Codex Siniaticus: Fact or Fiction

(Regarding claims of modern scholars)
Source: Wikipedia

(Note: links have been left in place to identify areas of further study. They may be activated on the Wikipedia site, also highlights are just my areas of note)

The Monastery

1

The oldest record of monastic life at Mount Sinai comes from the travel journal ==written in Latin b==y a pilgrim woman named Egeria (Etheria; St Sylvia of Aquitaine) about 381/2–386.[16][17]

The monastery was built by order of Emperor Justinian I (reigned 527–565), enclosing the Chapel of the Burning Bush (also known as "Saint Helen's Chapel") ordered to be built by Empress Consort Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, at the site where Moses is supposed to have seen the burning bush.[18] The living bush on the grounds is purportedly the one seen by Moses.[19]

2

Structurally the monastery's king post truss is the oldest known surviving roof truss in the world.[20] The site is sacred to Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.[21]

A mosque was created by converting an existing chapel during the Fatimid Caliphate (909–1171), which was in regular use until the era of the Mamluk Sultanate in the 13th century and is still in use today on special occasions.

During the Ottoman Empire, the mosque was in desolate condition; it was restored in the early 20th century.[22]

3

During the seventh century, the isolated Christian anchorites of the Sinai were eliminated: only the fortified monastery remained.

The monastery is still surrounded by the massive fortifications that have preserved it. Until the twentieth century, access was through a door high in the outer walls.

4

From the time of the First Crusade, the presence of Crusaders in the Sinai until 1270 spurred the interest of European Christians and increased the number of intrepid pilgrims who visited the monastery. The monastery was supported by its dependencies in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Crete, Cyprus and Constantinople.

Ossuary in Saint Catherine's Monastery

The monastery, along with several dependencies in the area, constitute the entire Church of Sinai, which is headed by an archbishop, who is also the abbot of the monastery. The exact administrative status of the church within the Eastern Orthodox Church is ambiguous: by some, including the church itself,[23]

5

it is considered autocephalous,[24][25] by others an autonomous church under the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem.[26] The archbishop is traditionally consecrated by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem;

6

in recent centuries he has usually resided in Cairo. During the period of the Crusades which was marked by bitterness between the Orthodox and Catholic churches, the monastery was patronized by both the Byzantine emperors and the rulers of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and their respective courts.

7

The library, founded sometime between 548 and 565, is the oldest continuously operating library in the world.[28] The monastery library preserves the second largest collection of early codices and manuscripts in the world, outnumbered only by the Vatican Library.[29] It contains Greek, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Syriac, Georgian, Arabic, Ethiopic/Ge'ez, Latin, Armenian, Church Slavonic, and Caucasian Albanian[30] manuscripts and books, and very rare Hebrew Language,[31] some Coptic books.[8]

8

In May 1844 and February 1859, Constantin von Tischendorf visited the monastery for research and discovered the Codex Sinaiticus, dating from the 4th century, at the time the oldest almost completely preserved manuscript of the Bible. The finding from 1859 left the monastery for Russia, in circumstances that had been long disputed. But in 2003 Russian scholars discovered the donation act for the manuscript signed by the Council of Cairo Metochion and Archbishop Callistratus on 13 November 1869. The monastery received 9000 rubles as a gift from Tsar Alexander II of Russia.

9

[32] The Codex was sold by Stalin in 1933 to the British Museum and is now in the British Library, London, where it

is on public display. Prior to September 1, 2009, a previously unseen fragment of Codex Sinaiticus was discovered in the monastery's library,[33][34] as well as among the New Finds of 1975.[35][8]

10

On other visits (1855, 1857) Constantin von Tischendorf also amassed there more valuable manuscripts (Greek, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Georgian, Syriac) and took them with him to St Petersburg and Leipzig, where they are stored today.[36][37][38][39][40][41][42]

11

In February 1892, Agnes S. Lewis discovered an old Syriac Sinaiticus, a Gospel palimpsest manuscript in St Catherine Monastery's library that became known as the Syriac Sinaiticus and is still in its[whose?] possession.[43] Agnes and her sister Margaret D. Gibson returned in 1893 with the Cambridge team of the two scholars that included their wives, and also J. Rendel Harris to photograph and transcribe the manuscript in its entirety, as well as to prepare the first catalogues of the Syriac and Arabic manuscripts.[44][45][46] Only among the New Finds two additional palimpsest manuscripts came to light containing additional passages of the Old Syriac Gosples.[47]

External video

🎬 The Icons of Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt (Archived), J. Paul Getty Museum

The Monastery also has a copy of the Ashtiname of Muhammad, in which the Islamic prophet Muhammad is claimed to have bestowed his protection upon the monastery.[48]

Additionally, the monastery houses a copy of Mok'c'evay K'art'lisay, a collection of supplementary books of the Kartlis Cxovreba, dating from the 9th century.[49]

12

The most important manuscripts have since been filmed or digitized, and so are accessible to scholars. With planning assistance from Ligatus, a research center of the University of the Arts London, the library was extensively renovated, reopening at the end of 2017.[50][51][8]

13

Sinai Palimpsests Project

Since 2011, a team of imaging scientists[52][8] and experienced scholars in the decipherment of palimpsest manuscripts [53][8] from the U.S. and Europe have photographed, digitized, and studied the library's collection of palimpsests during the international Sinai palimpsests project.[54][8][18][55]

Palimpsests are notable for having been reused one or more times over the centuries. Since parchment was expensive and time-consuming to produce, monks would erase certain texts with orange juice or scrape them off and write over them.[56][8] Though the original texts were once assumed to be lost,[57] the imaging scientists used narrowband multispectral imaging techniques and technologies to reveal features that were difficult to see with the human eye, including ink residues and small grooves in the parchment.[18][29] Each page took approximately eight minutes to scan completely.[29] These images have subsequently been digitized and are now freely available for research at the UCLA Online Library for scholarly use.[8]

14

As of June 2018, at least more than 160 palimpsests were identified, with over 6,800 pages of texts recovered.[8] The

newer finds were discovered in a secluded storage area of the St George Tower in 1975.[58][59][60][61][62][63] Highlights include
"108 pages of previously unknown Greek poems and the oldest-known recipe attributed to the Greek physician Hippocrates;" additional folios for the transmission of the Old Syriac Gospels;[47] two unattested witnesses of an early Christian apocryphal text the Dormition of Mary (Transitus Mariae) of which most of the Greek text is lost;[64]
a previously unknown martyrdom of Patriklos of Caesarea (Palestine),
one of the eleven followers of Pamphilus of Caesarea;
as well as insight into dead languages such as the previously hardly attested Caucasian Albanian[65][66] and Christian Palestinian Aramaic,

the local dialect of the early Byzantine period, with many unparalleled text witnesses.[8]

15

Works of art

The complex houses irreplaceable works of art: mosaics, the best collection of early icons in the world, many in encaustic, as well as liturgical objects, chalices and reliquaries, and church buildings.

