

The Number of the Beast (666)

© Evert van Voorthuizen, August 2025.

Email: preteristadvocate@gmail.com.

Bible Versions

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(Note: All underlining of Scripture quotations for emphasis has been added by the author.)

Introduction

Revelation is a "prophecy" of coming events (1:3).

Because nothing like what John describes has ever literally transpired, John's visions are assumed to relate to events still in our future. But that's not what Revelation itself claims.

The very first verse clearly indicates the time frame for fulfillment (1:1):

This is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants what must soon come to pass.

This time indicator is repeated in 1:3, and again at the end of Revelation:

1:3: Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and obey what is written in it, because the time is near.

22:6: Then the angel said to me, "These words are faithful and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent His angel to show His servants what must soon take place."

22:10: Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of prophecy in this book, because the time is near."

The entire prophetic content of Revelation is "bookended" by these imminence statements.

Thus, contrary to popular opinion, John's visions relate not to events in our future, but to events long past.

To first-century events!

When John wrote, a certain "king" was reigning: the sixth king in a line of seven.

Five kings had already "fallen" (i.e., died), and a seventh would soon arise to reign for a short while (17:10).

The Beast itself would be a sort of eighth king, meaning that it would take on an identity and possess authority of its own somewhat independently of the other kings (17:11).

These seven kings are almost certainly the Roman rulers (Caesars), beginning with Julius:

Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, NERO, Galba.

Nero's successor, Galba, reigned for just seven months.

This places John's writing during the reign of Nero, who became Roman emperor in October 54 AD.

Nero's persecution of Christians broke out in Rome around November 64 and probably continued until his death in June 68 — a period of about 3½ years or 42 months, as noted in Revelation 13:5.

The dreaded number

Revelation 13:17-18 (BSB):

¹⁷ *so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark — the name of the beast or the number of its name.*

¹⁸ *Here is a call for wisdom: Let the one who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and that number is 666.^d*

BSB Footnote:

^{18 d} Some manuscripts 616.

We see here that:

1. John calls for “wisdom”: he invites his readers to calculate and solve the riddle.¹
2. 666 is the number of the name of the Beast (13:17; 15:2).

It is the number of a certain man (13:18).

Since John gives its value (666), the riddle involves identifying the number’s referent: the man and his name.

3. One must “calculate” his identity (13:18). From the verb *psēphizō* (Strong’s G5585), “to count, calculate”.
4. The solution is not straightforward, but requires a degree of “insight” (13:18).

From this we may deduce the following:

1. The riddle is solvable, and could be solved by John’s first readers.
2. The man was someone familiar to them.
3. The solution likely required some mathematical calculations.
4. The riddle is deliberately obscure.

The number’s referent was clearly a first-century person. But the riddle’s solution had to be kept hidden from outsiders — from the Roman authorities, so as not to unduly endanger John’s readers.²

Isopsephy and gematria

In ancient languages, the letters of an alphabet also served as numerals.

Most of us are familiar with the Roman numerals I, V, X, L, C, D and M — all letters from the Latin alphabet.

With the Greek and Hebrew alphabets, every individual letter also represented a number.³

This dual role of letters allowed words and phrases and names to have numerical values as well — equal to the sum of the number values of their constituent letters.

Isopsephy is the technique of (1) calculating the numerical value of Greek words, and (2) correlating multiple words having the same value in order to uncover hidden meanings. (*Gematria* is the Hebrew equivalent.)

Riddles utilizing this technique were commonplace in the first-century Roman world.

So we may assume that when John invited his readers to “calculate” to whom the 666 referred, they would have tried different letter combinations and added up their individual values in an attempt to reach that total.

To complicate matters John was seeking a Hebraic solution, not a Greek or Latin one.

Only those readers familiar with the Hebrew alphabet would have been able to solve the riddle.

¹ John seems to have liked puzzles and symbolism.

² The Roman province of Asia (in today’s western Turkey) was a center of the cult of Caesar-worship. Its cities were loyal to the emperor and his Empire. There was a definite need to keep the riddle’s solution private!

³ In Greek: *alpha* = 1; *beta* = 2; ... *iota* = 10; *kappa* = 20; ... *rho* = 100; *sigma* = 200; ... *omega* = 800.

In Hebrew: *aleph* = 1; *beth* = 2; ... *yod* = 10; *kaph* = 20 ... *qoph* = 100; *resh* = 200; *sin/shin* = 300; *taw* = 400.

The Solution

The solution presented here was reached independently by several German scholars in the 1830s.

The number refers to the Roman emperor Nero, who was about to unleash the first imperial persecution.

Nero blamed Christians for the fire that decimated Rome in the summer of AD 64, thereby justifying his brutal torture and murder of untold thousands of believers.

Here is the solution to John's riddle:

John's readers mostly spoke Greek, but some would also have been familiar with Aramaic and Hebrew.

The Latin form of Nero's name was NERO CAESAR. We find this form, for example, on first-century Roman coins.

The Greek form of his name, as found on Greek coins, was ΝΕΡΩΝ ΚΑΙΣΑΡ (= *Nerōn Kaisar*).

The Hebrew form of his name was a transliteration of the Greek form, but without the vowels *e*, *ai* and *a*.

First-century Jews wrote his name thus: נרׇון קסר.⁴

The numerical values of these seven Aramaic/Hebrew letters total 666.

These seven letters transliterated into our modern alphabet are *Nrwn Qsr*.

Explanation

1. Hebrew reads from right to left.
2. In John's time only Hebrew consonants were employed; the vowel pointings had not yet been invented. Thus, the vowels *e*, *ai*, and *a* (in *Nerōn Kaisar*) are missing in the Hebrew transliteration.
3. Having said that, vowels were sometimes represented by certain consonants (called vowel letters). Here, the *omega* (long *o*) in *Nerōn* is represented by the Hebrew letter *waw* (= *w*).
4. Aramaic/Hebrew letters were assigned numerical values; the values of the seven letters total 666.

Nero's name in Greek	Nero's name in Hebrew	Hebrew letter's numerical value	Hebrew letter's transliteration
N	נ (nun)	50	<i>n</i>
E			
P (rho = r)	פ (resh)	200	<i>r</i>
Ω (omega = ō)	ו (waw)	6	<i>w</i>
N	ן (final nun) ⁵	50	<i>n</i>
K	ק (qoph)	100	<i>q</i>
A			
I			
Σ (sigma = s)	ס (samek)	60	<i>s</i>
A			
P (rho = r)	פ (resh)	200	<i>r</i>
TOTAL		666	

⁴ We know this from an Aramaic document that has been found at Murabba'at, near the Dead Sea.

⁵ The final *nun* of a Hebrew word has a different form to a *nun* placed elsewhere.

Why does the Hebrew letter *waw* (w) stand in for the Greek letter *omega*?

Hebrew writing has gone through several phases:

The earliest Hebrew alphabet consisted of consonants only; vowels were not used in writing at all.

Then, from the 10th century BC on, innovative scribes started to use some of the consonants to represent the different vowel sounds.

The ה (*he* = *h*) stood in for the vowels *e* and long *a*.

The י (*yod* = *y*) stood in for the long *i* and long *e*.

The ו (*waw* = *w*) stood in for the long *o* and long *u*.

Because these three letters (ה, י, ו) represented both vowels and consonants, they were called vowel letters.⁶

Finally, the present system of Hebrew vowel signs and accent marks was introduced by the Masorete scholars sometime between 600 and 800 AD. Under this system, the *waw* has been modified by a dot to represent the long *o* and long *u* vowels:

ו̇ = *holem waw*, transliterated by *ô*.

ו̈ = *shureq*, transliterated by *û*.

Our interest here, with Nero's name in Hebrew, is with the letter ו (*waw* = *w*), which in John's time could stand in for the long *o* and *u* vowels.

This is the reason for the *omega* in *Nerōn* being transliterated by the Hebrew letter *waw*.

Objections to the Nero theory

Objection 1

Why would John require a Hebraic solution when most of his readers spoke Greek?

Response:

1. John himself said that some "insight" was needed to solve the riddle.
As noted earlier, John deliberately made the puzzle obscure to avoid trouble with the authorities.
2. John in Revelation shows a keen interest in Hebrew names:
9:11: *They were ruled by a king, the angel of the Abyss. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek it is Apollyon.*

16:16: *And they assembled the kings in the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.*

In the first instance John gives his readers the Greek equivalent to a Hebrew name.

And for both names, he transliterates the Hebrew form into the Greek text of Revelation.

Given John's evident interest in Hebrew names, and the fact that Revelation's symbolism derives almost exclusively from the Hebrew Scriptures, it would seem eminently reasonable for him to propose a riddle solvable in Hebrew rather than Greek or Latin.

(And a lot safer for his readers.)

⁶ The ה (*he* = *h*) was only used as a vowel letter at the end of a word, to show that the final vowel (*e* or long *a*) should be pronounced. This can be seen, for example, in Hebrew names such as Moses (Moshē: מֹשֶׁה), and those ending in *ah* like Leah (לֵאָה), Rebekah (רִבְקָה), Micah (מִיכָה) and Deborah (דְּבוּרָה).

This letter ה is transliterated on the Blue Letter Bible website as *ê* or *â*, and on the Bible Hub website as *eh* or *āh*.

Objection 2

Why would John complicate matters by requiring such an unusual spelling of Nero's name?

This theory requires an appended *n* (Hebrew letter *nun*) to reach the 666 total.

Response:

Rather than being an unusual spelling, this was the regular Greek spelling of Nero's name as found, for example, on first-century Greek coins. The standard form of his name was ΝΕΡΩΝ ΚΑΙΣΑΡ (= *Nerōn Kaisar*).⁷

This objection, while quite common, it completely unfounded.

Two further points:

1. An Aramaic document discovered at Murabba'at, near the Dead Sea, supports the required spelling. This document was composed "in the second year of Nero Caesar", which equates to 55-56 AD. Nero's name in this document, with its transliterated Aramaic/Hebrew characters — includes the final *nun*: נרׇן קסר (= *nrwn qsr*).
2. Some early Greek manuscripts have 616 as the Beast's number. It seems that some early scribe, mindful that Nero was the intended referent, altered the number so that it reflected the more usual spelling used by his Latin readers: *Nero Caesar*. The Hebrew equivalent (without the final *nun*) totals 616. Irenaeus wrote disparagingly of this variant found in certain manuscripts already in his day (ca. 180 AD). He insists that 666 is the original form.

Objection 3

There ought to be additional vowel letters in the Hebrew transliteration of *Nerōn Kaisar*.

Specifically, a *yod* (= *y*) should be included in "Caesar" to give *nrwn qysr*.

Which would bring the total number value to 676 rather than the required 666.

Response:

As noted above, the Murabba'at document supports the required spelling.

Nero's name is spelled thus: נרׇן קסר.

Other than the *waw* (ו), no vowel letters are present that would increase the name's numerical value beyond 666. This spelling may or may not have been the dominant spelling, but it was certainly utilized.

(See Appendix 1: Nero's name in the Murabba'at scroll.)

Objection 4

The proposed solution requires the addition of "Caesar", which is a title rather than a part of Nero's name.

Response:

The name "Caesar" transitioned from being a family surname to a title of imperial authority around 68/69 AD.

This shift occurred after the fall of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, with later emperors adopting the title to connect themselves with Julius Caesar and his legacy.⁸

⁷ A Google search will amply demonstrate this fact. Search using as key words: Nero, Greek coins, ΝΕΡΩΝ ΚΑΙΣΑΡ. Coins often had ΝΕΡΩΝ ΚΑΙΣΑΡ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΣ inscribed — the Greek equivalent of Nero Caesar Augustus.

⁸ Each ruler of the Julio-Claudian dynasty (Julius → Nero) had *Caesar* as one of his names.

Following the death of Nero in June 68 AD, Galba assumed both the role of emperor and the name *Caesar* without any real claim to either. He took the name "Servius Galba Caesar Augustus". Galba helped solidify *Caesar* as the title of the designated heir by giving it to his own adopted heir, Piso Licinianus. After Galba's brief reign, Otho assumed the name "Marcus Otho Caesar Augustus". Vespasian finally ended the civil war and established the Flavian dynasty in July 69, ruling as "Imperator Caesar Vespasianus Augustus".

Objection 5

A final *nun*, called a *Nun Sofit*, has a different numerical value than the usual *nun*: 700, instead of 50. The *Nun Sofit* brings the total value of *Nerōn Kaisar* to 1316, well over the required 666.

Response:

Standard Hebrew gematria does not utilize the higher values of the sofit letters.

According to Wikipedia:

In gematria, Nun represents the number 50. Its final form represents 700 but this is rarely used, Tav and Shin (400 + 300) being used instead.⁹

Another Wikipedia article states:

In standard gematria (*mispar hechrechi*), each letter is given a numerical value between 1 and 400, as shown in the following table. In *mispar gadol*, the five final letters are given their own values, ranging from 500 to 900.¹⁰

It seems unlikely John would further confuse by requiring the use of a non-standard form of gematria. Were non-standard forms even known or utilized in the 1st century?

Objection 6

The number should be understood as three “sixes” rather than the number 666:

William Hendriksen, in his classic work *More than Conquerors*, claims that the 666 refers not to a specific man, but to mankind generally:

... the number of the beast is the number of man. Now, man was created on the sixth day. Six, moreover, is not seven and never reaches seven. It always fails to attain perfection; that is, it never becomes seven. Six means missing the mark, or failure. Seven means perfection or victory. ... The number of the beast is 666, that is, failure upon failure upon failure!¹¹

Response:

If John intended three lots of six, we would expect to see in the early manuscripts one of the following: Either three *stigmata* in a row, with each denoting a *six* (Ϛ Ϛ Ϛ), or the word “six” written three times thus:

Ϟϟ Ϟϟ Ϟϟ (= *hex hex hex*).

But instead we find 600 + 60 + 6, for a total value of 666:

- Some early manuscripts have the number fully spelled out.
- Others have the number’s shorthand form: Ϟ ϟ Ϛ. Ϟ (*chi*) = 600; ϟ (*xi*) = 60; Ϛ (*stigma*) = 6.
- Certain scribes deliberately altered the number to 616, intending it to be 50 less in value than 666.

Then there is John’s invitation to solve the riddle through mathematical calculation.

John employs the term *psēphizō*: a verb, imperative mood, 3rd person singular; literally: “let him count”. From the verb *psēphizō* (Strong’s G5585), “to count, calculate”.

Used in connection with the counting of pebbles in enumeration, or casting them into an urn when voting. This requirement for calculation is consistent with the (aforementioned) practice of *gematria* or *isopsephy*.

⁹ Wikipedia, article titled *Nun (letter)*. Accessed 7-July-2025.

¹⁰ Wikipedia, article titled *Gematria*; subsection: *Methods of Hebrew gematria*. Accessed 7-July-2025.

¹¹ William Hendriksen, *More than Conquerors, Commentary of Revelation*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1967). Chapter 11: Revelation 12 – 14; Section 4: The helpers of the dragon (13:1-18).

Indeed, the term *isopsephy* is related to the very verb that John employs: *psēphizō*.

The root word for both is the Greek noun ψηφος (*psēphos*) = a pebble.

Isos means “equal” — hence *isopsephy*, “equal pebbles”.

For John’s riddle, whose name is equal to 666?

Objection 7

No one in the early centuries considered Nero to be the number’s referent.

Some scholars regard this as the greatest obstacle to the Nero theory.

Four points in response:

1. Irenaeus and other early Fathers held that Antichrist was to come in the future, at the end of the world. Therefore, Nero as an historical figure was a non-starter.
2. Early exegetes consistently sought a Greek (not Hebrew) solution to the riddle. Nero’s name only works in Hebrew, so it is not surprising he was missed. Prejudice against a Hebraic solution meant they were unable to decipher the name that John intended.¹²
3. Irenaeus was aware of some in his day who had a particular individual in mind:
... some, in their inexperience, have ventured to seek out a name which should contain the erroneous and spurious number.¹³

For reasons unknown, Irenaeus never provides the suggested name or names, but his opponents’ preference for 616 over 666 strongly suggests that the Latin form of Nero’s name — *Nerō Caesar* — was being proposed.

4. Many early Christians did in fact associate Nero with the end-time persecutor — the Beast or Antichrist. We cover this in a subsequent section (page 9).

Objection 8

Nothing like what John describes concerning the mark of the Beast transpired in the 1st century.

Response:

John, like the prophets of old, is employing exaggerated imagery.

Note that in Revelation God’s people also receive a mark and seal on their foreheads (see 7:3; 9:4; 14:1; 22:4).

This clearly is not an outward mark, so why should the mark of the Beast be any more literal?

