

The Doctrine of Scripture (2)

The Canonicity, Transmission & Translation of the Bible

Transmission of Scripture

Introduction:

- Is the Bible we have today the inspired and inerrant Word of God?
- How can we be certain that we have today is an accurate, reliable reproduction of what was originally written?

Transmission of Scripture

Introduction: Facts of Transmission

- we do not possess the original manuscripts (autographs) of any book of the Bible
- the contents of the NT were extensively hand-copied for centuries (before the printing press)
- there are many extant manuscripts (MMS) of the NT in whole or in part dating as early as the second century
- these manuscripts contain numerous "variants" – a difference in wording

Transmission of Scripture

Textual Criticism

A. Definition

- "the study of the copies of any written work of which the original is unknown, with the purpose of ascertaining the original text"

(Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Criticism*; Rev. Ed.; 1995)

Transmission of Scripture

Textual Criticism

B. Factors

- 1) the quality of the manuscripts
- 2) the number of manuscripts
- 3) the interval of time between the autographs and the manuscripts

AUTHOR	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	No. of Copies
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,000 yrs.	10
Livy	59 B.C.-A.D. 17			20
Plato (<i>Tetralogies</i>)	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,200 yrs.	7
Tacitus (<i>Annals</i>)	100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1,000 yrs.	20 (-)
also minor works	100 A.D.	1000 A.D.	900 yrs.	1
Pliny the Younger (<i>History</i>)	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 yrs.	7
Thucydides (<i>History</i>)	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs.	8
Suetonius (<i>De Vita Caesarum</i>)	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 yrs.	8
Herodotus (<i>History</i>)	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs.	8
Horace			900 yrs.	
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1,400 yrs.	193
Lucretius	Died 55 or 53 B.C.		1,100 yrs.	2
Catullus	54 B.C.	1550 A.D.	1,600 yrs.	3
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1,500 yrs.	9
Demosthenes	383-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1,300 yrs.	200*
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1,400 yrs.	49†
Aristophanes	450-385 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,200 yrs.	10

*All from one copy.
†Of any one work.

(McDowell, *Evidence*, p.42)

Transmission of Scripture

Textual Criticism

C. Manuscript Evidence (NT)

- 5,735 Greek MMS; includes two entire Bibles from the early 4th cent. (250 yr. from NT)
- 93 MMS are dated within 300 yrs. after the NT was written (e.g. *Chester Beatty Papyri*)
- Thousands of ancient versions (Latin, Syriac, Coptic); 86,000 Patristic quotations

Transmission of Scripture

Textual Criticism

D. Greek Manuscripts (documents)

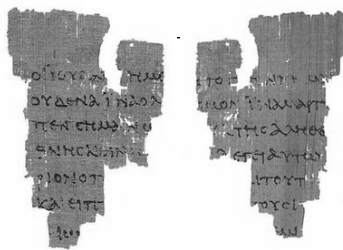
- *papyri* – used widely until 3rd cent.; 116 extant MMS (mainly survived in Egypt)

Chester Beatty Papyri



p46; 150-200 A.D. (2 Cor. 11)

Rylands Library



p52; 125 A.D. (John 18:31-33; 37-38)

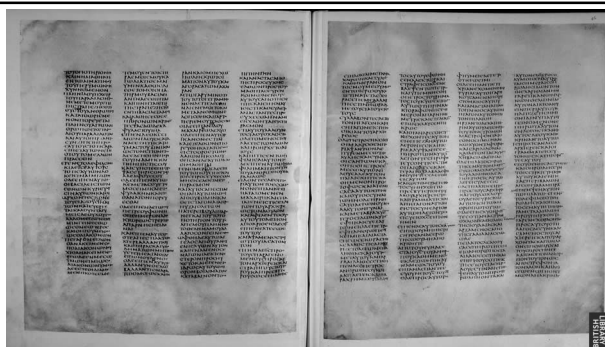
Earliest New Testament MMS

Transmission of Scripture

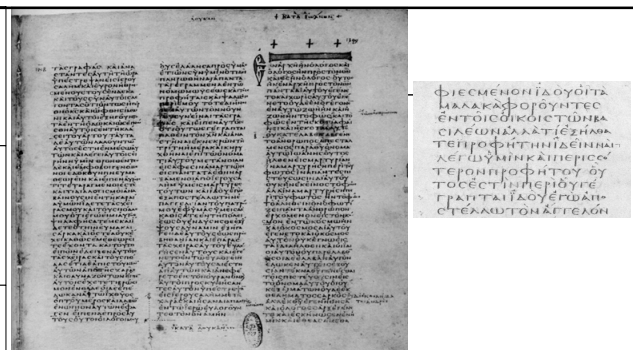
Textual Criticism

D. Greek Manuscripts (documents)

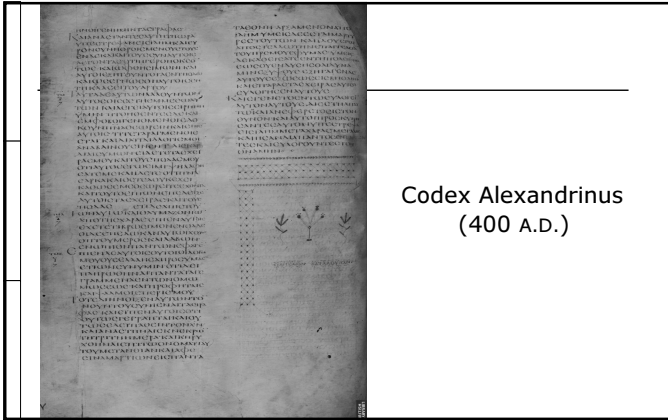
- *papyri* – used widely until 3rd cent.; 116 extant MMS (mainly survived in Egypt)
- *uncials* – large square-type (capital) letters; on parchment usually in a codex; 310 MMS



Codex Sinaiticus (350 A.D.)



Codex Vaticanus (325 A.D.)



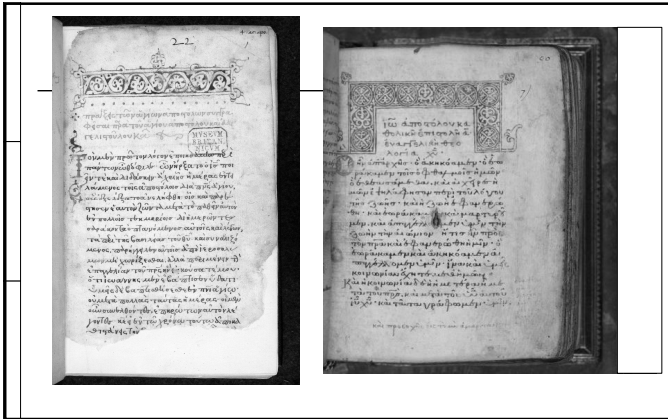
Codex Alexandrinus
(400 A.D.)

Transmission of Scripture

Textual Criticism

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- *papyri* – used widely until 3rd cent.; 116 extant MMS (mainly survived in Egypt)
- *uncials* – large square-type (capital) letters; on parchment usually in a codex; 310 MMS
- *minuscules* – lower case cursive script used from the 9th century onward; 2,877 MMS



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- *minuscules* – lower case script developed in the 9th century; 2,877 MMS
- *lectionaries* – Scripture readings for church services; 2,432 MMS