~Canon of Scripture~

George Lamsa, the translator of the Aramaic Bible into English from Aramaic and Church of the East scholar, states that the Christian Church of the East still uses the Aramaic Bible and attests to the originality of the Peshitta when one of its notable leaders stated in 1957 in the preface to George Lamsa's Aramaic Bible, "...[T]he Church of the East received the scriptures from the hands of the blessed Apostles themselves in the Aramaic original, the language spoken by our Lord [Yeshua] himself, and that the ***Peshitta*** is the text of the Church of the East which has come down from the Biblical times without any change or revision

"The Scriptures in the Church of the East, from the inception of Christianity to the present day, are in Aramaic and have never been tampered with or revised, as attested by the present Patriarch of the Church of the East"
(Lamsa, "Introduction" p. v)

There are many scholars who, though holding to the fourth century canonization view, still admit that (a) the Apostolic Scriptures were written and accepted as authoritative by the end of the first century, and (b) a de facto canon was in place at that time, though no over-arching ecclesiastical body had yet recognized it, since no such body was to exist for another 250 years or so!

There is substantial evidence from the earliest church fathers writing in the period from A.D. 95 to 120 that all the present books of the New Testament were used and recognized as authoritative.

"There is evidence that within thirty years of the apostle's [John] death all the Gospels and Pauline letters were known and used in all those centers from which any evidence has come down to us. It is true that some of the smaller letters were being questioned as to their authority in some quarters for perhaps another fifty years, but this was due only to uncertainty about their authorship in those particular locales. This demonstrates that acceptance was not being imposed by the actions of councils but was rather happening spontaneously through a normal response on the part of those who had learned the facts about authorship. In those places where the churches were uncertain about the authorship or apostolic approval of certain books, acceptance was slower." **(The Origin of the Bible, 70)**

Septuagint "LXX"

The Septuagint: A page from Codex Vaticanus, the basis of Sir Launcelot Lee Brenton's English translation. The Septuagint (or simply "LXX") is the name commonly given in the West to the ancient, Koine Greek version of the Old Testament translated in stages between the 3rd to 1st century BC in Alexandria. It is the oldest of several ancient translations of the Hebrew Bible into Greek. The name means "seventy" and derives from a tradition that seventy-two Jewish scholars (LXX being the nearest round number) translated the Pentateuch (or Torah) from Hebrew into Greek for one of the Ptolemaic kings. As the work of translation went on gradually, and new books were added to the collection, the compass of the Greek Bible came to be somewhat indefinite. The Pentateuch always maintained its pre-eminence as the basis of the canon; but the prophetic collection changed its aspect by having various

hagiographa incorporated into it. Some of the newer works, those called anagignoskomena in Greek, are not included in the Hebrew canon. Among these books are Maccabees and the Wisdom of Ben Sira. Also, the LXX version of some works, like Daniel and Esther, are longer than the Hebrew.[1] Several of the later books apparently were composed in Greek.

The LXX was held with great respect in ancient times; Philo and Josephus ascribed divine inspiration to its authors. It formed the basis of the Old Latin versions and is still used intact within Eastern Orthodoxy. Besides the Old Latin versions, the LXX is also the basis for Gothic, Slavonic, old Syriac (but not the Peshitta), old Armenian, and Coptic versions of the Old Testament. Of significance for all Christians and for bible scholars, the LXX is quoted by the Christian New Testament and by the Apostolic Fathers. While Jews have not used the LXX in worship or religious study since the second century AD, recent scholarship has brought renewed interest in it in Judaic Studies. Some of the Dead Sea scrolls attest to Hebrew texts other than those on which the Masoretic Text was based; in many cases, these newly found texts accord with the LXX version. The oldest surviving codices of LXX date to the fourth century AD.

Masoretic Text

The **Masoretic Text** (**MT**) is the Hebrew text of the Tanakh approved for general use in Judaism. It is also widely used in translations of the Old Testament of the Protestant Bible, and in recent decades also for Roman Catholic Bibles. It was primarily compiled, edited and distributed by a group of Jews known as the Masoretes between the seventh and tenth centuries CE. Though the consonants differ little from the text generally accepted in the early second century, it has numerous differences of both little and great significance when compared to earlier sources such as the Septuagint, which is used in translations of the Old Testament of the Christian Bible.

The Hebrew word *mesorah* **(הרוסמ, alt. תרוסמ)** refers to the transmission of a tradition. In a very broad sense it can refer to the entire chain of Jewish tradition (see Oral law), but in reference to the **masoretic text** the word *mesorah* has a very specific meaning: the diacritic markings of the text of the Hebrew Bible and concise marginal notes in manuscripts (and later printings) of the Hebrew Bible which note textual details, usually about the precise spelling of words.

The oldest manuscripts containing substantial parts of the Masoretic Text known to still exist date from approximately the ninth century, and the Aleppo Codex (possibly the first ever complete copy of the Masoretic Text in one manuscript - see the Aleppo Codex article) dates from the tenth century.

The Nash Papyrus (2nd century BCE) contains a portion of the pre-Masoretic Text, specifically the Ten Commandments and the Shema Yisrael prayer.

Etymology

The Hebrew word *masorah* ("tradition") occurs in many forms. The term is taken from Ezekiel 20:37 and means originally "fetter". The fixation of the text was considered to be in the nature of a fetter upon its exposition. When, in the course of time, the Masorah had become a traditional discipline, the term became connected with the verb ("to hand down"), and was given the meaning of "tradition."

Language and form

The language of the Masoretic notes is partly Hebrew and partly Aramaic. The Masoretic annotations are found in various forms: (a) in separate works, e.g., the *Oklah we-Oklah*; (b) in the form of notes written in the margins and at the end of codices. In rare cases, the notes are written between the lines. The first word of each Biblical book is also as a rule surrounded by notes. The latter are called the Initial Masorah; the notes on the side margins or between the columns are called the Small or Inner Masorah; and those on the lower and upper margins, the Large or Outer Masorah. The name "Large Masorah" is applied sometimes to the lexically arranged notes at the end of the printed Bible, usually called the Final Masorah, or the Masoretic Concordance.

The Small Masorah consists of brief notes with reference to marginal readings, to statistics showing the number of times a particular form is found in Scripture, to full and defective spelling, and to abnormally written letters. The Large Masorah is more copious in its notes. The Final Masorah comprises all the longer rubrics for which space could not be found in the margin of the text, and is arranged alphabetically in the form of a concordance. The quantity of notes the marginal Masorah contains is conditioned by the amount of vacant space on each page. In the manuscripts it varies also with the rate at which the copyist was paid and the fanciful shape he gave to his gloss.

In most manuscripts, there are some discrepancies between the text and the masorah, suggesting that they were copied from different sources or that one of them has copying errors. The lack of such discrepancies in the Aleppo Codex is one of the reasons for its importance; the scribe who copied the notes, presumably Aaron ben Moses ben Asher, probably wrote them originally.

Origin

The Talmud (and also Karaite mss.) states that a standard copy of the Hebrew Bible was kept in the court of the Temple in Jerusalem for the benefit of copyists; there were paid correctors of Biblical books among the officers of the Temple (Talmud, tractate Ketubot 106a). This copy is mentioned in the Aristeas Letter (§ 30; comp. Blau, *Studien zum Althebr. Buchwesen*, p. 100); in the statements of Philo (preamble to his "Analysis of the Political Constitution of the Jews") and in Josephus (*Contra Ap.* i. 8).

Another Talmudic story, perhaps referring to an earlier time, relates that three Torah scrolls were found in the Temple court but were at variance with each other. The differences were then resolved by majority decision among the three (p. Taanit 68a, Tractate Soferim 6:4 etc).

Numerical Masorah

In classical antiquity, copyists were paid for their work according to the number of stichs. As the prose books of the Bible were hardly ever written in stichs, the copyists, in order to estimate the amount of work, had to count the letters. For the Masoretic Text, such statistical information more importantly also

ensured accuracy in the transmission of the text with the production of subsequent copies that were done by hand.

Hence the Masoretes contributed the Numerical Masorah. These notes are traditionally categorized into two main groups: the marginal Masorah and the final Masorah. The category of marginal Masorah is further divided into the Masorah parva (small Masorah) in the outer side margins and the Masorah magna (large Masorah), traditionally located at the top and bottom margins of the text.

The Masorah parva is a set of statistics in the outer side margins of the text. Beyond simply counting the letters, the Masorah parva consists of word-use statistics, similar documentation for expressions or certain phraseology, observations on full or defective writing, references to the Kethiv-Qere readings and more. These observations are also the result of a passionate zeal to safeguard the accurate transmission of the sacred text.

The Masorah magna, in measure, is an expanded Masorah parva. It is not printed in BHS.

The final Masorah is located at the end of biblical books or after certain sections of the text, such as at the end of the Torah. It contains information and statistics regarding the number of words in a book or section, etc.

Thus (Leviticus 8:23) is the middle verse in the Pentateuch; all the names of Divinity mentioned in connection with Abraham are holy except (Genesis 18:3); ten passages in the Pentateuch are dotted; three times the Pentateuch has the spelling אל where the reading is ול. The collation of manuscripts and the noting of their differences furnished material for the Text-Critical Masorah. The close relation which existed in earlier times (from the Soferim to the Amoraim inclusive) between the teacher of tradition and the Masorete, both frequently being united in one person, accounts for the Exegetical Masorah. Finally, the invention and introduction of a graphic system of vocalization and accentuation gave rise to the Grammatical Masorah.

The most important of the Masoretic notes are those that detail the Kethiv-Qere that are located in the Masorah parva in the outside margins of BHS. Given that the Masoretes would not alter the sacred consonantal text, the Kethiv-Qere notes were a way of "correcting" or commenting on the text for any number of reasons (grammatical, theological, aesthetic, etc.) deemed important by the copyist. [Reference: Pratico and Van Pelt, Basics of Biblical Hebrew, Zondervan. 2001. p406ff]

Fixing of the text

The earliest labors of the Masoretes included standardizing division of the text into books, sections, paragraphs, verses, and clauses (probably in the chronological order here enumerated); the fixing of the orthography, pronunciation, and cantillation; the introduction or final adoption of the square characters with the five final letters (comp. Numbers and Numerals); some textual changes to guard against blasphemy and the like (though these changes may pre-date the Masoretes - see Tikkune Soferim); the enumeration of letters, words, verses, etc., and the substitution of some words for others in public reading.

Since no additions were allowed to be made to the official text of the Bible, the early Masoretes adopted other expedients: e.g., they marked the various divisions by spacing, and gave indications of halakic and haggadic teachings by full or defective spelling, abnormal forms of letters, dots, and other signs. Marginal notes were permitted only in private copies, and the first mention of such notes is found in the case of R. Meïr (c. 100-150 CE).

Tikkune Soferim

Early rabbinic sources, from around 200 CE, mention several passages of Scripture in which the conclusion is inevitable that the ancient reading must have differed from that of the present text. The explanation of this phenomenon is given in the expression ("Scripture has used euphemistic language," i.e. to avoid anthropomorphism and anthropopathism).

Rabbi Simon ben Pazzi (third century) calls these readings "emendations of the Scribes" (*tikkune Soferim*; Midrash Genesis Rabbah xlix. 7), assuming that the Scribes actually made the changes. This view was adopted by the later Midrash and by the majority of Masoretes. In Masoretic works these changes are ascribed to Ezra; to Ezra and Nehemiah; to Ezra and the Soferim; or to Ezra, Nehemiah, Zechariah, Haggai, and Baruch. All these ascriptions mean one and the same thing: that the changes were assumed to have been made by the Men of the Great Synagogue.

The term *tikkun Soferim* has been understood by different scholars in various ways. Some regard it as a correction of Biblical language authorized by the Soferim for homiletical purposes. Others take it to mean a mental change made by the original writers or redactors of Scripture; i.e. the latter shrank from putting in writing a thought which some of the readers might expect them to express.

The assumed emendations are of four general types:

- Removal of unseemly expressions used in reference to God; e.g., the substitution of ("to bless") for ("to curse") in certain passages.

- Safeguarding of the Tetragrammaton; e.g. substitution of "Elohim" for "YHVH" in some passages.

- Removal of application of the names of false gods to YHVH; e.g. the change of the name "Ishbaal" to "Ishbosheth."

- Safeguarding the unity of divine worship at Jerusalem.

Mikra and ittur

Among the earliest technical terms used in connection with activities of the Scribes are the "mikra Soferim" and "ittur Soferim." In the geonic schools, the first term was taken to signify certain vowel-changes which were made in words in pause or after the article; the second, the cancellation in a few passages of the "vav" conjunctive, where it had by some been wrongly read. The objection to such an explanation is that the first changes would fall under the general head of fixation of pronunciation, and the second under the head of "Qere" and "Ketiv". Various explanations have, therefore, been offered by ancient as well as modern scholars without, however, succeeding in furnishing a completely satisfactory solution.

Suspended letters and dotted words

There are four words having one of their letters suspended above the line. One of them, (Judges 18:30), is due to an alteration of the original out of reverence for Moses; rather than say that Moses' grandson became an idolatrous priest, a suspended nun was inserted to turn Mosheh into Menasheh (Manasseh). The origin of the other three (Psalms 80:14; Job 38:13, 15) is doubtful. According to some, they are due to mistaken majuscular letters; according to others, they are later insertions of originally omitted weak consonants.

In fifteen passages in the Bible, some words are stigmatized; i.e., dots appear above the letters. The significance of the dots is disputed. Some hold them to be marks of erasure; others believe them to indicate that in some collated manuscripts the stigmatized words were missing, hence that the reading is doubtful; still others contend that they are merely a mnemonic device to indicate homiletical explanations which the ancients had connected with those words; finally, some maintain that the dots were designed to guard against the omission by copyists of text-elements which, at first glance or after comparison with parallel passages, seemed to be superfluous. Instead of dots some manuscripts exhibit strokes, vertical or else horizontal. The first two explanations are unacceptable for the reason that such faulty readings would belong to Qere and Ketiv, which, in case of doubt, the majority of manuscripts would decide. The last two theories have equal probability.

Inverted letters

In nine passages of the Bible are found signs usually called "inverted nuns," because they resemble the Hebrew letter nun (נ) written upside down. The exact shape varies between different manuscripts and printed editions. In no manuscript, however, is an upside-down nun used. In many manuscripts, a reversed nun is found -- referred to as a "nun hafucha" by the masoretes. In some earlier printed editions, they are shown as the standard nun upside down or inverted, because the printer did not want to bother to design a character to be used only nine times. The recent scholarly editions of the masoretic text show the reversed nun as described by the masoretes. In some manuscripts, however, other symbols are occasionally found instead. These are sometimes referred to in rabbinical literature as "simaniyot," (markers).

History of the Masorah

The history of the Masorah may be divided into three periods: (1) creative period, from its beginning to the introduction of vowel-signs; (2) reproductive period, from the introduction of vowel-signs to the printing of the Masorah (1525 CE); (3) critical period, from 1525 to the present time.

The materials for the history of the first period are scattered remarks in Talmudic and Midrashic literature, in the post-Talmudical treatises *Masseket Sefer Torah* and *Masseket Soferim*, and in a Masoretic chain of tradition found in Ben Asher's "Diḳduḳe ha-Ṭe'amim," § 69 and elsewhere.

Differences between Babylonia and the Land of Israel

In the course of time, differences in spelling and pronunciation had developed not only between the schools of the Land of Israel and of Babylonia – differences already noted in the third century – but in the various seats of learning in each country. In Babylonia the school of Sura differed from that of Nehardea; similar differences existed in the schools of the Land of Israel, where the chief seat of learning in later times was the city of *T'veryah*/Tiberias. These differences must have become accentuated with the introduction of graphic signs for pronunciation and cantillation; and every locality, following the tradition of its school, had a standard codex embodying its readings.

In this period living tradition ceased, and the Masoretes in preparing their codices usually followed the one school or the other, examining, however, standard codices of other schools and noting their differences.

Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali

In the first half of the tenth century Aaron ben Moses ben Asher and Moshe ben Naphtali (often just called ben Asher and ben Naphtali) were the leading Masoretes in Tiberias. Their names have come to symbolize the variations among Masoretes, but the differences between ben Asher and ben Naphtali should not be exaggerated. There are hardly any differences between them regarding the consonants, though they differ more on vowelling and accents. Also, there were other authorities such as Rabbi

Pinchas and Moshe Moheh, and ben Asher and ben Naphtali often agree against these others. Further, it is possible that all variations found among manuscripts eventually came to be regarded as disagreements between these figureheads. Ben Asher wrote a standard codex (the Aleppo Codex) embodying his opinions. Probably Ben Naphtali did too, but it has not survived.

