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The Amazing Mass of Biblical Manuscripts

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schenken. Hoffmann sagt in seiner Komparation unter anderm: „Die Phantasie ist unanschaulich. Das Denken ist langsam. Wohl aber ist es in höchstem Maße geisterfüllt. Die Phantasie ist produktiv. Das Denken ist original. Und eben dies haben wir als Merkmale des Alterschaffens kennengelernt. . . . Endlich aber läßt sich noch auf viele Einzelheiten hinweisen, in denen die Psyche des Evangelisten der Alterspsyche entspricht, bis hin in stilistische Kleinigkeiten.“ (S. 173.) Der Verfasser schließt mit der Bemerkung: „Fragen wir endlich noch, was nun mit unserm Ergebnis gewonnen ist, so dürfte als wichtigster Gewinn dies zu buchen sein, daß das hohe Alter des Evangelisten die psychologische Möglichkeit des Evangeliums sicherstellt. Weil der Verfasser die Absonderlichkeiten, aber auch die Reife und Tiefe des alt gewordenen Menschen besaß, darum ist sein Werk bei allen äußerlichen Mängeln [?] das tiefinnigste Buch der Weltliteratur geworden, in welchem „jedes Wort einen Zentner wiegt.“ (S. 183.)

Hierzu kommen aber noch gewisse innere Gründe, die auf eine späte Verabfassung des vierten Evangeliums hinweisen. Schon die vielfache Beschreibung jüdischer Sitten und Gebräuche weist nicht nur auf eine räumliche, sondern auch auf eine zeitliche Entfernung hin, z. B. Kap. 2, 6; 8, 37 ff. Von besonderer Bedeutung ist die Benennung des galiläischen Meeres als Meer τῆς Γαλιλαίας τῆς Τιβεριάδος, Kap. 6, 1. Bis zur Zeit der Zerstörung Jerusalems war diese Stadt den Juden eine heidnische Stadt, und sie wird darum in den Synoptikern überhaupt nicht genannt. Gegen Ende des Jahrhunderts aber war Tiberias eine jüdische Stadt, und der See erhielt von ihr seinen Namen. Auch andere geographische Bezeichnungen lassen sich am besten erklären, wenn man die Verabfassung des Buches gegen das Ende des ersten Jahrhunderts ansieht. Dieser Tatsache widerspricht nicht Kap. 5, 2, mit der Bezugnahme auf den Teich Bethesda, wie Lange meint (Das apostolische Zeitalter, II, 420 f.); denn dieser Teich wurde bei der Eroberung der Stadt nicht verschüttet, sondern war gegen Ende des Jahrhunderts noch dort zu sehen. Wir bleiben also getrost bei der festen Meinung, daß das Johannesevangelium von dem Apostel Johannes gegen Ende des Jahrhunderts geschrieben wurde, und zwar in Ephesus.

P. E. Krehmann

The Amazing Mass of Biblical Manuscripts

This year of our Lord, 1937, bids fair to become the beginning of a third great period in the history of the Greek text of our Bible. Later generations of Bible-lovers will no doubt refer to this period of textual criticism as that of decipherment, transcription, and conservative comparison. True, this latter textual activity has been in progress for the last generation, but it becomes ap-

parent with the wealth of material now on hand that only a modest beginning has been made. The century just ended, from 1836 to 1936, has resolved itself into an age of such amazing discoveries of manuscripts that it deserves special mention and study in the annals of the Greek text.

During the first period of text history the collection of material overshadowed all other considerations. This period can well be said to have begun in 1627, when Codex Alexandrinus came to England. This first period ended in 1836, when Prof. J. M. A. Scholz summed up all that had been done hitherto in the way of listing manuscripts by publishing a catalog of New Testament manuscripts. This catalog was six years in the making, and it listed the then already amazing total of 1,280 Biblical manuscripts, which it had taken 200 years to gather and classify.

The important Codex Alexandrinus was a gift from Cyril Lucar, patriarch of Constantinople, who offered it to James I through his ambassador at the Golden Porte; but it did not reach England until Charles I was on the throne. Cyril had been patriarch of Alexandria and brought the manuscript with him when he was transferred to Constantinople in 1621. The book dates from the first half of the fifth century. Bound in four volumes, now bearing the royal arms and initials of Charles I, it can be seen in the British Museum, a gift to that great institution by George II in 1757. The beautiful book is written on fine vellum pages about 10½ by 12½ inches in size, with two columns to the page. It contains the entire Greek Bible, except for accidental mutilations. These, unfortunately, amount to the loss of nearly all of Matthew, parts of the Psalms, John, and Second Corinthians. In all 773 leaves remain out of an original total of 820. The manuscript contains also some Old and New Testament apocrypha, viz., Third and Fourth Maccabees, Psalms of Solomon, and First and Second Clement.

