

## *The Apostolic Bible Polyglot Translator's Note*

*It is not the intent of the translator of The Apostolic Bible Polyglot to support the acceptance of the Sinai manuscript by publishing the following pamphlet. Quite the contrary, it is with the purpose of showing that there were claims of forgery and various problems with the manuscript that are generally not published when this manuscript is mentioned. It is the intent of the translator to make the reader acquainted with the works of John William Burgon and Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener. John Burgon wrote "The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established," published by George Bell and Sons, 1896 at Cambridge. F.H.A. Schrivener wrote a two volume set titled, "A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament." also published by George Bell and Sons, 1894 at Cambridge. Further information on these two distinguished scholars can be found on Wikipedia...[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_William\\_Burgon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_William_Burgon).*

*I recently was invited to stay at the Monastery of St. John the Theologian on the Island of Patmos a place mentioned in this pamphlet as a destination of Constantine Tischendorf. As mentioned in the pamphlet, the library of the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, had "ancient catalogues of the monastic library." It therefore seems very unlikely to me that an uncial codex would be in a waste paper basket. I was able to handle and see the Codex Purpureus, a 6th century uncial, on Patmos, only because I presented The Apostolic Bible Polyglot to the library. Only with white gloves was I able to handle this manuscript. I find it incredulous that a German or Englishman that wasn't a Orthodox Christian would even be able to have access to the library, and that an offering to purchase an uncial codex would be accepted by the monks with anything less than rebuke. Then if the codex was entered into a catalog, as mentioned in the brochure, why would it be in a waste paper basket of all places...and then just when Tishendorf appeared? Also to have one codex containing the whole of the Bible is also suspect, as far as I am concerned, especially when non-canonical books are included. Also it is remiss, I believe, for the writer of the pamphlet to include the verses of the Sinai manuscript in English and not in Greek, and furthermore to compare these words with the A.V. rather than Stephens Greek text. Lastly I find it somewhat comical that the charge against a forger was that he was convicted of forgery...that would seem to be more of a proof of his "credentials" ...see pg. 9, second paragraph.*

*Charles Van der Pool*

*2009*

The Mount Sinai Manuscript of the Bible with Four Illustrations

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# THE MOUNT SINAI MANUSCRIPT OF THE BIBLE

## *The Discovery*

THE fortunes and migrations of any important ancient manuscript must always offer matter of romantic interest, but the circumstances attending the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus have given it a popular appeal surpassing that of either of its sisters, the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Alexandrinus. Were it possible to accept the tradition which represents the latter as written by the martyr Thecla shortly after the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325), that manuscript would indeed possess a unique interest; but it seems out of the question to entertain for it an earlier date than at best the beginning of the fifth century. Whereas the Vaticanus has remained (save for a period during the Napoleonic wars) in the security of the Vatican Library since the fifteenth century, and the Alexandrinus, ever since it was presented in 1627 to Charles I of England by Cyril Lucar, Patriarch successively of Alexandria and Constantinople, has formed part first of the Royal Library and subsequently of that of the British Museum, the Sinai manuscript was not discovered till the year 1844. It is indeed likely, though not certain, that it had been seen nearly a century before by the Italian traveller, Vitaliano Donati, but it remained totally unknown to the world at large until, in May 1844, the great German Biblical scholar, Constantine Tischendorf, during a visit to the monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai, found 129 leaves of it in a waste-paper basket, about to be consigned to the furnace, in which two other basketfuls (so the librarian told him) had already been consumed. Forty-three of these leaves he obtained as a gift and afterwards presented them to the King of Saxony; but he was unable, either then or on a subsequent visit in 1853, to obtain possession of the others or to discover whether any thing further remained of the manuscript from which they were taken. In 1859, however, he revisited the monastery with a letter of introduction from the Tsar; and on the evening of 4 February he was shown the whole volume, so far as it then survived, that is, the 86 leaves which he had been unable to bring away with him, and 261 other leaves, making in all 347. These were subsequently presented by the monastery to the Tsar; and thus it has come about that a small portion of the manuscript is preserved in the University Library at Leipzig, where it is known as the Codex Friderico-Augustus, whereas the remainder has hitherto been in the former Imperial Library at Leningrad, save for one fragment, subsequently discovered, and kept in the Library of the Society of Ancient Literature in that city.

## *The Acquisition by the Russian Government*

The slanders which have been widely uttered against a distinguished scholar and honourable man make it necessary to describe somewhat in detail the subsequent history of the manuscript, down to the time when it finally became the property of the Tsar of Russia.

