

MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS AND MODERN EVANGELICALS: LESSONS FROM THE PAST, GUIDANCE FOR THE FUTURE

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Abstract: *Paratextual and codicological material in medieval Greek NT manuscripts are rich mines that have been largely neglected by evangelicals. Five such features are touched on in this article: (1) the growing canon consciousness and emergence of the codex and their interrelationship; (2) subscriptions (scribal notes at the end of NT books, often reflecting very early traditions) and colophons (blessing, supplication, or mild complaint by a scribe at the end of his codex); (3) the significant but essentially ignored role of female scribes through the centuries; (4) the part that paratextual features in these MSS played in helping scribes to memorize scripture; and (5) the visual priority given to Scripture over tradition in MSS with commentaries.*

Key Words: *medieval manuscripts, NT canon, birth of the codex, subscriptio, ancient interpretation of NT, colophons, female scribes, memory, memorizing Scripture, MSS with commentaries, paratextual features, format and interpretation*

The title of this message is “Medieval Manuscripts and Modern Evangelicals: Lessons from the Past, Guidance for the Future.”¹ I am restricting this lecture to biblical manuscripts (MSS) and, more specifically, NT MSS. Limiting my discourse further, I will not be addressing textual variants but instead will be focusing especially on paratextual and codicological features—that is, layout, formatting, and extrabiblical notes.

Why this topic? What can evangelicals possibly learn from the handwritten books of the medieval period?² These MSS are often deemed irrelevant without a hearing. Part of the reason for this presumed irrelevance may be the longstanding disdain for the first 1,500 years of church history within the broader evangelical community. As we are all aware, this situation has been changing for many decades among evangelical scholars. In our ecclesial gatherings, however, church history tends to begin with Luther, with an occasional glance at Augustine or Chalcedon.

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¹ I will also expand the topic just a bit beyond the medieval period (i.e. beyond c. 400 to 1500).

² Ancient manuscripts of the NT—the papyri and major majuscules—have been canvassed relatively well. Much of the information on these codices is readily accessible. See J. K. Elliott, *Bibliography of Greek New Testament Manuscripts* (3rd ed.; Leiden: Brill, 2015), for the most up-to-date entries on virtually all Greek NT MSS that have any published data. Remarkably, only about twenty percent of all such MSS have anything more than mere citations in print. This means that well over 4,000 MSS are essentially unknown, even to NT textual critics.

And even on an academic level, when evangelicals do engage with the first one and a half millennia, we almost always limit ourselves to the writings of the Church Fathers.

What I will argue for in this paper is that medieval MSS have much to contribute to modern evangelicals. Perhaps an analogy might help. In 1863 J. B. Lightfoot, then Hulsean Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University, delivered a lecture about the NT language. He expressed his frustration in finding comparable Greek to the NT in terms of its lexical stock, literary quality, and idioms. Lightfoot opined, “If we could only recover letters that ordinary people wrote to each other without any thought of being literary, we should have the greatest possible help for the understanding of the language of the NT generally.”³

The Cambridge divine’s “prophecy” would be fulfilled when thirty-two years later a young parish pastor in Hesse, Germany,⁴ published his *Bibelstudien*, an innocuously-titled book that would revolutionize the analysis of NT Greek. In this volume, Adolf Deissmann revealed linguistic parallels between the NT and the “letters that ordinary people wrote”—that is, the non-literary papyri.⁵ He demonstrated that the language of the NT was not “Holy Ghost Greek” as it had been frequently dubbed. It was essentially the common tongue of the day: “The pragmatic effect of Deissmann’s work was to render obsolete virtually all lexica and lexical commentaries written before the turn of the century.”⁶ Yet such unpretentious papyrus scraps could have been left moldering in the libraries of Europe if Deissmann and others had not connected the dots.

I am not suggesting that medieval MSS are as significant as the non-literary papyri. I will argue, however, that a number of their features deserve a wider hearing than is normally given them, and that evangelicals in particular have much to learn from these documents.

As a preface, I should mention what has piqued my interest in this topic. In 2002, the Center for the Study of NT Manuscripts was founded. CSNTM’s initial goal has been to digitize Greek NT MSS and make the images available on the Internet. In our first fourteen years, at more than forty sites throughout the world, we have digitized hundreds of MSS, including more than 90 NT MSS that were un-

³ Cited in J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, vol. 1: *Prolegomena* (3rd ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908), 242.

⁴ Gustav Adolf Deissmann had completed his *Habilitationsschrift* a few years earlier at Marburg University on ἐν Χριστῷ in the NT. In this work, he became sensitized to the character of NT Greek and attempted to free it from its Semitic bonds. Concurrent with his pastorate in Herborn, Deissmann also was a *Privatdozent* at Marburg when his *Bibelstudien* appeared. Deissmann’s career would later be marked by distinguished professorships in Heidelberg and Berlin. See Albrecht Gerber, *Deissmann the Philologist* (BZNTW 171; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 1, 23.

⁵ Ancient papyri were first discovered in 1752 in the ruins of Herculaneum, one of the towns destroyed by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 CE. The non-literary Greek papyri, however, began to be published in the late nineteenth century. Deissmann chanced upon them in 1893 when he saw the first volume of the *Berliner griechische Urkunden*. He immediately saw the relevance of these non-literary papyri for the NT.

⁶ D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 25.

known to biblical scholars. Using state-of-the-art equipment CSNTM has now created images of nearly half a million MS pages.

In 2015 and 2016, we photographed the entire collection of 300 Greek NT MSS held at the National Library of Greece. My job on these expeditions has been to examine each MS and prepare it for the digitizing teams. This includes writing a brief autopsy on each codex, giving details such as dimensions, leaf count, lines per page, date, contents, and interesting or unusual features. In the process, I have gained some familiarity with and a great deal of interest in these MSS.

I. INTRODUCTION

Standard hand editions of the Greek NT do not give all the data on the codices that stand behind our critical texts. Much more can be seen by a direct examination of the MSS or by examination of high-resolution photographs. Further, there are bits of data embedded in these MSS that can enrich our understanding of the NT, the process of transmission, and the culture of the scribes and their books.⁷ Such features have not been altogether ignored. Harry Gamble noted more than two decades ago,

The failure to consider the extent to which the physical medium of the written word contributes to its meaning—how its outward aspects inform the way a text is approached and read—perpetuates a largely abstract, often unhistorical, and even anachronistic conception of early Christian literature.⁸

Gamble and others have tried to right this wrong, though within evangelical circles the impact has been minimal. This paper is intended to bring some of these issues to your attention. Due to time constraints, this paper will be highly selective and only address five areas of largely paratextual and codicological components. And even within these areas, I will restrict my comments to a few key features.⁹

II. CODEX AND CANON

Every NT book, in all probability, was written on a papyrus roll¹⁰ and dispatched to its readers as a single document.¹¹ When collections of various groups

⁷ Ehrman has been most responsible for bringing to our attention the importance of the variants as a window on the culture and values of the scribes, though he largely restricts himself to these features in the MSS. See Bart D. Ehrman, “The Text as Window: New Testament Manuscripts and the Social History of Early Christianity,” in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Questionis* (2nd ed.; NTTSD 42; ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 803–30.

⁸ Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 42.

⁹ As recently as 2003, Metzger could include in his desideratum for “The Future of New Testament Textual Studies” a careful examination of “all aspects of the physical make-up of the documents” (Bruce M. Metzger, “The Future of New Testament Textual Studies,” in *The Bible as Book: The Transmission of the Greek Text* [ed. Scot McKendrick and Orlaith O’Sullivan; London: British Library, 2003], 204).

¹⁰ C. H. Roberts originally thought that Mark was written on a parchment codex and that the end of the Gospel was lost. He considered this to be the beginning of the codex form (C. H. Roberts, “The

of NT writings—such as the Gospels or Paul’s letters—began, it was not possible to combine such into one anthology until the invention of the codex. Although the codex form had its beginnings in the late first century, we do not know who invented it.¹² The anonymity of its origins belies the fact that the birth of the codex was, in the words of C. H. Roberts, “the most momentous development in the history of the book until the invention of printing.”¹³ In spite of its obscure origins, we do know that Christians were the first to popularize the codex book form. As far as the extant data reveal, for the first five hundred years of the Christian era, approximately ninety percent of all Christian books were written on a codex while only fourteen percent of all non-Christian books were written on a codex.¹⁴

The codex form was soon found to be useful for its capaciousness. Even early on, all of the Gospels, the whole of the Pauline corpus, or the Catholic epistles, could be enclosed between two covers, a virtual impossibility for a roll.¹⁵ And by the fourth century, bookmaking technology had improved sufficiently to include all twenty-seven books within a single codex—in fact, even the whole Bible could be so enclosed.¹⁶

But this brought new challenges to the ancient church. How should these books be arranged? What should the order of the Gospels be? How should Paul’s

Codex,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 40 [1954]: 187–90) and why Christians used it universally for Scripture as well as almost always for other Christian writings. But he apparently refuted his own views about Mark as codex three decades later (C. H. Roberts and T. C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* [London: Oxford University Press, 1983], 55–57). Martin Hengel contends that each of the Gospels was originally written in codex form rather than roll (*The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Collection and Origin of the Canonical Gospels* [Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2000], 50).

¹¹ The only partial exception to this was perhaps Luke-Acts which, though dispatched as two volumes (due to the limitations of the standard papyrus roll), was most likely meant to be a single treatise (see Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 30–33, 405, 414, *et passim*; Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* [4th ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], 12). Seeing Luke-Acts as essentially one book also makes sense if they were sent to Theophilus as something of a trial brief to secure Paul’s release from prison (see John W. Mauck, *Paul on Trial: The Book of Acts as a Defense of Christianity* [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001]).

¹² Martial is often given credit for this invention, but even Roberts and Skeat note that his experiment was “still-born” (Roberts and Skeat, *Birth of the Codex*, 29).

¹³ Roberts, “Codex,” 169.

¹⁴ The estimates above are based on incomplete data provided by Roberts and Skeat, *Birth of the Codex*. They document the number of extant non-Christian books through 500 CE (3064 total including 434 codices [14.165%]) while the Christian books are only listed through 400 CE (277 total with 241 codices [87.003%]). However, since the codex form was growing in popularity, it is a conservative estimate that at least 90% of all Christian books by 500 CE were in this format.

¹⁵ T. C. Skeat, “The Origin of the Christian Codex,” in *The Collected Biblical Writings of T. C. Skeat* (NovTSup 113; ed. J. K. Elliott, Leiden: Brill, 2004), 80: “The maximum length of a roll is generally taken to be about 10 m.” Not only could only one Gospel be on a roll, but even Paul’s letters, as seen in \mathfrak{P}^{46} , would be too much for the wieldiest roll (Skeat estimates that \mathfrak{P}^{46} would originally be c. 1570 cm [Skeat, “The Length of the Standard Papyrus Roll and the Cost-Advantage of the Codex,” in *Collected Biblical Writings*, 68]).

