

Mark of the Beast

Granted, using the '666' on the covers pictured below as a segway into a discussion of the Mark of the Beast may be a stretch, but one doesn't usually see that number...because of its Biblical ramifications, just as hotels avoided having a thirteenth floor because of its superstitious meanings.

The number of the beast is associated with the Beast of Revelation in chapter 13, verse 18 of Book of Revelation. In most manuscripts of the New Testament and in English translations of the Bible, the number of the beast is six hundred and sixty-six.

"17And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is 666." ...But, is 666 the real number?

Although Irenaeus (2nd century AD) affirmed the number to be 666 and reported several scribal errors of the number, theologians have doubts about the traditional reading because of the appearance of the figure 616 in the *Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus* (one of the four great uncial codices), as well as in the Latin version of Tyconius (*DCXVI*, ed. Souter in the *Journal of Theology*, SE, April 1913), and in an ancient Armenian version (ed. Conybeare, 1907). Irenaeus knew about the 616 reading, but did not adopt it (*Haer.* V, 30). In the 380s, correcting the existing Latin-language version of the New Testament (commonly referred to as the *Vetus Latina*), Jerome retained "666".

Around 2005, a fragment from Papyrus 115, taken from the Oxyrhynchus site, was discovered at the University of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum. It gave the beast's number as 616. This fragment is the oldest manuscript (about 1,700 years old) of Revelation 13 found as of 2017. *Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus*, known before the Papyrus 115 finding but dating to after it, has 616 written in full.

Papyrus 115 and Ephraemi Rescriptus have led some scholars to regard 616 as the original number of the beast. According to Paul Louis, "The number 666 has been substituted for 616 either by analogy with 888, the Greek number of Jesus or because it is a triangular number, the sum of the first 36 numbers ($1+2+3+4+5+6+...+36 = 666$)".

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Number_of_the_beast]