When this ancient manuscript arrived in England, it instantly created a sensation among Biblical scholars and ushered in the first great period in the history of textual criticism. Bishop Bryan Walton included its principal readings in his polyglot Bible of 1657. Next, this discovery and its subsequent publication started a veritable world-wide search for manuscripts, especially of the New Testament, and it powerfully stimulated the tabulation of variations of readings found in these newly discovered manuscripts. An immediate search of the great libraries of Europe resulted in a series of publications over the next two centuries, in which English and German scholars took the leading part. The tabulating and numbering of the manuscripts for easy reference dates from this time. Uncial manuscripts were indicated by the capital

letters of the Latin and Greek alphabets, and minuscule manuscripts by Arabic numbers.¹⁾

As a further tangible result of this sudden interest in the Greek text the various polyglot Bibles made their appearance in the seventeenth century. The huge Paris Polyglot (1629—1645) came out in ten volumes and five languages: Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Syriac, and Arabic, with an addition of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Last of the great polyglots was the aforementioned London Polyglot in eight volumes, edited by Bishop Walton. It reached a total of seven languages, viz., Hebrew (Old Testament), Greek, Latin, Syriac, Ethiopian, Arabic, and Persian (New Testament only), with Latin translations for all, and compared with the Samaritan Pentateuch, various targumim, and paraphrasings.

England remained in the lead in this work during the remainder of the seventeenth century and the early part of the eighteenth. More and more manuscripts were being ferreted from their late, obscure resting-places in the museumlike libraries. By 1675, the dean of Christ Church, Dr. John Fell, had produced a critical apparatus in which he used over one hundred manuscripts. He used the Coptic and Gothic versions, together with the *textus receptus* of Robert Henri Estienne (Stephanus), Walton, and others. He based most of his comparative work on numerous manuscripts found in the Bodleian library at Oxford.

The peak of this work in England of that period was reached by John Mill. He was most unselfishly encouraged and pecuniarily assisted by Dr. Fell. For more than twenty-five years Mill assiduously collected manuscripts, to publish in 1707 a New Testament edition with textual annotations to the *textus receptus* from seventy-eight other manuscripts besides those employed by Stephanus. Mill compared all translations accessible to him, and he was the first one to adduce Scripture-passages quoted by the early Christian Fathers. The in itself elaborate introduction to his *opus magnum* is considered to have laid the foundation for textual criticism of the New Testament. For many decades to come his work remained the basis for scholarly, comparative, and, as far as England was concerned, withal reverent critical work on the New Testament text.

Nine years before his decapitation on Tower Hill (1645) Archbishop William Laud of Canterbury, an able student of the

1) Uncials: inch-size letters written separately, with the words running together in a solid stream. Minuscules: cursives, with the letters connected as in our modern handwriting; they are smaller than the uncials. The tenth century is usually taken as a broad division between these two styles of Greek writing, although there are minuscules of the ninth and uncials of the eleventh century.

ancient manuscripts, presented a codex of the seventh century to the Bodleian library in 1636. This is now known as the Codex Laudianus (E.). The text was the same as that used by the Venerable Bede (born 673) in his Anglo-Saxon translation of the fourth gospel. Hearne finally published it in 1715, but few scholars were acquainted with this earlier manuscript.

It was a hostile English atmosphere which feared that the publication of so many variant readings would engender doubt as to the inspiration and integrity of the Scriptures (although it is evident that no point of Christian truth is at all affected by the variants) that catapulted the leadership in this particular field of Bible-study into the laps of German scholars.