It has been suggested that there never was an actual "Ben Naphtali"; rather, the name was chosen (based on the Bible, where Asher and Naphtali are the younger sons of Zilpah and Bilhah) to designate any tradition different from Ben Asher's. This is unlikely, as there exist lists of places where ben Asher and Ben Naphtali agree against other authorities.

Ben Asher was the last of a distinguished family of Masoretes extending back to the latter half of the eighth century. Despite the rivalry of Ben Naphtali and the opposition of Saadia Gaon, the most eminent representative of the Babylonian school of criticism, Ben Asher's codex became recognized as the standard text of the Bible. See Aleppo Codex, Codex Cairensis.

The Middle Ages

The two rival authorities, Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali, practically brought the Masorah to a close. Very few additions were made by the later Masoretes, styled in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Naḳdanim, who revised the works of the copyists, added the vowels and accents (generally in fainter ink and with a finer pen) and frequently the Masorah. Many believe that the Ben Asher family were Karaites.

Considerable influence on the development and spread of Masoretic literature was exercised during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries by the Franco-German school of Tosafists. R. Gershom, his brother Machir, Joseph b. Samuel Bonfils (Tob 'Elem) of Limoges, R. Tam (Jacob b. Meïr), Menahem b. Perez of Joigny, Perez b. Elijah of Corbeil, Judah of Paris, Meïr Spira, and R. Meïr of Rothenburg made Masoretic compilations, or additions to the subject, which are all more or less frequently referred to in the marginal glosses of Biblical codices and in the works of Hebrew grammarians.

Critical study

Jacob ben Hayyim ibn Adonijah, having collated a vast number of manuscripts, systematized his material and arranged the Masorah in the second Bomberg edition of the Bible (Venice, 1524-25). Besides introducing the Masorah into the margin, he compiled at the close of his Bible a concordance of the Masoretic glosses for which he could not find room in a marginal form, and added an elaborate introduction – the first treatise on the Masorah ever produced. In spite of its numerous errors, this work has been considered by some as the "textus receptus" of the Masorah and was used for the English translation of the Old Testament for the King James Version of the Bible.

Next to Ibn Adonijah the critical study of the Masorah has been most advanced by Elijah Levita, who published his famous "Massoret ha-Massoret" in 1538. The "Tiberias" of the elder Buxtorf (1620) made Levita's researches more accessible to a Christian audience. The eighth prolegomenon to Walton's Polyglot Bible is largely a réchauffé of the "Tiberias". Levita compiled likewise a vast Masoretic concordance, "Sefer ha-Zikronot," which still lies in the National Library at Paris unpublished. The study is indebted also to R. Meïr b. Todros ha-Levi (RaMaH), who, as early as the thirteenth century, wrote his "Sefer Massoret Seyag la-Torah" (correct ed. Florence, 1750); to Menahem di Lonzano, who composed a treatise on the Masorah of the Pentateuch entitled "Or Torah"; and in particular to Jedidiah Solomon of Norzi, whose "Minḥat Shai" contains valuable Masoretic notes based on a careful study of manuscripts.

Much confidence in the accuracy of transmissions within the Masoretic Text has come from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Some important editions

There have been very many published editions of the Masoretic text; this is a list of some of the most important.

- Everard van der Hooght, 1705, Amsterdam

Nearly all 18th century and 19th century Bibles were almost exact reprints of this edition.

- Benjamin Kennicott, 1776, Oxford

As well as the van der Hooght text, this included the Samaritan Pentateuch and a huge collection of variants from manuscripts and early printed editions; while this collection has many errors, it is still of some value. The collection of variants was corrected and extended by Johann Bernard de Rossi (1784–8), but his publications gave only the variants without a complete text.

- Meir Letteris, 1852; 2nd edition, 1866

The 1852 edition was yet another copy of van der Hooght. The 1866 edition, however, was carefully checked against old manuscripts. It is probably the most widely reproduced text of the Hebrew Bible in history, with many dozens of authorized reprints and many pirated and unacknowledged ones.

- Seligman Baer and Franz Delitzsch, 1869–1895 (Exodus to Deuteronomy never appeared)
- C.D. Ginsburg, 1894; 2nd edition, 1908–1926

The first edition was very close to the second Bomberg edition, but with variants added from a number of manuscripts and all of the earliest printed editions, collated with far more care than the work of Kennicott. The second edition diverged slightly more from Bomberg, and collated more manuscripts.

- Biblia Hebraica, first two editions, 1906, 1912; virtually identical to the second Bomberg edition but with variants from Hebrew sources and early translations in the footnotes
- Biblia Hebraica, third edition based on the Leningrad Codex, 1937
- Umberto Cassuto, 1953 (based on Ginsburg 2nd edition but revised based on the Aleppo Codex, Leningrad Codex and other early manuscripts)
- Norman Snaith, 1958

Snaith based it on Sephardi manuscripts such as British Museum Or.2626-28, and said that he had not relied on Letteris. However, it has been shown that he must have prepared his copy by amending a copy of Letteris, because while there are many differences, it has many of the same typographical errors as Letteris. Snaith's printer even went so far as to break printed vowels to match the broken characters in Letteris. Snaith combined the accent system of Letteris with the system found in Sephardi manuscripts, thereby creating accentuation patterns found nowhere else in any manuscript or printed edition.

- Hebrew University Bible Project, 1965-

Started by Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, this follows the text of the Aleppo Codex where extant and otherwise the Leningrad Codex. It includes a wide variety of variants from the Dead Sea Scrolls,

Septuagint, early Rabbinic literature and selected early mediaeval manuscripts. So far, only Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel have been published.

- Koren, 1966

The text was derived by comparing a number of printed Bibles, and following the majority when there were discrepancies.

- Aron Dotan, based on the Leningrad Codex, 1976
- Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, revision of Biblia Hebraica (third edition), 1977
- Mordechai Breuer, based on the Aleppo Codex, 1977–1982
- Biblia Hebraica Quinta, revision of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia; only the first volume (Five Megilloth) has been published.

Several texts are mentioned in the Tanakh and New Testament, yet do not appear in the canon of the respective works. Scholars consider some of these to be lost works, while others are viewed as pseudepigraphal.

Lost Books of the Bible?

Jewish-related

- The Book of Jasher (fully translated as the *Book of the Upright* or the *Book of the Just*) is mentioned in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18. From the context in the Book of Samuel it is inferred that it was a collection of poetry. Several books have claimed to be this lost text, but are widely discounted as pseudepigrapha.

- The Book of the Wars of the Lord[1]

Referenced at Numbers 21:14.

- The Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel is mentioned in 1 Kings 16:20 regarding King Zimri. This appears to be a different book than any of those included in the Bible.

- The books of annals of the kings of Israel and books of annals of the kings of Judah are mentioned in the Books of Kings (1 Kings 14:19, 14:29). They are said to tell of events during the reigns of Kings Jeroboam of Israel and Rehoboam of Judah, respectively. Some believe that the information of these books was later compiled into Kings, but others differ, citing the above passages from Kings which state they contain "other events".

- Books of Chronicles are mentioned on several occasions in the Book of Esther and also in Nehemiah 12:23. Some scholars believe that the book was ahistorical; it is however also noticed that the author was familiar with the customs at the Persian court, where the book is set. While the chronicles mentioned in *Esther* are thought by some scholars to be fictional there is no doubt that the Kings of Persia did keep annals.

- "The Book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the Seer" is mentioned in the book of 2nd Chronicles. (II Chr 12:14-15). Iddo was a seer who lived during the reigns of Solomon,

Rehoboam, and Abijah. His deeds were recorded in this book, which has been completely lost to history, excepting its title.

- The Covenant Code

Referenced at Exodus 24:7

- The Manner of the Kingdom[2]

Referenced at 1Samuel 10:25.

- The Acts of Solomon[3]

Referenced at 1Kings 11:41.

- The Annals of King David[4]

Referenced at 1Chronicles 27:24.

- The Book of Samuel the Seer[5]

Referenced at 1Chronicles 29:29.

- The Book of Nathan the Prophet[6]

Referenced at 1Chronicles 29:29.

- The Book of Gad the Seer[7]

Referenced at 1Chronicles 29:29.

- The History of Nathan the Prophet[8]

Referenced at 2Chronicles 9:29.

- The Prophecy of Ahijah[9]

Referenced at 2Chronicles 9:29.

- The Visions of Iddo the Seer

Referenced at 2Chronicles 9:29.

- The Book of Shemaiah the Prophet[10]

Referenced at 2Chronicles 12:15.

- Iddo Genealogies[11]

Referenced at 2Chronicles 12:15.

- The Story of the Prophet Iddo[12]

Referenced at 2Chronicles 13:22.

- The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel[13]

Referenced in 2Chronicles 16:11, 2Chronicles 27:7 and 2Chronicles 32:32.

- The Book of Jehu[14]

Referenced at 2Chronicles 20:34.

- The Story of the Book of Kings[15]

Referenced at 2Chronicles 24:27.

- The Acts of Uziah[16]

Referenced at 2Chronicles 26:22.

- The Vision of Isaiah[17]

Referenced at 2Chronicles 32:32.

- The Acts of the Kings of Israel[18]

Referenced at 2Chronicles 33:18.

- The Sayings of the Seers[19]

Referenced at 2Chronicles 33:19.

- The Laments for Josiah[20]

Referenced at 2Chronicles 35:25.

- The Chronicles of King Ahasuerus[21]

Referenced at Esther 2:23 and Esther 6:1.

- The Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia[22]

Referenced at Esther 10:2.

Christian-related

- A line from the Book of Enoch is quoted in the Epistle of Jude (1:14–15) almost verbatim. The work is believed by most scholars to be pseudepigraphal, but the author of Jude seems to have believed it was Enoch's own words.

- The Epistle to Corinth'[23]

Referenced at 1Corinthians 5:9

- The Earlier Epistle to the Ephesians

Referenced at Ephesians 3:3-4

- The Epistle from Laodicea to the Colossians[24]

Referenced in Colossians 4:16

- The Earlier Epistle of John[25]

Referenced at 3John 1:9

- Missing Epistle of Jude[26]

Referenced at Jude 1:3

Notes

1. ^ Sometimes called *The Book of the Wars of Yahweh*. One source says "The quotation is in lyrical form, so it is possibly a book of poetry or a hymnal...Moses quoted it, so the date of its composition must have been prior to the completion of the Pentateuch, perhaps during the wanderings in the wilderness. Nothing else is known about it, and it survives only in Moses' quotation."[1]
2. ^ Also called *The Book of Statutes* or *3 Samuel*.
3. ^ Also called *The Book of the Acts of Solomon*.[2]
4. ^ Also called *The Book of the Annals of King David* or *The Chronicles of King David*.[3]
5. ^ Also called *Samuel the Seer* or *The Acts of Samuel the Seer*.[4]
6. ^ Also called *Nathan the Prophet* or *The Acts of Nathan the Prophet*.[5]
7. ^ Also called *Gad the Seer* or *The Acts of Gad the Seer*.[6]
8. ^ Distinguished here[7] from what may be the identical book, *Nathan the Prophet*, above
9. ^ Also called *The Prophesy of Ahijah the Shilonite*[8].
10. ^ Also called *Shemaiah the Prophet* or *The Acts of Shemaiah the Prophet*[9]. See Sh'maya.
11. ^ Also called *The Genealogies of Iddo the Seer* or *The Acts of Iddo the Seer*[10].
12. ^ Also called *The Midrash of the Prophet Iddo*.[11]
13. ^ Also called *The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah*.
14. ^ Also called *The Book of Jehu ben Hanani*
15. ^ Also called *Midrash on the Book of Kings*.[12]
16. ^ Also called *Second Isaiah* or *The Book by the prophet Isaiah*.[13]
17. ^ Also called *The Vision of the Prophet Isaiah*. May be identical to the pseudepigraphal *Ascension of Isaiah*.

18. ^ Also called *The Acts and Prayers of Manasseh*.[14] May be identical to *The Book of the Kings of Israel*, above.
19. ^ Also called *The Acts of the Seers*.[15]
20. ^ Also called *2 Lamentations*. This event is not recorded in the existing *Book of Lamentations*.
21. ^ Also called *The Book of Records of the Chronicles*
22. ^ Also called *The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia*
23. ^ Also called *A Prior Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*[16] or *Paul's previous Corinthian letter*.[17]
24. ^ Also called *The Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans*[18] or *Paul's letter to the Laodiceans*.[19]
25. ^ Also called *The Epistle of John to the Church Ruled by Diotrephes*[20]
26. ^ Also called *2 Jude*.

Biblical canon

The **biblical canon** is a list of books written during the formative periods of the Jewish or Christian faiths. The leaders of these communities hold the books in their respective canons to be inspired by God and to authoritatively express the historical relationship between God and his people.

There are differences between the Jewish and Christian canons, and between the canons of different Christian traditions. The differing criteria and processes of canonization dictate what the communities regard as the Bible. The making of a New Testament **canon** was an important step in stabilizing the early Christian Church.

At this time the canons listed below are usually considered *closed*: additional books cannot be added. By contrast, an *open* canon would allow additional books, should they meet the criteria. Generally, the closure of the canon reflects a belief that public revelation has ended, and that texts from that period can be collected into an authoritative body of work.

Canonic texts in Jewish and Christian traditions

A **canonic text** is a single authoritative text for each of the books in the canon, one which depends on editorial selections from among manuscript traditions with varying interdependence. Significant separate manuscript traditions in the canonic Hebrew Bible are represented in the Septuagint and its variations from the Masoretic text, which itself was established through the Masoretes' scholarly collation of varying manuscripts, and in the independent manuscript traditions represented by the Dead Sea scrolls. Additional and otherwise unrecorded texts for *Genesis* and the early chapters of *Exodus* lie behind the Book of Jubilees.

New Testament Greek and Latin texts presented enough significant differences that a manuscript tradition arose of presenting *diglot* texts, with Greek and Latin on facing pages. New Testament manuscript traditions include the Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Bezae, Textus Receptus, Vulgate, and others.

Jewish canon See also: Tanakh

The Jews recognize the twenty-four books of the Hebrew Bible as the Tanakh. Evidence suggests that the process of canonization of the Tanakh occurred between 200 BCE and 200 CE. The first suggestion of a Jewish canon comes in the 2nd century BCE. The book of 2 Maccabees, itself not a part of the Jewish canon, describes Nehemiah (around 400 BCE) as having "founded a library and collected books about the

kings and prophets, and the writings of David, and letters of kings about votive offerings" (2Macc 2:13-15). The Book of Nehemiah suggests that Ezra brought the Torah back from Babylon to Jerusalem and the Second Temple (8). Both I and II Maccabees suggest that Judas Maccabeus likewise collected sacred books (such as 1Macc 3:42-50, 2Macc 15:6-9). They do not, however, suggest that the canon was at that time closed; moreover, it is not clear that these sacred books were identical to those that later became part of the canon.

Additional evidence of a collection of sacred scripture similar to portions of the Hebrew Bible comes from the book of Sirach (dating from 180 BCE and also not included in the Jewish canon), which includes a list of names of great men[1] (44-49) in the same order as is found in the Torah and the Nevi'im (Prophets), and which includes the names of some men mentioned in the Ketuvim (Writings). Based on this list of names, some scholars have conjectured that the author, Yeshua ben Sira (Joshua son of Sirach) had access to, and considered authoritative, the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets. His list excludes names from Ruth, Song of Songs, Esther, Daniel, and Job, suggesting that he either did not have access to these books, or did not consider them authoritative. In the prologue to the Greek translation of Ben Sira's work, his grandson, dated at 132 BCE, mentions both the Law (Torah) and the Prophets (Nevi'im), as well as a third group of books which is not yet named as Ketuvim (the prologue simply identifies "the rest of the books") [2]. Based on this evidence, some scholars have suggested that by the 2nd century BCE the books of the Torah and Nevi'im were considered canonical, but that the books of the Ketuvim were not.

The Septuagint (LXX) translation of the Hebrew language Bible into Koine Greek, probably in the 1st and 2nd centuries BCE, provided a text for the Greek-speaking world and was used by the writers of the New Testament. In this text (actually scrolls rather than a book) the Torah and Nevi'im are established as canonical, but again, Ketuvim have not yet been definitively canonized (some editions of the Septuagint include, for instance I-IV Maccabees or the 151st Psalm, while others do not include them, also there are the Septuagint additions to Esther, Jeremiah, and Daniel and 1 Esdras).

The Dead Sea scrolls discovered at caves near Qumran refer to the Torah and Nevi'im and suggest that these portions of the Bible had already been canonized before 68 CE. A scroll that contains all or parts of 41 biblical psalms, although not in the same order as in the current Book of Psalms, and which includes eight texts not found in the Book of Psalms, suggests that the Book of Psalms had not yet been canonized.

