

# **Where Are The Original Writings of The Apostles?**

## **The Ministry of the Written Word in the Early Church**

What Are The Oldest and Best Manuscripts?

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## **Preface**

I am not in the least bit qualified to weigh in on this subject. However, I have gathered the comments of others far more qualified, the testimony of Scripture, and the most pertinent historian of the early Church (after Luke) to give an accurate account. My goal is to show a true picture of what actually happened – the when, where, how, and why - after which I pray the truth, to the glory of God, will be revealed.

*Mike Burris, 4/2022*

## **Introduction**

If the Gospel was to be preached in all the world (Mark 13:10, 16:15), and if God's plan of salvation is hinged on the receiving and obeying of His Word (John 17:6, 14, 17, 20; 12:48; 14:23,24) so much so that Jesus said that His Words bring eternal life (John 3:34; 6:63; 6:68), and if they abide in us He abides in us as well (John 15:4,7; 1John 2:24), then where are the original writings of the apostles? Shouldn't the real words of Jesus be easy to find?

If the earth was to be filled with the knowledge of God (Isaiah 11:9), and the New Covenant to flow like the river from Ezekiel's temple (Ezekiel 47:1-12) then where are the words of God?

# **Where are the Original Writings of the Apostles?**

When we look into the early Church's publication of God's Word, we see massive streams. That is, streams in which God's words were copied massively with the strength, quality and care reflecting the glory of God and the true work of the Holy Spirit.

## **3 Marks**

The work of the Holy Spirit in the publication of God's Word has distinctive marks, and for convenience I will list three:

1. The quality of the work,
2. The accuracy of the work, and

### 3. The volume of the work.

These three marks will appear as we look into the streams of God's Word.

## **I. The Historical Record**

The disciples were told to go to all nations and make disciples (Matt.28:19), but they had to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit. After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the ministry of the Word began, and in Acts 6:2-4, we see that the apostles had to appoint deacons so that they could devote themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.

### **The Move from Jerusalem**

Eusebius, the early Church historian, records that in AD 68, the Church in Jerusalem received a word from the Lord telling them to leave Jerusalem and move to Syria (this was to avoid the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD

(Luke 21:20), and when they moved, they took their manuscripts with them.

## **What Manuscripts Did They Have?**

Eusebius continues,

“We have thus set forth in these pages what has come to our knowledge concerning the apostles themselves and the apostolic age, and concerning the sacred writings which they have left us, as well as concerning those which are disputed, but nevertheless have been publicly used by many in a great number of churches, and moreover, concerning those that are altogether rejected and are out of harmony with apostolic orthodoxy.”

Eusebius. The History of the Church (The Church History of Eusebius) (pp. 134-135). Neeland Media LLC. Kindle Edition.

## **The Church on Fire in Syria**



After the Church moved to Syria, they aggressively evangelized the country! The ministry of the Word greatly expanded, and so much so that at least seven Churches (listed in the book of Revelation) were established in the lifetime of the apostle John.

## **The Language of the Land**

The language of the land was Aramaic (the same as Syriac), and according to Eusebius, Matthew was said to have first published his gospel in the Aramaic/Syriac language.

Bruce Metzger, in his book, “The Canon of the New Testament”, refers to Theodor Zahn:

“The gospel is older than the N.T. Between the time when Jesus proclaimed the coming of the rule of God in His kingdom and the emergence from His Church of the earliest document which had come down to us, possible some two decades elapsed; and some seventy years passed before the appearance of the last

of the writings found in the N.T. collection. Even if the investigation of this oldest Christian literature should result in showing that no single part of it originated on the soil of Palestine, or within the Jewish Christianity of the first generation, we should still be unable, without some knowledge of the language in which Jesus taught, and in which His disciples preached the gospel to the Jews in Palestine, to form a correct concept of the beginnings of Christian literature. For, quite independent of the results of all literary criticism, and especially of the answer to the question whether the N.T. writings were composed, as tradition says they were, almost without exception by native Jews, and to no small extent by Palestinian Jews, the fact remains, that the Christian preaching came from Palestine, and that Jews who had no idea of giving up their nationality carried it beyond the limits of their land and nations. This statement, in which Paul (Rom. 15:27), Luke (\*Acts 11:19), and Tacitus (Ann 15.44) agree, does not require further proof. ”

Theodor Zahn, Intro to the N.T. 2

F.H.A. Scrivener says this:

“The Aramaean or Syriac, employed to this day in the public service of several Eastern Churches, is a branch of the great Semitic family of languages, and as early as Jacob's age was distinct from the Hebrew: Laban the Syrian called the stony heap of witness "Jegar-sahadutha," but Jacob called it "Galled" (Gen. xxxi. 47). As we now find it in books, it was spoken 'in the north of Syria and in Upper Mesopotamia, about Odessa, the native country of the patriarch Abraham. It is, compared with the Hebrew, which ceased to be vernacular six centuries before Christ, at the time of the Captivity to Babylon, a copious, flexible, and elegant language. It is so near akin to the Chaldea as spoken in Babylon, and brought back by the Jews into Palestine, that the latter was popularly known by its name (2 Kings xviii. 26; Isaiah. xxxvi. 11; Dan. ii. 4). Hence the Syriac of literature, though long since passed away from common use, very nearly represents the dialect spoken by our Lord during his earthly ministry, and by those who then lived in the Holy Land; and was

on that account regarded with the deeper interest by Albert Chancellor to the Emperor Ferdinand I., and by its other first students in modern times. The oldest Syriac version, distinguished from those that followed it by the name of the "Pesto" or "Simple," comprised both the Old and New Testaments, except the second Epistle of S. Peter, the second and third of S. John and the Apocalypse, and seems to have been executed .(at least in some portions) as early as the end of the first or the beginning of the second century, from manuscripts which have of course long ago perished: it is cited under the familiar appellation of "the Syrian" by Melton about A.D. 170.

Christianity, as we know, spread early from Antioch, the Greek capital (Acts xi. 19—27; xiii. 1, into the native interior of Syria, where the Apostle Thaddeus is alleged to have preached the Gospel to Acarus, to parch of Odessa. The Pesto would be readily conceded to be by far the chief of all versions of Scripture, but for certain appearances of revision undergone by its text in ancient times, which slightly impair its critical value; although we have copies of it which bear date in the sixth century, and, even as it

stands, in weight and authority it is exceeded by none, while for perspicuity of style, for ease and freedom combined with precision and correctness—but these qualities make little for our immediate purpose—it is quite without a rival. The first printed edition of the New Testament, out of many that succeeded, was put forth at Vienna in 1555 by at the expense of his Imperial master; the Old Testament was first published in 1645' by the Maronite Gabriel in the magnificent Paris Polyglot.”

Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener. *Six Lectures on the Text of the New Testament and the Ancient Manuscripts which Contain it: Chiefly Addressed to Those who Do Not Read Greek* (Kindle Locations 1109-1129). Deighton, Bell. Kindle Edition.

## **2. The First Great Publication of the Early Church**

**The first great publication  
containing the original writings of the  
apostles was a book called,  
“The Pesto,” or, “The Peshitta”**

(The name, “Peshitta”, is from the Aramaic word, “*pšittā*”, and is from the verb “*pšat*”, meaning ‘to stretch out’ or ‘to extend’)

The Peshitta contained the Old and the New Testament, except for the books 2nd and 3rd John, 2nd Peter, Jude, and Revelation. These books were added later but were missing in the initial Peshitta because the cannon was not yet established.

(Note, the Latin, “**Muratorian Fragment**”, contains a discussion about what books should be canonized, and it is dated around 170 AD)

Around 1000 copies of the Peshitta exist today, which represent many more thousands that were painstakingly copied by primitive methods. This shows the resolve of the early Church in the pooling of their resources to produce what they knew to be the true gospel.

# **The Massive Publication of the Peshitta**

The massive publication of the Peshitta was for

- 1. Evangelism. 2. Edification, and**
- 3. The Refutation of Heresy.**

On the refuting of heresy, John Burgon writes,

“Gaius, an orthodox Father who wrote near the end of the second century, named four heretics who not only altered the text but had disciples multiply copies of their efforts. Of special interest here is his charge that they could not deny their guilt because they could not produce the originals from which they made their copies.<sup>3</sup> This would be a hollow accusation from Gaius if the originals could not be accessed.”

Cf. Burgeon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 323.

By the end of the second century,

1. The original writings of the apostles were available, and
2. As stated, the multiple copies were used to refute heresy.

