

Manuscripts Collection Reader Guide 4

THE PAPYRUS COLLECTIONS

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1. Introduction

Almost all surviving papyri have been recovered by archaeological excavation, and almost all of them in Egypt. Many have been excavated and published by the Egypt Exploration Society from sites at Oxyrhynchus, Hibeh, Tebtunis and the Fayum. The papyri from these sites were distributed after publication to institutions all over the world. Undistributed papyri are kept at the Papyrology Rooms of the Sackler Library, Oxford, to which enquiries about them should be directed. The collections of papyri in the Manuscript Collections of the British Library consist of *Greek* and a few *Latin* papyri. Papyri in Egyptian languages, e.g. hieroglyphics and demotic are preserved in the Department of Egyptian Antiquities of the British Museum. Coptic papyri are in the Asia, Pacific & Africa Collections of the British Library (consult the W.E. Crum *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum* London, 1905, and B. Layton, *A Catalogue of Coptic Literary Manuscripts in the British Library acquired since the year 1906*, London 1987. (A few Coptic papyri which also contain Greek were, however, transferred from Asia, Pacific & Africa Collections to the Manuscript Collections and re-numbered after the publication of Crum's catalogue, see section 2 below). Papyri in Arabic, Aramaic, and Pahlavi are also in Asia, Pacific & Africa Collections.

Papyri in this department are numbered from Papyrus 1 onwards. These numbers are also known as inventory numbers. Egerton Papyri form a separate sequence. The British Library uses the collection names Papyrus (sometimes abbreviated to Pap.) and Egerton Papyrus (Eg. Pap.) followed by the Papyrus or inventory number. International convention, however, sometimes uses P for Papyrus followed by an abbreviation representing the location and a catalogue or page number e.g. P. Lond. 1420 or P. Lond. xxxiii, or P. Lond. I, p.234. These numbers must be converted to British Library inventory numbers before the correct papyrus can be requested. Details of how to convert from these internationally used catalogue numbers and page numbers to numbers used in this department can be found in Section 4 of this Reader Guide, 'How to request Papyri'.

2. The Catalogues

The catalogues of papyri are as follows. Most of the catalogue entries include an edition of the text. Note that not all of the inventory numbers between the first and last numbers shown are necessarily included in that catalogue. Where the catalogue numbers and inventory numbers differ, the inventory number is the same as our papyrus number. This is explained in more detail in Section 4, 'How to request Papyri'.

Catalogue of the Literary Papyri in the British Museum, ed. by H. J. M. Milne, London, 1927.

Catalogue numbers P. Lit. 1-257

Inventory numbers 1-2485, Egerton Pap. 1

Greek Papyri in the British Museum:

Vol. I. Ed. by F. G. Kenyon. London, 1893; reprinted Milan, 1973.

Includes Greek papyri acquired up to 1890. The catalogue numbers are the same as the inventory numbers.

Catalogue and inventory numbers 1-131

Vol. II. Ed. by F. G. Kenyon. London, 1898; reprinted Milan, 1973.

Includes Greek papyri acquired from 1891 to 1895.

The catalogue numbers are the same as the inventory numbers.

Catalogue and inventory numbers 139-484

Vol III. Ed. by F. G. Kenyon and H. I. Bell. London, 1907; reprinted Milan, 1973. Includes Greek papyri acquired from 1896 to 1903.

The catalogue numbers are the same as the inventory numbers.

Catalogue and inventory numbers 485-1331

Vol. IV. *The Aphrodito Papyri*, ed. by H. I. Bell, with an appendix of Coptic papyri ed by W. E. Crum. London, 1910; reprinted Milan, 1973. Includes the collection of papyri from Aphrodito [Kôm Ishgau] acquired in 1903 and 1906.

Catalogue numbers 1332-1646

Inventory numbers 1332-1560, 1749-1753

Vol V. Ed. by H. I. Bell. London, 1917; reprinted Milan, 1973. Includes Greek papyri acquired in 1906 and 1907.