We should recall, too, how the Lord formerly directed his people to tie his commandments to their hands and foreheads (Dt 6:8) — as a sign of their love and loyalty to him. Something intended to be taken figuratively, not literally (Ex 13:9, 16; Dt 11:18-20).

What John intends by this imagery has to do with social ostracism: first-century Jewish believers in Jesus were cast out of the synagogue and socially ostracized — considered dead.

That such measures were effective may be seen in the early reluctance of people to confess Jesus (cf. Jn 9:21-22; 12:42-43; 19:28).

Fast forward two or three decades and we find Jewish believers having their property confiscated and wages not paid — see Hebrews 10:34; James 5:4.

¹² Why were early exegetes prejudiced against a Hebraic solution? Was it because they themselves were unfamiliar with the Hebrew language? Was it a result of continuing hostility between Jews and Christians?

¹³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.30.1.

The beastly mark probably had something to do with being a member in good standing in the local synagogue — both in the Holy Land itself and in areas (like Asia) where Jews were prominent.

(Notice how John calls the synagogues of Asia “synagogues of Satan”, whose members claim to be Jews and the chosen people of God but who in fact are neither — see Revelation 2:9 and 3:9.)

Similarly, in Gentile communities, coercion likely took the form of membership in trade guilds and the worship of patron gods. Was loyalty to the emperor enforced in some localities? Roman emperors lapped up blasphemous titles and adoration; statues and temples were erected in their honor. In the province of Asia, the emperor was viewed as the incarnation of the local god. Nero took all this to new heights (2Thes 2:4). This was a problem for Jews and Christians alike (Luke 20:20-26).

The choice facing first-century people was this: Who is lord? Was Caesar lord, or was Jesus lord?

That seems to be the issue behind the symbolism of the Beast and his mark and the worship demanded.

Conclusion

Many objections to the Nero theory seem to stem from something more fundamental, namely this:

An underlying objection to the 666 referring to some past personality.

After all, if John is referring to Nero, that leaves no room for some latter day Antichrist to appear on the scene to stamp us all with his mark.

And of course, that is correct! That is precisely what preterism affirms.

Some in the early church associated the end-time Antichrist with Nero

Some early exegetes did in fact associate the number of the Beast with Nero.

In other words, the tradition that John in Revelation 13 was referring to Nero was never completely lost, despite claims to the contrary.

This tradition seems to have been based in part on the *Nero redivivus* myth — which was itself based on the somewhat obscure nature of the tyrant's death.

Popular in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries, the myth alleged that Nero wasn't really dead but was currently in hiding, waiting for an opportunity to return to power. Some in the Empire hoped for his return, others dreaded the prospect.

Supposedly, certain verses in Revelation reflect this myth, and many modern scholars argue for the late-date composition of Revelation given that the legend would take some time to infiltrate the popular imagination.

Actually, the myth arose immediately following Nero's death and spread rapidly. The story of his recovery was common talk in the province of Asia by the following year (69 AD).¹⁴

Later Christian commentators saw in these verses clear references to Nero: he was presently in hiding waiting to return as a counterfeit Christ who would deceive many, including the Jews.

He would be an eighth "king" and ruler of the Empire.

For Christian exegetes, if Nero was not himself the Antichrist he was at least a prototype of the end-time ruler: his persecuting zeal made him an obvious model of the future tyrant.

The following verses from Revelation suggested this to some Christians:

One of his heads appeared to be fatally wounded, but his fatal wound was healed.

The whole earth was amazed and followed the beast. (13:3, HCSB)

[The second beast] deceives those who live on the earth because of the signs that he is permitted to perform on behalf of the beast, telling those who live on the earth to make an image of the beast who had the sword wound and yet lived. (13:14, HCSB)

"The beast that you saw once was, and now is not, and is about to rise from the Abyss and go to its destruction. And those dwelling on the earth — whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world — will be astonished when they see the beast that once was, and now is not, and yet will be." (17:8, my translation)

The beast that was and is not, is himself an eighth king, yet he belongs to the seven and is going to destruction. (17:11, HCSB)

For a more detailed discussion on this topic, see the following:

- Francis Gumerlock, "Nero Antichrist: Patristic Evidence of the Use of Nero's Name in Calculating the Number of the Beast (Rev 13:18)." In: *Westminster Theological Journal* 68 (2006): 347-360.
Available online here:
<https://franciscgumerlock.com/wp-content/uploads/Gumerlock-Nero-Antichrist-WTJ.pdf>.
- Kenneth Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell* (Fountain Inn, SC: Victorious Hope Publishing, 2010), chapter 18.

¹⁴ See Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, page 306.

The following witnesses connected Nero to the end-time Antichrist:

1. The *Sibylline Oracles* testify to this Nero-Antichrist belief.
2. Victorinus (ca. 260) claims that Revelation 13:3 is referring to Nero in its description of the Beast whose fatal wound was healed:

And one of the heads was slain to death, and his death-stroke was healed: speaks of Nero.

For it is certain that when he was followed by the cavalry sent by the Senate, he cut through his own throat.¹⁵

3. John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407) comments that Paul, in his *mystery of iniquity* prophecy (2Thes 2:7), was speaking about Nero as if he were a type of Antichrist.
4. Sulpicius Severus (ca. 363-425) wrote concerning the origins of the *Nero Redivivus* myth:
It was uncertain as to whether Nero had committed suicide. People believed that even if he had pierced himself with a sword, his wound was healed so that he still lived (Rev 13:3).
He will return at the end of the world to fulfill the mystery of iniquity prophecy.¹⁶
5. Theodoret of Cyrrhus (ca. 393-458) noted that some commentators apply Paul's prophecy to Nero.
6. Augustine (354-430 AD) and Quodvultdeus (died ca. 450) both note that the Nero-Antichrist belief was prevalent in North Africa in their time.
Commenting on Revelation 17:7-12, Quodvultdeus writes that the eighth king, whom John calls Antichrist, is understood by some to be Nero, so that he is *the beast who was, and is not, and who will come again* (17:8).¹⁷
7. The *Liber genealogus* is a Latin work by an unknown fifth-century North African Donatist.
The version of 438 AD shows how the numerical values of the letters in *Antichristus* total 154.
Then, if that number is multiplied by four — because there are four letters in the name *Nero* — one obtains 616, which is the authentic reading of Revelation 13:18.
The type of persecution that happened in the past under Nero will happen again under the Antichrist:
Peter and Paul died 38 years after the Lord's death. "This first persecution was of Nero, which is going to occur again under [the two witnesses] Enoch and Elijah."¹⁸
The author then paraphrases or cites from a late edition (post-Jerome's recension) of the Commentary of Victorinus: Certain names in Greek total 666. These include Antemus, Teitan, Phoebus, and the Gothic name Gensērikos.¹⁹
But, notes the author, these do not match the true number, which is 616 and points to Nero.
Nero is presently in hiding in some city in the west.
8. An early 8th century Latin work *Commemoratorium de Apocalypsi Johannis Apostoli*, written either in Ireland or by someone influenced by Irish scholarship, comments on Revelation 13:18 thus:
"The number of his name is understood according to the Hebrew language."²⁰
This is remarkable: as late as the 700s, a few scholars still recognized the need for a Hebraic solution.

¹⁵ From Victorinus' comments on Revelation 13:3. Cited from: *Commentary on Revelation by St. Victorinus*. Part of the Ancient Bible Commentaries in English series. Edited by John Litteral. Translated by Kevin P. Edgecomb. Published in September 2014.

¹⁶ Sulpicius Severus, *Historia Sacra*, Book 2; Section 29. In: *Patrologia Latina* Volume 20 (PL 20, page 145/146). Published by Jacques Paul Migne in 1845. Cited in Gumerlock, "Nero Antichrist".

¹⁷ Quodvultdeus, *On the Promises and Predictions of God*, Dimidium Temporis, 8. In: *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* Volume 60 (CCSL 60, page 201). Cited in Gumerlock, "Nero Antichrist".

¹⁸ Paragraph 614 from *Liber genealogus*. Cited in Gumerlock, "Nero Antichrist".

¹⁹ This last name is a variant of *Gaiseric*, who was king of the Vandals (ruled 428-477 AD). Gaiseric led his subjects to settle in north Africa. He was an Arian heretic. The name would be quite appropriate for the future Antichrist who comes to deceive the nations.

²⁰ *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* Volume 107 (CCSL 107, page 221). Cited in Gumerlock, "Nero Antichrist".

The Nero redivivus myth evaluated

Since Revelation was composed and circulated some years prior to Nero's suicide, it is highly unlikely that John is alluding to (or predicting) the *Nero redivivus* myth.

The meaning of the Beast that **was** and **is not** and **is about to come** is this:

The Beast relates not so much to Nero the individual as to the inquisition he was about to unleash.

The Beast is the Inquisition; its "number" refers to the man empowering it (Nero).

Note that the persecuting Beast has seven heads and 10 horns (Rev 13:1; 17:3, 10).

Kurt Simmons explains the significance of the seven-headed Beast:

In Revelation, the heads take on double meaning. They are *successive* when representing the ruling Caesars (Rev 17:10), but *simultaneous* when they represent the places where the Neronian persecution had a head. The head with the wound that healed (Rev 13:3, 12) likely represents the persecution in Palestine. The head was "wounded" when the persecution over Stephen collapsed, but healed in the renewed power to persecute under Nero. The same facts are represented under other symbolism by the binding of the dragon and beast in Tartarus (Rev 11:7; 17:8; 20:1-6).

The mortal wound to the head causes the beast and dragon to descend to the pit; the healing of the wound allows the beast to revive and ascend from the pit to persecute the church anew.²¹

The Beast, representing state-sanctioned persecution, existed prior to Nero.

The earlier persecution by the Jewish leaders, which would have required Pilate's permission, was also a manifestation of the Beast. That had ceased around AD 35 with the conversion of Saul/Paul.

Over nearly 30 years Christians throughout the Empire had enjoyed relative peace, and the gospel had been proclaimed largely unhindered.

But all that was about to change:

Nero's inquisition would cause the martyrdom of multitudes of Christians in Rome and Asia and Judea, and probably elsewhere in the Empire. Most Christian leaders would perish; the very survival of the Church and the Christian faith was at stake.²²

With the outbreak of Nero's persecution, what had earlier "died" suddenly came to life again.

The Beast had returned — he had been "resurrected" from the Abyss and his "fatal wound" had been healed.²³

The renewal of persecution under Nero is depicted by John in terms of:

- The Beast's imminent release from the Abyss (Rev 11:7; 17:8).²⁴
- The Beast's fatal wound being healed (Rev 13:3).
- Satan's release from the Abyss (Rev 20:7).

Three ways of portraying the same thing!

Satan acts through the Beast to persecute the Church.

When persecution begins anew it is as if both Satan and the Beast have been released from the Abyss.

²¹ Kurt Simmons, *Adumbrations: The Kingdom & Coming of Christ in the Book of Daniel* (Carlsbad, NM: Biblical Publishing Company, 2009). From Kurt's comments on Daniel 7:20, page 172.

²² John himself had already been exiled to Patmos prior to recording Revelation. That the persecution had not yet started in earnest is apparent from Revelation 2:13 (only one martyr to date) and 17:12-14 (the local Roman governors had not yet started to arrest and execute believers).

²³ That this renewal of persecution is received with universal astonishment and joy and support suggests that Christians were generally hated throughout the Roman Empire (Rev 11:9-10; 13:3-4, 8; 17:8; cf. Mt 24:9).

²⁴ Revelation 17:8: The beast "is about to rise from the Abyss ..." The fulfillment of Revelation's prophecies was imminent.

Clues that John gives for solving his riddle

As noted already, John in Revelation shows a keen interest in **Hebrew** names:

9:11: *They were ruled by a king, the angel of the Abyss. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek it is Apollyon.*

16:16: *And they assembled the kings in the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.*

In the first instance John gives his readers the Greek equivalent of a Hebrew name.

And for both names, he transliterates the Hebrew form into the Greek text of Revelation.

Given John's evident interest in Hebrew names, and the fact that Revelation's symbolism derives almost exclusively from the Hebrew Scriptures, it would seem eminently reasonable for him to propose a riddle solvable in Hebrew rather than in Greek or Latin.

Further evidence for this comes from an examination of the names themselves:

Concerning the first Hebrew name that John cites: *Abaddon* (Greek text: Ἀβaddon) means "destruction".

All five Old Testament (OT) instances of this name end with the vowel letter *waw* and a final *nun*.²⁵

The second name, *Armageddon* (Greek text: Ἀρμαγεδων = *Har-magedōn*), means "hill or mountain of Megiddo".²⁶

There are 11 OT references to Megiddo. Ten of them end with the vowel letter *waw*, representing the long *o*. But in Zechariah 12:11 the name ends differently — with a final *nun* appended to the *waw*.

Both transliterated names end in *omega-nu*: ων (*ōn*). So too does the name *Apollyon*.

John's evident interest in Hebrew names that end with *waw-nun*, and in their Greek transliterations that end with *omega-nu* (*ōn*), hint at his sought-after solution:

His readers must do the reverse by finding the Hebrew form of a Greek name ending in *ōn*.

Nero's name fits this scheme perfectly!

Therefore:

The common Greek form of Nero's name (*Nerōn Kaisar*) must be transliterated into Hebrew to give *nrwn qsr* — the letter values of which add up to 666.

One final point:

The name associated with 666 in the OT — Solomon — also has an *ōn* ending in the Septuagint version that John's readers used.

1 Kings 10:14 (LXX, with transliteration):

Σαλωμων ... ἑξακοσια καὶ ἑξηκοντα ἑξ ταλαντα ...

*Salōmōn ... hexakosia kai hexēkonta hex talanta ...*²⁷

²⁵ The reader is urged to verify these Hebrew forms by examining an unpointed Hebrew text.

The Bible Hub website provides the option of examining Hebrew texts as found in the Aleppo Codex (ca. 920 AD).

For *Abaddon*, see Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Psalm 88:11; Proverbs 15:11. For *Megiddo*, see Joshua 12:21; 17:11; Judges 1:27; 5:19; 1 Kings 4:12; 9:15; 2 Kings 9:27; 23:29-30; 1 Chronicles 7:29; 2 Chronicles 35:22; Zechariah 12:11.

²⁶ Concerning Armageddon: *Har* is the Hebrew word for mountain or hill. The name is really an oxymoron because Megiddo is located in the Jezreel Valley, not on a hill. John is rather alluding to the numerous battles formerly fought in this valley where the Lord had delivered his people from their oppressors — often against overwhelming odds. Armageddon ("Mount Megiddo") is to be viewed as a symbolic place denoting *final defeat*, much like our term "Waterloo".

²⁷ Note the *iota-alpha* ending of "six hundred": an Adjective (Accusative Plural Neuter form), agreeing with its Accusative Neuter Plural Noun "talents".

Manuscript variations on the number

The extant Greek manuscripts of Revelation display the greatest variant-to-manuscript ratio of any New Testament book. Indeed, it seems that the Greek text of Revelation was corrupted quite early on.

Irenaeus (ca. 180 AD) complained about scribal habits and corrupted Greek manuscripts already in his day. In comparison with other New Testament books, the Apocalypse seems to have had limited circulation, and later on doubts arose concerning its authorship and authenticity.

Revelation enjoyed widespread acceptance in the 2nd century — viewed as authentic, authored by the apostle John, and authoritative.²⁸ In the 3rd century doubts about authorship began to emerge in the East.

By the 4th century Revelation was viewed with suspicion and widely rejected in the East. Furthermore, since chiliasts derived their beliefs from Revelation, opponents of chiliasm tended to reject the book as a whole.²⁹

Early Latin commentaries on Revelation were composed by Victorinus (ca. 260 AD) and Tyconius (380).

But the earliest known Greek commentaries are those by Oecumenius (ca. 580) and Andreas (611).

This demonstrates the relative lack of interest in Revelation in the eastern churches.

While Jewish and non-Christians employed scrolls, the earliest Christians preferred to use codices (books).

This was especially the case with texts that were deemed canonical — those Old and New Testament texts that were prepared for reading in the churches. Book format conferred several advantages: the scribe could write on both sides of the page, and the reader could quickly flip from one location in the text to another.³⁰

Codices were at first made of papyrus. Most of the extant papyri come from Egypt because the dry climate of that land has aided their preservation. However, from around the year 200, Christian scribes began to employ codices made of parchment, which comes from animal skins and is far more durable than papyrus.³¹

By 400 AD parchment had largely displaced papyrus, although some extant papyri date from the 600s and 700s. From the 12th century, some scribes utilized paper rather than parchment.