The early Church created a “*mainstream*” publication to weed out the false and affirm the true teachings of the apostles (Note the practice of the Church in Acts 16:4ff).

In the writings of Irenaeus we find this note:

"I adjure you who may copy this book, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by his glorious advent when he comes to judge the living and the dead, to compare what you shall write, and correct it carefully by this manuscript, and also to write this adjuration, and place it in the copy." 3.  
These things may be profitably read in his work, and related by us, that we may have those ancient and truly holy men as the best example of painstaking carefulness."



Eusebius. The History of the Church (p. 112).

Also from Eusebius,

“But that those who use the arts of unbelievers for their heretical opinions and adulterate the simple faith of the Divine Scriptures by the craft of the godless, are far from the faith, what need is there to say? Therefore they have laid their hands boldly upon the Divine Scriptures, alleging that they have corrected them. 16. That I am not speaking falsely of them in this matter, whoever wishes may learn. For if any one will collect their respective copies, and compare them one with another, he will find that they differ greatly.”

Eusebius. The History of the Church (p. 118)

Again, the massive publishing of the original writings of the apostles was used to refute heresies, and these original writings were published by the early Church in The Peshitta.

## The Dating of the Peshitta

This from the Peshitta symposium,

“The most thorough and innovative discussion of the origin of the Peshitta is that of the late Michael Weitzman. In his *Introduction* to this Syriac version, he first explains that the categories of ‘Judaism’ and ‘Christianity’ as they were used in the debate do not take account of the diversity within both religions which research of the last decades has revealed (see Judaism, Syriac contacts with). It would be better, he argues, first to establish the ‘theological profile’ of the translation. Only then can we compare the version with what we know of the Jewish and Christian communities of the time. Weitzman’s own position is that the Peshitta was translated in [Edessa](#) from 150 onwards by a non-rabbinic Jewish group that clearly identified themselves with Judaism, but neglected some elements of ritual in favour of a more personal belief, in which prayer played an important role. They emphasized faith and hope rather than observance. As they shared these values with

Christians, they might have adopted Christianity. This would then explain how a Jewish translation came to be transmitted by the Eastern Churches, and why it was not received among rabbinic Jews. The evidence for the presence of Jews in Edessa may lead to a modification (Romeny 2005). As far as we can tell on the basis of the funerary inscriptions found close to Edessa, it appears that Edessan Jews did use more or less the same dialect of Aramaic, but did not use the same script as the local pagans. They chose the square Jewish Aramaic script that was also used for Hebrew. On the other hand, Classical Syriac as we know it from the earliest Christian sources suggests that Edessan Christians adopted the Old Syriac dialect and script that were used by the pagans, rather than the Jewish script. This confronts us with the paradox of a translation that supposes a knowledge of Hebrew found only among very learned Jews but that was not written in the Jewish script. Was the Peshitta a gentile project, after all, or should we assume that, perhaps together with an update of the language, the translation was recast in Syriac script? The alternative is that the translators

were Jewish Christians (in the sense of: Jews who had come to believe that Jesus Christ brought salvation) from the start. It is certain that either some of the Jews of Edessa or one of its Christian groups felt the need for a version in the dialect of the town. What Weitzman calls the ‘theological profile’ of the translators is compatible with either possibility, as long as we do not think in terms of the ideal types of rabbinic Judaism and later Christianity. The use of the Syriac script, however, points solely in the direction of Christians. Whatever the case may be, it should be granted that the actual translation work was done by Jews, be they converted to Christianity before (Romeny) or after (Weitzman) the production of the Peshitta: we cannot assume that pagans who converted to Christianity commanded sufficient knowledge of Hebrew. Weitzman connects the Peshitta with the city of Edessa. The Peshitta introduces references to Mabbug, [Harran](#), and [Nisibis](#) as additions to the text or substitutions for other names. These names suggest an origin in Osrhoene, the province around Edessa. The dialect and script of the Peshitta also accord well with that of the

inscriptions found in this province. Weitzman's main argument for dating the OT Peshitta is formed by quotations of the Peshitta in other texts. On the basis of such quotations, a latest possible date can be established. If the Peshitta was indeed the basis for the OT quotations in the [Diatessaron](#), at least the books actually cited, that is, the Pentateuch, the Latter Prophets, and the Psalms, already existed and had attained some status by around 170. On the other hand, the fact that [Bardaisan](#), born in 154, quotes Gen. 9:6 in a form that stands closer to the Jewish Targum Onqelos could still indicate some reserve towards the Peshitta. This is a warning against adopting a much earlier date, and makes Weitzman propose the date of ca. 150...Burkitt (1904) attributed the Peshitta to [Rabbula](#), the bp. of Edessa (411–35) who had vigorously suppressed the use of the Diatessaron in the Syriac Church. While Rabbula may have enforced the dissemination of the Peshitta version, the theory that he was responsible for its creation was convincingly challenged by Vööbus (1951) who illustrated how Rabbula's own writings

contained quotations from the Old Syriac Version and the Diatessaron.”

Bas ter Haar Romeny and Craig E. Morrison , “Peshitta,” in *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage: Electronic Edition*, edited by Sebastian P. Brock, Aaron M. Butts, George A. Kiraz and Lucas Van Rompay, <https://gedsh.bethmardutho.org/Peshitta>.

(Note: Dr. Hort in the 19th century asserted that the Peshitta was a fabrication of Rabulla.)

## **3.A Second Wave of Publication**

Another massive stream of the Peshitta came in the year 313 AD after the issue of what was known as, “The Edict of Milan.”

### **The Edict of Milan**

Thousands of Christians were martyred under the persecutions of the Roman (Diocletian) government. Fortunately, these persecutions ended when a ruler named Constantine came into power.

In 311 AD, Constantine, with an army of 40,000, was outnumbered 4 to 1 in a battle against Maxentius for the supremacy of the western empire. Constantine received in dream a vision of victory prior to the battle. He was victorious, and as a result was converted to Christianity (although he refused baptism because he felt it inappropriate as a result of having to execute people as emperor).

Upon his victory, Constantine issued “The Edict of Milan”, which stopped the persecution of Christians, and restored their rights and property. Constantine also enforced this edict battling and executing two emperors underneath him - including his own brother in law.

Constantine, though not perfect in other respects, at the government’s expense rebuilt Churches and houses of

prayer that had been destroyed, and also commissioned at the government's expense the copying of the Church's sacred Scripture. Here is Constantine's letter to Eusebius requesting the copy of Scripture:

“Victor Constantinus, Maximus Augustus, to Eusebius. It happens, through the favoring providence of God our Saviour, that great numbers have united themselves to the most holy church in the city which is called by my name. It seems, therefore, highly requisite, since that city is rapidly advancing in prosperity in all other respects, that the number of churches should also be increased. Do you, therefore, receive with all readiness my determination on this behalf. I have thought it expedient to instruct your Prudence to order fifty copies of the sacred Scriptures, the provision and use of which you know to be most needful for the instruction of the Church, to be written on prepared parchment in a legible manner, and in a convenient, portable form, by professional transcribers thoroughly practiced in their art. The catholicus of the diocese has also



received instructions by letter from our Clemency to be careful to furnish all things necessary for the preparation of such copies; and it will be for you to take special care that they be completed with as little delay as possible. You have authority also, in virtue of this letter, to use two of the public carriages for their conveyance, by which arrangement the copies when fairly written will most easily be forwarded for my personal inspection; and one of the deacons of your church may be entrusted with this service, who, on his arrival here, shall experience my liberality. God preserve you, beloved brother!”

Eusebius responded:

“Such were the emperor's commands, which were followed by the immediate execution of the work itself, which we sent him in magnificent and elaborately bound volumes of a threefold and fourfold form. This fact is attested by another letter, which the emperor wrote in acknowledgment, in which, having heard that the

city Constantia in our country, the inhabitants of which had been more than commonly devoted to superstition, had been impelled by a sense of religion to abandon their past idolatry, he testified his joy, and approval of their conduct.”

Eusebius Of Caesarea. Life of Constantine .

Notice this statement in the letter of Constantine to Eusebius:

“...to be written on prepared parchment in a legible manner, and in a convenient, portable form, by professional transcribers thoroughly practiced in their art.”

## **The Quality of the Copy**

Here, not only do we see the true copies of the original autographs in the possession of the Church (to which Eusebius had access), but we also see the hand of the Holy Spirit in the quality of the work as Constantine is asking for the use of professional transcribers thoroughly

practiced in their art, and in a convenient portable form for the spread of it.