Catalogue numbers 1647-1911

Inventory numbers 1520-1820, 1858

[Vol VI] *Jews and Christians in Egypt*. Ed. by H. I. Bell. With three Coptic texts ed. by W. E. Crum. London, 1924.

Catalogue numbers 1912-1929

Inventory numbers 2248-2549

Vol VII. *The Zenon Archive*. Ed. by T. C. Skeat. London, 1974.

Catalogue numbers 1930-2193

Inventory numbers 610, 1912-2907, 3081

Fragments of an unknown Gospel and other early Christian Papyri. Ed. by H. I. Bell and T. C. Skeat. London, 1935.

Catalogue numbers P. Lond. Christ 1-4

Inventory numbers Egerton Pap. 2-5

Location list of the Oxyrhynchus Papyri ... compiled by R. A. Coles, London 1974. Lists the British Library's holdings of Oxyrhynchus Papyri with their British Library inventory numbers.

In addition to the above, Papyri 37-2922 are briefly described in the printed *Catalogues of Additions*, 1836-1955, and Egerton Papyri 1-36 in the printed *Catalogues of Additions* for 1931 - 1945. These catalogues should be used to find papyri acquired after the publication of the catalogues listed above. A few Coptic papyri which also contain Greek which were transferred to the Manuscript Collection from Asia, Pacific & Africa Collections and re-numbered in our sequence of Papyri can be found by referring to these *Catalogues of Additions* by the year the transfer occurred. A few Coptic papyri, which also contain Greek remain at Asia, Pacific & Africa Collections.

There is no separate published catalogue of our few Latin papyri, but information concerning them can be found in Robert Cavaenale, *Corpus papyrorum latinarum*, Wiesbaden, 1956-8, and Albert Bruckner and Robert Marichal, *Chartae latinae antiquiores*, Otten and Lausanne, 1954, which can be consulted in the Humanities Reading Room (floor 1).

3. Ostraca

About 4000 ostraca (potsherds with writing) in Greek were transferred to the British Library from the Department of Egyptian Antiquities of the British Museum in 1932, 1933 and 1967, and still retain the inventory numbers allotted to them in that Department. They are numbered 5790-63859 although not all of the numbers between these are in the Manuscript Collections, as the Department of Egyptian Antiquities retain those that are not in Greek (eg in demotic). There are also 15 Egerton ostraca.

There is no printed catalogue of the ostraca, but three hundred of them were published in Ulrich Wilcken, *Griechische Ostraka aus Aegypten und Nubien*, 2 vols. Leipzig and Berlin, 1899. Staff library only. Copy available in the Humanities Reading Room (floor 1).

4. How to request Papyri

Remember that when requesting a papyrus, the collection name is Papyrus (sometimes abbreviated to Pap.) or Egerton Papyrus (sometimes Eg. Pap.) followed by the papyrus number. International conventions of referring to papyri may involve converting such references (e.g. P. Lond. 1420) to our Papyrus numbers (e.g. Papyrus 1441). The method of conversion for each of the catalogues described in Section 2 above is indicated below. Note, however, that numbers preceded by *P. inv.* or *B. M. inv.* or *B. L. inv.* are inventory numbers and therefore need no conversion, although the collection name should be written as Papyrus followed by the papyrus number.

P. Lond.: refers to the *Catalogue of Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, (described more fully in section 2 above). Where the catalogue and inventory numbers differ, convert the catalogue numbers (in bold figures) to the inventory numbers (in light figures) in the following way:

- (a) Vols. I-III: Reference to papyri in these volumes is usually made by volume number and page number, e.g. P. Lond. I, p. 234, because the entries are arranged chronologically, not in numerical order. Where the page number and catalogue number conflict, the page number is likely to be correct. In these catalogues, the *catalogue* number is the same as

the *inventory* number, which is also the same as the *Papyrus* number, e.g. P. Lond. I, xxxiii = Pap. 33. The papyri in the first two volumes are numbered with roman numerals.