¹⁶ We have no evidence that MSS prior to the fourth century were large enough to contain the whole NT. But by the fourth century, the whole Bible could be placed within a single codex.

letters be organized? And how should the five basic groups—Gospels, Acts, Paul, Catholics, and Revelation—be ordered when these were all put within one volume?

Understandably, handbook editions of the Greek NT do not list the books in the order in which they appear in the MSS. But this information has value for a number of reasons, offering tantalizing tidbits on what led the ancient church to organize the NT the way it did.

1. *Order of the Gospels*. For example, the Gospels are found in nine arrangements among the MSS.¹⁷ The two most prominent are first, Matthew-Mark-Luke-John, and second, the “Western order” of Matthew-John-Luke-Mark which is seen, as its name implies, in Latin witnesses.¹⁸ The Western order places the apostles before the non-apostolic evangelists. Among the Greek MSS, this arrangement is rare, but significantly it is found in the third-century papyrus \mathfrak{P}^{45} and about half a dozen Greek majuscules.¹⁹

The Western order might also be seen in one other MS. In 2015, CSNTM photographed a parchment codex that had been known for well over a century.²⁰ The Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung (or INTF) in Münster classified it as an eleventh-century minuscule. The MS has only two Gospels—Luke and John—but they are in reverse order.²¹ It originally had all four Gospels.²² If this is a minuscule MS, it is the only one known with the Western order. In my examination of the codex, however, I would question both the date and the classification. It is more likely to be a tenth-century majuscule.²³

¹⁷ Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 296–97.

¹⁸ E.g. Old Latin MSS a b e f ff² g.

¹⁹ Metzger mentions codices D, W, and X as Greek majuscules to have the Western order but adds that “several of the older Greek minuscule MSS” also have this order (*ibid.*, 296). In addition to these majuscules can be added 036 and 0234; \mathfrak{P}^{45} , our oldest extant MS of Mark’s Gospel, also followed the Western order (T. C. Skeat, “A Codicological Analysis of the Chester Beatty Papyrus Codex of Gospels and Acts (P 45),” in *Collected Biblical Writings*, 146–47). Metzger erred regarding the minuscule MSS. J. K. Elliott notes that “Metzger was wrong (a rare occurrence!) re ‘several’ minuscules with the W order. Parker in his book on D reminds us that Gregory, Proleg. p. 137 claims to know 594 but he (G) is mistaken: the Liste has it as a ms. of Mt & Lk only (= Gregory p. 560f). Gregory p. 516 knows of Mosc syn ms. numbered 138 but such a Tischendorf number is marked ‘—’ for e in Liste, Sigelkonkordanz. (I see Gregory p. 524 includes 309 = 055 as a W order ms., but even that has now recently been expunged as being a Ms. of John Chrys. not of the NT!” (email dated February 17, 2015).

²⁰ Caspar René Gregory, *Textkritik des Neuen Testaments*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Hinrichs’sche, 1900), 261. Gregory lists it as an eleventh-century minuscule, both data Münster seems simply to have adopted.

²¹ This is noted by Gregory but he does not comment on what must have preceded John.

²² The codex currently has only Luke and John with commentary for each. (It originally had all four Gospels as can be seen by the quire number $\alpha\beta$ [22] on the recto of the second leaf. Assuming an eight-leaf quire as the norm, that would mean that there were originally c. 176 leaves prior to the current folio 2r. Since John [starting in chapter 3] and Luke take up 163 leaves collectively, and since the codex cuts off long before the ending of Luke, it is likely that it included Matthew prior to this.) Significantly, John precedes Luke (with the end of John and beginning of Luke on the same folio) making this another majuscule (or the *first* minuscule?) that can be added to the Western-order Gospels.

²³ Some evidence that Gregory-Aland 1411 is a tenth-century majuscule: letters are almost always supralinear which suggests a date no later than the tenth century (cf. Bruce M. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Palaeography* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981], 49). That the

The Western order may well have been the oldest arrangement of the Gospels made once the codex form was large enough to accommodate all four Gospels.²⁴ If so, it might suggest something of a growing canon consciousness in the second century²⁵ because by putting the apostles first, priority seems to have been given to them.²⁶

There is another order that is even rarer among Greek MSS—Matthew-Luke-Mark-John. This arrangement was followed by Ambrosiaster, a name given to an anonymous writer in c. 380 CE mistakenly believed to be St. Ambrose.²⁷ The lone Greek MS known to mention this order is codex 498, a fourteenth-century minuscule. It has at the beginning of the document something of a running-hand table of contents for the OT and NT. Here the Gospels are listed in the Ambrosiaster order without further comment.²⁸ But when the scribe writes out the *text* of the Gospels he follows the standard order of Matthew-Mark-Luke-John.²⁹

In February 2015 while preparing a Gospels MS for the CSNTM digitizing teams, I came across something that caught my eye. It was a small parchment codex that contained Matthew and Mark. At the end of Matthew, *on the same page*, the Lukan κεφάλαια, or primitive chapter headings, begin. They continue on the next two pages, indicating almost surely that the scribe of this MS was copying from an exemplar that had the Ambrosiaster order. The scribe then has an icon of Mark followed by the text of Mark. The other half of this MS, located in a library outside of Athens, has Luke and John.

lines were not noticed by INTF is most likely due to the photographic quality of the microfilm which cannot reveal the fine detail found in digital photographs.

The question about whether this is a majuscule or minuscule is due to the fact that it has minuscule commentary but majuscule text (this would normally qualify it as a majuscule) and that the scribe was not entirely consistent in distinguishing text from commentary. This is not altogether infrequent in the MSS that intermingle text with commentary.

²⁴ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 47: “A roll of more than ten or eleven meters was too cumbersome for the reader to handle” (cf. p. 266). Matthew, Luke, and John would take up close to this upper limit (882, 864, and 684 cm respectively according to Skeat, “Origin of the Christian Codex,” 80). They would accordingly not allow for any other Gospel to be included in the roll.

²⁵ By the time of the Muratorian Canon (second half of the second century) the order is now Matthew-Mark-Luke-John. Roberts and Skeat thought that a four-Gospel codex in the second century was unlikely (*Birth of the Codex*, 66), but Skeat later argued that there is evidence that \mathfrak{P}^4 , \mathfrak{P}^{64} , and \mathfrak{P}^{67} were from the same Gospel codex and that it should be dated to the late second century (“The Oldest Manuscript of the Four Gospels?,” *NTS* 43 [1997]: 1–34; dating is discussed on pp. 26–31). But see Peter Head’s argument against Skeat’s conclusion of a second-century four-Gospel codex (Peter M. Head, “Is \mathfrak{P}^4 , \mathfrak{P}^{64} and \mathfrak{P}^{67} the Oldest Manuscript of the Four Gospels? A Response to T. C. Skeat,” *NTS* 51 [2005]: 450–57).

²⁶ Hengel argues that the normal order was made to emulate the chronological order of the Gospels, leaving “aside the problematical Hebrew ‘Matthew’” (*Four Gospels and the One Gospel*, 39; whole discussion on pp. 38–47).

²⁷ Irenaeus occasionally discussed the Gospels in this order: Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.11.7; 4.6.1. But see *Haer.* 3.1.1 (standard order). And in *Haer.* 3.11.7, he also mentions them in the order John-Luke-Matthew-Mark.

²⁸ See Gregory, *Textkritik* 1.196. This list inexplicably omits the Apocalypse from the NT, though the text of Revelation is included in the minuscule.

²⁹ The order is as follows: Matthew (ff. 5–26), Mark (ff. 27–39), Luke (ff. 41–64), John (ff. 65–82). For images, see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_17469.

What are we to make of this evidence? First, the chapter headings of Luke on the same page as the end of Matthew, as well as the next two pages, provide almost indisputable proof that the scribe was about to write out Luke immediately after Matthew.³⁰ Second, the scribe was copying from a Greek exemplar that had the Ambrosiaster order.³¹ There are telltale signs that this transcriber was not particularly attentive to his work.³² And this inattentiveness underscores the great probability that the scribe had a Greek exemplar for the Lukan κεφάλαια: if he were translating these chapter headings from a Latin codex, inattentiveness would not be a likely trait.

My hypothesis is that the scribe did not realize that the MS he was copying was an Ambrosiaster-arranged εὐαγγελιστήριον until he began to copy out Luke's headings. Rather than stop right there, he finished out the rest of the headings (after all, he was in the middle of the quire), then proceeded to write out Mark's Gospel. Whether our copyist picked up *another* MS for the rest of his task is not yet known.³³ In the least, this particular MS provides solid evidence for the Ambrosiaster order among *Greek* MSS at least three hundred years prior to codex 498, and it implies that an even older Greek exemplar also had this order.

There is a longstanding fascination in canon studies with the arrangement of the Gospels in the MSS. And canon studies have been attracting renewed attention among evangelicals in recent years. The Western order in yet another Greek MS and the Ambrosiaster order in an eleventh-century minuscule add more specifics to the discussion. Although the implications of such data are not yet fully known, in the least it is vital for evangelicals to keep up with the latest findings.

2. *Hebrews among the letters of Paul.* Hebrews, though always associated with Paul's letters, found a home in various locations. In fact, Hebrews "wanders from one end of [Paul's letters] to the other."³⁴ The earliest MS of the *corpus Paulinum*,

³⁰ It is just possible that this scribe was working from individual Gospel MSS and simply picked up Luke after he finished writing out Matthew. But since individual Gospel MSS are hardly found after c. 800 CE, this is hardly likely.

³¹ The only known Gospels order that places Luke immediately after Matthew is Ambrosiaster's.

³² The scribe's carelessness can be seen by his irregular word breaks at the end of lines in which he occasionally split up a syllable. This is normally an indication that a scribe was not altogether professional, since this practice occurred only rarely in Greek MSS, and was considered a violation of a cardinal rule of calligraphy. See Edward Maunde Thompson, *An Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography* (rev. ed.; Richmond, UK: Tiger of the Stripe, 2008), 60; E. G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 19–20; James R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (NTSD 36; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 756. (Thanks are due to Jacob Peterson for pointing me to these references.) For example, the last two lines of the Athens MS, which ends at Mark 8:2, reads: μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ λέγει αὐτοῖς, σπλαγχνίζομαι ἐπὶ τὸν ὄχλον. Significantly, the second to last line ends with just the sigma of σπλαγχνίζομαι, thus breaking the word rather unnaturally. Occasionally earlier scribes also split up syllables against the normal rules, such as we see in P⁴⁷ in several locations.

³³ But this is perhaps not impossible to determine. If the textual affinities of Matthew differ significantly from the rest of the codex, it would seem that the scribe did indeed use a different exemplar once he began to copy out Mark's Gospel.

³⁴ Jerome D. Quinn, "P⁴⁶—The Pauline Canon?," *CBQ* 36 (1983): 379.

