

Richard Simon

Critical History of the Text of the New Testament

Wherein is Established the Truth
of the Acts on which the Christian
Religion is Based

*Translated, Introduced
and Annotated by*
ANDREW HUNWICK

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ABBREVIATIONS

Arsenal	Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal
BnF	Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France
Bodleian	Oxford: Bodleian Library
Mazarine	Paris: Bibliothèque Mazarine
MS.	Manuscript
PG	J.P. Migne (ed.), <i>Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca</i> (Paris: Migne, 1857–1887)
PL	J.P. Migne (ed.), <i>Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina</i> (Paris: Garnier, 1844–1864)
tr.	translated by

PREFACE

From the earliest days of Christianity, there have been learned men in the Church who diligently applied themselves to correcting errors which, from time to time, made their way into the Holy Books. Requiring precise knowledge of these books, and wide research into the manuscript copies, this task of exegesis is called *textual criticism*,¹ because it involves making a judgment regarding the best readings to be retained in the text. Origen² was highly regarded for work of this kind, not only among the Greeks, but throughout the East where, by common consent, the Bibles he corrected were preferred above all others.

St Jerome,³ the Origen of Latin-speakers, rendered great service to Churches in the West by correcting the Latin Bibles they used, in accordance with exegetical criteria. Recognising his profound erudition, Pope Damasus commissioned him to revise the Old Latin version of the Gospels, which was at that time in a piteous condition. The task seemed audacious, and even appeared to be beyond the capabilities of one individual, who could

¹ Editor's note: Though the use of the word *exégèse* is not recorded before 1705, I have used "exegesis" here throughout, or "textual criticism" in preference to simply "criticism" (*critique*), the term used by R. Simon, which is insufficiently specific in this context.

² Church Father (ca. 185 – ca. 254), whose massive work on biblical interpretation, the *Hexapla* (surviving only in fragments), a compilation of six ancient versions of the Old Testament in parallel columns, was intended to allow an exact comparison of textual differences between the original pre-Christian Septuagint, and that of rabbinic revisers, and to show the relations of the Septuagint to the Hebrew text, in order to ascertain the true readings. Origen's surviving exegetical works, frequently incorporating textual variants, include homilies, some Old Testament scholia, and voluminous commentaries. His most significant work is *Contra Celsus* (*Against Celsus*—see present work, *passim*), his great apologetic reply to the attack on Christianity made by the second-century pagan Greek philosopher Celsus.

³ Though tradition has it that the biblical scholar St Jerome (Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus, ca. 342–420) was commissioned in 382 by Pope Damasus I to make a revision of the Old Latin (*Vetus Latina*) translations of the Bible, in order definitively to settle the textual differences in the Old Latin mss. circulating at the time, no such commission survives; and although the late 4th-century Latin translation of the Bible, known since the 13th century as the "Vulgate" (commonly used translation) is largely ascribed to Jerome, he himself did not revise the New Testament beyond the Gospels (see Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament* [4th ed. Oxford/New York: O.U.P., 2005], 105; also Catherine Brown Tkacz, "Labor tam utilis: the Creation of the Vulgate," *VC* 50: 1996, 42–72), generously dedicating this work to Damasus in the Preface (*Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem* [3d ed., Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983] 2:1515–1516).

not pass critical judgment on books, generally countenanced by everyone, without incurring the hatred of many.

For even though the Church did have a use for such work, attempting to rectify longstanding errors, consecrated over long years, was risky, a work of piety, but also presumptuous.⁴ However, seeing he had the support of such a great Pope, and being convinced moreover that the Old Latin version, in use throughout the East, was full of mistakes, he preferred to risk being the target of countless ignorant scandalmongers, rather than fail in his duty.⁵ He well foresaw he would be dismissed as an innovator and a forger, for daring to make changes to ancient books on which no one before him had laid a finger. But he had an example to follow in Origen, Pierius,⁶ and a few other able exegetes who, using the original Greek of the New Testament, had undertaken the same task as he himself was doing with the Latin manuscripts of the gospels.

Justice was subsequently done by this Church Father: copies of the “Old” Latin New Testament, as used by Western Churches in his own day, are now hard to find. But we still retain enough of them to show those individuals who defend obvious mistakes on the grounds that they are old mistakes, that St Jerome ably served the Church by modifying and correcting the Old Latin copies in strict observance of exegetic principles. This is what is demonstrated in the present book, which also shows that the oldest Greek copies we presently have of the New Testament are not the best copies, since they follow the Latin texts which St Jerome found to be so unreliable that he considered it appropriate to correct them.

Father Morin, and after him Father Amelote,⁷ who so staunchly vaunted

⁴ *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, 2:1515; also PL 29:525.

⁵ *Ibid.*; also PL 29:525–526.