In the first century, Philo Judaeus of Alexandria discussed sacred books, but made no mention of a tripartite division of the Bible; however, in *De vita contemplativa*[3], a disputed text[2], v.25, is stated: "studying ... the laws and the sacred oracles of God enunciated by the holy prophets, and hymns, and psalms, and all kinds of other things by reason of which knowledge and piety are increased and brought to perfection." Significantly, Philo quotes extensively from the Hebrew canon, including parts of the Ketuvim, but never from its apocrypha. Josephus refers to sacred scriptures divided into three parts: the five books of the Torah; thirteen books of the Nevi'im, and four other books of hymns and wisdom[3]. The number of 22 books mentioned by Josephus does not correspond to the number of books in the current canon. Some scholars have suggested that he considered Ruth part of Judges, and Lamentations part of Jeremiah. Other scholars suggest that at the time Josephus wrote, such books as Esther and Ecclesiastes were not yet considered canonical.

Significantly, Josephus characterizes the 22 books as canonical because they were divinely inspired; he mentions other historical books that were not divinely inspired and that therefore do not belong in the canon.

The first reference to a 24-book Jewish canon is found in 2 Esdras 14:45-46, which was probably written in the first half of the second century:

> "Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people." RSV

The "seventy" might refer to the Septuagint, apocrypha, or mystical works.

The Pharisees also debated the status of these extra-canonical books; in the 2nd century, Rabbi Akiva declared that those who read them would not share in the afterlife (Sanhedrin 10:1).

The Mishnah, compiled by the second century, describes some of the debate over the status of some books of *Ketuvim*, and in particular whether or not they render the hands "impure". Yadaim 3:5 calls attention to the debate over Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes. The Megillat Ta'anit, in a discussion of days when fasting is prohibited but that are not noted in the Bible, mentions the holiday of Purim. Based on these, and a few similar references, Heinrich Graetz concluded in 1871 that there had been a Council of Jamnia (or Yavne in Hebrew) which had decided Jewish canon sometime in the late 1st century (*c.* 70–90). This became the prevailing scholarly consensus for much of the 20th century. However, from the 1960s onwards, based on the work of J.P. Lewis, S.Z. Leiman, and others, this view increasingly came into question. In particular, later scholars noted that none of the sources actually mentioned books that had been withdrawn from a canon, and questioned the whole premise that the discussions were about canonicity at all, asserting that they were actually dealing with other concerns entirely.

Jewish scholars have not come to a consensus on when the Tanakh was finalized.

Samaritan canon

The small community of the remnants of the Samaritans in Palestine includes only their version of the Torah and the book of Joshua in their canon. This grouping is sometimes referred to as the Hexateuch. The Samaritan community possesses a copy of the Torah that they believe to have been penned by Aaron himself..

Christian canons

Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant

Early Christianity of the first three centuries

The Septuagint: A page from *Codex Vaticanus*, the basis of Sir Lancelot Brenton's English translation.

Early Christianity had no well-defined set of scriptures outside of the Septuagint.[4] The New Testament refers to the "Law and Prophets", for example the Gospel of Luke 24:44-45 records Jesus stating: "written. . .in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. . .the Scriptures" and Acts of the Apostles 24:14 records Paul of Tarsus stating: "I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets". **The earliest Christian canon is found in the Bryennios manuscript, published by J.-P. Audet in *JTS* [4] 1950, v1, pp 135-154, dated to around 100,** written in Koine Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew; it is this **27-book** Old Testament list: "Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Jesus Nave, Judges, Ruth, 4 of Kings (Samuel and Kings), 2 of Chronicles, 2 of Esdras, Esther, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Job, Minor prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel" (*2 of Esdras* might include 1 Esdras; *Esther*, *Jeremiah* and *Daniel* might include their Septuagint additions; *Jesus Nave*[5] is an early translation of *Joshua son of Nun*). Early Christianity also relied on the Sacred Oral Tradition of what Jesus had said and done, as reported by the apostles and other followers. Even after the Gospels were written and began circulating, some Christians preferred the oral Gospel as told by people they trusted (e.g. Papias, *c.* 125).

By the end of the 1st century, some letters of Paul were collected and circulated, and were known to Clement of Rome (*c.* 96), Ignatius of Antioch (died 117), and Polycarp of Smyrna (*c.* 115) but they weren't usually called *scripture/graphe* as the Septuagint was and they weren't without critics. In the late 4th century Epiphanius of Salamis (died 402) *Panarion* 29 says the Nazarenes had rejected the Pauline epistles and Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 26.2 says the Ebionites rejected him. Acts 21:21 records a rumor that Paul aimed to subvert the Old Testament (see Romans 3:8, 31). 2 Peter 3:16 says his letters have been abused by heretics who twist them around "as they do with the other scriptures." In the 2nd and 3rd centuries Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 6.38 says the Elchasai "made use of texts from every part of the Old Testament and the Gospels; it rejects the Apostle (Paul) entirely"; 4.29.5 says Tatian the Assyrian rejected Paul's Letters and Acts of the Apostles; 6.25 says Origen accepted 22 canonical books of the Hebrews plus Maccabees plus the four Gospels but Paul "did not so much as write to all the churches that he taught; and even to those to which he wrote he sent but a few lines."

Bruce Metzger in his *Canon of the New Testament*, 1987, draws the following conclusion about Clement:

Clement's Bible is the Old Testament, to which he refers repeatedly as Scripture (graphe), quoting it with more or less exactness. Clement also makes occasional reference to certain words of Jesus; though they are authoritative for him, he does not appear to enquire how their authenticity is ensured. In two of the three instances that he speaks of remembering 'the words' of Christ or of the Lord Jesus, it seems that he has a written record in mind, but he does not call it a 'gospel'. He knows several of Paul's epistles, and values them highly for their content; the same can be said of the Epistle to the Hebrews, with which he is well acquainted. Although these writings obviously possess for Clement considerable significance, he never refers to them as authoritative 'Scripture'.

Marcion of Sinope: ***c.*** **150,** was the first of record to propose a definitive, exclusive, unique canon of Christian scriptures. (Though Ignatius did address Christian scripture, before Marcion, against the heresies of the Judaizers and Dociests, he did not publish a canon.) Marcion rejected the theology of the Old Testament, which he claimed was incompatible with the teaching of Jesus regarding God and morality. The Gospel of Luke, which Marcion called simply the Gospel of the Lord, he edited to remove any passages that connected Jesus with the Old Testament. This was because he believed that the god of the Jews, YHWH, who gave them the Jewish Scriptures, was an entirely different god than the Supreme God who sent Jesus and inspired the New Testament. He used ten letters of Paul as well (excluding Hebrews and the Pastoral epistles) assuming his *Epistle to the Laodiceans* referred to canonical Ephesians and not the apocryphal Epistle to the Laodiceans or another text no longer extant. He also edited these in a similar way. To these, which he called the *Gospel and the Apostolicon*, he added his *Antithesis* which contrasted the New Testament view of God and morality with the Old Testament view of God and morality. By editing he thought he was removing judaizing corruptions and recovering the original inspired words of Jesus and Paul. Marcion harshly edited the ten epistles by Paul as well as the Gospel of Luke. However, he defends Luke as the only "worthy" gospel, while putting aside Matthew, Mark, and John. Marcion's canon and theology were rejected as heretical by the early church; however, he forced other Christians to consider which texts were canonical and why. He spread his beliefs widely; they became known as Marcionism. Henry Wace in his introduction [5] of 1911 stated: "A modern divine. . .could not refuse to discuss the question raised by Marcion, whether there is such opposition between different parts of what he regards as the word of God, that all cannot come from the same author." The Catholic Encyclopedia of 1913 stated: "they were perhaps the most dangerous foe Christianity has ever known." Adolf von Harnack in *Origin of the New Testament* [6], 1914, argued that Marcion viewed the church at this time as largely an Old Testament church (one that "follows the Testament of the Creator-God") without a firmly established New Testament canon, and that it gradually formulated its New Testament canon in response to the challenge posed by Marcion.

A folio from P46, early 3rd c. New Testament manuscript useful in discerning the early Christian canon.

Muratorian fragment [7]: this 7th century Latin manuscript is often considered to be a translation of the first non-Marcion New Testament canon, and dated at between 170 (based on an internal reference to Pope Pius I and arguments put forth by Bruce Metzger) and as late as the end of the 4th century (according to the Anchor Bible Dictionary[6]). This partial canon lists the four gospels and the letters of Paul, as well as two books of Revelation, one of John, another of Peter (the latter of which it notes is not often read in the churches). It rejects the Epistle to the Laodiceans and Epistle to the Alexandrians both said to be forged in Paul's name to support Marcionism.

Diatessaron: c. 173, a one-volume harmony of the four Gospels, translated and compiled by Tatian the Assyrian into Syriac. In Syriac speaking churches, it effectively served as the only New Testament scripture until Paul's letters were added during the 3rd century. Some believe that Acts was also used in Syrian churches alongside the Diatessaron, however, Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History 4.29.5 states: "They, indeed, use the Law and Prophets and Gospels, but interpret in their own way the utterances of the Sacred Scriptures. And they abuse Paul the apostle and reject his epistles, and do not accept even the Acts of the Apostles." (There were many books with the title of 'Acts', written about the same time by different writers. Moreover, at one time the Gospel of Luke and the biblical 'Acts' appear to have been one continuous document.) In the 4th century, the Doctrine of Addai lists a 17 book NT canon using the Diatessaron and Acts and 15 Pauline epistles (including 3rd Corinthians). The Diatessaron was eventually replaced in the 5th century by the Peshitta, which contains a translation of all the books of the **27-book NT** except for 2 John, 3 John, 2 Peter, Jude and Revelation and is the Bible of the Syriac Orthodox Church where some members believe it is the original New Testament, see Aramaic primacy.

The aforementioned Muratorian fragment shows that by 200 (assuming a date of 200) there existed a set of Christian writings somewhat similar to what is now the New Testament. Also in the early 200's it is claimed Origen (ca. 185-ca. 254) was using the same 27 books as in the modern New Testament, though there were still were lingering disputes over Hebrews, James, II Peter, II and III John, and Revelation.[7] In c. 160 Irenaeus of Lyons: (with Justin and his student Tatian claimed that there were exactly four Gospels, no more and no less, as a touchstone of orthodoxy. He argued that it was illogical to reject Acts of the Apostles but accept the Gospel of Luke, as both were from the same author. In *Against Heresies* 3.12.12 [8] he ridiculed those who think they are wiser than the Apostles because they were still under Jewish influence. This was crucial to refuting Marcion's anti-Judaizing, as Acts gives honor to James, Peter, John and Paul alike. This was the first known response to Marcion.[*citation needed*] At the time, Jewish Christians tended to honor James (a prominent Christian in Jerusalem described in the New Testament as an *apostle* and *pillar*, and by Eusebius and other church historians as the first Bishop of Jerusalem) but not Paul, while Pauline Christianity tended to honor Paul more than James

Codex Claromontanus canon [9]: c. 250, a page found inserted into a 6th century copy of the Epistles of Paul and Hebrews, has the **27-book OT** plus Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, 1-2,4 Maccabees, and the **27-book NT** plus 3rd Corinthians, Acts of Paul, Apocalypse of Peter, Barnabas, and Hermas, but missing Philippians, 1-2 Thessalonians, and Hebrews.

Era of the Seven Ecumenical Councils

Eusebius, around the year 300, recorded a New Testament canon in his *Ecclesiastical History* Book 3, Chapter XXV:

"1... First then must be put the holy quaternion of the Gospels; following them the Acts of the Apostles... the epistles of Paul... the epistle of John... the epistle of Peter... After them is to be placed, if it really seem proper, the Apocalypse of John, concerning which we shall give the different opinions at the proper time. These then belong among the **accepted writings**."

"3 Among the **disputed writings**, which are nevertheless recognized by many, are extant the so-called epistle of James and that of Jude, also the second epistle of Peter, and those that are called the second and third of John, whether they belong to the evangelist or to another person of the same name. Among the rejected [Kirsopp Lake translation: "not genuine"] writings must be reckoned also the Acts of Paul, and the so-called Shepherd, and the Apocalypse of Peter, and in addition to these the extant epistle of Barnabas, and the so-called Teachings of the Apostles; and besides, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seem proper, which some, as I said, reject, but which others class with the accepted books. And among these some have placed also the Gospel according to the Hebrews... And all these may be reckoned among the **disputed books**"

"6... such books as the Gospels of Peter, of Thomas, of Matthias, or of any others besides them, and the Acts of Andrew and John and the other apostles... they clearly show themselves to be the fictions of heretics. Wherefore they are not to be placed even among the rejected writings, but are all of them to be cast aside as absurd and impious."

The Apocalypse of John, also called Revelation, is counted as both **accepted** (Kirsopp Lake translation: "Recognized") and **disputed**, which has caused some confusion over what exactly Eusebius meant by doing so. From other writings of the Church Fathers, we know that it was disputed with several canon lists rejecting its canonicity. EH 3.3.5 adds further detail on Paul: "Paul's fourteen epistles are well known and undisputed. It is not indeed right to overlook the fact that some have rejected the Epistle to the Hebrews, saying that it is disputed by the Church of Rome, on the ground that it was not written by Paul." EH 4.29.6 mentions the Diatessaron: "But their original founder, Tatian, formed a certain combination and collection of the Gospels, I know not how, to which he gave the title Diatessaron, and which is still in the hands of some. But they say that he ventured to paraphrase certain words of the apostle [Paul], in order to improve their style."

Cheltenham Canon ([10], [11]), (also known as Mommsen's): **c. 350,** a page found inserted in a 10th century manuscript, has a 24 book OT and 24 book NT which provides syllable and line counts but omits Hebrews, Jude and James, and seems to question the epistles of John and Peter beyond the first.

Synod of Laodicea: *c.* 363, was one of the first synods that set out to judge which books were to be read aloud in churches. The decrees issued by the thirty or so clerics attending were called canons. Canon 59 decreed that only canonical books should be read, but no list was appended in the Latin and Syriac manuscripts recording the decrees. The list of canonical books, Canon 60 [12], sometimes attributed to the Synod of Laodicea is a later addition according to most scholars and has a 22 book OT and 26-book NT (excludes Revelation).

Athanasius: in 367, in Festal Letter 39 [13] listed a 22 book OT and 27-book NT and 7 books not in the canon but to be read: Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach, Esther, Judith, Tobit, Didache, and the Pastor (probably Hermas). This NT list is very similar to the modern Protestant canon; the only differences are his exclusion of Esther and his inclusion of Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah as part of Jeremiah.

In *c.* 380, the redactor of the Apostolic Constitutions attributed a canon to the Twelve Apostles themselves ([14]) as the 85th of his list of such apostolic decrees:

> *Canon 85. Let the following books be esteemed venerable and holy by all of you, both clergy and laity. [A list of books of the Old Testament ...] And our sacred books, that is, of the New Testament, are the four Gospels, of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; the fourteen Epistles of Paul; two Epistles of Peter; three of John; one of James; one of Jude; two Epistles of Clement; and the Constitutions dedicated to you, the bishops, by me, Clement, in eight books, which is not appropriate to make public before all, because of the mysteries contained in them; and the Acts of us, the Apostles.* (From the Latin version.)

Some later Coptic and Arabic translations add Revelation and the Epistles of Clement.

Pope Damasus I: is often considered to the father of the modern Catholic canon. Though purporting to date from a "Council of Rome" under Pope Damasus I in 382, the so-called "Damasian list" appended to the pseudepigraphical Decretum Gelasianum [15] is actually a valuable though non-papal list from the early 6th century. Denziger's recension is found in the links at Decretum Gelasianum. The "Damasian Canon" was published by C.H. Turner in *JTS*, vol. 1, 1900, pp 554-560. In 405, Pope Innocent I in Letter #6 (to Exuperius) described a canon identical to Trent (without the distinction between protocanonicals and deuterocanonicals).

In the late 380s, Gregory of Nazianus produced a canon ([16]) in verse which agreed with that of his contemporary Athanasius, other than placing the "Catholic Epistles" after the Pauline Epistles and omitting Revelation.

Bishop Amphilocus of Iconium, in his poem *Iambics for Seleucus* ([17]) written some time after 394, discusses debate over the canonical inclusion of a number of books, and almost certainly rejects the later Epistles of Peter and John, Jude, and Revelation.

