What is the Bible and what is the basis for its Credibility?

As is the case when we consider any question, we must understand the terms being used. The terms we must understand are bible and credibility.The word bible comes from the Greek to the latin as “Biblia”[[1]](#footnote-1) which means books. The Bible is so-called since, under one cover, it contains many books. These books were composed by various sacred authors throughout the centuries, beginning with Moses and ending with St. John the Apostle. This book is divided into two main parts. The Old Testament and the New Testament.

What is meant by Testament?In this context, the word “testament” signifies God's covenant or pact with man. One speaks of the “Old Testament” in relation to the “New and Eternal Testament” of Christ’s blood. The “Old Testament” is the covenant God entered with [Abraham](https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/abraham), then with the people of Israel.[[2]](#footnote-2) This covenant begins with God calling Abraham to leave his land in order to be the father of many nations and requires circumcision as a sign of this covenant. This covenant is made more explicit with Moses and reaches its completion, and is superseded, by the Sacrifice of Christ, which is the New and Eternal Covenant. We will develop this point more in the next podcast on the theology of History.

What is meant by credibility?Why do we consider these books as worthy of belief. Here we are concerned with the evidence used to judge the credibility of any ancient book. As with all ancient books, you need to look at the manuscripts (MSS.) and establish that the documents which we now have are reliable and true to the original MSS. which as called autographs. Once you have done this you analyze the internal and external evidence contained in and surrounding the MSS. to see if the authors claimed to tell the truth, had reason to tell the truth, and had actual knowledge of the events of which they wrote.

The first question then is to consider the MSS.?The sure starting-point for a correct estimation of the text of the Bible is the evidence obtained from the MSS. We will look at some MSS. evidence of the OT. and the NT. The first thing to observe is that however distant the oldest MSS. are from the time when the books were composed, there is a uniform and homogeneous tradition concerning the text.[[3]](#footnote-3)

From what date are the oldest Manuscripts of the Old Testament?The original autographs of sacred authors themselves are no longer extant for any book of the Bible. The oldest partial MSS. of the text of any biblical book are to be found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls[[4]](#footnote-4) are the oldest copies of the text of any biblical book and are made of papyrus[[5]](#footnote-5) and parchment.[[6]](#footnote-6) “of far greater interest to textual scholars of the Old Testament are the Dead Sea Scrolls, the remains of an ancient Jewish library—widely believed to belong to the group known as the “Essenes”—found in caves at the northwest end of the Dead Sea in the late 1940s at a site called Qumran. The Dead Sea Scrolls provide our oldest copies of any portion of Scripture, including texts that date to the second century B.C. Copies of all the undisputed books of the Old Testament were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls except for Esther and Nehemiah. Fragmentary remains of about a thousand scrolls were found at Qumran, of which some 250 were copies of biblical books, almost all in Hebrew.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Most dead Sea scrolls were small copies but it is to be noted that The Isaiah Scroll[[8]](#footnote-8) was found completely intact in these caves. It written at least 1,000 years before any other known complete copy of Isaiah. This gives weighty evidence that the Bible was accurately preserved through the centuries.[[9]](#footnote-9) This scroll is dated around 200 BC and Isaiah lived 700 B.C so could have been copied from the original.

Some more detail about the dead Sea Scrolls. “*About a third of the Hebrew biblical texts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls closely follow the textual form that we now know as the Masoretic Text. 5 % agree with the Septuagint, 5% with the Samaritan Pentateuch and and a large number that had unique readings (differences of wording) in many biblical passages.”[[10]](#footnote-10)*

We will now consider the the Masoretic text and then Septuagint to establish the credibility of the OT as a historical books.

