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Why was the New Testament originally written in the Greek and not in Hebrew or some other language?The basic reason why Greek was chosen for the New Testament instead of Aramaic or Hebrew was that the writers wished to reach a broad, Gentile (non-Israelite) audience, not just a Jewish audience. The spoken tongue used by both the disciples and Christ was highly likely Aramaic, even though such a Semitic language was not the original one used by the Jews.Greek was the leading written and spoken language of the eastern Mediterranean world when Rome ruled the world during the New Testament period. Indeed, it remained the dominant language, especially in the large cities of Alexandria, Antioch, etc., until after the Arab Muslim conquest, long after the time the Western Roman Empire fell in 476 A.D. By the time of the New Testament church in the first century A.D., Hellenism had greatly influenced and changed the people and culture of Judea. Greek, not Hebrew, was the commonly used language of Palestine during the rule of the Roman Empire. Biblia latina (Bible in Latin)Bohemia, 15th Century A.D. The ability to speak the Greek language, especially during New Testament times, was a needed skill as it was used as the standard way of communicating, carrying out business, and so on.Greek was written and used during the early church period to communicate between people who grew up in different areas of the world and whose native tongues were quite different.The well-known Jewish historian of the New Testament period, Josephus, stated that the ability to speak Greek was very common not only among the general populous but also among servants and slaves.Greek Alphabet Α α Alpha Β β Beta Γ γ Gamma Δ δ Delta Ε ε Epsilon Ζ ζ Zeta Η η Eta Θ θ Theta Ι ι IotaΚ κ KappaΛ λ Lambda Μ μMu Ν ν NuΞ ξ XiO ο Omicron Π πPi Ρ ρ Rho Σ σSigma Τ τ TauY υUpsilon Φ φ PhiΧ χChi Ψ ψ PsiΩ ω OmegaDid Jesus Speak Greek?Some evidence that Christ spoke the language does exist in the New Testament. Jesus utilized at least two Grecian words for love in his well-known post-resurrection conversation with Peter regarding how much he loved him. He used the word agape, which is a deep love and phileo, which is brotherly love toward someone we like (see John 21: 15 - 17). These words have no exact corresponding word either in Old Testament Hebrew or in Aramaic.Jesus' play on words for "stone" and "rock," while talking with Peter in Matthew 16:18, also uses Grecian words that cannot be replicated in another language. "And I also say to you that you are Peter (Petros, Strong's Concordance #G4074, which literally means a stone), and on this rock (Petra, Strong's #G4073, which literally means a massive rock) I will build My church . . ." (Matthew 16:18).Mark 7 records the story of a Gentile woman who requested Jesus heal her young daughter. After being initially rebuffed, she persisted with her request. Jesus responded that he was sent to save and serve Israelites and that, "It isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs" (Mark 7:27).The New Testament word Jesus used for "dogs" in Mark 7:27 was the Greek kunarion (Strong's Concordance #G2952), commonly used in reference to household pets. He could have, but did not, use the much harsher Hebrew term for dogs commonly used by the Jews in their hatred and contempt for Gentiles.Did Pilate Use Greek?Additionally, Pontius Pilate could well have questioned Jesus in Greek, since few non-Romans in Judea spoke Latin. It is highly unlikely Pilate would have known the local languages of the "despised" and conquered peoples he ruled in the name of the mighty Roman Empire.Jesus, befitting a Jew raised in "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Isaiah 9:1), could converse with people of both Jewish and gentile backgrounds.Since the apostles and evangelists in the early New Testament church wished to reach as large an audience as possible, they chose to write their inspired words in Greek and not Aramaic, Hebrew or some other language. Their choice, given that the Bible is the most popular book ever printed, proved wise indeed.About the Bible Series By Terance Espinoza, Ph.D. The New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek. It was not written in Hebrew or Aramaic, there is no textual evidence of an Ur-gospel, and there is no "original Aramaic" New Testament manuscript from which our Greek New Testament was translated. The Peshitta is an Aramaic (Syriac) translation whose New Testament portion post-dates the Greek New Testament by hundreds of years. It is a translation from the Greek New Testament and not the other way around. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew except for the following passages which were originally written in Aramaic: Genesis 31:47 (2 words), Jeremiah 10:11; Daniel 2:4-7:28, & Ezra 4:8-6:18, 7:12-26. The Greek New Testament does preserve some Hebrew and Aramaic words, but they were written in Greek letters that preserve the approximate sounds of the original Hebrew or Aramaic words, (i.e., they're transliterated). There is uncertainty on whether some of these transliterated words reflect an Aramaic or a Hebrew origin. This is common for languages in the same family. The use of Hebrew & Aramaic words in the original Greek of the New Testament reflects normal practice in multicultural, multilingual contexts. For example, Paul is recorded as seamlessly switching from Greek to Aramaic in Acts 21:37-22:2, depending on the audience he is addressing. This entire passage is written in Greek in the Book of Acts, but Paul's linguistic dexterity reflects the normal code-switching practices of bilingual people. Among the transliterated Hebrew and Aramaic words in the Greek New Testament, some are loan-words (Luke 22:41) while others reflect moments of code-switching between languages (e.g., 1 Cor 1:12). "empty headed" (raka)ῥακάMatt 5:22"zealot" (kananaios, from Aram. kan'an)ΚαναναῖοςMatt 10:4; Mark 3:18."Save now" (hosanna)ὡσαννὰMatt 21:9 (2x), 15; Mark 11:9; John 12:13"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Eloi, eloi, lema sabaxthani)ελωι ελωι λεμα σαβαχθανιMark 15:34"…why have you forsaken me?" (lema sabaxthani)λεμα σαβαχθανιMatt 27:46"Little girl, rise." (talitha koum)ταλιθα κουμMark 5:41. The parallel in Matt 9:24 and Luke 8:54 omit this phrase."Be opened" (effatha)εφφαθαMark 7:32"Rabbi" (rabbouni)ῥαββουνίMark 10:51; John 20:16"Father/Dad" (abba)αββαMark 14:36; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6 *Arranged according to their first occurrence in the canonical order of the NT. Compiled by searching "[ANY Aram]" in Accordance 13. Additional words were added based on the results from the transliterated Hebrew word search in the GNT, described below. "Accuser/Satan" (satanas, from Heb. satan)σατανᾶςMatt 4:10; 12:26 (2x); 16:23; Mark 1:13; 3:23 (2x); 26; 4:15; 8:33; Luke 10:18; 11:18; 13:16; 22:3, 31; John 13:27; Acts 5:3; 26:18; Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 5:5, 2 Cor 2:11; 11:14; 12:7; 1 Thess 2:18; 2 Thess 2:9; 1 Tim 1:20; 5:15; Rev 2:9, 13 (2x), 24; 3:9 ; 12:9; 20:2, 7"Truly, Amen" (amen)ἀμὴνMatt 5:18, 26; 6:2, 5, 16; 8:10; 10:15, 23, 42; 11:11; 13:17; 16:28; 17:20; 18:3, 13, 18, 19, 23, 28; 21:21, 31; 23:36; 24:2, 34, 47; 25:12, 40, 45; 26:13, 21, 34; Mark 3:28; 8:12; 9:1; 9:41; 10:15, 29; 11:23; 12:43; 13:30; 15:9, 18, 25, 30; [16:8b]; Luke 4:24, 37; 18:17, 29; 21:32, 43; John 1:51; 3:2 (2x), 5 (2x), 11 (2x); 5:19 (2x), 24 (2x); 6:26 (2x), 32 (2x), 47 (2x), 53 (2x); 8:34 (2x), 51 (2x), 58 (2x); 10:1 (2x), 7 (2x); 12:24 (2x); 13:16 (2x); 20 (2x), 21 (2x), 21 (2x), 38 (2x); 14:12 (2x); 16:20 (2x), 23 (2x); 21:18 (2x); Rom 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 15:22; 16:27; 1 Cor 14:16; 2 Cor 1:20; Gal 1:5; 6:18; Eph 3:21; Phil 4:20; 1 Thess 3:13; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tim 4:18; Heb 13:21; 1 Peter 4:11; 5:11; [2 Pet 3:18]; Jude 25; Rev 1:6, 7; 3:14; 5:14; 7:12; Rev 19:4; Rev 22:20"Gehenna" (ge'enna)γέεννα Matt 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; Jas 3:6"moth" (sais)σής Matt 6:19, 20; Luke 12:33"wealth" (mamonas, from Heb. mammon)μαμωνᾶς Matt 6:24; Luke 16:9, 11, 13"sack cloth" (Heb. sak)σάκκος Matt 11:21; Luke 10:13; Rev 6:12; 11:3"Sabbath" (sabbatou)σαββάτου Matt 12:1, 2, 5 (2x), 8, 10, 11, 12; 24:20; 28:1 (2x); Mark 1:21; 2:23, 24, 27 (2x), 28; 3:2, 4; 6:2; 16:1, 2, [9]; Luke 4:16, 31; 6:1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9; 13:10, 14 (2x), 15, 16; 14:1, 3, 5; 18:12; 23:54, 56; 24:1; John 5:9, 10, 16, 18; 7:22, 23 (2x); 9:14, 16; 19:21 (2x); 20:1, 19; Acts 1:12; 13:14, 27, 42, 44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4; 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2; Col 2:16A measure of quantity (saton, from Heb. sata)σάτου Matt 13:33; Luke 13:21"Rabbi" (rabbi)ῥαββί Matt 23:7, 8; 26:25; Mark 9:5; 11:21; 14:45; John 1:38, 49; 3:2; 26; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8"Passover" (pasxa, from Heb. pesach)πάσχα Matt 26:2, 17, 18, 19; Mark 14:1, 12 (2x), 14, 16; Luke 2:41; 22:1, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15; John 2:13, 23; 6:4; 11:55; 12:1; 13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:14; Acts 12:4; 1 Cor 5:7; Heb 11:28"My God, my God…" (aili, aili)ηλι ηλι Matt 27:46. The rest of this line is Aramaic.Proper name "Boanerges" (boanerges, from Heb. "sons of thunder/earthquake/noise)βοανηργές Mark 3:17(Iskarioth, from Heb. "man from Kyriot"[?])Ἰσκαριώθ Mark 3:19; 14:10; Luke 6:16. The more Greek version Iskariot is in Matt 10:4; 26:14; Luke 22:3; John 6:71; 12:4; 13:2, 26; 14:22."Offering" (korban)κορβᾶν Mark 7:11"Beer" (sikera, from Heb. shik'ra)σίκερα Luke 1:15A liquid measure (batos)βάτος Luke 16:6A measure of quantity (koros)κόρος Luke 16:7"Fine linen" (bussos)βύσσος Luke 16:19Mulberry tree (sukaminos)συκάμινος Luke 17:6A unit of coinage (mnas, from Heb. Mina)μνᾶς Luke 19:13, 16 (2x), 18 (2x), 20, 24 (2x), 25 "Rock" (Kaifas, from Heb. Kepha)Κηφᾶς John 1:42; 1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Gal 1:18; 2:9, 11, 14"Manna" (manna)μάννα John 6:31, 49; Heb 9:4; Rev 2:17"Hyssop" (ussopos, from Heb. ayzov")ὕσσωπος John 19:29"of hosts" (sabaoth)σαβαὼθ Rom 9:29; Jas 5:4"Our Lord come!" (marana tha)μαράνα θά1 Cor 16:22. The same phrase in Revelation 22:21 has been translated into Greek.Pledge/Down Payment (arrabon, from Heb. erabon)ἀρραβών2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14"basket" (sarganei) from Heb sarag)σαργάνη2 Cor 11:33"Hallelujah" (halleluia)ἀλληλουϊάRev 19:1, 3, 4, 6 *Arranged according to their first occurrence in the canonical order of the NT. Compiled by searching "[ANY Heb]" in the GNT in Accordance 13, and then comparing those results to the lists of Jeff A. Benner, "Hebrew Words in the Greek New Testament," Ancient Hebrew Research Center. David N. Bivin and Joshua N. Tilton, "LOY Excursus: Greek Transliterations of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Hebrew/Aramaic Words in the Synoptic Gospels," Jerusalem Perspective (2014). and Walter Bauer, "An Introduction to the Lexicon of the Greek New Testament," BDAG, xxii. Finally, each occurrence of each word word from the resultant list was independently verified by this author to be in the GNT. Answer The term Aramaic Primacy is used, informally, to refer to the claim that the New Testament was originally written not in Koine Greek but in a dialect of Aramaic. This theory is more commonly referred to as "Peshitta Primacy," referring to the ancient Aramaic manuscripts of the Bible, a collection known as the Peshitta. The Aramaic Primacy Theory is drastically different from the consensus of historians and New Testament scholars, who hold that the original works of the New Testament were in fact written in Greek. A large number of researchers suggest that the Gospels of Mark and Matthew may have drawn from earlier Aramaic sources, but the claims of Aramaic Primacy go far beyond this. Certain denominations hold to Aramaic Primacy as an article of faith, such as the Assyrian Church of the East. George Lamsa, a proponent of the Nestorian heresy, was instrumental in advancing the view that the New Testament was originally written in Aramaic. As with other views running contrary to general scholarship, Aramaic/Peshitta Primacy is primarily supported by the work of a single author, in this case, Lamsa. Both contemporaries of Lamsa and later scholars have concluded he frequently confused then-modern Syriac with ancient Aramaic, two languages that are extremely similar. More problematic is Lamsa's translation of the Bible from the Aramaic, published in full in 1957. His translation work is inaccurate and filled with subtle changes to the text that undermine the doctrines of the Trinity and the deity of Christ, among others. Textual scholars have examined the Peshitta and found clear evidence of influence from later translations. The dialect used in the Peshitta is from a later time period than that of Jesus and His disciples. The Peshitta utilizes phrases that obscure wordplay and metaphor; this is expected of a translation