In Germany, where respect and reverence for the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures was less pronounced than among their Anglo-Saxon cousins across the North Sea, if not often entirely absent, a tremendous critical activity developed. As is sadly recognized by believing scholars, the German school did not often remain in the conservative realms of lower criticism, but manifested serious aberrations going into the sphere of higher criticism of the destructive and negative type. Much modern writing of a shallow kind is still infected with its blight. For the ensuing century little more was heard of English contributions to the subject.²⁾

The scene now shifts to the Continent, where J. J. Wettstein was the first to compile a list of manuscripts with the nomenclature that is universally followed to this day. In 1752 he listed 21 uncials, and above 250 minuscules.³⁾

2) It must not be forgotten, however, that the Codex Bezae, fifth century, and presented to Cambridge by Theodore Beza in 1581, had been slightly used by Stephanus and Beza. It was more fully drawn on by Walton and published in its entirety by Cambridge University in 1793. Its divergence from the textus receptus caused it to be regarded with some suspicion, and British scholars refused to attach much importance to it.

3) A first actual attempt at classification was made by J. A. Bengel, who in 1734 classified the number of authorities on hand. He concerned himself with the quality of the manuscripts rather than their quantity alone. He distinguished between the then most ancient, which he called African and Asian MSS., and the later MSS., which are considered as containing the Byzantine, or received text. This somewhat limited division was expanded by J. S. Semler in 1767. He devised a threefold classification, viz., *I. Alexandrian*: the then earliest Greek MSS. and the Syriac, Coptic, and Ethiopian MSS. *II. Eastern*: sources in Constantinople and Antioch, including the chief mass of manuscripts then available. *III. Western*: as contained in the Latin versions and the Fathers, with the exception of Origen. Semler's theory in turn was extended by his pupil J. J. Griesbach, who between 1774 and 1805 applied Semler's system of grouping to Wettstein's list and made a precise allotment of the several MSS., versions, and Fathers to the several groups proposed by his teacher; e. g., he placed the quotations of Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius into the first, or Alexandrian group, whereas he placed the Codex Alexandrinus into the Eastern group.

The constantly swelling number of manuscripts was augmented further by C. F. Matthaei, who added 57 manuscripts in the six-year period from 1782—1788. Later, from 1803—1807, this same scholar added a few more. Further additions to the list of known manuscripts were made from the Imperial Library at Vienna and from various museums and libraries in Spain, Italy, and Germany. These collections brought the work to the end of the eighteenth century, enabling the above-mentioned Professor Scholz to bring out by 1836 his celebrated catalog of New Testament manuscripts, which already listed the imposing and amazing array for that day of

Uncials of the Gospels	26
Uncials of the Acts and General Epistles ..	8
Uncials of the Pauline Epistles	9
Uncials of the Apocalypse	3
Total	46 uncials;
Minuscules of the Gospels	469
Minuscules of the Acts and General Epistles	192
Minuscules of the Pauline Epistles	246
Minuscules of the Apocalypse	88
Total	995 minuscules.

To this were added 239 lectionaries, collections of pericopes, which brought the total of catalogued manuscripts to 1,280 by the beginning of 1837 A. D., and that year may aptly be said to mark the beginning of the second period in the history of the Greek text.

This amazing grand total of 1,280 manuscripts collected and collated from 1627 to 1836 cannot strictly be attributed to discovery. It represents mainly the result of careful cataloging on a grand scale of existing treasures long unnoticed in the art and book collections of Europe. It remained for the second period from 1837 to 1936 to become one of most astonishing discovery, textual study and publication of studied findings.

This great century opens with new and young blood. In 1840, immediately after taking his theological degree in Leipzig, a young man breaks into the scene who at once carried the search for manuscripts into the world's more isolated places. He examined the bindings of books,⁴ gathered divers sheets of old vellum, and searched libraries in remote, forgotten, and hazardous countries. This was Constantine Tischendorf (1815—1874), who was responsible for a greater number of additions to the list of known manuscripts than any other scholar before or since, and whose career

4) It has always been a fascinating pastime for this writer to peek behind the backs of the bindings in his own library, often to find scraps of old newspapers of two or three or even more generations ago.

was crowned by the most sensational discovery in the history of Biblical scholarship. The discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus and his edition of the Codex Vaticanus,⁵⁾ were the supreme achievements of his eventful life. The story of Tischendorf's finding of the Sinaiticus is so full of fascinating detail that it should receive a special treatise, for the few lines that could at best be given to it in this brief chronological review would not do it justice. It is hoped that the full story of the Codex Sinaiticus can be given in a subsequent article, inasmuch as this famous manuscript lately has been much before the public because of its recent acquisition by the British Museum from the Russian Communist government for good capitalist gold.