This quality of work in the copying of Scripture was not only requested by Constantine, but also by the early Church itself, and is reflected in just about all of the Peshetta copies today.

Wilbur Pickering in, “The Identity of the New Testament”, says this,

“...a school emerged in the city of Antioch (Antioch or Antiochia was an ancient city located on the Orontes River near the Amanus Mountains in Syria), and Theophilus, a bishop there, began insisting upon the literal interpretation of Scripture. The point is that a literalist was obliged to be concerned about the precise wording of the text since his interpretation or exegesis hinges upon it. It is reasonable to assume that this "literalist" mentality would have influenced the churches of Asia Minor and Greece and encouraged them in the careful and faithful transmission of the pure text that they had received.

For example, the 1,000 MSS of the Syriac Peshitta are unparalleled for their consistency...”

Pickering, Wilbur. *The Identity of the New Testament Text* IV (p. 107)

In Bruce Metzger’s book, “The Text of the New Testament”, he has this to say about the Peshitta:

“The text of the Peshitta has been transmitted with remarkable fidelity, so that very few significant variants exist among the witnesses. The textual complexion of the Peshitta version has not yet been satisfactorily investigated, but apparently it represents the work of several hands in various parts of the New Testament. In the Gospels it is closer to the Byzantine type of text than in Acts, where it presents many striking agreements with the Western text.”

Bruce Metzger, “The Text of the New Testament”, page 70.

\*

**What is meant by “Byzantine”?**

Byzantine: refers to that type of text which characterizes the majority of the later Greek uncial, semi uncial and minuscule manuscripts of the KJV New Testament. It is also the type of text found in the Syriac Peshitta and Gothic versions and in the extant quotations of Church Fathers. This text derives its name from the provenance (origin) of most of its manuscripts, the Byzantine Empire. It has, in addition to Byzantine, been called: Antiochian, after the supposed place of its origin...”

\*

The copies of the Peshitta that we have today represent many thousands more of accurately hand copied manuscripts that have survived not only time, but also heavy use, and destruction from various elements and persecutions. From the comments above, we can see the following marks of the Holy Spirit in the publication of God’s word as being that of,

**1. Quality, 2. Accuracy, and 3. Volume.**

The Peshitta is the representation given to us by the early Church. This is the first and greatest evidence that we have today of God's authentic Word.

“Jacob Geerlings, who has done extensive work on certain branches of the "Byzantine" text-type, affirms concerning it: "Its origins as well as those of other so-called text-types probably go back to the autographs".

Pickering, Wilbur. The Identity of the New Testament Text IV (p. 85). Kindle Edition.

## **4.The Travels of the Peshitta**

Bruce Metzger again, in his book, “The New Testament Cannon”, says this about the Peshitta:

“The fact that during the first six centuries of the Christian era five or six separate versions of the Scriptures in Syriac were produced is testimony to the vitality and scholarship of Syrian

churches. Indeed, as Eberhard Nestle has reminded us, ‘No branch of the Early Church has done more for the translation of the Bible into their vernacular than the Syriac-speaking. In our European libraries we have Syriac Bible MSS from Lebanon, Egypt, Sinai, Mesopotamia, Armenia, India (Malabar), and even from China.’”

Metzger, Bruce M.. The Canon of the New Testament (Its Origin, Development, and Significance) (pp. 218-220).  
Clarendon Press

Note the travel of the Peshitta:

“In our European libraries we have Syriac Bible MSS from Lebanon, Egypt, Sinai, Mesopotamia, Armenia, India (Malabar), and even from China.”

## **The Peshitta in Egypt**

F.H.A. Scrivener:

“Next to Syria in geographical position stands Egypt...By the Coptic versions of the Bible, therefore, we mean those made for the use of the primitive Christians of Egypt, possibly as early as the second century, when the Gospel had already spread from Alexandria far into the interior...The small fragments of a translation of both Testaments in a third dialect, the which seems to have been vernacular either in the Oasis of Ammon in the west, or among certain rude tribes in the Delta of the Nile...”

Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener. Six Lectures on the Text of the New Testament and the Ancient Manuscripts which Contain it: Chiefly Addressed to Those who Do Not Read Greek (Kindle Locations 1180-1203). Deighton, Bell. Kindle Edition.

## **The Peshitta in Early Egyptian Papyri.**

In his book, “The Byzantine Text-Type” Dr. Harry A. Sturz, says this on page 55,



“Francis Crawford Burkitt...has noted that the (then) recently discovered Sinaitic Syriac, though often supporting the Alexandrian text, occasionally agrees with the Syrian text in “distinctive readings. Later, in an article on the newly discovered Chester Beatty Papyri, Burkitt comments on Byzantine agreements in these manuscripts (“The Chester Beatty Papyri, : Journal of Theological Studies, XXXIV, October 1933) as do C.C. Tarelli and others in Journal of Theological Studies, XL 19-25: “Some Further Linguistic Aspects of the Chester Beatty Papyrus of the Gospel,” 1942. Gunther Zuntz in 1946 in the Schweich Lectures on “The Text of the Epistles (The lectures were published in 1953, London, Oxford University Press), and E. C. Colwell in 1961 in his article on “The Origin of Text-types of New Testament Manuscripts.” (Early Christian Orinis, ed. A. Wikgren).

Also from Dr. Sturz,

“Bruce Metzger in “ The Lucianic Recension of the Greek Bible”, gives a list of seven examples of papyrus-supported Byzantine readings. (“Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism”, page 38), and in a footnote, he lists some sixteen other references of “distinctively Byzantine readings which are also found in p66.”

(Note: Dr. Sturz has about 152 Byzantine readings in the Egyptian papyri.)

Dr. Wilbur Pickering said this:

“...Eldon Epp's study of P45 and Gordon Fee's study of P66. With reference to 103 variation units in Mark 6-9 (where P45 is extant) Epp records that P45 shows a 38% agreement with D, 40% with the TR, 42% with B, 59% with f13, and 68% with W. 2 Fee records that in John 1-14 P66 shows a 38.9% agreement with D, 44.6% with Aleph, 45.0% with W, 45.6% with A,

47.5% with the TR, 48.5% with C, 50.4% with B, and 51.2% with P75.<sup>3</sup>

Does 40% not constitute a "trace"? The picture is similar to that offered by the early Fathers. If we plotted these papyri on a chart with the same headings there would be a significant number of variants in each column—"Egyptian", "Majority" and "other" were all important players on the scene in Egypt at the end of the second century. Mention should be made of the study done by Harry A. Sturz.<sup>4</sup> He himself collated P45,46,47,66,72 and 75, but took citations of P13 and P37 from apparatuses in Nestle texts (p. 140). He compared these papyri with the Byzantine, Alexandrian and Western texts throughout the NT.

Pickering, Wilbur. *The Identity of the New Testament Text* IV (p. 151).

The Peshitta or Byzantine readings in the Egyptian papyri has major implications:

1. That whatever is represented by the Peshetta was shared to surrounding nations resulting in other versions and translations (Antioch being ground zero for the spread of the gospel), and

2. As represented in the papyri, the scribes in Egypt had their choice of readings from either their local version or the earlier Syriac or Peshitta.

Dr. Sturz relays a finding in the study of the papyri by Gunther Zuntz, which he says is amazing,

“...the Byzantine readings had to originate in the east and not the west.”

Dr. Harry Sturz, “The Byzantine Text Type”, chapter 6.

Greek communities were established in Egypt under the conquest of Alexander the great, and as a result there were Greek translations of the Peshitta in Egypt by the middle or possibly even before the beginning of the second century as seen in the papyri (again, Antioch being ground zero for the outreach of the Church, and the papyri

itself representing what was already in existence (*the Scripture had to arrive in Egypt long before the papyri*).

Preceding the Peshitta, however, we have the initial travels of the apostles:

**Andrew** is said to have gone to Scythia, which would have included Kazakhstan, Russia and Eastern Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Georgia, Belarus and the Baltic regions;

**Bartholomew** went to India (modern day Yemen) where he is said to have handed out parts of the gospel of Matthew, also Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, Laconia (Greece), and Phrygia (central Asia Minor).

**Jude**, known as Thaddeus, went to Judea, Samaria, Idumea, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Iran, and was also accompanied by Simon the Zealot.