⁶ Pierius (fl. 282–300, †after 309, in Rome), known in Alexandria for his preaching and textual criticism (surviving fragments in PG 10:241–246) as “Origen the Younger.” See Jerome, *Distinguished Men* ch. 76 (PL 23:685B).

⁷ R. Simon is less than generous when discussing the works of fellow-Oratorians Jean Morin (1591–1659) and Denis Amelote (1606–1678). Abandoning his strict Calvinist upbringing and education, through his passion for study Morin was led to join the newly founded congregation of the Oratoire in 1618. His first publication was the two books of highly learned church criticism, *Exercitationes* (see *infra*, ch. 4 n. 21); entrusted with overseeing publication of the Septuagint Bible (1628), in the preface he advocated the superiority of the Greek over the Hebrew which, he claimed, the Jews had falsified. His contribution to the Great Paris Polyglot published by M. Guy Michel Le Jay in 1645 (see *infra*, ch. 22 n. 3) was the Samaritan Pentateuch, accompanied by his own Latin translation; his *Opuscula Hebraeo-samaritana* (1657) include a Samaritan grammar and lexicon. R. Simon’s “life” of Morin accompanying the publication of his learned correspondence (*Antiquitates ecclesiae orientalis* [1628]), is a satire of the man and of the Oratory, one way no doubt for Simon to avenge himself against the latter for having excluded him in 1678. On Amelote’s putative manuscript sources (see

“these august and venerable manuscripts”⁸ because the texts are very old, overlooked the fact that a book’s being a thousand or twelve hundred years old does not mean it is correct, if there is clear proof that it was altered before that time. I have had to examine the validity of currently available Greek manuscript copies of the New Testament in minute detail: merely looking at the manuscripts, ascertaining that they are old, and noting the variant readings, will not do. It must be done with discrimination: otherwise corrupt texts will be described as “true apostolic copies,” as the two above-named authors have done.

Erasmus,⁹ who had read enough manuscripts of this kind to be able to show some discernment, still made gross errors. Groundlessly he accused the Greeks, from the time they rejoined the Church of Rome, of making corrections to their copies along the lines of the Latin texts. This baseless accusation could only come from that scholar’s ignorance in regard to the reliability of the manuscript copies he consulted.

Beza,¹⁰ who had access to more New Testament manuscripts than Erasmus, as well as the assistance of the painstaking work done by Stephanus Senior and Junior, Robert and Henri Estienne,¹¹ still failed to assess the

infra, ch. 29), Simon’s strictures are particularly disparaging. On the other hand, some of the notions present in Amelote’s Preface to his edition of the New Testament [*Le Nouveau Testament de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ*] (Paris: Muguet, 1688), Preface (unpaginated), vol. 1 [9] [BnF A-2568 (1)] could be seen as far-fetched, or simply unverifiable, e.g. that John 3:13 can serve to convince Calvinists that there exists a “third place,” distinct from Paradise and Hell, since when Jesus said those words, not just man, from the time of Abel, had yet ascended into Heaven (Preface [4–5]); or that even when apostles or evangelists “misquoted” scripture, their pens were nonetheless guided by God (*ibid.*, [15]).

⁸ These words are again quoted by R. Simon in ch. 29 of the present work.

⁹ The Dutch-born humanist Desiderius Erasmus (1469–1536) published, in 1516, his first edition of the Greek New Testament, accompanied by his own translation into Latin (see *infra*, ch. 18 n. 4). See also Erasmus on 1John 5:7 (*Opera omnia ...* ed. J. Le Clerc [Leiden: Vander Aa, 1703–1706], 6:1079–1081).

¹⁰ Théodore de Beza (or more correctly “Besze,” 1519–1605, a Calvinist theologian) produced the first critical edition of the Greek New Testament (1565), including variants compiled by Stephanus (see the following note), and others from 17 MSS. consulted. A second edition (1582) also included the *Codex Bezae* which he had discovered at Lyons in 1562, and presented to the University of Cambridge in 1581 (on *Codex Bezae*, see *infra*, ch. 30 nn. 1–5, and especially n. 5).

¹¹ Scholar-printers Robert (1503–1559) and Henri (1528–1598) Estienne (also generally known as Robertus and Henricus Stephanus), father and son, were active in Paris and Geneva in the 16th century. Beza’s editions of the Greek New Testament, published by Robert Estienne, have been mentioned. In 1565 a large French Bible was printed. Henri’s own editions of the Greek New Testament of 1576 and 1587 are noteworthy; the former containing the first scientific treatise on the language of the apostolic writers; the latter, a discussion of the ancient divisions of the text. In 1594 he published a concordance of the New Testament, the

reliability of those copies, because of which I have had to correct him on several points where he was wrong. The man was actually so prejudiced by his Calvinist beliefs that he wrongly accused the Italians of falsifying certain Greek copies of the New Testament in accordance with their own beliefs.