Uncial script is a type of majuscule (capital letters only) script where the letters are rounded.

The uncial script used by early Latin and Greek scholars comprised lines of text with no breaks between words. Words beginning at the end of one line would carry over to the next. (Later uncial text did use word breaks.)

Minuscule script was developed in northern France in the 8th century.³²

Minuscule was characterized by the use of both upper- and lowercase letters, breaks between words, and a lot more punctuation. The new cursive script was faster to write, more legible, and more of it could fit onto a page.

The oldest firmly dated Greek New Testament minuscule comes from 835 AD.³³

²⁸ Second-century Church Fathers who accepted Revelation include Papias of Hierapolis, Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, Melito of Sardis. Irenaeus in Gaul, and Clement of Alexandria. See the online article: *The Fall and Rise of Revelation*. Author: T.C. Schmidt. Via the Text and Canon Institute website: <https://textandcanon.org/the-fall-and-rise-of-revelation/>.

²⁹ Chiliasm was very popular in the second century. Justin Martyr acknowledged that not all who are true Christians believed in a literal millennium, but the “right minded” ones like himself did. See *Dialogue with Trypho* chapters 80 and 81.

³⁰ See the online article: *Why were the Early Christians More Likely to Write on a Codex Rather than a Scroll?* Author: Paul Gibson. <https://biblequestions.info/2019/11/02/why-were-the-early-christians-more-likely-to-write-on-a-codex-rather-than-a-scroll/>.

³¹ Emperor Constantine in 331 directed Eusebius to prepare 50 copies of the entire Greek Bible — the New Testament plus the Septuagint — to be written on parchment, for the growing number of churches in his new capital, Constantinople.

³² Specifically, in the 760s at the scriptorium of the Benedictine monks of Corbie Abbey.

³³ Minuscule 461 (aka the Uspenski Gospels) is a complete text of the gospels, probably copied in Constantinople. The text-type is Byzantine. Other minuscules dating from ca. 850 AD include: 33 and 892 (both are Alexandrian text-type); 2464 (mostly Alexandrian, but Byzantine in Romans); and 565 (Caesarian text-type).

An important note:

While the earliest scribes employed uncial script on papyrus, the term *uncial* is normally reserved for uncial manuscripts made of parchment or vellum.³⁴

Naming of the New Testament Greek manuscripts

- Each papyrus manuscript is designated by a *unique P-number* (e.g., Papyrus 115, or P¹¹⁵).
- Each uncial parchment or vellum manuscript is designated by *Uncial* plus a number beginning with zero.
- Each minuscule manuscript, whether made of parchment or vellum or paper, is designated by *Minuscule* plus a number.

As noted earlier:

- Some early manuscripts have the Beast's number fully spelled out.
- Others have the number's shorthand form: **ΧΞΖ**. **Χ** (*chi*) = 600; **Ξ** (*xi*) = 60; **Ζ** (*stigma*) = 6.
- Yet others have the number 616, either fully spelled out or in shorthand form.

1. **Codex Alexandrinus**, from ca. 420 AD, is one of the four so-called *Great Uncials* — codices (books) that originally contained the whole Greek Bible, both Testaments together.³⁵

(As aforementioned, *uncial* manuscripts employed capital letters only, with no breaks between words.)

Alexandrinus is widely regarded as the best extant early text of Revelation.

Perusing this codex, we see something like the following, though without the word breaks:

ΕΞΑΚΟCΙΟΙ ΕΞΗΚΟΝΤΑ ΕΞ

Here, **Ξ** is an old uncial form of *xi* (= *x*), **Α** is an old uncial *alpha* (= *a*), and **ϸ** is an old uncial *sigma* (= *s*).³⁶

The equivalent in lowercase Greek letters is ἐξακοσιοι ἐξηκοντα ἐξ.

Transliterated, this is *hexakosioi hexēkonta hex*.

Literally, it is *six hundred sixty-six*.

This reading is also found in the early Byzantine Minuscule 1828 (XI).

(Roman numerals in parentheses indicate the estimated century when the manuscript was copied.)

Importantly, this reading is regarded by some as having been **the original form of the number 666** — the form that John himself wrote in the original autograph.

2. **Codex Sinaiticus** dates from 330-360 AD.

The text of this codex is regarded as of somewhat inferior quality to that of the later Codex Alexandrinus.

For the Beast's number, the word for 600 has a one letter difference compared to Alexandrinus:

ΕΞΑΚΟCΙΑΙ (= ἐξακοσiai; *hexakosiai*).

Sinaiticus, and Codex Ephraemi (see point 6, below), appear to be the only manuscripts with this spelling variant. Is this reading a simple spelling error?

³⁴ Vellum is a finer-quality parchment and was generally made from the skin of a young animal: calfskin, kidskin, or lambskin.

³⁵ The four Great Uncials are:

Codex Sinaiticus (Uncial 01 or **Ⲱ** = *aleph*), dating from 330-360 AD; **Codex Alexandrinus** (Uncial 02 or A), from 400-440 AD;

Codex Vaticanus (Uncial 03 or B), from 325-350 AD; **Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus** (Uncial 04 or C), from ca. 450 AD.

The text of Revelation found in Alexandrinus and Ephraemi, as well as in Papyrus 115, is widely considered to be superior to that found in Codex Sinaiticus and Papyrus 47. All of these (Revelation) texts belong to the Alexandrian text-type. The extant copy of Vaticanus does not include the Book of Revelation. The original text of Codex Ephraemi has been written over by a later scribe.

³⁶ Codex Alexandrinus and (most of) Codex Sinaiticus are housed in the British Library in London. Digitized versions of both codices can be viewed online via The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (<https://www.csntm.org/>). See Appendix 2.

3. A further spelling variation is found in many manuscripts dating from the 9th to the 17th centuries:
The spelling of the word for 600 is ἑξακοσια (= *hexakosia*).
This variant is found in Uncial 025/P and in numerous minuscules.³⁷
The earliest witness to this spelling is the sixth-century Alexandrian text preserved in the 13th-century Minuscule 2053; this contains the book of Revelation only, along with a commentary by Oecumenius.
4. A great number of manuscripts have the number of the Beast in shorthand form, represented by the three Greek letters *chi* (χ = *ch*), *xi* (ξ = *x*), and the obsolete letter *stigma* (ς).
In Papyrus 47 and uncials 046 and 051 they appear thus: **ΧΞς**.
In numerous minuscules they appear thus: **χξς**.
A line above the letters indicates that each one is to be read as a numeral.
The Greek numerical values of these three letters represent the number 666 as follows:
χ (*chi*) = 600; ξ (*xi*) = 60; ς (*stigma*) = 6. For a total of 666.
5. **Papyrus 47** is the earliest extant Greek manuscript which includes the number.
Produced in the late 200s AD, the papyrus includes Revelation 9:10 – 11:3; 11:5 – 16:15; 16:17 – 17:2.
Its text of Revelation 13:18 has the 666 written as three capital letters, thus: **ΧΞς**.
See the following image, about one-third of the way along line four.³⁸
Here, **Χ** is capital *chi*, **Ξ** is an older form of capital *xi*, and **ς** is capital *stigma*.

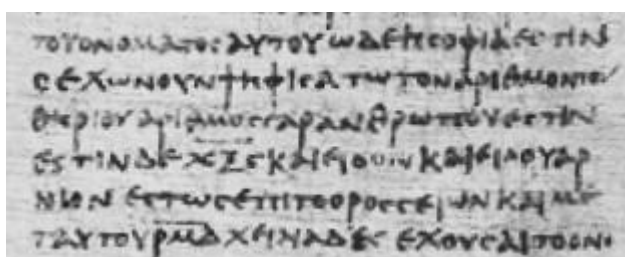


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6. In **Codex Ephraemi**, copied ca. 450 AD, the number of the Beast is 616, not 666.
This codex is also one of the four *Great Uncials*. Its original text has been written over by a later scribe.
In the underlying text the number 616 is fully spelled out in Greek capitals.
With its middle word *deka* (= 10) rather than the usual *hexēkonta* (= 60), the total comes to 616.
Here is the text's lowercase equivalent: ἑξακοσιαι δεκα ἐξ.
Transliterated, this is *hexakosiai deka hex*.

³⁷ Thus we have three different spellings of the word “six hundred”, with endings -οι (found in Codex Alexandrinus and Minuscule 1828), -αι (in Codices Sinaiticus and Ephraemi), and -α (in many later manuscripts).

³⁸ A better image of this papyrus leaf is available on the Institute for New Testament Textual Research website: <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=10047> [Page Id: 130 (7r); Rev 13:16-18; 14:1-4].

7. **Papyrus 115**, from ca. 300 AD, consists of 26 mutilated fragments of a codex containing parts of the book of Revelation. It has the number 616, written as three Greek capital letters: **ΧΙϚ**.

These letters are *chi* (Χ = *ch*), *iota* (Ι = *i*), and *stigma* (Ϛ):

Χ (*chi*) = 600; Ι (*iota*) = 10; Ϛ (*stigma*) = 6. For a total of 616.

Note that this early manuscript seems to have breaks between words.

Moreover, one can see that the number 616 is preceded by the letter **Η** (capital *eta* = *ē*).

If standing alone, this letter is the Greek word *or*.

It seems that this manuscript combined both numbers, so as to read “666 or 616.”

This conjecture is supported by the following:

- There seem to be no other letters immediately preceding the **Η**.
- No other manuscript has the letter *eta* immediately preceding the number.³⁹

Here is an image of the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 115 (4499/p¹¹⁵):

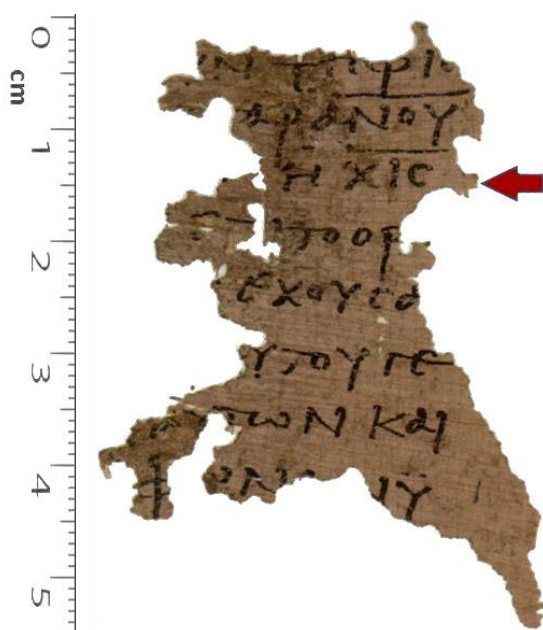


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Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

The Institute for New Testament Textual Research (at the University of Münster, Germany) provides, on its website, what is likely to have been the original text of Papyrus 115.

Here is part of their reconstruction (employing lowercase Greek letters):

γὰρ αὐοὺ **ἐστὶν καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ χξς** ἢ χις.⁴⁰

The words in black can be made out on the papyrus; those in red are a reconstruction of the missing text.

Here, χξς ἢ χις means “666 or 616”.

³⁹ Other manuscripts have one of the following immediately preceding the number:

αὐτοῦ (= *of it*), ἐστὶν (= *is*), or ἐστὶν δε (Papyrus 47). None have a preceding *eta* (Η or η).

⁴⁰ See: <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=10115> [Page Id 160 (8v); Rev 13:18; 14:1-3; 14:5-7].

8. The 616 textual variant is of ancient pedigree.

Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon, writes disparagingly (in *Against Heresies* 5.30.1) of this variant found in certain Greek manuscripts already in his day (ca. 180 AD). He insists that 666 is the original form, found in the best and most ancient copies. It seems that once the text was changed, the 616 variant was preserved and disseminated by those with pet theories concerning the number's referent.

The 616 variant was popular in North Africa and in Donatist circles.

Tyconius of Carthage (ca. 380 AD, a Donatist) employed this number in his immensely popular commentary on Revelation. Caesarius of Arles also gave his interpretation of this number (in 542 AD).

A few ancient Latin manuscripts also carry the 616 variant.

9. Minuscule 2344, an important 11th century Alexandrian text, has a unique variant:

ἑξακοσια ἑξηκοντα πεντε (= 665).

10. A further unique variant is found in Minuscule 582, copied in the year 1334:

ἑξακοσια ἑξηκοντα (= 660).

11. Almost all of the early non-Greek versions have the number 666:

The Old Latin (from ca. 160 AD), Sahidic Coptic (ca. 200), Vulgate (405), Armenian (400s), Ethiopic (500s), and the Syriac^{ph} (508) and Syriac^h (600s) versions.

- The Old Latin text of Codex Gigas (ca. 1200) reads: *sexingenti sexaginta sex* (= 666).
- Jerome's Vulgate (AD 405) reads: *et numerus eius est sescenti sexaginta sex* (= 666).
- One Vulgate manuscript, Düsseldorf Universitätsbibliothek Manuscript B-3 which was copied ca. 800 AD in Corbie Abbey, reads: *et numerus eius sexcenti sedecim* (= 616).
- One 6th century Armenian manuscript also carries the 616 variant.
- One 9th century Latin manuscript, it^{ar}, has 646 as the number of the Beast.

The early papyri and codices, including Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Ephraemi Rescriptus, and Alexandrinus outside the gospels, are representatives of the Alexandrian text-type.

Somewhat later, the Orthodox Church in Constantinople took over responsibility for copying the Greek manuscripts. Worn-out manuscripts were regularly replaced under the Church's supervision.

The text was edited for grammar and style, becoming more "polished" and standardized over time.

The numbers of Byzantine manuscripts really took off in the 800s AD, soon eclipsing those with the Alexandrian text-type.

The **Textus Receptus** (Latin for "Received Text") refers to the succession of printed editions of the Greek New Testament, from Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum Omne* (1516) to the 1633 Elzevir edition.

These served as the textual base for the vernacular translations of the Reformation era, including the KJV.

For the book of Revelation, Erasmus utilized a 12th century codex, Minuscule 2814.

The Textus Receptus, following Minuscule 2814, has the number in shorthand form: **χξς**.⁴¹

Note that the final six verses of Revelation are missing in Minuscule 2814.

Erasmus had to back-translate these verses from his Latin text in order to complete his Greek text of Revelation.

⁴¹ The Textus Receptus of Revelation 13 can be found online here:
https://www.logosapostolic.org/bibles/textus_receptus/revelation/rev13.htm.

The Textus Receptus was derived from **Byzantine text-type** manuscripts.

Minuscule 2814 contains the Book of Revelation along with a commentary on the Book by Andreas of Caesarea. Its Greek text is of the Andreas subtype, related to but not a pure representative of the Byzantine text-type. The Andreas subtype, present in about 30% of Byzantine manuscripts of the Apocalypse, is usually (but not always) accompanied by the Commentary.

Manuscripts having the number fully spelled out

Many manuscripts, both Alexandrian and Byzantine, have the Beast's number fully spelled out.

With regard to the first number (600):

We have already considered Codex Alexandrinus with its *iota-omicron-iota* ending, supported as this is by the early Byzantine Minuscule 1828 (XI).⁴²

We further considered the Codices Sinaiticus and Ephraemi Rescriptus with their *iota-alpha-iota* endings.

Apart from these, the spelling of the word "600" is almost invariably ἑξακοσια — with an *iota-alpha* ending.

The earliest witnesses to this third variant are the following:

- the sixth-century Alexandrian text preserved in the 13th-century Minuscule 2053.
- the Andreas-like Byzantine text of Uncial 025/P (IX).
- the Alexandrian text of Minuscule 1841 (ca. 900).

This *iota-alpha* variant is by far the most common for manuscripts having the longhand form of the number.⁴³

What can account for these variant spellings?

Whereas the latter two numbers (ἑξήκοντα and ἑξ) are indeclinable, the different forms for the (adjective) *six hundred* seem to reflect its Nominative Plural declensions, as follows:

- Masculine form = ἑξακοσιοι.
- Feminine form = ἑξακοσιαι.
- Neuter form = ἑξακοσια.

But which noun is this adjective agreeing with (in case, gender, and number)?

With the neuter noun "Beast" (θηριου)? Or with the masculine noun "number" (αριθμος)?

Is the neuter form found in later manuscripts explicable as an attempt by scribes to "correct" the text?

Certainly, the Byzantine scribes tended to correct the text, but how can we account for the early Alexandrian witnesses to the neuter form?

Manuscripts with the shorthand form of the number

As aforementioned, the shorthand form of the Beast's number (666) comprises the letters *chi*, *xi*, and the obsolete *stigma*:

As majuscule (capital) letters in Papyrus 47 (III) and uncials 046 (X) and 051 (X): **ΧΞϚ**.