The large icon collection begins with a few dating to the 5th (possibly) and 6th centuries, which are unique survivals; the monastery having been untouched by Byzantine iconoclasm, and never sacked. The oldest icon on an Old Testament theme is also preserved there. A project to catalogue the collections has been ongoing since the 1960s.

The monastery was an important centre for the development of the hybrid style of Crusader art, and still retains over 120 icons created in the style, by far the largest collection in existence. Many were evidently created by Latins, probably monks, based in or around the monastery in the 13th century.[67]

16

The Codex Sinaiticus (Shelfmarks and references: London, British Library, Add MS 43725; Gregory-Aland nº ℵ [Aleph] or 01, [Soden δ 2]), or "Sinai Bible", is one of the four great uncial codices, ancient, handwritten copies of a Christian Bible in Greek. It is the oldest complete copy of the New Testament.[1] The codex is a historical treasure.[2]

The codex is an Alexandrian text-type manuscript written in uncial letters on parchment and dated paleographically

to the mid-4th century. Scholarship considers the Codex Sinaiticus to be one of the most important Greek texts of the New Testament, along with the Codex Vaticanus. Until Constantin von Tischendorf's discovery of the Sinaiticus text in 1844, the Codex Vaticanus was unrivaled.[3]

The Codex Sinaiticus came to the attention of scholars in the 19th century at Saint Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai Peninsula, with further material discovered in the 20th and 21st centuries.

17

Although parts of the codex are scattered across four libraries around the world, most of the manuscript is held today in the British Library in London, where it is on public display.[4][5]

Since its discovery, study of the Codex Sinaiticus has proven to be useful to scholars for critical studies of biblical text.

While large portions of the Old Testament are missing, it is assumed that the codex originally contained the whole of both Testaments.[6]

About half of the Greek Old Testament (or <u>Septuagint</u>) survived, along with a complete <u>New Testament</u>, the entire <u>Deuterocanonical books</u>, the <u>Epistle of Barnabas</u> and portions of <u>The Shepherd of Hermas</u>.[7]

The text of the Old Testament <mark>contains</mark> the following passages:[19][20]

- <u>Genesis</u> 23:19 – Genesis 24:46 – fragments
- <u>Leviticus</u> 20:27 – Leviticus 22:30
- <u>Numbers</u> 5:26–Numbers 7:20 – fragments
- <u>1 Chronicles</u> 9:27–1 Chronicles 19:17
- <u>Ezra–Nehemiah</u> (from Esdr. 9:9).
- <u>Book of Psalms</u>–<u>Wisdom of Sirach</u>
- <u>Book of Esther</u>
- <u>Book of Tobit</u>
- <u>Book of Judith</u>
- <u>Book of Joel</u>–<u>Book of Malachi</u>
- <u>Book of Isaiah</u>
- <u>Book of Jeremiah</u>
- <u>Book of Lamentations</u>
- <u>1 Maccabees</u>–<u>4 Maccabees</u>

John 7:52–8:12 without the pericope 7:53–8:11 in Sinaiticus

The text includes two other books, the Epistle of Barnabas and part of The Shepherd of Hermas as part of the New Testament, which also lacks several passages:[21]

<mark>Omitted verses</mark>

- Gospel of Matthew 12:47, 16:2b-3, 17:21, 18:11, 23:14, 24:35;
- Gospel of Mark 1:33, 7:16, 9:44, 9:46, 10:36, 11:26, 15:28, 16:9–20 (Long ending of the Gospel Mark, referring to the appearance of Jesus to many people following the resurrection)
- Gospel of Luke 10:32 (Likely omitted due to haplography resulting from homeoteleuton; the verse was added by a later corrector in lower margin.), 17:36
- Gospel of John 5:4, Pericope adulterae (7:53–8:11) (see Image "John 7:53–8:11"), 16:15, 19:20, 20:5b-6, 21:25
- Acts of the Apostles 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29;[22]
- Epistle to the Romans 16:24

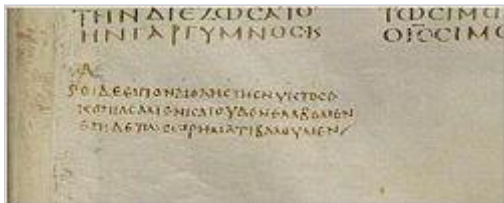Page of the codex with text of Matthew 6:4–32

<mark>Omitted phrases</mark>

- Matthew 5:44 εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς καταρωμένους ὑμᾶς, καλῶς ποιεῖτε τοῖς μισοῦσιν ὑμᾶς (bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you);[23]
- Matthew 6:13 – ὅτι σοῦ ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. ἀμήν (For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.) omitted.[24]
- Matthew 10:39a – ο ευρων την ψυχην αυτου απολεσει αυτην, και (He who finds his life will lose it, and);[25]
- Matthew 15:6 – η την μητερα (αυτου) (or (his) mother);[26]
- Matthew 20:23 και το βαπτισμα ο εγω βαπτιζομαι βαπτισθησεσθε (and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with)[27]
- Matthew 23:35 – υιου βαραχιου (son of Barachi'ah) omitted; this omission is supported only by codex 59

(by the first hand), three Evangelistaria (ℓ 6, ℓ 13, and ℓ 185), and Eusebius.[28]