but not an original autograph. The massive number of biblical manuscripts available makes it possible to recognize variations, translation choices, and so forth, over time and geography. In other words, all available evidence points to the Peshitta's being a later translation, not an original manuscript. Peshitta Primacy, or Aramaic Primacy, is not supported by evidence or scholarship. Despite the traditional view of Syriac churches, certain segments of Messianic Judaism, and the Hebrew Roots Movement, the New Testament was not originally written in Aramaic. The New Testament was originally written in Greek. This claim is not particularly controversial among biblical scholars, though some have argued that parts of the New Testament were originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic. Some popular writers and religious groups, however, have claimed that much or all of the New Testament was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic. In this article, we will survey the evidence and arguments that lead the vast majority of scholars today to believe that the original language of the New Testament was Greek. The history of spoken and written languages in first-century Palestine In order to identify the original language of the New Testament, it is important to understand the language situation in the first century AD. Before the exile of Judah in the early sixth century BC, Hebrew was the main spoken and written language in ancient Israel and Judah, and most of the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew. Under Persian imperial rule in the sixth through the early fourth centuries BC, Aramaic became the official language of government and most scribal education, and it gradually became the most common spoken language in the region. Hebrew and Aramaic are closely related languages of the so-called "Semitic" branch (of the Afroasiatic family), and they mixed and influenced each other to a large extent during this period. Some portions of the Old Testament were originally written in Aramaic, especially parts of Daniel and Ezra, as were some of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other early Jewish literature. With the conquest of Alexander the Great in the late fourth century, Greek gained prominence as the common language of government, trade, and elite culture throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, including Judea and Galilee. By the third century BC at the latest, the Jewish expatriate community in Egypt had largely lost the ability to speak Hebrew and/or Aramaic, and so they translated the books of the Hebrew Bible into their then-native Greek. These translations—collectively called the "Septuagint"—became the main Scriptures used in the Jewish diaspora, the Jewish people living outside of the land of Israel. Many Jewish works from the diaspora, as well as some from Judea, were also written in Greek in this period. Thus, by the time of the first century AD, the language situation in Palestine was very complicated and multilingual. Aramaic appears to have been the most common spoken language, especially among the working classes. Hebrew continued to be used for prayer and to compose religious texts, such as many of the Dead Sea Scrolls. And there is some evidence that Hebrew also continued to be used as a spoken language in some circles. Greek was widely spoken in the area as well, especially by Jews from higher socio-economic classes and those who had reason to interact with their Gentile neighbors. Thus, the language used for any spoken or written interaction depended on who was involved and the purpose of the conversation, and Greek allowed for the widest possible dissemination of written works throughout the Mediterranean world. Manuscript evidence Beyond this general linguistic background, the manuscript evidence is a crucial part of addressing the question of what language the New Testament was written in. Here, the evidence is unequivocal: the New Testament is a corpus of Greek compositions. The Institute for New Testament Textual Research has documented over five thousand Greek manuscripts containing parts (or all) of the New Testament, ranging from the second century AD into the early modern era. This Greek tradition ultimately was and is the source for all known translations of the New Testament into other languages, ancient and modern. This includes ancient translations into Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Georgian. It also includes, of course, modern translations into countless languages around the world. In sharp contrast, there are no ancient Hebrew manuscripts of the New Testament whatsoever. Some late-antique Jewish polemical works do include Hebrew translations of parts of the New Testament, but the earliest extant Hebrew version of a complete New Testament book is the fourteenth-century version of Matthew included in a polemical work by the Jewish scholar Shem Tov. This Hebrew version likely pre-dated Shem Tov, but it has many elements from Latin and medieval vernacular languages that prove that it is a late translation ultimately derived from the known Greek Matthew, rather than reflecting an original Hebrew version of the book. (The books of the New Testament have also been translated into Hebrew on multiple occasions in modern times, but these are irrelevant for the question of the original language of the New Testament.) The situation with Aramaic is more difficult, since there are ancient copies of the New Testament in different dialects of Aramaic. Even after the first century AD, Aramaic continued to be widely spoken in the Eastern Mediterranean, Mesopotamia, and surrounding areas in a wide variety of local dialects. These dialects cannot exactly be considered "Jesus' mother tongue," because they changed considerably over time and varied significantly from place to place. Given the growth of Christianity in the East, it is no surprise that both the Old and New Testaments were translated into these dialects and revised multiple times between the second and the seventh centuries. These versions are usually called the "Syriac," which is one of the most widely used and well-documented dialects of Aramaic. Another noteworthy translation was made into the Christian Palestinian Aramaic dialect, which has more Palestinian influence than the other versions. While these Aramaic New Testament versions were made already in antiquity, the scholarly consensus is clear that they were translations, mostly from the Greek, into later Aramaic dialects. They were not original Aramaic versions of the New Testament books. The fact that even the earliest Syriac translators had to rely on Greek manuscripts is a good indication that Hebrew or Aramaic copies of the New Testament were unavailable already in the early centuries AD. The manuscript tradition thus strongly indicates a Greek origin for all of the books of the New Testament. Church tradition of Hebrew or Aramaic originals Given the manuscript evidence, why do some argue for Hebrew or Aramaic originals for at least parts of the New Testament? One of the strongest reasons is church tradition. The ancient Christian historian Eusebius cited a Christian writer from the second century named Papias who claimed, "Matthew collected/arranged the sayings [of Jesus] in the Hebrew dialect/manner, and everyone translated/interpreted them as they were able." This was understood by many early Christian writers to mean that the Gospel of Matthew was originally written in Hebrew and later translated into Greek. Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius, Augustine, Jerome, and others interpreted Papias's statement this way. But as many modern scholars have pointed out, this brief statement contains many ambiguities that make it difficult to understand and assess its veracity: What does it mean that Matthew "collected/arranged the sayings"? Did he simply write a document collecting sayings of Jesus that was used as a source for composing the complete Gospels? Or does it mean that he wrote in Hebrew the entire Gospel of Matthew as we know it today, including all of the narrative? What does "Hebrew dialect/manner" mean? Some scholars interpret this as meaning simply that Matthew arranged the sayings in a typical Jewish way; and indeed Matthew is often thought to reflect a very Jewish–Christian understanding of the life and words of Jesus. But even if Papias was referring to composition in a Semitic language, it is not entirely clear whether it would refer to Hebrew or to Aramaic. In ancient texts, the word "Hebrew" could also be used to refer to the language we now call Aramaic, with "Hebrew" perhaps better understood as "the language typical of the Hebrews/Palestinian Jews." And, finally, what does the word "translated/interpreted" mean in this context? In Greek literature it is used to refer to interpretation and exposition, sometimes but not always including translation from one language to another. Thus, while this early tradition undoubtedly merits attention due to its antiquity, it is far from obvious what Papias meant and whether he had accurate information. Indeed, there is no evidence that any early Jewish or Christian writer ever actually had access to a Hebrew or Aramaic original of Matthew, nor does anyone cite from such a hypothetical text. In the fifth century, the famous Christian textual scholar Jerome was sent to the Holy Land and tasked with translating the Old and New Testaments from their original languages into Latin. He came across an Aramaic gospel used by the Jewish–Christian sects of the Nazarenes and Ebionites, which he subsequently translated into Greek. These sects claimed that their gospel—also called the Gospel according to the Hebrews—was the original version of Matthew, written in Hebrew. Though initially intrigued, Jerome appears ultimately not to have been convinced, and he translated his Latin version of Matthew instead from the canonical Greek version. Other church fathers also discussed the contents of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which is in many respects very far removed from the canonical Greek Matthew received in the orthodox Christian churches. At one point, Jerome cites a supposed saying of Jesus from the Gospel according to the Hebrews that cannot have been from an original Hebrew version, but seems to be dependent upon the Greek version of Matthew. In the Greek Gospel of Matthew, the author quotes John the Baptist saying that Jesus does not need to be baptized, and Jesus saying that it is necessary "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt 3:14–15), pre-empting the theological question of why Jesus would need to undergo John's baptism of repentance if he was without sin. The Gospel according to the Hebrews cited by Jerome adds a non-canonical saying of Jesus in which he explicitly denies his need for baptism because of his sinlessness. This statement provides a clear safeguard responding to the theological problem first raised in the Greek Matthew, and it is implausible that such an important statement would have been left out in translation if the Gospel according to the Hebrews really had been the Hebrew original of Matthew. Thus, this "Hebrew gospel" can by no means be considered the Semitic original behind our canonical Greek Matthew; it appears to be a separate apocryphal gospel dependent upon Matthew. There is a similar claim that the second-century Christian philosopher and missionary Pantaenus found a Hebrew version of Matthew in India. The local Christians claimed that this was the original Hebrew of Matthew passed on by the apostle Bartholomew, but this is probably no more credible as evidence for a now-lost Hebrew original than the Ebionites' Gospel according to the Hebrews. The latter example proves that such biased claims cannot be accepted uncritically, and there is no reason to think that Pantaenus was linguistically competent to evaluate the evidence himself. Thus, the evidence from tradition for a Hebrew original remains almost entirely dependent upon the ambiguous claims of Papias and assertions by certain sects about the priority of their own preferred gospels. And this applies only to the book of Matthew, not the other books of the New Testament, for most of which there is no early church tradition of a Semitic original at all. One other church tradition worthy of mention supposes that the letter to the Hebrews was first written by Paul in Hebrew or Aramaic and only later translated into Greek. But the early church's theories about the origin of the letter to the Hebrews are conflicting and debated. Indeed, Origen, one of the few church fathers who actually knew Hebrew, already argued that the book's high literary Greek style implies that Hebrews was first written in Greek by a very skilled writer. Language evidence for Hebrew or Aramaic Is there any linguistic evidence for the use of Hebrew or Aramaic in the New Testament? The answer is yes, especially in the sayings of Jesus in the Gospels. Like most Jews of the time in Palestine, Jesus' first language was undoubtedly Aramaic. Often Jesus' sayings