**Thomas** is said to have gone to the Kerala area of India,

**Mark** to Alexandria in Africa,

**Peter** presided over the Church at Antioch before going to Rome where he was martyred,

**John**, after his exile on the island of Patmos, retired in Ephesus.

The tomb of **Phillip** is in Hierapolis (lit. "Holy City") located in **Phrygia**,

**Matthew**, also known as Levi, after preaching his gospel in Judea for 15 years, is said to have gone to Ethiopia on the Caspian Sea (not Africa), Persia, Syria, and Macedonia.

**Matthias** is said to have gone to Ethiopia.

**Simon the Zealot**, is said not only to have accompanied Bartholomew, and later Jude, but also preached along the Black Sea, and into Egypt, northern Africa, and Britain.

All were martyred on the mission field except for John.

Source: “A Light in Darkness”, Rick Renner

# **5. Major Transitions of the Peshitta**

Scrivener writes,

“About four other translations of Scripture into Syriac, but of a later date, are extant, either complete or in a fragmentary shape, two of which have considerable worth as instruments of criticism.

## **The Greek Translation of The Peshitta**

Scrivener continues,

The Herculean Syriac is the principal, and includes the whole New Testament. At the end of the manuscript from which the printed text is derived (and we find independent testimony to the fact in another quarter), a colophon or subscription by the first hand declares that the

translation was made A. D. 508 (by one Polycarp, a Ural or Suffragan Bishop, as we learn elsewhere) for Xenakis or Philoxenus, Bishop of Ma bug or of the communion, the chief of those semi-heretical sects into which the Syrian Church has been divided from the fifth century to this day. The subscription goes on to state that this version was collated by the writer, Thomas of Harrell, A. D. 616 (who subsequently became himself Bishop of Ma bug), by the help of two approved Greek manuscripts (perhaps of three, for the reading varies), belonging to the convent of Antonia, in Alexandria. We have here, therefore, a version of the sixth century, diligently corrected a hundred years later by venerable Greek copies found in Egypt, whose variations are set in the margin. It is this margin which renders the version as valuable as it is to textual critics, for the body of the work consists of a servile accommodation of the noble and free Pesto, the vernacular Bible of all Syria, to the very letter of the Greek. ... Two manuscripts of the translation were sent to England from in



1730, and made known by a tract published by Dr. Gloucester Riley in 1761. He bequeathed them to New College, Oxford, whose library they now adorn, and several other copies of the Gospels only have been since discovered elsewhere. The version was published at Oxford by Professor Joseph 'White in 1788—1803.”

## **The Vulgate**

Scrivener says this about the Vulgate:

13. The literary history of the Vulgate is a vast study by itself, on which we have fortunately no need to enter now. In its purest form that version appears in the Codex a noble copy of the whole Bible, written (p. 69) by the hand of the Abbot Servants, A. D. 541. It was brought from the great monastery of Monte into the Laurentian Library at Florence, and has been edited more than once. Only five years younger is the Codex in the famous Abbey of Fulham in Hesse Case,

first applied to the recension of the text by Eichmann in 1839. Since the Vulgate was the sole Bible of Western Europe for above one thousand years, it is not surprising that more copies of it exist in public libraries than of almost all other books put together; many of them being of much use for elucidating Jerome's text, but the greater part more remarkable for the illuminations and embellishments which have been lavished upon them by skilful or pious hands. The noble volume exhibited open in the Manuscript Room of the British Museum as Charlemagne's Bible, is probably some fifty years later than his reign, although it may possibly contain certain corrections made about A.D. 797 at his request by our learned countryman Alcuin. The first printed book, as we had occasion to mention before (p. 3), was the Latin Bible of the Vulgate version; and after the Council of Trent in 1546 had stamped this translation with its sanction, in terms however ambiguous, it became the obvious duty of the Church of Rome to provide an authorized

standard for general use. Sixths V. in 1590, and after him Clement VIII. in 1592, put forth separate editions, each executed with anxious care, yet the former at least so full of errors both textual and typographical, as to have exposed the Popes and their confident yet purblind criticism to the derision of zealous polemical writers (such as Dr Th. James in his *Vellum Pa pale*, dice *Concordia Discord*, 1600), who could not let slip what appeared to them a suitable occasion for vexing the enemies they had failed to convince. We profess no sort of sympathy with this gibing spirit, especially when exercised upon topics so sacred; yet it is only right to state that neither Sixths nor Clement's Bible, the latter of which is adopted for "authentic" in the Roman communion, can be relied upon in the least for critical purposes. They are constructed in a loose and unintelligent fashion, on manuscripts too recent to be trustworthy. If Codex was consulted for Pope Sixths, as has been stated, it had little or no influence in forming the text. The true readings must still be sought for in the older

copies among which it is paramount. 14. The Syriac, the Coptic and the Latin :—these are the principal versions, the rest being quite subsidiary or of slight consideration.

## More Languages

Scrivener continues,

To us of the Teutonic stock the Gothic is the most interesting, although more so on linguistic than critical grounds. It was made by Uphills, a about B.C. 350, while the Goths still inhabited now called Bulgaria, and its dialect is marvellously akin to that of modern Germany. Besides some fragments from Bob bio discovered by Mai in 1817, and others in the library in the same volume as the fragments C odd. SQ of the Gospels (p. 76), there is extant the superb but incomplete Codex Argents in the University of Upscale, on purple vellum vita silver and gold letters. It was taken by the Swedes at the siege of Prague in 1648, and has

been several times edited. Ten leaves, stolen about 1821, were given up by the penitent thief, more gracious than (p. 68), on his death-bed, to who published them in 1857. The remaining versions might do us better service, if we knew better how to use them. The Armenian and Ethiopia, composed, in or about the fifth century, in languages known to few, labour under the suspicion of having been conformed in later times to the Latin Vulgate, and, considered as versions, they have been alleged to possess little merit. The Georgian, which is said to date from the sixth century, pertains to the Armenians of the orthodox faith, and we know of no one in England who can read it, except Prebendary Malian of The Georgian is even stated to have been corrupted from the Slavonic, the version of the sister communion in Russia, made from the Greek as late as the ninth century. A secondary translation, not made from the Greek at all, can be applied only to the criticism of its own primary. Such are the Frankish and the Anglo Saxon or Old English, various modifications of

which are derived from what were considered the best copies of the Vulgate between the eighth and eleventh centuries; such too are the Persia in Walton's Polyglot t and several Arabic versions, which are translated from the Pesto Syriac.

Another Persia version, edited by (1653-7), and perhaps some out of the many Arabic versions extant (especially the Gospels in the excellent one published by in 1616 and called from a province in Egypt), were rendered from Greek manuscripts too modern to be of much account.

15. The advantage we derive from versions such as most of those we have been describing, as making known to us the contents of manuscripts of the original older than any at present existing, is too great not to be held in constant remembrance. In other respects important deductions must be made before we apply their evidence to the criticism of the sacred books. It may prove as difficult to arrive at the primitive text of the version, as of the Greek itself: the variations subsisting in the copies are sometimes quite as considerable, and suspicions of

subsequent correction from other sources are easily raised and hard to refute. Even so late a version as the *of* has been thought to be revised from the Coptic. Then again, if we take into our reckoning the genius of the language into which the Greek is turned, the skill, the care, the peculiar habits of the translator, and our own defective knowledge of the special dialect of the version, we shall perhaps never feel so secure in the application of this kind of testimony as when we come to determine the genuineness of whole sentences or clauses inserted in some Greek copies and omitted in others. "Scripture, by being translated into the tongues of many nations, assures us of the falsehood of additions," as Jerome writes to Pope Damasus in his Preface to the Vulgate Gospels. This is even now the surest benefit which versions can render to the critic.

Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener. *Six Lectures on the Text of the New Testament and the Ancient Manuscripts which Contain it: Chiefly Addressed to Those who Do Not Read Greek* (Kindle Locations 1303-1357). Deighton, Bell. Kindle Edition.

## **The Textus Receptus**

This Greek translation of the Peshitta resulted in many thousands of copies of both capital (Uncial) and small letter cursive and minuscule Greek manuscripts. Around 525 of the capital scripts, and 2500 of the small letter scripts have been found (as well as 10k of the Latin and 9k others). However, the most notable transition of the Peshitta is the use of it's Greek text for the Textus Receptus:

In Christianity, the term Textus Receptus (Latin for "received text") refers to all printed editions of the Greek New Testament from Erasmus' Novum Instrumentum omne (1516) to the 1633 Elzevir edition. It was the most commonly used text type for Protestant denominations.