- Mark 1:1 – υιου θεου "the Son of God" omitted.[29]
- Mark 10:7 – omitted και προσκολληθησεται προς την γυναικα αυτου (and be joined to his wife), as in codices Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1209, Codex Athous Lavrensis, 892, ℓ 48, syr^s, goth.[30]
- Luke 9:55b-56a – καὶ εἶπεν, Οὐκ οἴδατε ποίου πνεύματος ἐστὲ ὑμεῖς; ὁ γὰρ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων ἀπολέσαι ἀλλὰ σῶσαι (and He said: "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of; for the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives but to save them) omitted as in codices: P^{45}, P^{75}, B, C, L, Θ, Ξ, 33, 700, 892, 1241, syr, cop^{bo};[31]
- John 4:9 – ου γαρ συνχρωνται Ιουδαιοι Σαμαριταις (Jews have no dealings with Samaritans), it is one of so-called Western non-interpolations; omission is supported by D, a, b, d, e, j, cop^{fay}, it was supplemented by the first corrector (before leaving scriptorium);[32]

==Some passages were excluded by the correctors:==

Additional phrase to John 21:6 on the margin – οι δε ειπον δι ολης της νυκτος εκοπιασαμεν και ουδεν ελαβομεν επι δε τω σω ρηματι βαλουμεν

- Matthew 24:36 – phrase ουδε ο υιος (nor the Son) the first corrector marked as doubtful, but the second corrector (b) removed the mark.[33]
- Mark 10:40 ητοιμασται υπο του πατρος μου (instead of ητοιμασται) – the first corrector marked "υπο του πατρος μου" as doubtful, but the second corrector removed the mark.[34]
- In Luke 11:4 ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ (but deliver us from evil) included by the original scribe, marked by the first corrector (a) as doubtful, but the third corrector (c) removed the mark.[35]
- Christ's agony at Gethsemane (Luke 22:43–44) – included by the original scribe, marked by the first corrector as doubtful, but the third corrector (c) removed the mark.[36]
- Luke 23:34a, "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" – it was included by the first scribe, marked by the first corrector as doubtful, but a third corrector removed the mark.[37]

These omissions are typical for the Alexandrian text-type.[38]

Matthew 8:13 (see Luke 7:10)

It has additional text: καὶ ὑποστρέψας ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ εὗρεν τὸν παῖδα ὑγιαίνοντα (and when the centurion returned to the house in that hour, he found the slave well) as well as codices C, (N), Θ, (0250), f¹, (33, 1241), g¹, syrʰ.[39]

Matthew 10:12 (see Luke 10:5)

It reads λέγοντες εἰρήνη τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ (say peace to be this house) after αυτην. The reading was deleted by the first corrector, but the second corrector restored it. The reading is used by manuscripts: Bezae, Regius, Washingtonianus, Koridethi, manuscripts f¹, 22, 1010 (1424), it, vgᶜˡ.[40][41]

Matthew 27:49 (see John 19:34)

In Matthew 27:49 the codex contains added text: ἄλλος δὲ λαβὼν λόγχην ἔνυξεν αὐτοῦ τὴν πλευράν, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ὕδορ καὶ αἷμα (the other took a spear and pierced His side, and immediately came out water and blood). This reading was derived from John 19:34 and occurs in other manuscripts of the Alexandrian text-type.[42]

Unique and other textual variants

Page from facsimile edition (1862); 1 Chr 9:27–10:11

Matthew 7:22 – It has additional word πολλα (numerous): "and cast out numerous demons in your name?". It is not supported by any other manuscript.[43]

Matthew 8:12 – It has ἐξελεύσονται (will go out) instead of ἐκβληθήσονται (will be thrown). This variant is supported only by one Greek manuscript Uncial 0250, and by Codex Bobiensis, syr[c, s, p, pal], arm, Diatessaron.[44]

Matthew 13:54 – Ordinary reading εις την πατριδα αυτου (to his own country) changed into εις την αντιπατριδα αυτου (to his own Antipatris), and in Acts 8:5 εις την πολιν της Σαμαρειας replaced into εις την πολιν της Καισαριας. These two variants do not exist in any other manuscript, and it seems they were made by a scribe. According to T. C. Skeat they suggest Caesarea as a place in which the manuscript was made.[45]

Matthew 16:12 – It has textual variant της ζυμης των αρτων των Φαρισαιων και Σαδδουκαιων (leaven of bread of the Pharisees and Sadducees) supported only by Codex Corbeiensis I and Curetonian Gospels.

Luke 1:26 – "Nazareth" is called "a city of Judea".

Luke 2:37 – εβδομηκοντα (seventy), all manuscripts have ογδοηκοντα (eighty);[46]

John 1:28 – <mark>The second corrector made unique textual variant</mark> Βηθαραβα. This textual variant has only codex 892, syr^h and several other manuscripts.[47]

John 1:34 – It reads ὁ ἐκλεκτός (chosen one) together with the manuscripts

{\displaystyle {\mathfrak {P}}}

☐5,

{\displaystyle {\mathfrak {P}}}

☐106, b, e, ff², syr^c, and syr^s instead of ordinary word υἱος (son).

John 2:3 – Where ordinarily reading "And when they wanted wine", or "And when wine failed", Codex Sinaiticus has "And they had no wine, because the wine of the marriage feast was finished" (supported by a and j);

John 6:10 – It reads τρισχιλιοι (three thousands) for πεντακισχιλιοι (five thousands); the second corrector changed into πεντακισχιλιοι.[48]

Acts 11:20 – It reads εὐαγγελιστας (Evangelists) instead of ἑλληνιστάς (Hellenists);[49]

In Acts 14:9, the word "not" inserted before "heard"; in Hebr. 2:4 "harvests" instead of "distributions"; in 1 Peter 5:13-word "Babylon" replaced into "Church".[49]

2 Timothy 4:10 – it reads Γαλλιαν (Gaul) for Γαλατιαν (Galatia) This reading of the codex is supported by Ephraemi Rescriptus, 81, 104, 326, 436.[50]

18

Witness of some readings of "majority"