are still preserved in Aramaic in the Greek New Testament and even modern translations. For example, in Mark 5:41, Jesus tells a little girl, Talitha qum(i), which is Aramaic for, "Little girl, get up!" In Mark 7:34, Jesus commands Ephphatha, "Be opened," and the deaf man's ears are opened. In Mark 15:34, Jesus cries out on the cross, Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"—which is an Aramaic translation of the Hebrew of Psalm 22:1. In John 1:42, Jesus calls Simon Cephas, which is the Aramaic word for "rock" and equivalent in meaning to the Greek word Petros (hence "Peter"). Jesus' Aramaic sayings are not limited to personal interactions with others in stories, but are also evident in his teachings. In Matthew 5:22, Jesus commands his followers not to insult each other with the Aramaic word Raqa "empty-head." In Matthew 6:24, Jesus says that one cannot love God and Mammon, the Hebrew/Aramaic word for "money/wealth." The fact that these and other words of Jesus are preserved in Aramaic, even in otherwise Greek New Testament texts, suggests two things. First, they establish that they were indeed probably originally spoken by Jesus in Aramaic. Second, they suggest that the Greek texts of the Gospels are not all translations from a Semitic original. If the entire text of a Gospel had been in Aramaic, why would a translator have preserved these phrases in Aramaic instead of replacing them with their Greek translations like the rest of the text? If the Gospel was originally written in Greek, on the other hand, it makes sense why Aramaic sayings would occasionally be quoted in the original—often accompanied by translations—to provide the reader with a more authentic-feeling access to Jesus' original words and to increase credibility by demonstrating the author's ability to bridge the language gap between Jesus and the Gospel's intended audience. If the entire text of a Gospel had been in Aramaic, why would a translator have preserved these phrases in Aramaic instead of replacing them with their Greek translations like the rest of the text? Additionally, scholars have noted examples of wordplay that suggest that certain sayings were originally delivered in Hebrew or Aramaic. For example, Matthew 1:21 says that Jesus would be so-named, because "he will save his people from their sins." In Hebrew and Aramaic, "he will save" sounds like and has the same root (yasha') as Jesus/Yeshua'. This reflects the common Old Testament practice of naming individuals with names that match the circumstances of their birth, but the obvious wordplay cannot come across in Greek. In another more subtle example in Matthew 3:9, John the Baptist says, And do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father," for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. In both Hebrew and Aramaic, the words for stones ('abanim/'abnayya) and children (banim/bnayya, lit. "sons") look and sound very similar. The meaning of this saying is adequately translated into Greek, but the poetic quality of the likely underlying Semitic wordplay is lost in translation. Because Hebrew and Aramaic were so closely related and intermixed in first-century Palestine, it is often difficult or even impossible to decide on which of the two languages sayings like this were originally produced. In other cases, scholars have noted that differences between the Gospels can be explained by different translations of a Semitic original. For example, in Matthew 23:26, Jesus commands the Pharisees to "cleanse" the inside of the cup and the plate. But in the parallel saying, Luke 11:41 quotes Jesus as saying that they need to "give alms." This difference is puzzling to explain in Greek, but long ago Julius Wellhausen observed that in Aramaic "cleanse" is dakko and "give alms" is zakko, which not only sound very similar but may also have been spelled the same way in Aramaic. In this case, it is likely that Matthew and Luke differ because of different interpretations of the underlying Aramaic expression. The grammar and language of the Greek New Testament also reflect the influence of Semitic forms in other ways. One particularly striking example is how writers sometimes add an extra (redundant) pronoun where it is common in Hebrew and Aramaic, but not considered good Greek. For example, Mark 7:25 in the Greek literally reads "whose her daughter had an unclean spirit," which is as awkward in the Greek as it is in English. Mark also begins most of his paragraphs with the word "and," which is very odd for Greek texts but normal in Semitic usage. Other common grammatical structures in the Greek New Testament also seem to have been influenced by Semitic grammar, like: "Answering, Jesus said" (Matt 11:25) means "Jesus answered" "King of kings" (Rev 19:16) means "the highest king" "And it happened when he returned" (Luke 19:15) means "When he returned" "I desired with desire" (Luke 22:15) means "I eagerly desired" These kinds of expressions, even if not totally impossible in native Greek speech and writing, reflect the Semitic background of the writers of the New Testament. They do not indicate that the New Testament books were translated from Hebrew or Aramaic, however. Many of the New Testament authors were bilingual (or potentially even multilingual), so it would be no surprise for one language to interfere with another. And most of these Semitic features in the Greek of the New Testament were well-known to Greek-speaking Jews and God-fearing Gentiles through literal translations in the Septuagint. In a sense, they formed a sort of mixed biblical idiom that shaped how the New Testament writers spoke and wrote religious texts in the Greek language. This is similar to how a modern believer's prayers or speech about religious topics might be influenced by the King James Version in ways that would sound odd to most modern English speakers ("How Great Thou Art"). Even more to the point, when modern worship leaders cry out "Hallelujah!" "Hosanna!" or "Amen!" it by no means implies that they know Hebrew or Aramaic. When modern worship leaders cry out "Hallelujah!" "Hosanna!" or "Amen!" it by no means implies that they know Hebrew or Aramaic. To summarize, there is much evidence for an underlying Semitic language (especially Aramaic) for parts of the Gospels, particularly in the sayings of Jesus. There is also considerable Semitic influence in the Greek language of many New Testament authors. But there is no linguistic reason to suppose that any of the complete Gospels or other New Testament books were originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic in their entirety. Language evidence for Greek Why then do most modern scholars insist that the New Testament was originally written in Greek? We have already discussed how the presence of Semitic influence in the language of the New Testament need not indicate that the Greek texts were translated from Semitic languages. These "Semitisms" were very familiar to readers of Greek translations of the Old Testament and became thoroughly ingrained in their own Greek writing. Furthermore, it is important not to exaggerate these Semitic elements. While they may stand out in sharp contrast to what would have been considered proper classical Greek, the discovery of many thousands of Greek papyri in the past 150 years has radically changed scholars' understanding of everyday Greek in the first century AD. While earlier scholars sometimes emphasized the uniqueness of Jewish Greek against that of classical authors, scholars can now see how the Greek of the New Testament fits comfortably within the common (or Koine) Greek spoken and written throughout the Eastern Mediterranean. Greek, as the lingua franca of the region, was often used in a simpler form than the classical authors and often reflected the influence of local customs and languages, but still remained recognizably Greek. This is exactly what we see in the Greek writings of the authors of the New Testament and other Jewish works of the period. In short, the books of the New Testament look just like other Greek writings from the period. On the other hand, the books of the New Testament do not look like translations from Hebrew or Aramaic versions of the books. Scholars actually know a lot about what Jewish translation from Hebrew or Aramaic into Greek looked like, because all the Hebrew Scriptures and many other works were translated into Greek before or around the first century AD. For most of these books, we know the text in both the original language and the target language (in this case, Greek) and can compare them word by word for many thousands of words to develop detailed profiles of how the translators worked. These "Septuagint" Greek translations are now a well-developed field of study, covering examples ranging from more to less literal and encompassing the idiosyncrasies of many individual translators. Even in the most free of these ancient translations, the Semitic base texts constrain and influence the translations to a much greater degree than could be supposed based on the Greek texts of the New Testament. The translations regularly mimic the simple sentence structures of their Semitic sources, whereas the New Testament texts tend to have the more complex sentences that are characteristic of Greek literary writing. Translations tend to have a limited range of Greek vocabulary and grammatical particles that conventionally correspond to Semitic words and usage, whereas the New Testament texts frequently have more varied vocabulary and use particles and expressions in ways that have no exact Semitic equivalents. Known translations also generally have a fairly consistent profile of translation technique throughout the entire translated book. In this regard, the greater evidence for Semitic language in the sayings of Jesus than in the surrounding narrative actually reinforces the argument that the entire Gospels could not have been written in Hebrew or Aramaic. If the Gospels had been translated in their entirety from Semitic originals, both the sayings and the narrative would have had a more consistent profile, rather than fluctuating back and forth between Semitic-sounding and proper Greek. Put simply, though the various books of the New Testament differ from each other in terms of style and level of writing, none of them looks like the known Greek translations from Hebrew or Aramaic texts from the period. Another important indication regarding the original language of the New Testament is that the authors often used Greek sources. Many books of the New Testament are filled with Old Testament quotations, and these are almost always cited from the Septuagint translations or revised Greek versions of the Old Testament texts. We cannot easily explain these away as just borrowing from previous biblical translations while translating the whole book, because the larger context sometimes depends on using the Greek text instead of the Hebrew. For instance, in Hebrews 10:5, the author cited Psalm 40:6 in the Greek tradition that has the word "body," instead of the Hebrew text which reads "ears." This reading from the Greek is important in the context of Jesus' body being the perfect sacrifice, which shows that the author must have been composing the text in Greek. Furthermore, scholars have long argued that the similarities in Greek wording between the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) are so close and extensive that some of them must have used the Greek text of one or more of the others as a source. The most common explanation is that both Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source, which is particularly important here, since Matthew is the one Gospel for which there is ancient speculation about a lost Hebrew or Aramaic original. If, as most modern scholars suspect, Matthew used the Greek text of Mark as his main written source and incorporated most of Mark in his Gospel, it makes little sense to think of the present Gospel of Matthew as a translation of a Hebrew or Aramaic gospel. A similar situation can be seen in the relationship between Jude and 2 Peter, one of which used the Greek text of the other as a main source for composing the text. The use of Greek sources by the New Testament authors is thus another strong indication that these works were originally written in Greek, rather than Hebrew or Aramaic. Scholars have also pointed out literary features in some passages that seem to work only in Greek. For example, in John 3 the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus hinges on the ambiguity in the Greek word anothen, which can mean either to be born "from above" or "again." Jesus seems to be implying that this rebirth needs to be of heavenly origin by the power of the Spirit, a nuance which Nicodemus misses with his response about being born again to an earthly mother. The meaning of this text turns on the nuances of the Greek language it must have been spoken and/or written in, and it is perhaps not coincidental that here Jesus interacts in Jerusalem with a high-status Jewish leader with a Greek name who likely would