The biblical Textus Receptus constituted the translation-base for the original German Luther Bible, the translation of the New Testament into English by William Tyndale, the King James Version, the Spanish Reina-Valera translation, the Czech Bible of Kralice, and most Reformation-era



New Testament translations throughout Western and Central Europe. The text originated with the first printed Greek New Testament, published in 1516, a work undertaken in Basel by the Dutch Catholic scholar, priest and monk Desiderius Erasmus.

The Textus Receptus, (TR or RT for “Received Text”) has been used for the following Bibles:

Tyndale New Testament 1526–1530

Coverdale Bible 1535

Matthew Bible 1537

Taverner's Bible 1539

Great Bible 1539

Geneva Bible 1560-1644

Bishops' Bible 1568

Douay-Rheims Bible 1582, 1610, 1749-52. Base translation is from the Vulgate but 1749-1752 editions

onwards (Challoner revisions) contain major borrowings from the Tyndale, Geneva and King James versions.

King James Version 1611, 1613, 1629, 1664, 1701, 1744, 1762, 1769, 1850

English Dort Version 1657, English translation of the Statenvertaling by Theodore Haak

Quaker Bible 1764

Webster's Revision 1833

Young's Literal Translation (YLT) 1862, 1887, 1898

Rotherham's Emphasized Bible (EBR) 1872 edition.

Cambridge Paragraph Bible 1873 edition of the KJV in paragraph format, edited by F.H.A. Scrivener.

Julia E. Smith Parker Translation 1876

New King James Version (NKJV) 1982 (New Testament 1979). With an anglicized version originally known as the "Revised Authorized Version".

Green's Literal Translation 1985. Included in The Interlinear Translation 1986.

Third Millennium Bible 1998

New Cambridge Paragraph Bible 2005 edition of the KJV, paragraph format with modernized spelling; edited by David Norton.

Modern English Version 2014.

Source: Wikipedia

## Summary

In closing, Scrivener says:

“We are thus compelled by the force of truth to admit that a wide space of little less than three centuries separates the lost autographs of Apostles and Evangelists from the earliest manuscripts of their works in full yet remaining to us. A vital question is yet to be answered, how this yawning gulf is to be bridged over, and the continuity restored between what they wrote and what we receive? We are thankful to know that our reply to this reasonable enquiry is at once brief, simple, and wholly satisfactory. **We have**

two.., other distinct sources of information, besides the evidence of Greek manuscripts, whereby the condition of the inspired text during the first three centuries can be readily ascertained, not indeed in complete detail, as manuscripts would have enabled us to do, but to an extent amply sufficient for all practical ends, quite enough to assure us of their general integrity, and of the reverence in which they were held in the first ages of the Faith:—and these are primitive versions of their text, and quotations made from them by ecclesiastical writers whose productions yet remain with us.

The precise character of the proof afforded us from these sources will most conveniently be dwelt upon in another Lecture; all I now seek is to impress upon your minds their exceeding value for illustrating the literary history of those remote ages, for which direct documentary evidence has failed us. Nor is the great general service they render us in this respect materially impaired by certain peculiarities to be detailed hereafter, which render it peculiarly necessary to

sift their testimony before implicitly receiving it on every point: still less by the fact that manuscripts of the translations of Scripture into Syriac, Coptic, Latin and other ancient tongues, like those of the original Greek and of the Fathers of the Church, themselves bear no higher date than the fourth century, and in the great majority of cases are considerably later. It is enough to know that their evidence is entirely independent of the later Greek copies, and has never been assimilated to them since each primitive version was first made or each Patristic work first published. Hence it arises that manuscripts of the Old Latin or Syriac, though themselves of the fourth or fifth century express, and unmistakable quotations made by in the second, by Origin in the third century, present us for the passages actually before us with a representation of the readings known to them, as reliable as if the Greek text which they used had survived to this day.”

Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener. Six Lectures on the Text of the New Testament and the Ancient Manuscripts which Contain

it: Chiefly Addressed to Those who Do Not Read Greek (Kindle Locations 139-157). Deighton, Bell. Kindle Edition.

It is clear that the oldest and best manuscripts (as well as the most copied and most qualitative) are those of the Peshitta and its close derivatives. The Peshitta, even though it has often been miscopied, displays the glory and faithfulness of God in the provision of His Word.

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## Appendix A

### More on the Peshitta

In the 3rd century, churches in Edessa began to use local Aramaic dialect as the language of worship. Early literary efforts were focused on creation of an authoritative Aramaic translation of the Bible, the Peshitta (ܦܫܝܬܬܐ Pšīttā).<sup>[82]</sup> At the same time, Ephrem the Syrian was producing the most treasured collection of poetry and theology in the Edessan Aramaic language, that later became known as Syriac. In 489, many Syriac-speaking Christians living in the eastern reaches of the Roman Empire fled to the Sasanian Empire to escape persecution and growing animosity with Greek-speaking Christians.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> The Christological differences with the Church of the East led to the bitter Nestorian Schism in the Syriac-speaking world. As a result, Syriac developed distinctive western and eastern varieties. Although remaining a single language with a high level of comprehension between the varieties, the two employ

distinctive variations in pronunciation and writing system, and, to a lesser degree, in vocabulary.

The Syriac language later split into a western variety, used mainly by the Syriac Orthodox Church in upper Mesopotamia and Syria proper, and an eastern variety used mainly by the Church of the East in central and northeastern Mesopotamia. Religious divisions were also reflected in linguistic differences between the Western Syriac Rite and the Eastern Syriac Rite. During the 5th and the 6th century, Syriac reached its height as the lingua franca of Mesopotamia and surrounding regions. It existed in literary (liturgical) form, as well as in vernacular forms, as the native language of Syriac-speaking populations. Following the Arab conquest in the 7th century, vernacular forms of Syriac were gradually replaced during the next centuries by the advancing Arabic language.<sup>[12]</sup> Having an Aramaic (Syriac) substratum, the regional Arabic dialect (Mesopotamian Arabic) developed under the strong influence of local Aramaic (Syriac) dialects, sharing significant similarities in language structure, as well as having evident and stark influences from previous (ancient) languages of the region.<sup>[83][84]</sup> Syriac-influenced Arabic dialects developed



among Iraqi Muslims, as well as Iraqi Christians, most of whom descend from native Syriac speakers. Western Syriac is the official language of the West Syriac Rite, practiced by the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Syriac Catholic Church, the Maronite Catholic Church, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, the Malabar Independent Syrian Church, the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church and the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. Eastern Syriac is the liturgical language of the East Syriac Rite, practised in modern times by the ethnic Assyrian followers of the Assyrian Church of the East, the Assyrian Pentecostal Church, the Ancient Church of the East, the Chaldean Catholic Church, as well as the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church in India. Syriac literature is by far the most prodigious of the various Aramaic languages. Its corpus covers poetry, prose, theology, liturgy, hymnody, history, philosophy, science, medicine and natural history. Much of this wealth remains unavailable in critical editions or modern translation. From the 7th century onwards, Syriac gradually gave way to Arabic as the spoken language of much of the region, excepting northern Iraq. The Mongol invasions and conquests of the 13th century, and the religiously motivated massacres of

Syriac Christians by Timur further contributed to the rapid decline of the language. In many places outside of Upper Mesopotamia, even in liturgy, it was replaced by Arabic.

## **Appendix B**

### **THE WESTCOTT-HORT CRITICAL THEORY**

“Although Brooke Foss Westcott identified himself fully with the project and the results, it is generally understood that it was mainly Fenton John Anthony Hort who developed the theory and composed the Introduction in their two volume work.<sup>2</sup> In the following discussion I consider the W-H theory to be Hort's creation. At the age of 23, in late 1851, Hort wrote to a friend: “I had no idea til I saw the last few weeks of the importance of texts, having read so little Greek Testament, and dragged on with the villainous Textus Receptus... Think of that vile Textus Receptus leaning entirely on late MSS.; it is a blessing there are such early ones.”

Pickering, Wilbur. The Identity of the New Testament Text IV (p. 17).

It appears that the problem with Dr. Hort (and with many seminaries today), is that they have what may be called,an analytical approach in which they try to apply the common principles of textual criticism to the sacred writings of the Church (and without a willingness to hear the Church!) Many who have dominated this field are atheist or atheistic in their approach (Note: none of the Greek manuscripts preferred by Dr. Hort were ever in the mainstream of the Church or consistent with the quality of the Holy Spirit).

