

OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

Dates of Important Translations and Manuscripts

Ron Craig

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Introduction

This work is part of the overall translation work of The Rooted Word Bible into English. We are releasing this tool for educational purposes. Its release is accompanied by a teaching video that should be viewed as well.

Resources for You

- [The Rooted Word \(website\)](#)
- [TRW Channel \(YouTube\)](#)

Summary Tables

Earliest Translations of the Old Testament

Tradition	Estimated Date (Original)	Earliest Attestation		Language	Sources
		Date	Mss		
Peshitta	2nd-3rd c. AD	464 AD	Mss 12138: 464 AD (Pent.)	Syriac	Mostly Hebrew Scriptures, some LXX
Latin Vulgate	382-405 AD	5th-6th c. AD	5th-6th c. AD (frags)	Latin	Mostly Hebrew Scriptures
Vetus Latina	2nd-4th c. AD	4th-5th c. AD	Many codices: 4th-5th c. AD	Latin	LXX
Hebrew Scriptures	15th-5th c. BC / 7th-2nd c. BC	3rd-1st c. BC	DSS: 3rd-1st c. BC (missing Esther)	Hebrew	unknown, assumed to be a mixture, excluding the LXX as a source
Samaritan Pentateuch	4th-3rd c. BC	2 nd c. BC	DSS: 2nd c. BC (a fragment of Exodus written in Paleo-Hebrew)	Hebrew	Unknown
Septuagint (LXX)	3rd-1st c. BC	2 nd c. BC	Rylands Papyrus 458: 2nd c. BC	Greek	The Letter of Aristeas: Pent. from Hebrew text (i.e. from the High Priest in Jerusalem)
Gothic Bible	4th c. AD	6th c. AD	Codex Argenteus, Codex Carolinus, Codex Ambrosianus	Gothic (East Germanic language)	Primarily the Greek Septuagint for the Old Testament, with some possible influence from the Old Latin versions
Armenian Bible	5th c. AD	989 AD	Ejmsatzm Gospels (includes the Old Testament)	Classical Armenian	Primarily the Greek Septuagint, with possible influence from Syriac versions
Coptic Bible	3rd-7th c. AD (various dialects)	4 th c. AD	Bodmer Papyri – portions of the OT & NT in var. dialects	Greek	Primarily the Greek Septuagint, with some possible influence from the Old Latin versions

Earliest Codices of the LXX

Estimated Date of Codex	Date	Provenance		Location(s)
		Date	Event(s)	
5th c. AD	1627 AD	Given by Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Constantinople, to King Charles I of England;		British Library
	< 1627 AD	Possibly belonged to the Patriarchal Library of Alexandria, Egypt (based on a note in the manuscript)		
4th c. AD	1431 AD	It's mentioned in a letter written by the humanist scholar Giovanni Tortelli. In this letter, Tortelli describes a very old Greek Bible manuscript in the Vatican Library, which is almost certainly Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae.		Vatican Library
	1475 AD	Appears in the earliest catalog of the Vatican Library		
	< 1475 AD	Origins unknown, possibly from Caesarea or Egypt		
5th c. AD	16 th c. AD	Acquired by Catherine de' Medici		National Library of France
	< 16 th c. AD	Possibly brought to Florence from the East		
5th-6th c. AD	< 1621 AD	Acquired by Sir Robert Cotton for his library		British Library (fragments)
	1581 AD	Likely acquired by Theodore Beza from the French Royal Library (Bibliothèque du Roi)		
	< 1581 AD	Possibly held in a monastery in Constantinople (speculative)		
9th c. AD	1602 AD	Donated to the Bodleian Library by Sir Thomas Bodley as part of its founding collection		Bodleian Library, Oxford
	< 1602 AD	Origins uncertain, possibly from a monastic library in the Eastern Mediterranean		
10th c. AD	1609 AD	Part of the founding collection of the Ambrosian Library, donated by Cardinal Federico Borromeo		Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan
	< 1602 AD	Acquired by Borromeo, likely from a monastic library or private collection in Europe		
4th c. AD	1844 AD	Stolen by Constantin von Tischendorf from Saint Catherine's Monastery		British Library (majority) Leipzig University Library Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai National Library of Russia, Saint Petersburg
	1862 AD	Simonides confesses he forged the Codex.		
	1839 AD	Simonides likely forged the Codex.		