Ⲣ⁴⁶ (c. 200 CE), places Hebrews immediately after Romans.³⁵ Judging by the indirect evidence of other early MSS, it is possible that Hebrews also came right after Romans in several papyri. We have eight MSS of Romans prior to the mid-fourth century, six of Hebrews, and four of 1 Corinthians.³⁶ Hebrews appears more often than any other letter except Romans.³⁷ The data prompt James Roysse to propose an intriguing possibility: “Might we speculate that the earlier portions of a codex (if indeed Hebrews often came after Romans) tended to survive?”³⁸ Hebrews is also found immediately after Romans in nine minuscule MSS.³⁹

The ancestor of Vaticanus placed Hebrews immediately after Galatians.⁴⁰ And more than eighty MSS, including most of the majuscules,⁴¹ locate Hebrews at the end of the letters to the churches and before those to individuals—that is, between 2 Thessalonians and 1 Timothy. Two or three MSS were recently discovered by CSNTM to have this order.⁴²

³⁵ Jason A. Whitlark, “Here We Do Not Have a City That Remains?: A Figured Critique of Roman Imperial Propaganda in Hebrews 13:14,” *JBL* 131 (2012): 172 n. 43, suggests that the “compiler of Ⲣ⁴⁶ may have thought that the final greeting indicated a Roman destination,” because although Paul’s letters seemed to be arranged by length early on, Hebrews is shorter than 1 Corinthians. Marc-André Caron is to be credited with pointing me to this reference.

³⁶ James R. Roysse, “The Early Text of Paul (and Hebrews),” in *The Early Text of the New Testament* (ed. Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 200–201, lists seven for Romans, followed by Hebrews in five. Then come 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and 1 Thessalonians, each attested in only three such MSS. His data need to be updated: another papyrus has recently come to light, GC.Pap. 000425, a third-century fragment from Romans 9–10. See Grant Edwards and Nicholas Zola, “Initial Findings on a Newly Discovered Fragment of Romans” (paper read at the annual meeting of the SBL, Chicago, November 2012). The MS has been given the Gregory-Aland number Ⲣ¹³¹. Other papyri in the same collection supplement Roysse’s study: Ⲣ¹²⁹ is a third-century fragment of 1 Corinthians, and Ⲣ¹³⁰ is a third/fourth century fragment of Hebrews.

³⁷ Roysse discusses all the Greek MSS that were written before the great majuscules of the mid-fourth century, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus (all of which are papyri except for 0220).

³⁸ Roysse, “Early Text of Paul,” 201.

³⁹ Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2nd ed.; Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994), 591. See the succinct discussion on pp. 591–92.

⁴⁰ See discussion in *ibid.*, 591 n. 2.

⁴¹ Ⲡ A B C H I K P 0150 0151 (*ibid.*, 591). Metzger supplements this with noting that “more than eighty minuscules” also have this order, though he only lists ten of these along with several versional witnesses.

⁴² William H. P. Hatch, “The Position of Hebrews in the Canon of the New Testament,” *HTR* 29 (1936): 133–51, discusses several arrangements, noting that about sixty minuscules have this order. This number was updated sixty years later by Kurt Aland of the INTF for Metzger’s *Textual Commentary*, 591. CSNTM has digitized several MSS with Hebrews after 2 Thessalonians, including two noteworthy codices. First, GA 794 (XIV) has Hebrews *both* after 2 Thessalonians *and* after Philemon. This came about because after 1 Timothy was written by the first calligrapher, another scribe finished the MS and, presumably not noticing that Hebrews had already been copied, wrote it again after Philemon. This second hand thus constitutes a newly discovered MS of Hebrews. Second, in 2007, CSNTM photographed almost fifty Greek NT MSS at the National Archive in Tirana, Albania. Only thirteen of these had been known to biblical scholars as being housed there. One of the MSS CSNTM digitized was Kod. Ar. 98 (XII/XIII), later given the Gregory-Aland number 2903; this also places Hebrews after 2 Thessalonians. See also images of 1827 (1295), 1828 (XI), 1875 (X), 2527 (XIV), at www.csntm.org, for some other MSS with this arrangement.

What is to account for the floating position of Hebrews in the canon? First, as far as the Greek MSS are concerned, it should be noted that Hebrews was always associated with Paul,⁴³ not with the Catholic Epistles or other NT books.⁴⁴ So, although it floats, it does not wander outside of Paul's epistles. In evangelical circles, however, we often put Hebrews with the General Letters in spite of the MS evidence to the contrary.⁴⁵ Doing so, I submit, obscures the arguments of the ancient and medieval church and ignores the unanimous MS testimony to the contrary. Hebrews was never called a Catholic Epistle in the MSS of the NT. If we are uncomfortable placing this document with Paul's letters, it should only be because of authorship issues. But if we tacitly relocate it within the canon, the charge of historical revisionism could legitimately be laid at our feet.

Of course, we must also recognize that it is not the case that the scribes who created these MSS always thought that Hebrews was authored by Paul. We have both patristic and MS evidence that reveals their suspicions.⁴⁶ Suspicions or out-

⁴³ Or, as Hengel quips, "in the Greek-speaking East it was put in the proximity of Paul" (*Four Gospels and the One Gospel*, 52).

⁴⁴ There are few MSS that include the whole NT; instead, most have only one or two corpora such as Gospels, just Paul's letters, or Acts and the epistles. When there are at least two groups, it is possible to tell what Hebrews was associated with. No Greek MSS of which I am aware places Hebrews outside of Paul's letters. Codex 1241, however, puts James in the middle of the Pauline corpus, right after Hebrews but before Romans (!), Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. And the Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397), though regarding Hebrews as canonical, place it outside Paul's letters (Elliott James Mason, "The Position of Hebrews in the Pauline Corpus in the Light of Chester Beatty Papyrus II" [Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1968], 138–39).

⁴⁵ For example, in several Bible college and evangelical seminary course catalogs. Phoenix Seminary's catalog for the course "507 Survey of the General Epistles and Revelation," though not mentioning Hebrews explicitly, does include Hebrews in the syllabus as one of the General Letters. Faith Theological Seminary's course NT 4134 on "The General Epistles and Revelation" includes Hebrews. Biola University's catalog tacitly lists Hebrews as one of the General Letters in the course BBST 343.

Most surprisingly, Hebrews is also listed among the General Letters occasionally in NT introductions: Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), "Part 4: Encountering the General Epistles and the Apocalypse," have Hebrews first among these "catholic" epistles (pp. 347–53); Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: B&H, 2009), "Part Four: The General Epistles and Revelation," lists Hebrews first among the Catholic Letters (pp. 667–700); Arthur G. Patzia, *The Making of the New Testament: Origin, Collection, Text, and Canon* (2nd ed.; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), "Part 4.2: The Catholic Epistles," lists Hebrews fifth among these books (pp. 158–59). Curiously, Patzia's first edition (1995) explicitly separated Hebrews from the Catholic Epistles (pp. 92–97), but then included it in the second edition. Paul N. Anderson, *From Crisis to Christ: A Contextual Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2014), "Part III: The General Epistles and Revelation," puts Hebrews first (pp. 299–314).

⁴⁶ This can be seen by the patristic evidence beginning with Origen, perhaps even with Clement of Rome, and later by Hilary, Jerome, and Augustine. Further, the general lack of a paratextual note affirming Paul as author in the more ancient MSS, especially when they explicitly claim such for the thirteen Pauline letters, may be significant. In the second millennium, MSS sometimes claim Pauline authorship in the *inscriptio* and/or *subscriptio* to this letter (so codices 1 81 218 323 489 630 927 945 999 1243 1244 1319 1505 1881 2495), as does the KJV. And these are not restricted to the second millennium as 018 and 025, among other witnesses, attest. As well, the *hypothesis* at the beginning of the *corpus Paulinum* and the *hypothesis* introducing Hebrews, both of which date back to no later than the fourth century, occasionally speak of Hebrews as one of fourteen letters by Paul. However, it is significant that even in many

right denial of Pauline authorship, however, did not mean that Hebrews was now a Catholic Epistle.

Second, in general we could say that as time goes on, Hebrews continues to move farther and farther toward the back of the Pauline corpus. The arrangement seen in most MSS, in which Hebrews is placed at the end of Paul's epistles, was the last development in the order.

Third, the reasons for a particular arrangement of books by an author in the Greco-Roman world varied considerably. Eric Scherbenske's doctoral dissertation, done under the tutelage of Bart Ehrman, discusses some of these arrangements. In *Canonizing Paul*, he notes sequences in Greco-Roman writings that were "alphabetical, chronological, theoretical, topical, pedagogical," and occasionally authorial.⁴⁷ Scherbenske argues that this last category could involve the inclusion of spurious works appended to the end of an author's writings. But I would argue that the history of Hebrews in the canon may suggest otherwise for this epistle.

As is well known, Hebrews struggled for acceptance in the West in the first four centuries. It was not included in their canon lists.⁴⁸ Thus, the practice of the ancient church seemed to be to omit Hebrews from the canon if its authorship was questioned rather than include it with Paul's letters. In a provocative study, Elliott Mason argues that the glacial progression of this letter toward the back of the Pauline corpus was initially due to concessions by the Eastern Church to the Church of Rome as to authorship. Nevertheless, it was still a part of Paul's letters regardless of its position.⁴⁹ By the end of the fourth century, both the Eastern and Western branches of Christendom accepted Hebrews as authoritative Scripture, while doubts about its authorship were reflected in its location within the *corpus Paulinum*. Mason's work was not listed in Scherbenske's bibliography in spite of its direct relevance to his study.

In sum, the church universal of the fourth century came largely to the position that evangelicals embrace today: they accepted Hebrews as Scripture even if it was not from the hand of Paul.⁵⁰

later MSS attribution to Paul is noticeably lacking in the subscriptions (181 218 256 424 489 927 999 1243 1244 1251 1424 1573 1735 1739 1836 1874 1881 1912).

⁴⁷ Eric W. Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul: Ancient Editorial Practice and the Corpus Paulinum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), quotation on p. 42; pp. 43–46 list some examples of inclusion of spurious writings.

⁴⁸ See Hermann Josef Frede, *Epistulae ad Philippenses et ad Colossenses* (VL 24.2; Freiburg: Herder, 1966), 290–303, especially pp. 292–93. However, there are several Old Latin MSS that include Hebrews (e.g. μ r t v z), though none is dated earlier than the sixth century.

⁴⁹ Mason, "Position of Hebrews," 130–32.

⁵⁰ There are very few exceptions to the belief of non-Pauline authorship of Hebrews, most notably by Eta Linnemann, "A Call for a Retrial in the Case of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Faith and Mission* 19/2 (Spring 2002): 19–59; and David Alan Black, *The Authorship of Hebrews: The Case for Paul* (Cantonment, FL: Energion, 2013).

III. SUBSCRIPTIONS AND COLOPHONS

Our second broad area to investigate involves extra-canonical notes known as subscriptions and colophons. A *subscription* is a note at the end of a *book of the NT* that may repeat the title, indicate who carried the letter to its destination, where the NT writing was dispatched from, or even offer a date for the book. A colophon is a note at the end of a *codex*, typically with the scribe’s personal reflections on the fruits of his toils. I will offer one example of a *subscription* and two of colophons.