**1 Corinthians 2:14**, The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. NKJV

In the case of Dr. Hort, he harbored an animosity toward the sacred text, and lopsidedly used or formulated such principles (most false) to degrade or discredit the

sacred text and remove it (and all of it's manuscripts) from study. Bruce Metzger, a member of the United Bible Society quoted this:

“More recently Brevard S. Childs has discussed ‘The Hermeneutical Problem of New Testament Text Criticism’, The canonical mode of textual criticism proposes a continuing search in discerning the best received text which moves from the outer parameters of the common church tradition found in the textus receptus to the inner judgment respecting its purity.”

Metzger, Bruce M.. The Canon of the New Testament (Its Origin, Development, and Significance) (p. 268). Clarendon Press. Kindle Edition.

Also Wilbur Pickering,

“When we turn to the cursives, Aland offers summaries for 150, chosen on the basis of their "independence" from the Byzantine norm. He lists 900 MSS only by number because "these minuscules exhibit a purely or predominantly Byzantine text",

and therefore he considers that "they are all irrelevant for textual criticism" (The Text, p. 155).”

Pickering, Wilbur. The Identity of the New Testament Text IV (p. 124). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

How, in any science, can one reach an accurate conclusion if 80% of the evidence is excluded? This is what so many seminaries practice today in their rejection of the “Byzantine Text”.

## **Appendix C**

### **The Woman Caught in Adultery, John 8:3-11**

This passage is commented on by Ambrose at Milan (AD 374) quotes at least nine times. Augustine in North Africa (AD 396) quotes 18 times. Also quoted by Pacian in the north of Spain ( AD 370); by Faustus the African (AD 400) by Rufinus at Aquileia (AD 400); by Chrysologus at Revenna (AD 433); by Sedulius a Scot (AD 434); by Victorius or Victorinus (AD 457); by Vigilius of Tapsus (AD 484) in North Africa; by Gelasius, bishop of Rome (AD 492); by Cassiodorus in Southern Italy; by Gregory the Great, and by other Fathers of the Western Church. It is in the Pehitta, in Codd b,c,e, g, h, j, Jerome (A.D. 385) after a careful survey of older Greek copies put it in the Vulgate (Jerome was familiar with later copies than B or A). It is also in the Ethiopic Version (5th Century); the Palestinian Syriac (5th Century); the Georgian (5th or 6th); the Slavonic, Arabic and Persion Versions, which are of later date, the Armenian Cod D; Uncial U, 18 cursives of John; cursives, 13, 69, 124, 346, the verses in question are found tacked on to the end of Lk 21, however, these cursives were copied from from a corrupt script and are

known as “The Farrar Group,” (they also have other problems). Both Augustine and Ambrose warned of the tendency to eliminate this text - it was expunged from some Armenian and Boharic scripts.

Source: Bergon, “Unholy Hands on the Bible” section F. This account quoted universally from one major publication, The Peshitta.

Westcott and Hort, as a result of eliminating the Byzantine scripts, and refusing to carefully consider the testimony of the Church, arrived at a wrong prototype for the Bible.

## Appendix D

### 1 John 5:7,8

A Vulgate reading in the Textus Receptus, not in the Peshitta. Erasmus was urged to add the text from a Latin manuscript. This text is also in the Latin Vulgate.

From Scrivener,

9. The Latin versions of Holy Scripture demand and will reward our special attention. Although we know that a branch of the Christian Church existed at Rome "many years" before S. Paul's first visit to the city (Rom. xv. 23), and already flourished there in the first century, it probably was not for the use of converts in the capital that the earliest Latin translation was made. To them S. Paul wrote his noble Epistle in Greek; the earliest Bishops of that Church were mostly Greek: even Clement their first or one of their first Bishops, and Caius the presbyter at a later period, whose names intimate a pure Roman origin, yet chose to write in Greek, a language more or less familiar even to the lowest



classes in that great centre of the civilized world. In the provinces, especially at a distance from the chief seats of commerce, Latin was the only language generally spoken, and in such places the necessity must have first arisen of rendering at least the New Testament into a tongue to be "understood of the people."

Scrivener continues,

...Since truth obliged us to speak slightly of Cardinal Mai when he tried his Prentice hand on the famous Cod. B (p. 30), we should be the more forward to acknowledge his services with reference to the Latin version, wherein he possessed the skill and knowledge of a master. To him we owe not only Cod. h. in the Vatican, of which had given some specimens, but what is one of the most valuable and interesting of all documents of this class, a Speculum or Book of Quotations, from almost every part of the New Testament (being all the more prized, inasmuch as our main Old Latin authorities contain the Gospels alone), edited in 1843 from a manuscript of the sixth century (cod. m. of our

critical notation) in the monastery of S. Croce at Rome, and conspicuous for being the earliest in which the clause about the Three Heavenly Witnesses (1 John v. 7, 8) is contained: it is here found in two different places.

Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener. Six Lectures on the Text of the New Testament and the Ancient Manuscripts which Contain it: Chiefly Addressed to Those who Do Not Read Greek (Kindle Locations 1265-1281).

Walter Thiele cites evidence for the Comma:

Walter Thiele (1959) suggested that this passage gives evidence that the comma was already present in the text known to Cyprian. Most modern scholars before Thiele had argued that Cyprian's invocation of Pater, Filius, Spiritus Sanctus rather than Pater, Verbum, Spiritus Sanctus—the form usually encountered in the comma—suggests that he did not know the comma, but Thiele showed that several Fathers (ps.-Augustine, Eugenius of Carthage, Cassiodorus) also cite the comma with Filius, as does the León palimpsest, the Theodulfian recension

and the Vulgate ms Dijon, Bibl. munic. 9bis.

Furthermore, Thiele pointed out that the comma was one of a number of interpolations in the Catholic Epistles found in a type of text quite close to that used in North Africa (Jas 1:1, 2:16, 2:25, 4:1; 1 Pt 1:16, 1:19, 2:23, 3:22, 5:4, 5:14; 1 Jn 2:5, 2:17, 2:26, 5:7-8, 5:9, 5:20; 2 Jn 11; Jud 11), which often draw their material from parallel passages elsewhere in the New Testament. Several of these interpolations are of a dogmatic nature (1 Pt 1:19, 3:22; 1 Jn 5:9, 20). .... Thiele to suggest that these interpolations, including the Johannine comma, may derive from a very early form of the Greek text.

Source: XenForo

Walter Thiele - Cyprian - Beobachtungen zum Comma Iohanneum (I Joh 5,7f.)

Other Notable Publications of the Comma,

John Mills, Novum Testamentum Graecum

Karl Schaaf, Lexicon Syricum concordantiale, omnes

Novi Testamenti syriaci voces... (not mentioned by

Bruce Metzger). Karl Schaff, was a Syriac scholar

Horne, Richard Porson claims 29 Latin MSS , the oldest and most correct contain the Comma

Source: Michael Maynard

The Historical Defense of 1 John 5:7-8

## Appendix E

### The Testimony of the Early Fathers

“Byzantine” readings are recognized (most notably) by the Didache, Diognetus, and Justin Martyr in the first half of the second century; by the Gospel of Peter, Athenagorus, Hegesippus, and Irenaeus (heavily) in the second half, by Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Clementines, Hippolytus, and Origen (all heavily) in the first half of the third century; by Gregory of Thaumaturgus, Novatian, Cyprian (heavily), Dionysius of Alexandria, and Archelaus in the second half; by Eusebius, Athanasius, Macarius Magnus, Hilary, Didymus, Basil, Titus of Bostra, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nyssa.

Source: Wilbur Pickering “The Identity of the New Testament”; Burgon, “The Last Twelve Verses”

# Codex Sinaiticus: Fact or Fiction (in regard to the 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.)

## The Monastery

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

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](#).<sup>[18]</sup> The living bush on the grounds is purportedly the one seen by Moses.<sup>[19]</sup>

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

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.<sup>[22]</sup>

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.

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,<sup>[23]</sup>

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

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.

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

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](#).