Any moral claim that the monastery had to complain of the loss of so historical a treasure is obviously destroyed by the fact that the monks had thrown away a great part of it. But it was

actually alleged by Tischendorf's enemies that on the occasion of his visit in 1859 he stole the manuscript. There is no vestige of truth in the allegation. His account of the affair (and there is no other contemporary record) may be read in his own words in his book on the manuscript<sup>1</sup> That his account is true, no one can doubt who reads it with an impartial mind; for he attempts to conceal nothing. He admits that he tried to buy the Codex from the monastery and the steward. When both these refused, he asked leave to bring it away to Cairo. Dionysius, the Superior of the monastery, was absent at Cairo; all present agreed to his request except Vitalius, the monk in charge of the church furniture, in whose special library the manuscript had been preserved. Owing to this opposition, Tischendorf was unable to bring it away with him to Cairo, whither he accordingly went to obtain permission from the Superior. This was readily given; the Superior dispatched a camel-messenger, and on 24 February 1859 the manuscript was placed in Tischendorf's hands for copying. But it was long before he was able to bring it away from Cairo. It was agreed at a meeting at the Russian Consulate that he should be allowed to have single gatherings of eight leaves at a time to copy. It is worth mentioning that while this was going on, a young English scholar got sight of the manuscript and tried to buy it. The Prior assured Tischendorf that the brethren would rather make a present of it to the Tsar than sell it for English gold. The tradition in the Tischendorf family is that the disappointed scholar joined the ranks of the German savant's enemies.<sup>2</sup>

The proposal to present the Codex to the Tsar, which Tischendorf had already broached to the brethren before this incident, could not be carried out at the time, because the old Abbot (who also had the title of Archbishop) of Sinai, Constantius, had died at Constantinople, and only a fully consecrated Archbishop could sanction such a transaction. The monks chose one Cyril as his successor, but their choice had to be confirmed by the Sublime Porte, and it was bitterly opposed by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who according to traditional use had the duty of consecrating the Archbishop of Sinai. The monks gave Tischendorf to understand that the donation of the manuscript to the Tsar would be seriously considered after the election of the new Archbishop had been confirmed. They thought that the matter might be settled in three months. Tischendorf went off to Palestine, Smyrna, and Patmos. It was during this time (in May) that he was seen by Mr. James Finn, Consul for Jerusalem and Palestine, at Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Finn's diary contains a somewhat confused account of the case. On his return to Cairo at the end of July, Tischendorf learned that the question of the vacant see was no farther advanced, and was begged by the Archbishop-elect himself to forward his interests. He not unwillingly went to Constantinople and placed the two intimately connected objects of his visit, the confirmation of the Archbishop and the proposed transfer of the Codex, in the hands of Prince Lobanow, the Russian Ambassador. The Patriarch, however, stood firm, and there seemed to remain no solution except one suggested by Tischendorf, to wit, the summoning of the Holy Synod and a personal appeal to it by the Archbishop. This meant a further delay of months, which Tischendorf could not contemplate with equanimity. He therefore obtained from the Russian Ambassador an official letter, dated 10/22 September, to the monks of Mount Sinai, asking them to lend the Codex, which they were proposing to offer to the Tsar, to Tischendorf, that he might take it to St Petersburg to control the printing of it, and undertaking that the Codex should remain the property of the brotherhood of Mount Sinai until the Superior should offer it officially in the name of the brotherhood to

the Tsar. If unforeseen circumstances should hinder the fulfilment of this intention, the Codex should be without fail restored to the brethren.

Tischendorf's efforts on behalf of the brethren had been favourably reported to them by their representatives at Constantinople; and on 28 September the Codex was handed to him. Cyril, accepting the plan suggested by Tischendorf, left immediately for Constantinople, and two months later the Holy Synod, with the Patriarch as sole dissentient, confirmed his election. In December the Archbishop wrote to Tischendorf 'La sainte cause a triomphé'. But the other part of the bargain remained unfulfilled, and nothing was done about the donation of the Codex.

On 19 November Tischendorf handed it to the Tsar. But it is significant of the correct attitude maintained throughout by the Imperial Government, that it was regarded as property entrusted to it, and therefore was not placed in the Imperial Library, but deposited in a fireproof vault in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where it remained until the donation was finally made.

It has been remarked by Professor C. R. Gregory<sup>4</sup> that 'in the East a gift demands a return, and that this return may under given circumstances be extraordinarily like a good round price paid for the nominal gift'. This being so, and the negotiations being conducted between the Russian Foreign Office on the one hand, and Oriental monks on the other, it is not surprising that they lasted a long time. Probably the monks complained of pressure being brought to bear on them; that they even went so far as to refuse indignantly the sum which was offered to them, and demand the return of the Codex, can be true only in so far as such gestures are part of the ordinary conduct of a bargain in Oriental countries.

Meanwhile, the Monastery of St Catherine was not a happy community. The Archbishop Cyril held the see only from 1860 to 1867,<sup>6</sup> when he was deposed, and succeeded by Callistratus, though Cyril continued to call himself Archbishop. The new Archbishop was a firm friend of Tischendorf, as may be gathered from his letter of 15 July 1869:<sup>7</sup>

'We hasten to assure you that We and Our reverend brethren cherish for ever thankful memories of you, that We consider Ourselves fortunate to have found such a friend and patron.... That your dear and learned Excellency is our good friend and honoured champion is manifest again from what is related to Us in your valued letter concerning the first edition of the precious Bible and your exertions on behalf of Sinai with His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, to whom finally, as you know, this famous Bible has been presented as a testimony of the eternal gratitude of Ourselves and Sinai. The results of these exertions have been duly communicated to Us also, but nothing has yet been despatched, neither the decoration nor the Imperial gift. In so far we consider Ourselves fortunate, in enjoying the sublime and powerful Imperial favour, of which we have so great need, for the Holy Monastery of Sinai.'

