acts MS., which is already in the press; and it is hoped that the others will follow as quickly as the printers can deal with them. The editions of the several MSS. will contain complete transcripts of the texts, with a select critical apparatus, and introductions describing the MSS. and discussing their textual character. Simultaneously complete photographic facsimiles will be issued in separate parts.

Biblical students will not be slow to congratulate Mr. Chester Beatty on his extraordinary good fortune in acquiring this unique group of early manuscripts, and to thank him for making them so fully available for their study. As editor, I can only express my gratitude to him for placing material of such fascinating interest in my hands just at the moment when I was free to undertake it, and my regret for the imperfections of execution which more competent scholars will no doubt discover.

F. G. K.

November, 1932.

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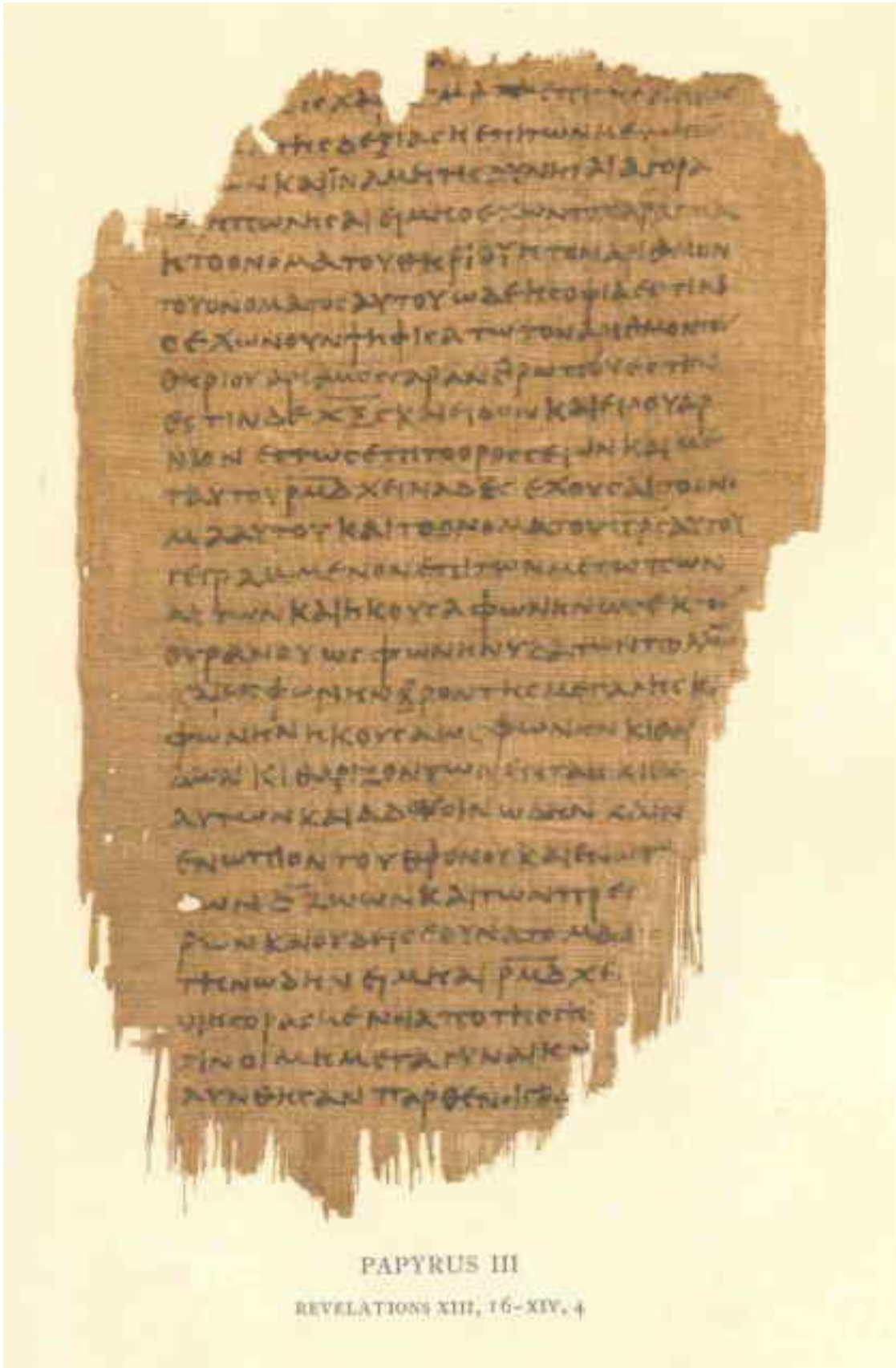
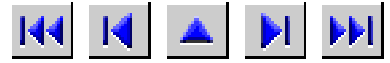
PAPYRUS I
LUKE XII, 18-37