3rd Synod of Carthage [18]: in 397, ratified the canon accepted previously at the Synod of Hippo Regius in North Africa in 393 and which was purportedly endorsed by Pope Damasus I. The 27-book NT canon included *the Gospels, four books; the Acts of the Apostles, one book; the Epistles of Paul, thirteen; of the same to the Hebrews; one Epistle; of Peter, two; of John, apostle, three; of James, one; of Jude, one; the Revelation of John.*

When **St. Jerome** translated the Bible into Latin, producing the Vulgate bible *c.* 400, he argued for the *Veritas Hebraica*, meaning the truth of the Jewish Bible over the Septuagint translation. At the insistence of the Pope, however, he added existing translations for what he considered doubtful books, but did not personally translate them anew. This period marks the beginning of a more widely recognized canon, although the inclusion of some books was still debated: Epistle to Hebrews, James, 2 John, 3 John, 2 Peter, Jude and Revelation. Grounds for debate included the question of authorship of these books (note that the so-called Damasian "Council at Rome" had already rejected John the Apostle's authorship of 2 and 3 John, while retaining the books), their suitability for use (Revelation at that time was already being interpreted in a wide variety of heretical ways), and how widely they were actually being used (2 Peter being amongst the most weakly attested of all the books in the Christian canon).

The late-5th or early-6th century **Peshitta** of the Syrian Orthodox Church ([19]) includes a 22-book NT, excluding II Peter, II John, III John, Jude, and Revelation. (The *Lee Peshitta* of 1823 follows the Protestant canon*)*

List of the Sixty Books [20]: dated to the 7th century, has 34 OT books and **26-book NT** (excludes Revelation) and 9 books "outside the sixty": Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, 1-4 Maccabees, Esther, Judith, Tobit and a 25 book apocrypha.

Orthodox Synod in Trullo: in 692, rejected by Pope Constantine, approved Gregory Theologus' 22 book OT and **26-book NT** (excludes Revelation) and the Canons of the Apostles of the Apostolic Constitutions of which Canon #85 [21] is a list of the **27-book OT** plus Judith, Sirach, 1-3Maccabees, Didache, 1-2Clement, and **26-book NT** (excludes Revelation), and the Apostolic Constitutions which themselves were rejected because they were said to contain heretical interpolations.

John of Damascus: *c.* 654 - 749, in *Exact Exposition of Orthodox Faith 4.17* accepted Didache and Apostolic Constitutions.

Medieval developments

Nicephorus: the Patriarch of Jerusalem, 806-815, in a *Stichometria* [22] appended to the end of his *Chronography* rejected Esther, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Maccabees, Psalms of Solomon, Enoch, Didache, Barnabas, Hermas, Clement, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of the Hebrews, 3rd Corinthians, Acts of Paul, Revelation, Apocalypse of Peter.

Reformation Era

Protestant Reformation: begun by Martin Luther, who made an attempt to remove the books of Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation from the canon (echoing the consensus of several Catholics, also labeled *Christian Humanists* — such as Cardinal Ximenez, Cardinal Cajetan, and Erasmus — and partially because they were perceived to go against certain Protestant doctrines such as sola gratia and sola fide), but this was not generally accepted among his followers. However, these books are ordered last in the German-language Luther Bible to this day.[8]

Bruce Metzger's *Canon of the New Testament* says in 1596 Jacob Lucius published a Bible at Hamburg which labeled Luther's four as "Apocrypha"; David Wolder the pastor of Hamburg's Church of St. Peter published in the same year a triglot Bible which labeled them as "non canonical"; J. Vogt published a Bible at Goslar in 1614 similar to Lucius'; Gustavus Adolphus of Stockholm in 1618 published a Bible with them labeled as "Apocr(yphal) New Testament."

Luther also eliminated the deuterocanonical books from the Catholic Old Testament, terming them "Apocrypha, that are books which are not considered equal to the Holy Scriptures, but are useful and good to read".[9] He also argued unsuccessfully for the relocation of Esther from the Canon to the Apocrypha, since without the deuterocanonical sections, it never mentions God. As a result Catholics and Protestants continue to use different canons, which differ in respect to the Old Testament.

Charles Caldwell Ryrie's *Basic Theology* counters in 1986 the claim that Martin Luther rejected the Book of James as being canonical. Here's what Luther wrote in his preface to the New Testament in which he ascribes to the several books of the New Testament different degrees of doctrinal value: "St. John's Gospel and his first Epistle, St. Paul's Epistles, especially those to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and St. Peter's Epistle-these are the books which show to thee Christ, and teach everything that is necessary and blessed for thee to know, even if you were never to see or hear any other book of doctrine. Therefore, St. James' Epistle is a perfect straw-epistle compared with them, for it has in it nothing of an evangelic kind." Thus Luther was comparing (in his opinion) doctrinal value, not canonical validity.

However, Ryrie's theory is countered by other Biblical scholars, including William Barclay, who note that Luther stated plainly, if not bluntly: "I think highly of the epistle of James, and regard it as valuable although it was rejected in early days. It does not expound human doctrines, but lays much emphasis on God's law. ... I do not hold it to be of apostolic authorship."[10] If Luther regarded the book of James as not being of "apostolic authorship" then he could not at all have regarded it as authoritative or worthy of canonization.

Philip Schaff's History of the Christian Church, book 7, chapter 4 *The Protestant Spirit of Luther's Version* states:

> The most important example of dogmatic influence in Luther's version is the famous interpolation of the word *alone* in Rom. 3:28 (allein durch den Glauben), by which he intended to emphasize his solifidian doctrine of justification, on the plea that the German idiom required the insertion for the sake of clearness. But he thereby brought Paul into direct verbal conflict with James, who says (James 2:24), "by works a man is justified, and not only by faith" ("nicht durch den Glauben allein"). It is well known that Luther deemed it impossible to harmonize the two apostles in this article, and characterized the Epistle of James as an "epistle of straw," because it had no evangelical character ("keine evangelische Art").

There is some evidence that the first decision to omit these books entirely from the Bible was made by Protestant laity rather than clergy. Bibles dating from shortly after the Reformation have been found whose tables of contents included the entire Roman Catholic canon, but which did not actually contain the disputed books, leading some historians to think that the workers at the printing presses took it upon themselves to omit them. However, Anglican and Lutheran Bibles usually still contained these books until the 20th century, while Calvinist Bibles did not. Several reasons are proposed for the omission of these books from the canon. One is the support for Catholic doctrines such as Purgatory and prayer for the dead found in 2 Maccabees. Luther himself said he was following Jerome's teaching about the *Veritas Hebraica*.

Council of Trent: on April 8, 1546, by vote (24 yea, 15 nay, 16 abstain) approved the present Roman Catholic Bible Canon including the Deuterocanonical Books. This is said to be the same list as produced at the Council of Florence in 1451, this list was defined as canonical in the profession of faith proposed for the Jacobite Orthodox Church. Because of its placement, the list was not considered binding for the Catholic church, and in light of Martin Luther's demands, the Catholic Church examined the question of the Canon again at the Council of Trent, which reaffirmed the Canon of the Council of Florence. The Old Testament books that had been in doubt were termed deuterocanonical, not indicating a lesser degree of inspiration, but a later time of final approval. Beyond these books, some editions of the Latin Vulgate include Psalm 151, the Prayer of Manasseh, 1 Esdras (called 3 Esdras), 2 Esdras (called 4 Esdras), and the Epistle to the Laodiceans in an appendix, styled "Apogryphi".

Thirty-Nine Articles: in 1563, of the Church of England, article 6, recognized the Roman Catholic Canon including the Deuterocanonicals with the caveat "for example of life and instruction in manners ... [but not] to establish any doctrine."

King James Bible: of 1611, included deuterocanon and apocrypha from the Vulgate and Septuagint.

Westminster Confession of Faith: in 1647, of Calvinism, decreed a **39-book OT** and **27-book NT**, all others labeled as apocrypha [23].

Synod of Jerusalem[24]: in 1672, decreed the Greek Orthodox Canon which is the same as Trent but adds Psalm 151, 1 Esdras, 3 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees, and Prayer of Manasseh. The Greek Orthodox generally consider the Septuagint to be divinely inspired.

Thomas Jefferson: in 1819, produced the Jefferson Bible, by excluding sayings of Jesus which he felt were easily determined to be inauthentic ("like picking diamonds from dunghills" -To Adams, 24 January 1814).

Vatican I: on April 24, 1870, approved the additions to Mark (v.16:9-20), Luke, (22:19b-20,43-44) and John, (7:53-8:11) which are not present in early manuscripts.

Pope Pius XI: on June 2, 1927, decreed the Comma Johanneum was open to dispute.

The Jesus Seminar in 1993 ranked sayings of Jesus for authenticity by consensus vote and published *The Five Gospels : What Did Jesus Really Say? The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*. In addition to the canonical four gospels, the fifth gospel is the Gospel of Thomas.

Other canons

The Syriac Peshitta, used by all the various Syrian Churches, originally did not include 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude and Revelation; however these 5 have been added to it in modern times (such as the *Lee Peshitta* of 1823). It also includes Psalm 151 and Psalm 152-155 and 2 Baruch. The Armenian Apostolic church at times has included the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs in its Old Testament and the Third Epistle to the Corinthians, but does not always list it with the other 27 canonical New Testament books.

The canon of the Tewahedo Churches is somewhat looser than for other traditional Christian groups, and the order, naming, and chapter/verse division of some of the books is also slightly different. The Ethiopian "narrow" canon includes 81 books altogether: The 27 book New Testament; those Old Testament books found in the Septuagint and accepted by the Orthodox; as well as Enoch, Jubilees, 1 Esdras and 2 Esdras, and 3 books of Maccabees; however, the three Ethiopian books of Maccabees are entirely different in content from the four Books of Maccabees known elsewhere.

The "broader" Ethiopian New Testament canon includes four books of "Sinodos" (church practices), two "Books of Covenant", "Ethiopic Clement", and "Ethiopic Didascalia" (Apostolic Church-Ordinances). However, these books have never been printed or widely studied. This "broader" canon is also sometimes said to include, with the Old Testament, an eight part history of the Jews based on the writings of Flavius Josephus, and known as "Pseudo-Josephus" or "Joseph ben Gurion" (*Yosēf walda Koryon*).[25]

Various books that were never canonized by any church, but are known to have existed in antiquity, are similar to the New Testament and often claim apostolic authorship, and are known as the New Testament apocrypha.

Modern interpretation of canonization

Many Evangelical Christian groups do not accept the theory that the Christian Bible was not known until various local and Ecumenical Councils, which they deem to be "Roman-dominated" and made their official declarations.

These groups believe that the New Testament supports that Paul (2 Timothy 4:11-13), Peter (2 Peter 3:15-16), and ultimately John (Revelation 22:18-19) finalized the canon of the New Testament. Some note that Peter, John, and Paul wrote 20 (or 21) of the 27 books of the NT and personally knew all the other NT writers. (Books not attributed to these three are: Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, James, and Jude. The authorship of Hebrews has long been disputed.)

Evangelicals tend not to accept the Septuagint as the inspired Hebrew Bible, though many of them recognize its wide use by Greek-speaking Jews in the first century. Others claim that the Masoretic text was known and used by the end of the first century. They note that early Christians knew the Hebrew Bible since around 170. Melito of Sardis listed all the books of the Old Testament that those in the Evangelical faiths now use (except, according to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, the Book of Esther, and with the addition of the Book of Wisdom). Melito's canon is found in Eusebius EH4.26.13-14 [26]:

Accordingly when I went East and came to the place where these things were preached and done, I learned accurately the books of the Old Testament, and send them to thee as written below. Their names are as follows: Of Moses, five books: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, Deuteronomy; Jesus Nave, Judges, Ruth; of Kings, four books; of Chronicles, two; the Psalms of David, the Proverbs of Solomon, Wisdom also, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Job; of Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah; of the twelve prophets, one book ; Daniel, Ezekiel, Esdras. From which also I have made the extracts, dividing them into six books.

However, Melito's account still does not determine that the *specific* documentary tradition used by the Jews necessarily was that which was eventually assembled into the Masoretic text, several centuries later.

Many modern Protestants point to four "Criteria for Canonicity" to justify the books that have been included in the Old and New Testament, which are judged to have satisfied the following:

1. Apostolic Origin — attributed to and based on the preaching/teaching of the first-generation apostles (or their close companions).
2. Universal Acceptance — acknowledged by all major Christian communities in the ancient world (by the end of the fourth century).
3. Liturgical Use — read publicly when early Christian communities gathered for the Lord's Supper (their weekly worship services).
4. Consistent Message — containing a theological outlook similar or complementary to other accepted Christian writings.

The basic factor for recognizing a book's canonicity for the New Testament was divine inspiration, and the chief test for this was apostolicity. The term *apostolic* as used for the test of canonicity does not necessarily mean apostolic authorship or derivation, but rather *apostolic authority*. *Apostolic authority* is never detached from the authority of the Lord.

It is sometimes difficult to apply these criteria to all books in the accepted canon, however, and some point to books that Protestants hold as apocryphal which would fulfill these requirements.

Footnotes

1. ^ **Jewish Encyclopedia: Bible Canon**: "Sirach ... knew the Law and Prophets in their present form and sequence; for he glorifies (ch. xliv.-xlix.) the great men of antiquity in the order in which they successively follow in Holy Writ. He not only knew the name [Hebrew omitted] ("The Twelve Prophets"), but cites Malachi iii. 23, and is acquainted with by far the greatest part of the

Hagiographa, as is certain from the Hebrew original of his writings recently discovered. He knew the Psalms, which he ascribes to David (Ecclus. [Sirach] xlvii. 8, 9), and the Proverbs: "There were those who found out musical harmonies, and set forth proverbs [A. V., "poetical compositions"] in writing" (xliv. 5). An allusion to Proverbs and probably to the Song of Solomon is contained in his words on King Solomon: "The countries marveled at thee for thy songs, and proverbs, and parables [or "dark sayings"], and interpretations" (xlvii. 17); the last three words being taken from Prov. i. 6, while the Song of Solomon is alluded to in "songs." He would have had no authority to speak of "songs" at all from I Kings v. 12; he must have known them. While he had no knowledge of Ecclesiastes, his didactic style proves that he used Job, as is also indicated by the words [Hebrew omitted] (xliv. 4, and afterward, [Hebrew omitted]). Ecclesiastes, Esther, and Daniel are not included in his canon (see Halévy, "Etude sur la Partie du Texte Hébreux de l'Ecclésiastique," pp. 67 et seq., Paris, 1897); he considers Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah as Holy Scripture (xlix. 12 = Ezra iii. 2; xlix. 13 = Neh. iii. and vi.; compare Neh. vi. 12); he mentions distinctly "the laws and prophets" (xxxix. 1); in the following sentences there are allusions to other writings; and verse 6 of the same chapter leads to the supposition that in his time only wisdom-writings and prayers were being written."

2. ^ **Jewish Encyclopedia: Bible Canon:** "It is true, Lucius ("Die Therapeuten," Strasburg, 1880) doubts the genuineness of this work; but Leopold Cohn, an authority on Philo ("Einleitung und Chronologie der Schriften Philo's," p. 37, Leipsic, 1899; "Philologus," vii., suppl. volume, p. 421), maintains that there is no reason to do so. Consequently, Siegfried's opinion ("Philo," p. 61, Jena, 1875) that Philo's canon was essentially the same as that of to-day, is probably correct (H. E. Ryle, "Philo and Holy Scripture," London, 1895)."
3. ^ **Against Apion Book 1.8:** "For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, [as the Greeks have,] but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life."
4. ^ **Assuming Koine Greek** primacy, which is the majority view, however, a small minority assume Aramaic primacy, meaning an original Aramaic Gospel which would cite the Aramaic Old Testament.
5. ^ **According to the Catholic Encyclopedia** [1]: "In the Fathers, the book is often called "Jesus Nave". The name dates from the time of Origen, who translated the Hebrew "son of Nun" by *uiòs Nauê* and insisted upon the *Nave* as a type of a ship; hence in the name *Jesus Nave* many of the Fathers see the type of Jesus, the Ship wherein the world is saved."
6. ^ **Hahneman, Geoffrey Mark. The Muratorian Fragment** and the Development of the Canon. Oxford: Clarendon, 1992. Sundberg, Albert C., Jr. "Canon Muratori: A Fourth Century List." Harvard Theological Review 66 (1973): 1-41.
7. ^ **Both points taken from Mark A. Noll's** *Turning Points*, pages 36 and 37. See **References** on this page.
8. ^ http://www.bibelcenter.de/bibel/lu1545/ note order: ... Hebr□er, Jakobus, Judas, Offenbarung; see also http://www.bible-researcher.com/links10.html
9. ^ **The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopædia** and Scriptural Dictionary, Fully Defining and Explaining All Religious Terms, Including Biographical, Geographical, Historical, Archæological and Doctrinal Themes, p.521, edited by Samuel Fallows et al, The Howard-Severance company, 1901,1910. - Google Books

10. ^ **Martin Luther, as quoted by William Barclay,** The Daily Study Bible Series, The Letters of James and Peter, Revised Edition, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, KY, 1976, p. 7

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Textus Receptus

Textus Receptus (Latin: "received text") is the name given to the first Greek-language text of the New Testament to be printed on a printing press. It was compiled by **Dutch Catholic scholar and humanist Desiderius Erasmus** in 1516 for his translation of the Bible into Greek, and later used as the basis for the translation of the New Testament by William Tyndale, for the original Luther Bible, and for most other Reformation-era translations throughout Western and Central Europe. The Textus Receptus is classified by scholars as a late Byzantine text.