So they had not yet received their reward; but Tischendorf was working for them. On 5/17 December 1869 Count Ignatiew wrote to him from Pera<sup>7</sup>, acknowledging a letter of 13 November in which Tischendorf had regretted that the compensation accorded by the Tsar to the Archbishop of Sinai for the acquisition of the manuscript was so long delayed. Ignatiew, sharing his regret, explained that for some years the monastery had been in a state of complete and scandalous anar-

chy, ending in the deposition of Archbishop Cyril and the election of the present titular, Callistratus; but Cyril claimed that his deposition was uncanonical, and continued to call himself Archbishop of Mount Sinai. It was but recently that Callistratus had been recognized by the Sublime Porte and the Egyptian Government. In such circumstances, it had been impossible to wind up the affair; 'to whom were we to send the money and the decorations?' Ignatiev demanded a formal document by which the whole community should declare that it made a gift of the manuscript to Russia. All he had received so far was one in which the signature of the monks of St Catherine was wanting. But the Archbishop, when Ignatiev on his last visit to Cairo pointed this out, had sent an express messenger to Mount Sinai; no doubt by now all was arranged, and the money and decorations, which had been left with the Russian Consul General, with full instructions, had been delivered to the Archbishop. The money amounted, he adds, to 9,000 roubles, 7,000 for the library of the principal monastery, and 2,000 for the dependency of Mount Thabor. The Archbishop and the members of the community of Djouvania, whom he had seen, showed themselves completely satisfied with this gift, and expressed their gratitude to him in the warmest terms.

The sum of money is estimated by Professor Gregory<sup>8</sup>, as equivalent to \$6,750 or more than £1,350 sterling, 'for that time a high price to pay for the manuscript.... The decorations referred to above are valued in the East even more highly than they are in the decoration-loving circles of Western Europe, and the monks received a number of these decorations.'

The formal deed of gift<sup>9</sup> was signed on 18 November 1869 by the monks of Mount Sinai, who acknowledged to have presented (*fait hommage*) to His Majesty the Emperor of Russia a manuscript of the Old and New Testaments discovered by Professor Tischendorf, in return for which donation His Majesty the Emperor granted to the Library of Mount Sinai the sum of 7,000 roubles and to the Convent of Mount Thabor 2,000 roubles. The Imperial Government held a receipt for the said amounts. In addition to this pecuniary recompense some of the Sinaite Fathers obtained Russian decorations.

And there can be no doubt that the transaction had dosed to the complete satisfaction of the monks, or at any rate of the Archbishop Callistratus. For Tischendorf remained on the friendliest terms with him. In the Leipzig University Library are three letters from the Archbishop, of 14 October 1870, of December 1870, and of 12 March 1874

The first, in Greek, with many flattering expressions of gratitude to Tischendorf and the Russian Vice-Consul, informs him that the Archbishop is going to Mount Sinai to keep the feast of St Catherine, asks that the expression of the gratitude of himself and all the brethren may be communicated to the proper quarters, and says that the writer and all his holy brotherhood will never cease to pray for the Majesty of the Emperor of all the Russias, who has in the East such servants as these who so warmly champion the cause of the holy tabernacles of the Orthodox Faith, and so worthily represent His Majesty. The second, also in Greek, is equally friendly to Tischendorf, and tells a long story of quarrels with the Patriarch of Alexandria, for protection against whom the Archbishop was appealing to Ignatiev (thus showing that he bore no grudge against him for the Codex agreement). He adds that if Tischendorf could persuade the Tsar to send them some

pecuniary assistance, they would regard him (Tischendorf) as their greatest benefactor. The third, in French, in similar flattering terms, thanks him for his friendly exertions with the Ambassador Ignatiew. 'Notre affaire reste encore presque dans le même point, et à cause de cet état passif, où nous nous trouvons, nous ne savons pas ce qui nous arriverait dans l'autre jour.' But they hope that Tischendorf's friendly intervention with His Excellency will have a good effect.

The affair to which the Archbishop alludes was probably the quarrel with the Patriarch of Alexandria mentioned in the previous letter; it cannot have been connected with the Codex, the donation of which had been long ago settled. In any case, as Dr. Glauning observes, the continuance of such relations between Tischendorf and the Archbishop as these letters reveal is only conceivable on the presupposition that the community of Sinai did not feel that it had been cheated or over-reached by Tischendorf, and this presupposition includes the further one, that the affair of the transfer of ownership of the Codex Sinaiticus had also been brought by St Petersburg to a settlement free from all objection or dissatisfaction.

Finally, to bring the story down to recent times, we may quote the evidence of a visitor to the monastery as late as 1926<sup>10</sup>

'I have a distinct recollection of the conversation one day turning to the question of the MSS. in the renowned library, and the story of Dr. Tischendorf and his epoch-making discovery of the Codex and its subsequent presentation, in return for a Royal donation, to the Tsar, was naturally recounted. The fact that the current story of the transaction was similar to the one then accepted by the monks of Mount Sinai themselves renders it all the more surprising, if not inconsistent, that his Beatitude, as head of the same community, should bring forward, so belatedly, this claim to the ownership of what his predecessors had apparently disposed of, in a manner and at an evaluation, which they then considered to be completely satisfactory.'