<sup>[32]</sup> 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,<sup>[33][34]</sup> as well as among the New Finds of 1975.<sup>[35][8]</sup>

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.<sup>[36][37][38][39][40][41][42]</sup>

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<sup>[w hose?]</sup> possession.<sup>[43]</sup> 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](#).<sup>[44][45][46]</sup> Only among the New Finds two additional palimpsest manuscripts came to light containing additional passages of the Old Syriac Gospels.<sup>[47]</sup>

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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.<sup>[48]</sup>

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.<sup>[49]</sup>

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.<sup>[50][51][8]</sup>

## Sinai Palimpsests Project

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

[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.<sup>[56][8]</sup> Though the original texts were once assumed to be lost,<sup>[57]</sup> 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.<sup>[18][29]</sup> Each page took approximately eight minutes to scan completely.<sup>[29]</sup> These images have subsequently been digitized and are now freely available for research at the UCLA Online Library for scholarly use.<sup>[8]</sup>

As of June 2018, at least more than 160 [palimpsests](#) were identified, with over 6,800 pages of texts recovered.<sup>[8]</sup> The newer finds were discovered in a secluded storage area of the St George Tower in 1975.<sup>[58][59][60][61][62][63]</sup> 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;<sup>[47]</sup>

two unattested witnesses of an early Christian apocryphal text the [Dormition of Mary](#) ([Transitus Mariae](#)) of which most of the Greek text is lost;<sup>[64]</sup>

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](#)<sup>[65][66]</sup> and [Christian Palestinian Aramaic](#),

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

## 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.<sup>[67]</sup>

The Codex Sinaiticus ([Shelfmarks](#) and references: London, [British Library](#), Add MS 43725; [Gregory-Aland](#) n<sup>o</sup> Ⲱ [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](#).<sup>[1]</sup> The codex is a historical treasure.<sup>[2]</sup>

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.<sup>[3]</sup>

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.

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.<sup>[4][5]</sup>

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.<sup>[6]</sup>

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

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

- [Genesis](#) 23:19 – Genesis 24:46 – fragments
- [Leviticus](#) 20:27 – Leviticus 22:30
- [Numbers](#) 5:26–Numbers 7:20 – fragments
- [1 Chronicles](#) 9:27–1 Chronicles 19:17
- [Ezra–Nehemiah](#) (from Esdr. 9:9).
- [Book of Psalms](#)–[Wisdom of Sirach](#)
- [Book of Esther](#)
- [Book of Tobit](#)
- [Book of Judith](#)
- [Book of Joel](#)–[Book of Malachi](#)
- [Book of Isaiah](#)

- [Book of Jeremiah](#)
- [Book of Lamentations](#)
- [1 Maccabees](#)–[4 Maccabees](#)



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:<sup>[21]</sup>

### Omitted verses

- [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;<sup>[22]</sup>
- [Epistle to the Romans](#) 16:24



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

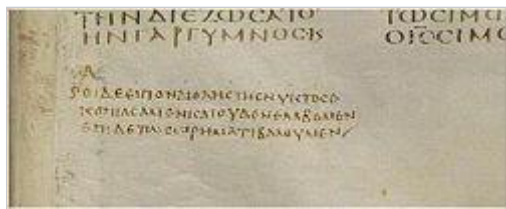
## Omitted phrases

- [Matthew 5:44](#) εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς καταρωμένους ὑμᾶς, καλῶς ποιεῖτε τοῖς μισοῦσιν ὑμᾶς (bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you);<sup>[23]</sup>
- Matthew 6:13 – ὅτι σοῦ ἐστὶν 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.<sup>[24]</sup>
- Matthew 10:39a – ὁ εὗρων τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπολεσεί αὐτήν, καὶ (He who finds his life will lose it, and);<sup>[25]</sup>
- Matthew 15:6 – ἢ τὴν μητέρα (αὐτοῦ) (or (his) mother);<sup>[26]</sup>
- Matthew 20:23 καὶ τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι βαπτισθῆσθε (and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with)<sup>[27]</sup>
- Matthew 23:35 – υἱοῦ βαρὰχίου (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](#).<sup>[28]</sup>
- Mark 1:1 – υἱοῦ θεοῦ "the Son of God" omitted.<sup>[29]</sup>
- Mark 10:7 – omitted καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ (and be joined to his wife), as in codices [Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1209](#), [Codex Athous Lavrensis](#), [892](#), [ℓ 48](#), syr<sup>s</sup>, goth.<sup>[30]</sup>
- 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<sup>45</sup>](#), [P<sup>75</sup>](#), B, C, L, Θ, Ξ, [33](#), 700, 892, 1241, syr, cop<sup>bo</sup>; [\[31\]](#)

- 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<sup>fav</sup>](#), 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 cw 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](#). [\[38\]](#)

## Additions

[Matthew 8:13](#) (see Luke 7:10)

It has additional text: καὶ ὑποστρέψας ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ εὑρεν 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](#), [\(0250\)](#), [f<sup>1</sup>](#), [\(33\)](#), 1241), [g<sup>1</sup>](#), syr<sup>h</sup>.<sup>[39]</sup>

[Matthew 10:12](#) (see Luke 10:5)

It reads λέγοντες εἰρήνη τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ (say peace to be this house) after αὐτην. 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 [f<sup>1</sup>](#), [22](#), 1010 (1424), it, vg<sup>cl</sup>.<sup>[40][41]</sup>

[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 ὕδωρ 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.<sup>[42]</sup>

## Unique and other textual variants



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



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

[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<sup>C, s, p, pal</sup>, arm, Diatessaron.<sup>[44]</sup>

[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.<sup>[45]</sup>

[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);<sup>[46]</sup>

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

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

$$\frac{P}{5},$$

$$\frac{P}{106},$$

[b](#), [e](#), [ff<sup>2</sup>](#), [syr<sup>C</sup>](#), and [syr<sup>S</sup>](#) instead of ordinary word υἱός (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.<sup>[48]</sup>

Acts 11:20 – It reads εὐαγγελιστάς (Evangelists) instead of ἑλληνιστάς (Hellenists);<sup>[49]</sup>

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".<sup>[49]</sup>

2 Timothy 4:10 – it reads Γαλλίαν (Gaul) for Γαλατίαν (Galatia) This reading of the codex is supported by Ephraemi Rescriptus, [81](#), [104](#), [326](#), 436.<sup>[50]</sup>

## 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<sup>1</sup>](#), [f<sup>13</sup>](#), [28](#), [700](#), [1010](#), 1079, 1242, 1546, 2148, [f<sup>10</sup>](#), [f<sup>950</sup>](#), [f<sup>1642</sup>](#), [f<sup>1761</sup>](#), syr<sup>s</sup>, arm, geo. This is a variant of the majority manuscripts.<sup>[51]</sup>

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.<sup>[52]</sup>

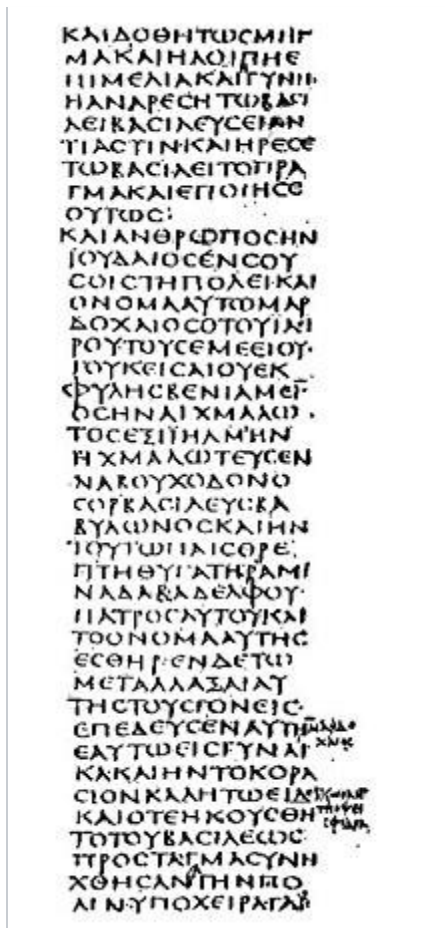
In Luke 8:48 it has θυγατερ (daughter) as in the Byzantine manuscripts, instead of the Alexandrian θυγατηρ (daughter), supported by the manuscripts: B K L W Θ.<sup>[53]</sup>

## 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](#), [424<sup>c</sup>](#), [614](#), [1739<sup>c</sup>](#), [2412](#), 2495, [f<sup>598m</sup>](#), syr<sup>h</sup>, [cop<sup>sa</sup>](#), [cop<sup>bo</sup>](#), [Origen](#).<sup>[54][n 3]</sup> [Bart D. Ehrman](#) says this was a corrupt reading from a proto-orthodox scribe,<sup>[55]</sup> although this conclusion has not gained wide support.<sup>[56]</sup>

## 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 *εἰκη* ('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".<sup>[n4]</sup>



A portion of the Codex Sinaiticus, containing [Esther](#).<sup>[57]</sup>

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.<sup>[58]</sup> There are a number of differences between Sinaiticus and Vaticanus; [Hoskier](#) enumerated 3036 differences:

Matt—656  
 Mark—567  
 Luke—791  
 John—1022  
 Total—3036.<sup>[59]</sup>

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".<sup>[60]</sup>

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 Μαρίας 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	Του δε ΧΥ ΙΥ η γενεσις ουτως ην μνηστευθεισης της μητρος αυτου Μαρίας τω Ιωσηφ πριν ην συνελθειν αυτους ευρεθη εν γαστρι εχουσα εκ ΠΝΣ αγιου Ιωσηφ δε ο ανηρ αυτης δικαιος ων

εβουληθη λαθρα απολυσαι αυτην	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.<sup>[61]</sup> Between the 4th and 12th centuries,

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

According to [David C. Parker](#) the full codex has about 23,000 corrections.<sup>[64]</sup>

In addition to these corrections some letters were marked by dots as doubtful (e.g. Ὡ). 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.<sup>[65]</sup>

## 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](#).<sup>[66]</sup> [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](#).<sup>[67]</sup> According to [Kenyon](#) the forms of the letters are Egyptian and they were found in Egyptian papyri of earlier date.<sup>[68]</sup> [Gardthausen](#)<sup>[69]</sup> Ropes and [Jellicoe](#) thought it was written in [Egypt](#). [Harris](#) believed that the manuscript came from the [library of Pamphilus](#) at Caesarea, [Palestine](#).<sup>[68]</sup> [Streeter](#),<sup>[61]</sup> Skeat, and [Milne](#) also believed that it was produced in Caesarea.<sup>[45]</sup>

## 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."<sup>[16]</sup>

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).<sup>[70]</sup> This hypothesis was supported by [Pierre Batiffol](#),<sup>[71]</sup> 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.<sup>[45]</sup>

[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".<sup>[72]</sup>

## 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.<sup>[73]</sup>

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.<sup>[74]</sup> The three remaining scribes are still identified by the letters that Tischendorf gave them: A, B, and D.<sup>[74]</sup> Correctors were more, at least seven (a, b, c, ca, cb, cc, e).<sup>[7]</sup>

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.<sup>[75]</sup> Metzger states: "scribe A had made some unusually serious mistakes".<sup>[63]</sup> Scribes A and B more often used nomina sacra in contracted forms (ΠNEYMA contracted in all occurrences, KYPIOΣ contracted except in 2 occurrences), scribe D more often used forms uncontracted.<sup>[76]</sup> D distinguished between sacral and nonsacral using of KYPIOΣ.<sup>[77]</sup> 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 ΙΣXYEI, confusing of E and AI is very rare.<sup>[75]</sup> In the Book of Psalms this scribe has 35 times ΔAYEΙΔ instead of ΔAYΙΔ, while scribe A normally uses an abbreviated form

ΔΑΔ.<sup>[78]</sup> Scribe A's was a "worse type of phonetic error". Confusion of E and AI occurs in all contexts.<sup>[75]</sup>

Milne and Skeat characterised scribe B as "careless and illiterate".<sup>[79]</sup> The work of the original scribe is designated by the siglum <sup>71</sup>. \*κ<sup>1</sup>



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.<sup>[63]</sup> Readings which they introduced are designated by the siglum κ<sup>a</sup>.<sup>[80]</sup> Milne and Skeat have observed that the superscription to 1 Maccabees was made by scribe D, while the text was written by scribe A.<sup>[81]</sup> Scribe D corrects his own work and that of scribe A, but scribe A limits himself to correcting his own work.<sup>[82]</sup>

In the 6th or 7th century, many alterations were made (κ<sup>b</sup>) – 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.<sup>[83]</sup> The pervasive iotacism, especially of the εi diphthong, remains uncorrected.<sup>[84]</sup>

## 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.<sup>[86]</sup>



[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",<sup>[87]</sup> 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).<sup>[88]</sup>

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

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.<sup>[9]</sup> In 1846, Captain C. K. MacDonald visited Mount Sinai, saw the codex, and bought two codices ([495](#) and [496](#)) from the monastery.<sup>[90]</sup>



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.<sup>[6]</sup>)

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.<sup>[91]</sup> 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.<sup>[92]</sup> 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".<sup>[93]</sup>

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.

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.<sup>[94]</sup>



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."<sup>[95]</sup>

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.<sup>[96][97]</sup>

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

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.<sup>[99]</sup>

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'.<sup>[100][101]</sup>



View of Saint Catherine's Monastery

## 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](#).<sup>[102][103]</sup>

[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.<sup>[104]</sup>

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.<sup>[105]</sup>

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."<sup>[106]</sup> The two most weighty of these three codices,  $\alpha$  and B, he likens to the "two false witnesses" of Matthew.<sup>[107][108]</sup>

## 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.<sup>[109][110]</sup>



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).<sup>[111]</sup> After coming to Britain it was examined by Skeat and Milne using an [ultra-violet](#) lamp.<sup>[112]</sup>



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.<sup>[113]</sup>

Among these fragments were twelve complete leaves from the Sinaiticus, 11 leaves of the [Pentateuch](#) and 1 leaf of the [Shepherd of Hermas](#).<sup>[118]</sup> Together with these leaves 67 Greek Manuscripts of New Testament have been found (uncials [0278](#) – [0296](#) and some minuscules).<sup>[114]</sup>

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.<sup>[115][116][117]</sup> This will include the use of [hyperspectral imaging](#) to photograph the manuscripts to look for hidden information such as erased or faded text.<sup>[118]</sup> This is to be done in cooperation with the British Library.<sup>[119]</sup>

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,<sup>[120]</sup> although the entire text was intended to be shown by that date.<sup>[121]</sup>

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.<sup>[122]</sup>

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.<sup>[123]</sup>

## Present location



The British Library

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](#).<sup>[7]</sup>

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.<sup>[124]</sup> 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.<sup>[125]</sup> 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.<sup>[125]</sup>

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.<sup>[126]</sup>

## 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.<sup>[7]</sup>

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.<sup>[10]</sup>

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 minuscule manuscripts in this place (for example, [Minuscule 2053](#), [2062](#)).<sup>[16]</sup>

## See also

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

## Notes

- <sup>^</sup> 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.](#))
- <sup>^</sup> Also in [Minuscule 69](#), [Minuscule 336](#), and several other manuscripts Pauline epistles precede Acts.
- <sup>^</sup> For another variants of this verse see: [Textual variants in the First Epistle of John](#).
- <sup>^</sup> The same variant present manuscripts: [P<sup>67</sup>](#), [2174](#), in manuscripts of [Vulgate](#), and in manuscripts of Ethiopic version.
- <sup>^</sup> 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 предложения 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.)

- <sup>^</sup> [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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- <sup>^</sup> [Scrivener, Frederick Henry Ambrose](#) (1875). [Six Lectures on the Text of the New Testament and the Ancient Manuscripts](#). Cambridge. p. 26. [ISBN 978-1-4097-0826-1](#).
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- <sup>^</sup> ["Liste Handschriften"](#). Münster: Institute for New Testament Textual Research. Retrieved 16 March 2013.
- <sup>^</sup> ["Sacred Texts: Codex Sinaiticus"](#). [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk). Retrieved 27 January 2017.
- <sup>^</sup>
- [Jump up to:](#)
- [a](#) [b](#) [c](#) [d](#) [e](#) [Aland, Kurt](#); Barbara Aland (1995). The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes.

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- [BBC video clip](#), handling the Codex Sinaiticus at the British Library

## Facsimiles of Codex Sinaiticus

- [Codex Sinaiticus](#) at the Center for the Study of NT Manuscripts (JPG)
- [Codex Sinaiticus: Facsimile Edition](#) ([ISBN 9781598565775](#))

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- [Differences between the Sinaiticus and the KJV](#)
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## Vellum and paper manuscripts[[edit](#)]

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 [Codex Vaticanus](#) (left) and [Codex Marchalianus](#) (right)

The prevailing type of book-hand during what in [papyrology](#) 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 [Christian literature](#). In [manuscripts](#), 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 [Vaticanus](#), 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 [Sinaiticus](#), which is not much later, the letters are larger and more heavily made; and in the [Alexandrinus](#) (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<sup>[citation needed]</sup>, 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 [Chancery hand](#) and seen in two papyrus examples of the Festal letters despatched annually by the [Patriarch of Alexandria](#), was occasionally used, the best known example being the [Codex Marchalianus](#) (6th or 7th century). A combination of this hand with the other type is also known.