The present exegetical survey contains several other remarks, along similar lines, regarding manuscript copies, both Greek and Latin, of the New Testament. My main concern has been to compensate for the shortcomings of those who, while publishing the various readings from these manuscripts, have failed to indicate the relative merits or demerits of those readings. To this end, it has been necessary to read a great many manuscripts, and examine them in line with exegetical criteria. In the days of St Jerome, this skill (neglected by most of our theologians because of its inherent difficulties) was the occupation of certain ladies of quality. They did not limit themselves to reading the editions of the Holy Books in common use among the people, but left no stone unturned to find the most correct versions—they even learnt the languages in which the Scriptures were written.

Everything I am stating here can be verified from these pious ladies' letters, and the replies from the learned Father, who occasionally had some difficulty in dealing with their objections on points solely to do with critical method. St Jerome suggested that the apostles had not quoted any Old Testament passage in their writings which was inconsistent with the Hebrew text. Eustochium,¹² who was familiar with the Greek and Hebrew tongues, adduced such cogent reasons to convince him that the opposite was true, that he felt virtually overwhelmed by the lady's arguments.¹³

It comes as no surprise that the study of exegesis was overlooked in the days when barbarism reigned in Europe, as, unlike the present day, there was no availability of the requisite tools for these studies, which are absolutely essential for proper study of theology. But what I cannot understand is the disdain in which these skills are held today, and the fact that those who

preparatory studies for which his father had made. His grandson Antoine († 1674), became "Printer to the King" in Paris in 1613. The Greek Bible of Jean Morin (3 vols., 1628) was issued from Antoine's presses. Robert published four editions (1546, 1549, 1550, and 1551) of the Greek New Testament *Τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης ἅπαντα* = *Novum Jesu Christi D.N. Testamentum Ex Bibliotheca Regia* (Geneva). The third of these [see *supra*, ch. 17 n. 534], was known as the "Editio Regia." His 4th edition, also containing the Latin translation of Erasmus, and the Vulgate (as well as publishing much of the work of Jean Calvin, Robert, in his Latin Bibles, scrupulously observed the text of Jerome), was the first to incorporate verse numeration. The annotations accompanying this edition of the Greek New Testament, the first to contain a critical apparatus, aroused the hostility of the Sorbonne, resulting in Robert's flight to Geneva.

¹² St Julia Eustochium (370-ca. 419), addressee of epistles from St Jerome.

¹³ Jerome, Preface to bk. 16 of Commentary on Isaiah (PL 24:547).

pursue them are considered as mere grammarians. It does explain why we observe clear proof of inadequacies in some famous theologians of our own time, who are ignorant of the true principles of exegesis.

It is worth noting that people were too ready to accuse early heretics of altering the books of the New Testament in line with their own beliefs. What should have been blamed on the faults of copyists and the diversity of versions was frequently ascribed to deliberate alteration. In this regard, the early ecclesiastical writers were just as hard on the heretics of their own times as they were on the Jews in their disputes with them on the different ways of interpreting the books of the Old Testament. These so-called alterations vanish at once when the manuscript copies, and the source of the various readings, are properly checked. For this reason the Arians, Nestorians, and other sectarians are vindicated, in the present work, of their alleged crime of knowingly falsifying the original texts of the evangelists and the apostles in support of their novel ideas. This book even shows that the most learned exegetes of our own day, too glibly describing those heretics as forgers, are equally guilty of prejudice of this kind.

In a different category are other sectarians who openly declared their opposition to the writings by the disciples of Jesus Christ, which they rectified and revised according to their own notions of Christianity. So as to give more weight to their idle fancies, some of them even went so far as to dream up extra "gospels" and "Acts" ascribed to various apostles. It has proved appropriate to collect and scrutinise these ancient "Acts," as part of the process of arriving at unequivocally correct knowledge of all things pertaining to the books of the New Testament. Even the arguments against orthodoxy, put forward to undermine the truth of the books accepted by all Catholic Churches by these heretics, and other enemies of Christianity, have not been excluded.

However, the strongest statements by early Church writers against the sectarians are also presented, as it would have been imprudent to expound wrong thoughts without also providing the requisite counter-arguments. I am begging Protestants to give due consideration to all these "Acts," and the way they were used in the early Church to establish the authority of the Scriptures: they will find it was all a matter of common sense. To refute the enemies of Christianity, men such as Irenaeus and Tertullian did not resort to the particular spirituality which made them personally aware of the divine nature of these books: they presented very solid arguments, devoid of fanaticism. Though convinced that Holy Scripture was divine, they did not counter their opponents by saying the Scripture was "so impregnated with the distinct character of its source, that it is impossible not to be aware of

this when it is read in a spirit of humble submission." As their opponents were philosophers, relying on their own native intelligence, they opposed them using reliable and unshakeable principles.