It is surely obvious that the question of transfer of ownership which was settled by deed of gift more than sixty years ago cannot reasonably be reopened at the present time, even if there were no such thing as a Statute of Limitations. This is the attitude which we are bound to assume to the charges which have been made, to the effect that the gift was extorted by the Russian Government, on pain of confiscation of property belonging to the monastery; and also to the alleged admission by Count Ignatiew, in private letters to the Archimandrite Antoninos, that he had 'stolen' the Codex—a statement which it is difficult to believe that one of the astutest diplomats of the nineteenth century would have made in all seriousness, even to a bosom friend. The publication of these letters seems to have provoked no action on the part of the Monastery at the time (1909), and, in any case, the complete and cordial acceptance of the position by the Archbishop of Sinai in the letters quoted above renders such allegations beside the point at issue.

## *The Genuineness of the Manuscript*

Apart from a recent newspaper report that it is a copy made by a forger in a Bolshevik prison from an earlier copy of the fifteenth or sixteenth century, a story sufficiently refuted by the appearance of the leaves themselves and a comparison of them with the Oxford facsimile of the Codex Sinaiticus, which was prepared before the War, the suspicion which has been aroused as to the genuineness of the manuscript rests solely on the declaration of Constantine Simonides in the middle of the nineteenth century that he had himself written it. His claim was sufficiently refuted at the time by competent scholars; nor, though the science of palaeography has since then advanced greatly and the manuscript has been minutely studied, had any doubt as to its authenticity been subsequently expressed till the fantastic story of Simonides was revived by a section of the Press,<sup>11</sup> The story in its complete form (details were added to meet objections from time to time both by Simonides himself and by a monk Callinicus, who appears to have been a sort of 'Mrs. Harris', i.e. Simonides himself under a different name) was that about the end of 1839 his uncle Benedict, head of the monastery of Panteleemon on Mount Athos, wishing to give a present to the Tsar Nicholas I, decided on 'a copy of the Old and New Testaments, written according to the ancient form, in capital letters, and on parchment', together with the remains of the seven Apostolic Fathers. Dionysius, the calligrapher of the monastery, declined the task as too difficult, whereupon Simonides, then studying theology under his uncle, agreed to undertake it. He mastered the art of calligraphy, found in the library of the monastery a large volume of vellum, which had for the most part been conveniently left blank, and proceeded to copy out the Old and New Testaments, using as his model 'a copy of the Moscow edition of both Testaments (published and presented to the Greeks by the illustrious brothers Zosimas)', which his uncle had collated 'with the ancient ones' [editions or manuscripts?]. To the Biblical scriptures he added the Epistle of Barnabas and the first part of the 'Shepherd' of Hermas, but then ran short of vellum and therefore did not proceed with the other Apostolic Fathers. His uncle, who corrected the manuscript in many places, died 29 August 1840; and some time afterwards Simonides went to Constantinople, where he showed the manuscript to the Patriarchs Anthimus and Constantius. The latter, who had been 'Bishop [really Archbishop] of Sinai', urged that it should be presented to St Catherine's monastery. This Simonides agreed to do, and after an unspecified interval he delivered the manuscript to the Patriarch, who acknowledged it in a letter dated 13 August 1841. On a subsequent visit in 1846 Simonides learned that the Patriarch 'had sent [the manuscript] some time previously to Mount Sinai'. There, In 1852, Simonides, while on a visit, saw it himself and 'found it much altered, having an older appearance than it ought to have. The dedication to the Emperor Nicholas, placed at the beginning of the book, had been removed'.

This ingenious fable teems with improbabilities. In the year 1839-40 Simonides, born 11 November 1824,<sup>12</sup> was fifteen years old. He arrived at Mount Athos, according to a biography by Charles Stewart, circulated by himself, in November 1839 and studied theology under Benedict. Benedict, so Simonides assured the world, discovered many ancient manuscripts, which, on the failure of his eyes, he set his nephew to reading and copying; yet simultaneously, that is, between the end of 1839, when the present to the Tsar was resolved on, and 29 August 1840, when Benedict



died, Simonides found time to learn the art of calligraphy and to copy the whole of the Old and New Testaments in time for many corrections to be introduced by his uncle before his death. And this at the age of little more than fifteen!

Furthermore, Simonides, when he states that he saw again in 1852 the manuscript which he had himself written twelve years before, clearly implies that it was at that time complete save for the dedication; yet Tischendorf had in 1844, taken away forty-three leaves of it, which he found, with many others, in a wastepaper basket. 'Callinicus', in a letter written after Simonides had published his first story (*The Literary Churchman*, 16 January 1863, p. 23), declared that Tischendorf stole these leaves; and Simonides himself, in another letter (*ibid.*, 2 February 1863, p. 47), writes: 'I saw [the manuscript] in safe preservation when I was at the monastery in March, 1844, a little before Tischendorf's arrival.' Yet in his first story we are told that in 1846 he learned from Constantius of the dispatch of the manuscript to Sinai. The inference is obvious that when he wrote his original narrative he did not know of Tischendorf's first find of the leaves, and that he subsequently invented his own visit in 1844 and the testimony of Callinicus in order to bridge this gap in his first story. Moreover, in 1845 Porphyrius Uspenski found in the monastery fragments of two leaves of the manuscript, both from the Pentateuch, used in the bindings of other books and showing every sign of having been there for a considerable time; and in 1859 more than half the Old Testament was missing. How had this happened to a manuscript written in 1840 and seen by Simonides himself in 1852, still more or less intact? And how comes it that on many pages of a manuscript so recent the ink has faded to so marked an extent?