- (b) In Vols. IV-VII, the catalogue number has to be converted to an inventory number by consulting the volume, e.g. P. Lond. IV, 1333 = Pap. 1333, but P. Lond. 1420 = Pap. 1441. Remember to convert *catalogue* to *inventory* numbers, not the *inventory* to *catalogue* numbers, and to replace the word *inventory* by *Papyrus* when making a request.

P. Jews. (Also called P. Lond. VI.) refers to H. I. Bell, *Jews and Christians in Egypt ... illustrated by texts from Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, 1924. The catalogue numbers continue from P. Lond. V, e.g. P. Jews 1912 = Pap. 2248 verso. See section 2 above.

P. Abinn. refers to *The Abinnaeus Archive*, edited by H. I. Bell, V. Martin, E. G. Turner, D. van Berchem, Oxford 1962. Staff library only. Copy available in the Humanities Reading Room (floor 1). Concordance on p. xiii (e.g. P. Abinn. 1 = P. London. 447, which is Pap. 447).

P. Oxy. refers to Grenfell, Hunt, et al, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 60 vols. (to 1993) London, 1898 -. Reference is usually made in the form of P. Oxy. 2477 (=Pap. 3060) or P. Oxy. IV 659 (= Pap. 1533). The correct reference to our Papyrus number can be found by consulting R. A. Coles, *Location list of the Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, London, 1974. If necessary, the departmental copies of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* [which have manuscript annotations of present locations up to Vol. XIV, and thereafter of B. M. (B. L.) papyri only] can be consulted by staff. A set is also available in the Humanities Reading Room (floor 1).

P. Tebt. refers to *Tebtunis Papyri*, Grenfell, Hunt and Smyly, Vols. I, II, III.1, III.2., IV, Oxford, 1902-76. Staff library only. Copy available in the Humanities Reading Room (floor 1).

P. Hib. refers to *Hibeh Papyri*, 2 Vols. (Vol. I, Grenfell and Hunt; Vol. II, Turner and Lenger), London, 1906. Staff library only. Copy available in the Humanities Reading Room (floor 1). Consult R. A. Coles, *Location list of Oxyrhynchus Papyri*.

P. Fay. refers to *Fayum Towns and their Papyri*, Grenfell, Hunt and Hogarth, London, 1990. Staff library only. Copy available in the Humanities Reading Room (floor 1). Consult R. A. Coles, *Location list of Oxyrhynchus Papyri*.

P. Lit. Lond. refers to H. J. M. Milne, *Catalogue of the Literary Papyri in the British Museum*, London 1927. See section 2, above.

P. Lond. Christ. refers to H. I. Bell and T. C. Skeat, *Fragments of an unknown Gospel and other early Christian Papyri*, London, 1935. See section 2, above.

Papyri with inventory numbers between 10,000 and 13,000 will be found in the Department of Egyptian Antiquities if they are in the British Museum.

For papyri with numbers between 01 and 02651, see section 9, Papyrus fragments, at the end of this leaflet.

5. New Testament papyri

International convention refers to many of the most important New Testament papyri by the letter P followed by a small superscript number, e.g. P¹⁸. For those papyri which are housed here, these references must be converted to our Papyrus numbers. Thus P¹⁸ = British Library Papyrus 2053. Several of the most authoritative books about New Testament papyri include a location register or concordance from the international reference to the reference used in the library where the papyrus is housed (usually with bibliographical references to published editions of the text) including the following. Those marked with an asterisk are currently available in the Manuscripts Reading Room. The remainder may be consulted in the Humanities Reading Room (floor 1).

- * Bruce M Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1968. Concordance on pp. 247-256. (This concordance was omitted from the 3rd edition of 1992.) Covers P¹ - P⁷⁶ and includes notes concerning P⁷⁷ - P⁸¹.