It is the oldest witness for the phrase μη αποστερησης (do not defraud) in Mark 10:19. This phrase was not included by the manuscripts: Codex Vaticanus (added by second corrector), Codex Cyprius, Codex Washingtonianus, Codex Athous Lavrensis, f[1], f[13], 28, 700, 1010, 1079, 1242, 1546, 2148, ℓ 10, ℓ 950, ℓ 1642, ℓ 1761, syrˢ, arm, geo. This is a variant of the majority manuscripts.[51]

In Mark 13:33 it is the oldest witness of the variant και προσευχεσθε (and pray). Codex B and D do not include this passage.[52]

In Luke 8:48 it has θυγατερ (daughter) as in the Byzantine manuscripts, instead of the Alexandrian θυγατηρ (daughter), supported by the manuscripts: B K L W Θ.[53]
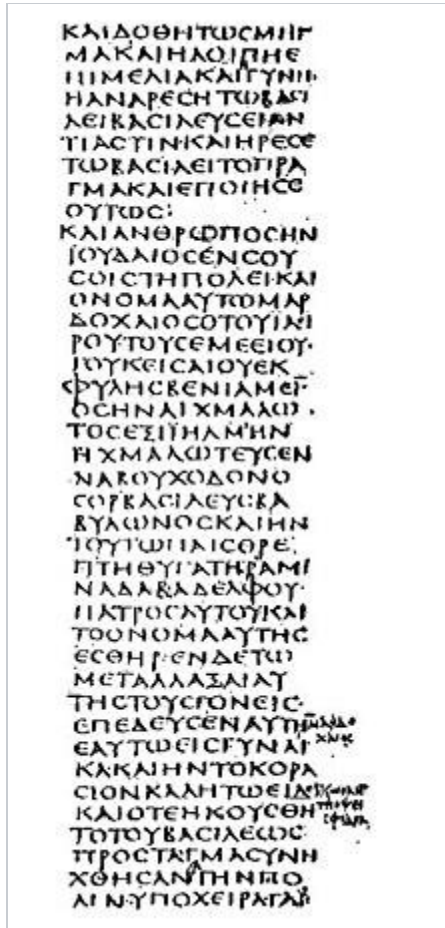
Orthodox reading

In 1 John 5:6 it has textual variant δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνεύματος (through water and blood and spirit) together with the manuscripts: Codex Alexandrinus, 104, 424ᶜ, 614, 1739ᶜ, 2412, 2495, ℓ 598ᵐ, syrʰ, copˢᵃ, copᵇᵒ, Origen.[54][n 3] Bart D. Ehrman says this was a corrupt reading from a proto-orthodox scribe,[55] although this conclusion has not gained wide support.[56]

19

Text-type and relationship to other manuscripts

For most of the New Testament, the Codex Sinaiticus is in general agreement with Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1209 and Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, attesting the Alexandrian text-type. A notable example of an agreement between the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus texts is that they both omit the word εικη ('without cause', 'without reason', 'in vain') from Matthew 5:22 "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement".[n 4]

A portion of the Codex Sinaiticus, containing Esther.[57]

In John 1:1–8:38, the Codex Sinaiticus differs from Vaticanus and all other Alexandrian manuscripts. It is in closer agreement with Codex Bezae in support of the Western text-type. For example, in John 1:4 Sinaiticus and Codex Bezae are the only Greek manuscripts with textual variant ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἐστίν (in him is life) instead of ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν (in him was life). This variant is supported by Vetus Latina and some Sahidic manuscripts. This portion has a large number of corrections.[58] There are a number of

differences between Sinaiticus and Vaticanus; Hoskier enumerated 3036 differences:

Matt–656
Mark–567
Luke–791
John–1022
Total—3036.[59]

A large number of these differences are due to iotacisms and variants in transcribing Hebrew names. These two manuscripts were not written in the same scriptorium. According to Fenton Hort Sinaiticus and Vaticanus were derived from a common original much older source, "the date of which cannot be later than the early part of the second century, and may well be yet earlier".[60]

Example of differences between Sinaiticus and Vaticanus in Matt 1:18–19:

Codex Sinaiticus	Codex Vaticanus

Του δε ΙΥ ΧΥ η γενεσις ουτως ην μνηστευθισης της μητρος αυτου Μαριας τω Ιωσηφ πριν ην συνελθιν αυτους ευρεθη εν γαστρι εχουσα εκ ΠΝΣ αγιου Ιωσηφ δε ο ανηρ αυτης δικαιος ων και μη θελων αυτην παραδιγματισαι εβουληθη λαθρα απολυσαι αυτην	Του δε ΧΥ ΙΥ η γενεσις ουτως ην μνηστευθεισης της μητρος αυτου Μαριας τω Ιωσηφ πριν ην συνελθειν αυτους ευρεθη εν γαστρι εχουσα εκ ΠΝΣ αγιου Ιωσηφ δε ο ανηρ αυτης δικαιος ων και μη θελων αυτην δειγματισαι εβουληθη λαθρα απολυσαι αυτην

B. H. Streeter remarked a great agreement between the codex and Vulgate of Jerome. According to him, Origen brought to Caesarea the Alexandrian text-type that was used in this codex, and used by Jerome.[61]
Between the 4th and 12th centuries,

seven or more correctors worked on this codex, making it one of the most corrected manuscripts in existence.[62] Tischendorf during his investigation in Petersburg enumerated 14,800 corrections only in the portion which was held in Petersburg (2/3 of the codex).[63]

According to David C. Parker the full codex has about 23,000 corrections.[64]

In addition to these corrections some letters were marked by dots as doubtful (e.g. ΤΉ). Corrections represent the Byzantine text-type, just like corrections in codices: Bodmer II, Regius (L), Ephraemi (C), and Sangallensis (Δ). They were discovered by Edward Ardron Hutton.[65]

20

Early history

Provenance

Little is known of the manuscript's early history.