As lowercase letters in numerous minuscules: **χξϚ**.

This latter form is found in the Alexandrian Minuscule 1611 (X).

⁴² The late minuscules 149 (XV), 1948 (XV), 2429 (XIV), and 2656 (1650 AD) also exhibit this form.

⁴³ The Alexandrian texts showing this spelling are these:

241 (XI), 1006 (XI), 1841 (ca. 900), 1854 (XI), 2053 (XIII), 2344 (XI), and 2846 (XII).

The earliest Byzantine texts with this spelling are Uncial 025/P (IX); the 11th-century minuscules 104, 459, 1934, and 2048; and the 12th-century minuscules 620, 911, 922, and 2794.

Minuscule 2625 (XII), whose text-type is somewhat elusive, also shows this spelling.

This is the form found in the majority of Byzantine and mixed text manuscripts — some 170 texts, starting with Minuscule 1424 (ca. 900 AD).⁴⁴

A superfluous ἐστίν, and missing text

More than 100 Greek Apocalypse manuscripts have the word ἐστίν (*estin* = “is”) immediately preceding the Beast’s number. This is the case with many of the manuscripts that utilize the shorthand version of the number, as well as some that utilize the longhand form. The copula (linking verb) ἐστίν is actually unnecessary here.

Texts that include ἐστίν:

- Most of the Alexandrian texts.⁴⁵
- Other non-Byzantine texts: 1678 (XIV), 1778 (XV), 2080 (XIV), and 2625 (XII).
- Almost all of the Andreas texts.⁴⁶
- Almost all of the Complutensian texts.
- Other early Byzantine texts: 911 (XII), and 2794 (XII).

Texts that do NOT have the preceding ἐστίν:

- A few Alexandrian texts: Codex Alexandrinus (V), 241 (XI), and probably Papyrus 115 (ca. 300 AD).
- Most of the Koine (Byzantine) texts.⁴⁷
- One mixed text (Aland category 3): 2377 (XIV).
- Just one early Andreas text: 2074 (X).
- Five of the six manuscripts that have the -οι ending of the word *six hundred*: Alexandrinus (V), 1828 (XI), 2429 (XIV), 149 (XV), and 1948 (XV).

Was ἐστίν included in the original autograph of Revelation 13:18?

Has the absence of ἐστίν from the majority of Koine texts arisen because the later scribes, who were all proficient in Greek, recognized that the word was superfluous and expunged it from the text?

A process of “polishing” the text by (and for the benefit of) native speakers of Greek?

Interestingly, a preceding *est* (= “is”) is found in the Old Latin text of Codex Gigas (from the early 1200s).

And it is found in the Vulgate texts of Jerome (405 AD) and Codex Amiatinus (716).

All this strongly suggests that the earliest Greek manuscripts from which these Latin texts derive also included the preceding *estin*.

Conversely, some manuscripts have words missing, presumably because the scribe inadvertently skipped from one ἐστίν to the next, omitting the text in between:

The words καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ are missing in Papyrus 47, in Codex Sinaiticus, and in seven late Andreas texts.

The corresponding words are also missing in the Sahidic Coptic version (cop^{sa}, ca. 200 AD) and the Syriac Philoxeniana version (syr^{ph}, 507/508).

⁴⁴ Including the following Byzantine minuscules:

From the 10th century: 82, 93, 456, 627, 920, and 2074; also 175 (ca. 1000 AD).

From the 11th century: 35, 42, 91, 177, 250, 314, 325, 424, 506, 617, 699, 919, 1734 (1015 AD), 1849 (1069 AD), 1862, 1870, 1888, 1955, 2004, 2059, 2138, 2259, and 2864 (ca. 1100 AD).

⁴⁵ The Alexandrian witnesses that have the preceding ἐστίν include Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (V), 1841 (ca. 900 AD), 1006 (XI), 1611 (X), 1854 (XI), 2053 (XIII), 2329 (X), 2344 (XI), and 2846 (XII). Papyrus 47 has a unique form: ἐστίν δε.

⁴⁶ Including the early Andreas texts: 025/P (IX), 051 (X), 2059 (XI), 2081 (XI), 2259 (XI), 2286 (XII), and 2814 (XII).

⁴⁷ Starting with 1424 (ca. 900 AD) and the 10th century manuscripts: 046, 82, 93, 456, 627, and 920.

John's original autograph

How did John himself write the number 666 in his original autograph?

In words, or in the shorthand form?

Critical text proponents suggest the original form is what we find in Codex Alexandrinus.

The *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th edition) has the following for the latter part of Revelation 13:18:

... καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ.

See the NA-28 textual apparatus for Revelation 13:18, via the Internet Archive:

[https://archive.org/details/novum-testamentum-graece-nestle-aland-28-ed.-pdfdrive](https://archive.org/details/novum-testamentum-graece-nestle-aland-28-ed.-pdfdrive/page/765) [page 765].⁴⁸

Note that the NA-28 is biased towards Alexandrian manuscripts.

Support for a longhand form comes from Irenaeus in his discussion on the origins of the 616 variant:

From *Against Heresies*, Book 5; Chapter 30; Paragraph 1:

Such, then, being the state of the case, and **this number [666] being found in all the most approved and ancient copies** [of the Apocalypse], and those men who saw John face to face bearing their testimony [to it]; while reason also leads us to conclude **that the number of the name of the beast, [if reckoned] according to the Greek mode of calculation by the [value of] the letters contained in it, will amount to six hundred and sixty and six; ...**

I do not know how it is that some have erred following the ordinary mode of speech, **and have vitiated the middle number in the name, deducting the amount of fifty from it**, so that instead of six decads they will have it that there is but one. **[I am inclined to think that this occurred through the fault of the copyists, as is wont to happen, since numbers also are expressed by letters; so that the Greek letter which expresses the number sixty was easily expanded into the letter iota of the Greeks.]** Others then received this reading without examination; some in their simplicity, and upon their own responsibility, making use of this number expressing one decad; while some, in their inexperience, have ventured to seek out a name which should contain the erroneous and spurious number.⁴⁹

Irenaeus claims:

- 666 is the true number found in the “most approved” and oldest copies of Revelation and vouched for by John himself.
- The riddle is solvable using Greek letters.
- The middle number in the dodgy manuscripts has been altered from 60 to 10, reducing the total by 50.
- This likely occurred through scribes who employed manuscripts where the number was represented by three Greek letters: **the letter representing 60 was changed into an *iota*.**
- Some of his contemporaries had the audacity to link the spurious number with some known person.

⁴⁸ See also David Robert Palmer's detailed textual apparatus: <https://www.bibletranslation.ws/trans/revwgrk.pdf> [pages 77-78].

The Tyndale House Greek New Testament (THGNT, 2017) suggests that the original form of the Beast's number was the shorthand form. Support for this is derived from Papyrus 47 and minuscules 1424 (ca. 900 AD) and 69 (XV).

See the Bible Gateway website for their textual apparatus:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=rev%2013%3A18&version=THGNT>.

⁴⁹ Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* (*Against Heresies*), written ca. 180 AD. Via the Internet Archive:

<https://archive.org/details/SaintIrenaeusAgainstHeresiesComplete/page/n323/mode/2up> [page 324/337].

These are significant admissions:

Not only does Irenaeus vouch for the existence in his time of the 616 variant.

He goes further, suggesting that this spurious number originated with scribes who utilized manuscripts with the shorthand form of the number — where the number was represented by three Greek letters instead of being fully spelled out. Careless scribes employing these defective manuscripts came up with the spurious number by changing the middle letter: The middle letter representing 60 (the *xi*) was “easily expanded” into an *iota*.⁵⁰

This is an unlikely theory, given that the letter *xi* (Ξ) bears little resemblance to the letter *iota* (Ι).

But Irenaeus implies that if the scribes had kept to manuscripts with the longhand form of the number — presumably like the ones he himself employed — the mistake would not have been made.

This confirms that both the short- and longhand forms of the number existed already in his day, ca. 180 AD.

Not only is 666 the correct number, but the better manuscripts are those where the number is fully spelled out.

The early appearance of the shorthand form is of course attested to by the Papyri 47 and 115, both of which predate the extant Codices (X, A, C) that carry the number’s longhand form.

Old Latin texts

- There is really just one extant Bible containing the Old Latin text of the Apocalypse: Codex Gigas (VL 51 / it^{gig}), from the early 1200s.⁵¹
For Revelation 13:18 it reads: & *numerus eius est sexingenti sexaginta sex* (= 666).
(Note the unique spelling of *six hundred* here.)⁵²
- Victorinus of Pettau wrote his *Commentary on the Apocalypse* ca. 260 AD.
He writes the number as **DCLXVI** (= 666).
- Tyconius of Carthage, a Donatist, wrote his hugely influential *Exposition of the Apocalypse* ca. 380 AD.
He has the number as **DCXVI** (= 616).

The Vulgate

Jerome’s Latin New Testament (405 AD) was based on the Old Latin texts, with revisions made using the oldest and best Greek manuscripts available to him but which unfortunately are no longer extant.⁵³

Jerome’s Vulgate text has the number fully spelled out.

Here is the lowercase equivalent of his text: *et numerus eius est sescenti sexaginta sex* (= 666).

One can see this form (in majuscule script) in Codex Amiatinus, a Vulgate text copied in 716 AD.⁵⁴

Later Vulgate editions have a one-letter difference in the first word’s spelling: *sexcenti sexaginta sex*.

The latter spelling is present in Düsseldorf Manuscript B-3 (ca. 800) and in Codex Harley 1772 (ca. 875).⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Perhaps by “expanded” Irenaeus means *unfolded* or *stretched out*.

⁵¹ The text of Codex Gigas is Old Latin in Acts and Revelation only; elsewhere it is Vulgate. Codex Gigas, housed in Stockholm, is named for its size: 92 cm long by 50 cm wide, and 22 cm thick.

The U.S. Library of Congress has the complete Codex Gigas available for viewing. See Appendix 2, point 27.

⁵² The following five manuscripts, containing at least some text from Revelation, are classed as Old Latin, but (unlike Codex Gigas) most seem in fact to be primarily Vulgate: VL 55/it^h (V); VL 61/it^{ar} (807 AD); VL 65/Harley 1772/it^z (IX); VL 74/it^{sin} (X); VL 56/it^t (XI).

⁵³ Jerome’s Latin text of the gospels, completed around 384 AD, was based on both Byzantine and Alexandrian Greek manuscripts. The Vulgate as a whole more closely follows the Alexandrian text-type, but in many instances it departs from both types.

Thus, it constitutes a text-type of its own which, with its 1000-year dominance, could be said to be the *Textus Receptus* of the medieval Western Church. The text of Jerome’s Latin Bible (completed in 405 AD) is available via the Step Bible website:

<https://www.stepbible.org/version.jsp?version=VulgJ>.

⁵⁴ The U.S. Library of Congress has the complete Codex Amiatinus available for viewing. See Appendix 2, point 26.

⁵⁵ Both of these manuscripts can be viewed online. See Appendix 2, points 28 and 30.

Conclusion

Irenaeus attests to the existence of both the short- and longhand forms of the number in the Greek manuscripts of his day.

The earliest Greek and Latin manuscripts (including the Latin commentaries) had:

Either 666 — fully spelled out (Ϟ; Α; Old Latin; Vulgate) or in shorthand form (Papyrus 47; Victorinus);

Or 616 — in shorthand form (Papyrus 115; Tyconius) but also fully spelled out (C).

Does this lend credence to Irenaeus' contention as to how the dodgy variant arose?

Jerome's Vulgate has the number 666 fully spelled out. This is significant because he had access to the best Greek manuscripts of his day, and to many Old Latin texts as well.

Origins of the 616 variant

The 616 variant was popular in the Latin world and in the Donatist community of North Africa (Tyconius et al.).

Papyrus 115 attests to its presence in Egypt.

Irenaeus in Gaul knew of Greek manuscripts with the variant, and he complained about some Christians who promoted the 616 as the original form because with it they had found specific solutions to John's riddle.

These facts attest to the variant been widely disseminated throughout the Roman world.

Evidently, once the text was changed, the 616 variant was promoted, and presumably copied and preserved in manuscripts, by those with pet theories concerning the number's referent.

Irenaeus and many later exegetes sought a Greek solution to the riddle: a Hebraic one was seldom considered.

It is interesting that Irenaeus refuses to mention the names put forward by his opponents.

Since Latin and Gaulish were the languages spoken, it seems likely that one of the solutions offered was the Hebrew transliteration of the Latin form of Nero's name.

In support of this, we should consider why Irenaeus seems so irritated with those offering a specific solution.

I would venture to suggest that there is a very obvious reason: his opponents were indeed advocating Nero.

Irenaeus required a future Antichrist, so any lingering preterist view of past fulfillment would have been anathema to him.

The great 20th century textual scholar Bruce Metzger commented concerning the variant number:

When Greek letters are used as numerals the difference between 666 and 616 is merely a change from ξ to ι (666 = ϞξϞ and 616 = ϞιϞ). Perhaps the change was intentional, seeing that the Greek form Neron Caesar written in Hebrew characters (נֵרֹן קֶסֶר) is equivalent to 666, whereas the Latin form Nero Caesar (נֵרֹ קֶסֶר) is equivalent to 616.⁵⁶

With this comment Metzger has hit the nail on the head!

Some early scribe (or scribes), mindful that Nero was the intended referent, altered the number so that it reflected the more usual spelling used by his (or their) Latin readers: *Nero Caesar*.

⁵⁶ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), page 752. Available online via the Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/details/textual-commentary-on-the-greek-new-testament-bruce-m.-metzger-1971/page/n391/mode/2up>. Accessed 30-July-2025.

Early Latin Commentaries of Revelation

Vetus Latina is the collective name given to the many Latin Bible translations (containing both Testaments) that preceded the Vulgate. In the second century, multiple translators in North Africa and elsewhere began rendering the Scriptures into Latin for their own communities. Evidence exists for Latin versions as early as 160 AD.⁵⁷

These “uncontrolled” versions show great diversity, with numerous disparate readings.⁵⁸

Pope Damasus I tasked Jerome with revising these old versions to produce a standardized Latin Bible.

Jerome’s New Testament was based on these Old Latin texts, with revisions made using the best available Greek manuscripts which unfortunately are no longer extant.

Whereas earlier Greek Bibles such as the four Great Uncials incorporated the Septuagint as their OT Scriptures, Jerome’s Vulgate OT was translated directly from the Hebrew.

Note that much of the witness to the Old Latin text of Revelation is to be found in the early Latin commentaries of Victorinus, Tyconius, Caesarius, and Primasius.

Victorinus of Pettau wrote his *Commentarii in Apocalypsin* ca. 260 AD.

Commentaries was based on the views of Papias, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and particularly of Origen.

Following Origen, Victorinus provided allegorical interpretations of many passages of Revelation, but he agreed with the earlier (chiliastic) interpreters in his promotion of an earthly 1000-year reign and New Jerusalem.

His most important contribution was the Theory of Recapitulation.

That is to say, the visions of Revelation repeat the same events using different imagery:

The same judgments are shown under the successive series of seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls.

So also, the New Jerusalem recapitulates the vision of the Millennium.

Jerome in AD 398 revised this commentary and specifically excluded its chiliastic interpretations.

Jerome rearranged sections, improved its Latin bible text, and added his own comments and some from Tyconius as well. This new, improved Victorinus-Jerome Commentary proved to be very popular.

Comments on Revelation 13:3:

Victorinus claims that this verse refers to Nero:

And one of the heads was slain to death, and his death-stroke was healed: speaks of Nero.

For it is certain that when he was followed by the cavalry sent by the Senate, he cut through his own throat.

For the Beast’s number Victorinus has **DCLXVI**.

He who must change his name and not change his name when he comes, the Holy Spirit says:

*His number is 666 (DCLXVI); this number is to be completed by Greek letters.*⁵⁹

That last statement simply means that the riddle is to be solved using Greek gematria.

⁵⁷ Cyprian, bishop of Carthage (died 257 AD), quotes accurately from an early Latin version which partially survives in two early manuscripts: Codex Bobbiensis (ca. 400), and Codex Floriacensis (ca. 500).

See the online article by Thomas Nicol, *The Old Latin Version*. Via: <https://www.bible-researcher.com/oldlatin.html>.

⁵⁸ The Greek manuscripts behind these Old Latin translations were of the Western text-type; Old Latin readings often agree with the Greek text of Codex Bezae (05/D) and the Old Syriac version (both from the 5th century).

