

Intro:

Last time we talked about the Syriac Versions of the New Testament and their manuscripts. We will continue to discuss versions in this session and also cover a group of men called the Church Fathers.

I put the time-line at the end this time because I think it will be most beneficial there.

I. Other Versions

A. Egyptian/Coptic Versions

1. Scholarship of Alexandria

- a. Significant Library “The libraries of Alexandria contained practically all the literature of Greece.” (Thiessen, p. 56)
- b. Septuagint translated in Alexandria, 3rd C BC (c. 250 BC)
- c. Greatly valued by Roman emperors
- d. Climate made it ideal for document preservation
- e. Hometown of Apollos (Acts 18.24, et al), a learned man

2. The Gospel in Egypt

- a. The Ethiopian eunuch and the Coptic Church (Acts 8)
- b. Local need: When the gospel came to the common Egyptians, they needed their own Bibles

3. Examples

- a. Sahidic or Thebaic Version (ca. AD 200)
- b. Bohairic or Memphitic Version (ca. 225, best Coptic, official version of Coptic church)
- c. Middle Egyptian (not much known, only fragments)

B. Latin Versions

1. Linguistic history of Rome

- a. Rome conquers Corinth 146 BC
- b. Many Greeks came into Rome, and the city became bilingual
- c. Greek the language of the day in the whole empire, especially among the commercial and educated classes

- d. Paul wrote to Romans in Greek
- e. Clement of Rome wrote to Corinthians in Greek (d. AD 101)
- f. Still, some provinces and country people only spoke Latin, so Latin versions needed

2. Examples

- a. Old Latin (two strains: African [AD 150] and European [most mss.])
- b. Vulgate (Trans by Jerome, Gospels AD 384, rest later)

3. The Vulgate

- a. Many conflicts in African and Euro Latin
- b. Jerome undertook resolution, published Gospels AD 384
- c. Very careful: “In the Gospels he made only such changes as were absolutely necessary to bring out the sense of the Greek; in the rest of the New Testament he used even greater caution in introducing new renderings.” (Thiessen, p. 60)
- d. Unpopular until 8th C, became official Catholic version at Council of Trent, AD 1546
- e. During unpopularity, copies often revised back to Old Latin
- f. More than 8000 mss. copies of Vulgate

II. The Church Fathers

A. Letters, commentaries, sermons, books

B. Advantages

- 1. Generally known dates (mss. involve uncertain dates)
- 2. Give some idea of type of text in use in a given locality
- 3. Can give evidence to disputed passages that might be present in their copies of the Bible
- 4. Often formally quote the Scriptures verbatim
- 5. Quoting quite accurate, especially in commentaries, and especially in those written in Greek

C. Disadvantages

1. Often quote loosely, from memory
2. Sometimes quote the same verse different ways, sometimes in the same book
3. We only have copies of the writings of the fathers, not originals

D. Many church fathers, writing from early 2nd to mid 5th C

1. Marcion of Pontus and Rome, (d. 165)
2. Justin Martyr, (c. 100 - 165)
3. Tatian of Syria and Rome, born about 120
4. Irenaeus of Asia Minor and Gaul (c. 140 - c. 203)
5. Clement of Alexandria (c.155 - c. 215)
6. Origen of Alexandria (c. 185 - c. 253)
... many others
7. Chrysostom of Antioch and Constantinople (347 - 407)

Conclusion:

Time line: various factors help in dating and tracking changes through the centuries of copied manuscripts.

The materials used: papyrus, vellum/parchment, or even some paper

The writing styles: UNCIALS to *miniscules*

The Versions: definite point in time when they came into existence

The Fathers: early witnesses to the text, help us understand types of texts in particular locations.