According to Hort, it was written in the West, probably in Rome, as suggested by the fact that the chapter division in the Acts of the Apostles common to Sinaiticus and Vaticanus occurs in no other Greek manuscript, but is

found in several manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate.[66] Robinson countered this argument, suggesting that this system of chapter divisions was introduced into the Vulgate by Jerome himself, as a result of his studies at Caesarea.[67] According to Kenyon the forms of the letters are Egyptian and they were found in Egyptian papyri of earlier date.[68] Gardthausen[69] Ropes and Jellicoe thought it was written in Egypt. Harris believed that the manuscript came from the library of Pamphilus at Caesarea, Palestine.[68] Streeter,[61] Skeat, and Milne also believed that it was produced in Caesarea.[45]

21

Date

The codex has been dated paleographically to the mid-4th century. It could not have been written before 325 because it contains the Eusebian Canons, which is a terminus post quem. "The terminus ante quem is less certain, but, according to Milne and Skeat, is not likely to be much later than about 360."[16]

Tischendorf theorized that Codex Sinaiticus was one of the fifty copies of the Bible commissioned from Eusebius by Roman emperor Constantine after his conversion to Christianity (De vita Constantini, IV, 37).[70] This hypothesis

was supported by Pierre Batiffol,[71] Gregory and Skeat believed that it was already in production when Constantine placed his order, but had to be suspended in order to accommodate different page dimensions.[45]

Frederic G. Kenyon argued: "There is not the least sign of either of them ever having been at Constantinople. The fact that Sinaiticus was collated with the manuscript of Pamphilus so late as the sixth century seems to show that it was not originally written at Caesarea".[72]

22

Scribes and correctors

Tischendorf believed that four separate scribes (whom he named A, B, C and D) copied the work and that five correctors (whom he designated a, b, c, d and e) amended portions. He posited that one of the correctors was contemporaneous with the original scribes, and that the others worked in the 6th and 7th centuries. It is now agreed, after Milne and Skeat's reinvestigation, that Tischendorf was wrong, in that scribe C never existed.[73]

According to Tischendorf, scribe C wrote the poetic books of the Old Testament. These are written in a different

format from the rest of the manuscript – they appear in two columns (the rest of books is in four columns), written stichometrically.

Tischendorf probably interpreted the different formatting as indicating the existence of another scribe.[74] The three remaining scribes are still identified by the letters that Tischendorf gave them: A, B, and D.[74] Correctors were more, at least seven (a, b, c, ca, cb, cc, e).[7]

Modern analysis identifies at least three scribes:
- Scribe A wrote most of the historical and poetical books of the Old Testament, almost the whole of the New Testament, and the Epistle of Barnabas
- Scribe B was responsible for the Prophets and for the Shepherd of Hermas
- Scribe D wrote the whole of Tobit and Judith, the first half of 4 Maccabees, the first two-thirds of the Psalms, and the first five verses of Revelation

Scribe B was a poor speller, and scribe A was not very much better; the best scribe was D.[75] Metzger states: "scribe A had made some unusually serious mistakes".[63] Scribes A and B more often used nomina sacra in contracted forms (ΠΝΕΥΜΑ contracted in all occurrences, ΚΥΡΙΟΣ contracted except in 2 occurrences), scribe D more often used forms uncontracted.[76] D distinguished

between sacral and nonsacral using of ΚΥΡΙΟΣ.[77] His errors are the substitution of EI for I, and I for EI in medial positions, both equally common. Otherwise substitution of I for initial EI is unknown, and final EI is only replaced in word ΙΣΧΥΕΙ, confusing of E and AI is very rare.[75] In the Book of Psalms this scribe has 35 times ΔΑΥΕΙΔ instead of ΔΑΥΙΔ, while scribe A normally uses an abbreviated form ΔΑΔ.[78] Scribe A's was a "worse type of phonetic error". Confusion of E and AI occurs in all contexts.[75]

Milne and Skeat characterised scribe B as "careless and illiterate".[79] The work of the original scribe is designated by the siglum ⁊ᵎ.*א⌉

In the 6th or 7th century the codex may have been housed at Caesarea

A paleographical study at the British Museum in 1938 found that the text had undergone several corrections.

The first corrections were done by several scribes before the manuscript left the scriptorium.[63] Readings which they introduced are designated by the siglum אᵃ.[80] Milne and Skeat have observed that the superscription to 1

Maccabees was made by scribe D, while the text was written by scribe A.[81] Scribe D corrects his own work and that of scribe A, but scribe A limits himself to correcting his own work.[82]

In the 6th or 7th century, many alterations were made (אᵇ) – according to a colophon at the end of the book of Esdras and Esther the source of these alterations was "a very ancient manuscript that had been corrected by the hand of the holy martyr Pamphylus" (martyred in 309). If this is so, material beginning with 1 Samuel to the end of Esther is Origen's copy of the Hexapla. From this colophon, the correction is concluded to have been made in Caesarea Maritima in the 6th or 7th centuries.[83] The pervasive iotacism, especially of the ει diphthong, remains uncorrected.[84]

23

Discovery

The Codex may have been seen in 1761 by the Italian traveller, Vitaliano Donati, when he visited the Saint Catherine's Monastery at Sinai in Egypt. His diary was published in 1879, in which was written:
In this monastery I found a great number of parchment codices ... there are some which seemed to be written

before the seventh century, and especially a Bible (made) of beautiful vellum, very large, thin and square parchments, written in round and very beautiful letters; moreover there are also in the church a Greek Evangelistarium in gold and round letters, it should be very old.

The "Bible on beautiful vellum" may be the Codex Sinaiticus, and the gold evangelistarium is likely Lectionary 300 on the Gregory-Aland list.[86]

Tischendorf in 1870

German Biblical scholar Constantin von Tischendorf wrote about his visit to the monastery in Reise in den Orient in 1846 (translated as Travels in the East in 1847), without mentioning the manuscript.

Later, in 1860, in his writings about the Sinaiticus discovery, Tischendorf wrote a narrative about the monastery and the manuscript that spanned from 1844 to 1859. He wrote that in 1844, during his first visit to the

Saint Catherine's Monastery, he saw some leaves of parchment in a waste-basket. They were "rubbish which was to be destroyed by burning it in the ovens of the monastery",[87] although this is firmly denied by the Monastery.

After examination he realized that they were part of the Septuagint, written in an early Greek uncial script. He retrieved from the basket 129 leaves in Greek which he identified as coming from a manuscript of the Septuagint. He asked if he might keep them, but at this point the attitude of the monks changed.