⁵⁹ Both citations here are from Victorinus’ comments on Revelation 13:3. Cited from: *Commentary on Revelation by St. Victorinus*. Part of the Ancient Bible Commentaries in English series. Edited by John Litteral. Translated by Kevin P. Edgecomb. Published in September 2014.

An important point:

Victorinus was proficient in Greek, not Latin.

For his biblical text he employed an old Greek text of the Apocalypse — not an existing Old Latin text.

However, the Latin translations he supplied for his commentary, updated and improved by Jerome, became part of the Old Latin textual tradition (text-type Y).⁶⁰

(In other words, the biblical citations in the Victorinus-Jerome Commentary are pre-Vulgate.)

Comments on Revelation 13:18:

(Source: <https://ccel.org/ccel/victorinus/apocalypse/anf07.vi.ii.xiii.html>.)

Victorinus (likely following Irenaeus and Hippolytus) explains how the name TEITAN adds up to 666:

T (*tau*) = 300; **E** (*epsilon*) = 5; **I** (*iota*) = 10; **T** (*tau*) = 300; **A** (*alpha*) = 1; **N** (*nu*) = 50.

Moreover, the Latin form of the number (DCLXVI) can be transposed to form the anti-phrase DICLUX.

Although Antichrist will be cut off from, and so deprived of, the true light, he will transform himself into an angel of light, daring to call himself “light”.

Victorinus mentions two further names whose letters in Greek total 666:

Moreover, we find in a certain Greek codex **αντεμος**, which letters being reckoned up, you will find to give the number as above: ...

Moreover, there is another name in Gothic of him, which will be evident of itself, that is, **γενσήρικος**, which in the same way you will reckon in Greek letters: ...

Transliterated, these names are *Antemos* and *Gensērikos*.

This second name is a variant of *Gaiseric*, who was king of the Vandals (ruled 428-477 AD).

He was an Arian heretic. The name would therefore be entirely appropriate for the future Antichrist who comes to deceive the nations.

But obviously we are dealing here with a late edition (post-Jerome’s recension) of Victorinus’ commentary.

Concerning the Latin name DICLUX, Victorinus’ reasoning is this:

From DICLUX can be formed the Latin words *dic* (= “say”) and *lux* (= “light”).

Antichrist will be possessed by Satan who himself “masquerades as an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14).

In imitation of Christ, Antichrist will say (claim) that he is the light, or he will have others call him “Light”.⁶¹

⁶⁰ The Old Latin bible text found in other commentaries is of different text-types: type S in Tyconius, and type C in Primasius.

See the online Oxford Academic article: *The Text of the Early Latin New Testament*. Author: H.A.G. Houghton.

Published in February 2016. Via: <https://academic.oup.com/book/12425/chapter/162895408>. Section E: Revelation (Apocalypse).

⁶¹ Francis Gumerlock provides this explanation in his edition of the Apocalypse Commentary of the so-called Irish Reference Bible.

This eighth-century Commentary is called *De enigmatibus ex Apocalypsi Johannis* (= *On the Mysteries of the Apocalypse of John*).

Its commentary on Revelation 13:18 refers to the devil disguising himself as an angel of light — something Antichrist will do too.

In endnote 242 (page 93) Gumerlock supplies the reason for this comment: the transposition of the Roman letters in DCLXVI gives “DICLVX forming the Latin words *dic* (say) and *lux* (light); hence, the quotation of the verse from 2 Corinthians.”

See: *Early Latin Commentaries on the Apocalypse*. Editor: Francis X. Gumerlock. TEAMS Commentary Series 8.

Publisher: Medieval Institute Publications (Kalamazoo, MI), 1997. Via: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/mip_teamscs/8/.

Tyconius of Carthage, a Donatist, wrote his hugely influential *Exposition of the Apocalypse* ca. 380 AD.

Tyconius' work, which is no longer extant, was highly regarded by early medieval commentators such as Caesarius of Arles (ca. 470-542 AD), Primasius of Hadrumetum (in Tunisia, died ca. 560), the Venerable Bede in northern England (673-735), and Beatus of Liébana (in Spain, lived ca. 730-785).

All these quoted extensively from the *Exposition* in their own (Latin) commentaries on the Apocalypse.

This happy situation has permitted the work's reconstruction:

Roger Gryson published his Latin reconstruction of the *Exposition* in 2011, which he subsequently translated into French. Gryson's work has in turn been translated into English by Francis Gumerlock.

(See the citation from this latter work, below.)

Tyconius interpreted John's visions to make them relevant for the Church of all times, similar to modern *Idealist* interpretations. He believed in a future persecution by the Antichrist, together with a future Second Coming and Last Judgment. Like Victorinus, he believed that Revelation is recapitulatory.

Tyconius interpreted the visions allegorically:

The millennial reign (of Revelation 20:4-6) represents the present reign of the saints; the first resurrection (20:5) "is in this [present] life through the forgiveness of sins." Into which we also rise through baptism.

For Tyconius, the 1000 years comprise the remaining part of the sixth millennium of world history.

This period, which is perhaps not literally 1000 years, began with Christ's advent and will continue until his Second Coming.

Francis Gumerlock explains as follows:

Here Tyconius is reiterating a common interpretation of the Fathers, based on Gn 1.3–31, Ps 90.4, Ezek 4.6, and 2 Pt 3.8, that the time allotted to the world by God was indicated figuratively in the days of creation, and that each day corresponded to a thousand years. ... For Tyconius Christ was born in the sixth day, and his Second Coming will inaugurate the eternal Sabbath; however, he does not understand the thousand years to be a literal designation of time. It is a part representing the whole time (i.e., synecdoche) between the first advent of Christ, when the devil was bound, and Christ's Second Advent.⁶²

The notion of the saints' present reign, accepted by Augustine, put an end to the chiliastic expectations of the Latin Church.

Tyconius' Latin text has for the number of the Beast **DCXVI** (= 616).

Western European scholars who followed Tyconius with this variant include Caesarius and Beatus.

An eighth-century Irish Reference Bible with commentary, and an anonymous gloss on the Apocalypse found in a ninth-century manuscript at Cambridge, discuss both numbers.

Conversely, Bede and Primasius accepted the more common 666.


Tyconius notes that the saints themselves receive Christ on their hand and on their forehead, which relates to their Christian profession and works of love. (Is he thereby suggesting that the mark is not a literal mark?)

⁶² Cited from Francis X. Gumerlock, *Tyconius: Exposition of the Apocalypse*. Part of The Fathers of the Church series (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017), page 177 (a footnote).

The number 616 should be written as the Greeks would write it, since John was writing to Christians in Asia. Jesus said, “I am the Alpha and the Omega” — the first and the last. So too, the number written as **ΧΙϚ** contains the first and last letters of the name *Christos*: *chi* and *sigma*.

Note that if this is Tyconius’ logic (and he is hard to follow at this point), he has mistaken the final *stigma* in the number (**Ϛ**) for a *sigma* (**Ϛ**) — the forms for both being quite similar.

But Tyconius continues: the **ΧΙϚ** can also be reworked into a monogram — a symbol or combination of letters that abbreviates the name of Jesus Christ. Here specifically, the *Chi-Rho* monogram, with the first two letters of *Christos* combined. According to Tyconius:

With this sign  Christ is understood, and a likeness is shown of him whom the church worships in truth, and to whom Adversity makes himself similar.⁶³

So now we have not just the number, but also the actual mark and the name it represents: *Christ*.

“Adversity” here is to be understood as a personification of the Beast.⁶⁴

The meaning is that the Beast or Antichrist will disguise himself as Christ.

Caesarius of Arles (ca. 470-542 AD).

Explanatio in Apocalypsin was a series of homilies on the book of Revelation composed between 510 and 537.

Caesarius’ two main sources were the earlier commentaries by Victorinus and Tyconius.

Unsurprisingly, his interpretation is similar to that of Tyconius.

Caesarius claims that when John refers to “the number of a man”, he means it was the number of Christ, the Son of Man. The six hundred and sixteen is to be written in Greek, thus: **ΧΙϚ**.

The three letters together signify Jesus Christ, whom the Church adores. The heretics, who follow the Beast, will invoke Christ’s name for their own false teaching. For indeed, the number of the Beast is the number of a man.⁶⁵

Evaluation:

It seems that Caesarius is claiming that the three letters here correspond to the first, third, and last letters in *Christos*: *chi*, *iota*, and *sigma*.

If so, Caesarius (like Tyconius) has mistaken the final *stigma* in the number for a *sigma*.

During the mid-500s further Latin commentaries were written by:

Aspringius of Béja (in Portugal), wrote *Tractatus in Apocalypsin* in 548.

Primasius of Hadrumetum (in Tunisia, died ca. 560), wrote *Commentarius in Apocalypsin* in 540.

Cassiodorus (in Italy), wrote *Complexiones in Apocalypsin* ca. 580 when in his nineties.

(*Tractus* = Tract; *Complexiones* = Brief Explanations; *Explanatio* = Explanation.)

⁶³ Cited from Francis X. Gumerlock, *Tyconius: Exposition of the Apocalypse*. Part of The Fathers of the Church series (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017), page 139.

Attribution for the *Chi-Rho* monogram:

From the *Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary*, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

⁶⁴ In the same way that the Devil is called the Adversary in 1 Timothy 5:14 and 1 Peter 5:8 (Latin: *Adversarius*).

⁶⁵ Caesarius’ *Expositio* can be viewed online via the Internet Archive:

<https://archive.org/details/caesarius-of-arles-commnetary-on-revelation/mode/2up>.

See pages 44-45 for Caesarius’ discussion about the number of the Beast.

Early Greek Commentaries on Revelation

Oecumenius of Isauria wrote his *Commentarius in Apocalypsin* ca. 580 AD.

This was the earliest Greek commentary. Political crises in the eastern Empire suggested that the end of the world might be near, renewing interest in the Apocalypse.

This commentary was only discovered around the turn of the last century, through careful examination of minuscules 2053 and 2062.

2053 has the complete commentary; text and commentary are interwoven, not clearly separated from each other. Though from the 13th century, 2053 is particularly valuable because it preserves Oecumenius' sixth-century text — both his commentary and the (Alexandrian) text of Revelation.⁶⁶

From Minuscule 2053 we note that Oecumenius wrote the number of the Beast as ἑξακοσια ἑξηκοντα ἑξ.

Some years later, probably in 611, **Andreas** composed his *Exposition of the Apocalypse of John*.

Andreas (ca. 560-614) was Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia.

Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou writes:

Andrew wrote his commentary largely in response to Oikoumenios, who preceded Andrew by only a few years. ... Andrew unquestionably had the Oikoumenios commentary before him as he composed his own. It is our contention that the deficiencies in Oikoumenios' commentary — perceived or actual — induced the composition of the Andreas commentary as well as influencing its content and emphases.

...

The resources available to a Greek commentator were extremely limited. Most passages in the Apocalypse had not been discussed by those earlier authorities, and therefore, a great deal of groundbreaking work remained for Oikoumenios and Andrew to do. Nonetheless, both of them felt the need to demonstrate that they stood within the stream of tradition, even if that stream amounted to a mere trickle. Thus, excluding the chiliastic interpretations of earlier Greek writers, Oikoumenios and Andrew together succeeded in presenting basically the entire, albeit scant, Greek interpretive tradition for the Apocalypse. Andrew's commentary became the most important in the East and the standard patristic commentary on the Apocalypse for the Orthodox Church.⁶⁷

Here are Andreas' suggestions concerning the number 666 in Revelation 13:18:

Following Hippolytus, he suggests LAMPETIS, TEITAN, and LATEINOS.

BENEDICTOS is a possibility — the name means “one who is blessed” as he seeks to imitate the truly blessed one, Christ our God.

⁶⁶ Herman Hoskier notes that while Bible text and commentary are interwoven, the former is repeated in smaller clauses: “This acts as a check on the text proper, which is rough or corrupt in places, and absolutely proves to our great satisfaction that we are dealing with Oecumenius' very own text and not, as in the case of some of the Andreas MSS, with a text which Andreas himself did not use originally. ... Therefore, as we can easily prove that the Messina MS. [2053] gives us the undoctored text of Oecumenius himself, we recover an *uncial* text of 600 A.D. as well as the lost commentary at the same time. After 1300 years this is very satisfactory.” From H.C. Hoskier, “The Lost Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse.”

In: *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1913), pages 300-314.

Via: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/289599>. Accessed 24-July-2025.

⁶⁷ Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou, 2008. *Andrew of Caesarea and the Apocalypse in the Ancient church of the East: Studies and Translation*, pages 134-135. Doctoral dissertation for the Université Laval, Québec.

Some common “names” in Greek add up to 666: *wicked guide, real harm, slanderer of old, unjust lamb* — he will be called these epithets by those opposing him.⁶⁸

According to Constantinou:

Andrew's superior skill and exegetical training produced a commentary that quickly eclipsed the work of Oikoumenios to become predominant and the standard patristic commentary for the East, including the Greek, Slavic, Armenian and Georgian Churches.

...

The totality of the ancient Greek tradition for the interpretation of the Apocalypse was preserved in the commentary of Andrew of Caesarea, who succeeded in drawing together the various strands of ancient tradition. His thoughtful, balanced and well written commentary was quickly embraced and became extremely important.⁶⁹

Andreas helpfully lists several early witnesses who attest to the Johannine authorship of Revelation (and so also to the book's authenticity and trustworthiness):

Papias, Irenaeus, Gregory the Theologian, Cyril of Alexandria, Methodius, and Hippolytus.

According to Andreas, these all specifically state that the book was composed by the Apostle John.⁷⁰

The Andreas commentary is found in 96 manuscripts of the book of Revelation: the entire commentary in 83, and an abbreviated version in a further 13 manuscripts.

So popular and influential was the commentary that it led to its own unique textual subtype of Revelation.⁷¹

Statements Andreas makes in his commentary suggest that he was following a preexisting text.

One such comment affirms the need to respect the text, regardless of any violations of proper Greek syntax.⁷²

It is interesting that several early manuscripts that lack the commentary also show some affinity to this Andreas subtype: 025/P (IX), 35 (XI), 88 (XII), 1384 (XI).

The translation of the Andreas commentary into Armenian, Georgian, and Old Slavonic facilitated the final acceptance of Revelation into the New Testament Canon in the churches of Armenia, Georgia, and Russia.

Arethas (ca. 860-939 AD) was also an Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia.

His Apocalypse commentary was heavily dependent on that of Andreas; he frequently copied his predecessor word-for-word, or paraphrased him.

Significantly, Arethas chose a Koine text (over that of Andreas) for his text of Revelation.

Arethas' commentary (with the Koine text) is found in six minuscules: the whole commentary in 314 (XI), 2075 (XIV), and 2077 (1685 AD), and an abbreviated form in 91 (XI), 617 (XI), and 1934 (XI).

⁶⁸ See Constantinou, *Andrew of Caesarea*, pages 146-147.

⁶⁹ Constantinou, *Andrew of Caesarea*, page iii of the Foreword.

⁷⁰ Constantinou, *Andrew of Caesarea*, page 242.

⁷¹ The Andreas (Av) subtype constitutes a major grouping within the Byzantine tradition, found in perhaps 30% of all Apocalypse manuscripts. However, many of these are quite late — from 1300 or later.

The most important Byzantine subtype, both within and outside of the Apocalypse, is the *Koine* subtype.

⁷² Constantinou, *Andrew of Caesarea*, page 123.

More from Irenaeus

Although Irenaeus did not write any full-length Commentary on the Apocalypse, he did discuss the number of the Beast and the future Antichrist.

Irenaeus wrote his *Against Heresies* in Greek, although only a Latin version survives.

Part of Irenaeus' comments about the 616 variant have been cited already (on page 20).

These were from Book 5; Chapter 30; Paragraph 1 (5.30.1) of his work.

Towards the end of Paragraph 1 he states why the spurious number is so dangerous:

For if these men assume one [number], when this [Antichrist] shall come having another, they will be easily led away by him, as supposing him not to be the expected one, who must be guarded against.⁷³

While Irenaeus is reluctant to attempt a solution, he does go on (in 5.30.3) to make certain suggestions in an effort to quell speculation, and to subvert his opponents who were coming up with specific solutions using the spurious number.

He offers three Greek names whose constituent letters add up to 666: EYANΘΑΣ, ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ, and ΤΕΙΤΑΝ.

He doesn't elaborate on the significance of EYANΘΑΣ (Evanthas).

ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ (*Lateinos*) seems a distinct possibility since it corresponds with the fourth kingdom of Daniel — the currently ruling Latin (Roman) kingdom.