1. *Subscriptions*. At the conclusion of Paul’s letter to the Romans are several subscriptions. As one might expect, “To the Romans” (Προς Ρωμαιοῦς) is found in most of our earliest witnesses, which is later expanded to “the epistle of the holy apostle Paul to the Romans.”⁵¹ Also, “from Corinth” is mentioned in quite a few MSS, including fairly early ones.⁵² But another phrase is also found among the MSS—one that makes an implicit interpretation on Rom 16:1–2. It is a notation about the courier of this letter—one Phoebe, from the church of Cencreae, a port town just east of Corinth. The apostle introduces her with a strong commendation, suggesting that she was a woman of some means.⁵³ The *subscription* at the end of Romans in many, if not most, MSS reads “written through Phoebe” (εγγραφή δια Φοιβῆς). As Randolph Richards has demonstrated, “to write through” someone is routinely a technical phrase pointing to the letter-bearer rather than the amanuensis.⁵⁴ In other words, this *subscription* is claiming that Phoebe is the one who carried this epistle to Rome.

⁵¹ The word order of this longer title varies significantly among the witnesses (218 1628 1720 1768 1877). There are several permutations with one or another word lacking in many other MSS.

⁵² E.g. B^e D^c 049 424 945 1720 1874.

⁵³ In Rom 16:2, Paul calls her a “benefactor” who has assisted him and many other believers. Cf. BDAG, s.v. *προστάτις*. Whether she was also a deacon or simply a “servant” at her church (διάκονος in v. 1) may depend, in part, on whether the *καί* before *διάκονον* is authentic (found in \mathfrak{P}^{46} \aleph^B C* 81 bo; lacking in \aleph^1 A C D F G Ψ 33 1739 1881 \mathfrak{N}^1 latt sy^s sa); if so, it is ascensive, most likely highlighting her official role.

⁵⁴ E. Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (WUNT 42; Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 69–73; and expanded in idem, “Silvanus Was Not Peter’s Secretary: Theological Bias in Interpreting *διά Σιλουανού ... ἔγραψα* in 1 Peter 5:12,” *JETS* 43 (2000): 417–32. Richards, however, insists that this expression “was used solely to identify the letter-carrier and never to identify the secretary” (“Silvanus,” 426). He restricts his certainty to the clause *γράφω διά τινος* (with the first person active of *γράφω*) noting that the passive of *γράφω* “would be an entirely different matter” since it refers to the object of the preposition as the author (ibid., 417 n. 2; see also 423 n. 32, 424). He also notes that “by the hand” (*χειρῆ*) may be used to “avoid confusion” so that one would not see “written by the hand” of someone as indicating the courier (425 n. 37). However, he then enlists the passive *εγγραφή δια Φοιβῆς* in the subscription to Romans on behalf of his argument that the *active* voice *γράφω* carried this force. He also cites Acts 15:23—“[they] wrote through their hands” (*γράψαντες διά χειρὸς αὐτῶν*)—as an idiom for the couriers (426–27 nn. 43, 44). These comprise two of Richards’s four summary arguments that the phrase *γράφω διά τινος* was always an idiom for the letter-bearer, yet these two texts are not the same expression, as he earlier had noted.

Further, there are other ancient texts that may suggest a different interpretation of the expanded/slightly different expression. Besides the NT phrase “written through the prophet(s)” (Matt 2:5; Luke 18:31), already discounted by Richards, see Josephus, *Ant.* 16.11.2 (τὰ γραφέντα δι’ αὐτῶν, indicating the authors). In codex 337 (XII) at the end of Romans we read: *εγγραφή η προς ρωμαιοῦς επιστολή δια Τερτιου επεμφθη δε δια Φοιβης απο Κορινθιων* (“the letter to the Romans, written through Tertius,

The subscriptions may reach back as far as the fourth century in the writings of Euthalius, who, in turn, probably used even older sources.⁵⁵

This particular *subscriptio*, I suggest, makes an important statement about the early church's view on the role of women in ministry and is almost surely a correct implication derived from Rom 16:1–2. However, the subscription is routinely overlooked by exegetical literature. To be sure, most exegetes note that Phoebe in all likelihood brought the letter to Rome⁵⁶ but they equally neglect to mention the ancient MS evidence that supports this conclusion.⁵⁷ A few commentaries—such as Fitzmyer's, Witherington's, and Schreiner's—are happy exceptions to this rule, for not only do they mention Phoebe as the likely courier but also that “some of the

and sent through Phoebe from Corinth”). Here *εγραφή* ... *δια* refers to Tertius, the amanuensis, while Phoebe is designated as the courier with the verb *επεμψθη*. Could it be that this twelfth-century minuscule is representing a much earlier idiom? All of the NT *subscriptio*es are found only in later MSS, yet a broad scholarly consensus that they reach back, at least collectively, to no later than the fourth century, should give us pause. Codex 337 is not an anomaly; this is not the only time that a NT MS speaks of the *amanuensis* with *εγραφή δια*. Codex 1751 (XV) at the end of Galatians adds the subscription that the letter was written “by the hand of Paul” (*εγραφή δια χειρης Παυλου*), yet a similar expression was considered by Richards as an indication of the *couriers* in Acts 15:23. And several MSS add the subscription at the end of Hebrews that the letter was “written through Timothy” (*εγραφή δια Τιμοθεου*; cf., e.g., 181 209 218 256 424 [*εγραφει* 489 927 1735] 757 1243 1244 1251 1315 1424 1573 1739 1836 1874 1881 1912). But in Heb 13:23 the author speaks of Timothy's release (from prison), adding “with whom if he comes soon I will see you.” This certainly sounds as though Timothy would probably be joining the author and was not sent on ahead with this letter.

Thus, there is quite a bit of evidence in the subscriptions of *εγραφή δια* indicating other than the courier. How certain are we that the first person *γράφω διά τινος* always indicated the courier? I am unaware of any studies done on this expression using the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, or the papyrus databases, but such may be illuminating. On the one hand, Richards's argument does not seem to be quite as airtight as he suggested; on the other hand, he is surely correct that the idiom overwhelmingly implies the courier rather than the amanuensis, and thus his point about evangelical bias in treatments of 1 Pet 5:12 stands.

⁵⁵ See Louis Charles Willard, *A Critical Study of the Euthalian Apparatus* (ANTF 41; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 102, 125; Vemund Blomkvist, *Euthalian Traditions: Text, Translation and Commentary* (TU 170; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 3–4, 242–43.

⁵⁶ Cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975–1979), 2.780; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 528; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16* (WBC 38B; Dallas: Word, 1988), 886, 889; James R. Edwards, *Romans* (NIBC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 354; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 913; N. T. Wright, *The Letter to the Romans* (NIB 10; Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 761; Grant R. Osborne, *Romans* (IVPNTC; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004), 402; Stanley E. Porter, *The Letter to the Romans: A Linguistic and Literary Commentary* (NT Monographs 37; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2015), 291. Otto Michel calls it only a possibility (*Der Brief an die Römer* [KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966], 473).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* (for all the references in the previous note). Ernst Käsemann, *An die Römer* (HNT 8a; 2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1974), 392, addresses the possibility of Phoebe as the courier but rejects this notion as totally speculative. Llewelyn goes so far as to state, “The letters of Paul to the Romans, Galatians and Thessalonians make no mention of their respective couriers. It seems improbable then that these letters were carried by one of Paul's ‘fellow workers’; for if Paul was sending one of his emissaries, he is likely to have referred to the fact” (S. R. Llewelyn, “Directions for the Delivery of Letters and the Epistles of St Paul,” in *Ancient History in a Modern University*, vol. 2: *Early Christianity, Late Antiquity and Beyond* (ed. T. W. Hillard et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 192. He does not mention the *subscriptio* about Phoebe.

ancient subscriptions to the letter indicate” this very thing.⁵⁸ And in commenting on Paul’s instructions for the saints in Rome to “help [Phoebe] in whatever she may need,” Stanley Porter states:

One might speculate that her need for aid could be related to the long journey that she had undertaken, the fact that she was a woman carrying such an important letter in a predominantly male-dominated world, or the need to ensure that she was listened to if she were to read the letter out to the Roman Christians—as she might well have been expected to do.⁵⁹

For some evangelicals, it may seem scandalous that Paul would entrust a woman to deliver this most important of his epistles. But the history of interpretation, from a very early period until the modern era, argues decisively that the apostle Paul had no qualms with investing Phoebe, a woman, with this marvelous and sacred task. The modern church owes a debt of gratitude to Phoebe, who carried the most important letter written in Late Antiquity to its destination, so that we all might be the beneficiaries of her noble deed.

2. *Colophons*. In his work *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible*, Bruce Metzger lists several colophons that reveal the humanity of these scribes. For example, what is often seen is the note, “The end of the book—thanks be to God!”⁶⁰—a sentiment that anyone reading a paper at ETS or SBL can wholeheartedly affirm! Occasionally, the scribes added annotations about the miserable weather and its effects on their efforts or the backbreaking pain of bending over for hours every day writing out a text.⁶¹ And frequently they are self-effacing, speaking of themselves as poor sinners who are in need of Christ’s mercy.

⁵⁸ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 786. He only lists codices 337, 424, 1881, as well as the Majority Text, though these minuscules would hardly be considered “ancient.” They do, however, have a very old pedigree. Ben Witherington III, with Darlene Hyatt, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 379 n. 16, cites Metzger’s *Textual Commentary* for MS evidence and argues that they offer the likely inference to be made from the commendation of Phoebe; cf. Witherington, *Romans*, 382. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 729, claims that Phoebe was “undoubtedly” the bearer (evidence from *subscriptio* on p. 755).

The MSS that mention Phoebe as the courier include L 049 35 42 69 90 101 201 209 216 218 241 339 460 462 466 469 489 602 603 605 618 642 927 945 999 1243 1244 1245 1315 1448 1628 1720 1768 1874 1876 1877 1923 1924 1927 1932 1962 2400 as well as many others.

⁵⁹ Porter, *Romans*, 291–92. Allan Chapple, “Getting *Romans* to the Right Romans: Phoebe and the Delivery of Paul’s Letter,” *TynBul* 62 (2011): 212–14, argues that Phoebe would not only have been responsible for reading the letter to the house churches in Rome but also, because of having been coached by Paul, would have been its first authorized interpreter.