What is the Masoretic text? “The Masoretic Text is the standard Hebrew form of the books of the Jewish Bible, the form used for chant and proclamation in traditional Jewish synagogues to this day. It takes its name from the Masoretes, a school of Jewish scribes that flourished between A.D. 700 to 1000. The Masoretes raised the reproduction of the Hebrew Scriptures to a high art. Among other innovations, they devised a system of markings (called “points”) placed above and below the Hebrew consonants to indicate the vowel to be pronounced after the consonant. In this way, they were able for the first time to put down in writing the Jewish oral tradition of the pronunciation of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Masoretes also introduced various quality-control measures for the reproduction of manuscripts, such as painstakingly tabulating the exact number of words and letters in each biblical book, so that scribes could check their work and be certain they had not missed a single letter! Subsequently, every newly written copy was carefully counted to verify its accuracy.”[[11]](#footnote-11)

The work of the Masoretes chiefly consisted in the faithful preservation of the transmitted text and they did this with great accuracy. This is an extraordinary accomplishment when you consider challenge in copying the ancient languages. They were, of course, influences by their own oral traditions

Why was it difficult the accurately copy the MSS in ancient languages?The original language of a large majority of the Old Testament books is Hebrew, the ancestral language of the people of Israel. It is a Semitic language with certain features such as tri-literal word roots (that is, words formed from a root consisting of three consonants), but two things makes it difficult to accurately copy.the absence of true verbal tenses, and a paratactic syntax (that is, the logical relationships between words, phrases, and clauses are often simply implied by juxtaposition, rather than clearly indicated by a hierarchical syntactical structure, as in Greek).[[12]](#footnote-12)

“….The very nature of the ancient Hebrew language reveals the essential role of sacred tradition in ancient Judaism. Because ancient Hebrew was written without vowels, it was not possible to interpret the ancient texts of Scripture accurately without first learning the oral tradition of the community from those responsible for the preservation and interpretation of the documents…. There is some theological significance in this fact, inasmuch as it demonstrates the reciprocal, complementary relationship that has always existed between Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, both in Judaism and Catholicism.[[13]](#footnote-13)Besides Hebrew, two other languages are employed in the Old Testament: Aramaic, the international language of the Near East under the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Empires (8-4 centuries B.C.), and Greek, the language spread throughout the ancient Mediterranean world by the conquests of Alexander the Great (4 century B.C.).[[14]](#footnote-14)

The Oldest complete Copy of the Jewish Bible dates to what Century? The oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew books of the Old Testament accepted by medieval Jews is a codex (a book formed by leaves of paper stitched on one side—that is, the form of book most familiar to us) called the Leningrad Codex, or Leningradensis, held in the National Library of Russia in Saint Petersburg (formerly Leningrad). [It] is a complete copy of the Masoretic Text written in Galilee around A.D. 1000.[[15]](#footnote-15)

A.D. 1000 is very distant in the over of times from the originals?Yes but some important points here: All undisputed books of the OT found in the current bible except two were found in the caves of Qumran. 1/3 of these biblical MSS. are in agreement with the Masoretic text. So, we have a full manuscript of O.T. from A.D.1000 and partial manuscript that were hidden in caves before 70 AD and found in 1940. The MSS. from A.D.1000 agree with many of the MSS. from over 1000 years before. This shows how serious the scribes and people were about preserving the accuracy of the Sacred text.

If the Masoretes School began in the 7th Century who preserved the scripture until then? As the Bible was always considered as Sacred it was carefully preserved by copyist of every age and they could compare the MSS. “Targums[[16]](#footnote-16)” and the “Vulgate”

1)The “Targums”, which were Aramaic versions of the Sacred Books, composed from the last centuries B.C. to the 5 A.D. These versions came to be since in the context of synagogue services as many people did not understand Hebrew The accuracy was very important in such a context, but the interpreter often paraphrased the Jewish text as he translated to Aramaic and he also added spiritual reflections.

