

## ~PARCHMENT (71)

[Latin, *pergamena*]

.. Vellum

- **Skins of sheep, goats, or calves prepared for use as writing material.** Leather was long used as a writing material among ancient people, the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah, copied toward the end of the Second Century B.C.E, is of leather.
- Papyrus from Egypt became a more widely used writing material but, according to Pliny, when the ruler of Egypt prohibited the exporting of it about 190 B.C.E, the use of leather parchment was invented in Pergamum. The English word, parchment, comes from Latin *pergamena*.
- Perhaps this means simply the popularizing of an already-existing method of treating the skins so that both sides could be written on. Scrolls of parchment were much more durable than the less expensive papyrus scrolls.
- The apostle Paul asked Timothy to bring the scrolls, especially the parchments. NW, Ro He does not indicate the contents of these requested items, but quite possibly he was asking for portions of the Hebrew Scriptures so that he could study them while imprisoned in Rome. The phrase, especially the parchments, may indicate that both scrolls of papyrus and scrolls of parchment were involved.
- When you come, bring the cloak I left at Troas with Carpus, and the scrolls, especially the parchments. (2 Timothy 4:13)
- Among the early Romans wooden tablets covered with wax were often used for writing matters of a temporary nature. Eventually sheets of leather or parchment were used instead for this purpose. The Latin word *membranae*, skins, was applied to such notebooks of parchment.
- In the text quoted earlier, Paul employed the Greek equivalent of the word in asking for the scrolls, especially the parchments, *mem'bra'nas*.

- Thus some commentators have suggested that he was requesting scrolls of the Hebrew Scriptures plus notes or letters of some type. So Moffatt translates it, **my books, and particularly my papers**, and **The New English Bible** reads, **the books, above all my notebooks**. However, whether the **parchments** were in the form of notebooks or papers, or were **parchment** scrolls, **La, Kx** cannot be ascertained.

## · Vellum

- Parchments were normally made from sheep, goat, or calf skin. In the **Third and Fourth Centuries C.E.**, there arose a distinction between the coarser and the finer grades of the material, the coarser continuing to be called **parchment**, but the finer, **vellum**.
- The finer **vellum** was made from delicate skins of calf, veal, or kid, or of stillborn calves or lambs. It was prepared by scraping the hair from the washed skins, stretching them on a frame, washing and scraping again to remove inequalities, dusting with chalk, and rubbing with pumice.
- This produced a thin, smooth, almost-white writing material that came to be widely used for important books until the invention of printing, for which paper was better and cheaper.
- Important Bible manuscripts such as the **Fourth-Century Sinaitic and Vatican No. 1209** as well as the **Fifth-Century Alexandrine** manuscripts are of vellum.