⁶⁰ Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 20.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* Metzger alludes to such colophons but does not list any specific MSS. On perhaps the most common colophon in various permutations (which is seen in Lectionary 402, discussed below), see Stig Y. Rudberg, “Note sur une formule des colophons de manuscrits grecs,” *Scriptorium* 20 (1966): 66–67; Kurt Treu, “Weitere Handschriften mit der Schreiberformel ‘H μὲν χεῖρ ἢ γράψασα...,’” *Scriptorium* 24 (1970): 56–64; Johannes Koder, “Ein inschriftlicher Beleg für H MEN ΧΕΙΡ Η ΓΡΑΨΑΣΑ,” *Scriptorium* 28 (1974): 295; and especially Gérard Garitte, “Sur une formule des colophons de manuscrits grecs (ἡ μὲν χεῖρ ἢ γράψασα),” *Collectanea Vaticana in honorem Anselmi M. Card. Albareda* I (StT 219; Vatican City: Bibliotheca Apostolica, 1962), 359–90.

Although I knew about such colophons secondhand for many years, I felt a deep satisfaction when I got to see them personally. I will mention just two that are found in MSS at the National Library of Greece.

In an eleventh-century Gospels codex, known as Lectionary 402, a scribe writes a poignant note at the end of his MS:

The hand that wrote [this] is rotting in the grave, but the letters remain until the fullness of the times. Completed with [the help] of God, February 23, Friday, the second hour, during the eleventh indiction, in the year 1089, through the hand of Andrew, scribe and calligrapher. And if it happens that any error of omission [remains]—this, for the sake of Christ, forgive me.⁶²

It is this first statement that draws our attention. Here is a scribe who saw his work as lasting far beyond the span of his life—even until the “fullness of the times.” Indeed, this parchment MS, though in less than pristine condition, still speaks to us more than a millennium later.⁶³ And it is a reminder both of how medieval scribes regarded the Scriptures and of the continuity of the modern church with the ancient, connected as it is through the long chain of biblical MSS.

The second colophon is found in another Gospels lectionary, number 401. Here we see a prayer by a scribe who has apparently labored at his task without even the minimal equipment necessary. He offers the following supplication to his Lord:

Christ, lover of mankind, ruler of all. Give grace to your faithful servant, Leon-tos, a sinner who longs much for the writing table to be acquired so that he may write without failing.

This scribe is dedicated to his task of copying out Scripture in the most difficult of circumstances. At the same time, we must not think that the ancient copyists used writing tables as a matter of course. One might ask: How else could a scribe have done his duty without such an appliance? In ancient times, even into the Middle

⁶² Emphasis added. Greek: Ἡ μὲν χεὶρ ἢ γράψασα σήπετε τάφω. τὸ δὲ γράμμα μένη εἰς χρόνους πληρεστάτους. — Ἐπιλήρωθη σὺν θεῷ. μηνὶ Φεβρουαρίου κγ', ἡμέρα παρασκευῆ, ὥρα β' Ἰνδικτιῶνος ια' τοῦ ἔτους ςφρζ' διὰ χειρὸς Ἀνδρέου νοταρίου καὶ καλλιγράφου καὶ εἴ τι ἐγένετο ἄχρι ψιλοῦ σφάλμα τοῦτο διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν συγχωρήσατέ μοι. (I have written out the abbreviations, underscoring them in the Greek text above.) The scribe wrote the year as 6597 (ςφρζ'). This was calculated from the creation of the world, which the scribes reckoned as occurring on September 1, 5509 BCE.

An indiction was a 15-year period. The indiction system was instituted by Constantine in 312 CE. For discussion of the various groups of indiction cycles, see V. Gardthausen, *Griechische Palaeographie: Das Buchwesen im Altertum und im byzantinischen Mittelalter* (2nd ed.; Leipzig: Veit, 1913), 487–97.

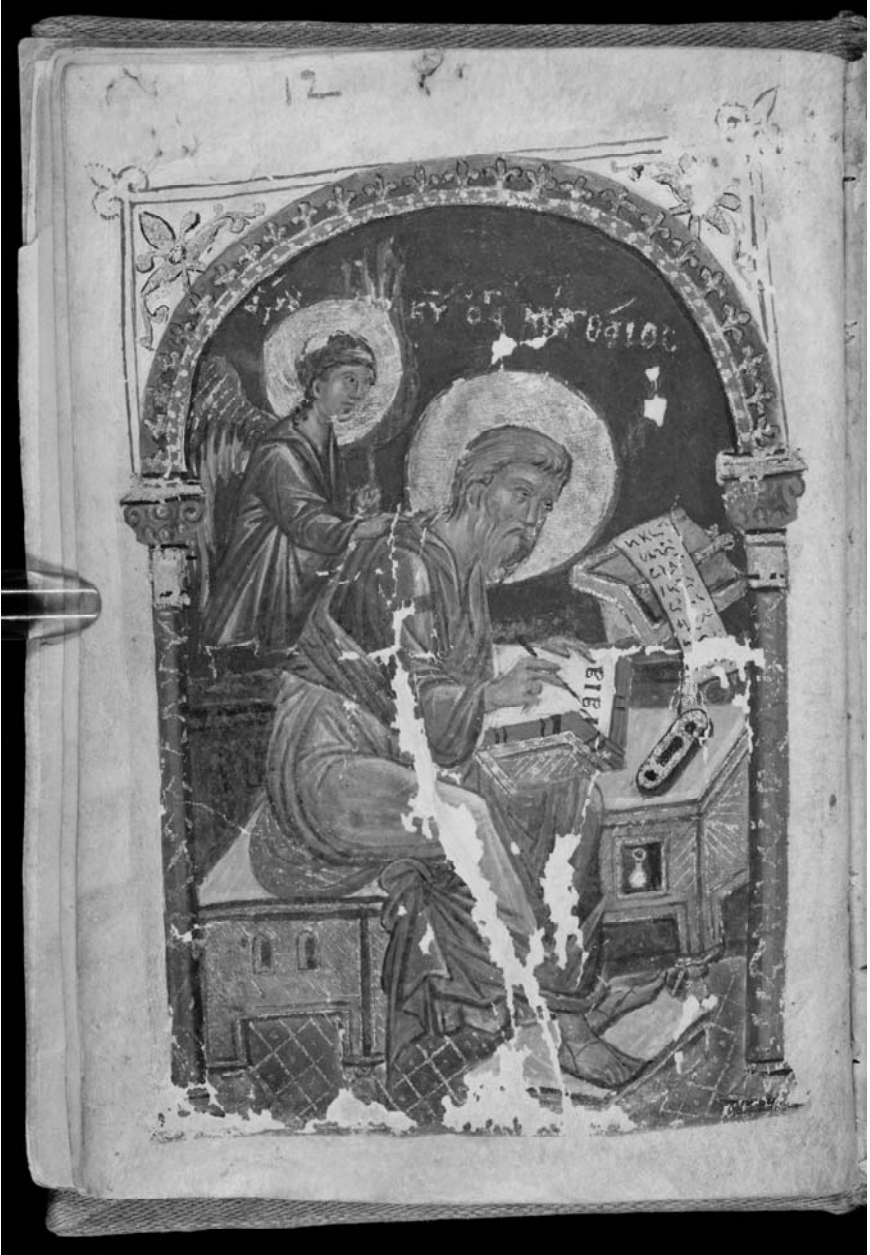
⁶³ Garitte, “Colophons,” found no examples earlier than the tenth century, making Lectionary 402 among the oldest to have this colophon. He did mention this MS, however (p. 361); he also lists Grottaferatta cod. B. α. IV (991 CE), 364, Leningrad, Bibl. Publ. cod. gr. 71 (1019/20), 364; Milan, Bibl. Ambrosienne, cod. B 56 sup. (1022), 365; Paris, Bibl. Nat., cod. gr. 375 (1021), 368; Vatican, Bibl. Vaticane, cod. Vat. gr. 1650 (1037), 371; Vatican, Bibl. Vaticane, cod. Vat. gr. 1809 (X), 369; Vatican, Bibl. Vaticane, cod. Vat. gr. 2082 (1056), 373. See p. 375 for summary of his findings by century. Thus, altogether out of fifty-one MSS canvassed, Garitte discovered two tenth-century MSS and six eleventh-century MSS that have this colophon.

Ages, the standard method for transcribing texts was to do so by placing the MS in one's lap.⁶⁴

In a characteristically comprehensive and detailed article, Bruce Metzger wrestled with when writing tables began to be regularly employed by the scribes.⁶⁵ He discovered that prior to 700 CE such equipment was pressed into service only sporadically. And even beginning in the eighth century it hardly became the norm. Indeed, the icons of the evangelists in late medieval MSS frequently show them writing their Gospels with a *codex* anachronistically straddling across their knees.

⁶⁴ Bruce M. Metzger, "When Did Scribes Begin to Use Writing Desks?" in *Historical and Literary Studies: Pagan, Jewish, and Christian* (NTTS 8; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 124–26.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 123–37.



Codex 758 (14th century, National Library of Greece):
Matthew writing his Gospel⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Thanks to CSNTM and the National Library of Greece for permission to use this photograph.

Even when some sort of writing table is seen, it is usually a small stand or pedestal. On a few occasions, the evangelist is portrayed writing his Gospel with the MS occupying an unwieldy position in his lap while the pages already produced are draped across just such a stand. When my boys were in high school, I was flabbergasted that, more often than not, they would sit lotus-style on the floor while doing their homework, leaving the desk untouched. Unbeknownst to them and to me, there was longstanding historical precedent for this practice!

Metzger documents several examples of these writing tables, but all of his evidence is found in “artistic media”⁶⁷—miniatures, mosaics, sculptures, and reliefs. He listed no colophons in any MSS that spoke of a writing desk. But the colophon in Lectionary 401, written by the scribe Leontos in 1048 CE, is a clear literary reference to a writing table—one that the scribe longed for. It is further remarkable that at this late date such paraphernalia might be considered a luxury for a calligrapher!

IV. FEMALE SCRIBES

We have already mentioned the *subscriptio* that regarded Phoebe as the courier of Paul’s epistle to the Romans. Now, we turn to one other area related to women and MSS. In her monograph entitled, *Guardians of Letters*, Kim Haines-Eitzen includes a chapter that focuses on female scribes in the Roman world and the early church.⁶⁸ She begins by noting both that female scribes have routinely been overlooked in scholarly works dealing with copyists and, even when noticed, the treatment has often been misunderstood.

Haines-Eitzen reminds us that Eusebius mentions in his *Ecclesiastical History* that Origen employed three groups of writing assistants: “more than seven shorthand writers . . . and as many copyists, as well as girls trained for beautiful writing” (κόραις ἐπὶ τὸ καλλιγραφεῖν ἡσκημέναις).⁶⁹

Jerome cites Eusebius’s passage about Origen but omits mention of the female calligraphers.⁷⁰ This neglect is only partially corrected in the *Cambridge History of the Bible* entry on “Books in the Graeco-Roman World and in the New Testament.” The author, C. H. Roberts, claims that Eusebius’s statement is “the first reference on record to the employment of women *stenographers*.”⁷¹

As I said, the neglect seen in Jerome’s statement is only *partially* corrected. Not only was Roberts incorrect about *Eusebius*, he was also incorrect about the *girls*. Eusebius was by no means the first to mention female scribes; they were discussed

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁶⁸ Kim Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); chapter 2: “‘Girls trained for beautiful writing’: Female Scribes in Roman Antiquity and Early Christianity” (pp. 41–52).