2) The state of the text is chiefly evidenced by the Vulgate Version made by St. Jerome at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth centuries. He followed the Hebrew MSS. of his time. His occasional remarks on how a word was spelt or read enable us to arrive at a sure judgment on the text of the fourth century….The consonant-text of the MSS. used of the Masoretes tallies almost in every respect with the original of St. Jerome[[17]](#footnote-17)

The Dead Sea Scrolls date to the 3rd and 2nd Century BC. What other evidence is there that the Bible we have today can be traced to the this time?The Greek Septuagint. When translating the Old Testament, scholars also consult the readings of the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament books. According to the ancient Jewish writing known as the Letter of Aristeas, the Septuagint translation was begun when the Hellenistic king of Alexandria in Egypt, Ptolemy II (283-246 B.C.), brought Jewish scribes from Jerusalem to Alexandria in order to translate the sacred books of the Jews into Greek for the Library of Alexandria in the third century B.C. This tradition is the origin of the name Septuagint (Greek for “seventy”) …after the seventy Jewish scholars commissioned to make the translation.[[18]](#footnote-18) It is said that all 70 scholars worked separately and came up with very similar translations.This cannot be verified, but that King Ptolemy II commissioning a Greek translation of the Pentateuch for his library is plausible and fits the known data. The translation of the Pentateuch was the first and perhaps best and dates to ca. 250 B.C.[[19]](#footnote-19)

All in all, the Septuagint carried enormous prestige in the ancient world. Jewish scholars like the philosopher Philo and the historian Josephus regarded it as virtually inspired, a view shared by some Church Fathers, such as Saint Augustine…. The majority of the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament are taken from the Greek Septuagint, since the apostles and other New Testament authors typically wrote for a broad audience, rather than just the Jews of Palestine.[[20]](#footnote-20) and most of the ancient world used the Septuagint as the Bible.

What are the Oldest MSS. For the Septuagint?“By the fourth century A.D., the Church had the resources to produce codices (bound books, not scrolls) of the entire Septuagint Bible for use in major churches. When Constantine… ordered Eusebius to have fifty MSS. of the [Bible](https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/bible) made on vellum (somatia en diphtherais) for use in the churches of Byzantium (Vita Constant., IV, 36). To the fourth century belong the earliest extant Biblical MSS. of anything but fragmentary size.[[21]](#footnote-21)Our oldest nearly complete manuscripts of the entire Bible come from this century and consist of the Septuagint plus the New Testament in Greek. The three most important are named for the places where they were found or now reside:

1) Vaticanus, the best manuscript of the complete Greek Bible, Old and New Testaments, stored in the Vatican Libraries at least since the Middle Ages; It dates to the 4th Century AD.

2) Alexandrinus, an excellently preserved Greek Bible from Alexandria, It does contains some non-canonical books. It dates from the 5th Century and is now stored in the British Library;

3) Sinaiticus, another Septuagint + Greek New Testament found in the nineteenth century in Saint Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai and now also residing in the British Library. It likewise dates to the 4th Century AD. It contains the entire NT as well as and much of the OT ”[[22]](#footnote-22)

Now back to the Vulgate. The Latin Vulgate is also of utmost importance. The bible was first translated into the latin from the Septuagint in the middle of the 2nd century AD and was called the Itala. Due to inexperienced copyist it was quickly corrupted to the extent that St. Jerome stated that there were as many forms of the text as copies.[[23]](#footnote-23)

Pope Damascus asked Jerome to revise the Psalms and the New Testament to bring it back in agreement with the Septuagint. The reason why the Psalms and New Testament were so urgent was because of their liturgical use. This work of St. Jerome was immediately adopted in the Roman liturgy and was thus called the Roman Psalter. In spite of the fact that Rome accepted it the people were very reluctant since they knew much of the Old Latins version by heart. This is important since it shows that the people knew scripture well and did not accept changes easily.[[24]](#footnote-24)

St. Jerome was not satisfied with his work so in 385 he went to live in a cave in Bethlehem to study scripture and perfect his work. He based this next version largely on the Hexapla of Origin which was preserved in the library of Caesarea.[[25]](#footnote-25)

The ***Hexapla*** *(*sixfold”) is the term for a [critical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textual_criticism) edition of the [Hebrew Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Bible) in six versions, four of them translated into [Greek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greek),[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hexapla%2523cite_note-1) now preserved only in fragments. It was an immense and complex word-for-word comparison of the original Hebrew Scriptures with the [Greek Septuagint translation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint) and with other Greek translations.[[26]](#footnote-26)[[27]](#footnote-27) With this we see that Jerome had access to MSS which modern scholars do not.