have been very comfortable speaking Greek. Gospels versus letters To summarize, there is considerable evidence for Semitic languages in the Gospels, primarily in the sayings of Jesus, most of which were likely originally delivered in Aramaic (or sometimes possibly Hebrew). There is also significant Semitic influence in the Greek of the Gospels, but of the type that would be expected for Jewish authors who were bilingual and/or familiar with Greek translations of the Old Testament, rather than indicating that the Gospels themselves were originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic. Thus, while Semitic traditions—whether oral or written—undoubtedly lay behind the Gospels, it is very unlikely that any of the four canonical Gospels were originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic in anything like their current forms. Only Matthew has support from church tradition for a Hebrew original, but this tradition is ambiguous at best and dubious at worst. Luke and Acts are also sometimes supposed to have been written (at least partially) in Hebrew because of frequent Semitisms, but this is highly unlikely, since most of these were well-known from Greek translations of the Old Testament. Luke's Gospel and Acts are actually written in a relatively high level of smooth Greek overall, and they are explicitly written for a Greek-speaking Christian with the Greek name Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). Furthermore, like Matthew, Luke clearly used Greek sources, and he positioned himself among the best in the Greek tradition of history writing (cf. Luke 1:1–4). Only Matthew has support from church tradition for a Hebrew original, but this tradition is ambiguous at best and dubious at worst. In short, claims that any of the canonical New Testament Gospels as we know them were originally composed in Hebrew or Aramaic are baseless and contrary to the linguistic evidence of the texts themselves. Any Semitic sources that may have been used by the Gospel writers appear to have been limited in scope and must have been thoroughly reworked in the composition processes of these works. Perhaps a good parallel to this might be the Jewish War by the Jewish historian Josephus. In his prologue to the Greek text, Josephus claims to have written about the war previously in Aramaic for his compatriots, whereas now he has written his book in Greek. Much like the New Testament, however, the Greek book we have today is so thoroughly Greek that it must have differed considerably from any lost Aramaic precursors. Hebrew or Aramaic originals for the rest of the New Testament books are even more implausible than for the Gospels. Though these books also contain Semitisms and sometimes even Hebrew or Aramaic words—for example, Maranatha ("Our Lord, come!") in Aramaic in 1 Corinthians 16:22; Abaddon ("Destruction") in Hebrew or Aramaic in Revelation 9:11—their texts are so thoroughly Greek in structure and idiom that there can be no serious doubt about their original language. Furthermore, the epistles were explicitly written to Christian believers in mixed Jew–Gentile congregations outside of Palestine, who could hardly have been expected to understand Hebrew or Aramaic. Many of the individuals mentioned had Greek or Latin names, and Paul's secretary who helped him write the letter to the Romans had the Latin name Tertius (Rom 16:22). The letter "to the Hebrews"—which some ancient authors supposed was originally written in Hebrew—depends on Greek Old Testament translations and is written at such a high level of literary Greek that no serious linguistic case can be made that it is a translation from a Semitic original. The book may have been written primarily to Greek-speaking Jews ("the Hebrews"), but it was almost certainly not composed in the Hebrew language. Conclusion In light of all of this, it is clear that the scholarly consensus that the New Testament was written in Greek is correct. The Aramaic (and perhaps sometimes Hebrew) words of Jesus and his earliest followers still grace some pages of the New Testament, either explicitly or implicitly. But by no means can they bear the weight of argument necessary to claim that any of the canonical Gospels as we know them today was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic. Whatever the underlying sources, the language of the canonical Gospels—and even more so the rest of the New Testament—is Greek through and through. This makes perfect sense in historical context, given Jesus' mission to take the good news to all the nations. Related articles How to Use Greek Lexicons The Big Story of the New Testament Tagged asaramaicgreekhebrewministry cornernew testament Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. 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Dionysius Areopagite, the Preaching of Peter, and a Poem by Ghazar.[citation needed] (Various sources[citation needed] also mention undefined Armenian canonical additions to the Gospels of Mark and John. These may refer to the general additions—Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11—discussed elsewhere in these notes.) A possible exception here to canonical exclusivity is the Second Apostolic Canons, which share a common source—the Apostolic Constitutions—with certain parts of the Orthodox Tewahedo New Testament broader canon.[citation needed] The Acts of Thaddeus was included in the biblical canon of Gregory of Tatev.[60] There is some uncertainty about whether Armenian canon lists include the Doctrine of Addai or the related Acts of Thaddeus.[citation needed] Moreover, the correspondence between King Abgar V and Jesus Christ, which is found in various forms—including within both the Doctrine of Addai and the Acts of Thaddeus—sometimes appears separately (see list[full citation needed]). The Prayer of Euthalius and the Repose of St. John the Evangelist appear in the appendix of the 1805 Armenian Zohrab Bible.[citation needed] Some of the aforementioned books, though they are found within canon lists, have nonetheless never been discovered to be part of any Armenian biblical manuscript.[60] ^ Though widely regarded as non-canonical,[citation needed] the Gospel of James obtained early liturgical acceptance among some Eastern churches and remains a major source for many of Christendom's traditions related to Mary, the mother of Jesus.[citation needed] ^ a b c d The Diatessaron, Tatian's gospel harmony, became a standard text in some Syriac-speaking churches down to the 5th century, when it gave way to the four separate gospels found in the Peshitta.[citation needed] ^ a b c d Parts of these four books are not found in the most reliable ancient sources; in some cases, are thought to be later additions, and have therefore not appeared historically in every biblical tradition.[citation needed] They are as follows: Mark 16:9–20, John 7:53–8:11, the Comma Johanneum, and portions of the Western version of Acts. To varying degrees, arguments for the authenticity of these passages—especially for the one from the Gospel of John—have occasionally been made.[citation needed] ^ Skeireins, a commentary on the Gospel of John in the Gothic language, was included in the Wulfila Bible.[citation needed] It exists today only in fragments.[citation needed] ^ a b The Acts of Paul and Thecla and the Third Epistle to the Corinthians are all portions of the greater Acts of Paul narrative, which is part of a stichometric catalogue of New Testament canon found in the Codex Claromontanus, but has survived only in fragments.[citation needed] Some of the content within these individual sections may have developed separately.[citation needed] ^ a b c d These four works were questioned or "spoken against" by Martin Luther, and he changed the order of his New Testament to reflect this, but he did not leave them out, nor has any Lutheran body since.[citation needed] Traditional German Luther Bibles are still printed with the New Testament in this changed "Lutheran" order.[citation needed] The vast majority of Protestants embrace these four works as fully canonical.[citation needed] ^ a b c d e The Peshitta excludes 2 John, 3 John, 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation, but certain Bibles of the modern Syriac traditions include later translations of those books.[citation needed] Still today, the official lectionary followed by the Syriac Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East presents lessons from only the twenty-two books of Peshitta, the version to which appeal is made for the settlement of doctrinal questions.[citation needed] ^ The Epistle to the Laodiceans is present in some western non-Roman Catholic translations and traditions.[citation needed] Especially of note is John Wycliffe's inclusion of the epistle in his English translation,[citation needed] and the Quakers' use of it to the point where they produced a translation and made pleas for its canonicity, see Poole's Annotations, on Col. 4:16. The epistle is nonetheless widely rejected by the vast majority of Protestants.[citation needed] ^ The Apocalypse of Peter, though not listed in this table, is mentioned in the Muratorian fragment and is part of a stichometric catalogue of New Testament canon found in the Codex Claromontanus.[citation needed] It was also held in high regard by Clement of Alexandria.[citation needed] ^ Other known writings of the Apostolic Fathers not listed in this table are as follows: the seven Epistles of Ignatius, the Epistle of Polycarp, the Martyrdom of Polycarp, the Epistle to Diognetus, the fragment of Quadratus of Athens, the fragments of Papias of Hierapolis, the Reliques of the Elders Preserved in Irenaeus, and the Apostles' Creed.[citation needed] ^ Though they are not listed in this table, the Apostolic Constitutions were considered canonical by some including Alexius Aristenus, John of Salisbury, and to a lesser extent, Grigor Tat`evatsi.[citation needed] They are even classified as part of the New Testament canon within the body of the Constitutions itself; moreover, they are the source for a great deal of the content in the Orthodox Tewahedo broader canon.[citation needed] ^ a b c d e These five writings attributed to the Apostolic Fathers are not currently considered canonical in any biblical tradition, though they are more highly regarded by some more than others.[citation needed] Nonetheless, their early authorship and inclusion in ancient biblical codices, as well as their acceptance to varying degrees by various early authorities, requires them to be treated as foundational literature for Christianity as a whole.[according to whom?][citation needed] ^ a b Ethiopic Clement and the Ethiopic Didascalia are distinct from and should not be confused with other ecclesiastical documents known in the west by similar names.[citation needed] The order in which the books of the New Testament appear differs between some collections and ecclesiastical traditions. In the Latin West, prior to the Vulgate (an early 5th-century Latin version of the Bible), the four Gospels were arranged in the following order: Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark.[f] The Syriac Peshitta places the major Catholic epistles (James, 1 Peter, and 1 John) immediately after Acts and before the Pauline epistles. The order of an early edition of the letters of Paul is based on the size of the letters: longest to shortest, though keeping 1 and 2 Corinthians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians together. The Pastoral epistles were apparently not part of the Corpus Paulinum in which this order originated and were later inserted after 2 Thessalonians and before Philemon. Hebrews was variously incorporated into the Corpus Paulinum either after 2 Thessalonians, after Philemon (i.e. at the very end), or after Romans. Luther's canon, found in the 16th-century Luther Bible, continues to place Hebrews, James, Jude, and the Apocalypse (Revelation) last. This reflects the thoughts of the Reformer Martin Luther on the canonicity of these books.[64][g][65] Main article: Authorship of the Bible § New Testament It is considered the books of the New Testament were all or nearly all written by Jewish Christians—that is, Jewish disciples of Christ, who lived in the Roman Empire, and under Roman occupation.[66] The author of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts is frequently thought of as an exception; scholars are divided as to whether he was a Gentile or a Hellenistic Jew.[67] A few scholars identify the author of the Gospel of Mark as probably a Gentile, and similarly for the Gospel of Matthew, though most assert Jewish-Christian authorship.[68][69][70][verification needed] However, more recently the above understanding has been challenged by the publication of evidence showing only educated elites after the Jewish War would have been capable of producing the prose found in the Gospels.