Erasmus' first edition of the Textus Receptus was prepared in haste. Typographical errors attributed to the rush to complete the work, not to mention the new invention (the printing press), abounded in the published text. Erasmus also lacked a complete copy of the book of Revelation and was forced to translate the last six verses back into Greek from the Latin in order to finish his edition.

Frederick Nolan, an eminent historian of the 19th century and a Greek and Latin scholar who researched Egyptian chronology, spent 28 years attempting to trace the Received Text to apostolic origins. He was an ardent advocate of the supremacy of the Textus Receptus over all other editions of the Greek New Testament, and argued that the first editors of the printed Greek New Testament intentionally selected the texts they did because of their superiority and disregarded other texts which represented other text-types because of their inferiority.

> It is not to be conceived that the original editors of the [Greek] New Testament were wholly destitute of plan in selecting those manuscripts, out of which they were to form the text of their printed editions. In the sequel it will appear, that they were not altogether ignorant of two classes

of manuscripts; one of which contains the text which we have adopted from them; and the other that text which has been adopted by M. Griesbach.[1]

Regarding Erasmus, Nolan stated:

> Nor let it be conceived in disparagement of the great undertaking of Erasmus, that he was merely fortuitously right. Had he barely undertaken to perpetuate the tradition on which he received the sacred text he would have done as much as could be required of him, and more than sufficient to put to shame the puny efforts of those who have vainly labored to improve upon his design. [. . .] With respect to Manuscripts, it is indisputable that he was acquainted with every variety which is known to us, having distributed them into two principal classes, one of which corresponds with the Complutensian edition, the other with the Vatican manuscript. And he has specified the positive grounds on which he received the one arid rejected the other.[2]

It is now widely accepted by textual scholars that the selection of manuscripts available to Erasmus was quite limited — due partly to his time constraints, partly to geographic isolation before high-speed transit, and partly to the fact that many important texts were as yet undiscovered — being confined to a few late medieval texts that most modern scholars consider to be of dubious quality.[3]

With the third edition of Erasmus' Greek text (1522) the Comma Johanneum was included because a single 13th-century manuscript was found to contain it — though Erasmus expressed doubt as to the authenticity of the passage in his *Annotations*.

Popular demand for more complete Greek versions of the Bible led to a flurry of authorized and unauthorized editions in the early sixteenth century.

Although sometimes used to refer to other editions, the name "Textus Receptus" has been used in a specific manner to designate only two New Testament Greek versions: one produced by Parisian Robert Stephanus in 1550 and another produced by the Elzevirs in 1624 (reprinted in 1633). The name itself derives from a phrase contained in the publisher's preface to the 1633 edition of the Elzevirs' text, *textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum*, translated "so you hold the text, now received by all." The two words, *textum* and *receptum*, were modified from the accusative to the nominative case to render *textus receptus*.

The majority of textual critical scholars have adopted an eclectic approach to the Greek New Testament, with the most weight given to the earliest extant manuscripts, which are mainly Alexandrian in character, thus breaking with the Textus Receptus in numerous places.

Byzantine text-type

The **Byzantine text-type** (also called **Constantinopolitan**, **Syrian**, **ecclesiastical**, and **majority**) is the largest group of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament.

The Byzantine text-type is the text-type with by far the largest number of manuscripts, especially from the invention of the minuscule (lower case) handwriting in the 9th century. For example, of 522 complete or nearly complete manuscripts of the General Epistles collated by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research in Münster, Germany, 372 of them attest the Byzantine reading in at least 90% of 98 test places.

The first printed edition of the New Testament in 1516 was completed by Erasmus and published by Johann Froben of Basel on March 1, 1516. Due to the pressure of his publisher to bring their edition to market before the competing Complutensian Polyglot, **Erasmus based his work on fewer than a half-dozen manuscripts from the Byzantine text-type, all of which dated from the twelfth century or later**. This text came to be known as the *Textus Receptus* or *received text* after being thus termed by Bonaventura Elzevir, an enterprising publisher from the Netherlands, in his 1633 edition of Erasmus' text. The New Testament of the King James Version of the Bible was translated from editions of what was to become the *Textus Receptus*.

Karl Lachmann (1850) was the first New Testament textual critic to produce an edition that broke with the *Textus Receptus*, relying mainly instead in manuscripts from the Alexandrian text-type. Although the majority of New Testament textual critics now favor a text that is Alexandrian in complexion, especially after the publication of Westcott and Hort's edition, there remain some proponents of the Byzantine text-type as the type of text most similar to the autographs. These critics include the editors of the Hodges and Farstad text (cited below), and the Robinson and Pierpoint text.

The Byzantine type is also found in modern Greek Orthodox editions. A new scientific edition of the Byzantine Text of John's gospel, funded by the United Bible Societies in response to a request from Eastern Orthodox Scholars, has begun in Birmingham, UK.

Among those who believe that the Byzantine text is only a secondary witness to the autograph, there is some debate concerning the origin of the Byzantine text and the reason for its widespread use. The suggestions that have been put forward are:

- That Lucian of Antioch used his text critical skills to produce a recension. (Jerome makes separate references to Lucian's recensions of both old and new testaments).
- That Constantine I paid for the wide distribution of manuscripts which came from a common source. (There are several references in Eusebius of Caesarea to Constantine paying for manuscript production).
- That after the Roman Empire stopped using Greek, and because of Muslim invasion, the only church to actively preserve the Greek text was the Byzantine church, which exercised central control from the Apostolic See of Antioch and withstood the Muslims until the 15th century.

To give a feel for the difference between the Byzantine form of text and the Eclectic text, which is mainly Alexandrian in character, of 800 variation units in the Epistle of James collected by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research, the Byzantine and Eclectic texts are in agreement in 731 of the places (a rate of 92.3%). Many of the 69 disagreements involve differences in word order and other variants that do not appear as translatable differences in English versions. According to the preface to the New King James Version of the Bible, the Textus Receptus, the Alexandrian text-type and the Byzantine text-type are 85% identical (that is, of the variations that occur in any manuscript, only 15% actually differ between these three)

Alexandrian text-type

The **Alexandrian text-type** (also called **Neutral** or **Egyptian**) is a group of early manuscripts of the New Testament in the original Greek. The oldest near-complete manuscripts of the New Testament (Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, both believed to be from the early 4th century CE) belong to this text-type. The earliest papyri manuscripts of the New Testament such as P^{66} and P^{75} from the 2nd century also are of the Alexandrian type.

Whilst the type of text is referred to as "Alexandrian" since most manuscripts of this early type appear to have been preserved by the dry climate of Egypt, the readings found in the Alexandrian text can generally be found in the textual traditions from all over the Roman Empire — for example, the Old Latin, Vulgate or Peshitta. **As far as the surviving evidence indicates, Alexandrian manuscripts appear to have been more widespread than Byzantine manuscripts until the wave of copying in the Byzantine church overtook them around the 9th century.**

Starting with Karl Lachmann (1850), manuscripts of the Alexandrian text-type have been the most influential in modern, critical editions of the Greek New Testament, achieving widespread acceptance in the text of Westcott & Hort (1881), and culminating in the United Bible Society 4th edition and Nestle-Aland, 27th edition of the New Testament.

All extant manuscripts of all text-types are at least 85% identical and most of the variations are not translatable into English, such as word order or spelling. However, there are occasional instances in which Alexandrian and Byzantine texts disagree in a significant way. One example is 1 Timothy 3:16. The Byzantine texts read "God was manifest in the flesh", whereas Alexandrian texts, with support from the Old Latin, Vulgate, Peshitta, Western text-type and many early church fathers read "He was manifest in the flesh". The difference between the two readings in Greek is a single short line, present in the letter Theta (Θ) but absent in the letter Omicron (O), respectively. Other verses relating to the divinity of Christ, such as John 1:1, show no significant variation.

Most textual critics of the New Testament favor the Alexandrian text-type as the best representative of the autographs for many reasons. One reason is that Alexandrian manuscripts are the oldest we have found, and some of the earliest church fathers used readings found in the Alexandrian text. Another is that often the Alexandrian reading is the only one that can explain the origin of all the variant readings found in other text-types.

Nevertheless, there are some dissenting voices to this general consensus. A few textual critics, especially those in France, argue that the Western text-type, an old text from which the Old Latin versions of the New Testament are derived, is more original.

In the United States, some critics have a dissenting view that prefers the Byzantine text-type. They assert that Egypt, almost alone, offers optimal climatic conditions favoring preservation of ancient manuscripts. Thus, the papyri used in the east (Asia Minor and Greece) would not have survived due to the unfavorable climatic conditions. The argument is that the much greater number of Byzantine manuscripts indicate a superior claim to being an accurate copy from the autograph. The Byzantine text is also the one found in modern Greek Orthodox editions, though this might simply be a matter of not wanting to break with tradition.

Some of those arguing in favor of Byzantine priority further assert that the Alexandrian church was dominated by the Gnostics who generally had either docetic views of Jesus, or considered his life to just be an allegory that was not based on facts. Alexandrian proponents counter that the Byzantine church was dominated by Arianism around the time that we first see evidence of the Byzantine text emerging. However most scholars are generally agreed that there is no evidence of systematic theological alteration in any of the text types.

Vetus Latina

Vetus Latina is a collective name given to the Biblical texts in Latin that were translated before St Jerome's Vulgate Bible became the standard Bible for Latin-speaking Western Christians. The phrase *Vetus Latina* is Latin for ***Old Latin***, and the Vetus Latina is sometimes known as the **Old Latin Bible**.

A page of the Codex Vercellensis, an example of the *Vetus Latina*. This section contains the Gospel of John, 16:23-30.

There was no single "Vetus Latina" Bible; there are, instead, a collection of Biblical manuscript texts that bear witness to Latin translations of Biblical passages that preceded Jerome's. After comparing readings for Luke 24:4-5 in Vetus Latina manuscripts, Bruce Metzger counted "no fewer than 27 variant readings!" To these witnesses of previous translations, many scholars frequently add quotations of Biblical passages that appear in the works of the Latin Fathers, some of which share readings with certain groups of manuscripts. As such, many of the Vetus Latina "versions" were generally not promulgated in their own right as translations of the Bible to be used in the whole Church; rather, many of the texts that form part of the Vetus Latina were prepared on an *ad hoc* basis for the local use of Christian communities, or to illuminate another Christian discourse or sermon. There are some Old Latin texts that seem to have aspired to greater stature or currency; several manuscripts of Old Latin Gospels exist, containing the four canonical Gospels; the several manuscripts that contain them differ substantially from one another. Other Biblical passages, however, are extant only in excerpts or fragments.

The language of the Old Latin translations is uneven in quality, as Augustine of Hippo lamented in *De Doctrina Christiana* (2, 16). Grammatical solecisms abound; some reproduce literally Greek or Hebrew idioms as they appear in the Septuagint. Likewise, the various Old Latin translations reflect the various versions of the Septuagint circulating, with the African manuscripts (such as the Codex Bobiensis) preserving readings of the Western text-type, while readings in the European manuscripts are closer to the Byzantine text-type. Many grammatical idiosyncrasies come from the use of Vulgar Latin grammatical forms in the text.

Replacement

With the publication of Jerome's Vulgate, which offered a single, stylistically consistent Latin text translated from the original tongues, the Vetus Latina gradually fell out of use. Jerome, in a letter,

complains that his new version was initially disliked by Christians who were familiar with the phrasing of the old translations. However, as copies of the complete Bible were infrequently found, Old Latin translations of various books of the Bible were copied into manuscripts along side Vulgate translations, inevitably exchanging readings; Old Latin translations of single books can be found in manuscripts as late as the 13th century. However, the Vulgate generally displaced the Vetus Latina and was acknowledged as the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Trent.

Below are some comparisons of the Vetus Latina with text from the Vulgate.

The following comparison is of Luke 6:1-4, taken from the Old Latin text in the Codex Bezae:

Vetus Latina	**Latin Vulgate**
Et factum est eum in Sabbato secundoprimo abire per segetes discipuli autem illius coeperunt vellere spicas et fricantes manibus	Factum est autem in sábbato secúndo, primo, cum transíret per sata, vellébant discípuli ejus spicas, et manducábant confricántes mánibus.
manducabant. Quidam autem de farisaeis dicebant ei, Ecce quid faciunt discipuli tui sabbatis	Quidam autem pharisæórum, dicébant illis : Quid fácitis quod non licet in sábbatis ?
quod non licet ? Respondens autem IHS dixit ad eos, Numquam hoc legistis quod fecit David quando esurit ipse et qui cum eo erat ?	Et respóndens Jesus ad eos, dixit : Nec hoc legístis quod fecit David, cum esurísset ipse, et qui cum illo erant ?
Intro ibit in domum Dei et panes propositionis manducavit et dedit et qui cum erant quibus non licebat manducare si non solis sacerdotibus ?	quómodo intrávit in domum Dei, et panes propositiónis sumpsit, et manducávit, et dedit his qui cum ipso erant : quos non licet manducáre nisi tantum sacerdótibus ?

The Old Latin text survives in places in the liturgy, such as the following verse well known from Christmas carols, Luke 2:14:

Vetus Latina	**Latin Vulgate**
Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis	Glória in altíssimis Deo, et in terra pax in homínibus bonæ voluntátis

The Old Latin text means, "Glory [belongs] to God among the high, and peace [belongs] to men of good will on earth". The Vulgate text means "Glory [belongs] to God among the most high and peace among men of good will on earth".

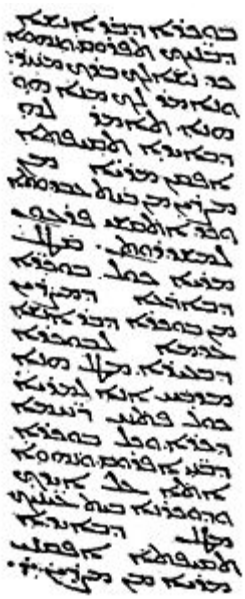
Probably the most well known difference between the Old Latin and the Vulgate is in the Pater Noster, where the phrase from the Vetus Latina, *quotidianum panem*, "daily bread", becomes *supersubstantialem panem*, "supersubstantial bread" in the Vulgate.

Peshitta

The **Peshitta** is the standard version of the Bible in the Syriac language.

The name 'Peshitta' is derived from the Syriac *mappaqtâ pšîṭtâ* (□ □ □ □□ □□ □), literally meaning 'simple version'. However, it is also possible to translate *pšîṭtâ* as 'common' (that is, for all people), or 'straight', as well as the usual translation as 'simple'. Syriac is a dialect, or group of dialects, of Eastern Aramaic. It is written in the Syriac alphabet, and is transliterated into the Roman alphabet in a number of ways: Peshitta, Peshittâ, Pshitta, Pšittâ, Pshitto, Fshitto. All of these are acceptable, but 'Peshitta' is the most convenient spelling in English.

History of the Syriac versions



Peshitta text of Exodus 13:14-16 produced in Amida in the year 464.

The Bible was translated into Syriac many times over the centuries from Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. The principal Syriac translation of the Old Testament was carried out by Jews or Jewish Christians during the first two centuries AD.

The earliest New Testament translation into Syriac was probably Tatian's Diatessaron ('one through four'). The Diatessaron, written about AD 175, was a continuous harmony of the four gospels into a single narrative. It, rather than the four separate gospels, became the official Syriac Gospel for a time, and received a beautiful prose commentary by Ephrem the Syrian. However, the Syriac-speaking church was urged to follow the practice of other churches and use the four separate gospels. Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus on the Euphrates in upper Syria in 423, sought out and found more than two hundred copies of the Diatessaron, which he 'collected and put away, and introduced instead of them the Gospels of the four evangelists'.