The whole list of Tischendorf's discoveries is otherwise amazing enough. For the first, he discovered eighteen uncial manuscripts and six minuscules. He became the first editor of twenty-five uncials and reedited eleven others of the first importance; he transcribed four more and collated thirteen. Excepting the Codex Alexandrinus and the Codex Bezae, there was no manuscript of real value to the knowledge of which Tischendorf did not contribute to a greater or lesser degree. The textual studies of this young scholar were of the most tireless nature. He published eight editions of the Greek New Testament, far surpassing, naturally, the Greek New Testament of Erasmus;⁶⁾ four editions of the

5) The Codex Vaticanus, fourth century, had been in the Vatican Library since 1481 as far as we know, and although used by Sixtus V for his edition of the Septuagint, it had found scant notice with reference to the New Testament. Not until after it had been taken to Paris by Napoleon subsequently to his loot of Italy and the Vatican, did a German scholar, Hug, realize and proclaim its age and value. When, after the fall of Napoleon, it was returned to Rome, the Vatican authorities withheld it from foreign scholars. Their explanation was that the Vatican intended to publish it at some later date. This promised publication was not made until 1857, and then it was so badly done that it was unserviceable for any purpose except for the revelation of an astonishing lack of interest in early Bible manuscripts on the part of the Vatican.

6) "If Erasmus had known that he was working for the ages, instead of getting ahead of Ximenes, he might have taken more pains to edit his Greek N. T." (Prof. A. T. Robertson, *Studies in the Text of the New Testament*, p. 36.) Erasmus, it will be remembered, produced a very hurried work in order to anticipate the work of the Complutensian archbishop. As early as 1502 Cardinal Francisco Ximenes de Cisneros, Archbishop of Toledo and Prime Minister of Spain, began the preparation of an edition of the Greek Bible at the University of Alcalá. Since he endeavored to accompany the Greek text by the Hebrew and Latin the work progressed but slowly. Although the N. T. was ready in 1514 it was held back from publication until the O. T. should be completed. Ximenes died in 1517, and when this great inquisitor died, the Reformation was born. Stunica carried on the work, and in 1522 the Complutensian Polyglot (from Latin "Complutum" for Alcalá) was given to the printers. Erasmus' wily and enterprising bookseller and publisher, Frobenius of Basel, heard of the work contemplated in Spain and com-

Latin; and four of the Septuagint. His final edition of the New Testament in Greek, completed two years before his untimely death (1874), has remained one of the standard editions for the use of scholars. It is only now, at this late date, that a new edition is being prepared in England along the same lines,⁷ incorporating, however, into it the results of all those recent discoveries which Constantine von Tischendorf did not live to see.

Using the abundant textual material with which Tischendorf had provided them, the two celebrated Cambridge scholars Westcott and Hort undertook the preparation of the revised Greek New Testament. Together with the parallel task of an English revision pursuant to appointment by the Canterbury Convocation, the Greek text of Westcott and Hort was given to the world in May, 1881.⁸ In this text the student at last had an admirably accurate Greek text, based on the then known most ancient authorities.

But meanwhile, on the Continent, the Wuerttemberg Bible Society had brought out as early as 1853 a Greek New Testament with the embodiment of Tischendorf's discoveries. The Basel Bible Society followed in 1880. However, the epoch-making event came when by request of the Wuerttemberg Bible Society Dr. Eberhard Nestle of Ulm published the first edition of his *Novum Testamentum Graece cum Apparatu Critico*, in 1898. He made the fullest and undoubtedly the ablest use of Westcott and Hort and all that had thus far been done in New Testament study from the textual point of view. Nestle's edition of the New Testament came out in a new edition at an average of every two years. The work was as ably continued after his death, March 9, 1913, by his son,

missioned the equally wily and enterprising Erasmus to anticipate it. He urged him to proceed with the greatest of speed, a bit of advice that must of necessity be detrimental to so important a work. Desiderius Erasmus, lacking the thoroughness that characterized Luther, went to work at once, using only such few manuscripts as happened to be obtainable at Basel (two of these were lent him by Dean Colet from the library of St. Paul's Cathedral in London). These were five late minuscules, the best one of the 11th century, and very little used by him. He had two 15th-century MSS. for the gospels, one 13th- or 14th-century MS. for Acts and the epistles, and a 12th-century MS. for Revelation. He was ready to print September 11, 1515, and finished the work on March 1, 1516, thus "winning" the race by six years at the cost of accuracy and thoroughness, a fault felt through four successive centuries. In fairness to Erasmus, it should be mentioned, however, that in his sixth and last edition of 1527 he made some use of the Complutensian, but the general inadequacy of the work remained largely unaffected.