Earliest Translations of the Old Testament

Peshitta

Estimated date of the original

2nd-3rd c. AD

Actual date of the earliest mss

5th-6th c. AD

British Library, Add. MS 12138: 464 AD (Pentateuch)

Codex Ambrosianus (7a1): 6th c. AD (Portions of the Old Testament)

Language

Syriac, a dialect of Middle Aramaic that was widely used in the Eastern Christian world during late antiquity

Sources

appears to be mostly Hebrew text aligning with the later MT, but many places, including entire books, align with the LXX as well.

Latin Vulgate

Estimated date of the original

382-405 AD

Actual date of the earliest mss

Codex Amiatinus: circa 700 AD (oldest most complete, created in Northumbria England)

Fragments of the Gospels and OT: 5th-6th c. AD (held in various locations)

Language

Latin

Sources

appears to be mostly Hebrew text, reflecting what Jerome said about his predisposition toward Hebrew language: "Hebraica veritas" or "Hebrew truth"

Old Latin Bible (Vetus Latina)

Estimated date of the original

2nd-4th c. AD

Actual date of the earliest mss

Many codices: 4th-5th c. AD

Language

Latin

Sources

LXX

Hebrew OT

Estimated date of the original

Pentateuch:	15-13th c. BC / 6-5th c. BC
Historical books:	10th-6th c. BC / 7-6th c. BC
Prophetic books:	8-5th c. BC / 5th c. BC
Wisdom books:	10th c BC / 4-2nd c. BC

Actual date of the earliest mss

DSS: 3rd-1st c. BC (missing Esther)

Nash Papyrus: 2nd c. BC (Ten Commandments and Shema Israel)

Masoretic Text: 10th-11th c. AD (Codex Leningradensis [1008 AD], Aleppo Codex [10th c. AD])

Language

Hebrew

Sources

unknown, assumed to be a mixture, excluding the LXX as a source.

Samaritan Pentateuch

Estimated date of the original

4th-3rd c. BC

Actual date of the earliest mss

Abisha Scroll: 1100 AD

Fragments from the Cairo Genizah: 10th–12th c. AD

Fragments at Chester Beatty Library and other collections: 11th–13th c. AD

Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS): 2nd c. BC (a fragment of Exodus written in Paleo-Hebrew in 4QpaleoExodm shows some alignment with the Samaritan Pentateuch)

Language

Hebrew

Sources

unknown

Greek Septuagint (LXX)

Estimated date of the original

3rd-1st c. BC

Actual date of the earliest mss

Rylands Papyrus 458: 2nd c. BC

Papyrus Fouad 266: 2nd-1st c. BC

Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS): 1st c. BC

Codex Vaticanus (4th century CE)

Codex Sinaiticus (4th century CE)

Codex Alexandrinus (5th century CE)

Language

Greek (Koine, Classical, and Semiticized Greek [aka "translation Greek" or "Jewish Greek"])

Sources

According to The Letter of Aristeas the Pentateuch was translated from Hebrew text, perhaps access provided by the High Priest at the Temple in Jerusalem. Everything else is unknown.

Gothic Bible

Estimated date of the original

4th c. AD

Actual date of the earliest mss

Codex Argenteus (6th c. AD) - fragments of the Gospels and the Pauline epistles

Codex Carolinus (6th c. AD) - fragments of the Pauline epistles

Codex Ambrosianus (6th c. AD) - fragments of the Old Testament

Language

Gothic (East Germanic language)

Sources

Primarily the Greek Septuagint for the Old Testament, with some possible influence from the Old Latin versions

Armenian Bible

Estimated date of the original

5th c. AD

Actual date of the earliest mss

The "Old" Gospel of Banants: This 7th-century manuscript, held at Matenadaran, is considered the oldest complete Armenian manuscript. While it primarily contains the Gospels, it may offer clues about the early stages of the Armenian Old Testament translation.

Ejmiadzin Gospels (989 AD): This beautifully illuminated manuscript is thought to closely reflect the original 5th-century Armenian translation, including the Old Testament.

Queen Mlké Gospels (862 AD): Another early illuminated manuscript that can provide insights into the early Armenian Bible.

Language

Classical Armenian

Sources

Primarily the Greek Septuagint, with possible influence from Syriac versions

Coptic Bible

Estimated date of the original

3rd-7th c. AD (various dialects)

Actual date of the earliest mss

Bodmer Papyri (4th c. AD) - contain portions of the Old and New Testaments in various Coptic dialects

Various manuscripts from the 5th-7th c. AD

Language

Various Coptic dialects (Sahidic, Bohairic, Fayyumic, etc.)