[71][verification needed] Main article: Synoptic Gospels Evangelist Mathäus und der Engel, by Rembrandt, 1661 Authorship of the Gospels remains divided among both evangelical and critical scholars. The names of each Gospel stems from church tradition, and yet the authors of the Gospels do not identify themselves in their respective texts. All four gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are anonymous works.[72] The Gospel of John claims to be based on eyewitness testimony from the Disciple whom Jesus loved, but never names this character. The author of Luke-Acts claimed to access an eyewitness to Paul; this claim remains accepted by most scholars.[73] Objections to this viewpoint mainly take the form of the following two interpretations, but also include the claim that Luke-Acts contains differences in theology and historical narrative which are irreconcilable with the authentic letters of Paul the Apostle.[74] According to Bart D. Ehrman of the University of North Carolina, none of the authors of the Gospels were eyewitnesses or even explicitly claimed to be eyewitnesses of Jesus's life.[75][76][77] Ehrman has argued for a scholarly consensus that many New Testament books were not written by the individuals whose names are attached to them.[78][79] Scholarly opinion is that names were fixed to the gospels by the mid second century AD.[80] Many scholars believe that none of the gospels were written in the region of Palestine.[81] Christian tradition identifies John the Apostle with John the Evangelist, the supposed author of the Gospel of John. Traditionalists tend to support the idea that the writer of the Gospel of John himself claimed to be an eyewitness in their commentaries of John 21:24 and therefore the gospel was written by an eyewitness.[82][83] This idea is rejected by the majority of modern scholars, with most viewing the passage as a later addition, though a growing minority view it as part of the earliest text.[84][85][86] Most[citation needed] scholars hold to the two-source hypothesis, which posits that the Gospel of Mark was the first gospel to be written. On this view, the authors of the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke used as sources the Gospel of Mark and a hypothetical Q document to write their individual gospel accounts.[87][88][89][90][91] These three gospels are called the Synoptic Gospels, because they include many of the same stories, often in the same sequence, and sometimes in exactly the same wording. Scholars agree that the Gospel of John was written last, by using a different tradition and body of testimony. In addition, most scholars agree that the author of Luke also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. Scholars hold that these books constituted two-halves of a single work, Luke–Acts.[citation needed] Main article: Authorship of Luke–Acts The same author appears to have written the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, and most refer to them as the Lucan texts.[92][93] The most direct evidence comes from the prefaces of each book; both were addressed to Theophilus, and the preface to the Acts of the Apostles references "my former book" about the ministry of Jesus.[94] Furthermore, there are linguistic and theological similarities between the two works, suggesting that they have a common author.[95][96][97][98] Main article: Authorship of the Pauline epistles Saint Paul Writing His Epistles by Valentin de Boulogne (c. 1618–1620). Most scholars think Paul actually dictated his letters to a secretary. The Pauline epistles are the thirteen books in the New Testament traditionally attributed to Paul of Tarsus. Seven letters are generally classified as "undisputed", expressing contemporary scholarly near consensus that they are the work of Paul: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon. Six additional letters bearing Paul's name do not currently enjoy the same academic consensus: Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus.[h] The anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews is, despite unlikely Pauline authorship, often functionally grouped with these thirteen to form a corpus of fourteen "Pauline" epistles.[i] While many scholars uphold the traditional view, some question whether the first three, called the "Deutero-Pauline Epistles", are authentic letters of Paul. As for the latter three, the "Pastoral epistles", some scholars uphold the traditional view of these as the genuine writings of the Apostle Paul;[h] most regard them as pseudepigrapha.[101] One might refer to the Epistle to the Laodiceans and the Third Epistle to the Corinthians as examples of works identified as pseudonymous. Since the early centuries of the church, there has been debate concerning the authorship of the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews, and contemporary scholars generally reject Pauline authorship.[102] The epistles all share common themes, emphasis, vocabulary and style; they exhibit a uniformity of doctrine concerning the Mosaic Law, Jesus, faith, and various other issues. All of these letters easily fit into the chronology of Paul's journeys depicted in Acts of the Apostles. The author of the Epistle of James identifies himself in the opening verse as "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ". From the middle of the 3rd century, patristic authors cited the Epistle as written by James the Just.[103] Ancient and modern scholars have always been divided on the issue of authorship. Many consider the epistle to be written in the late 1st or early 2nd centuries.[104] The author of the First Epistle of Peter identifies himself in the opening verse as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ", and the view that the epistle was written by St. Peter is attested to by a number of Church Fathers: Irenaeus (140–203), Tertullian (150–222), Clement of Alexandria (155–215) and Origen of Alexandria (185–253). Unlike The Second Epistle of Peter, the authorship of which was debated in antiquity, there was little debate about Peter's authorship of this first epistle until the 18th century. Although 2 Peter internally purports to be a work of the apostle, many biblical scholars have concluded that Peter is not the author.[105] For an early date and (usually) for a defense of the Apostle Peter's authorship see Kruger,[106] Zahn,[107] Spitta,[108][full citation needed] Bigg,[109] and Green.[110] The Epistle of Jude title is written as follows: "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James".[111] The debate has continued over the author's identity as the apostle, the brother of Jesus, both, or neither.[112] Main article: Authorship of the Johannine works The Gospel of John, the three Johannine epistles, and the Book of Revelation, exhibit marked similarities, although more so between the gospel and the epistles (especially the gospel and 1 John) than between those and Revelation.[113] Most scholars therefore treat the five as a single corpus of Johannine literature, albeit not from the same author.[114] Burkett argues the gospel went through two or three "editions" before reaching its current form around AD 90–110, though more recent scholars tend to be less interested in theories about hypothetical editions or sources of the gospel.[115][116][86] It speaks of an unnamed "disciple whom Jesus loved" as the source of its traditions, but does not say specifically that he is its author except in John 21, which is widely viewed as a later addition;[117][86] Christian tradition identifies this disciple as the apostle John, but while this idea still has supporters, for a variety of reasons the majority of modern scholars have abandoned it or hold it only tenuously.[118] It is significantly different from the synoptic gospels, with major variations in material, theological emphasis, chronology, and literary style, sometimes amounting to contradictions.[119] The author of the Book of Revelation identifies himself several times as "John".[120] and states that he was on Patmos when he received his first vision.[121] As a result, the author is sometimes referred to as John of Patmos. The author has traditionally been identified with John the Apostle to whom the Gospel and the epistles of John were attributed. It was believed that he was exiled to the island of Patmos during the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian, and there wrote Revelation. Justin Martyr (c. 100–165 AD) who was acquainted with Polycarp, who had been mentored by John, makes a possible allusion to this book, and credits John as the source.[122] Irenaeus (c. 115–202) assumes it as a conceded point. According to the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, modern scholars are divided between the apostolic view and several alternative hypotheses put forth in the last hundred years or so.[123] Ben Witherington points out that linguistic evidence makes it unlikely that the books were written by the same person.[124] Main article: Dating the Bible § Table IV: New Testament There is no scholarly consensus on the date of composition of the latest New Testament texts. John A. T. Robinson, Dan Wallace, William F. Albright, Maurice Casey, and James Crossley all dated many or all of the books of the New Testament before 70 AD.[125][126][127] Jonathan Bernier's recent argument for early dates has enjoyed a positive reception, with endorsements from Chris Keith and Anders Runesson, among others.[128] Many other scholars, such as Bart D. Ehrman and Stephen L. Harris, date some New Testament texts much later than this;[129][130][131] Richard Pervo dated Luke–Acts to c. 115 AD,[42] and David Trobisch places Acts in the mid-to-late second century, contemporaneous with the publication of the first New Testament canon.[43] Whether the Gospels were composed before or after 70 AD, according to Bas van Os, the lifetime of various eyewitnesses that includes Jesus's own family through the end of the First Century is very likely statistically.[132] Markus Bockmuehl finds this structure of lifetime memory in various early Christian traditions.[133] The earliest manuscripts of New Testament books date from the late second to early third centuries (although see Papyrus 52 for a possible exception).[134] Literary analysis of the New Testament texts themselves can be used to date many of the books of the New Testament to the mid-to-late first century. The earliest works of the New Testament are the letters of the Apostle Paul. It can be determined that 1 Thessalonians is likely the earliest of these letters, written around 52 AD.[135] Main article: Language of the New Testament The major languages spoken by both Jews and Greeks in the Holy Land at the time of Jesus were Aramaic and Koine Greek, and also a colloquial dialect of Mishnaic Hebrew. It is generally agreed by most scholars that the historical Jesus primarily spoke Aramaic,[136] perhaps also some Hebrew and Koine Greek. The majority view is that all of the books that would eventually form the New Testament were written in the Koine Greek language.[3][137] As Christianity spread, these books were later translated into other languages, most notably, Latin, Syriac, and Egyptian Coptic. Some of the Church Fathers[138] imply or claim that Matthew was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, and then soon after was written in Koine Greek. Nevertheless, some scholars believe the Gospel of Matthew known today was composed in Greek and is neither directly dependent upon nor a translation of a text in a Semitic language.[139] The style of Koine Greek in which the New Testament is written differs from the general Koine Greek used by Greek writers of the same era, a difference that some scholars have explained by the fact that the authors of the New Testament, nearly all Jews and deeply familiar with the Septuagint, wrote in a Jewish-Greek dialect strongly influenced by Aramaic and Hebrew[140] (see Jewish Koine Greek, related to the Greek of the Septuagint). But other scholars say that this view is arrived at by comparing the linguistic style of the New Testament to the preserved writings of the literary men of the era, who imitated the style of the great Attic texts and as a result did not reflect the everyday spoken language, so that this difference in style could be explained by the New Testament being written, unlike other preserved literary material of the era, in the Koine Greek spoken in everyday life, in order to appeal to the common people, a style which has also been found in contemporary non-Jewish texts such as private letters, receipts and petitions discovered in Egypt (where the dry air has preserved these documents which, as everyday material not deemed of literary importance, had not been copied by subsequent generations).[141] Main article: Development of the New Testament canon The process of canonization of the New Testament was complex and lengthy. In the initial centuries of early Christianity, there were many books widely considered by the church to be inspired, but there was no single formally recognized New Testament canon.[142] The process was characterized by a compilation of books that apostolic tradition considered authoritative in worship and teaching, relevant to the historical situations in which they lived, and consonant with the Old Testament.