I also felt that in this book I should not fail to mention the main Jewish objections to the books of the New Testament: for although we most commonly feel nothing but disdain for this poor nation, there is no shortage among them of persons displaying great skill and subtlety in their disputes with Christians. I have experienced this myself in numerous encounters, raising no more than their own ideas to refute them. As they set such store by instruction, claiming that the disciples of "Jesus son of Mary" had no reason for making changes to the religion of their ancestors, it has been necessary to look into the objections they raise against the writings of the Evangelists and the apostles.

I have discussed several other major questions in this exegetical survey, without however using the methods of scholastic theologians, which I find unreliable. Whereas scholastic theology can lead us to doubt matters of the utmost certainty, I have done my utmost to make no statement that is not reliably and textually supported. As religion is essentially made up of matters of fact, the certainty of those facts cannot be brought home to us by subtle theologians without any proper knowledge of ancient times. On the contrary, often their approach merely serves to confuse the mind, giving rise to mischievous quibbling over religion's hidden truths.

So no one should find it strange that what I say occasionally differs from the opinions most widely held in the Colleges, or that, to the views of various Academies, I prefer the ideas of some recent theologians, ideas which cannot be accused of "modernism" as they correspond to those of the Church's most ancient Teachers. One example of my preference occurs in the passage where I discuss the old quarrel between the theologians of Louvain and Douai, and the Jesuits in those countries, regarding inspiration in Holy Scripture. On this question, in a manner that was insulting to society in general, the Doctors of both Faculties passed harsh judgment on the Jesuits of Louvain. But I, for my part, having carefully examined the arguments on which those learned Masters based their judgments, considered that their authority on its own was not something for which I ought to have regard.¹⁴

My aim throughout this book has not been to serve any particular master, but to come down on the side of truth. A true Christian, a professed follower of the Catholic faith, should no more describe himself as a disciple of St

¹⁴ See *infra*, ch. 23.

Augustine than of St Jerome, or any other Church Father, since his faith has its foundation in the word of Jesus Christ as contained in the writings of the apostles and the unchanging tradition of Catholic Churches. Would to God that the theologians of our own day had all been of this mind! there would not have been so many unprofitable quarrels, bringing about nothing but chaos, within church and state. Having no personal interest or ties to any “party”—I loathe the very word “party”—I declare that, in writing this book, I have had no other aim than that of serving the Church, by placing its most sacred and divine qualities beyond dispute.

It would be pointless repeating here what has already been said elsewhere¹⁵ regarding the expression *textual criticism*, an artistic term applying, to some extent, to written documents, the variants within which are studied in order to establish correct readings. The purpose of those practising this art is not to demolish, but to be constructive. Since Holy Scripture has not been exempt from the errors occurring in every sort of book, with the passing of time, and through the carelessness of copyists, within the Church there have always been learned persons busied with the task of correcting Bibles. Back in the most barbaric times, books were brought out with the name *Correctoria Bibliæ* (*Corrections to the Bible*). The emperor Constantine spared no effort in providing Churches in the east with error-free copies of their Bibles, as did Charlemagne and his successors with Latin Bibles for Churches in the West.

In addition to those once employed in monasteries to copy books, sometimes there were exegetes who modified and corrected them: hence in the most ancient hand-written Bibles we find corrections, some of which appear to be as old as the manuscripts themselves. But there is no need to go back as far as that to find justification for scriptural exegesis: we need only look at what happened in the last century in regard to the Latin editions of our Bibles. According to the Louvain theologian Henten, Robertus Stephanus left no stone unturned to provide us with a reliable and correct edition of the Bible. In his preface to the Louvain Bible, this theologian, working subsequently in the same area as Stephanus, openly acknowledged his indebtedness to the scholar-printer, expressing admiration for his diligence and extreme efforts.¹⁶

¹⁵ On Simon's definition of “criticism” (*la critique*), see Pierre Gibert, *L'Invention critique de la Bible, xv^e–xviii^e siècle* (coll. “Bibliothèque des Histoires”, Paris: NRF Gallimard, 2010), 183 n. 3, and ch. 17 “De la critique ou de l'histoire”, 185–195.

¹⁶ Jan Henten (Joannes Hentenius, 1500–1566), Preface to Louvain Bible of 1547, repr. in *Biblia ad vetustissima exemplaria nunc recens castigata ...* (Antwerp: Birckmann, 1570), [iii].

