



The Bible, 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

Total for all Classifications: by 1957 there were 4,678 manuscripts

Uncial Manuscripts

The Sinaitic

Code letter is the Hebrew letter Aleph. 4th century AD. Contained complete New Testament. Written in Greek. Today, it is located in the British Museum, London, England. It contained New Testament omissions in Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53 - John 8:11. It contains 147.5 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 British Museum for \$510,000 in 1933. It had been in Caesarea between the 5th & 7th century.

The Vatican

Code letter is "B." 4th century AD. New Testament (partial). Written in Greek. Today, it is located in Vatican Library, Rome, Italy. It contained textual omissions in Mark 16:9-20, John 7:53 - John 8:11, and from Heb 9:14 to the end of the New Testament. The General epistles were also included in the manuscript. It contained 142 pages of New Testament writings. Its first appearance was 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 is "A." 5th century AD. Written in Greek. Present location is in the British Museum, London. It contained textual omissions in Matt 1:25, John 6:50 - John 8:52, 2 Cor 4:13 - 2 Cor 12:6. Contained 134 pages of New Testament writings. In 1078 AD, it was 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 1879-83 it was printed entirely and became the First Uncial manuscript to be used by Biblical scholars.

The Ephraem

Code letter is "C." 5th century AD. Old and New Testament written in Greek. Located at National Library, Paris, France. Owned by the French Government. It contained textual omissions in New Testament, 2 Thessalonians, 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 is “D.” 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: Matthew 1:1-20; Matthew 6:20 - Matthew 9:2, Matthew 27:2-12, John 1:16-3:26, Acts 8:29-10:14; Acts 21:2-10, Acts 21:15-18; Acts 22:10-20; Acts 22: 29 - Acts 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 is “D2.” 6th century. Contents: Paul’s Epistles, complete and including Hebrews. Written in Greek and Latin. Present location: National Library in Paris. Textual omissions: (Greek) Romans 1:1-7, Romans 1:27-30, 1 Corinthians 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 is “W.” 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-John 16:7 and some portions of the Pauline Epistles. There is some evidence that Acts, the General Epistles, Romans, 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 is Greek Theta “Θ.” 8th or 9th century. Contents: the four Gospels. Written in Greek. Location: Library at Tiflis, capital of Georgia, now a part of the Russian Soviet Republic. 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 oldest manuscripts. Date: Biblical manuscripts are with one exception 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Publicly made known by Chester Beatty, Nov, 19, 1931. It falls into three codices: The Gospels and Acts: contains 60 pages. 200-250 AD, Pauline Epistles: 172 pages. 3rd century, and Book of Revelation: Chap. 9:10-17:2; 20 pages. 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 made in 1611 and they were not used to any great extent.

Minuscule Manuscripts

Manuscripts written in small letters. Date: 8th century and onward. Number of Manuscripts: Highest number 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, of these the following: No. 1, 118, 111, 209, 81. Minuscules are listed in the apparatus by number, Uncials by letter.

Papyri

Single sheets or fragments of sheets, upon which parts of the Bible are 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 century.

1925 - Robertson listed 34 fragments, 19 of which were found in Egypt.

By 1940 - the number has increased to 52. Most are dated to 3rd through 6th or 7th century. Value of the Papyri: Age - 200 years or more older than oldest known vellum manuscripts. They represent 12 New Testament books, 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 1565 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.