[143] Writings attributed to the apostles circulated among the earliest Christian communities and the Pauline epistles were circulating, perhaps in collected forms, by the end of the 1st century AD.[144] One of the earliest attempts at solidifying a canon was made by Marcion, c. 140 AD, who accepted only a modified version of Luke (the Gospel of Marcion) and ten of Paul's letters, while rejecting the Old Testament entirely. His canon was largely rejected by other groups of Christians, notably the proto-orthodox Christians, as was his theology, Marcionism. Adolf von Harnack,[145] John Knox,[146] and David Trobisch,[43] among other scholars, have argued that the church formulated its New Testament canon partially in response to the challenge posed by Marcion. Polycarp,[147] Irenaeus[148] and Tertullian[149] held the epistles of Paul to be divinely inspired "scripture". Other books were held in high esteem but were gradually relegated to the status of New Testament apocrypha. Justin Martyr, in the mid 2nd century, mentions "memoirs of the apostles" as being read on Sunday alongside the "writings of the prophets".[150] The Muratorian fragment, dated at between 170 and as late as the end of the 4th century (according to the Anchor Bible Dictionary), may be the earliest known New Testament canon attributed to mainstream Christianity. It is similar, but not identical, to the modern New Testament canon. The oldest clear endorsement of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John being the only legitimate gospels was written c. 180 AD. A four gospel canon (the Tetramorph) was asserted by Irenaeus, who refers to it directly[151][152] in his polemic Against Heresies: It is not possible that the gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the church is scattered throughout all the world, and the "pillar and ground" of the church is the gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh.[152]—Irenaeus of Lyon (emphasis added) The books considered to be authoritative by Irenaeus included the four gospels and many of the letters of Paul, although, based on the arguments Irenaeus made in support of only four authentic gospels, some interpreters deduce that the fourfold Gospel must have still been a novelty in Irenaeus's time.[153] By the early 200s, Origen may have been using the same twenty-seven books as in the Catholic New Testament canon, though there were still disputes over the canonicity of the Letter to the Hebrews, Epistle of James, II Peter, II John and III John and the Book of Revelation,[154] known as the Antilegomena. Likewise, the Muratorian fragment is evidence that, perhaps as early as 200, there existed a set of Christian writings somewhat similar to the twenty-seven book NT canon, which included four gospels and argued against objections to them.[155] Thus, while there was a good measure of debate in the Early Church over the New Testament canon, the major writings are claimed to have been accepted by almost all Christians by the middle of the 3rd century.[156] Origen was largely responsible for the collection of usage information regarding the texts that became the New Testament. The information used to create the late-4th-century Easter Letter, which declared accepted Christian writings, was probably based on the Ecclesiastical History (HE) of Eusebius of Caesarea, wherein he uses the information passed on to him by Origen to create both his list at HE 3:25 and Origen's list at HE 6:25. Eusebius got his information about what texts were then accepted and what were then disputed, by the third-century churches throughout the known world, a great deal of which Origen knew of firsthand from his extensive travels, from the library and writings of Origen.[157] In fact, Origen would have possibly included in his list of "inspired writings" other texts kept out by the likes of Eusebius—including the Epistle of Barnabas, Shepherd of Hermas, and 1 Clement. Notwithstanding these facts, "Origen is not the originator of the idea of biblical canon, but he certainly gives the philosophical and literary-interpretative underpinnings for the whole notion."[158] Eusebius, c. 300, gave a detailed list of New Testament writings 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 Book of Revelation, 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 Book of 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, 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." In his Easter letter of 367, Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, gave a list of the books that would become the twenty-seven-book NT canon,[159] and he used the word "canonized" (kanonizomena) in regards to them.[160] The first council that accepted the present canon of the New Testament may have been the Synod of Hippo Regius in North Africa (393 AD). The acts of this council are lost. A brief summary of the acts was read at and accepted by the Council of Carthage (397) and the Council of Carthage (419).[161] These councils were under the authority of St. Augustine, who regarded the canon as already closed.[162][163][164] Pope Damasus I's Council of Rome in 382, if the Decretum Gelasianum is correctly associated with it, issued a biblical canon identical to that mentioned above,[159] or, if not, the list is at least a 6th-century compilation.[165] Likewise, Damasus' commissioning of the Latin Vulgate edition of the Bible, c. 383, was instrumental in the fixation of the canon in the West.[166] In c. 405, Pope Innocent I sent a list of the sacred books to a Gallic bishop, Exsuperius of Toulouse. Christian scholars assert that, when these bishops and councils spoke on the matter, they were not defining something new but instead "were ratifying what had already become the mind of the Church."[162][167][168] The New Testament canon as it is now was first listed by St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in 367, in a letter written to his churches in Egypt, Festal Letter 39. Also cited is the Council of Rome, but not without controversy. That canon gained wider and wider recognition until it was accepted at the Third Council of Carthage in 397 and 419. The Book of Revelation was not added till the Council of Carthage (419).[169] Thus, some claim that, from the 4th century, there existed unanimity in the West concerning the New Testament canon (as it is today),[170] and that, by the 5th century, the Eastern Church, with a few exceptions, had come to accept the Book of Revelation and thus had come into harmony on the matter of the canon.[171] Nonetheless, full dogmatic articulations of the canon were not made until the Canon of Trent of 1546 for Roman Catholicism, the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563 for the Church of England, the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647 for Calvinism, and the Synod of Jerusalem of 1672 for the Greek Orthodox. On the question of NT Canon formation generally, New Testament scholar Lee Martin McDonald has written that:[172] Although a number of Christians have thought that church councils determined what books were to be included in the biblical canons, a more accurate reflection of the matter is that the councils recognized or acknowledged those books that had already obtained prominence from usage among the various early Christian communities. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia article on the Canon of the New Testament: "The idea of a complete and clear-cut canon of the New Testament existing from the beginning, that is from Apostolic times, has no foundation in history. The Canon of the New Testament, like that of the Old, is the result of a development, of a process at once stimulated by disputes with doubters, both within and without the Church, and retarded by certain obscurities and natural hesitations, and which did not reach its final term until the dogmatic definition of the Tridentine Council."[173] In 331, Constantine I commissioned Eusebius to deliver fifty Bibles for the Church of Constantinople. Athanasius (Apol. Const. 4) recorded Alexandrian scribes around 340 preparing Bibles for Constans. Little else is known, though there is plenty of speculation. For example, it is speculated that this may have provided motivation for canon lists, and that Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus may be examples of these Bibles. Together with the Peshitta and Codex Alexandrinus, these are the earliest extant Christian Bibles.[174] Papyrus Bodmer VIII, at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, showing 1 and 2 Peter. The Codex Regius (L or 019), an 8th-century Greek manuscript of the New Testament with strong affinities to Codex Vaticanus. Main article: New Testament manuscripts Like other literature from antiquity, the text of the New Testament was (prior to the advent of the printing press) preserved and transmitted in manuscripts. Manuscripts containing at least a part of the New Testament number in the thousands. The earliest of these (like manuscripts containing other literature) are often very fragmentarily preserved. Some of these fragments have even been thought to date as early as the 2nd century (i.e., Papyrus 90, Papyrus 98, Papyrus 104, and famously Rylands Library Papyrus P52, though the early date of the latter has recently been called into question).[175] Main articles: Textual variants in the New Testament and Textual criticism of the New Testament Textual criticism deals with the identification and removal of transcription errors in the texts of manuscripts. Ancient scribes made errors or alterations (such as including non-authentic additions).[176] The New Testament has been preserved in more than 5,800 Greek manuscripts, 10,000 Latin manuscripts and 9,300 manuscripts in various other ancient languages including Syriac, Slavic, Ethiopic and Armenian. Even if the original Greek versions were lost, the entire New Testament could still be assembled from the translations.[177] In addition, there are so many quotes from the New Testament in early church documents and commentaries that the entire New Testament could also be assembled from these alone.[177] Not all biblical manuscripts come from orthodox Christian writers. For example, the Gnostic writings of Valentinus come from the 2nd century AD, and these Christians were regarded as heretics by the mainstream church.[178] The sheer number of witnesses presents unique difficulties, but it also gives scholars a better idea of how close modern Bibles are to the original versions.[178] On noting the large number of surviving ancient manuscripts, Bruce Metzger sums up the view on the issue by saying "The more often you have copies that agree with each other, especially if they emerge from different geographical areas, the more you can cross-check them to figure out what the original document was like. The only way they'd agree would be where they went back genealogically in a family tree that represents the descent of the manuscripts.[177] In attempting to determine the original text of the New Testament books, some modern textual critics have identified sections as additions of material, centuries after the gospel was written. These are called interpolations. In modern translations of the Bible, the results of textual criticism have led to certain verses, words and phrases being left out or marked as not original. According to Bart D. Ehrman, "These scribal additions are often found in late medieval manuscripts of the New Testament, but not in the manuscripts of the earlier centuries."[179] Most modern Bibles have footnotes to indicate passages that have disputed source documents. Bible commentaries also discuss these, sometimes in great detail. While many variations have been discovered between early copies of biblical texts, almost all have no importance, as they are variations in spelling, punctuation, or grammar. Also, many of these variants are so particular to the Greek language that they would not appear in translations into other languages. For example, order of words (i.e. "man bites dog" versus "dog bites man") often does not matter in Greek, so textual variants that flip the order of words often have no consequences.[177] Outside of these unimportant variants, there are a couple variants of some importance. The two most commonly cited examples are the last verses of the Gospel of Mark[180][181][182] and the story of Jesus and the woman taken in adultery in the Gospel of John.[183][184][185] Many scholars and critics also believe that the Johannine Comma reference supporting the Trinity doctrine in the First Epistle of John to have been a later addition.[186][187] According to Norman Geisler and William Nix, "The New Testament, then, has not only survived in more manuscripts than any other book from antiquity, but it has survived in a purer form than any other great book—a form that is 99.5% pure".[188] The Rossano Gospels, sixth century, a representative of Byzantine text The often referred to Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, a book written to prove the validity of the New Testament, says: "A study of 150 Greek [manuscripts] of the Gospel of Luke has revealed more than 30,000 different readings... It is safe to say that there is not one sentence in the New Testament in which the [manuscript] is wholly uniform."