The doctors of the Louvain Faculty of Theology, after deeper research into manuscript copies, subsequently improved on their colleague's edition, correcting certain passages they considered had not been modified with sufficient care. The Franciscan monk Nikolaas Zegers devoted all his time to correcting the books of the New Testament, addressing his findings to Pope Julius III under the title: *Epanorthotes*:¹⁷ *Corrections to the New Testament, Wherein Earlier Corrupt Readings Are Restored, Additions Removed, and Deletions Restored*. In his Dedicatory Epistle he assures the Pope that he has expunged countless errors and false glosses from the Old Latin version that had been in use in Western Churches almost since the time of the apostles.¹⁸

There is nothing to match the careful correctness of the critical observations by Lucas of Bruges on the Louvain theologians' edition of the Latin Bible. Among the very numerous manuscripts he consulted for this book, he mentions a copy to which alterations were made by Dominican monks on the basis of the Bibles of Charlemagne. He has high esteem for another manuscript entitled *Correcting The Bible*.¹⁹ He gives an assurance that nearly all the various readings latterly adopted by exegetes are in his book, where they are also examined alongside the Hebrew text.²⁰

Elsewhere I have discussed a similar manuscript, held in the old library of the Sorbonne College;²¹ I even quoted a few extracts providing obvious proof

¹⁷ Greek ἐπανορθωτής "corrector."

¹⁸ Nikolaas Zegers (Tacitus Nicolaus Zegerus of Brussels, †1559), *Epanorthotes: castigationes in Novum Testamentum, in quibus depravata restituuntur, adjuncta rescantur et sublata adjiciuntur* (Cologne: Birckmann, 1555) in: John Pearson et al. (ed.), *Critici Sacri: sive doctissimorum virorum in SS. Biblia Annotationes et Tractatus* (Amsterdam: Boom, 1698) [BnF A-1338] tome 6 "exhibens Annotatos in Quatuor Evangelia," xij-xvj. R. Simon cites Zegers in ch. 32 of the present work, with respect to Matthew 5:44. Worth quoting is part of the notice on Zegers in *A New Ecclesiastical History of the Sixteenth Century*, Volume the Second (London 1706), Book v, 29 (English translation of Louis Ellies Du Pin, *Nouvelle Bibliothèque des auteurs ecclésiastiques depuis les 14^{es} siècles de l'Eglise jusqu'au XVII^e inclus* [Paris: Pralard, 1686–1714]): Du Pin states that Zegers revised the text of the Vulgate with a view to correcting "the Faults which had crept into various Copies, and fixing the true Reading either by the Greek text (which however he does not always follow, nor look upon as exempt from Faults), or by the Greek and Latine Fathers, or by Conjectures ... This Author understood languages well, and was a pretty good Critick; but sometimes he quoted Supposititious Books."

¹⁹ François Lucas de Bruges (Lucas of Bruges, 1548–1619), Jesuit scholar, Dean of the Chapter of Saint-Omer, *Notationes in Sacra Biblia, quibus variantia discrepantibus exemplaribus loca summo studio discutiuntur* (Antwerp: Plantin, 1580), 23 [BnF A-4136]. On the *Notationes*, see *infra* ch. 29 n. 5.

²⁰ On Genesis 8:7 see *ibid.*, 28.

²¹ Founded in 1257 by Robert de Sorbon (1201–1274, chaplain and confessor to Louis IX), the Sorbonne (in the Paris Latin Quarter) became a theological college. Renovated in 1622–1626 by Richelieu, in whose honour the chapel, where he is interred, was built in 1637, it was

that, even back in those barbarian days, the Latins did not neglect scriptural exegesis.

However much partisans of the Jews' Hebrew text sing the praises of the Masorah, much of it is no more than hair-splitting or superstition. Christians, from East and West, have been more scholarly than they were in correcting their Bibles, as is demonstrated throughout this book. Rather than the Masoretes, we must follow the example of those learned exegetes in Rome,²² who corrected the Latin Bibles on the orders of Popes Sixtus v and Clement VIII. In all Western Churches, their corrections are a virtual substitute for a reliable "Masorah." Only unintelligent Protestants like Thomas James, author of the vicious satire entitled *The Papal War*,²³ are capable of finding fault with the range of biblical editions published under these two Popes. Not that it is impossible to improve on them: but this must only be done by means of a special commentary which does not detract from the authority of those editions, which have become accepted through general use.

Two final observations on the documents referred to in the present work. In regard to the manuscripts, I have indicated in which libraries they are

also a high court of the Christian church, opposing the Jesuits in the sixteenth century, the Jansenists in the seventeenth, and the *philosophes* in the eighteenth, before being closed down in 1790 owing to anticlerical feeling at the time of the Revolution. Reopened as a theological faculty in 1808 by Napoleon, since the end of the nineteenth century the Sorbonne has been a secular institution, presently housing seven universities belonging to the former "University of Paris."

²² In the sixteenth century (1566–1582) Roman revisers correcting the text of the "Gratian Decree" (*Decretum Gratiani*, see *infra* ch. 3 n. 13) added numerous critical notes, designated by the words *Correctores Romani*.