They realized how valuable these old leaves were, and Tischendorf was permitted to take only one-third of the whole, i.e. 43 leaves. These leaves contained portions of 1 Chronicles, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, and Esther. After his return they were deposited in the Leipzig University Library, where they remain.

In 1846 Tischendorf published their contents, naming them the 'Codex Friderico-Augustanus' (in honor of Frederick Augustus and keeping secret the source of the leaves).[88]

Other portions of the same codex remained in the monastery, containing all of Isaiah and 1 and 4 Maccabees.[89]

24

In 1845, Archimandrite Porphyrius Uspensky
(1804–1885), at that time head of the Russian
Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem and subsequently
Bishop of Chigirin, visited the monastery and the codex
was shown to him, together with leaves which Tischendorf
had not seen.[n 5] In 1846, Captain C. K. MacDonald visited
Mount Sinai, saw the codex, and bought two codices (495
and 496) from the monastery.[90]

The codex was presented to Alexander II of Russia
In 1853, Tischendorf revisited the Saint Catherine's
Monastery to get the remaining 86 folios, but without
success. Returning in 1859, this time under the patronage
of Tsar Alexander II of Russia, he was shown the Codex
Sinaiticus.

He would later claim to have found it discarded in a rubbish bin. (This story may have been a fabrication, or the manuscripts in question may have been unrelated to the Codex Sinaiticus: Rev. J. Silvester Davies in 1863 quoted "a monk of Sinai who... stated that according to the librarian of the monastery the whole of Codex Sinaiticus had been in the library for many years and was marked in the ancient catalogues...

Is it not likely... that a manuscript known in the library catalogue would have been jettisoned in the rubbish basket." Indeed, it has been noted that the leaves were in "suspiciously good condition" for something found in the trash.[n 6])

25

Tischendorf had been sent to search for manuscripts by Russia's Tsar Alexander II, who was convinced there were still manuscripts to be found at the Sinai monastery.[91] The text of this part of the codex was published by Tischendorf in 1862:

- Konstantin von Tischendorf: Bibliorum codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus. Giesecke & Devrient, Leipzig 1862.

This work has been digitised in full and all four volumes may be consulted online.[92] It was reprinted in four volumes in 1869:

- Konstantin von Tischendorf, G. Olms (Hrsg.): Bibliorum codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus. 1. Prolegomena. G. Olms, Hildesheim 1869 (Repr.).
- Konstantin von Tischendorf, G. Olms (Hrsg.): Bibliorum codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus. 2. Veteris Testamenti pars prior. G. Olms, Hildesheim 1869 (Repr.).
- Konstantin von Tischendorf, G. Olms (Hrsg.): Bibliorum codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus. 3. Veteris Testamenti pars posterior. G. Olms, Hildesheim 1869 (Repr.).
- Konstantin von Tischendorf, G. Olms (Hrsg.): Bibliorum codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus. 4. Novum Testamentum cum Barnaba et Pastore. G. Olms, Hildesheim 1869 (Repr.).

The complete publication of the codex was made by Kirsopp Lake in 1911 (New Testament), and in 1922 (Old Testament). It was the full-sized black and white facsimile of the manuscript, "made from negatives taken from St. Petersburg by my wife and myself in the summer of 1908".[93]

The story of how Tischendorf found the manuscript, which contained most of the Old Testament and all of the New

Testament, has all the interest of a romance. Tischendorf reached the monastery on 31 January; but his inquiries appeared to be fruitless. On 4 February, he had resolved to return home without having gained his object:
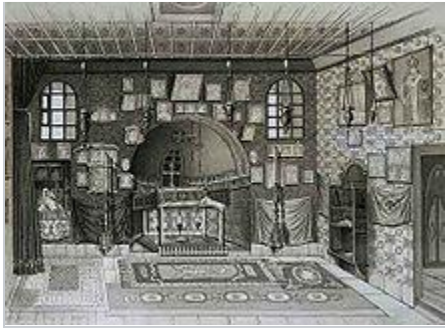

Lithograph of Saint Catherine's Monastery, based on sketches made by Porphyrius Uspensky in 1857.

26

On the afternoon of this day I was taking a walk with the steward of the convent in the neighbourhood, and as we returned, towards sunset, he begged me to take some refreshment with him in his cell. Scarcely had he entered the room, when, resuming our former subject of conversation, he said: "And I, too, have read a Septuagint" – i.e. a copy of the Greek translation made by the Seventy. And so saying, he took down from the corner of the room a bulky kind of volume, wrapped up in a red cloth, and laid it before me. I unrolled the cover, and discovered, to my great surprise, not only those very fragments which, fifteen years before, I had taken out of the basket, but also other parts of the Old Testament, the New Testament complete,

and, in addition, the Epistle of Barnabas and a part of the Shepherd of Hermas.[94]

The Chapel of the Burning Bush in Saint Catherine's Monastery; a lithograph from the album of Porphyrius Uspensky

After some negotiations, he obtained possession of this precious fragment. James Bentley gives an account of how this came about, prefacing it with the comment, "Tischendorf therefore now embarked on the remarkable piece of duplicity which was to occupy him for the next decade, which involved the careful suppression of facts and the systematic denigration of the monks of Mount Sinai."[95]

He conveyed it to Tsar Alexander II, who appreciated its importance and had it published as nearly as possible in facsimile, so as to exhibit correctly the ancient handwriting. In 1869 the Tsar sent the monastery 7,000 rubles and the monastery of Mount Tabor 2,000 rubles by way of compensation.[96][97]

The document in Russian formalising this was published in 2007 in Russia and has since been translated.[98]

Regarding Tischendorf's role in the transfer to Saint Petersburg, there are several views.