7) Sir Frederic Kenyon, *The Story of the Bible*, 1936, p. 73. The first instalment (Mark) was published in April, 1935.

8) *The New Testament in the Original Greek*. The text revised by Brooke Foss Westcott, D. D., and Fenton John Anthony Hort, D. D., London and Cambridge.

Dr. Erwin Nestle. The sixteenth edition appeared early in 1936.⁹⁾ It is generally considered the purest Greek text in existence today.

Thus, in 1881, it did indeed look as if the period of New Testament research had come to a successful and triumphant close. Scholars had a new Greek Bible based on the earliest authorities, and English readers had a revised English Bible based upon this

9) This sixteenth edition is such a marvelous piece of work, so filled with fascinating textual readings for the lover of the Greek Testament that one easily could devote the space of an entire article to an enthusiastic description of it. In passing, a few of the new features of this edition can be mentioned; e. g., $\chi\omicron\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ has been spelled with a small χ where it designates the office of the Messiah (Matt. 16, 16), and it is written with a capital letter where it has become a proper noun, as in Gal. 3, 24—29. This of course leaves room for some differences of opinion. Former users of Nestle's text will find a number of new designs inserted at various places. These have become necessary on account of the great number of new manuscripts compared in the critical apparatus. Here for the first time an editor of the New Testament dares to indicate readings that in all probability can be considered original in the strictest sense of the term. The additional new readings are the result of a comparison of the more recently discovered manuscript, such as the Washington Codex (W), the Koridethi Gospels (Θ), and numerous papyri, in particular the Chester Beatty Papyri (pp. 45 to 47), and the Michigan parts of the same (46) and Michigan 1570, 1571 (pp. 37, 38). Another significant feature employed by Dr. Erwin Nestle in this edition is his system of grouping of manuscripts. He groups variants into an \S group, i. e., the Hesychian, or Egyptian, family of texts, consisting in the main of Codex Vaticanus (B), the Sinaiticus (N), and the Codex Ephraemi rescriptus (C), and, with lesser consideration, the Paris Gospels of the eighth century (L), the St. Gallen Gospels of the ninth century (Δ), an Athos MS. of the eighth century (Ψ), and a few minuscules. As an instance of the wealth of material consulted and compared, Nestle publishes by name a list of 76 manuscripts; of these, 65 are valuable uncials, and 11 of the more important minuscules are mentioned by catalog number; "most" minuscules have been consulted, however. This manuscript list appended is particularly serviceable in that it gives not only the usual classifications of manuscripts, but also their age, specific name, exact contents, and present repository. Not satisfied with comparing this sizable number of available text manuscripts, the editor has compared many ancient translations; e. g., he refers to 40 Latin, 6 Syriac, and 7 assorted rare versions, as the Sahidic, Bohairic, Ethiopian, Arabic, Armenian, Georgian, and Gothic. In further addition to all this comparative material he compares Biblical quotations as found in 36 of the old Fathers and in 5 New Testament apocrypha. Parallel passages enumerated and referred to in the outer margin are more numerous and complete than in any other existing edition. This welcome feature often turns the handy volume into a small concordance. The unusual wealth of parallels published in a small margin is made possible by Nestle's very efficient system of abbreviations for the books of the Bible: Gn, Ex, Lv, Nu, Dt, Jos, Jdc, Rth, 1. 2 Sm, 1. 2 Rg, 1. 2 Chr, Esr, Neh, Esth; Job, Ps, Prv, Eccl, Ct; Is, Jr, Ez, Dn, Hos, Joel, Am, Ob, Jon, Mch, Nah, Hab, Zph, Hgg, Zch, MI; (Jdth, Sap, Tob, Sir, Bar, 1—4 Mcc); Mt, Mc, L, J; Act; R, 1. 2 K, G, E, Ph, Kol, 1. 2 Th, 1. 2 T, Tt, Phm;

earlier Greek text.¹⁰) It seemed as though nothing more needed to be done than to ponder and digest these results. No further change was expected for some time to come.

Yet, another age of discoveries was just opening. A most momentous march of Greek manuscripts, mainly from the desert sands of Egypt, began to fill the museums of Europe and America, ever widening our knowledge of the Bible text and its early history, thereby testing the results accumulated until 1881.

