

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

See also the “Understanding Archaeological Terms” table in chapter 15.

Terminology	Definition
Alexandrian text-type	The type or family of Greek New Testament documents believed to be traceable back to Alexandria, Egypt. This group of manuscripts is believed to be the oldest and most reliable group of New Testament documents.
autograph (plural, <i>autographa</i>)	One of the original documents of the Bible.
biblical manuscript	An ancient copy of at least part of a biblical book or corpus.
bookhand	A more reformed style consisting of carefully written upright letters, separate from each other, written in a more fastidious fashion.
canon	The closed, definitive collections of writings inspired by God, which constitute authentic content of Scripture.
Caesarean text-type	The type or family of Greek New Testament documents believed to be traceable back to Israel.
codex (plural, <i>codices</i>)	An ancient version of what we today call a book which used leaved pages rather than a continuous scroll which was rolled up.
colophon	An ancient endnote, often indicating information about the manuscript to which it is attached.
consonantal text	The pre-Masoretic text containing only consonants with no vowels.
exemplar	An authoritative copy or archetype.
fair copy	The final draft of a manuscript after all revisions have been made.
final masora	An apparatus found in the second Rabbinic Bible at the end of each biblical book, which counts the number of letters, words, and verses in each biblical book.

Terminology	Definition
Jamnia, Scholars of	A rabbinic group that discussed, among other things, the canon of the Old Testament in AD 90.
Kethib-Qere	The <i>Kethib</i> (Aramaic for “written”) referred to what was written in the text itself, whereas the <i>Qere</i> (Aramaic for “read”) referred to the consonants in the margin with the vowels found in the text of the Kethib.
Nakdanim	A group of scribes whose name was derived from a word meaning “to point” and who were responsible for adding the vowel points and accents to the manuscript of the Hebrew Scriptures.
nomina sacra	Early Christian abbreviations within manuscripts that were usually used to abbreviate holy names (for example, <i>Jesus</i>) or theological words used quite frequently (for example, <i>man</i>).
Masora	“Tradition” that the Masoretes had received and usually transmitted in the margins of the Hebrew Bible.
Masoretes	The primary group of medieval scribes responsible for transmitting the pointed (vowelized) text of the Hebrew Bible along with significant apparatuses associated with the Hebrew text.
Masoretic Text	The group of Hebrew texts transmitted by a group of medieval scribes known as the Masoretes.
papyrus	A form of ancient paper created from the flattened, dried papyrus plant found in Egypt.
Pentateuch	<i>Penta-</i> (meaning five), Pentateuch refers to the first five books of the Old Testament, typically ascribed to the authorship of Moses.
pointing	The vowel markings found within the Hebrew text from the fifth century AD and after.
orthography	The system of writing used, including issues of script and handwriting.

Terminology	Definition
ostrakon (plural, <i>ostraca</i>)	A piece of pottery or stone, usually broken off of a vase, pot, or other household item, on which an inscription is often found.
paleographers	Specialized historians who study ancient texts.
ruling hand	Also called “documentary hand,” it was executed more quickly and less conscientiously than the bookhand.
scribe	A skilled copyist of the Scriptures.
scriptio plena	Semitic alphabet that contained vowel points.
scroll	A document used for recording written material that consisted of one continuous sheet that was compacted through rolling.
Septuagint (LXX)	The common designation used to refer to the numerous Greek translations of the Old Testament we find in the ancient world.
Sopherim	A group of scribes responsible for transmitting the consonantal text.
scriptio continua	Script that was connected without lapses or spaces between words or sentences.
scriptorium (plural, <i>scriptoria</i>)	A professional facility devoted to the copy and production of documents and books; a facility frequently used in the reproduction of New Testament manuscripts.
Syrian text-type	The type or family of Greek New Testament documents believed to be traceable back to Syria but which later dominated the Byzantine era. This text is largely believed to be the result of combining many other texts and is thought to be the least reliable of the manuscripts.
textual critic	A person who studies the textual traditions and individual manuscripts upon which the Bible was based.
textual families/types	A grouping of manuscripts based on geographical location and similar textual characteristics, such as having the same readings of particular verses in a given family.

Terminology	Definition
textual tradition	A group or family of manuscripts to which a particular manuscript is usually related.
uncial	Bookhand with larger and annular letters, found within the sixth and seventh centuries
version	An ancient translation of the Bible usually based on the original languages.
Vorlage	The source text underlying a text that is being used or translated.
Western text-type	The type or family of Greek New Testament documents believed to be traceable back to Rome.