F. G. Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, 3rd ed., London, 1975. Concordance on pp. 67-77. Covers P¹ - P⁷⁵ with some omissions.

- * Kurt & Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids and Leiden, 2nd ed., 1989. Concordance on pp. 96-102. (in German ed. of 1982, pp.106-111). Covers P¹ - P⁹⁶.
- * Philip W. Comfort, *Early Manuscripts & Modern Translations of the New Testament*, Wheaton, Illinois, 1990. Concordance on pp. 32-71. Covers P¹ - P⁹⁵.
- * Eberhard & Erwin Nestle, revised Kurt Aland, et al, *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece*, 26th ed., Stuttgart, 1979. Concordance on pp. 684-689. Covers P¹ - P⁸⁸. [27th ed., 1993, pp. 684-689, P¹⁻⁹⁸]
- * Kurt Aland, *Kurzgefasste Liste der Griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments, I. Gesamtübersicht*, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1994, Concordance on pp. 3-16. Covers P¹ - P⁹⁹.

Kurt Aland, *Repertorium der Griechischen Christlichen Papyri I, Biblische Papyri*, Berlin and NY, 1976. See forward, page 9. Covers P¹ - P⁸⁸.

Joseph van Haelst, *Catalogue des Papyrus Littéraires, Juifs et Chrétiens*, Paris, 1976. Concordance on pp. 379-380. Covers P¹

6. A note about multi-part papyri

Many papyri have been divided into several different parts or frames. Note that a separate ticket is required for each part. In some cases however, the published catalogue description does not indicate the separate parts. In these cases staff can show readers copies of the departmental location lists which indicate the number of frames for each papyrus. Some frames contain fragments from more than one papyrus. This is usually also shown in the departmental location lists.

7. Facsimiles of papyri

- * *Greek Papyri in the British Museum. Facsimiles. Vol. I*, London 1893. Plates of all the papyri of which the texts are printed in *Greek Papyri in the British Museum, Vol. I*. Papyrus 1 - Papyrus 131.
- * *Greek Papyri in the British Museum. Facsimiles. Vol. II*, London, 1898. Plates of the papyri of which the texts are printed in *Greek Papyri in the British Museum, Vol. II*. Papyrus 139 - Papyrus 483.
- * *Greek Papyri in the British Museum. Facsimiles. Vol. III*, London, 1907. Plates of the papyri of which the texts are printed in *Greek Papyri in the British Museum, Vol. III*, with the addition of five Aphrodito papyri. Papyrus 604 - Papyrus 1371.

MS Facsimile 5, vols. I-III

Another set of the facsimile series listed above.

MS Facsimile 2

Aristotle's Constitution of Athens (Pap. 131v) ed F.G. Kenyon, London, 1891

MS Facsimile 3

Herodas (Pap. 135) ed. F.G. Kenyon, London, 1892

MS Facsimile 4

Bacchylides (Pap. 733) ed. F.G. Kenyon, London, 1898

- * *Catalogue of Ancient Manuscripts in the British Museum, Part I, Greek*, by E. Maunde Thompson & G. F. Warner, London, 1881. Includes plates of Papyri 37, 98, 107, 108, 114, 115.
- * *Facsimiles of Biblical Manuscripts in the British Museum*, by F. G. Kenyon, London, 1900. Includes Papyrus 2

8. Exhibited papyri

Usually, there is always an example of papyri exhibited in the Sir John Ritblat Gallery.

9. Papyrus fragments

Fragments of papyri, when assembled and framed, are assigned a number between 01 and 02651, although only a few have so far been so treated. For a brief description of the fragments, see T. S. Pattie, 'A Little-known collection of papyri in the British Library' in *Proceedings of the XVIII International Congress of Papyrology 1986, vol. 1*, Athens, 1988, pp. 147-150 (= departmental pamphlet no. 3746).