From the very spot of Tischendorf's discovery of the Sinaiticus, the monastery of St. Catherine at the foot of the alleged Mount Sinai, came a new find in 1889. Dr. Rendel Harris stumbled upon a lost early Christian work in a Syriac translation, *The Apology of Aristides*, a defense of the Christian religion before Antoninus Pius by the Athenian philosopher, about 140 A.D.¹¹) This discovery helped to dispel the discrediting claims of the German school that none of our gospels were written before 140 A.D. and that they were, therefore, of little historical authority. These critical contentions were entirely confounded when the discovery of an Arabian translation of the *Diatessaron* in 1888 established without a doubt the authenticity of Tatian's work as a harmony of the gospels. This was conclusive proof that by at least 170 A.D. the

H; Jc, 1.2 P, 1—3 J, Jd; Ap. The inner margin carries a list of the ancient textual divisions before the era of our present chapters and verses. There is first the old Greek paragraph division (κεφάλαια), the famous division of the Cod. Vat. (B), with which agrees perfectly Cod. E (Zacynthius, eighth century), and, above all, the sections and "canons" of Eusebius as explained fully in his letter to Carpian (this letter Εὐσέβιος Καπριανῷ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ ἐν κυρίῳ is again included in the prefatory material). Finally, the introduction is given in German, English, Latin, and Norwegian, and the nicest turn of all is that each is prefaced by J. A. Bengel's apt motto "*Te totum applica ad textum; rem totam applica ad te.*"

10) Unfortunately the revisers disobeyed instructions "to introduce as few alterations as possible into the text of the Authorized Version consistent with faithfulness." A somewhat pedantic scholarship could not resist making such changes as sadly marred the instinctive sense of style which was the heritage of the King James translators. This repelled the general reader, and the inevitable result has been fatal to the general acceptance of this revised version. Sir Frederic Kenyon, who, together with Prof. U. Wilcken, is the greatest living papyrologist, opines in his recent *The Story of the Bible* (first printing, January, 1936), to which this article is greatly indebted, as follows: "Time has rather increased than diminished the weight of criticism of the literary shortcomings of the English," and he advises keeping an eye on the Revised Version although it "can never be the magnificent monument of English which the Authorized Version is, and can never bring home to us the sacred story with the same unequalled appeal of majestic language."

11) The *Apology* actually never had been lost; but the original Greek had been cleverly embedded in a Christian novel of about the seventh century. This Syriac version helped to identify it.

four canonical gospels held undisputed sway and primacy over all other narratives of our Lord's life.¹²⁾

That flood of papyri from Egypt, in particular from the Fayum District and Oxyrhynchus, dug up from the *koms*, or rubbish heaps, of the Lake Moeris region by Drs. Grenfell, Hunt, and Hogarth, and published in convenient and continuous series by the Egypt Exploration Society,¹³⁾ continued unabated and reached overwhelming proportions in 1894. Although papyri of strictly Biblical content were not very numerous, the Greco-Roman *débris* in Egypt gave up a considerable part of the Epistle to the Hebrews, written on the back of an epitome of Livy.¹⁴⁾ The others were small fragments, but of some collective value. P. L. Hedley enumerates 174 of the Old Testament, and 157 of the New Testament, in an unpublished catalog of Biblical papyri.

Another decade, and, quite unintentionally, the Freer Gallery in Washington, D. C., had the fortune of becoming a depository for the earliest copies of the gospels in Greek that have come down to us. Mr. Chas. L. Freer of Detroit, a collector of oriental paintings, while traveling in Egypt in 1906, found a group of vellum manuscripts in the establishment of Ali Arabi, a dealer in antiques, near Cairo. Mr. Freer noticed their obviously early character and Biblical contents. Although he was not interested in this particular collectors' field, he nevertheless made the purchase, realizing the opportunity of acquiring some documents of antiquity for the United States. Both the Egyptian Museum in Berlin and the

12) As far back as 1836 Venetian monks had printed an Armenian version of St. Ephrem's commentary (fourth century) of the *Diatessaron* as a concordance of the four canonical gospels. Armenian being practically unknown to Western scholars, no one took notice of it. Even a Latin translation of this same work by the same monks, in 1876, remained unnoticed until 1880, when Dr. Ezra Abbot called attention to it. This led to further research and became productive of the publication of the Arabian *Diatessaron*, in 1888.—Mention should be made at this point of a most interesting discovery made public during the last months of 1935, viz., that of the Dura Fragment. Dura is the remains of a Roman fort on the banks of the Euphrates, discovered by British officers in 1920. When the site became a mandated area of France, French-American archeologists carefully investigated it. Among the ruins of a Christian church a number of papyri and vellum manuscripts were found. They were examined at Yale in 1933 and brought to light a fragment of the *Diatessaron* in Greek. It contains only the incident of Joseph of Arimathea's petition for the body of our Lord. The Persians destroyed Dura in 256 A. D., so the manuscripts must have been written before that date.