St. Jerome then decided to translate the whole bible from the best Hebrew MSS. he could find and this was very controversial.

We will quote part of of letter for St. Augustine to St. Jerome which show how well Catholic of the time took scriptures and how serious they were about accurate translations.

“A certain bishop, one of our brethren, …. came upon a word in the book of the prophet Jonah, of which you have given a very different rendering from that which had been of old familiar to the senses and memory of all the worshippers, and had been chanted for so many generations in the church. Thereupon arose such a tumult in the congregation, especially among the Greeks, correcting what had been read, and denouncing the translation as false, that the bishop was compelled to ask the testimony of the Jewish residents …. The man was compelled to correct your version in that passage as if it had been falsely translated, as he desired not to be left without a congregation -- a calamity which he narrowly escaped.”[[28]](#footnote-28)

We note that the disputed word was the name of plant in Jonah 4:6, *So the Lord God appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah ...*Scholars today still do not know for certain which plant is meant by the Hebrew word. [[29]](#footnote-29)

Saint Jerome translated most of the biblical books of the Old Testament directly from the best Hebrew copies he was able to procure. On the one hand, this makes his translation worthy of consultation as an important witness to the ancient manuscripts available to him in his day—manuscripts to which we no longer have access. On the other hand, as far as we can tell, the Hebrew text used by Saint Jerome tends, by and large, to resemble closely the Hebrew of the Masoretic Text that we now possess. For this reason, when the Masoretic Text is itself unclear or appears disturbed, Saint Jerome’s Vulgate is often not helpful in resolving the textual issues. Scholars also consult other ancient versions (that is, translations) of the Old Testament, such as the ancient Syriac translation… as well as versions in ancient Coptic (a form of Egyptian) and Ethiopic (the language of Ethiopia).[[30]](#footnote-30)

What is state of the MMS of the Vulgate?

It is estimated that there are more than 8000 MSS. of the Vulgate extant. The oldest MSS of the Vulgate is the Codex Amiatinus[[31]](#footnote-31) [[32]](#footnote-32) from the 8th Century, but most of the others are from the the twelfth century and after.[[33]](#footnote-33)

Points to highlight. Jerome used the Hebrew MSS. of his time and his work is in agreement with the Masoretes. The full Hebrew MSS of 1000 AD correspond to Dead Sea Scrolls which date from 3rd- 2nd Century BC

Have modern Scripture scholars verified the harmony in these various Old Testament MSS.?

The proof for the agreement between the MSS. has been established by Scripture scholars and we will name two important Scripture Scholars.

Kennicott, Benjamin, D.D, a Biblical scholar born of in Devonshire, England, Apr. 4,1718 after comparing more than 600 MSS. (“Vetus Testamentum Hraicum cum variis lectionibus”, [Oxford](https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/oxford), 1776, 1780).

Father De Rossi has added considerably to this material (“Variae lectiones veteris Testamenti”, Parma, 1784-88).[[34]](#footnote-34) The collection of approximately 1500 Hebrew manuscripts amassed by the Parma priest and professor Giovanni de Rossi during the 18th century, and acquired subsequently by the Biblioteca Palatina located in the same city, has survived there intact until the present day and confirm the uniformity of the OT MSS.

It is obvious that this striking uniformity between these differing Old Testament MMS. and their harmony with the Dead Sea scrolls cannot be due to chance; it is unique in the history of text-tradition, and all the more remarkable as the imperfect Hebrew system of writing could not but occasion many and various errors and slips.