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PAPYRUS II

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PAPYRUS III

REVELATIONS XIII, 16- XIV, 4

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PAPYRUS IV

GENESIS XXIX, 15-27

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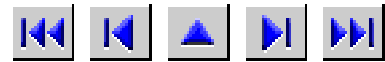
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PAPYRUS V
GENESIS XLII, 27-35

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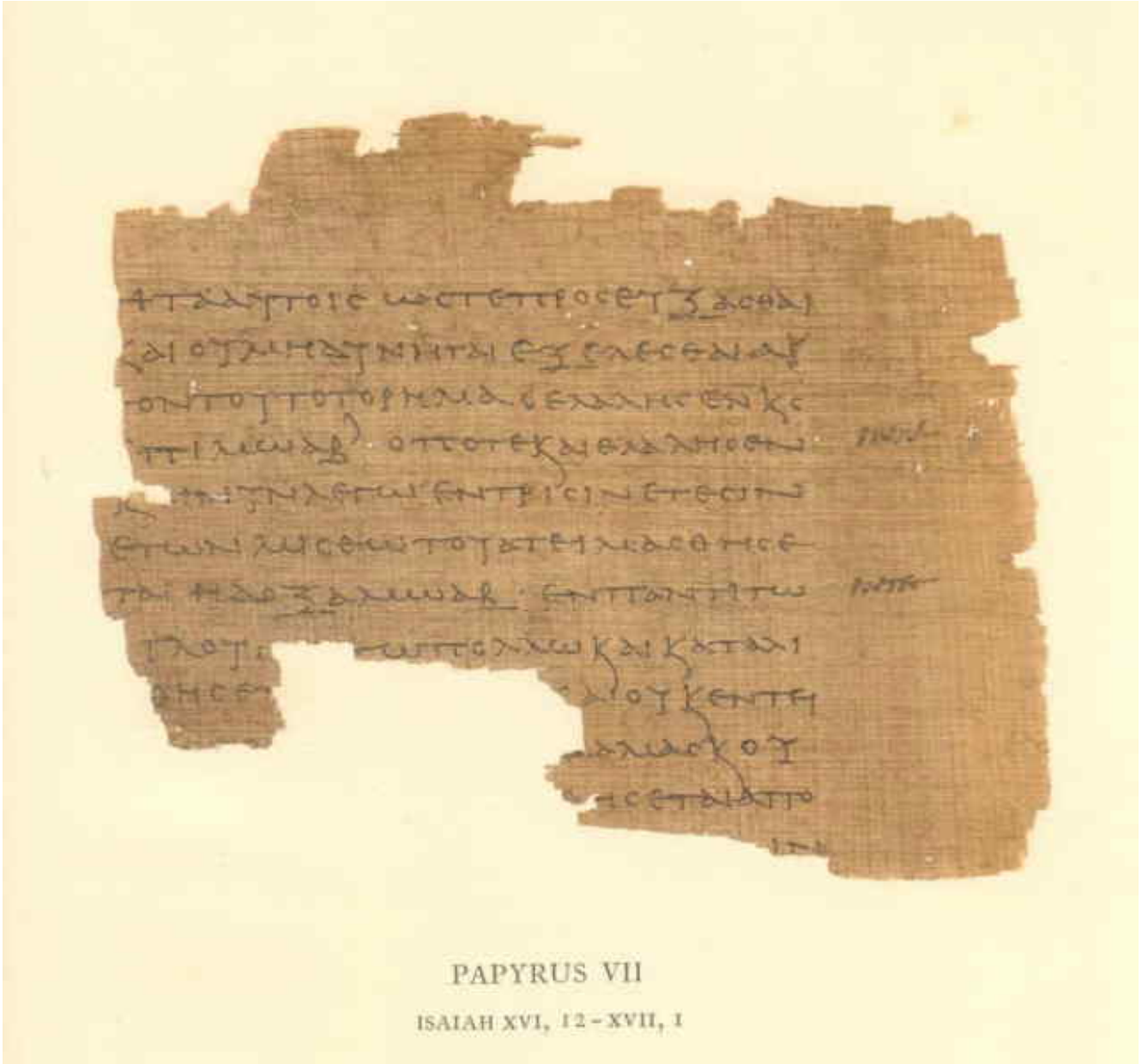
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PAPYRUS VI