Sources

Primarily the Greek Septuagint, with some possible influence from the Old Latin versions

Earliest Codices of the LXX

Codex Alexandrinus (Codex A)

Original Translation

LXX (3rd-1st c. BC)

Estimated date of the earliest mss

5th c. AD

Language

Greek

Location

British Library

Provenance

1627 Given by Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Constantinople, to King Charles I of England

Before 1627 Possibly belonged to the Patriarchal Library of Alexandria, Egypt (based on a note in the manuscript)

Codex Vaticanus (Codex B)

Original Translation

LXX (3rd-1st c. BC)

Estimated date of the earliest mss

4th c. AD

Language

Greek

Location

Vatican Library

Provenance

1431 AD It's mentioned in a letter written by the humanist scholar Giovanni Tortelli. In this letter, Tortelli describes a very old Greek Bible manuscript in the Vatican Library, which is almost certainly Codex Vaticanus.

1475 AD Appears in the earliest catalog of the Vatican Library

Before 1475 AD Origins unknown, possibly from Caesarea or Egypt

Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (Codex C)

Original Translation

LXX (3rd-1st c. BC)

Estimated date of the earliest mss

5th c. AD

Language

Greek (palimpsest, meaning the original text was scraped off and overwritten)

Location

National Library of France

Provenance

16th c. Acquired by Catherine de' Medici

Before 16th c. Possibly brought to Florence from the East

Codex Cottonianus (Codex D)

Original Translation

LXX (3rd-1st c. BC)

Estimated date of the earliest mss

5th-6th c. AD

Language

Greek

Location

British Library (fragments)

Provenance

Before 1621 Acquired by Sir Robert Cotton for his library

1581 Likely acquired by Theodore Beza from the French Royal Library
(Bibliothèque du Roi)

Before 1581 Possibly held in a monastery in Constantinople (speculative)

Codex Bodleianus (Codex E)

Original Translation

LXX (3rd-1st c. BC)

Estimated date of the earliest mss

9th c. AD

Language

Greek

Location

Bodleian Library, Oxford

Provenance

1602 Donated to the Bodleian Library by Sir Thomas Bodley as part of its founding collection

Before 1602 Origins uncertain, possibly from a monastic library in the Eastern Mediterranean

Codex Ambrosianus (Codex F)

Original Translation

LXX (3rd-1st c. BC)

Estimated date of the earliest mss

10th c. AD

Language

Greek

Location

Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan

Provenance

1609 Part of the founding collection of the Ambrosian Library, donated by Cardinal Federico Borromeo

Before 1609 Acquired by Borromeo, likely from a monastic library or private collection in Europe

Codex Sinaiticus (Codex ~~X~~[Aleph])

Original Translation

LXX (3rd-1st c. BC)

Estimated date of the earliest mss

4th c. AD

Language

Greek

Location

British Library (majority)
Leipzig University Library
Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai
National Library of Russia, Saint Petersburg

Provenance

1844 Stolen by Constantin von Tischendorf from Saint Catherine's Monastery
1839 Simonides forged the Codex.

Controversy

1839 Simonides asserted that he had created the manuscript in 1839 at the Monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mount Athos as part of a scholarly project but that it was later misrepresented by Constantin von Tischendorf as an ancient text. Simonides' claim caused significant controversy but was largely dismissed by scholars of the time due to a lack of credible evidence.

1844 AD: Tischendorf's first visit to Saint Catherine's Monastery; he discovers portions of Codex Sinaiticus.

1853 AD: Tischendorf's second visit; he obtains a larger portion of the Codex.

1859 AD: Tischendorf presents the Codex to Tsar Alexander II of Russia.

1862 AD: Tischendorf publishes the first complete edition of the Codex. Simonides claims to have forged the Codex.

1869 AD: The Tsar secures a formal agreement and compensation from the monks of Saint Catherine's Monastery.

1933 AD: The majority of the Codex is sold by the Soviet government to the British Museum.

Additional Important Documents for the LXX

The Letter of Aristeas

Estimated date of the original

2nd c. BC

Actual date of the earliest mss

Manuscripts of Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*: 4th c. AD (the letter is quoted extensively)

Later Byzantine Manuscripts: 10th–15th century CE (Several medieval manuscripts preserve the Letter of Aristeas in Greek. These manuscripts often include other Jewish or Hellenistic writings and reflect the interest in this text during the Byzantine period.)

Language

Greek (Classical Greek with Koine style)

Sources

Unknown.