This fact is all the more striking, as the history of the [New Testament](https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/new-testament) is quite different. We have New Testament MSS. written not much more than 300 years after the composition of the books, and in them we find numerous differences, though but few of them are important. The textual variants in the MSS. of the New Testament are limited to quite insignificant differences of vowels and more rarely of consonants.[[35]](#footnote-35) This is even admitted by Bart Ehrman who has abandoned Christianity and is now a agnostic who attacks the divinity of Jesus and Christianity. "that essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the MSS. tradition of the New Testament.”[[36]](#footnote-36)

Craig Blomberg is a New Testament scholar and I quote, “Only about a 10th of 1% of the variations are interesting enough to make their way into footnotes in most English translations.” He then refers to the above quotation of Bart Ehrman. “It is too bad that this admission appears in an appendix and comes only after repeated criticism.”[[37]](#footnote-37)

There are a number of MSS. in Papyrus assigned to the 2nd and 3rd Century which are within of century of the lost autographs.[[38]](#footnote-38) The earliest is a fragment of St. John’s Gospel on papyrus dated to about A.D. 150 [[39]](#footnote-39)

In Summary, there are thousands more New Testament Greek manuscripts than any other ancient writing. The internal consistency of the New Testament documents is about 99.5% textually pure. In addition, there are over 19,000 copies in the Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic languages. The total supporting New Testament manuscript base is over 24,000.[[40]](#footnote-40)

How does the MMS. evidence of the bible compare to MMS. of Secular ancient works?

The history of the Greek historian Herodotus who is called the “Father of History”. He composed his history from B.C. 480-425: [[41]](#footnote-41)The oldest fragment we have of Herodotus’ history is the late 1st century A.D. about 500 years after it was composed and the earliest complete copy is from 10th Century, 1400 years after it was composed.

Tacitus (A.D. 100) who is one the of the most important Roman historians who even speak about Christ and Pontius Pilate:[[42]](#footnote-42) We have copies from AD 1000. So the Annals/histories of Rome by Tacitus has come from MMS. nearly 1000 years after they were composed.

Homer, the Greek Poet: We note that with Homer, as other ancient authors, it is unknown how much of the original work was oral composition and how much was written composition.[[43]](#footnote-43)The Iliad and the Odyssey were originally composed in the 9th century B.C. There are a few fragments of the Iliad that can be dated within 500 years of that time. The first complete copy of the Iliad comes from a manuscript dated to the 10th century A.D which is the same as the Leningrad codex. The first complete copy we have of the Iliad is from 1,800 years after it was originally written. The first fragment of Homer’s Odyssey was found on clay tablets in Greece and are dated to third century after Christ. So it’s about a thousand years after the original composition.

The MSS. evidence for the Bible makes it a very credible book. Its credibility is also supported by Archeology, which is external evidence.

We would like to give a quotation of an eminent biblical archeologist, William F. Albright. Albright became known to the public in 1948 for his role in the authentication of the [Dead Sea Scrolls](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Sea_Scrolls),[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_F._Albright%252523cite_note-23) but made his scholarly reputation as the leading theorist and practitioner of [biblical archaeology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_archaeology), "that branch of archaeology that sheds light upon 'the social and political structure, the religious concepts and practices and other human activities and relationships that are found in the Bible or pertain to peoples mentioned in the Bible."[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_F._Albright%252523cite_note-24) [[44]](#footnote-44) We quote him “The spades of the archaeologists have uncovered innumerable facts that confirm the Scripture. More than twenty-five thousand sites have been discovered that pertain to the Bible. Records of tens of thousands of individuals and events have been found. The most recent and continuing testimony of archaeology, like all such testimony that has gone before, is definitely and uniformly favorable to the Scripture at its face value, rather than to the Scripture as reconstructed by critics. Dr. William Albright says, There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament tradition.”[[45]](#footnote-45) Speaking of Archeology the famed archaeologist Sir William Ramsay set out to discredit Luke (who authored the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles) when he traveled to Biblical locations recounted in the New Testament. After twenty years of investigation, he converted to Christianity and determined that “Luke should be placed along with the very greatest of historians… You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian’s, and they stand against the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment” (Ramsay, 1915/2011).[[46]](#footnote-46) [[47]](#footnote-47)