Irenaeus does have quite a lot to say about ΤΕΙΤΑΝ:

Teitan too (ΤΕΙΤΑΝ, the first syllable being written with the two Greek vowels ε and ι), among all the names which are found among us, is rather worthy of credit. For it has in itself the predicted number, and is composed of six letters, each syllable containing three letters; and [the word itself] is ancient, and removed from ordinary use; for among our kings we find none bearing this name Titan, nor have any of the idols which are worshipped in public among the Greeks and barbarians this appellation. Among many persons, too, this name is accounted divine, so that even the sun is termed Titan by those who do now possess [the rule]. This word, too, contains a certain outward appearance of vengeance, and of one inflicting merited punishment because he (Antichrist) pretends that he vindicates the oppressed. And besides this, it is an ancient name, one worthy of credit, of royal dignity, and still further, a name belonging to a tyrant. Inasmuch, then, as this name Titan has so much to recommend it, there is a strong degree of probability, that from among the many [names suggested], we infer, that perchance he who is to come shall be called Titan. We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign.

Irenaeus sought a solution based on Greek letters, so it's hardly surprising that he failed to find the intended referent. Why he and other early Fathers failed to consider a Hebraic solution is something of a mystery.

It didn't help that so few of them were proficient in Hebrew.

(Origen and Jerome being the exceptions.)

⁷³ The citations in this section are from *Against Heresies*: Book 5; Chapter 30; Paragraphs 1 and 3.

Via the Internet Archive:

<https://archive.org/details/SaintIrenaeusAgainstHeresiesComplete/page/n323/mode/2up> [pages 324 and 326/337].

Appendix 1: Nero's name in the Murabba'at scroll

This section derives principally from two sources:

Encyclopedia.com; article entitled: *Murabba'at Scrolls*.⁷⁴

Craig R. Koester, "The Number of the Beast in Revelation 13 in Light of Papyri, Graffiti, and Inscriptions."⁷⁵

From 1952 to 1961, numerous ancient manuscripts were discovered in caves near Wadi Murabba'at.

The Murabba'at caves are some 19 km to the south of Qumran, where the more famous biblical Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. The caves are near Wadi Murabba'at (or Nahal Darga) which runs from the Judean Desert near Bethlehem southeastward down to the Dead Sea.

Following initial discoveries by Bedouin, archaeologists visited the site in early 1952. Numerous documents were recovered from four caves. In 1955 shepherds entered another cave and found a scroll of the *Twelve Minor Prophets* which contained substantial portions of the Hebrew text of nine of those 12 books.

Among the manuscripts are fragments of Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah — written on animal skin.

There is a fragment of a liturgical document in Hebrew, and fragments of some literary works in Greek.

The Roman period documents are the most numerous and interesting, but there are also some that come from earlier periods — from the Iron Age (8th and 7th centuries BC) and the Hellenistic period.

The caves were evidently used as outposts for guerrilla fighters during the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132–135 AD).

There are also some letters addressed to Yeshua ben Galgula, probably the leader of the Murabba'at guerrillas.

There are quite a number of contracts and deeds of sale written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, with many of these belonging to the period preceding and during the Bar Kokhba Revolt.

There are several lists of deliveries of grain and vegetables; most of these are in Greek, but a few are in Aramaic or Hebrew.

What these documents demonstrate is that the inhabitants of Judea were trilingual in the first century AD and on into the second — they were proficient in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

Significantly for our purposes, one of the oldest of the Aramaic documents found at Murabba'at has Nero's name spelled out exactly as our theory requires. The document relates an acknowledgment of indebtedness, together with the debtor's promise to fully repay the loan:

... in the second year of Nero Caesar [נְרוֹן קֶסֶר] ... at Šiwaya, Absalom son of Hanin from Šiwaya has declared in my presence, that he borrowed from me, Zechariah son of Yoḥannan son of H ... a resident of Keslon, twenty denarii ...

[The debtor then declares his intention to fully repay the loan]:

... and if I do not repay by the end of the appointed time, I will pay you one-fifth interest and will repay you fully, even if it is a sabbatical year. And if I do not do it, restitution will be made to you from my property, and you will have the right of seizure on anything I acquire.

[Signatures follow.]⁷⁶

This document was composed "in the second year of Nero Caesar", which equates to 55-56 AD.

Nero's name is spelled thus: נְרוֹן קֶסֶר. Other than the *waw* (ו), no vowel letters are present that would increase the numerical value of the name beyond 666.

⁷⁴ See: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/murabbaat-scrolls>.

⁷⁵ Craig R. Koester, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN. "The Number of the Beast in Revelation 13 in Light of Papyri, Graffiti, and Inscriptions." Article in: *Journal of Early Christian History* 6, no. 3 (2016): 1-21.

Via: https://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=faculty_articles.

⁷⁶ Quotation adapted from Craig R. Koester, "The Number of the Beast."

Appendix 2: Digital images of manuscripts showing the number of the Beast

Digitized images of many manuscripts and codices can be viewed online via:

- The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (CSNTM: <https://www.csntm.org/>).
- The Vatican Library: Digital Collections.
- The Institute for New Testament Textual Research (INTF) at the University of Münster, Germany: the New Testament Virtual Manuscript Room.
- Gallica: the digital library of the National Library of France (BnF) and its partners.

Here are some manuscripts showing the variety of forms of the dreaded number:

1. Codex Sinaiticus (IV):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_01.
CSNTM Image Id: 142096. Third column; lines 21-22.
2. Codex Alexandrinus (V):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_02.
CSNTM Image Id: 143710. Right-hand column; line 12.
3. Uncial 046 (X):
https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.2066.
Frames 269v/270r. Right-hand page; line 22, far right.
See also the transcription of this page on The New Testament Virtual Manuscript Room website:
<https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=20046>.
Document ID: 20046. Page Id: 240 (Rev 13:13-18; 14:1-3).
4. Uncial 051 (X):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/Group/GA_051.
CSNTM Image Id: 262150. Right-hand page; line 6.
Note that the final *stigma* here looks more like an S than a ζ.
5. Minuscule 69 (XV):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_69.
CSNTM Image Id: 1390. Line 23, far left.
6. Minuscule 82 (X):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_82.
CSNTM Image Id: 516034. Left-hand page; line 10. (Between the three large letters.)
Surrounded by the text of commentary.
Note the three individual overlines.
7. Minuscule 177 (XI):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_177.
CSNTM Image Id: 261017. Line 7, second from left.
8. Minuscule 241 (XI):
<https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=30241>.
Document ID: 30241; Page Id: 6750. Line 13, right half.
Difficult to read. "Six hundred" is spelled ἑξακοσια (= *hexakosia*).

9. Minuscul 254 (XIV):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_254.
CSNTM Image Id: 321883. Second-to-last line, right half (orange text).
“Six hundred” is spelled ἑξακοσια.
Black text presumably is the Andreas commentary.
10. Minuscul 424 (XI):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/Manuscript/Group/GA_424_digital.
CSNTM Image Id: 615575. Inner text; fourth line up from the foot of the page, far right.
Surrounded by the text of commentary (Andreas, abbreviated).
11. Minuscul 627 (X):
https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.2062.
Frame 20. Right-hand page; seventh line up from the foot of the page, far right.
12. Minuscul 792 (XIII):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/Manuscript/Group/GA_792.
CSNTM Image Id: 145804. Right-hand page; middle of line 11.
Has a unique form: ἑξακοσια followed by the letters *xi* (ξ) and *stigma*.
The final alpha of ἑξακοσια is above the line; it was clearly an afterthought!
The final *stigma* is shown in its *sigma-tau* ligature form.
The *xi* and *stigma* have a single overline.
13. Minuscul 1006 (XI):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_1006.
CSNTM Image Id: 550766. Right-hand page; line 7, end of line and carrying over to the next line.
Difficult to read. “Six hundred” is spelled ἑξακοσια.
14. Minuscul 1328 (XIV):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_1328.
CSNTM Image Id: 466959. Right-hand page; line 5.
15. Minuscul 1424 (IX/X):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_1424.
CSNTM Image Id: 614028. Lower right-hand corner.
16. Minuscul 1611 (X):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/Group/GA_1611.
CSNTM Image Id: 382663. Right column; third line up from the foot of the page.
Note that the final *stigma* is shown in its *sigma-tau* ligature form.
17. Minuscul 1734 (1015 AD):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_1734.
CSNTM Image Id: 602615. Right-hand page; middle of line 9.
Note the three individual overlines.
18. Minuscul 1828 (XI):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_1828.
CSNTM Image Id: 256803. Seventh line up from the foot of the page, right side.
“Six hundred” is spelled ἑξακοσιοι (= *hexakosioi*) — the same as in Codex Alexandrinus.

19. Minuscule 1854 (XI):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/Group/GA_1854.
 CSNTM Image Id: 606244. Left-hand page; third line up from the foot of the page; right half of line.
 “Six hundred” is spelled ἑξακοσια.
20. Minuscule 1888 (XI):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/Group/GA_1888.
 CSNTM Image Id: 475213. Right-hand page; inner text; middle of line 13.
 Surrounded by the text of a commentary.
21. Minuscule 2259 (XI):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/Group/GA_2259.
 CSNTM Image Id: 622383. Left-hand page; middle of line 12.
 The number here is immediately followed by Andreas commentary.
 Note near the foot of the page the names TEITAN and LATEINOS in the commentary section.
22. Minuscule 2323 (XIII):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_2323.
 CSNTM Image Id: 4152. Line 6, left side.
23. Minuscule 2344 (XI):
https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/Group/GA_2344.
 CSNTM Image Id: 681900. Left-hand column; about ¾ of the way down the page.
 Two lines below a large dot. Text is indistinct — a magnifying lens is needed!
 But one can just make out:
 αριθμος αυτου εστιν εξακοσια εξηκον
 τα πεντε και ειδον ...
 Note: the substitution of πεντε (*pente* = 5) for ἑξ (*hex* = 6). The Beast’s number here is **665**.
24. Minuscule 2814 (XII):
<https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace?docID=32814>.
 Document ID: 32814. Page Id: 990 (Rev 13:18). Line 16, far right.
 Includes the transcription of the Greek text.
 The text of Revelation alternates with the text of the Andreas Commentary.
25. Liber Ardmachanus / Book of Armagh (VL 61 / it^{ar}).
 An Irish Latin Manuscript, copied by the monastic scribe, Ferdomnach, in Armagh ca. 807 AD.
 The text is **mostly Vulgate, with some Old Latin**.
 This codex can be viewed online via The Library of Trinity College (Dublin) Digital Collections:
<https://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/concern/works/3j333696h?locale=en&page=45>.
 View Image 340 of 458: Folio 165 [ie 166] v. Left-hand column; fourth line from the foot of the page.
 The Beast’s number here is: **dcxlii** (= 646).
 An inversion of letter order (of *X* and *L*) explains this aberrant number — a simple scribal error.
 (Two lines below, the number 144,000 is written: cxliiii milia.)
 Note that the script is Irish minuscule: all lowercase, with breaks between words.
 Internet Archive has a transcription of the page:
<https://archive.org/details/cu31924091179337/page/n639/mode/2up> [Page 640/822; Left column; fourth line from the foot of the page].

26. Codex Amiatinus: An English **Vulgate** manuscript from 716 AD.

This codex is considered to be the most important extant witness to the Latin text of Jerome's Vulgate. The Venerable Bede records that the Benedictine monk Ceolfrid (642-716), abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, commissioned three large Bibles from the abbey's scriptorium. This Codex is the only one that survives. It was sent as a gift to the Pope in 716. (Ceolfrid died *en route* to Rome.)

Codex Amiatinus can be viewed online via the U.S. Library of Congress:

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2021668243>.

Search for Image 2046. Left-hand column; lines 17 and 18.

Note the majuscule (capital letters) script, with small breaks between some words.

Here is the (lowercase equivalent) text of Revelation 13:18, found in lines 13 to 18:

hic sapientia est qui habet intellectum computet numerum bestiae

Here wisdom is : who has understanding calculate the number of the beast :

numerus enim hominis est et numerus eius est sescenti sexaginta sex.

number For of man is : and number his is six hundred sixty six.

This Latin text presumably agrees with that found in the original Vulgate.

(Exception: *computet* was probably originally spelled *conputet*.)

Note the *est* (= "is") immediately preceding the number; this conforms with the *estin* found in early Greek manuscripts. This word is absent in later editions of the Vulgate.

27. Codex Gigas (VL 51 / it^{gig}): A Latin Bible copied in Bohemia sometime between 1204 and 1227.

The text of Codex Gigas is **Old Latin** in Acts and Revelation only; elsewhere it is Vulgate.⁷⁷

This codex is named for its enormous size: 92 cm long by 50 cm wide, and 22 cm thick.

Codex Gigas can be viewed online via the U.S. Library of Congress:

https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_03042/?sp=551&r=0.025,1.162,0.371,0.169,0.

Image 551. Left-hand column; third line up from the foot of the page.

The whole verse here is very close to the Vulgate text of Codex Amiatinus, shown above.

Note the minuscule (lowercase) script, and the better spacing between words.

In Revelation 13:18 the codex reads: & numerus eius est **sexingenti sexaginta sex** (=666).⁷⁸

Interestingly, the number 144,000 in the following line is in lowercase Roman numerals: c.xl.iiii milia.

This difference in format suggests that the Beast's number was fully spelled out in the Greek exemplar employed for the Gigas translation.

28. Düsseldorf Universitätsbibliothek Manuscript B-3.

This **Vulgate** manuscript was probably copied in Corbie Abbey (northern France) between 780 and 820.⁷⁹

Manuscript B-3 can be viewed online via the Düsseldorf University and State Library:

<https://digital.ulb.hhu.de/ms/content/pageview/4506511>.

This is Image [445] 221r out of 621. (The Apocalypse begins at Image 433 and ends at 460.)

See lines 3 and 4 above the foot of the page.

This manuscript reads: *et numerus eius sexcenti sedecim* (= 616).

Corbie Abbey was renowned for its library and scriptorium. The script is pre-Carolingian minuscule.

⁷⁷ Codex Gigas is the only extant codex that comes close to having an Old Latin text of the whole of Revelation. Liber Ardmachanus and Codex Harleianus and other supposed Old Latin witnesses are more Vulgate than Old Latin.

⁷⁸ The ampersand symbol (&) is a ligature of the Latin word *et*, meaning "and". Latin scribes combined the letters *e* and *t* into a single symbol to write faster in cursive.

⁷⁹ Details of Manuscript B-3 can be found here: <https://elms.nuigalway.ie/catalogue/1658>.

29. Codex Fuldensis.

A **Vulgate** text from 541-546 AD.

The codex's transcription (lowercase equivalent) for Revelation 13:18 reads:

*hic sapientia est qui habet intellectum computet numerum bestiae,
numerus enim hominis est et numerus eius est. DCLX·VI.*⁸⁰

The codex can be viewed via FulDig — the digitisation server of the Fulda University and State Library:
<https://fuldig.hs-fulda.de/viewer/image/PPN325289808/981/>.

Image 981:489r. Line 8.

The script is majuscule Latin with no breaks between words.

In the margin adjacent to the number is written the name TEITAN.

Codex Fuldensis is considered to be the second most important witness to the text of the Latin Vulgate.

It was copied between 541 and 546 at Capua (in Italy) by order of Bishop Victor.

Victor personally corrected the text in May of 547.

The English monk Boniface, the missionary to Germany, acquired the codex and in 745 gifted it to the newly founded Fulda Abbey library. It is currently housed in the Fulda University and State Library.

30. Codex Harleianus / Harley 1772 (VL 65 / it²).

This (mostly) **Vulgate** manuscript was copied in an abbey in northern France (probably Reims or Cambrai) sometime between 850 and 900.

The transcription has for the Beast's number: *et numerus ei est sexce[nti sedecim (= 616)].*⁸¹

The text after the bracket is missing in the original, so how can anyone be certain of this reconstruction?

The codex (and the tear in the page) can be viewed via the British Library:

https://iiif.bl.uk/uv/#?manifest=https://bl.digirati.io/iiif/ark:/81055/vdc_100056033924.0x000001.

Image 301 (of 311). Line 8.

31. The Irish Reference Bible (in Latin).

This work is a commentary on most of the Bible (both Testaments), drawing on earlier sources.

Originally authored ca. 740 AD.

Images here are from a 9th century copy of this Reference Bible housed in the National Library of France (BnF), Department of Manuscripts. Latin manuscript 11561:

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90668240/f218.item.zoom> [page 218 out of 224].

Right-hand page; left column; line 8 above the foot of the page.

Et numerus nominis ei est dclxvi· uel dcxvi in aliis libris·

Translation: And the number of his name is 666; or 616 in other books.

This work thus admits to drawing on a variety of sources and includes both numbers.