There are, however, other difficulties. No book, printed or manuscript, is known from which the text of the Codex Sinaiticus could conceivably have been derived, and some of its readings are in fact unique. All palaeographers who have studied the manuscript are agreed that at least three different hands can be distinguished in the main text. Why did the handwriting of Simonides himself change in this way? And how are we to explain the fact that the numerous corrections are in hands of various types, from the fourth century till well into the Middle Ages?

It may be added that a monk Callinicus who was eventually found in St Catherine's monastery declared that he had not written the letters so signed and did not know Simonides; that the brethren all agreed that no such person as Simonides had ever visited Sinai; that the manuscript was entered in ancient catalogues of the monastic library; and further that S. Nicolaidēs, formerly Archdeacon and first Secretary of the Metropolis of Salonica, who had five times visited Mount Athos and was well acquainted with all the monasteries, ridiculed Simonides' story and threw doubts on the very existence of Benedict (*The Parthenon*, 28 February 1863).

Such points as have been stated above can be appreciated by all, whether skilled in palaeography or not; the palaeographical arguments against Simonides' claim, which only experts can fully assess, are even more decisive, and it may be categorically stated that no single person qualified to judge feels any doubt whatever as to the genuineness of the manuscript. One point of detail may, however, be alluded to, as it constitutes a palaeographical test which is in itself fatal to Simonides' story. One of the arguments used in favour of the theory that the manuscript was written in Egypt is the sporadic occurrence in it, both in the text itself and in the earlier cor-

rections, of an omega of very curious shape. (ω as against the usual ω). This very rare form is found in one or two papyri from Egypt, notably in Papyrus 28 of the John Rylands Library, Manchester, but, apart from a few instances in the Codex Vaticanus, it appears to be unknown elsewhere. Now in 1839-40, the Codex Vaticanus was locked away and inaccessible to scholars in the Vatican Library, and the papyri in question were buried in the sands of Egypt. Whence then could Simonides have obtained it? Or what object could he have in inventing so strange a form?

Apart from the ridiculous story of the forger in the Bolshevik prison, the suspicion attaching to the Codex rests wholly on the rambling and sometimes self-contradictory assertions of a man convicted of gross lying and forgery, which have been rejected with contempt by every expert who has studied the original manuscript. In fact., as Professor Kirsopp Lake has written, 'the details of this absurd story belong rather to the annals of crime than to the history of palaeography'.

### *Description of the Manuscript*

The whole volume as it now exists, including the leaves at Leipzig, that belonging to the Society of Ancient Literature, and two fragmentary leaves found in the bindings of other manuscripts, contains 393 leaves, of which 347 have been acquired by the British Museum from the Russian Government through Messrs. Maggs Brothers. These have been numbered Add. MS 43725.

Before Tischendorf's first visit to Sinai a good deal of the manuscript had already disappeared. What is left includes the whole of the New Testament, with two works which very nearly obtained admission into the Canon, the Epistle of Barnabas and the 'Shepherd' of Hermas, the latter incomplete. Of the Old Testament the following books remain, in the order here given: Genesis (fragment), Numbers (fragment), 1 Chronicles (portions), Ezra (9:9-end), Nehemiah, Esther, Tobit, Judith, 1 and 4 Maccabees, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations (portions), the Minor Prophets (except Hosea, Amos, and Micah), Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Job. Of these, the leaves at Leipzig contain the whole of Nehemiah and Esther and portions of Chronicles, Ezra, Tobit, Jeremiah, and Lamentations.

The leaves are composed of very fine vellum, varying in thickness but usually thin and each measuring 15 by 13.5 inches, made up for the most part in gatherings or quires of eight leaves or sixteen pages. The text is written (except in the seven books, Psalms-Job, where there are only two columns) in four narrow columns to the page, so that a complete opening shows eight successive columns; and each column normally contains 48 lines. Four different scribes, writing very similar hands and employing an ink of the brownish tint characteristic of the period, were employed on the main text, besides others responsible for such minutiae as the running titles, section numbers, and subscriptions, not to mention numerous correctors, contemporary and later. The script is a rather large and handsome uncial, regular and exact but a little heavy. It represents a type of hand found in Greek papyri written in Egypt at least as far back as the latter part of the second century; and were hand writing the only criterion of date, one might venture to put back the preparation of the volume to the end of the third century. This is, however, rendered impossible by the presence, apparently as an original part of the manuscript and certainly before

it left the scriptorium, of the Eusebian apparatus, which consists of section numbers and references to the canons or tables devised by Eusebius of Caesarea for his harmony of the Gospels. The tables themselves are missing, perhaps through the early loss of a quire between the Old and New Testaments, but the section and reference numbers, which, like the titles of the Psalms, are in red ink, appear throughout the Gospels. The date at which Eusebius devised his scheme is unknown, but since he died about A.D. 340 and we must allow some time for his system to establish itself, we cannot well place the Sinai manuscript appreciably before that date.