The codex is currently regarded by the monastery as having been stolen. This view is hotly contested by several scholars in Europe. Kirsopp Lake wrote:

Those who have had much to do with Oriental monks will understand how improbable it is that the terms of the arrangement, whatever it was, were ever known to any except a few of the leaders.[99]

In a more neutral spirit, New Testament scholar Bruce Metzger writes:

Certain aspects of the negotiations leading to the transfer of the codex to the Tsar's possession are open to an interpretation that reflects adversely on Tischendorf's candour and good faith with the monks at Saint Catherine's Monastery. For a recent account intended to exculpate him of blame, see Erhard Lauch's article 'Nichts gegen Tischendorf' in Bekenntnis zur Kirche: Festgabe für Ernst Sommerlath zum 70. Geburtstag (Berlin, c. 1961); for an account that includes a hitherto unknown receipt

given by Tischendorf to the authorities at the monastery promising to return the manuscript from Saint Petersburg 'to the Holy Confraternity of Sinai at its earliest request'.[100][101]

View of Saint Catherine's Monastery

27

Simonides

On 13 September 1862 Constantine Simonides (1820–1890), skilled in calligraphy and with a controversial background with manuscripts, made the claim in print in The Manchester Guardian that he had written the codex himself as a 19-year-old boy in 1839 in the Panteleimonos monastery at Athos.[102][103]

Constantin von Tischendorf, who worked with numerous Bible manuscripts, was known as somewhat flamboyant, and had ambitiously sought money from several royal families for his ventures, who had indeed funded his trips.

Simonides had a somewhat obscure history, as he claimed he was at Mt. Athos in the years preceding Tischendorf's contact, making the claim at least plausible.

Simonides also claimed his father had died and the invitation to Mt. Athos came from his uncle, a monk there, but subsequent letters to his father were found among his possessions at his death.

Simonides claimed the false nature of the document in The Manchester Guardian in an exchange of letters among scholars and others, at the time.

Henry Bradshaw, a British librarian known to both men, defended the Tischendorf find of the Sinaiticus, casting aside the accusations of Simonides.

Since Bradshaw was a social 'hub' among many diverse scholars of the day, his aiding of Tischendorf was given much weight. Simonides died shortly after, and the issue lay dormant for many years.[104]

Tischendorf answered Simonides in Allgemeine Zeitung (December 1862), that only in the New Testament there are many differences between it and all other manuscripts.

Henry Bradshaw, a bibliographer, combatted the claims of Constantine Simonides in a letter to The Manchester Guardian (26 January 1863). Bradshaw argued that the Codex Sinaiticus brought by Tischendorf from the Greek monastery of Mount Sinai was not a modern forgery or written by Simonides.[105]

The controversy seems to regard the misplaced use of the word 'fraud' or 'forgery' since it may have been a repaired text, a copy of the Septuagint based upon Origen's Hexapla, a text which has been rejected for centuries because of its lineage from Eusebius who introduced Arian doctrine into the courts of Constantine I and II.

Not every scholar and Church minister was delighted about the codex. Burgon, a supporter of the Textus Receptus, suggested that Codex Sinaiticus, as well as codices Vaticanus and Codex Bezae, were the most corrupt documents extant. Each of these three codices "clearly exhibits a fabricated text – is the result of arbitrary and reckless recension."[106] The two most weighty of these three codices, ℵ and B, he likens to the "two false witnesses" of Matthew.[107][108]

28

Recent history

In the early 20th century Vladimir Beneshevich (1874–1938) discovered parts of three more leaves of the codex in the bindings of other manuscripts in the library of Mount Sinai. Beneshevich went on three occasions to the monastery (1907, 1908, 1911) but does not tell when or from which book these were recovered. These leaves were also acquired for St. Petersburg, where they remain.[109][110]

A two-thirds portion of the codex was held in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg from 1859 until 1933

For many decades, the Codex was preserved in the Russian National Library. In 1933, the Soviet Union sold the codex to the British Museum (after 1973 British Library) for £100,000 raised by public subscription (worth £7.3 million in 2022).[111] After coming to Britain it was examined by Skeat and Milne using an ultra-violet lamp.[112]

In May 1975, during restoration work, the monks of Saint Catherine's Monastery discovered a room beneath the St. George Chapel which contained many parchment fragments. Kurt Aland and his team from the Institute for New Testament Textual Research were the first scholars who were invited to analyse, examine and photograph these new fragments of the New Testament in 1982.[113]

Among these fragments were twelve complete leaves from the Sinaiticus, 11 leaves of the Pentateuch and 1 leaf of the Shepherd of Hermas.[18] Together with these leaves 67 Greek Manuscripts of New Testament have been found (uncials 0278 – 0296 and some minuscules).[114]

29

In June 2005, a team of experts from the UK, Europe, Egypt, Russia and USA undertook a joint project to produce a new digital edition of the manuscript (involving all four holding libraries), and a series of other studies was announced.[115][116][117] This will include the use of hyperspectral imaging to photograph the manuscripts to look for hidden information such as erased or faded text.[118] This is to be done in cooperation with the British Library.[119]

More than one quarter of the manuscript was made publicly available at The Codex Sinaiticus Website on 24 July 2008. On 6 July 2009, 800 more pages of the manuscript were made available, showing over half of the entire text,[120] although the entire text was intended to be shown by that date.[121]

The complete document is now available online in digital form and available for scholarly study. The online version has a fully transcribed set of digital pages, including amendments to the text, and two images of each page, with both standard lighting and raked lighting to highlight the texture of the parchment.[122]

Prior to 1 September 2009, the University of the Arts London PhD student, Nikolas Sarris, discovered the previously unseen fragment of the Codex in the library of Saint Catherine's Monastery. It contains the text of Book of Joshua 1:10.[123]

Present location

The British Library

30

The codex is now split into four unequal portions: 347 leaves in the British Library in London (199 of the Old Testament, 148 of the New Testament), 12 leaves and 14 fragments in the Saint Catherine's Monastery, 43 leaves in the Leipzig University Library, and fragments of 3 leaves in the Russian National Library in Saint Petersburg.[7]

Saint Catherine's Monastery still maintains the importance of a letter, handwritten in 1844 with an original signature of Tischendorf confirming that he borrowed those leaves.[124] However, recently published documents, including a deed of gift dated 11 September 1868 and signed by Archbishop Kallistratos and the monks of the monastery, indicate that the manuscript was acquired entirely legitimately.[125] This deed, which agrees with a report by Kurt Aland on the matter, has now been published.