NUMBERS VII, 1-13

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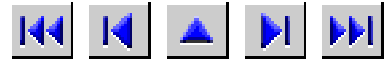
PAPYRUS VIII

JEREMIAH V, 9-13

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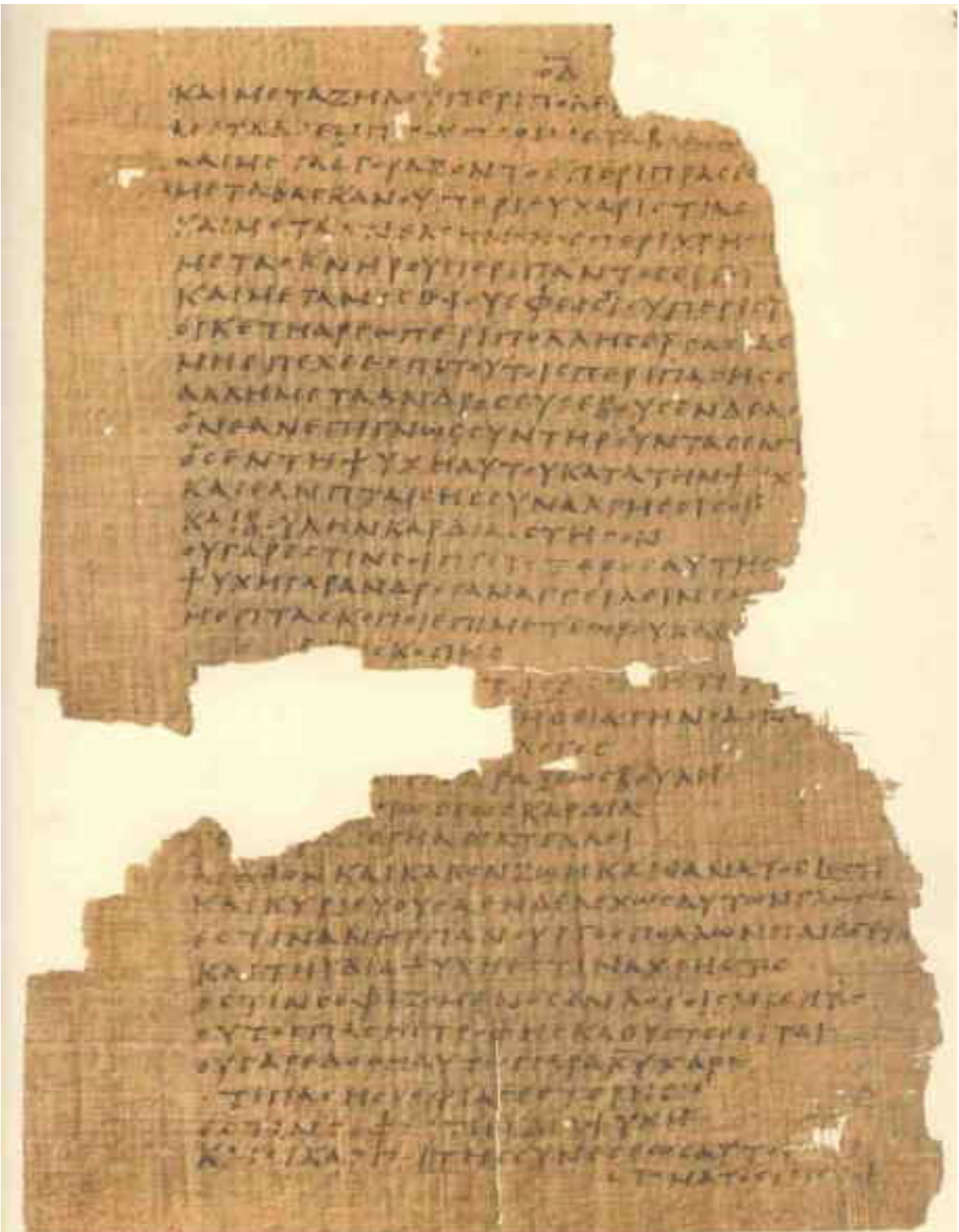
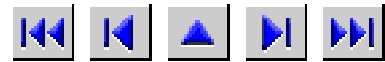
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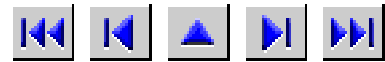


PAPYRUS XI

EXCLESIASTICUS XXXVII, 11-22

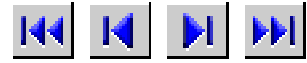
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