13) The Egypt Exploration Society (then the Fund) in 1897 started the so-called "Greco-Roman Branch, for the discovery and publication of remains of classical antiquity and early Christianity in Egypt" and began publishing its *Greco-Roman Memoirs*, containing and collating the papyri. Vol. 23 is to be published in 1937.

14) Originally published as Oxyrhynchus Papyri No. 657, now in British Museum collection No. 1532.

British Museum had rejected an offer to acquire the manuscripts. The collection contained two manuscripts of each, the Old and the New Testament. The manuscript of the four gospels, known as Codex Washington (W), now is world-famous. This codex also contains the disputed last twelve verses of Mark's gospel.¹⁵⁾

Until 1929 many minor discoveries were made which certainly deserve mention in this necessarily incomplete and somewhat hurried enumeration. Four handsome vellum manuscripts of the sixth century came to light during this time, emerging from such out-of-the-way places as Rossano, in Southern Italy; Albania; Cappadocia; and Sinope, on the Black Sea. Two of these scripts contained illustrations and no doubt were de-luxe volumes in their day. The number of existing known manuscripts of the Bible by this time was fast approaching the 5,000 mark, and the end was not yet!

It was in 1930 when a discovery was made that put all the others in the shade, a discovery rivaled only by that earlier one of the Codex Sinaiticus, which is in process of publication now as these lines are being written. This is the group of papyri now referred to as the Chester Beatty Biblical papyri.¹⁶⁾ The University

15) Facsimiles of W are published by the University of Michigan (Prof. H. A. Sanders) through the Freer Foundation. Through the good offices and interested efforts of our own Dr. L. Fuerbringer the library of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis received a number of copies of these valuable facsimiles of the Codex Washington. The Seminary library owns facsimiles of Genesis, Deuteronomy, Joshua, the Minor Prophets, and the four gospels. It might be added here that our library also possesses a facsimile copy of the Codex Sinaiticus.

16) The details attending this remarkable discovery as yet have not been fully revealed. The papyri are said to have been found in a Coptic cemetery of the ancient city of Aphroditopolis, on the opposite side of the river from the Fayum. Mr. A. Chester Beatty is a well-known American collector in England and owner of a most magnificent collection of illuminated Western and Oriental manuscripts. — The latest news, as reported in the *London Morning Post* during March, 1936, is that Mr. Beatty has again bought from an Egyptian dealer a quantity of leaves of a manuscript containing such parts of the Pauline epistles as were missing in Mr. Beatty's earlier collections. Sir Frederic Kenyon is preparing the whole of the manuscript for publication. It comprises about five-sixths of the text of Paul's epistles. Timothy, Titus, and Philemon are missing still. Of more than passing interest is the fact that the Epistle to the Hebrews is placed second in this collection, following immediately after Romans. This is a distinct "innovation," since no other manuscript thus places the epistles. Sir Frederic places these manuscripts into the early part of the third century. That would make them about a hundred years older than the Codex Sinaiticus, and it thus becomes the oldest manuscript of any considerable size of the New Testament. It is written in the ordinary ink of the time, in a good and clear hand, easy to decipher. A few variations in detail exist, as in all manuscripts, but our existing text is again confirmed. The papyri are in a generally good condition; only a few lines on the bottom of each page are blurred through friction or wear.

of Michigan happily acquired some of the leaves and fragments. The physical aspect and extent of this discovery was first described by Sir Frederic Kenyon in an article in the *London Times* of November 17, 1931. At that time he could enumerate twelve manuscripts, eight of portions of the Old Testament and three of the New. One contained some chapters of the apocryphal Book of Enoch and an unnamed Christian homily.

