

## The silver bible : origins and history of the Codex Argenteus

Lars Munkhammar



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The Codex Argenteus, the 'Silver Bible' in Uppsala University Library is the most comprehensive extant text in the Gothic language. Rumours, adventures and exciting stories surround it. Gothic treasures, hidden relics, magic libraries, war booty, shipwrecks and robbery accompanied it through history.

The Codex Argenteus contains what is left of a splendid book of the four Gospels written in the early 6th century, probably for the Ostrogothic King Theoderic the Great. The text is part of Wulfila's 4th century translation of the Bible from Greek into Gothic. The Codex was discovered in the Werden Monastery near the Ruhr in the 16th century. When the Swedes captured the city of Prague in 1648, it was there. It followed a twisted road through Europe to Uppsala University Library where it arrived as a gift from the Swedish Chancellor Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie in 1669. The fate of the Codex in the years between its time in Ravenna and Werden is shrouded in oblivion. 'The Mystery of the Thousand Years' produced several theories about the fate of the Codex Argenteus during this millennium. In 2011 the Codex Argenteus was inscribed on UNESCO:s Memory of the World List.



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