



New Testament Manuscript Copies

Four Classifications of Manuscripts

Uncial manuscripts: all in capitals. Minuscule manuscripts: in small letters. Papyrus fragments.

Lectionaries: Books or volumes containing selections of manuscripts to be read in the churches yearly.

Quantities of Manuscripts:

Uncial manuscripts: 170 known manuscripts. There were 4,678 classifications by 1957.

Uncial Manuscripts:

The Sinaitic:

Code letter: (the Hebrew letter Aleph). Date: 4th century AD. Contained complete New Testament. Written in Greek. Today in British Museum, London, England. New Testament omissions contained: Mark 16:9-20; John 7:53-8:11. Contains 147½ pages of New Testament writings. It was found at Mt. Sinai by Dr. Tischendorf in 1844 AD. New Testament published by Tischendorf in 1863 AD. Sold by the USSR to the British Museum for \$510,000 in 1933. It had been in Caesarea between the 5th & 7th century.

The Vatican:

Code Letter: (B). Date: 4th century AD. New Testament (partial). Written in Greek. Today in Vatican Library, Rome, Italy. Textual omissions: Mark 16:9-20; John 7:53-8:11; Heb 9:14 to the end of the New Testament. The General epistles were also included in the manuscript. Contained 142 pages of New Testament writings. Its first appearance in the Vatican Library catalogue of 1481. Printed by the Vatican Press in 1889-90 and made available to the world. The original source is unknown.

The Alexandrian:

Code letter: (A). Date: 5th century. Written in Greek. Present location: British Museum, London. Textual omissions: Matt 1:1-25:6; John 6:50-8:52; 2 Cor 4:13-12:6. Contained 134 pages of New Testament writings. In 1078, given to the Patriarch of Alexandria, in 1621 taken to Constantinople, in 1624 taken to Turkey and presented to Charles I of England, King James I having died before it arrived. In 1879-1883, it was printed entirely and became the First Uncial manuscript to be used by biblical scholars.

The Ephraem:

Code letter: (C). Date: 5th century. Old and New Testament written in Greek. Located at National Library, Paris, France. Owned by the French Government. New Testament textual omissions: 2 Thess, 2 John and parts of other books, see Scrivener, Introduction, Vol. 1, page 121, note. This is a Palimpsest manuscript. Written, erased and written again. It contains parts of each New Testament book except those above mentioned. The name came from the writings of Ephraem, which were written over some of the biblical Greek writings. In 1840, Tischendorf brought out the underlying text more fully and edited and published it in 1843-45.

The Beza:

Code letter: (D). Date: 6th century AD. Contents: the Gospels, 3 John 11-15 and the Acts. Language: Greek and Latin. Located at Cambridge University, England. Textual Omissions: Greek: Matt 1:1-20;



6:20-9:2; 27:2-12; John 1:16-3:26; Acts 8:29-10:14; 21:2-10,15-18; 22:10-20; 22: 29-28:31.

Written in parallel columns to the Latin text. Latin text has some omissions also. It was found in 1562 in the monastery of St. Irenaeus at Lyons by Beza, a French Bible scholar. In 1581, it was given to the University of Cambridge. It was printed in common type in 1864 by Dr. Scrivener.

The Claromontanus:

Code Letter: (D2). Date: Sixth century. Contents; Paul's Epistles, complete and including Hebrews. Written in Greek and Latin. Present location: National Library in Paris. Textual omissions: (Greek) Rom 1:1-7, 27-30; 1 Cor 14:13-22. Found by Beza in a monastery at Clermont, France and used by him in the 2nd edition of his Greek Testament in 1582. In 1852, it was fully edited by Tischendorf.

The Washington:

Code Letter: (W). Date: 4th or 5th century. Contents: the four Gospels and portions of all the Pauline Epistles from 1 Corinthians onward and including Hebrews. Language: Greek. Present location: the National Library, Washington, D.C. Property of the United States Government. Textual omissions: Mark 15:13-38; John 14:25-16:7; some portions of the Pauline Epistles. There is some evidence that Acts, the General Epistles, Romans, and before 1 Corinthians are missing. Purchased by Freer of Detroit in 1906 and edited by H.A. Sanders of the University of Michigan in 1912 and 1918. This is one of the important manuscripts.

The Keridethi Gospels:

Code Letter: Greek Theta Θ. Date: 8th or 9th century. Contents: the four Gospels. Written in Greek. Location: Library at Tbilisi (called Tiflis prior to 1936), capital of the Republic of Georgia. Georgia was a part of the Russian Soviet Socialistic Republic (USSR). Found in the Keridethi monastery in Caucasus region near east end of the Black Sea. Published by Beerman and Gregory in 1913. Important to later textual criticism.

Chester Beatty Papyri:

One of the greatest discoveries of new biblical manuscripts. One of the eight (8) oldest manuscripts. Date: Biblical manuscripts are with one exception 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Publicly made known by Chester Beatty on November 19, 1931. It falls into three codices: The Gospels and Acts containing 60 pages written in 200-250 AD. Pauline Epistles containing 172 pages and written in the 3rd Century. The Book of Revelation Chapters 9:10-17:2 containing 20 pages and written in the 3rd century.

The "Greek Bible:"

Of the seven great uncial manuscripts described, four of them--the Sinaitic, Vatican, Alexandrian and the Ephraem, contain or did contain the entire Greek New Testament.

King James Version:

Of these oldest and important manuscripts, only two - Beza and Claromontanus, were known and accessible at the time when the King James Version of our English Bible was written in 1611 and they were not used to any great extent. Textual basis for the King James Version will be discussed more fully later.

Minuscule Manuscripts:

These are manuscripts written in small letters. Date: 8th century and onward. The highest number of



manuscripts counted was 2,352. Lake says, “about 3,000.” Of these, 46 contain the entire New Testament, others have sections.

Value: Even though the minuscules came later in time, some of them were copies of older uncials. Therefore, a later minuscule might carry an older text than a given uncial. There are several of real value: No. 1, 118, 111, 209, and 81. Minuscules are listed in the apparatus by number, Uncials are by listed letter.

Papyri:

These are single sheets or fragments of sheets, upon which parts of the Bible were written in Greek. Discoveries: 1778 - Papyrus found in Europe. 1820 - Papyrus found dating to 2nd century. 1877 - Papyrus first discovered on large scale by Arsinoe. 1890 - systematic exploration started under Professor Petrie. 1896-7 - Drs. Grenfell and Hunt of Oxford, England found tons of papyri, ranging in age from 1st century to the 10th. 1925 - Robertson listed 34 fragments, 19 of which were found in Egypt. By 1940, the number had increased to 52. Most are dated to 3rd through 6th or 7th century.

Value of the Papri: Age - 200 years or more older than oldest known vellum manuscripts. They represent 12 New Testament books and confirm their authenticity. Vocabulary; they throw much light on the meaning of New Testament words. They reduce the supposed 550 “new words” of the New Testament to 50.

Summary:

There are about 170 Uncials. There are about 2,352 Minuscules. There are about 52 Papyri. There are 1,565 Lectionaries. This makes a total of 4,139 manuscripts, with more being discovered. We have 8,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate and 1,000 manuscripts of ancient versions.