[189] Main article: Biblical criticism Biblical criticism is the scholarly "study and investigation of biblical writings that seeks to make discerning judgments about these writings."[190] Main article: New Testament manuscripts The textual variation among manuscript copies of books in the New Testament prompted attempts to discern the earliest form of text already in antiquity (e.g., by the 3rd-century Christian author Origen). The efforts began in earnest again during the Renaissance, which saw a revival of the study of ancient Greek texts. During this period, modern textual criticism was born. In this context, Christian humanists such as Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus promoted a return to the original Greek of the New Testament. This was the beginning of modern New Testament textual criticism, which over subsequent centuries would increasingly incorporate more and more manuscripts, in more languages (i.e., versions of the New Testament), as well as citations of the New Testament by ancient authors and the New Testament text in lectionaries in order to reconstruct the earliest recoverable form of the New Testament text and the history of changes to it.[3] Further information: Non-canonical books referenced in the Bible Books that later formed the New Testament, like other Christian literature of the period, originated in a literary context that reveals relationships not only to other Christian writings, but also to Graeco-Roman and Jewish works. Of singular importance is the extensive use of and interaction with the Jewish Bible and what would become the Christian Old Testament. Both implicit and explicit citations, as well as countless allusions, appear throughout the books of the New Testament, from the Gospels and Acts, to the Epistles, to the Apocalypse.[191] The first translations (usually called "versions") of the New Testament were made beginning already at the end of 2nd century. The earliest versions of the New Testament are the translations into the Syriac, Latin, and Coptic languages.[192] Main article: Syriac versions of the Bible The Rabbula Gospels, Eusebian Canons. The Philoxenian probably was produced in 508 for Bishop Philoxenus of Mabbug.[193] Main article: Bible translations into Coptic There are several dialects of the Coptic language: Bohairic (the Nile Delta), Fayyumic (in the Faiyum in Middle Egypt), Sahidic (in Upper Egypt), Akhmimic (what is now Sohag Governorate in Upper Egypt), and others. The first translation was made by at least the third century into the Sahidic dialect (copsa). This translation represents a mixed text, mostly Alexandrian, though also with Western readings.[194] A Bohairic translation was made later, but existed already in the 4th century. Though the translation makes less use of Greek words than the Sahidic, it does employ some Greek grammar (e.g., in word-order and the use of particles such as the syntactic construction μεν—δε). For this reason, the Bohairic translation can be helpful in the reconstruction of the early Greek text of the New Testament.[195] Main article: Early translations of the New Testament BL Add. MS 59874 with Ethiopic Gospel of Matthew. The continued spread of Christianity, and the foundation of national churches, led to the translation of the Bible—often beginning with books from the New Testament—into a variety of other languages at a relatively early date: Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic, Persian, Sogdian, and eventually Gothic, Old Church Slavonic, Arabic, and Nubian.[196] Main article: Bible translations Mikael Agricola hands over the Finnish-language translation, Se Wsi Testamenti, to King Gustav Wasa of Sweden in 1548. The 16th century saw the rise of Protestantism and an explosion of translations of the New (and Old) Testament into the vernacular. Notable are those of Martin Luther (1522), Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1523), the Froschau Bible (1525–1529, revised in 1574), William Tyndale (1526, revised in 1534, 1535 and 1536), the Brest Bible (1563), and the Authorized Version (also called the "King James Version") (1611). Translations of the New Testament made since the appearance of critical editions of the Greek text (notably those of Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort, and von Soden) have largely used them as their base text. Unlike the Textus Receptus, they have a pronounced Alexandrian character. Standard critical editions are those of Nestle-Åland (the text, though not the full critical apparatus of which is reproduced in the United Bible Societies' "Greek New Testament"), Souter, Vogels, Bover and Merk. Notable translations of the New Testament based on these most recent critical editions include the Revised Standard Version (1946, revised in 1971), La Bible de Jérusalem (1961, revised in 1973 and 2000), the Einheitsübersetzung (1970, final edition 1979), the New American Bible (1970, revised in 1986 and 2011), the New International Version (1973, revised in 1984 and 2011), the Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible (1988, revised in 2004), the New Revised Standard Version (1989) and the English Standard Version (2001, revised in 2007, 2011 and 2016). Main article: New Testament theology According to Gary T. Meadors: The self-witness of the Bible to its inspiration demands a commitment to its unity. The ultimate basis for unity is contained in the claim of divine inspiration in 2 Timothy 3:16[197] that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (KJV). The term "inspiration" renders the Greek word theopneustos. This term only occurs here in the New Testament and literally means "God-breathed" (the chosen translation of the NIV).[198] The notion of unity in diversity of Scripture claims that the Bible presents a noncontradictory and consistent message concerning God and redemptive history. The fact of diversity is observed in comparing the diversity of time, culture, authors' perspectives, literary genre, and the theological themes.[198] Studies from many theologians considering the "unity in diversity" to be found in the New Testament (and the Bible as a whole) have been collected and summarized by New Testament theologian Frank Stagg. He describes them as some basic presuppositions, tenets, and concerns common among the New Testament writers, giving to the New Testament its "unity in diversity": The reality of God is never argued but is always assumed and affirmed Jesus Christ is absolutely central: he is Lord and Savior, the foretold Prophet, the Messianic King, the Chosen, the way, the truth, and the light, the One through whom God the Father not only acted but through whom He came The Holy Spirit came anew with Jesus Christ. The Christian faith and life are a calling, rooted in divine election. The plight of everyone as sinner means that each person is completely dependent upon the mercy and grace of God Salvation is both God's gift and his demand through Jesus Christ, to be received by faith The death and resurrection of Jesus are at the heart of the total event of which he was the center God creates a people of his own, designated and described by varied terminology and analogies History must be understood eschatologically, being brought along toward its ultimate goal when the kingdom of God, already present in Christ, is brought to its complete triumph In Christ, all of God's work of creation, revelation, and redemption is brought to fulfillment[199] For the Roman Catholic Church, there are two modes of Revelation: Scripture and Tradition. Both of them are interpreted by the teachings of the Church. The Roman Catholic view is expressed clearly in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1997): § 82: As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence. § 107: The inspired books teach the truth. Since therefore all that the inspired authors or sacred writers affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures. In Catholic terminology the teaching office is called the Magisterium. The Catholic view should not be confused with the two-source theory. As the Catechism states in §§ 80 and 81, Revelation has "one common source ... two distinct modes of transmission."[200] While many Eastern Orthodox writers distinguish between Scripture and Tradition, Bishop Kallistos Ware says that for the Orthodox there is only one source of the Christian faith, Holy Tradition, within which Scripture exists.[201] Traditional Anglicans believe that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation", (Article VI), but also that the Catholic Creeds "ought thoroughly to be received and believed" (Article VIII), and that the Church "hath authority in Controversies of Faith" and is "a witness and keeper of Holy Writ" (Article XX).[202] In the famous words of Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells: "As for my religion, I dye in the holy catholic and apostolic faith professed by the whole Church before the disunion of East and West, more particularly in the communion of the Church of England, as it stands distinguished from all Papal and Puritan innovations, and as it adheres to the doctrine of the Cross."[This quote needs a citation] Following the doctrine of sola scriptura, Protestants believe that their traditions of faith, practice and interpretations carry forward what the scriptures teach, and so tradition is not a source of authority in itself. Their traditions derive authority from the Bible, and are therefore always open to reevaluation. This openness to doctrinal revision has extended in Liberal Protestant traditions even to the reevaluation of the doctrine of Scripture upon which the Reformation was founded, and members of these traditions may even question whether the Bible is infallible in doctrine, inerrant in historical and other factual statements, and whether it has uniquely divine authority. The adjustments made by modern Protestants to their doctrine of scripture vary widely.[citation needed] This section may lend undue weight to certain ideas, incidents, or controversies. Please help improve it by rewriting it to create a more balanced presentation. Discuss and resolve this issue before removing this message. (May 2025) The topic of this article may not meet Wikipedia's general notability guideline. Please help to demonstrate the notability of the topic by citing reliable secondary sources that are independent of the topic and provide significant coverage of it beyond a mere trivial mention. If notability cannot be shown, the article is likely to be merged, redirected,

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ISBN 9780800604707. OCLC 1194914119. ^ Three forms are postulated, from The Canon Debate, chapter 18, p. 300, note 21, attributed to Harry Y. Gamble: "(1) Marcion's collection that begins with Galatians and ends with Philemon; (2) Papyrus 46, dated about 200, that follows the order that became established except for reversing Ephesians and Galatians; and (3) the letters to seven churches, treating those to the same church as one letter and basing the order on length, so that Corinthians is first and Colossians (perhaps including Philemon) is last." ^ Harnack, Adolf. "Appendix VI". Origin of the New Testament. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. ^ Knox, John (1942). Marcion and the New Testament: An Essay in the Early History of the Canon. Chicago: Chicago University Press. pp. 158ff. ISBN 978-0404161835. {{cite book}}: ISBN / Date incompatibility (help) ^ Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, Chapter 12 ^ Against Heresies, inter alia, 3.12.12 ^ Adversus Marcionem, inter alia, V.14 ^ Justin Martyr. First Apology. Chapter 67. ^ Ferguson 2002, p. 301ff. ^ a b Irenaeus. "Chapter XI". Against Heresies, Book III. Section 8. ^ McDonald & Sanders 2002, p. 277. ^ Noll, Mark A. (1997). Turning Points. Baker Academic. pp. 36–37. ^ de Jonge, H. J. (2003). "The New Testament Canon". In de Jonge, H. J.; Auwers, J. M (eds.). The Biblical Canons. Leuven University Press. p. 315. ^ Ackroyd & Evans 1970, p. 308. ^ Bateman, C. G. (3 August 2010). Origen's Role in the Formation of the New Testament Canon (Thesis). Regent College. SSRN 1653073. ^ McGuckin, John A. (2003). "Origen as Literary Critic in the Alexandrian Tradition". In Perrone, L. (ed.). Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition, Vol. 1. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 164. 