1. https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resource/56029/the-word-bible [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Catholic Encyclopedia [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/old-testament [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-artifacts/dead-sea-scrolls/what\_are\_the\_dead\_sea\_scrolls/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.britannica.com/topic/papyrus-writing-material [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/parchment [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament by John Bergsma and Brant James Pitre P. 68 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/dss/great-isaiah-scroll-and-the-masoretic-text.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. https://christian-apologist.com/2017/08/07/archeological-and-historical-extra-biblical-evidence-in-support-of-christianity/ [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament by John Bergsma and Brant James Pitre P. 68 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament by John Bergsma and Brant James Pitre P. 62 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament by John Bergsma and Brant James Pitre P. 56 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament by John Bergsma and Brant James Pitre P. 58 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament by John Bergsma and Brant James Pitre P. 61 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament by John Bergsma and Brant James Pitre P. 61 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Targum [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Catholic Encyclopedia [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament by John Bergsma and Brant James Pitre P. 62 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament by John Bergsma and Brant James Pitre P. 62 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament by John Bergsma and Brant James Pitre P. 64 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Catholic Encyclopedia [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament by John Bergsma and Brant James Pitre P. 65 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The Dictionary of the Psalter Dom Matthew Britt O.S.B [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. The Dictionary of the Psalter Dom Matthew Britt O.S.B [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. The Dictionary of the Psalter Dom Matthew Britt O.S.B [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hexapla [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. https://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?entryid=3814 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. http://www.bible-researcher.com/vulgate2.html [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. http://www.bible-researcher.com/vulgate2.html [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament by John Bergsma and Brant James Pitre P. 66 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex\_Amiatinus [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/manuscripts-of-the-bible [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/manuscripts-of-the-bible [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/Parma.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Catholic Encyclopedia [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Misquoting Jesus Bart Ehrman. Appendix of paper back edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Trent Horn’s defense of the MMS [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. (b) Papyrus

    In the Archduke Rainer collection, [Vienna](https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/vienna), are several very fragmentary bits of [New Testament](https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/new-testament) Greek phrases, which Wessely, the curator of that collection, assigns to the second century. The Grenfell and Hunt excavations in Oxyrhyncus brought to light various fragments of the [New Testament](https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/new-testament) which Kenyon, the assistant keeper of the MSS. of the British Museum, assigns to the latter part of the third century. Only one papyrus MS. of the [New Testament](https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/new-testament) is important to the text-critic—Oxyrhyncus Pap. 657, third-fourth century; it preserves to us about a third of the [Epistle to the Hebrews](https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/epistle-to-the-hebrews), an epistle in which Cod. B. is defective.

    [https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/manuscripts-of-the-bible#iii-greek-mss](https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/manuscripts-of-the-bible%252523iii-greek-mss) [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rylands_Library_Papyrus_P52> [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. https://www.thecollegechurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/HANDOUTS-Is-Scripture-Reliable.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-first-book-of-herodotus-histories [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. https://www.tertullian.org/rpearse/tacitus/ [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. https://chs.harvard.edu/chapter/2-homers-originality-oral-dictated-texts/ [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\_F.\_Albright [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. https://christian-apologist.com/2017/08/07/archeological-and-historical-extra-biblical-evidence-in-support-of-christianity/ [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. https://christian-apologist.com/2017/08/07/archeological-and-historical-extra-biblical-evidence-in-support-of-christianity/ [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\_Mitchell\_Ramsay [↑](#footnote-ref-47)