

'Oldest' papyrus is finally decoded

June 1 2006

Greek scientists using modern technology say they have decoded the text of the world's oldest literary papyrus.

The Derveni Papyrus has been in the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki since its charred fragments were found in the remains of a funeral pyre in 1962, ekathimerini.com reported Thursday.

Researchers have described the papyrus as a "philosophical treatise based on a poem in the Orphic tradition and dating to the second half of the 5th century B.C."

"It is particularly important to us as it is the oldest (papyrus) bearing Greek text," Apostolos Pierris, director of the Patras Institute of Philosophical Research, said.

Institute experts, along with scientists from Britain's Oxford University and Brigham Young University in the United States, plan to reassemble the papyrus. The researchers told ekathimerini.com it is an invaluable document for the study of ancient Greek religion, philosophy and literary criticism.

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