The early Syriac versions of both Old and New Testament with the four gospels, excluding the Diatessaron, is called the *Old Syriac* (*Vetus Syra*) version. The Old Syriac Old Testament was probably based extensively on the Aramaic Targumim, but little evidence survives today. There are two manuscripts of the Old Syriac separate gospels (Syra Sinaiticus and Syra Curetonianus). These are clearly based on the Greek text, and the so-called 'Western' recension of it. The Syriac of these manuscripts shows some influence of West Aramaic, a related language. It is thought that the gospels circulated separately in a Palestinian Christian dialect of Aramaic during the period that the Diatessaron circulated in the Syriac community. These source gospels, if they existed at all, were translations from Koine Greek,

except see Aramaic primacy. There is also evidence that translations of the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline epistles also existed in the Old Syriac version, though according to Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 4.29.5, Tatian himself rejected them.

The Peshitta is a reworking of Old Syriac material to form a unified version of the scriptures for the Syriac-speaking churches. The name of Rabbula, bishop of Edessa (d. 435) is popularly connected with the production of the Peshitta. However, it is unclear how involved he was, if at all. By the early fifth century, the Peshitta was the standard Bible of the Syriac-speaking churches. Even with centuries of schism and division, the Peshitta remains a single, uniting tradition.

Content and style of the Peshitta

The sixth beatitude (Matthew 5:8) from an East Syriac Peshitta.
Ṭûḇayhôn l'aylên daḏkên b-lebbhôn: d-henôn neḥzôn l'alāhâ.
'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.'

The Peshitta version of the Old Testament is an independent translation based largely on a Hebrew text similar to the Proto-Masoretic Text. It shows a number of linguistic and exegetical similarities to the Aramaic Targums but is now no longer thought to derive from them. In some passages the translators have clearly used the Greek Septuagint. The influence of the Septuagint is particularly strong in Isaiah and the Psalms, probably due to their use in the liturgy. Most of the Apocrypha is translated from the Septuagint, except that Tobit did not exist in early versions of the Peshitta, and the translation of Sirach was based on a Hebrew text.

The Peshitta version of the New Testament shows a continuation of the tradition of the Diatessaron and Old Syriac versions, displaying some lively 'Western' renderings (particularly clear in the Acts of the Apostles). It combines with this some of the more complex 'Byzantine' readings of the fifth century. One peculiar feature of the Peshitta is the absence of 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude and Revelation. Modern Syriac Bibles add sixth or seventh century translations of these five books to a revised Peshitta text.

Modern developments

The Peshitta, lightly revised and with missing books added, is the standard Syriac Bible for churches in the Syriac tradition: the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Syrian Catholic Church, the Assyrian Church of the East, the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East, the Chaldean Catholic Church, the Maronite Church, the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church, the Mar Thoma Church, the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church and the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. The Syrian Christians in India have mostly replaced Syriac with Malayalam. The Arabic language is becoming more common, if not for liturgical readings, for sermons and personal study of the Bible among Syriac Christians in the Middle East.

Almost all Syriac scholars agree that the Peshitta gospels are translations of the Greek originals. A minority viewpoint is that the Peshitta represent the original New Testament and the Greek is a translation of it. For more information, see Peshitta primacy.

In 1901, P. E. Pusey and G. H. Gwilliam published a critical text of the Peshitta with a Latin translation. Then, in 1905, the British and Foreign Bible Society produced a clear, non-critical version of the Peshitta

gospels. In 1920, this version was expanded to a complete New Testament. From 1961, the Peshitta Institute of Leiden has published the most comprehensive critical edition of the Peshitta as a series of fascicles.

A 1933 translation of the Peshitta into English, edited by George M. Lamsa, is known as the Lamsa Bible.

In 1996, the first edition of George Anton Kiraz's *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels: Aligning the Old Syriac Sinaiticus, Curetonianus, Peshitta and Harklean Versions* (abbr. CESG; the Harklean text was prepared by Andreas Juckel) was published by Brill. The subsequent second (2002) and third (2004) editions were printed by Gorgias Press LLC.

The Old Latin Psalms are a special case. Here, the Latin liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church continues the use of the Gallican psalter, which is a version of the Psalms from the Vetus Latina that was doubly revised by St Jerome before he began to prepare his Vulgate translation. These Psalms had already become widely used in the liturgy, and their phrasing was familiar to worshippers despite their occasional divergences from classical Latin usage. Jerome also translated the Psalms from the original Hebrew; Jerome's new Psalter is called the *Iuxta Hebraeicum*, but this new version failed to displace the Gallican psalter in liturgical use, and ultimately the Gallican was used as the psalter of the Vulgate. The Gallican is the psalter that is chanted to Gregorian chant and used in classical music. In 1979, the Roman Catholic Church issued a *Nova Vulgata* version of the Psalms, and authorized them for liturgical use; by then, Latin liturgies were seldom used, and the Nova Vulgata has made little impact.

Codex Vaticanus

Page from Codex Vaticanus Graece 1209, B/03

The **Codex Vaticanus** (The Vatican, Bibl. Vat., Vat. gr. 1209; Gregory-Aland no. **B** or **03**) is one of the oldest extant manuscripts of the Bible. It is slightly older than Codex Sinaiticus, both of which were probably transcribed in the 4th century. It is written in Greek, on vellum, with uncial letters.

A section of the *Codex Vaticanus*, containing 1 Esdras 2:1-8

Vaticanus originally contained a complete copy of the Septuagint ("LXX") except for 1-4 Maccabees and the Prayer of Manasseh. Genesis 1:1 - 46:28a (31 leaves) and Psalm 105:27 - 137:6b (10 leaves) are lost and have been filled by a recent hand. 2 Kings 2:5-7, 10-13 are also lost due to a tear in one of the pages. The order of the Old Testament books is as follows: Genesis to 2 Chronicles as normal, 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras (which includes Nehemias), the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Job, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Esther, Judith, Tobit, the minor prophets from Hosea to Malachi, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Lamentations and the Epistle of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.

The extant New Testament of Vaticanus contains the Gospels, Acts, the General Epistles, the Pauline Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews (up to Heb 9:14, καθα[ριει); thus it lacks 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon and Revelation. These missing pages were replaced by a 15th century minuscule supplement (no. 1957).

The Greek is written continuously with small neat writing, later retraced by an 11th century scribe. Punctuation is rare (accents and breathings have been added by a later hand) except for some blank spaces, diaeresis on initial iotas and upsilons, abbreviations of the *nomina sacra* and markings of OT citations.

The manuscript contains mysterious double dots (so called "umlauts") in the margin of the New Testament, which seem to mark places of textual uncertainty. There are 795 of these in the text and around another 40 that are uncertain. The date of these markings are disputed among scholars and are discussed in a link below.

Provenance

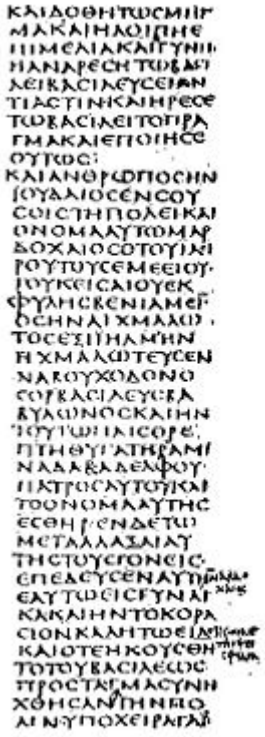
The manuscript has been housed in the Vatican Library (founded by Pope Nicholas V in 1448) for as long as it has been known, appearing in its earliest catalog of 1475 and in the 1481 catalogue. Its place of origin and the history of the manuscript is uncertain, with Rome, southern Italy and Caesarea all having been suggested. There has been speculation that it had previously been in the possession of Cardinal

Bessarion because the minuscule supplement has a text similar to one of Bessarion's manuscripts. According to Paul Canart's introduction to the recent facsimile edition, p.5, the decorative initials added to the manuscript in the middle ages are reminiscent of Constantinopolitan decoration of the 10th century, but poorly executed, giving the impression that they were added in the 11th or 12th century. T C Skeat, a paleographer at the British Museum, has argued that Codex Vaticanus was among the 50 Bibles that the Emperor Constantine I ordered Eusebius of Caesarea to produce. The similarity of the text with the papyri and Coptic version (including some letter formation), parallels with Athanasius' canon of 367 suggest an Egyptian or Alexandrian origin.

Importance

Codex Vaticanus is one of the most important manuscripts for Textual criticism and is a leading member of the Alexandrian text-type. It was heavily used by Westcott and Hort in their edition of the Greek New Testament (1881).

Codex Sinaiticus



A portion of the Codex Sinaiticus, containing Esther 2:3-8.

Codex Sinaiticus (London, Brit. Libr., Add. 43725; Gregory-Aland no. **א** (Aleph) or **01**) is a 4th century uncial manuscript of the Greek Bible, written between **330–350**. Originally containing the whole of both Testaments, only portions of the Greek Old Testament or Septuagint survive along with a complete New Testament, the Epistle of Barnabas and portions of The Shepherd of Hermas (suggesting that the latter two may have been considered part of Biblical canon by the editors of the codex). Along with Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus is one of the most valuable manuscripts for Textual criticism of the Greek New Testament, as well as the Septuagint. For most of the New Testament, Codex Sinaiticus is in general agreement with Codex Vaticanus and Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, attesting an Alexandrian text-type, but

in John 1:1-8:38 Codex Sinaiticus is in closer agreement with Codex Bezae in support of a Western text-type. Description

The entire codex consists of 346½ folios, written in four columns. Of these, 199 belong to the Old Testament and 147½ belong to the New Testament, along with two other books, the Epistle of Barnabas and part of The Shepherd of Hermas. The books of the New Testament are arranged in this order: the four Gospels, the epistles of Paul, the Acts of the Apostles, the General Epistles, Revelation.

Of its prior history, little is known. It is speculated to have been written in Egypt and is sometimes associated with the 50 copies of the scriptures commissioned by Roman Emperor Constantine after his conversion to Christianity.

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. In the sixth or seventh century many alterations were made, which, according to a colophon at the end of the book of Esdras and Esther states, that the source of these alterations was *"a very ancient manuscript that had been corrected by the hand of the holy martyr Pamphylus"* (martyred AD 309). From this is concluded, that it had been in Caesarea Palaestina in the 6th or 7th centuries.[1] Uncorrected is the pervasive iotacism, especially of the ει diphthong.

Discovery

The Codex Sinaiticus was found by Constantin von Tischendorf on his third visit to the Monastery of Saint Catherine, on Mount Sinai in Egypt, in 1859. The first two trips had yielded parts of the Old Testament, some found in a basket of manuscript pieces, which Tischendorf was told by a librarian "were rubbish which was to be destroyed by burning it in the ovens of the monastery".[2] 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. In May 1875, during restoration work, the monks of St. Catherine's monastery discovered a room beneath the St. George Chapel which contained many parchment fragments. Among these fragments were twelve missing leaves from the Sinaiticus Old Testament.

The story of how von Tischendorf found the manuscript, which contained most of the Old Testament and all of the New Testament, has all the interest of a romance. Von Tischendorf reached the monastery on January 31; but his inquiries appeared to be fruitless. On February 4, he had resolved to return home without having gained his object.

> 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 Pastor of Hermas.[3]

After some negotiations, he obtained possession of this precious fragment, and conveyed it to Tsar Alexander, who appreciated its importance and had it published as nearly as possible in facsimile, so as to

exhibit correctly the ancient handwriting. The Tsar sent the monastery 9,000 rubles by way of compensation.

Regarding Tischendorf's role in the transfer to Saint Petersburg, there are several views. Although when parts of Genesis and Book of Numbers were later found in the bindings of other books, they were amicably sent to Tischendorf, the *Codex* is currently regarded by the monastery as having been stolen, a view hotly contested by several scholars in Europe. 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 Czar's possession are open to an interpretation that reflects adversely on Tischendorf's candour and good faith with the monks at St. Catherine's. 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 St. Petersburg 'to the Holy Confraternity of Sinai at its earliest request'.[4]

For many decades, it was preserved in the Russian National Library. In 1933, the Soviet Union sold the Codex to the British Library for £100,000.

Present location

The Codex is now split into four unequal portions: 347 leaves in the British Library in London, 12 leaves and 14 fragments in St. Catherine's Monastery of Sinai, 43 leaves in the Leipzig University Library, and fragments of 3 leaves in the Russian National Library in St Petersburg.

In June 2005, 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. This will include the use of hyperspectral imaging to photograph the manuscripts to look for hidden information such as erased or faded text.[5] This is to be done in cooperation with the British Library.

This entry incorporates text from the public domain Easton's Bible Dictionary, originally published in 1897.

Codex Bezae

A sample of the Greek text from the Codex Bezae

The **Codex Bezae Cantabrigensis** (Gregory-Aland no. **D** or **05**) is an important codex of the New Testament dating from the fifth- or sixth-century. It is written in an uncial hand on vellum and contains, in both Greek and Latin, most of the four Gospels and Acts, with a small fragment of 3 John.

A sample of the Latin text from the Codex Bezae

The manuscript presents the gospels in the unusual order Matthew, John, Luke and Mark, of which only Luke is complete; after some missing pages the MS picks up with the *Third Epistle of John* and contains part of *Acts*. Written with one column per page it has 406 leaves, out of perhaps an original 534, and the Greek pages on the left face Latin ones on the right. The first three lines of each book are in red letters, and black and red ink alternate lines towards the end of books. As many as nine correctors have worked on the manuscript between the sixth and twelfth century.

Text type

The Greek text is unique, with many interpolations found nowhere else, with a few remarkable omissions, and a capricious tendency to rephrase sentences. Aside from this one Greek manuscript it is found in Old Latin (pre-Vulgate) versions — as seen in the Latin here — and in Syriac, and Armenian versions. It is one type of the Western text-type, and it is the only Greek witness of the Western type. The manuscript demonstrates the latitude in the manuscript tradition that could still be found in the 5th and 6th centuries, the date of this codex.

The relation of the Latin text to the Greek text is not straightforward and has occasioned much disagreement among critics. The modern consensus is that the Greek descended from an early offshoot of the mainstream manuscript tradition. Most writers consider that this Greek text developed independently, while the Latin text is seen as originating in a clumsy attempt to translate the Greek, which then was amended in its turn, to conform to the Latin. Issues of conformity have dogged the usage of the *Codex Bezae* in biblical scholarship too. In general the Greek text is treated as an unreliable witness and treated as "an important corroborating witness wherever it agrees with other early manuscripts" as one of the links below freely admits.

Some of the outstanding features: *Matthew* 16:2f is present and not marked as doubtful or spurious. The longer ending of *Mark* is given. *Luke* 22:43f and *Pericope de adultera* are present and not marked as spurious or doubtful. *John 5:4* is omitted, and the text of *Acts* is nearly one-tenth longer than the generally received text.

History of the Codex

The manuscript is believed to have been repaired at Lyon in the Ninth Century as revealed by a distinctive ink used for supplementary pages. It was closely guarded for many centuries in the monastic library of St Irenaeus at Lyon. The manuscript was consulted, perhaps in Italy, for disputed readings at the Council of Trent, and was at about the same time collated for Stephanus's edition of the Greek New Testament. During the upheavals of the Wars of Religion in the 16th century, when textual analysis had a new urgency among the Reformation's Protestants, the manuscript was taken from Lyon in 1562 and delivered to the Protestant scholar Theodore Beza, the friend and successor of Calvin, who gave it to the University of Cambridge, in the comparative security of England, in 1581, which accounts for its double name. It remains in the Cambridge University Library.

The importance of the Codex Bezae is such that a colloquium held at Lunel, Herault, in 1995 was entirely devoted to it. Papers discussed the many questions it poses to our understanding of the use of the Gospels and Acts in early Christianity, and of the text of the New Testament.

Dead Sea scrolls

The current version of this article or section reads like an essay.

Fragments of the scrolls on display at the Archeological Museum, Amman

The **Dead Sea scrolls** comprise roughly 825-872 documents, including texts from the Hebrew Bible, discovered between 1947 and 1956 in eleven caves in and around the Wadi Qumran (near the ruins of the ancient settlement of Khirbet Qumran, on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea). The texts are of great religious and historical significance, as they are practically the only known surviving Biblical documents written before AD 100.

Date and contents

According to carbon dating, textual analysis, and handwriting analysis the documents were written at various times between the middle of the 2nd century BC and the 1st century AD. At least one document has a carbon date range of 21 BC–61 AD. The Nash Papyrus from Egypt, containing a copy of the Ten Commandments, is the only other Hebrew document of comparable antiquity. Similar written materials have been recovered from nearby sites, including the fortress of Masada. While some of the scrolls were written on papyrus, a good portion were written on a brownish animal hide that appears to be gevil. The scrolls were written with feathers from a bird and the ink used was made from carbon black and white pigments. One scroll, appropriately named the Copper Scroll, consisted of thin copper sheets that were incised with text and then joined together.