²³ Thomas James (1573?–1629, first Bodley's librarian at Oxford), *Bellum papale, sive, Concordia discors Sixti Quinti et Clementis Octavi: circa Hieronymianan editionem: praeterea in quibusdam locis gravioribus habetur comparatio utriusque editionis, cum postrema et ultima lovaniensium, ubi mirisica industria Clementis and cardinalium super castigatione Bibliorum deputatorum, notas duntaxat marginales lovaniensium in textum assumendo, clare demonstratur* (London: Bishop, Newbery and Barker, 1600). Rather than satirical, James's book is an attack on papal infallibility based on the differences between the 1590 and 1592 editions of the Vulgate. On this matter, also worth quoting is Charles Butler's *Horae Biblicae* (*The Philological and Biographical Works of Charles Butler* [London: Clarke, 1817]), 1:144–145: of the former, Butler observes that although Sixtus v "perused every sheet ... his edition scarcely made its appearance, before it was discovered to abound with errors. The copies therefore were called in, and a new edition was printed by *Clement* the VIIIth, his immediate successor, in 1592 ... Dr. James [...] reckons two thousand instances in which they differ; Father Henri de Bukentop, a Recollet, made a similar collection [*Lux de luce* (Brussels 1710)], but denied the consequences which Dr. James professed to draw from the variations. Lucas of Bruges has reckoned four thousand places in which, in his opinion, the Bible of Clement VIII may be thought to want correction."

located, and I have read each and every one that I have mentioned and from which I have quoted, except for the Cambridge document containing the four gospels and Acts.²⁴ I was sent a reliable copy of the Greek text of this manuscript from England, which I have followed scrupulously.

In regard to printed books, quite a large number of which are quoted, for the most part I have merely given the gist of the relevant passages, and summarised them in my main text: masses of quotations are simply very boring when they contain only five or six words having any bearing on the point under discussion. This was the method used in my *Critical History of the Old Testament*.²⁵ However, without changing my method in any way, I have endeavoured to satisfy those persons who, to spare themselves the trouble of searching through books to find the various passages, wished them to be quoted at length. Here they are to be found in footnotes, where they can be read in full, in the author's original text.²⁶

²⁴ See *infra*, ch. 29 and 30. The *Codex Bezae*, customarily referred to as manuscript source D 05, a fifth-century manuscript, in parallel Greek and Latin, presented to the University of Cambridge by Théodore de Beza (see *supra*, Preface, n. 10). The manuscript had earlier (1546) been taken by the Bishop of Clermont (near Beauvais) to the Council of Trent, and was drawn on by Robertus Stephanus (see *supra*, Preface n. 11) for his 1550 edition of the New Testament.

²⁵ R. Simon, *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament* (1678; the edition usually quoted is that of 1685 [Rotterdam: Leers]): certain chapters of the book, where Simon declared that Moses could not have written the greater part of the writings attributed to him, had led to the seizing and destruction of the entire first impression [Paris: Billaine, 1678]; another edition, with no bibliographic details (in fact the publisher was Elzevir of Amsterdam), had appeared in 1680.

²⁶ Whilst these actual quotations are not reproduced in the present edition, specific references to them are to be found in the footnotes.

RICHARD SIMON (1638–1712)
SKETCH OF LIFE & CAREER

A small unprepossessing sickly man, with a high-pitched voice, iron-willed, always true to himself. His overriding principle was to call a spade a spade.¹

Born 13 May 1638 in Dieppe (Normandy), Richard Simon, son of an edge-tool maker, grew up a “poor boy,” his family being, in the diplomatic expression of his nephew, also his biographer, “renowned more for innate righteousness than for wealth.”² Evidently he early acquired an unfavourable impression of Protestantism, owing to seemingly self-seeking adherents in Dieppe³ and to certain latent misgivings. He received his schooling at the “low-fee” Oratorian college in Dieppe, excelling in Greek. Completing his studies at the Jesuit college in Rouen, here he apparently acquired a mistrust of Jansenists from the Rector, Jean de Brisacier, and came to embrace the doctrine of Molinism.⁴ A scholarship enabled him to continue his studies at the Oratory, in Paris. The subsequent attitudes and behaviour of this scholarship pupil, son of a tradesman, were evidently affected by his situation at the time, that of a belittled or disparaged loner.

Does this also explain why, from the age of 35, Simon typically made it known that he did not owe any of his intellectual achievements to the Oratory, but solely to his own efforts in reading, and self-teaching? Indeed he was in actual fact gifted with phenomenal intelligence⁵ and a prodigious memory.⁶

¹ Paul Auvray, *Richard Simon, 1638–1712: Étude bio-bibliographique avec des textes inédits* (coll. “Mouvement des idées au xvii^e siècle,” Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), 18 (hereafter cited Auvray); Antoine-Augustin Bruzen de la Martinière (1662–1746), *Éloge historique de Richard Simon, Prêtre* (hereafter cited E.H.). (*Lettres choisies de M. Simon où l'on trouve un grand nombre de faits anecdotes de littérature* [Amsterdam: Mortier, 1730], 1:3–100), 15, 26.