It has generally been stated that the Codex Vaticanus is earlier than the Sinai manuscript, but this statement seems to rest mainly on the assumption, which we now know to be untrue, that the style of hand represented by the latter was of fourth-century origin, whereas the hand of the Vaticanus is of a rounder and less heavy type, which was believed to be earlier. The fact that the Vaticanus has a peculiar system of numbering in place of the Eusebian sections is of little moment at this early date. There seems in truth little ground for separating the two manuscripts by any great interval of time, and none for dogmatism. It is even possible that both were written in the same scriptorium, which there are various reasons, not conclusive but of some weight, for placing in Egypt, and, if so, presumably at Alexandria. At a later period, which considerations of script fix as between the fifth and seventh centuries, the Codex Sinaiticus was very likely at Caesarea in Palestine, when corrections were made in it by various hands. This is inferred from two notes (both in the portion at Leipzig) added by one of this group of correctors at the end of Ezra and Esther respectively. The second and longer may be rendered into English as follows: 'Collated with an exceedingly ancient copy which was corrected by the hand of the holy martyr Pamphilus; and at the end of the same ancient book, which began with the first book of Kings and ended with Esther, there is some such subscription as this, in the hand of the same martyr: *Copied and corrected from the Hexapla of Origen corrected by himself. Antoninus the Confessor collated it; I, Pamphilus, corrected the volume in prison through the great favour and enlargement of God; and if it may be said without offence it is not easy to find a copy comparable to this copy.* The same ancient copy differed from the present volume in respect of certain proper names."<sup>13</sup>

The Hexapla, the chief treasure of the great library at Caesarea, was the copy of the Old Testament prepared by Origen, who lived from about A.D. 185 to 254. It was written in six parallel columns, of which the first two contained the Hebrew text, respectively in Hebrew and in Greek characters, and the others the Greek translations of Aquila, Symmachus, the Septuagint (revised by Origen himself), and Theodotion. The Antoninus mentioned in the note was martyred at Caesarea on 13 November A.D. 309, Pamphilus on 16 February following; and thus we see that a portion of the Old Testament text (Kings to Esther) in the Sinai manuscript was corrected from a manuscript written before 309 and revised about that year, by comparison with the Hexapla itself, in the prison to which the two scholars had been consigned during the Great Persecution. These corrections have therefore a very special value.

## *The Value of the Manuscript for the Text*

Textually the manuscript would in any case be of considerable interest by the mere fact of its early date; but the character of the text gives it a value of a special kind. It is indeed a little misleading to speak thus of its 'character', as if this were uniform throughout. The textual value of a manuscript depends upon that of its source or sources. Now, in the fourth century complete copies of the Bible were still a novelty, the sacred scriptures having hitherto circulated, for the most part, either as single books or in collections of a few books; and thus the text of the Sinai manuscript was derived, ultimately at least and perhaps directly, not from a single archetype of uniform character but from many manuscripts, each containing small portions of the Bible. Thus, it is not surprising to find that whereas in the Psalms the Sinai manuscript (denoted  $\aleph$  or Aleph) and the Vaticanus (B) combine to show a text which has been called Lower Egyptian, while that of the Alexandrinus (A) belongs to a different family, in the Major Prophets Aleph and A are often found combining in opposition to B. In the New Testament, for which Aleph is complete and which probably stands first in interest for most readers of this pamphlet, B and Aleph are the leading representatives of the type of text called by Westcott and Hort 'Neutral' and by them regarded as representing, more than any other, the original form of the New Testament. Of the two, B (for which Westcott and Hort had a decided preference) is the purer representative of the family, but it seems clear that Aleph, though it not infrequently differs from B, is derived from a common ancestor. Moreover it alone of the three early codices is complete, for B has lost the Pastoral Epistles and Revelation, and A wants the greater part of Matthew. Recently, owing mainly to the researches of Canon Streeter and Professor Kirsopp Lake, a text which has been called 'Caesarean' and which possesses strong claims to consideration, has been identified; and some early papyri found in Egypt, notably the Chester Beatty papyrus of the four Gospels and Acts recently edited by Sir Frederic Kenyon, though not belonging strictly to any of the recognized families, show a text which in many respects approximates to the Caesarean type. This raises a doubt as to the correctness of some of Westcott and Hort's views and makes it necessary to investigate the whole question afresh.<sup>14</sup>

It will perhaps be of interest to set down here translations of a few passages in the Gospels, selected from many such, in which Aleph offers readings of interest. These translations and the text of the Authorized Version are printed in parallel columns, and agreements of Aleph with B are marked by an asterisk.

### \*Matt. 1:25

*Sinai MS. (Aleph)*

Till she brought forth a son.

A. V.

Till she had brought forth her firstborn son.

\*Matt 5:44

*Sinai MS. (Aleph)*

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them which persecute you.

A.V.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.

Matt 12:46-8

*Sinai MS. (Aleph)*

His mother and his brethren stood without. And he answered and said unto him that told him, &c.

[B has the shorter text as above, except for the insertion after 'stood without' of 'desiring to speak with him'.]

A.V.

His mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, &c.

\*Matt. 18:11

*Sinai MS. (Aleph)*

[Omitted.]

A. V.

For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

\*Mark 16:8-20

*Sinai MS. (Aleph)*

The Gospel ends with v. 8, which, literally translated, reads thus: And going out they fled from the sepulchre; for trembling and amazement held them: and they said nothing to any man; for they were afraid. B agrees. A (Codex Alexandrinus) has vv. 9-20, as in the Authorized Version.