⁶⁹ Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians*, 41, quoting Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.23.

⁷⁰ Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians*, 42, citing Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 61.

⁷¹ Colin H. Roberts, “Books in the Graeco-Roman World and in the New Testament,” *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1: *From the Beginnings to Jerome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 65. Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians*, 43, quotes this statement, adding the emphasis.

more than two hundred years earlier by Suetonius.⁷² And, second, these girls were trained in *calligraphy*; they were not secretaries or stenographers.

In fact, Eusebius's statement implies that of the three groups of writing assistants employed by Origen, these young women were the *most skilled* and the *most trained*. Their *skill* is seen in the verb *καλλιγραφεῖν* used to describe them, in comparison with the adjective *ταχυγράφοι* ("shorthand writers") and even the noun *βιβλιογράφοι* ("scribes"). Their *training* is seen in the *perfect* participle *ἡσκημέναις* which, both lexically and grammatically, strongly implies practice, training, and commitment to one's task.⁷³

Such female scribes mentioned by Eusebius were not an anomaly; the records show that women continued as scribes throughout the Middle Ages. There is Melania, who was a fifth-century nun and calligrapher of OT and NT MSS.⁷⁴ And we read of Caesaria the Younger, in the early sixth century, who as the "mother of the monastery" directed the nuns to "beautifully copy out the holy books, having their mother herself as teacher."⁷⁵

George Putnam, in his *Books and Their Makers During the Middle Ages*, documents the work of female calligraphers, mostly nuns, from the third through fourteenth century.⁷⁶ He notes that the quality of their work includes "some of the most beautiful specimens of caligraphy [*sic*] which have been preserved from the Middle Ages"—revealing "a dexterity, an elegance . . . , and an assiduity which the monks themselves could not attain."⁷⁷ Several of these women were the scribes of biblical books.

There is even some evidence to suggest that one female scribe, among other scribes, had a role in the production of *codex Alexandrinus*. This MS is one of only four complete Greek Bibles from the first millennium still extant.⁷⁸ It is a handsome fifth-century codex given in 1627 to Charles I of England by Cyril Lucaris, the Patriarch of Constantinople. Cyril may have been motivated to make such a gift because of his affinity for Calvinism and the Church of England.⁷⁹

The evidence that a female scribe had a hand in the production of *Alexandrinus* is somewhat contradictory. When Cyril sent the MS to England he attached a note that a single female calligrapher, named Thecla, penned the entire codex shortly after the Council of Nicea—that is, in the early fourth century. The note also indicated that the leaf with the colophon naming Thecla as the scribe was torn

⁷² Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians*, 45, citing Suetonius, *Vesp.* 3.

⁷³ BDAG define the verb *ἀσκέω* as "to apply oneself w. commitment to some activity."

⁷⁴ Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians*, 48.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 49, quoting *Vit. Caes.* 1.58.

⁷⁶ Geof[rge] Haven Putnam, *Books and Their Makers During the Middle Ages*, vol. 1: 476–1600 (repr. ed.; New York: Hillary, 1962), 51–55. See also Leila Avrin, *Scribes, Script and Books: The Book Arts from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (London: British Library, 1991), 226–27.

⁷⁷ Putnam, *Books and Their Makers*, 53.

⁷⁸ Though none are complete today, **8**, A, B, and C were originally complete Bibles and the only extant copies of such.

⁷⁹ Philip Schaff, *Creeeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, vol. 1: *The History of Creeeds* (6th ed.; New York: Harper, 1919), 54–59.

off by Muslims.⁸⁰ But since this MS is dated to the fifth century and since it is known that several scribes worked on it, Cyril's note must be somewhat discounted. However, there is also a comment at the beginning of the codex, written in Arabic in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, that also mentions Thecla as the possible scribe of the MS.⁸¹ In the least, this demonstrates that Cyril's memo was not created *ex nihilo*, but had, at a minimum, a tradition of several hundred years behind it.⁸²

We also have indirect evidence for a female scribe as the calligrapher of codex 579, an important thirteenth-century minuscule of the Gospels. The MS was commissioned by Olympia, the abbess of the monastery.⁸³ If she commissioned it, then it almost surely was done "in house." If so, it would have been produced by a woman.

Altogether, the evidence for Christian female scribes producing specific, extant NT MSS is minimal, but the broader evidence for them working on biblical MSS during the entire medieval era and beyond is clear and compelling. Along with their male counterparts, these female scribes materially connect the ancient church with the modern. And these women especially do so in ways that are both aesthetically pleasing and, as the next section will show, intended to aid in the memorization and retention of Scripture.

V. MANUSCRIPTS AND MEMORY

In 1961, Birger Gerhardsson published *Memory and Manuscript*, a monograph that saw the oral traditions in Rabbinic Judaism as the lens through which we should read the historical remembrances in the Gospels.⁸⁴ I have reversed the title in this inquiry because I am dealing with the MSS as an aid for the memory of the monks. The history of the book is fascinating not only for a historian but also for cultural anthropologists. In the last two millennia, there have been three major technological advances in book-making, each having their own seismic consequences on how we learn.

First, as we already mentioned, the change from the roll to the codex in the first century of our era was, in the words of C. H. Roberts, "the most momentous

⁸⁰ Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians*, 50, citing the still-extant note inside the codex.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* The note reads: "They say that this book was written by the hand of Thecla, the martyr."

⁸² Kim Haines-Eitzen, in her book, *The Gendered Palimpsest: Women, Writing, and Representation in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 32, also claims that "the scribe of the Freer manuscript of the Gospels appears to have 'characterized himself as the servant of a monastery, or a church, or a female saint' as the use of a feminine article suggests." Her quoted material is from Henry A. Sanders, *The New Testament Manuscripts in the Freer Collection: Part I: The Washington Manuscript of the Four Gospels* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 3. However, the larger context reveals that Sanders was speaking about the first *owner*, not the scribe, of this MS ("The difference in writing shows that it was not the scribe of the MS who added the first subscription" [Sanders, *Washington Manuscript*, 3]).

⁸³ See Hermann Freiherr von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt: Teil 1: Untersuchungen; Abteilung: Die Textzeugen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911), 179 (in von Soden's nomenclature this codex is known as $\epsilon 376$).

⁸⁴ Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 1961).

development in the history of the book until the invention of printing.”⁸⁵ Not only could a codex contain more material per book, as we have seen, it also could contain more material per leaf,⁸⁶ thus reducing the cost of production.⁸⁷ Further, it facilitated quick referencing because of the ease of flipping through cut pages over against the more cumbersome and time-consuming unraveling of a roll.⁸⁸

Fourteen centuries went by before the second major technological advance. In 1454, Johannes Gutenberg invented the first movable-type printing press.⁸⁹ Significantly, this invention burst onto the world stage just a year after Constantinople fell to the Ottomans. When the city fell, many of the scribes and monks fled to Western Europe, bringing their MSS with them. At this time, ancient Greek was virtually unknown in the West⁹⁰ and had been unknown for a millennium. Now, the flood of MSS coming from Constantinople gave the Renaissance a shot in the arm, and it gave birth to the Reformation.⁹¹ With Gutenberg’s invention, books at last became affordable. Combined with the deluge of Greek MSS into Europe, knowledge increased dramatically.⁹² There was, however, a price to pay for this new invention, to which I will turn shortly.

⁸⁵ Roberts, “Codex,” 169.

⁸⁶ Skeat, “Standard Papyrus,” in *Collected Biblical Writings*, 70, estimates the cost savings of the codex over the roll at 26%.

⁸⁷ And yet, the codex could be more expensive than the roll since it had to be bound (Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007], 250).

⁸⁸ Other disadvantages of the roll included the need for “exceptional coordination” while holding a roll open with the right hand and simultaneously rolling the document with the left; finding “an exact quotation in a different scroll was totally discouraging”; finding one’s place in the roll if it slipped out of the reader’s hands was difficult; and rewinding it when one was finished with the roll was a bit of a chore (Avrin, *Scribes, Script and Books*, 153). This last disadvantage was disputed by T. C. Skeat, “Was Rolling a Papyrus Roll an Irksome and Time-Consuming Task?” in *Collected Biblical Writings*, 60–63.

The roll, however, never fully went out of use throughout the medieval period. It was superior to the codex in that a passage could be read without interruption because of displaying the whole text without the reader having to turn pages, and depict complex genealogies and other detailed graphics much more easily (Clemens and Graham, *Manuscript Studies*, 250–58).

⁸⁹ The actual date of Gutenberg’s invention is disputed but 1454 is often given as the correct year.

⁹⁰ With some pockets of exceptions, especially in Italy.

⁹¹ Technically, the Renaissance began in 1397 when the chancellor of Florence, Coluccio Salutati, invited the Byzantine scholar Manuel Chrysolaras to teach ancient Greek in Florence. But the Greek phase received its greatest impetus when the scribes fled with their MSS during the sacking of Constantinople

Preserved Smith, *Erasmus: A Study of His Life, Ideals and Place in History* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1923; repr. New York: Dover, 1962), 2, argues cogently on the basis of societal shifts, new discoveries and inventions, and the rebirth of antiquity, that “the Renaissance and the Reformation were ... really one.”

⁹² Marburg historian Ernst Benz published a rather insightful article in *Tecnica e casistica* (ed. Enrico Castelli; Rome: Centro Internazionale di Studi Umanistici, 1964), entitled, “I fondamenti cristiani della tecnica occidentale,” 241–63. *Inter alia*, Benz argues, in the words of Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Book That Made Your World* (Nashville: Nelson, 2011), 97:

The Judeo-Christian view of reality and destiny produced and nurtured technology in four ways: *First*, the Bible emphasized intelligent craftsmanship in the world’s design. *Second*, the Bible suggested that human beings participate in divine workmanship by being good arti-

Third is the “rise of the machines”—especially the personal computer and the Internet. Not only has this duo overhauled how printing has been done since Gutenberg’s day, it has also changed how we learn. If the printing press eventually moved us away from a *memorizing* culture, digital technology has moved us away from a *reading* culture. Accessibility to information is now on an unprecedented scale, but such inundation also has produced less filtering of sources, instant and visceral reactions through social media, and even a cultural dehumanizing effect. We tend to read snippets, not whole books—let alone whole paragraphs. And we Google the rest! Further, studies have shown that retention of what is read on a computer screen is lower than what is read from a printed book.⁹³

The medieval world was decidedly different. In Mary Carruthers’s highly-vaunted work, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, the author demonstrates several key principles about learning and books. First, she notes that “medieval culture was fundamentally memorial, to the same profound degree that modern culture in the West is documentary. This distinction certainly involves technologies ... but it is not confined to them. For the valuing of *memoria* persisted long after book technology itself had changed.”⁹⁴

sans themselves. *Third*, the Bible taught that we follow divine example when we use the physical universe for righteous ends. And *fourth*, the Bible challenged the West to use time wisely, because each moment is a valuable, one-time opportunity [emphasis original].