² E.H., 4.

³ Auvray, 10 n. 2.

⁴ According to which, the efficacy of grace depends solely on its voluntary acceptance.

⁵ E.H., 12–15.

⁶ E.H., 99. [*Editor's Note*: Evidence of his remarkable memory may, I suggest, be seen in the passages quoted in Simon's hundreds of references accompanying the text of the present work. Comparing the wording in his quotations with that in printed sources, I have identified some minimal discrepancies (differences in word order, the use of one Greek or Latin particle

At this point it also seems not inappropriate to ask whether his seemingly humble situation and straitened circumstances induced at the time such a feeling of humiliation that they affected and shaped his future character and behaviour? Can they be held to explain the ruthless, almost pathological obstinacy he showed by his apparently obsessive need to prevail in every written polemic, win every argument, however insignificant, and to refute any perceived slight, however trivial, petty, inconsequential or insignificant? Did he in this way seek to show, in view of the evident superiority of his intellect, knowledge, and pen, that he was in no way a lesser person than anyone else, whatever their status, rank, position, or means?⁷ And despite a naturally fiery and brusque temperament,⁸ leading eventually to sustained bitterness and discourtesy,⁹ could those same factors explain an apparent pusillanimity, which led him so often to use pseudonyms instead of putting his real name to his works?

His circumstances in any event led him to return prematurely to Dieppe before the “exams” of 1659. He was rescued by a generous close friend, the Abbé Hyacinthe de la Roque, who enticed him back to Paris for three years’ further study. Evidently the generous-hearted Abbé discerned what was to be the lifelong dedication to reading and learning that gave true satisfaction and meaning to Simon’s existence. In any event, back in Dieppe, Simon expanded his learning in history and the Scriptures, familiarising himself notably with the New Testament commentaries of Maldonado, Beza, and Du Jon (cited in the present work).

instead of another, etc.). Since Simon provides actual page numbers for only a handful of his innumerable references, it seems likely that these were the object of specific verification on his part. If he did check only these passages, and not the countless others, I suggest it is also likely that he quoted all these others from memory: this would account for the very occasional inaccuracies in his quotations.]

⁷ B.E. Schwarzbach suggests that, in his time, Simon’s belligerence was only to be expected: “In those days the life of learning was generally frenzied and contentious, an outlet for aggressive egos, where controversialists like Simon were the rule and where gentle and generous scholars like Mabillon were the exception.” (*JQR* n.s. 67 [1976–1977]: 180) Auvray notes more than once Simon’s tendency to become lost in the details of a discussion, also recording his lack of personal warmth (Auvray, 166). On Simon’s confrontational attitude, see 351 and 354 of Abbé Jean-Benoît-Désiré Cochet, *Galerie dieppoise: notice biographique sur les hommes célèbres ou utiles de Dieppe et de l’arrondissement* (Dieppe: Delevoye, 1862): “Richard Simon,” 327–381 (hereafter cited Cochet), a rich and informative biobibliographic notice based on an anonymous manuscript. It is significant that Simon also valued his privacy (*E.H.*, 98).

⁸ *E.H.*, 63.

⁹ *E.H.*, 66.

In 1662, aged 23, he had nonetheless sought admittance as a novice to the Oratory, then under the directorship of Father Berthad, who not only permitted him to continue studying (he learned Arabic at this time) provided he observed all the regulatory exercising of “piety,” but kept a welcome avuncular eye on his reading (the Scriptures, exegesis and Patristics, especially the works of St Jerome) whilst warning him that inevitably his abilities would make him many enemies.¹⁰ He also dissuaded Simon from leaving the Oratory to join the Jesuits, carefully pointing out that the former held no monopoly on jealousy, subtle cruelty, or hindrance of talent.

Simon acted as philosophy “supervisor” at the Oratorian college in Julliy (Burgundy), alternating between Julliy and the Rue Saint-Honoré where, as well as preparing a catalogue of the Oriental books in the library of the Oratory, far from being a recluse, as some have thought,¹¹ he moved in intellectual circles, keeping company, among others, with Isaac de la Peyrère¹² and Jona Salvador,¹³ theologian and philosopher Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715), in whom he inspired enthusiasm for Hebrew and Syriac, as well as with the Jesuits, including Père François de la Chaise, confessor to King Louis XIV from 1674–1709, and with François Dirois of Port-Royal des Champs.

Trouble between Simon and Port-Royal first eventuated in the form of a theological squabble in 1609, the year of publication of *Perpetuity of Faith in the Eucharist* by Pierre Nicole and Antoine Arnauld,¹⁴ regarding which F. Dirois urged Simon to set down his views on the book’s qualities and drawbacks, in the form of a letter. Confidentiality was not respected: the letter was made public, causing an outcry, Simon being accused of seeking to discredit Arnauld in the interest of supporting the Protestants.