About 80% to 85% of the Dead Sea Scrolls are written in one of three dialects of Hebrew,[1] Biblical Hebrew (also known as Classical Hebrew), "Dead Sea Scroll Hebrew" (on which see Hoffman 2004 or Qimron 1986), or proto-Tannaitic Hebrew, as in the Copper Scroll and the MMT text. Biblical Hebrew dominates in the Biblical scrolls, and DSS Hebrew in scrolls which some scholars believe were composed at Qumran. Also some scrolls are written in Aramaic and a few in Koine Greek.

For the view that the scrolls are the remnants of Jerusalem libraries and that there is no organic connection between the scrolls and Qumran, see below, section 2.3. Even according to those scholars who believe that there was scribal activity at Qumran, only a few of the biblical scrolls were actually composed there, the majority being copied before the Qumran period and coming into the ownership of the claimed Qumran community (Abegg et al 2002). There is, however, no concrete physical evidence of scribal activity at Qumran, nor, *a fortiori*, that the claimed Qumran community altered the biblical texts to reflect their own theology (Golb, 1995; cf. Abegg et al 2002). It is thought that the claimed Qumran community would have viewed the Book of Enoch and the Book of Jubilees as divinely inspired scripture (Abegg et al 2002). The biblical texts cited most often in the nonbiblical Dead Sea Scrolls are the Psalms, followed by the Book of Isaiah and the Book of Deuteronomy (Abegg et al 2002).

Important texts include the Isaiah Scroll (discovered in 1947), a Commentary on the Habakkuk (1947); the so-called Manual of Discipline (= Community Rule) (1QS/4QSa-j), which gives much information on the structure and theology of a sect; and the earliest version of the Damascus Document. The so-called Copper Scroll (1952), which lists valuable hidden caches of gold, scrolls, and weapons, is probably the most notorious.

The fragments span at least 801 texts that represent many diverse viewpoints, ranging from beliefs resembling those of the Essenes to those of other sects. About 30% are fragments from the Hebrew Bible, from all the books except the Book of Esther and the Book of Nehemiah (Abegg et al 2002). About 25% are traditional Israelite religious texts that are not in the canonical Hebrew Bible, such as the Book of Enoch, the Book of Jubilees, and the Testament of Levi. Another 30% contain Biblical commentaries or other texts such as the Community Rule (1QS/4QSa-j, also known as "Discipline Scroll" or "Manual of Discipline") and the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness (1QM, also known as the "War Scroll") related to the beliefs, regulations, and membership requirements of a Jewish sect, which some researchers continue to believe lived in the Qumran area. The rest (about 15%) of the fragments are yet unidentified.

Frequency of books found

Books Ranked According to Number of Manuscripts found (top 16)

Books	No. found
Psalms	39
Deuteronomy	33
1 Enoch	25
Genesis	24
Isaiah	22
Jubilees	21
Exodus	18
Leviticus	17

Numbers	11
Minor Prophets	10
Daniel	8
Jeremiah	6
Ezekiel	6
Job	6
1 & 2 Samuel	4

Interpretations

Essenes

According to a view almost universally held until the 1990s, the scrolls were written by a sect known as the Essenes who (according the this theory) lived at Kirbet Qumran. The scrolls were also hidden by them in the nearby caves during the Jewish Revolt in AD 66 before being massacred by the Roman troops. This is known as the Qumran-Essene Hypothesis. Some arguments used to support this theory are: 1) the strikingly similar parallels between the description of an initiation ceremony of new members in the Community Rule and Josephus' (a Jewish-Roman historian of the time) account of the Essene's initiation ceremony. 2)Josephus also mentions the Essenes as sharing property among the members of the community and so does the Community Rule. (It should also be noted that there are differences between the scrolls and Josephus' account of the Essenes but it is hard to ignore these remarkable similarities). 3) During the excavation of Kirbet Qumran two inkwells were found, giving weight to the theory that the scrolls were actually written there. 4)Long tables were also found that Roland de Vaux (one of the original editors of the Dead Sea Scrolls) interpreted as tables for a 'scriptorium'. 5)Water cisterns were discovered too and may have been used for ritual bathing which would have been an important part of Jewish (and Essene) religious life. 5) A description by Pliny the Elder (a geographer who was writing after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70) of a group of Essenes living in a desert community close to the ruined town of Engedi hooked some scholars in saying that this was proof that Kirbet Qumran was in fact an Essene settlement.

However, the evidence against this theory is formidable. First off, Kirbet Qumran is a tiny settlement which could only house about 150 at the very most at any one time. If, in fact, the Dead Sea Scrolls were written by the Essenes at that place, it would be a feat indeed. Plus, it would be nearly impossible considering the number of scribes (that have been identified via handwriting) is in the several hundreds. (Only about a dozen "repeats" of handwriting have been found). The tables that are assumed to be writing tables isn't as striking when one takes into account that scribes at that time did not write on long tables but wrote sitting cross-legged with a board in their lap. And Pliny's description isn't specific enough for one to assume that it must *only* refer to Kirbet Qumran.

In view of rising opposition to this theory, it can no longer be stated with certitude that the opinion that the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls were Essenes is the most prevalent view among scholars (Golb 1995; Hirschfeld 2004; Magen and Peleg 2006; cf. Abegg et al 2002). Since the 1990s a version of this theory, which can also no longer be said to be prevalent among scholars, stresses that the authors of the scrolls were "Essene-Like" or a splinter Essene group rather than simply Essenes as such. This modification of the Essene theory takes into account some significant differences between the world view expressed in some of the scrolls and the Essenes, as described by the classical authors. Together, the two theories may be called the "Qumran-sectarian theory".

Origins

Theory of Sadduceean Origin

Another variation on the Qumran-sectarian theory, which has gained some popularity, is that the community was led by Zadokite priests (Sadducees). The most important document in support of this view is the "Miqsat Ma'ase haTorah" (MMT, 4Q394-), which states one or two purity laws identical to those attributed in rabbinic writings to the Sadducees (such as concerning the transfer of impurities). However many more purity laws differ. Any hard conclusions are hard to make on this fact. This document also reproduces a festival calendar which follows Sadducee principles for the dating of certain festival days.

Florentino Martinez in a 2000 article in *Near Eastern Archaeology* dates composition of the Temple Scroll to the times of Hasmonean power consolidation, long before the existence of the Essenes and states that this is only the date when it was reduced to writing; the notions it expresses must be older. Some theological issues make this unlikely. Josephus tells us in his Jewish War and in his Antiquities of the Jews that the Sadducees and the Essenes held opposing views of predestination, with the Essenes believing in an immortal soul and attributing everything to fate, while the Sadducees denied both the existence of the soul and the role of fate altogether. The scroll authors' belief that the soul survived beyond death (and this belief included resurrection) and their complex world of angels and demons engaged in a cosmic war was contrary to the Sadduceean belief that there is no resurrection, no angel or spirit. For the Saducees every man had the right to choose between good and bad, and this life was it. For the Essenes, God ruled all and man lived for the next life that was soon to come. It is unlikely that one became the other. It seems this could make it unlikely that Sadducees and Essenes were too closely related.

Jerusalem libraries

In 1980 Norman Golb of the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute published the first of a series of studies critical of the Qumran-sectarian theory, and offering historical and textual evidence that the scrolls are the remains of various libraries in Jerusalem, hidden in the Judaean desert during the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans in 68-70 A.D. In broad terms, this evidence includes (1) the Copper Scroll found in Cave 3, which contains a list of treasures that, according to Golb and others, could only have originated in Jerusalem; (2) the great variety of conflicting ideas found among the scrolls; and (3) the fact that, apart from the Copper Scroll, they contain no original historical documents such as correspondence or contracts, but are all scribal copies of literary texts -- indicating that they are remnants of libraries and were not written at the site where they were found. Golb's theory has been endorsed by numerous scholars, including the prominent Israeli archaeologists Yizhar Hirschfeld,Yahman Jamaca, Yitzhak Magen and Yuval Peleg. Hirschfeld believes that Qumran was the country estate of a wealthy Jerusalemite. Magen and Peleg believe that the site was a pottery factory and had nothing to do with any sect. Golb believes that it was a military fortress, part of a concentric series of such bastions protecting Jerusalem. Thus, while one can no longer speak of any consensus regarding Qumran, what can be said is that current scrolls scholarship appears to be polarized between the traditional Qumran-sectarian theory and a growing movement towards the view that the site was secular in nature and had no organic connection with the parchment fragments found in the caves (see below). The scrolls are increasingly held to have come from a major center of intellectual culture in Palestine such as only Jerusalem is known to have been during the intertestamentary period. According to this theory, the scrolls are in fact more important than they were previously thought to be, because of the light they cast on Jewish thought in Jerusalem at that time.

Temple library

In 1963 Karl Heinrich Rengstorf of the University of Münster put forth the theory that the Dead Sea scrolls originated at the library of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. This theory was rejected by most scholars during the 1960s, who maintained that the scrolls were written at Qumran rather than transported from another location (a position then thought to be supported by de Vaux's identification of a room within the ruins of Qumran as a probable scriptorium -- an identification that has since been disputed by various archaeologists). Rengstorf's theory is also rejected by Norman Golb, who argues that it is rendered unlikely by the great multiplicity of conflicting religious ideas found among the scrolls. It has been revived, however, by Rachel Elior, who heads the department of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Christian connections

Spanish Jesuit José O'Callaghan has argued that one fragment (7Q5) is a New Testament text from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 6, verses 52–53. In recent years this controversial assertion has been taken up again by German scholar Carsten Peter Thiede. A successful identification of this fragment as a passage from Mark would make it the earliest extant New Testament document, dating somewhere between AD 30 and 60. Opponents consider that the fragment is tiny and requires so much reconstruction (the only complete word in Greek is "και" = "and") that it could have come from a text other than Mark.

Robert Eisenman advanced the theory that some scrolls actually describe the early Christian community, characterized as more fundamentalist and rigid than the one portrayed by the New Testament. Eisenman also attempted to relate the career of James the Just and Paul of Tarsus to some of these documents.

Other theories

Because they are frequently described as important to the history of the Bible, the scrolls are surrounded by a wide range of conspiracy theories. There is also writing about the Nephilim related to the Book of Enoch. Other theories with more support among scholars include Qumran as a military fortress or a winter resort (Abegg et al 2002).

High resolution images of all the discovered material are not available online to public examination.

Discovery

The scrolls were found in 11 caves near a settlement at Qumran, none of them coming from the actual settlement. It is generally accepted that a Bedouin goat- or sheep-herder by the name of Mohammed Ahmed el-Hamed (nicknamed edh-Dhib, "the wolf") made the first discovery towards the beginning of 1947.

In the most commonly told story the shepherd threw a rock into a cave in an attempt to drive out a missing animal under his care. The shattering sound of pottery drew him into the cave, where he found several ancient jars containing scrolls wrapped in linen.

Dr. John C. Trevor has carried out a number of interviews with several men going by the name of Muhammed edh-Dhib, each relating a variation on this tale.

The scrolls were first brought to a Bethlehem antiquities dealer named Ibrahim 'Ijha, who returned them after being warned that they may have been stolen from a synagogue. The scrolls then fell into the hands of Khalil Eskander Shahin, "Kando", a cobbler and antiques dealer. By most accounts the Bedouin removed only three scrolls following their initial find and, either encouraged by Kando to return, or revisited the site to gather more. Alternatively, it is postulated that Kando engaged in his own illegal excavation: Kando himself possessed at least four scrolls.

Arrangements with Bedouin left the scrolls in the hands of a third party until a sale of them could be negotiated. That third party, George Isha'ya, was a member of the Syrian Orthodox Church, who soon contacted St. Mark's Monastery in the hope of getting an appraisal of the nature of the texts. News of the find then reached Metropolitan Athanasius Yeshue Samuel, more often referred to as Mar Samuel.

After examining the scrolls and suspecting their age, Mar Samuel expressed an interest in purchasing them. All four scrolls found their way into his hands, the now famous Isaiah Scroll, the Community Rule, the Habakkuk Peshar, and the Genesis Apocryphon. Through the antiquities market, more scrolls soon surfaced, and Eleazer Sukenik found himself in possession of three: The War Scroll, Thanksgiving Hymns, and another more fragmented Isaiah scroll.

By the end of 1947, Sukenik, received word of the scrolls in Mar Samuel's possession and attempted to purchase them. No deal was reached, and instead the scrolls found the attention of Dr. John C. Trevor, of the American School of Oriental Research (ASOR). Dr. Trevor compared the script in the scrolls to the Nash Papyrus, the oldest biblical manuscript at the time, finding similarities between the two.

Dr. Trevor, a keen amateur photographer, met with Mar Samuel on February 21, 1948, when he photographed the scrolls. The quality of his photographs often exceeded that of the scrolls themselves over the years, as the texts quickly eroded once removed from their linen wraps.

In March of that year, violence erupted between Arabs and Jews in Israel, prompting the removal of the scrolls from the country for safekeeping. The scrolls were illegally removed to Beirut.

Cave 2

Bedouin discover 30 fragments of other scrolls in Cave 2, including Jubilees & ben Sirach in the original Hebrew.

Cave 3

One of the most curious scrolls is the Copper Scroll. Discovered in Cave 3, this scroll records a list of 64 underground hiding places throughout the land of Israel. The deposits are to contain certain amounts of gold, silver, aromatics, and manuscripts. These are believed to be treasures from the Temple at Jerusalem, that were hidden away for safekeeping.

Cave 4

Since the late fifties, about 40% of the Scrolls, mostly fragments from Cave 4, remained unpublished and were inaccessible.

Caves 5 and 6

The discovery of caves 5 and 6 were shortly after that of cave 4.Caves 5 and 6 yielded a modest find. Some of the dead sea scrolls actually appeared for sale on June 1, 1954 in the Wall Street Journal. The advertisement read: "The Four Dead Sea Scrolls: Biblical manuscripts dating back to at least 200 BC are for sale. This would be an ideal gift to an educational institution or religious institution by an individual or group."

Caves 7–10

Archeologists discovered caves 7 through 10 in 1955. However they did not contain many fragments. Cave 7 contain seventeen Greek documents including 7Q5) which would cause a controversy of debates in the following decades. Cave 8 only had five fragments and cave 9 held but one fragment. Cave 10 nothing but an ostracon.

Cave 11

The Temple Scroll, found in Cave 11, is the longest scroll. Its present total length is 26.7 feet (8.148 meters). The overall length of the scroll must have been over 28 feet (8.75m).

Publication

Some of the documents were published in a prompt manner: all of the writings found in Cave 1 appeared in print between 1950 and 1956; the finds from 8 different caves were released in a single volume in 1963; and 1965 saw the publication of the Psalms Scroll from Cave 11. Translation of these materials quickly followed.

The exception to this speed were the documents from Cave 4, which represented 40% of the total material. The publication of these materials had been entrusted to an international team led by Father Roland de Vaux, a member of the Dominican Order in Jerusalem. This group published the first volume of the materials entrusted to them in 1968, but spent much of their energies defending their theories of the material instead of publishing it. Geza Vermes, who had been involved from the start in the editing and publication of these materials, blamed the delay—and eventual failure—on de Vaux's selection of a team unsuited to the quality of work he had planned, as well as relying "on his personal, quasi-patriarchal authority" to control the completion of the work.

As a result, a large part of the finds from Cave 4 were not made public for many years. Access to the scrolls was governed by a "secrecy rule" that allowed only the original International Team or their designates to view the original materials. After de Vaux's death in 1971, his successors repeatedly refused to even allow the publication of photographs of these materials so that other scholars could at least make their judgments. This rule was eventually broken: first by the publication in the fall of 1991 of 17 documents reconstructed from a concordance that had been made in 1988 and had come into the hands of scholars outside of the International Team; next, that same month, by the discovery and publication of a complete set of photographs of the Cave 4 materials at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, that were not covered by the "secrecy rule". After some delays these photographs were published by Robert Eisenman and James Robinson (*A Facsimile Edition of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, two volumes, Washington, D.C., 1991). As a result, the "secrecy rule" was lifted, and publication of the Cave 4 documents soon commenced, with five volumes in print by 1995.

Vatican conspiracy theory

Allegations that the Vatican suppressed the publication of the scrolls were published in the 1990s. Notably, Michael Baigent's and Richard Leigh's book *The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception* claim that several key scrolls were deliberately kept under wraps for decades to suppress unwelcome theories about the early history of Christianity; in particular, Eisenman's speculation that the life of Jesus was deliberately mythicized by Paul, possibly a Roman agent who faked his "conversion" from Saul in order to undermine the influence of anti-Roman messianic cults in the region.