This is found in Mangalwadi’s chapter, “Technology: Why Did the Monks Develop It?” Here the author argues that technology has deep roots in the Christianity of western Europe. He develops this further by arguing that “to work was to be like God, but toil was a curse on human sin. Toil was mindless, repetitive, dehumanizing labor. This distinction enabled Christian monks to realize that human beings should not have to do what wind, water, or horses can do” (p. 98). Although Mangalwadi does not mention Gutenberg’s invention, this device seems to fit Benz’s four reasons for the Christian development of technology as well as Mangalwadi’s additional *raison d’être*: Gutenberg’s Bible has been widely acclaimed as the most beautiful book ever printed; it was supremely a product meant for good; the printing press revolutionized the access of information; and the printing press eliminated the need to produce handwritten Bibles that would require months, even years, of backbreaking labor for ancient and medieval scribes.

⁹³ Ferris Jabr, “The Reading Brain in the Digital Age: The Science of Paper versus Screen,” *Scientific American* (April 11, 2013), accessed online (!) at <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/reading-paper-screens>. Jabr mentions that “more than one hundred published studies” have been produced on this topic.

⁹⁴ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 9.

Eighty years after the birth of the printing press, Luther could begin the preface to his commentary on Romans (Martin Luther, *Commentary on Romans* [trans. J. Theodore Mueller; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954], xiii):

This Epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel, and is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes.

Memory in the Middle Ages was strongly linked to wisdom and ethics. As Carruthers notes, “Ancient and medieval people reserved *their* awe for memory. . . . they regard[ed] it as a mark of superior moral character as well as intellect.”⁹⁵ He later points out, “The choice to train one’s memory or not, for the ancients and medievals, was not a choice dictated by convenience: it was a matter of ethics.”⁹⁶ They saw wisdom as involving “memory, intellect, and foresight, corresponding to the three tenses.”⁹⁷

We have several examples of remarkable feats of memory in the medieval period. Early on, the monks were often required to have memorized large portions of Scripture. In a Coptic ostrakon, edited by W. E. Crum, we read of three men who sought ordination as deacons. Bishop Abraham required them to “to master (?) the Gospel according to John and learn it by heart . . . by the end of Pentecost.”⁹⁸ But this was not an anomaly. The same bishop required another applicant to the diocese, named Papas, “to learn the [G]ospel of John by heart within 2 months,” applicant Abraham to memorize Matthew, and Elias the Gospel of Mark.⁹⁹ The good bishop expected Hemai to write out John’s Gospel, presumably from memory, and yet another candidate to learn the “whole Gospel [—which one we are not told—] by heart before the month of Thoth and repeat it.”¹⁰⁰

This bishop was not alone in his demands for clerics’ mnemonic feats. A bishop at Oxyrhynchus, by the name of Aphou, required deacons to recite from memory twenty-five Psalms, two of Paul’s letters, and a portion of a Gospel. He required of applicants to the priesthood even more: they also had to memorize portions of Deuteronomy, Proverbs, and Isaiah.¹⁰¹

Pachomius, the fourth-century Church Father, and the presumed founder of cenobitic monasticism, was not nearly as demanding. He required newcomers to his monastery to memorize *only* “20 Psalms, two Epistles of Paul, or a portion of some other part of Scripture”¹⁰²

But by the late Middle Ages, the Psalms were typically memorized *in toto* by the monastic initiates.¹⁰³ At some Orthodox monasteries, throughout the medieval era and into the modern age, the divine services would last *seven hours* every day.

Significantly, this preface was published in the same year as his translation of the NT into the vernacular. This was *new* to the German people, yet Luther urged them to memorize Romans—an epistle they had never seen in their own language before.

⁹⁵ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 1 (emphasis original).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 87, citing Albertus Magnus who, in turn, learned this principle from Cicero. See also *ibid.*, 81–89.

⁹⁸ W. E. Crum, *Coptic Ostraca from the Collections of the Egypt Exploration Fund, the Cairo Museum and Others* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1902), 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 9–10.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 11. The exact quotation has “repeats” instead of “repeat.”

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 9 n. 5. Some of the references from Crum are also mentioned in Metzger and Ehrman, *Text*, 127 n. 123.

¹⁰² Metzger and Ehrman, *Text*, 127 n. 123.

¹⁰³ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 283–85.

The morning matins would begin at about 3:30 and last until 7 AM.¹⁰⁴ With the prominence given to the recital of the lectionary by the cantor in these services, knowledge of Scripture would be constantly reinforced.

When I visited St. Catherine's Monastery at Mt. Sinai in 2002, a friend who accompanied me, an Orthodox priest, told me plainly that if I began to quote *any* verse from the NT in Greek (with the modern pronunciation, of course!), the monks of Sinai could finish it. The spiritual disciplines and religious rituals at St. Catherine's, as well as at many other convents, have gone virtually unchanged for centuries.

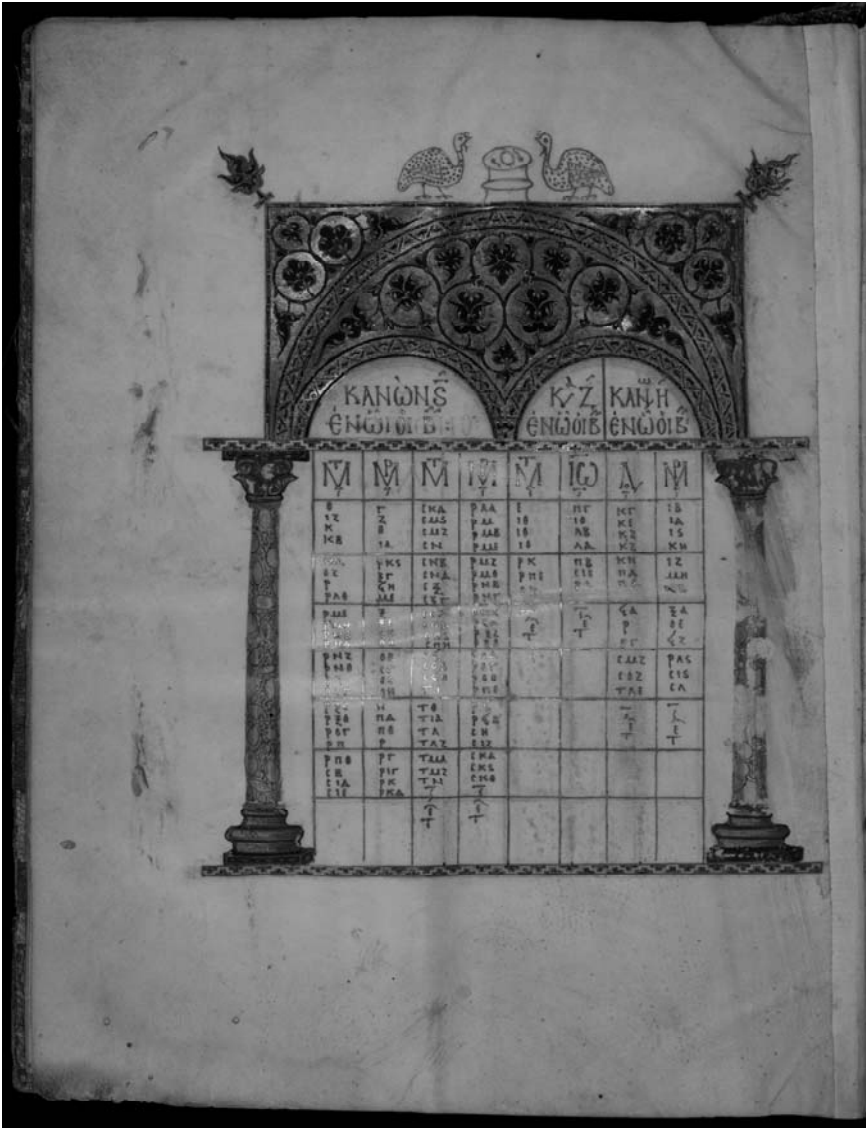
Spanning the whole range of the Middle Ages, handwritten books increasingly were designed in such a way to make memorization easier. The layout, vivid colors, icons, symbols, enlarged letters at the beginning of pericopes, and marginalia on the page were all utilized to aid the memory.¹⁰⁵

Many Gospel MSS begin with the Eusebian Canons, an ingenious table of ten lists of parallels between the four Gospels. Such were necessary as a means of finding where one was in the Gospels prior to chapter and verse divisions; they would be repeated in the margins to guide the reader. The canons were typically laid out like pillars, attracting the reader's eye and assisting both the memory of and meditation on Scripture.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ I have experienced this at more than one Orthodox monastery in different countries.

¹⁰⁵ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 9–10, 19, 21, 31, 53, 102–3, 171, 281–82, 291, 309–24, 336, *et passim*. She deals primarily with Latin codices, and some of her conclusions are not completely relevant to how Greek MSS were utilized to aid the memory. One is of course reminded of Jerome's complaint that "parchments are dyed purple, gold is melted into lettering, manuscripts are decked with jewels, while Christ lies at the door naked and dying" (Jerome, *Epist.* 22.32 [quotation in Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 11 n. 7]). Both his vow of poverty and his spectacular memory certainly contributed to his attitude about such deluxe MSS.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 118, 281, 324, 336.



Codex 809 (11th century): Eusebian Canon¹⁰⁷

The icons of the evangelists were often painted with gold, lapis lazuli, rich greens and reds—all to highlight that a Gospel was being introduced. Such colors were also used throughout the more ornate MSS, especially in the enlarged letters beginning each new section. These letters were meant to trigger the memory of a

¹⁰⁷ Thanks to CSNTM and the National Library of Greece for permission to use this photograph.

text, since “the *incipit[s]* or first phrase[s] of each [pericope] ... [were] the cues and starting-off points for recollection of the whole.”¹⁰⁸

Such feats of memory—legendary to us moderns, almost routine for medieval monks—put a serious question mark over the validity of John Dominic Crossan’s tacit argument that modern memory is no different from ancient (and medieval) memory.¹⁰⁹

Once books were printed, reading for memory slowly morphed into a low priority since the texts became widely accessible. Books moved increasingly toward black and white, naked, printed words, without accompanying aids for readers. The printing press changed Western civilization away from a memorizing culture as much as any other invention.

Although anecdotes of astounding recall of Scripture are rare in the age of the printed page and the Internet, there are some. One thinks of a John Wesley, C. H. Dodd, or F. F. Bruce, each of whom had apparently memorized the entire Greek NT.¹¹⁰ Even Nikita Khrushchev reportedly had memorized the Gospels as a

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 102. Instead of “pericope” Carruthers speaks of the Psalms, since she is reflecting Hugh of St. Victor’s advice to his monks on memorization techniques.