\*Luke 10:41-2

*Sinai MS. (Aleph)*

Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But there is need of few things or one: for Mary chose the good part.

A.V.

Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part.

Luke 11:2-4

*Sinai MS. (Aleph)*

Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so also (*so marked by corrector for deletion*) on (corrector adds the, but the word has been subsequently erased) earth. (*Corrector inserts in margin, And deliver us from the evil one.*) Our daily bread give us day by day. And forgive us our sins as also (*corrected to* for also) we ourselves forgive every man that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.

A.V

Our father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

[B has the following differences: 'Thy will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth' is omitted; B reads 'for we also ourselves forgive'; 'but deliver us from the evil one' is omitted. It will be noticed that this clause has been inserted by the corrector of Aleph at the wrong place. He originally began to write it, in the right margin, in the correct position, but changed his mind, washed out what he had written, and rewrote the words as above, altering 'but' to 'and'.]

Luke23:34.

The words 'And (A.V. 'then') Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do', omitted by B, occur in Aleph, as in the Authorized Version.

John 4:9-10.

*Sinai MS. (Aleph)*

How is it that thou, being a jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? Jesus answered and said, &c. The words, 'for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans', are inserted in Aleph by a corrector, but in B they are part of the original text.

A.V.

How is it that thou, being a jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said, &C.

John 7: 53-8:11 (consisting mainly of the episode of the woman taken in adultery) is omitted, as also by B and most of the earliest authorities.

In Luke 22:43,44 the reading of Aleph is deserving of special mention. The text of the Authorized Version has: 'And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.' Both B and A omit these two verses entirely, but they occur, in the form just quoted, in Aleph, which provides the earliest manuscript evidence for them. A very early corrector, however, probably one of those who checked the manuscript immediately after it had been written, has inserted above the words, and down each margin, the dots and hooks which were used to cancel a passage; he had presumably found the verses wanting in another manuscript with which he compared this and decided that they were spurious. So much is evident from the facsimile, where some at least of the dots are quite clear; but a close scrutiny of the manuscript reveals what the facsimile does not, that another corrector has attempted to erase the deletion-marks. In the spaces between the lines, where the use of the knife might endanger the actual text, he has been only partially successful, and several of the dots are visible, one or two being even untouched; but the hooks in the margin have in fact been effectively erased, the vellum showing, however, the roughness of surface due to the knife. Tischendorf ascribed the erasure of these marks to one of what he called the 'C correctors'  $\aleph^c$  who worked on the manuscript while it was at Caesarea; and minute examination has revealed that the individual in question was the corrector known as  $\aleph^{ca}$ . This very important scribe who, if not identical, was at least contemporary, with the man who wrote the notes at the end of Ezra and Esther in the Old Testament, collated the entire manuscript,<sup>15</sup> the text of which he transformed into something approximating to the Byzantine type which underlies our Authorized Version. In the original manuscript his alterations can be almost invariably detected by the peculiar reddish-orange tint of his ink, though of course this is imperceptible in a facsimile. And though we can hardly hope to identify the origin of a mere erasure, in the present instance the final word of the pas-

sage, 'ground' (**γην**, at the head of the second column in the illustration), has clearly been touched up by this same **ℵ<sup>ca</sup>** to whom the erasure of the deletion-marks may therefore be confidently attributed.

Another of the many passages where sight of the original manuscript is indispensable may be briefly referred to here. In an appendix to his book *The Four Gospels* (pp 590-7), Canon Streeter has argued, on the basis of certain readings found both in the Codex and in certain works of St. Jerome, that the manuscript may have been used by Jerome himself, who supposed it to represent the type of text approved by Origen. In support of his theory, Canon Streeter has pointed out that the remarkable addition 'nor the Son' (**οὐδὲ ο υἱος**) in Matt. 24:36 is expressly asserted by Jerome to be absent from the copies approved by Origen, whereas we know from Origen's own writings that he not only accepted the phrase but commented on it at length. Now curiously enough these words, though occurring in the original text of the Codex Sinaiticus, *have been deleted by an early corrector*; <sup>16</sup> so Canon Streeter has argued that Jerome, seeing these words deleted in a manuscript he supposed to have the authority of Origen, would naturally have concluded that Origen had discountenanced them. So far, so good; but obviously Canon Streeter had to show that the words had been deleted *before* the time of Jerome, and consequently to reject Tischendorf's doubtful ascription of the deletion to **ℵ<sup>ca</sup>**, who is not earlier than the fifth century. Re-examination of the passage, however, indicates that Tischendorf was right; the colour of what ink is still visible, the shape and position of the dots and the marginal hook, all point to **ℵ<sup>ca</sup>**, and thus Canon Streeter's ingenious argument would fall to the ground, though of course this does not disprove the connexion which he sought to establish between the Codex Sinaiticus and St. Jerome.

These examples provide an answer to a question asked by some critics: Why, since a complete facsimile of the Sinai manuscript exists, need the original be acquired? For the finer and more exact details of scholarship not even the best facsimile can ever replace an original manuscript. All who have done work of this kind know how often it happens that such problems as the identification of hands, the proper assignment of corrections, sometimes the very question whether a particular reading is original or a later correction, can be solved only by a minute examination of the actual manuscript; and in matters of textual criticism, notably in the case of Aleph, the authority to be attached to corrections, which depends largely on identification of hands, is often of high importance.