However, the complete publication and dissemination of translations and photographic records of the works in the late 1990s and early 2000s effectively undermined these ideas, since the 'new' Scroll material did not include anything which connected the Scrolls to early Christianity and certainly did not contain anything about the Catholic Church or anything the church would want to 'suppress'. As a result, most scholars discredit this conspiracy theory.

Significance

The significance of the scrolls is still somewhat impaired by the uncertainty about their date and origin.

In spite of these limitations, the scrolls have already been quite valuable to text critics. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible were Masoretic texts dating to the 9th century. The biblical manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls push that date back to the 2nd century BC and, until that happened, the oldest Greek manuscripts, such as Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, were the earliest extant versions of biblical manuscripts. Although some of the biblical manuscripts found at Qumran differ significantly from the Masoretic text, most do not. The scrolls thus provide new variants and the ability to be more confident of those readings where the Dead Sea manuscripts agree with the Masoretic text or with the early Greek manuscripts.

Further, the sectarian texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, most of which were previously unknown, offer new light on one form of Judaism practiced in the Second Temple period.

See also

- Damascus Document
- Community Rule
- War Rule
- Biblical archaeology
- Masoretic Text
- Septuagint
- Józef Milik
- Norman Golb
- Gospel of Judas

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Apocrypha

Apocrypha (from the Greek word απόκρυφα meaning "those having been hidden away"[1]) are texts of uncertain authenticity or writings where the authorship is questioned.

In Judeo-Christian theology, the term *apocrypha* refers to any collection of scriptural texts that falls outside the canon. Given that different denominations have different ideas about what constitutes canonical scripture, there are several different versions of the apocrypha.

During sixteenth-century controversies over the biblical canon the word "apocrypha" acquired a negative connotation, and it has become a synonym for "spurious" or "false". This usage usually involves fictitious

or legendary accounts that are plausible enough to commonly be considered as truth. For example, the Parson Weems account of George Washington and the cherry tree is considered apocryphal.

Denotation and connotation

The term "apocrypha" has evolved in meaning somewhat, and its associated implications have ranged from positive to pejorative. The term **apocryphal**, according to Merriam-Webster, means "of doubtful authenticity; spurious".

Esoteric writings

The word "apocryphal" (ἀπόκρυφος) was first applied, in a positive sense, to writings which were kept secret because they were the vehicles of esoteric knowledge considered too profound or too sacred to be disclosed to anyone other than the initiated.

It is used in this sense to describe *A Holy and Secret Book of Moses, called Eighth, or Holy (Μωυσέως ἱερὰ βίβλος ἀπόκρυφος ἐπικαλούμενη ὀγδόη ἢ ἁγία)*, a text taken from a Leiden papyrus of the third or fourth century AD, but which may be as old as the first century. In a similar vein, the disciples of the Gnostic Prodicus boasted that they possessed the secret (ἀπόκρυφα) books of Zoroaster. The term in general enjoyed high consideration among the Gnostics (see Acts of Thomas, 10, 27, 44)[1].

4 Ezra is, in its author's view, a secret work whose value was greater than that of the canonical scriptures because of its transcendent revelations of the future. Gregory of Nyssa, in *Oratio in suam ordinationem,* labels the words of St. John in the New Testament Book of Revelation as ἐν ἀποκρύφοις [2]. However, Christians hold that all scripture is of equal value and the book of Ezra is of the same authority as the rest of scripture. It must be noted that much of the Bible apparently contains transcendent revelations of the future, a fact used by Christians to prove its Divine origin.

Questionable writings

"Apocrypha" was also applied to writings that were hidden not because of their divinity but because of their questionable value to the church.

Origen, in *Commentaries on Matthew,* X. 18, XIII. 57, distinguishes between writings which were read by the churches and apocryphal writings: γραφη μη φερομενη μεν εν τοις κοινοις και δεδημοσιευμενοις βιβλιοις εικος δ ὁτι εν αποκρυφοις φερομενη. The meaning of αποκρυφος is here practically equivalent to "excluded from the public use of the church", and prepares the way for an even less favourable use of the word[3].

Spurious writings

The word "apocrypha" came finally to mean "false, spurious, bad, or heretical."

This meaning also appears in Origen's prologue to his commentary on the Song of Songs: *De scripturis his, quae appellantur apocryphae, pro eo quod multa in iis corrupta et contra fidem veram inveniuntur a majoribus tradita non placuit iis dari locum nec admitti ad auctoritatem.* [4] "Concerning these scriptures, which are called apocryphal, for the reason that many things are found in them corrupt and against the true faith handed down by the elders, it has pleased them that they not be given a place nor be admitted to authority."

Other meanings

In addition to the above, other uses of "apocrypha" developed over the history of Western Christianity.

The Gelasian Decree refers to religious works by church fathers Eusebius, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria as "apocrypha." Augustine defined the word as meaning simply "obscurity of origin," implying that any book of unknown authorship or questionable authenticity would be considered as apocrypha. On the other hand, Jerome (in *Protogus Galeatus*) declared that all books outside the Hebrew canon were apocryphal [5]. In practice, however, Jerome treated some books outside the Hebrew canon as if they were canonical, and the Western Church did not accept Jerome's definition of apocrypha, instead retaining the word's prior meaning (*see: Deuterocanon*). As a result, various church authorities labeled different books as apocrypha, and treated apocryphal books with varying levels of regard.

Many of the Greek fathers included some apocryphal books in the Septuagint with little distinction made between them and the rest of the Old Testament. Origen, Clement and others cited some apocryphal books as "scripture", "divine scripture", "inspired", and the like. On the other hand, teachers connected with Palestine and familiar with the Hebrew canon excluded from the canon all of the Old Testament not found there. This view is reflected in the canon of Melito of Sardis, and in the prefaces and letters of Jerome [6].

A third view was that the books were not as valuable as the canonical scriptures of the Hebrew collection, but were of value for moral uses and to be read in congregations. They were referred to as "ecclesiastical" works by Rufinus [7].

These three opinions regarding the apocryphal books prevailed until the Protestant Reformation, when the idea of what constitutes canon became a matter of primary concern for Roman Catholics and Protestants alike.

In 1546 the Catholic Council of Trent adopted the canon of Augustine, declaring "He is also to be anathema who does not receive these entire books, with all their parts, as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church, and are found in the ancient editions of the Latin Vulgate, as sacred and canonical." The whole of the books in question, with the exception of 1st and 2nd Esdras and the Prayer of Manasses, were declared canonical at Trent[8].

The Protestants, in comparison, universally held the belief that only the books in the Hebrew collection were canonical. **John Wycliffe, a 14th century reformer**, had declared in his Biblical translation that "whatever book is in the Old Testament besides these twenty-five shall be set among the apocrypha, that is, without authority or belief" [9]. Nevertheless, his translation of the Bible included the apocrypha.[2]

The respect accorded to apocryphal books varied between Protestant denominations. In both the German (1537) and English (1535) translations of the Bible, the apocrypha are published in a separate section from the other books. In some editions, (like the Westminster), readers were warned that these books were not "to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings." A milder distinction was expressed elsewhere, such as in the "argument" introducing them in the Geneva Bible, and in the Sixth Article of the Church of England, where it is said that "the other books the church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners," though not to establish doctrine [10].

Apocryphal Texts by Denomination

Jewish apocrypha *Main article: Jewish apocrypha*

Although Traditional Judaism insists on the exclusive canonization of the 24 books in the Tanakh, it also claims to have an oral law handed down from Moses. Certain circles in Judaism, such as the Essenes in Palestine and the Therapeutae in Egypt, were said to have a secret literature (see Dead Sea scrolls). A large part of this literature consisted of the apocalypses. Based on false prophecies, these books were not considered scripture, but rather part of a literary form that flourished from 200 BCE to 100 CE.

Biblical books called apocrypha *Main article: Biblical apocrypha*

During the birth of Christianity, some of the Jewish apocrypha that dealt with the coming of the Messianic kingdom became popular in the rising Jewish-Christian communities. Occasionally these writings were changed, but on the whole it was found sufficient to reinterpret them as conforming to a Christian viewpoint. Christianity eventually gave birth to new apocalyptic works, some of which were derived from traditional Jewish sources.

Some of the Jewish apocrypha were part of the ordinary religious literature of the early Christians. This was not strange, as the large majority of Old Testament references in the New Testament are taken from the Greek Septuagint, which is the source of the deuterocanonical books[3] as well as most of the other biblical apocrypha.[4]

The deuterocanonical books form part of the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox canons. New Testament reliance on these books includes these examples: James 1:19-20 shows dependence on Sirach 5:13-14, Hebrews 1:3 on Wisdom 7:26, Hebrews 11:35 on 2 Maccabees 6, Romans 9:21 on Wisdom 15:7, 2 Cor. 5:1, 4 on Wisdom 9:15, etc.

The Book of Enoch is included in the biblical canon only of the Oriental Orthodox churches. However, the Epistle of Jude quotes the prophet, Enoch, by name, and use of this book appears in the four gospels and 1 Peter. The genuineness and inspiration of Enoch were believed in by the writer of the Epistle of Barnabas, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria, and much of the early church. The epistles of Paul and the gospels also show influences from the Book of Jubilees, which is part of the Oriental Orthodox canon, as well as the Assumption of Moses and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, which are included in no biblical canon.

The high position which some apocryphal books occupied in the first two centuries was undermined by a variety of influences in the Christian church. All claims to the possession of a secret tradition (as held by many Gnostic sects) were denied by the influential theologians like Irenaeus and Tertullian, the timeframe of true inspiration was limited to the apostolic age, and universal acceptance by the church was required as proof of apostolic authorship. As these principles gained currency, books deemed apocryphal tended to become regarded as spurious and heretical writings, though books now considered deuterocanonical have been used in liturgy and theology from the first century to the present.

Commonly, among Protestant Christians, the apocrypha includes (but is not limited to) those books in the Old Testament that, early in his life, Jerome described as apocryphal in the 4th century.

New Testament apocryphal literature *Main article: New Testament apocrypha*

New Testament apocrypha — books similar to those in the New Testament but rejected by Catholics, Orthodox and/or Protestants — include several gospels and lives of apostles. Some of these were clearly produced by Gnostic authors or members of other groups later defined as heterodox. Many texts, believed

lost for centuries, were unearthed in the 19th and 20th centuries, producing lively speculation about their importance in early Christianity among religious scholars.

The Gnostic tradition was a prolific source of apocryphal gospels. While these writings borrowed the characteristic poetic features of apocalyptic literature from Judaism, Gnostic sects largely insisted on allegorical interpretations based on a secret apostolic tradition. With them, as with most Christians of the first and second centuries, apocryphal books were highly esteemed.

Though Protestants, Catholics and, in general, Orthodox agree on the canon of the New Testament, the Ethiopian Orthodox have in the past also included I & II Clement, and Shepherd of Hermas in their New Testament canon. This is no longer the case, according to Biblical scholar R.W. Cowley.

A well-known New Testament apocryphal book is the Gospel of Thomas, the only complete text of which was found in the Egyptian town of Nag Hammadi in 1945. The Gospel of Judas, a Gnostic gospel, also received much media attention when it was reconstructed in 2006.

Artists and theologians have drawn upon the New Testament apocrypha for such matters as the names of Dismas and Gestas and details about the Three Wise Men. The first explicit mention of the perpetual virginity of Mary is found in the pseudepigraphical Infancy Gospel of James.

Notes

1. ^ Specifically, απόκρυφα is the neuter plural of απόκρυφος, a participle derived from αποκρυπτειν, "to hide away".
2. ^ Wyclif's Bible
3. ^ *Deuterocanonical books* literally means books of the second canon. The term was coined in the 16th century.
4. ^ The *Style Manual for the Society of Biblical Literature* recommends the use of the term *deuterocanonical literature* instead of *apocrypha* in academic writing, although not all apocryphal books are properly deuterocanonical.

- *This article incorporates text from the* Encyclopædia Britannica *Eleventh Edition, a publication now in the public domain.*

Information concerning the Hellenist Jews was incorporated from the Catholic Encyclopedia at newadvent.com.

Pseudepigraphy

Pseudepigrapha, from Greek *pseudes* = "false", "epigraphe" = "inscription"— see Epigraphy— are text works that are considered to have a wrongly attributed authorship. For instance, several Hebrew scholars would not insist that the *Song of Solomon* was actually written by the king of Israel or ascribe the *Book of Enoch* to the prophet Enoch, and not all Christian scholars would insist today that the *Second Epistle of Peter* was written by Saint Peter. Nevertheless, in some cases, especially for books belonging to a religious canon, the question of whether a text is considered pseudepigraphical can become a matter of heavy dispute. The authenticity or value of the work itself, which is a separate question for experienced readers, often becomes sentimentally entangled in the association. Though the inherent value of the text may not be called into question, the weight of a revered or even apostolic author lends authority to a text. This is the essential motivation for pseudepigraphy in the first place.

Pseudepigraphy covers the false ascription of names of authors to works, even to perfectly authentic works that make no such claim within their text. Thus a widely accepted but incorrect attribution of authorship may make a perfectly authentic text pseudepigraphical. In a parallel case, forgers have been known to improve the market value of a perfectly genuine 17th-century Dutch painting by adding a painted signature *Rembrandt fecit*.

On a related note, a famous name assumed by the author of a work is an **allonym.**

These are the basic and original meanings of the terms.

Classical and Biblical studies

There have probably been pseudepigrapha almost from the invention of full writing. For example ancient Greek authors often refer to texts which claimed to be by Orpheus or his pupil Musaeus but which attributions were generally disregarded. The collection known as the "Homeric hymns" is pseudepigraphical.

In Biblical studies, *pseudepigrapha* refers particularly to works which purport to be written by noted authorities in either the Old and New Testaments or by persons involved in Jewish or Christian religious study or history. These works can also be written about Biblical matters, often in such a way that they appear to be as authoritative as works which have been included in the many versions of the Judeo-Christian scriptures. Eusebius of Caesarea *Historia ecclesiae* 6,12 indicates this usage dates back at least to Serapion whom he records to have said: *But those writings which are falsely inscribed with their name (*ta pseudepigrapha*), we as experienced persons reject...*

Many such works were also referred to as Apocrypha, which originally connoted "secret writings", those that were rejected for liturgical public reading. An example of a text that is both apocryphal and pseudepigraphical is the *Odes of Solomon*, pseudepigraphical because it was not actually written by Solomon but instead is a collection of early Christian (first to second century) hymns and poems, originally written not in Hebrew, and apocryphal because not accepted in either the Tanach or the New Testament.

But Protestants have also applied the word *Apocrypha* to texts found in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox scriptures which were not found in Hebrew manuscripts. Roman Catholics called those texts "deuterocanonical". Accordingly, there arose in some Protestant Biblical scholarship an extended use of the term *pseudepigrapha* for works that appeared as though they ought to be part of the Biblical canon, because of the authorship ascribed to them, but which stood outside both the Biblical canons recognized by Protestants and Catholics. These works were also outside the particular set of books that Roman Catholics called *deuterocanonical* and to which Protestants had generally applied the term Apocryphal. The term accordingly as now used often among both Protestants and Roman Catholics, allegedly for the clarity it brings to discussion among Protestants and Catholics, may make it difficult to discuss questions of pseudepigraphical authorship of canonical books dispassionately with an unsophisticated audience. To confuse the matter even more, Orthodox Christians accept books as canonical, that Roman Catholics and most Protestant denominations consider pseudepigraphical or, at best, of much less authority. There exist also churches that reject some of the books that Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants accept. The same is true of some Jewish sects. These are matters more appropriately discussed at Apocrypha.

There is a tendency not to use the word *pseudepigrapha* when describing works later than about 300C.E. when referring to Biblical matters. But see *Gospel of Barnabas*, *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, and the

author traditionally referred to as the "Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite"—a classic example of pseudepigraphy. There is also a category of modern pseudepigrapha.

Examples of Old Testament pseudepigrapha are the Ethiopian *Book of Enoch, Jubilees* (both of which are canonical in the Abyssinian Church of Ethiopia); the *Life of Adam and Eve* and the Pseudo-Philo. Examples of New Testament pseudepigrapha (but here also likely to be called New Testament Apocrypha) are the Gospel of Peter, the attribution of the *Epistle to the Laodiceans* to Paul, and *Acts of Thomas*, which few would claim was actually written by Thomas. Other examples of New Testament pseudepigrapha are the *Shepherd of Hermas* and *Gospel of Barnabas*, and perhaps the *Gospel of Judas*.

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