But discussion focuses on the 666: On various Greek letters, on the *Chi-Rho* monogram, and on several Greek names (Tietan, Antemos, Arhoume).

The Commentary on Revelation starts on page 208. Headed: DE APOCALYPSIN IN IÖH.

⁸⁰ See: https://archive.org/details/CodexFuldensis/Codex_Fuldensis_Source/page/449/mode/2up [page 450].

⁸¹ See: <https://archive.org/details/epistlesapocalyp00buch/page/146/mode/2up> [page 146].

The Buchanan edition, published in 1912.

From page xix of this work: "The copyists of our MS. were totally ignorant of the Latin tongue. This appears from some of their attempts to separate into words the unseparated text which they copied."

An English translation can be found online:

Early Latin Commentaries on the Apocalypse. Editor: Francis X. Gumerlock.

TEAMS Commentary Series 8. Publisher: Medieval Institute Publications (Kalamazoo, MI), 1997.

https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/mip_teams/8/.

This Commentary found in the Irish Reference Bible is called *De enigmatibus ex Apocalypsi Johannis*.

Background information can be found on page 6; the Commentary itself starts on page 44.

32. (To be continued.)

Appendix 3: Manuscripts of Revelation

1) Manuscripts up to the 10th century.

Manuscript	Date	Text of Revelation	Text-type
P18	200-400	1:4-7	A (1)
P24	300-400	5:5-8; 6:5-8	A (1)
P43	500-700	2:12-13; 15:8 – 16:2	A (2)
P47	late 200s	9:10 – 11:3; 11:5 – 16:15; 16:17 – 17:2	A (1)
P85	300-500	9:19 – 10:2; 10:5-9	A (2)
P98	150-200	1:13-20	A
P115	200-400	2:1-3; 2:13-15; 2:27-29; 3:10-12; 5:8-9; 6:5-6; 8:3-8; 8:11 – 9:5; 9:7-16; 9:18 – 10:4; 10:8 – 11:5; 11:8-15; 11:18 – 12:1; 12:2b-5; 12:8-10; 12:13 – 13:3; 13:6-16; 13:18 – 14:3; 14:5-7; 14:10-11; 14:14-15; 14:18 – 15:1; 15:4-7	A (1)
01/λ	330-360	Complete	A (1)
02/A	400-440	Complete	A (1)
04/C	450	1:2 – 3:19; 5:14 – 7:14; 7:17 – 8:4; 9:17 – 10:10; 11:3 – 16:13; 18:2 – 19:5	A (2)
025/P	850 ± 50	1:1 – 16:11; 17:2 – 19:20; 20:10 – 22:5	℣ ^A (5)
046	950 ± 50	Complete	℣ ^K (5)
051	950 ± 50	11:15 – 13:1; 13:3 – 22:7; 22:15-21 With Andreas Commentary	℣ ^A
052	950 ± 50	7:16 – 8:12 With Andreas Commentary	Byz (5)
0163	450 ± 50	16:17-20	mixed (3)
0169	350 ± 50	3:19 – 4:3	mixed (3)
0207	350 ± 50	9:2-15	mixed (3)
0229	750 ± 50	18:16-17; 19:4-6	mixed (3)
0308	350 ± 50	11:15-16; 11:17-18	A
0326	350 ± 50	17:1-4	A
82	950 ± 50	Complete With (abbreviated) Andreas Commentary	℣ ^K
93	950 ± 50	Lacking 1:1 – 2:5	℣ ^K
456	950 ± 50	Complete	℣ ^K
627	950 ± 50	1:1 – 3:20; 4:10 – 22:21	℣ ^K
920	950 ± 50	1:1 – 22:1	℣ ^K (5)
1424	900 ± 50	Complete	℣ ^K (5)
1611	950 ± 50	Lacking 21:27 – 22:21	A (2)
1841	900 ± 50	Complete	A (2)
2074	950 ± 50	Complete With Andreas Commentary	℣ ^A
2329	950 ± 50	Complete	A (2)
2351	950 ± 50	1:1 – 13:18; 14:3-5 With Commentary	mixed (3)

2) 11th century manuscripts.

Manuscript	Date	Text of Revelation	Text-type
35	1050 ± 50	Complete	ℳ ^C + ℳ ^A
42	1050 ± 50	1:1 – 18:3; 18:13 – 22:21	ℳ ^K
91	1050 ± 50	Complete With (abbreviated) Arethas Commentary	ℳ ^K
104	1087	Complete	Byz (5)
175	1000 ± 50	Complete	ℳ ^K
177	1050 ± 50	Lacking 22:21	ℳ ^K (5)
241	1050 ± 50	Complete	A
250	1050 ± 50	Complete With (abbreviated) Andreas Commentary	Byz ?
314	1050 ± 50	1:1-10; 1:17 – 9:11; 9:17 – 17:9; 18:8 – 20:1 With Arethas Commentary	ℳ ^K (5)
325	1050 ± 50	Complete	ℳ ^K
424	1050 ± 50	Lacking 15:6 – 17:3; 18:10 – 19:9; 20:8 – 22:21 With (abbreviated) Andreas Commentary	Byz
459	1092	Complete	Byz (5)
506	1050 ± 50	Complete	ℳ ^K
617	1050 ± 50	Complete With (abbreviated) Arethas Commentary	ℳ ^K
699	1050 ± 50	Complete	ℳ ^K
919	1050 ± 50	1:1 – 19:6	ℳ ^K
1006	1050 ± 50	Complete	A (2)
1384	1050 ± 50	1:1 – 4:1; 16:15 – 22:12	ℳ ^C + ℳ ^A
1734	1015	1:1 – 22:7 (16th century for 22:8b-21)	ℳ ^K
1828	1050 ± 50	Lacking 18:23 – 22:21	Byz
1849	1069	Complete	ℳ ^K
1854	1050 ± 50	Complete	A (2)
1862	1050 ± 50	Complete With (abbreviated) Andreas Commentary	Byz
1870	1050 ± 50	Complete	ℳ ^K
1888	1050 ± 50	Complete With (abbreviated) Andreas Commentary	Byz
1934	1050 ± 50	Complete With (abbreviated) Arethas Commentary	ℳ ^K
1955	1050 ± 50	1:1-14, 16; 15:8 – 19:4	ℳ ^K
2004	1050 ± 50	1:1 – 14:10; 15:2 – 22:21	ℳ ^K
2032	1050 ± 50	1:11 – 2:20; 3:16 – 6:9; 7:17 – 9:5; 21:18 – 22:17 With Andreas Commentary	ℳ ^A
2048	1050 ± 50	Complete	ℳ ^K
2059	1050 ± 50	Complete With Andreas Commentary	ℳ ^A
2081	1050 ± 50	Complete With Andreas Commentary	ℳ ^A
2138	1072	Complete	ℳ ^K
2259	1050 ± 50	13:14 – 14:16 With Andreas Commentary	ℳ ^A
2344	1050 ± 50	1:1 – 22:1	A (1)
2723	1050 ± 50	Complete	ℳ ^C

3) Some later manuscripts, up to 1470.

Manuscript	Date	Text of Revelation	Text-type
88	1150 ± 50	1:1 – 3:13	mixed/Ḥ ^A
94	1150 ± 50	Complete With Andreas Commentary	Ḥ ^A (5)
110	1150 ± 50	1:1-6, 14; 8:1 – 22:19	Ḥ ^K
203	1111	1:1 – 12:7; 13:1 – 22:21	Ḥ ^K
242	1150 ± 50	Complete	Ḥ ^K
256	1100 ± 50	1:1 – 15:7; 16:4 – 19:16	Ḥ ^K
337	1150 ± 50	1:1 – 10:3; 11:1 – 22:17	Ḥ ^K
452	1150 ± 50	Complete	Ḥ ^K
517	1100 ± 50	Complete	Ḥ ^K
620	1150 ± 50	Complete	Byz
911	1150 ± 50	1:1 – 20:11	Byz (5)
922	1116	Complete	Byz
1740	1150 ± 50	1:1 – 20:12; 21:9 – 22:21	Ḥ ^C
1760	1150 ± 50	1:1 – 5:8; 16:12 – 18:4; 19:20 – 20:9	Ḥ ^K
1872	1150 ± 50	Complete	Ḥ ^K
1893	1150 ± 50	1:1-5; 3:1 – 10:6; 12:11 – 17:5; 19:2-21; 21:4 – 22:21	Ḥ ^K
2030	1150 ± 50	16:20 – 22:21	mixed (3)
2050	1107	1:1 – 5:14; 20:1 – 22:21	A (2)
2186	1150 ± 50	1:1 – 13:17; 14:8 – 15:4; 16:12 – 17:17:3; 17:9 – 22:21 With Andreas Commentary	Ḥ ^A
2286	1150 ± 50	Complete With Andreas Commentary	Ḥ ^A
2625	1150 ± 50	1:1 – 22:19	A ?
2794	1150 ± 50	1:1 – 22:12	Byz
2814	1150 ± 50	1:1 – 22:16 With Andreas Commentary	Ḥ ^A
2846	1150 ± 50	1:1 – 9:7; 10:9 – 22:21	A ?
2855	1150 ± 50	12:12 – 13:13	??
2864	1100 ± 50	Complete	Ḥ ^K
792	1250 ± 50	Complete	Byz ?
2053	1250 ± 50	1:1 – 7:4; 7:9 – 22:21 With Oecumenius Commentary	A (1)
2062	1250 ± 50	1:1 – 2:1; 15:1 – 22:21 With Oecumenius Commentary	A (1)
2031	1301	Complete With Andreas Commentary	Ḥ ^A
254	1350 ± 50	Complete With Andreas Commentary	Ḥ ^A (5)
1328	1350 ± 50	Complete	Ḥ ^C
1678	1350 ± 50	Complete With Andreas & Oecumenius Commentaries	A ?
2060	1331	Complete? With Andreas Commentary	Ḥ ^A
2080	1350 ± 50	1:1 – 17:1; 17:14 – 22:16	A ?
2377	1350 ± 50	13:10 – 14:4; 19:21 – 20:6; 20:14 – 22:21	mixed (3)
69	ca. 1470	1:1 – 18:6 (18:7 – 19:10 are fragmentary)	Ḥ ^K (5)
1778	1450 ± 50	Lacking 1:1 – 1:8 With Andreas & Oecumenius Commentaries	A ?

Table Notes

1. Dates are approximate only and are sometimes revised.
Table 1 includes all of the extant Apocalypse manuscripts pre-1000 AD.
Table 2 includes all of the 11th century manuscripts.
Table 3 includes most of the 12th century manuscripts, plus some significant later ones.
2. Uncial Codices: 01/Ⲛ = Sinaiticus; 02/A = Alexandrinus; 04/C = Ephraemi Rescriptus; 025/P = Porphyrianus.
3. Text-types:
A = non-Byzantine (Alexandrian, or closer to Alexandrian).
With Aland category in parentheses.
Mixed (3) = non-Byzantine, but having a considerable number of Byzantine readings.
Byz = Majority Text, unclassified.
4. Uncial 046 is the earliest manuscript of the main (Koine) Byzantine text-type.
5. The text of Papyrus 115 is closest to Codices Alexandrinus (A) and Ephraemi (C)
These three may witness to an early text-type of the book of Revelation.
6. 12th century Minuscule 2186. According to David Robert Palmer:
“An almost exact sister to ms 2814, Erasmus’ one [Apocalypse] manuscript, except complete.
This manuscript helps prove that Erasmus back-translated last 5 verses of Rev. from the Latin.”⁸²
7. Uncial 0326 is a relatively recent addition to the list.⁸³

Main sources used in constructing these tables (including the one on page 42):

1. *Text und Textwert der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*.
Volume VI. Die Apokalypse.
New Testament Textual Research, published by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research of the
Wilhelms-Universität Münster/Westfalen.
Authors: Markus Lembke, Darius Müller, Ulrich B. Schmid; in conjunction with Martin Karrer.
Available online:
<https://ia801603.us.archive.org/9/items/Arbeiten-zur-neutestamentlichen-Textforschung/49MARK~1.PDF>.
The list of Revelation manuscripts is found on pages 172 to 192/962.
2. *New Testament Textual Criticism: The Application of Thoroughgoing Principles*.
(Essays on Manuscripts and Textual Variation.)
Author: J.K. Elliott.
Publisher: Brill (Leyden and Boston), 2010.
3. David Robert Palmer:
Translation and detailed textual apparatus for the book of Revelation:
<https://www.bibletranslation.ws/trans/revwgrk.pdf>.
For the Apocalypse manuscripts listing, see pages 193-212.

⁸² David Robert Palmer: <https://www.bibletranslation.ws/trans/revwgrk.pdf> [page 208]. Comment on Minuscule 2186.

⁸³ See the report by Peter Malik: Manuscript 5574; Revelation 17:1-4. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (Volume LXXXVII, 2023), pages 5-6.
Via: https://www.academia.edu/122130439/P_Oxy_LXXXVII_5574_Revelation_17_1_4.
See also the Table of New Testament Greek Manuscripts, by David Robert Palmer: <https://bibletranslation.ws/manu.html>.

Byzantine Manuscripts

The Byzantine text in different manuscripts is quite stable for most of the New Testament.

℣ (Gothic M) denotes the Byzantine “Majority Text”.

However, in the *Pericope Adulterae* (John 7:53–8:11) and the book of Revelation, the degree of variation among Byzantine manuscripts increases significantly.

With regard to the book of Revelation, there are three large families of Byzantine manuscripts:

1. ℣^K (M^K): Texts in the main **Koine** tradition.
Manuscripts covering disparate copying eras and locations.
Also called Family K or Q manuscripts.
2. ℣^A (M^A): Texts that contain and derive from the **Andreas** Commentary (611 AD). Also called Family Av.
Text similar to the Andreas subtype can be found in some manuscripts that lack the Commentary: 025/P, 35, 88, 1384.
The Andreas commentary is found in 96 manuscripts: the entire commentary in 83 manuscripts, and an abbreviated version in 13.
3. ℣^C (M^C): A family of some 40 manuscripts of Revelation that are related to the text of the **Complutensian** Polyglot. This family is closely related to the Family 35 manuscripts.⁸⁴
4. ℣ by itself (in Revelation texts) signifies agreement between ℣^K and ℣^A.

Byzantine vs. Alexandrian Manuscripts

The early Greek codices (including Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus) and the earliest papyri are representatives of the Alexandrian text-type. Nearly all have been found in Egypt, where the dry climate permits their long-term preservation.

Somewhat later, the Orthodox Church in Constantinople took over responsibility for copying the Greek manuscripts. Worn-out manuscripts were regularly replaced under the Church’s supervision.

The text was edited for grammar and style, becoming more “polished” and standardized over time.

The numbers of Byzantine manuscripts really took off in the 800s AD, soon eclipsing those with the Alexandrian text-type.

The fact that the vast majority — some 95% — of extant manuscripts are of Byzantine text-type leads some to conclude that this textual tradition better reflects the original New Testament autographs, and that we should be using Bible translations based on this text-type. But surely this Byzantine dominance is explicable:

First, Latin displaced Greek in the Western Church.

Second, translations of the Bible into local languages (Syriac, Armenian, Coptic, etc.) meant that Greek Bibles were later needed only where Greek was spoken. The Orthodox Church headquartered in Constantinople needed new Greek Bibles — for its own use.

⁸⁴ The Family 35 (or K') is large group of manuscripts dating from ca. 1050 to 1453. The name derives from its earliest member: Minuscule 35, from the 11th century. The group probably arose ca. 1100 as an attempt to create a unified New Testament text: the copying was controlled and the accuracy unequalled in the history of New Testament textual transmission. Texts with this K' subtype gained in popularity and became the most copied Greek text of the late Middle Ages. Note that some manuscripts, for example minuscules 35, 1384, and 1732, show textual affinity to both the Complutensian and Andreas subtypes.

Apocalypse manuscripts with commentaries associated with the text:

Up to the 16th Century.