This development is not widely known in the English-speaking world, as only German- and Russian-language media reported on it in 2009. Doubts as to the legality of the gift arose because when Tischendorf originally removed the manuscript from Saint Catherine's

Monastery in September 1859, the monastery was without an archbishop, so that even though the intention to present the manuscript to the Tsar had been expressed, no legal gift could be made at the time. Resolution of the matter was delayed through the turbulent reign of Archbishop Cyril (consecrated 7 December 1859, deposed 24 August 1866), and the situation only formalised after the restoration of peace.[125]

Skeat in his article "The Last Chapter in the History of the Codex Sinaiticus" concluded in this way:

This is not the place to pass judgements, but perhaps I may say that, as it seems to me, both the monks and Tischendorf deserve our deepest gratitude, Tischendorf for having alerted the monks to the importance of the manuscript, and the monks for having undertaken the daunting task of searching through the vast mass of material with such spectacular results, and then doing everything in their power to safeguard the manuscript against further loss. If we accept the statement of Uspensky, that he saw the codex in 1845, the monks must have worked very hard to complete their search and bind up the results in so short a period.[126]

31

Impact on biblical scholarship

Along with Codex Vaticanus, the Codex Sinaiticus is considered one of the most valuable manuscripts available, as it is one of the oldest and likely closer to the original text of the Greek New Testament. It is the only uncial manuscript with the complete text of the New Testament, and the only ancient manuscript of the New Testament written in four columns per page which has survived to the present day.[7]

With only 300 years separating the Codex Sinaiticus and the lifetime of Jesus, it is considered by some to be more accurate than most New Testament copies in preserving readings where almost all manuscripts are assumed by them to be in error.[10]

For the Gospels, Sinaiticus is considered among some people as the second most reliable witness of the text (after Vaticanus); in the Acts of the Apostles, its text is equal to that of Vaticanus; in the Epistles, Sinaiticus is assumed to be the most reliable witness of the text. In the Book of Revelation, however, its text is corrupted and is considered of poor quality, and inferior to the texts of Codex Alexandrinus, Papyrus 47, and even some

32

Vellum and paper manuscripts

The change from papyrus to vellum involved no such modification in the forms of letters as followed that from metal to papyrus. The justification for considering the two materials separately is that after the general adoption of vellum, the Egyptian evidence is first supplemented and later superseded by that of manuscripts from elsewhere, and that during this period the hand most used was one not previously employed for literary purposes.

Uncial hand

See also: Uncial script

Pages from <u>Codex Vaticanus</u> (left) and <u>Codex Marchalianus</u> (right)

The prevailing type of book-hand during what in <u>papyrology</u> is called the Byzantine period, that is, roughly from AD 300 to 650, is known as the biblical hand. It went back to at least the end of the 2nd century and had had originally no special connection with <u>Christian literature</u>. In <u>manuscripts</u>, whether vellum or paper, of the 4th century found in Egypt are met other forms of script, particularly a sloping, rather inelegant hand derived from the literary hand of the 3rd century, which persisted to at least the 5th century; but the three great early codices of the Bible are all written in uncials of the biblical type. In the <u>Vaticanus</u>, placed in the 4th century, the characteristics of the hand are least strongly marked; the letters have the forms characteristic of the type but without the heavy appearance of later manuscripts, and the general impression is one of greater roundness. In the <u>Sinaiticus</u>, which is not much later, the letters are larger and more

heavily made; and in the <u>Alexandrinus</u> (5th century) a later development is seen, with emphatic distinction of thick and thin strokes. By the 6th century, alike in vellum and in papyrus manuscripts, the heaviness had become very marked, though the hand still retained, in its best examples, a handsome appearance; but after this it steadily deteriorated, becoming ever more mechanical and artificial. The thick strokes grew heavier; the cross strokes of T and Θ and the base of Δ were furnished with drooping spurs. The hand, which is often singularly ugly[citation needed], passed through various modifications, now sloping, now upright, though it is not certain that these variations were really successive rather than concurrent. A different type of uncials, derived from the <u>Chancery hand</u> and seen in two papyrus examples of the Festal letters despatched annually by the <u>Patriarch of Alexandria</u>, was occasionally used, the best known example being the <u>Codex Marchalianus</u> (6th or 7th century). A combination of this hand with the other type is also known.

33

See also

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- <u>Bible portal</u>
- <u>Biblical manuscript</u>

- [Codex Sinaiticus Rescriptus](#)
- [Differences between codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus](#)
- [Fifty Bibles of Constantine](#)
- [List of New Testament uncials](#)
- [Syriac Sinaiticus](#)

Notes

- [^](#) It was estimated by Tischendorf and used by Scrivener in his Introduction to the Sinaitic Codex (1867) as an argument against authorship of [Simonides](#) (["Christianity"](#), p. 1889.)
- [^](#) Also in [Minuscule 69](#), [Minuscule 336](#), and several other manuscripts Pauline epistles precede Acts.
- [^](#) For another variants of this verse see: [Textual variants in the First Epistle of John](#).
- [^](#) The same variant present manuscripts: [P^{67}](#), [2174](#), in manuscripts of [Vulgate](#), and in manuscripts of Ethiopic version.
- [^](#) Uspienski described: "Первая рукопись, содержащая Ветхий Завет неполный и весь Новый Завет с посланием ап. Варнавы и книгой Ермы, писана на тончайшем белом пергаменте. (...) Буквы в ней совершенно похожи на церковно-славянские. Постановка их прямая и сплошная. Над словами нет придыханий и ударений, а речения не отделяются никакими знаками правописания кроме точек. Весь

священный текст писан в четыре и два столбца стихомерным образом и так слитно, как будто одно длинное речение тянется от точки до точки." (Порфирий (Успенский), Первое путешествие в Синайский монастырь в 1845 году, Petersburg 1856, с. 226.)

- ^ Davies' words are from a letter published in The Guardian on 27 May 1863, as quoted by Elliott, J.K. (1982) in Codex Sinaiticus and the Simonides Affair, Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, p. 16; Elliott in turn is quoted by Michael D. Peterson in his essay "Tischendorf and the Codex Sinaiticus: the Saga Continues", in The Church and the Library, ed. Papademetriou and Sopko Boston: Somerset Hall Press (2005), p. 77. See also notes 2 and 3, p. 90, in Papademetriou.

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