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Pastoral articles on the New Testament for ministerial training Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WELS) Jewish reading of the New Testament Haaretz essay on reclaiming the New Testament as an integral part of Jewish literature Guide to the University of Chicago New Testament Club Records 1894–1958 at the University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center The Gospels in the official canon, and some that were not included in the Bible Dating the New Testament A compilation of the dates ascribed by various scholars to the composition of the New Testament documents, accompanied by an odd statistical average of the dates New Testament Koine Greek Original Side by side with the English (King James) and Russian (Synodal) translation Commentary by the Greek Fathers – Icons from Mount Athos New Testament, Greek Polytonic Text according to Ecumenical Patriarchate (Greek) Greek New Testament text (searchable only; no downloads) with lexical aids Collection: "Christian New Testament" from the University of Michigan Museum of Art New Testament art from the Metropolitan Museum of Art Retrieved from " 2This documentation needs attention from an expert in religion. The specific problem is: sources does not support the statement about date (AD 70). WikiProject Religion may be able to help recruit an expert. (March 2025) Letter addressed to the Christians in the city of Corinth Part of a series onNew Testament apocryphaFirst page of the Gospel of Judas(Page 33 of Codex Tchacos) Apostolic Fathers 1 Clement 2 Clement Epistles of Ignatius Polycarp to the Philippians Martyrdom of Polycarp Didache Barnabas Diognetus The Shepherd of Hermas Apocryphal gospels Jewish–Christian gospels Ebionites Hebrews Nazarenes Infancy gospels James Thomas Arabic Pseudo-Matthew History of Joseph the Carpenter Gnostic gospels Judas Mary Philip Truth Secret Mark The Saviour Other gospels Thomas Marcion Nicodemus Peter Barnabas Lost gospels Bartholomew Matthias Cerinthus Basilides Mani Gospel of the Hebrews Apocalypses Paul Peter Pseudo-Methodius Thomas Stephen 1 James 2 James 2 John Epistles Apocryphon of James Apocryphon of John Epistula Apostolorum Pseudo-Titus Peter to Philip Paul and Seneca Lost epistles Alexandrians Laodiceans Acts Andrew Andrew and Bartholomew Barnabas John Mar Mari The Martyrs Paul Peter Peter and Andrew Peter and Paul Peter and the Twelve Philip Pilate Thaddeus Thomas Timothy Xanthippe, Polyxena, and Rebecca Misc. Other apocrypha Clementine literature Diatessaron Doctrine of Addai Pilate cycle Prayer of the Apostle Paul Questions of Bartholomew Resurrection of Jesus Christ Related topics Nag Hammadi library Christianity portalvte The First Epistle of Clement (Ancient Greek: Κλήμεντος πρὸς Κορινθίους, romanized: Klēmentos pros Korinthious, lit. 'Clement to Corinthians') is a letter addressed to the Christians in the city of Corinth. The work is attributed to Clement I, the fourth bishop of Rome and was almost certainly written by him.[1] Based on internal evidence some scholars say the letter was composed some time before AD 70,[2][3][4][5][6] but another common time given for the epistle's composition is at the end of the reign of Domitian (c. AD 96).[7][8] As the name suggests, a Second Epistle of Clement is known, but this is a later work by a different author. The letter is a response to events in Corinth, where the congregation had deposed certain bishops. The author called on the congregation to repent, to restore the bishops to their position, and to obey their superiors. He said that the Apostles had appointed the church leadership and directed them on how to perpetuate the ministry. In Corinth, the letter was read aloud from time to time. This practice spread to other churches, and Christians translated it from the original Greek into Latin, Syriac, and other languages. The work was lost for centuries, but since the 1600s various copies or fragments have been found and studied. It has provided valuable evidence about the structure of the early church. Part of the Apostolic Fathers collection, some early Christians treated the work as a sacred text. It was included in some Bibles, such as the Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Hierosolymitanus, but not in the 27-book New Testament canon that is shared across most modern Christian churches. Such works are known as New Testament apocrypha, and 1 Clement ranks Didache as one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of those that still exist. Original Greek and Latin translation Although traditionally attributed to Clement of Rome,[9] the letter does not include Clement's name, and is anonymous, though scholars generally consider it to be genuine.[7] The epistle is addressed as "the Church of God which sojourneth in Rome to the Church of God which sojourneth in Corinth". Its stylistic coherence suggests a single author.[10] Scholars have proposed a range of dates, but most limit the possibilities to the last three decades of the 1st century,[11][12] and no later than AD 140.[13] The common time given for the epistle's composition is at the end of the reign of Domitian (c. AD 96).[7][8] The phrase "sudden and repeated misfortunes and hindrances which have befallen us" (1:1) is taken as a reference to persecutions under Domitian. Some scholars believe that 1 Clement was written around the same time as the Book of Revelation (c. AD 95–97).[14] Irenaeus (c. 130 – c. 202 AD) mentions the letter in his book Against Heresies III (180 AD).[15] In the time of this Clement, no small dissension having occurred among the brethren at Corinth, the Church in Rome dispatched a most powerful letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace, renewing their faith, and declaring the tradition which it had lately received from the apostles, proclaiming the one God, omnipotent, the Maker of heaven and earth, the Creator of man, who brought on the deluge, and called Abraham, who led the people from the land of Egypt, spoke with Moses, set forth the law, sent the prophets, and who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels. From this document, whosoever chooses to do so, may learn that He, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, was preached by the Churches, and may also understand the apostolic tradition of the Church, since this Epistle is of older date than these men who are now propagating falsehood, and who conjure into existence another god beyond the Creator and the Maker of all existing things.—St. Irenaeus, Against Heresies III, Chapter 3:3 The letter was occasioned by a dispute in Corinth, which had led to the removal from office of several presbyters. Since none of the presbyters were charged with moral offences, 1 Clement charges that their removal was high-handed and unjustifiable. The letter is extremely lengthy—twice as long as the Epistle to the Hebrews—and includes many references to the Old Testament.[16] 1 Clement offers valuable evidence about the state of the ministry in the early church. He calls on the Corinthians to repent and to reinstate the leaders that they had deposed. He explains that the Apostles had appointed "bishops and deacons", that they had given instructions on how to perpetuate the ministry, and that Christians were to obey their superiors. The author uses the terms bishops (overseers, episkopos) and elders (presbyters) interchangeably.[7] New Testament references include admonition to "Take up the epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle" (xlvii. 1) which was written to this Corinthian audience; a reference which seems to imply written documents available at both Rome and Corinth. 1 Clement also alludes to the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians; and alludes to Paul's epistles to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians, Titus, 1 Timothy, numerous phrases from the Epistle to the Hebrews, and possible material from Acts. There is no trace in Clement of a knowledge of 1 and 2 Thessalonians or the epistle of Philemon;[a] however, Clement may have had indirect knowledge of 2 Corinthians, Colossians, and 2 Timothy because of the relationship with the other epistles alluded to.[17] In several instances, the author asks their readers to "remember" the words of Jesus, although they do not attribute these sayings to a specific written account. These New Testament allusions are employed as authoritative sources which strengthen the letter's arguments to the Corinthian church. According to Bruce Metzger, Clement never explicitly refers to these New Testament references as "Scripture".[16] Additionally, 1 Clement possibly references the martyrdom of Paul and Peter (sections 5:4 to 6:1).[18] 1 Clement was written at a time when some Christians were keenly aware that Jesus had not returned as they had expected. Like the Second Epistle of Peter, this epistle criticizes those who had doubts about the faith because the Second Coming had not yet occurred.[19] Facsimile of the Epistle of Clement, from the Codex Alexandrinus The epistle was publicly read from time to time in Corinth, and by the 4th century this usage had spread to other churches. It was included in the 5th century Codex Alexandrinus, which contained the entire Old and New Testaments.[20] It was included with the Gospel of John in the fragmentary early Greek and Akhmimic Coptic papyrus designated Papyrus 6. First Clement is listed as canonical in "Canon 85" of the Canons of the Apostles, showing that First Clement had canonical rank in at least some regions of early Christendom. Ibn Khaldun also mentions it as part of the New Testament,[21] suggesting that the book may have been in wide and accepted use in either 14th century Spain or Egypt.[citation needed] Though known from antiquity, the first document to contain the Epistle of Clement and to be studied by Western scholars was found in 1628, having been included with an ancient Greek Bible given by the Patriarch of Constantinople Cyril I to King Charles I of England.[22] The first complete copy of 1 Clement was rediscovered in 1873, some four hundred years after the Fall of Constantinople, when Philotheos Bryennios found it in the Greek Codex Hierosolymitanus, written in 1056. This work, written in Greek, was translated into at least three languages in ancient times: a Latin translation from the 2nd or 3rd century was found in an 11th-century manuscript in the seminary library of Namur, Belgium, and published by Germain Morin in 1894; a Syriac manuscript, now at Cambridge University, was found by Robert Lubbock Bensly in 1876, and translated by him into English in 1899; and a Coptic translation has survived in two papyrus copies, one published by C. Schmidt in 1908 and the other by F. Rösch in 1910.[23][24] The Namur Latin translation reveals its early date in several ways. Its early date is attested to by not being combined with the pseudepigraphic later Second Epistle of Clement, as all the other translations are found, and by showing no knowledge of the church terminology that became current later—for example, translating Greek presbyteroi as seniores rather than transliterating to presbyteri. Papyrus 6 Second Epistle of Clement ^ This may be, however, due to the brevity of 1 and 2 Thessalonians and the epistle of Philemon, as well as their particular purpose of writing or their content. ^ "First Letter of Clement | Description, History, Summary, & Facts | Britannica". Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved 2024-03-24. ^ Herron, Thomas J. (2008). Clement and the Early Church of Rome: On the Dating of Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians. Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road. ^ Thiede, Carsten Peter (1996). Rekindling the Word: In Search of Gospel Truth. Gracewing publishing. p. 71. ISBN 1-56338-136-2. ^ Carrier, Richard (2014). On the Historicity of Jesus Sheffield. Phoenix Press. pp. 271–272. ISBN 978-1-909697-49-2. ^ Licona, Michael (2010). The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach. Apollos. 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Clement and the Early Church of Rome: On the Dating of Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians. Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road. p. 47. In the context of 1 Clement's strategy to win over the Corinthians to a renewed sense of order in their community, any reference to a Temple which stood in ruins would simply make no sense . . . It is easier to believe that 1 Clement wrote while the Temple still stood, i.e. in circa A.D. 70. ^ L.L. Welborn, "The preface to 1 Clement: the rhetorical situation and the traditional date", in Breytenbach and Welborn, p. 201 ^ W.C. van Unnik, "Studies on the so-called First Epistle of Clement. The literary genre," in Colliers Breytenbach and Laurence L. Welborn, Encounters with Hellenism: Studies on the First Letter of Clement, Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2004, p. 118. ISBN 9004125264. ^ "CHURCH FATHERS: Against Heresies, III.3 (St. Irenaeus)". New Advent. Retrieved 2024-04-17. ^ a b Bruce M. 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ISBN 0-14-044197-2. ^ A second manuscript containing a Syriac version of 1 Clement is mentioned in Timothy B. Sailors, "Bryn Mawr Classical Review: Review of The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations". Retrieved 21 May 2023. ^ JB Lightfoot and JR Harmer, ed. (1891), The Apostolic Fathers: Revised Greek Texts with Introductions and English Translations, Baker Books, 1988 reprint, p