GA No.	Century	Commentary	GA No.	Century	Commentary
051	X	Andreas	2054	XV	Andreas
052	X	Andreas	2055	XV	Andreas
82	X	Andreas (abbreviated)	2056	XIV	Andreas
91	XI	Arethas (abbreviated)	2058	XIV	Andreas & Oecumenius
94	XII	Andreas	2059	XI	Andreas
250	XI	Andreas (abbreviated)	2060	1331	Andreas
254	XIV	Andreas	2062	XIII	Oecumenius
314	XI	Arethas	2063	XVI	Andreas
424	XI	Andreas (abbreviated)	2064	XVI	Andreas
617	XI	Arethas (abbreviated)	2065	XV	Andreas
743	XIV	Andreas	2066	1574	Andreas
886	1454	(not Andreas)	2067	XV	Andreas
1678	XIV	Andreas & Oecumenius	2068	XVI	Andreas
1769	XIV	(not Andreas)	2069	XV	Andreas
1773	XIV	Andreas	2070	1356	Andreas
1778	XV	Andreas & Oecumenius	2073	XIV	Andreas
1859	XIV	(not Andreas)	2074	X	Andreas
1862	XI	Andreas (abbreviated)	2075	XIV	Arethas
1888	XI	Andreas (abbreviated)	2081	XI	Andreas
1934	XI	Arethas (abbreviated)	2082	XVI	
2014	XV	Andreas	2083	1560	Andreas
2018	ca. 1300	Andreas	2091	XV	Andreas
2019	XIII	Andreas	2186	XII	Andreas
2022	XIV	Andreas	2254	XVI	Andreas
2023	XV	Andreas	2259	XI	Andreas
2026	XV	Andreas	2286	XII	Andreas
2028	1422	Andreas	2302	XV	Andreas
2029	XVI	Andreas	2305	XIV	Andreas
2031	1301	Andreas	2351	X	(not Andreas)
2032	XI	Andreas	2361	XVI	Andreas
2033	XVI	Andreas	2403	XVI	Oecumenius
2034	XVI	Andreas	2419	ca. 1300	(not Andreas)
2035	XVI	Federigo de Venezia	2428	XV	Andreas
2036	XIV	Andreas	2429	XIV	Andreas
2037	XIV	Andreas	2435	XVI	Andreas
2038	XVI	Andreas	2594	XVI	(not Andreas?)
2042	XIV	Andreas	2595	XV	Andreas
2043	XV	Andreas	2638	XIV	(not Andreas)
2044	1560	Andreas	2743	XVI	(not Andreas)
2045	XIV	Andreas	2759	XVI	(not Andreas)
2046	XVI	Andreas	2814	XII	Andreas
2047	1543	Andreas	2891	XVI	
2051	XVI	Andreas	2991	1580	Andreas
2052	XVI	Andreas	2992	XIV	Andreas
2053	XIII	Oecumenius			

Appendix 4: The Sahidic Coptic Version

The Egyptian language was originally written down in hieroglyphs and its derivatives.

These were difficult to read and write, so early Egyptian Christians began to write down their native language using the 24 Greek capital letters. Along with these, seven letters derived from the Egyptian Demotic script were employed to represent certain sounds unique to the Egyptian language. This written form, now known as Coptic, eventually incorporated numerous Greek words relating to Christian doctrine, life, and worship.

The first translation of the New Testament into the Sahidic (southern Coptic) dialect appears to have been made around the end of the 2nd century in Upper (southern) Egypt, where Greek was less well understood.

The translation was made from early Alexandrian Greek texts, which is not surprising given their geographical proximity. The OT was translated from the Septuagint.

Manuscripts of the Sahidic version are designated sa or cop^{sa} in textual apparatuses.

There has been uniformity of Coptic lettering across the centuries, so we will examine here a modern edition of the Sahidic version on the assumption that the form hasn't changed much.⁸⁵

Revelation 13:18:

ΠΑΙ ΠΕ ΠΜΑ ΝΤΣΟΦΙΑ ΠΕΤΕΟΥΝΣΗΤ ΜΜΟϞ ΜΑΡΕϞΕΠΤΗΠΕ ΜΠΡΑΝ ΜΠΕΘΥΡΙΟΝ
ΤΗΠΕ ΓΑΡ ΝΟΥΡΩΜΕ ΤΕ ΕΣΕΙΡΕ ΝΣΕΥΨΕ ΣΕΤΑϞΕ.

Many of these letters are recognizable as Greek capitals.

For example, one can easily make out the word *sophia* ("wisdom") in the fourth word: ΝΤΣΟΦΙΑ.

With respect to the Beast's number itself:

ΕΣΕΙΡΕ = *and makes*

ΝΣΕΥΨΕ = *six hundred* (Ν = linking particle; ΣΕΥ- = 6 [contract form]; ΨΕ = 100)

ΣΕΤΑϞΕ = *sixty-six*

The number in Sahidic is fully spelled out.

However, Sahidic characteristically writes out numbers in full, and only rarely uses the Greek model in which individual letters themselves have a numerical value. (Contrast this with the northern Bohairic dialect, where the Greek system is extensively used and letters that serve as a number have a line written over them.)

So, the fact that this early version, from ca. 200 AD, has the Beast's number fully spelled out has little bearing on the form carried by the (Alexandrian) Greek exemplar from which it was copied.

⁸⁵ The Sahidic text here is from: *The Coptic version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect, otherwise called Sahidic and Thebaic*, Volume 7 (The Catholic Epistles and the Apocalypse). Edited by George William Horner (1849-1930). Published by the Clarendon Press (Oxford) in 1924. Public Domain. Via the Step Bible website: <https://www.stepbible.org/?q=version=CopSahHorner@reference=Rev.13>. Accessed 30-July-2025.

Appendix 5: The Nestle-Aland Critical Apparatus

In the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th edition), the last part of Revelation 13:18 reads⁸⁶:

... καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ ἑξακόσιοι ἐξήκοντα ἕξ.⁸⁷

Critical apparatus for the number itself:

ἑστὶν (+ δε P⁴⁷) P⁴⁷, C, P, 051, 1006, 1611, 1841, 1854, 2053, 2329, 2344, 88^A, sy^h ;

ἑξακοσὶαι ἐξηκοντα ἐξ 88 ; ἑξακοσὶαι δεκα ἐξ (χις P¹¹⁵) C, Ir^{mss} ; ἑξακοσια ἐξηκοντα πεντε 2344 ;

ἑξακοσια ἐξηκοντα ἐξ P, 1006, 1841, 1854, 2053^{vid} ; txt A (χξς P⁴⁷, 046, 051, 1611, 2329, 2377, 88) Ir, Hipp.

Using the above apparatus, we may note the following:

1. ἑ : Many manuscripts have the word ἐστὶν (= “is”) inserted before the number, as do most 88^A manuscripts — Byzantine manuscripts of the Andreas text-subtype but not those of the Koine tradition.
The word’s insertion is present also in the Syriac Harklensis version (sy^h, 616 AD).
2. **txt** : The chosen text (which is conjectured to have been the form in the original autograph) is supported by Codex A, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus. The shorthand form χξς is supported by Papyrus 47, uncials 046 and 051, minuscules 1611, 2329, 2377, and by most manuscripts of the Majority (Byzantine) tradition.
3. The various spellings of “six hundred” are listed, along with their manuscript support.
4. The 616 variant is attested to by Codex C, and by manuscripts known to Irenaeus.
Papyrus 115 has the shorthand form.
5. One manuscript has the number 665 in words: Minuscule 2344.
6. “**vid**” for the important Minuscule 2053: Gives the most probable reading with text that is unclear.

Note that the NA-28 is biased towards Alexandrian manuscripts.

Important texts consistently cited in the NA-28 for Revelation include these:

Papyri: P¹⁸, P²⁴, P⁴³, P⁴⁷, P⁸⁵, P⁹⁸, P¹¹⁵.

88 (01), A (02), C (04).

0163, 0169, 0207, 0229; 1006, 1611, 1841, 1854, 2030, 2050, 2053, 2062, 2329, 2344, 2351, 2377.

In the Byzantine text tradition:

025/P, 046, 051;

88^A [= texts of the Andreas type]; 88^K [= texts of the Koine tradition];

88 [signifies agreement of 88^A and 88^K].

Along with the early papyri and uncials (01, 02, 04), NA-28 considers the Alexandrian minuscules 1006 (XII), 1611 (X), 1841 (ca. 900 AD), 1854, (XI), 2050 (1107 AD), 2053 (XIII), 2062 (XIII), 2329 (X), and 2344 (XI).

2053 and 2062 preserve the sixth-century Alexandrian (and originally uncial) text of Oecumenius.

NA-28 considers the mixed-text uncials (0163 to 0229), and the mixed-text minuscules 2030 (XII), 2351 (X), and 2377 (XIV).

To cap matters, NA-28 considers the Andreas and Koine (Byzantine) traditions as well — taking particular note of the Andreas-like text of 025/P (IX), the Andreas text of 051 (X), and the early Koine text of 046 (X), along with the majority readings of each (Byzantine) subtype.

One can see here an eminently sensible focus on the early manuscripts without neglecting the Byzantine textual tradition.

⁸⁶ Via the Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/details/novum-testamentum-graece-nestle-aland-28-ed.-pdfdrive>. See page 765.

⁸⁷ This is literally: ... and the number [is] of it six hundred sixty-six.

Online Resources

1. Lists of (and details about) the New Testament manuscripts on Wikipedia:
 - a. For Papyri: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_New_Testament_papyri.
 - b. For Uncials: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_New_Testament_uncials.
 - c. For Minuscules: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_New_Testament_minuscules_\(1-1000\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_New_Testament_minuscules_(1-1000)).
(This page contains links to minuscules 1001 to 2000, and minuscules 2001 to 3000 and beyond.)
 - d. For Manuscript Categories:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Categories_of_New_Testament_manuscripts.
2. Lists of New Testament Alexandrian manuscripts:
<https://uasvbible.org/2021/12/08/alexandrian-text-type-of-greek-new-testament-manuscripts/>.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandrian_text-type.
https://textus-receptus.com/wiki/Alexandrian_text-type.
3. Lists of New Testament Byzantine manuscripts:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_text-type.
https://textus-receptus.com/wiki/Byzantine_text-type.
4. Categories of New Testament manuscripts:
<https://ebible.org/engtcnt/XXD01.htm>. (For Revelation manuscripts.)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Categories_of_New_Testament_manuscripts#Description_of_categories.
5. Manuscript descriptions:
Minuscules 1-500: <https://waltzmn.brainout.net/Manuscripts1-500.html>.
Minuscules 501-1000: <https://waltzmn.brainout.net/Manuscripts501-1000.html>.
Minuscules 1001-1500: <https://waltzmn.brainout.net/Manuscripts1001-1500.html>.
Minuscules 1501-2000: <https://waltzmn.brainout.net/Manuscripts1501-2000.html>.
Minuscules 2001 or more: <https://waltzmn.brainout.net/Manuscripts2000plus.html>.
Text-types: <https://www.skypoint.com/members/waltzmn/TextTypes.html>.
Nomina Sacra (abbreviations): <https://www.skypoint.com/members/waltzmn/NominaSacra.html>.
6. General articles on manuscripts and text-types:
<https://www.bible-researcher.com/isbetext02.html>.
7. Manuscripts with commentaries:
Article by Daniel B. Wallace:
<https://www.csntm.org/2015/02/26/biblical-manuscripts-and-their-commentaries/>.
8. David Robert Palmer:
 - a. Translation and detailed textual apparatus for the book of Revelation:
<https://www.bibletranslation.ws/trans/revwgrk.pdf>.
For Palmer's Apocalypse manuscripts listing, see pages 193-212.
 - b. Table of early Greek NT manuscripts: <https://www.bibletranslation.ws/manu.html>.
 - c. Textual Criticism Issues: <https://bibletranslation.ws/tc.html>.

9. Viewing digitized images of manuscripts:
 - a. The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (CSNTM; Director: Daniel B. Wallace):
<https://www.csntm.org/>.
 - b. The Institute for New Testament Textual Research (INTF) at the University of Münster, Germany:
(the New Testament Virtual Manuscript Room):
<https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace>.
 - c. The Vatican Library Digital Collections:
<https://digi.vatlib.it>.
 - d. Gallica: the digital library of the National Library of France (BnF) and its partners:
<https://gallica.bnf.fr/accueil/en/html/accueil-en>.
10. Ancient Bible Versions:

The Step Bible website: <https://www.stepbible.org/?q=version>.

Includes the LXX, Sahidic Coptic, Syriac, Samaritan Pentateuch, and Vulgate versions.

Hebrew: Leningrad Codex; Aleppo Codex (Masoretic unpointed text).
11. A vital online reference for manuscripts of the book of Revelation:

Text und Textwert der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments.

Volume VI. Die Apokalypse.

<https://ia801603.us.archive.org/9/items/Arbeiten-zur-neutestamentlichen-Textforschung/49MARK~1.PDF>.

New Testament Textual Research, published by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research of the Wilhelms-Universität Münster/Westfalen.

Authors: Markus Lembke, Darius Müller, Ulrich B. Schmid; in conjunction with Martin Karrer.

The English Introduction begins on page 103/962.

The key to the text verse variations is found on 124/962.

The list of Revelation manuscripts is found on pages 172 to 192/962.

All current New Testament manuscripts that contain Revelation (or portions thereof) are listed, along with their estimated date (century), the Revelation text that is included, and the holding institution.

The textual variants found in Revelation 13:18 are listed on pages 300 to 303/962.
12. Francis Gumerlock:

Articles and Books about Revelation:

<https://francisgumerlock.com/book-of-revelation-in-christian-history/>.
13. Other helpful online articles:
 - a. <https://www.cob-net.org/compare/docs/reference-charts-ciampa.pdf>.
 - b. Text and Canon Institute.
Articles about manuscripts: https://textandcanon.org/articles?_sft_category=manuscripts.
 - c. *The Fall and Rise of Revelation*. Author: T.C. Schmidt.
Article in the Text and Canon Institute website:
<https://textandcanon.org/the-fall-and-rise-of-revelation/>.
 - d. "The Lost Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse." Author: H.C. Hoskier.
The American Journal of Philology, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1913), pages 300-314.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/289599>.

14. Ancient Commentaries:

- a. The Venerable Bede: *The Explanation of the Apocalypse* can be viewed online here:
<https://thecatacombs.org/showthread.php?tid=881>.
- b. *Early Latin Commentaries on the Apocalypse*. Editor: Francis X. Gumerlock.
TEAMS Commentary Series 8.
Publisher: Medieval Institute Publications (Kalamazoo, MI), 1997.
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/mip_teams/8/.
De enigmatibus ex Apocalypsi Johannis is a Commentary found in the so-called Irish Reference Bible.
Details about this Commentary are given on page 6; the Commentary itself starts on page 44.

15. Article from the February 1844 edition of *Bibliotheca Sacra and Theological Review*.

“Interpretation of the Number 666 (χξς) in the Apocalypse 13:18 and the Various Reading 616 (χις).”

The original article (from 1836) was by Professor Ferdinand Benary of Berlin.

Translated from the German by Rev. Henry Boynton Smith.

Uploaded onto the Academia website by Adylson Valdez:

https://www.academia.edu/32966103/Interpretation_of_the_Number_666_in_the_Apocalypse_13_18_and_the_Various_Reading_616_Benary_1836.

16. Internet Archive Resources:

- a. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses (Against Heresies)*, written ca. 180 AD.
Book 5, Chapter 30:
<https://archive.org/details/SaintIrenaeusAgainstHeresiesComplete/page/n323/mode/2up>.
- b. The Greek version of Oecumenius’ Commentary on the Apocalypse, edited by H.C. Hoskier (1928):
<https://archive.org/details/completemcommenta0000oecu/mode/2up>.
- c. Andreas of Caesarea’s Commentary.
Part of The Fathers of the Church series (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011). English translation by Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou.
<https://archive.org/details/commentaryonapoc0123andr/page/n7/mode/2up>.
- d. Caesarius’ *Expositio in Apocalypsim*.
The English translation was made from Patrologia Latina Volume 35, pages 2417-2452.
(Published by Jacques Paul Migne in 1845.)
<https://archive.org/details/caesarius-of-arles-commnetary-on-revelation/mode/2up>.
See pages 44-45 for Caesarius’ discussion about the number of the Beast.
- e. *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. Author: Bruce M. Metzger.
London: United Bible Societies, 1971.
<https://archive.org/details/textual-commentary-on-the-greek-new-testament-bruce-m.-metzger-1971/mode/2up>.
- f. The *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th edition) textual apparatus.
<https://archive.org/details/novum-testamentum-graece-nestle-aland-28-ed.-pdfdrive>.
- g. Codex Harleianus (Harley 1772), from ca. 875.
The variant number of the Beast (616) is found on page 146:
<https://archive.org/details/epistlesapocalyp00buch/page/146/mode/2up>.

- h. *The Text of the New Testament*. Authors: Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, 1981.
English translation by Erroll F. Rhodes.
Publisher: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids, MI., 1989).
<https://archive.org/details/kurt-aland-and-barbara-aland-the-text-of-the-new-testament.-an-introduction/page/n3/mode/2up>.
For the Aland textual categories, see pages 335-336.
For the listing of Byzantine manuscripts, see Table 6, pages 138-140.