

GA 757

Let me tell you a story about GA 757. It is a complete NT, dating to the 13th century, and is perhaps the best and most important MS held by the National Library of Greece—it is good quality Family 35 throughout. This story is confined to the first Gospel, Matthew. Even though the collating of MSS can be a tedious activity, every now and again they tell an interesting story, especially for someone with enough experience with MSS to have some basis for interpreting what he is seeing.

It would appear that 757 was subjected to some rough treatment fairly early on. The first supplement had to replace 1:1 – 19:22, perhaps within a century of the first hand. I gather that it was then bound with the rest of the book (757 was obviously an important MS). After this binding, six leaves were torn out of the back of 757^s, but leaving a stub with some words—the six leaves contained 15:20 – 19:22. Perhaps at the same time, seven leaves were torn out of the beginning of what remained of 757, also leaving a stub with some words—the seven leaves contained 19:23 – 23:27. Those thirteen leaves were never replaced.

Probably no earlier than the 15th century (perhaps later) a second supplement had to replace the first two leaves of 757^s, containing 1:1 – 2:11, as well as another three leaves, containing 6:14 – 7:19. This same hand also replaced the penultimate leaf of 757, containing 27:61 – 28:13. The leaves done by 757^{s2} were bound in the appropriate places in the present volume. To all the above the reader may be saying, “OK, but so what?” I hasten to explain.

What is left of 757 (first hand) has only three careless spelling errors, otherwise being perfect **f³⁵**. All that remains of 757^s (first supplement), twelve chapters, is precisely perfect **f³⁵**, which means that its exemplar was also perfect. To my surprise, the first five leaves of 757^{s2} (second supplement) are also perfect **f³⁵**, except for three itacisms, which means that **its** exemplar was also perfect. I suppose that both supplements could have used the same exemplar, but in any case, for a 14th century copy to be perfect, all intervening generations had to be perfect as well. Now I call that **incredibly careful transmission!**