It is thus a matter for rejoicing that the Trustees of the British Museum have been able to acquire this, one of the primary authorities for the text of the Bible. They already possessed the Codex Alexandrinus, besides some important manuscripts of the Syriac and Coptic versions, while the Codex Bezae, another of the primary authorities, is at Cambridge, and the Codex Ephraemi rescriptus and Codex Claromontanus are no farther away than Paris. Such concentration of early codices in a limited area is of the utmost service to scholars, who will thus be saved both time and expense in their researches.

The purchase from the Soviet Government was effected at the end of 1933, with the help of an advance by the Treasury, for £100,000, the British Government having undertaken to contribute £1 for every £1 contributed from other sources. On 15 Jan. 1934 the Trustees of the British Museum ap-



pealed to the public for £50,000 to cover their liability in the matter, and so meet the Government's offer. Not only has the whole of this sum of £50,000 been secured but further subscriptions, together with an advance from the reserves of the Museum, have raised the total to more than £60,500 and proportionately diminished the Government's quota.

In conclusion, thanks must be returned to the Oxford University Press, which has generously borne the cost of composition for this pamphlet, and to Messrs. Vaus and Crampton, who with equal generosity presented the blocks from which the illustrations were printed.

1 *Die Sinaibibel*, Leipzig, 1871, pp. 14 ff. See also the introduction to his *Notitia Editionis Codicis Bibliorum; Sinaitici*, Leipzig, 1860.

2 Various correspondents have pointed out that in 1847 there was some talk of George Borrow being sent on a mission to the East in quest of manuscripts for the British Museum, and one of the places he was to visit was the monastery on Mount Sinai. The proposal came to nothing; but had he gone, much trouble and expense might have been saved, and we should have had an interesting account of his experiences. (W. I. Knapp, *Life . . . of George Borrow*, 1899, vol. ii, pp. 61-3.)

3 Diary of Mr. Finn, quoted by Miss Constance Finn in *The Times*, 1 February 1934. Her letter is inaccurate in giving the impression that Tischendorf had the Codex with him; what the diary actually says is that he had had the Codex 'conveyed to St Petersburg in original'. Even this is incorrect; as we shall see, Tischendorf did not take the Codex until September of that year. A year later, 1 May 1860, the Archimandrite Porphyrius Uspenski (afterwards Bishop of Chirgin) told the diarist that he had discovered the Codex some time before and published something about it. This is the usual claim put forward in such circumstances by some one who 'knew about it all the time'. Doubtless after Tischendorf found the 129 leaves in the waste-paper basket in 1844., Porphyrius or others looked for the rest and found it. What Porphyrius did do was, after Tischendorf's first visit, to find in the binding of another book fragments of two leaves. This was in 1845. In 1863 he published a Russian brochure attacking the orthodoxy of the Codex. Porphyrius also told Mr. Finn that Tischendorf arrived at Sinai just when the Archbishopric was vacant, and promised Cyril, the ambitious president of the convent, to have him made Archbishop if he would make a present of the manuscript to the Russian Emperor. 'This bargain has been fulfilled on both sides.' We have to thank Miss Finn for permission to consult the actual text of the diary.

4 *Canon and Text of the New Testament*, Edinburgh, 1907, p. 331.

5 P. Gregoriades, **Ἡ ἱερά Μονή του Σινά**, Jerusalem, 1875, pp. 148-9.

6 Tischendorf, op. cit., p. 91; C. R. Gregory, in his edition of Tischendorf's *New Testament*, Vol. iii, pt. 1, Leipzig 1884, p. 352. Tischendorf gives the translation of part of the letter, Gregory the original Greek of a part, the two supplementing each other.

7 We have to thank the Librarian of Leipzig University, Dr. Glauning, for photostats of the four letters (three originals and one copy) to Tischendorf, which are quoted in what follows.

8 Op. cit, p. 332.

9 See the note communicated 1/13 June 1878 by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Professor Gregory, and printed in his edition of Tischendorf's *New Testament*, loc. cit., pp. 351-2.

10 Mr. John Walker, in *The Times* for 31 Jan. 1934.

11 The story is happily summarized by F. H. Scrivener in *A full Collation of the Codex Sinaiticus with the Received Text of the New Testament*, 1864, pp. lx-lxxii.

12 In a letter published in *The Literary Churchman*, 2 February 1863, pp. 48-51, Simonides replies to arguments adduced against his claim and *inter alia* declares that the true date of his birth was 5 November 1820. But he had himself previously (*Athenaeum*, 21 December 1861, p. 849) given the date as 11 November 1824. The later letter contradicts his own earlier narrative in several particulars; e.g. in the latter he says 'I began to practise the principles of calligraphy', whereas in his subsequent letter he claims to have been already a skilled calligrapher. His attempts to explain this and other discrepancies are lame in the extreme.

13 There are two very similar notes in the famous Vatican MS. of the Minor Prophets known as *Codex Marchalianus* (Swete, *O.T. in Greek*, iii, pp. viii-ix).

14 See F. G. Kenyon, *Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible*, Schweich Lectures, 1932; London, British Academy, 1933.

15 Except the Epistle of Barnabas.

16 The deletion-marks were subsequently erased, but that fact is of no consequence here.