The New Testament leaves are of prime importance. One group originally was a copy of all four gospels and the Acts. They are written in a small hand, with a script peculiar to the mode of writing in the first half of the third century, which makes them a century older than both the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus. The other group contains the major part of the Pauline epistles, written in a fine hand, which Professor Wilcken would place at about 200 A. D. When the entire collection is published, the University of Michigan cooperating with Sir Frederic, scholars will have the epistles of St. Paul in a copy written only about 150 years after his death.

Indeed, discoveries of manuscripts of the Greek Scriptures have been crowding fast upon each other these last few years, confirming the Church's age-long faith and putting to rout the speculations and theories of its enemies. Today it can only be either ignorance or outspoken hostility to the Word of God to cast aspersions and doubts upon the integrity and authenticity of the sacred text. A United Press dispatch dated London, November 18, 1935, announced: "Oldest text of Bible believed discovered." Here reference was had to one of the Biblical papyri in the John Rylands Library at Manchester, England. It consists of part of St. John's gospel and has been assigned to the early second century by Dr. Henry Guppy, the Rylands librarian.¹⁷⁾

17) Not quite a year later, viz., in August, 1936, the traceable history of the transmission of the text was pushed still farther back into recorded history. This time, however, we have a text of the LXX. The manuscript was published without delay by the Manchester University Press (*Two Biblical Papyri in the John Rylands Library*. Edited by C. H. Roberts, M. A. With facsimile.) The four fragments composing this manuscript contain Deut. 23, 24 to 24, 3 in the LXX version. They were purchased by Dr. Rendel Harris and are of special interest as they were written in the second century B. C. Hitherto no manuscript of any part of the Bible has been found written earlier than the second century A. D., so that these fragments are some 300 years older than any other manuscript of the Bible in any language and bring us within a century of the time when the Ptolemean translators were at work in Egypt. These papyri constitute the only pre-Christian evidence for the text of the Old Testament. When discovered, the documents formed part of a cartonnage, i. e., papyrus torn up and glued together and then coated with plaster to be used for mummy-wrappings. They had to be put in boiling water before the leaves could be separated. This, incidentally, is a splendid testimonial to the fastness of Egyptian

Thus, whereas in 1836 the list of known Biblical manuscripts stood at the respectable figure of 1,280, this wealth of Scriptural documents had increased to just a few short of 5,000 a hundred years later, and no one knows what the future will bring. We have now several witnesses from the third century and one even from as early as the beginning of the second. This is undeniably striking outward proof of the soundness of canonical tradition, that with these thousands of copies from so many different parts of the ancient and medieval world the variant readings of the text involve simply questions of linguistic detail and not any disagreement as to essential contents or articles of faith. So, whether we have a translation from an early or from a late manuscript, we have in our hand the true and inspired Word of God.

Another point of external evidence worth mentioning is the fact that we have far more and far older manuscripts of our Bible than of any other ancient book, and this despite the fact that early Christianity was vehemently persecuted and its sacred books were the special object of search and destruction, a fate not shared by those pagan writers whose works constitute part of our classical education. The "best" preserved author in this class is Vergil; yet the earliest manuscript we now possess of him was written 350 years after his death. For all the other classic writers the distance between the author and his earliest extant works is much greater. For Livy the interval is about 500 years; for Horace it is 900, for most of Plato 1,300, and for Euripides 1,600 years. Our earliest extant New Testament manuscripts on the contrary were written only from 100 to 150 years after the death of their inspired authors. Again, while at most only a few score of manuscript fragments of the pagan writers are in existence today, the total number of our Biblical manuscripts runs, as before stated, very close to 5,000, so close in fact that by the time this reaches print, scholars may have 5,000 manuscripts of God's Word at their disposal. A most amazing century this, from 1836 to 1936!

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ink, a secret our modern ink-makers would gladly give a fortune for. The cartonnage probably came from the Fayum, where Jewish communities existed at that time, to whom the Deuteronomy text might have belonged. — Also in 1935, in January, the British Museum announced the acquisition of additional fragments of Greek papyri from Egypt. They were described in the *London Times* of January 23, 1935, by Mr. Harold Idris Bell, keeper of the manuscripts in the British Museum. In March the trustees published them under the title *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri*. Edited by H. Idris Bell and T. C. Skeat. 63 pp., with 5 plates. So great is the general interest in Great Britain in these papyrus discoveries that the Oxford University Press had to order a second impression of the work in the third month after publication. The manuscript raises such interesting questions that it deserves a special discussion rather than this brief mention in a footnote.