¹⁰⁹ John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately after the Execution of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), advances this argument in his chapter, “Does Memory Remember?” (pp. 59–68). *Inter alia*, he mentions how well students at one class at Emory University remembered their own circumstances twenty-four hours, then two and one half years, after the *Challenger* explosion in January 1986 (ibid., 61–63). Using seven criteria for accuracy (the student’s location, activity, informant, time, etc.), Crossan notes that the students, on average, were accurate for only three out of seven indicators in their later recollections. He uses this as an indication that the early remembrances of Jesus cannot be trusted. What he does not note, however, are five key factors that show an important distinction from his analogy: (1) What the apostles remembered about Jesus were memories in *community*, reinforced through constant discussion and proclamation. (2) The disciples all *witnessed* these events in the flesh, rather than learning of them through a more removed medium such as television or radio. (3) The Christ-event affected their lives in far greater ways than the *Challenger* explosion affected these students. (4) *All* of the students nonetheless remembered the *Challenger* explosion, even though their own circumstances were not recalled as accurately. (5) Ancient memory skills are not like modern memory skills. The tacit assumption that memory has not changed from ancient to modern times is demonstrably false when one recalls monkish memory and the history of the book. Moderns are as far removed from a memorizing culture as the Amish are from the technological wizardry of the twenty-first century.

¹¹⁰ See Anonymous, “John Wesley’s Revision of the New Testament,” *The Christian Advocate* 86 (April 27, 1911): 556, who notes “the testimony of an early Methodist preacher, that Wesley could always remember the Greek of a passage in the New Testament, even if he was at a loss for the exact language of the Authorized Version.” F. W. Dillistone, *C. H. Dodd, Interpreter of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 221, asserts that “when asked if it was true that if all written texts of the Greek New Testament were lost or destroyed [Dodd] could reproduce it completely from memory, he replied quite simply that, having lived with it for so long, he was sure that he could.” J. K. Elliott tells me of reports that “[F.] F.] Bruce knew [the NT] all by heart in English and in Greek and could also come up with chapter and verse with instant recall” (email correspondence, November 13, 2016).

There is also the apocryphal story about Samuel Prideaux Tregelles’s visit to the Vatican in 1845–46. He came for the purpose of examining codex Vaticanus, which was even at that late date in need of an accurate transcription. He admitted that he was not allowed to take any notes during the three hours each day that he was permitted to see the MS; he was able to reconstruct a few of the more significant variants, however (see Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *A Lecture on the Historic Evidence of the Authorship and Transmission of the Books of the New Testament* [London: Bagster, 1852], 84–85; and idem, *The Greek New*

child.¹¹¹ And D. A. Carson relates how one professor in Germany would conduct a postdoctoral seminar in which he weeded out most students by requiring them to write out *from memory* both the Greek text of Ephesians *and* its apparatus!¹¹²

To our shame, many of the modern anecdotes are about brilliant scholars who have memorized great amounts of Scripture *purely for the sake of scholarship*. Aren't *we* supposed to be more motivated to know the text? What if evangelicals were to recover the monastic model of memorizing large sections of the Bible so that it would permeate both our mind and our *soul*? I must confess that I do not memorize the text nearly as much as I would like. Andy Naselli has argued for this very thing—and as an act of worship as much as a mental discipline—in his forthcoming book, *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament*.¹¹³ He includes an appendix called, “Why and How to Memorize an Entire New Testament Book”—advice that he has lived. Both his book and the paratextual features of medieval MSS have convicted me of my slothfulness.

VI. TEXT AND COMMENTARIES

Our fifth area of inquiry is “Text and Commentaries.” NT MSS were rarely *just* the text. Besides some of the aids to readers we have already mentioned, a number of these MSS also included patristic commentaries. About one dozen majuscules and over 500 minuscule MSS include such commentaries.¹¹⁴ These MSS come in at least four different formats.

First, and probably most common, is for the text to be in larger script and centered on the page, with commentary wrapping around it on three sides (on the top, bottom, and outside margin of the leaf). The Scripture in such MSS is clearly more prominent than the commentary.

Testament [London: Bagster, 1857–79], xxii–xxiii). But this story evolved into the fabrication that he had memorized the text of Codex B without the benefit of note-taking while examining it (see, e.g., George L. Robinson, *Where Did We Get Our Bible?* [New York: Harper, 1928], 111: “The story of how Dr. Tregelles in 1845 was allowed by the [Vatican] authorities (all unconscious to themselves) to secure it page by page through memorizing the text, is a fascinating one. Dr. Tregelles did it.”).

¹¹¹ “My Father, Nikita: A conversation with Sergei Khrushchev,” interview by William van Ornum, *America: The National Catholic Review*, November 18, 2013 (accessed online at <http://www.americamagazine.org/issue/my-father-nikita>).

¹¹² Cited by Andy Naselli, “Don Carson on How Knowing the Bible Does Not Automatically Make You More Holy,” <http://andynaselli.com/don-carson-on-how-knowing-the-bible-does-not-automatically-make-you-more-holy>, June 14, 2016.

¹¹³ Andrew David Naselli, *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament: 12 Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Harmony Township, NJ: P&R, forthcoming): “Appendix B: Why and How to Memorize an Entire New Testament Book,” 341–45 of the prepublication draft.

¹¹⁴ Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 48. Metzger has just a brief note on these commentaries, and only notes two formats.

A third format is to have the NT written in majuscule letters and the commentary in minuscule. Minuscule script began to take over the majuscule in the ninth century, in large measure because it could be written more quickly. So, when a scribe chose to write out the biblical text in majuscule letters he or she was deliberately giving prominence of place to the Scriptures.

Finally, some MSS have an introductory symbol to the biblical text such as an asterisk or simple cross to set it off from the commentary.

There is a common theme through all of these varieties: the sacred writings are marked out in a special way and are considered of greater importance than the commentary. These medieval scribes understood the significance of Scripture and made sure to highlight it over *comments* about it. I am reminded of a quip Howard Hendricks would often make: “It’s amazing how much light the *text* sheds on the *commentaries!*” Indeed, the refrain of focusing on the text, of constantly putting before the reader what is of the greatest significance, is a hallmark of these manuscripts.¹¹⁶

I have visited several monasteries over the years, both Catholic and Orthodox. In more than one of them I was told that I needed to come back to the tradition and start my spiritual pilgrimage from there rather than from the Bible. When a team from CSNTM was digitizing the biblical codices at one of these convents for several weeks, our liaison repeatedly reminded us of the importance of the tradition. Toward the end of our time there, I began to show our guide these MSS with patristic comments. Over and over again, I pointed out how the scribes of *his tradition* elevated the Bible above that tradition in the MSS they were copying. Then, when our expedition was coming to a conclusion, he burst into the library one morning, with a big smile on his face. “For the first time in my life,” he declared, “I opened my Bible last night. And I read Paul’s letter to the Philippians. *Do you have any idea what’s in that book?*” He finally got it.

Here was a man—an official representative of this prestigious abbey—who had never read the Scriptures! To be sure, he had heard snippets of them in the worship services all his life. But he had never opened a Bible, let alone read an entire book—even a small epistle like Philippians.

How is it that he could get things so wrong? Why was Scripture so marginalized in his faith and life? It had been caked over by centuries of tradition that hid the word of God from sight.

¹¹⁶ This is not to say that these patristic commentaries were unimportant. No, they were vital for the communities of faith. Christians then, as now, wanted to know how to understand the Bible, and the scribes did well to reproduce the reflections on Scripture of the great thinkers in the history of the church. But on balance, we should remember that the Scriptures were front and center both in format and focus of these scribes.

VII. CONCLUSION

It is time to draw this lecture to a close. So, allow me to mention some observations on, and perhaps some insights into, what I have learned working with NT MSS.

One of the underlying and unstated themes of this message is that the Bible is not, never has been, and really cannot be read in isolation. Formatting the Scriptures has always brought with it both the reward of clearly seeing the text and the risk of skewing its meaning.

From the arrangement of the canon with the advent of the codex to the many paratextual features designed to aid the memory, from the ancient *subscriptions* to the priority of the Bible over tradition, we have seen a number of ways in which these MSS offer us lessons from the past and guidance for the future. And it is especially in my last area of inquiry—that of *Text and Commentaries*—where I find a number of lessons for evangelicals.

I cannot help but think that many medieval scribes who had devoted themselves so much to copying the Scriptures were very much like many of us. Although they gave preferential treatment in *form* to the text over tradition, their lives were in many ways like my monastic friend who opened Philippians for the first time. For them, and for us, tradition has become so encrusted that we sometimes cannot even see the life-giving words in front of us. Just as the Pharisaic oral tradition in Jesus's day had become a thick layer of protection over the divine Word, so also in our own day we have evangelical *shibboleths* that can dull us from truly *hearing* the Scriptures, and a *kethiv-qere* that can blind us from truly *seeing* the Scriptures.

I am not exempt from this blindness. I come from a particular tradition within evangelicalism that all too often has become the only lens through which I see the text. I am a premillennial, dispensational, Reformed, complementarian, non-charismatic evangelical. Before I attended my first ETS conference, I just assumed that this perspective—*my* perspective—was the only legitimate one. *Semper reformanda* was not my motto; *numquam reformanda* (“never being reformed”) suited my prejudices better.

But over thirty years ago I came to the annual ETS meeting. It challenged my preconceptions and provoked my thinking. To hear scholars with different viewpoints articulate their positions with logic and evidence was both a breath of fresh air and a burden. And it was vitally important for me to listen and engage my mind and heart.

In 1994, I became the president of the Southwest Region and had the privilege of selecting the theme for the spring conference. I chose “Conflicting Pneumatologies” and made sure to invite people from Pentecostal and charismatic schools to read papers at the meeting. One entire school had never had *any* of its faculty at the regional conference before. They were invited to a place at the table. We had vigorous debates and stimulating presentations. And in the end, we all realized that we were much closer to each other than we had assumed because we worshiped the same Lord, embraced the same gospel, and revered the same Bible.

I must confess that I am still premillennial, dispensational, Reformed, complementarian, and non-charismatic. But I also have grown in my respect for other opinions. And the doctrinal basis of the Society has been a large reason for that. This society, with its high view of Scripture, was never intended to give a voice only to those who are in the majority. It was always intended to be a place where iron sharpens iron, where caricatures are demolished, where civility and respect are elevated, and where all who embrace inerrancy can have a place at the table.

Sadly, ETS is changing. There are some who want to hoist their own interpretations to the plateau of inerrancy. They are prioritizing one set of values as though such were just as important as the Society's doctrinal basis. But this is not the Evangelical *Premillennial* Society. It is not the Evangelical *Complementarian* Society. And it is not the Evangelical *Reformed* Society—although I suspect that the majority of our members belong to all three of these camps. And yet, every one of us holds to a minority opinion on *something*. I pray that we can get past our insecurities, and fears of other viewpoints, and ennoble our brothers *and sisters* who may disagree with us. I pray that we can embrace the methodological battle cry of the Reformation—*ad fontes!* (“back to the sources!”)—because it is not a particular interpretation, but the inerrant word of God, that binds us all to one another.¹¹⁷

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