Simon’s ordination took place on 20 September 1670. From 1676–1682, he was priest of the parish of Bolleville (Normandy).

¹⁰ Evidently Simon was also lacking in the tact deemed customary for erudite persons, then as now (*E.H.* 26).

¹¹ Jacques Le Brun, “SIMON (Richard),” *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* (Paris: Letouvey and Ané, 1996), vol. 12 fasc. 71:1358.

¹² Peyrère (1596–1676), raised a Calvinist, author of *The Recall of the Jews* (1643) and *Pre-Adamites* (1655). The former work has as its basis the second coming of Christ, at which time the promise of a Jewish Messiah would be fulfilled; while the basic theory of the latter is that there were men before Adam. At the same time he held that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch.

¹³ A Jew from Pinerolo (Italy), with whom Simon at one stage envisaged translating the Talmud.

¹⁴ Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole, *La Perpétuité de la foi de l’Église catholique touchant l’Eucharistie* (Paris: Savreux, 1669, 1672 and 1674).

Whilst his *Critical History of the Old Testament* appeared in 1678,¹⁵ it did not go on sale immediately, as Simon hoped to dedicate the work to the king, then away in Flanders. Unwisely the publisher Billaine, in order to promote sales, circulated a summary of the chapter headings. Nicolas Toinard, a friend of Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, and a member of the latter's "Petit Concile," coming across the Table of Contents, and observing the chapter heading that read: "Moses cannot be the author everything ascribed to him in the Books bearing his name," at once forwarded it to Bossuet who, without having read the book, rushed to the Chancellor, Michel Le Tellier,¹⁶ to have the book seized.¹⁷ Virtually the entire run of 1,300 copies was destroyed.¹⁸ Whilst Simon had declared himself ready to make corrections, or even to publish the book in Latin, all was to no avail. Moreover, on 18 May 1678, on the grounds of not having made the corrections agreed upon with the censor Pirot, and of having added new material without approval, he was excluded from the Oratory. As Auvray observes, it was a loss for both parties;¹⁹ furthermore, irony of fate, the inscription on his grave in Dieppe and the memorial in Bolleville, describe him as Richard Simon, "Oratory priest."

With dignity, Simon withdrew to Bolleville. For whatever reason, in public he ascribed the seizure of his book to the vengeful machinations of Port-Royal, in retaliation for the affair of 1669. The Oratory, meantime, in its general assembly of 1681, formally distanced itself from the book and its author.

At this stage it is relevant to cite the following statements by Guy Stroumsa:²⁰

For all his revolutionary influence and the constant censorship applied to his works, however, one should note that Simon never intended to oppose ortho-

¹⁵ R. Simon, *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (Paris: Billaine, 1678). A critical edition by Pierre Gibert, entitled *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament: suivi de Lettre sur l'inspiration* (Montrouge: Bayard) appeared in 2008.

¹⁶ 1603–1685, mover in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685). Bossuet, it seems, condemned the book without having read anything more than the Table of Contents (Auvray, 52).

¹⁷ For the approach used in the textual analysis of scripture that underpinned Bossuet's persistently violent reaction to R. Simon's "rational" exegesis, see Gibert, *L'Invention critique*, 208–214.

¹⁸ Auvray, 47, n. 2.

¹⁹ Auvray, 75.

²⁰ Stroumsa, G.G., "Richard Simon: from *Philology to Comparatism*," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 3 (2001): 89–107.

doxy. On the contrary, he always meant to serve it ... Simon never questioned the Divine Revelation, but he was convinced that Biblical criticism could contribute a deeper, more reasoned adhesion to this revelation.²¹

Simon left the parish of Bolleville in 1682. It was from this time, says biographer Auvray,²² that he was compelled to change his approach to everything, to suppress his natural directness, and to act in a covert and furtive manner. Openly facing opponents with whom he was unevenly matched, was futile. The alternatives were to publish outside of France, use pseudonyms, deny authorship of everything he wrote, and remain constantly on alert.

In Amsterdam in 1680, there appeared a second edition of *Critical History of the Old Testament*, which Simon found editorially and typographically far from satisfactory. It was, surprisingly, with Bossuet himself that Simon evidently broached the possibility of its being republished, which led merely, however, to years of equivocation and prevarication.²³ Negotiating consequently on the quiet with a Dutch Protestant publisher, Simon prepared a new edition of his work, published in 1685 in Rotterdam, thus pre-empting the intervention of Bossuet who, nonetheless, undertook a detailed refutation, of which manuscript fragments and partial copies survive.²⁴ Simon then proceeded with the publication of a work on the New Testament, similar to his study of the Old Testament, and which he had already foreshadowed in that book. Like its predecessor, this new work was divided into three parts—text (the present work),²⁵ versions, and commentaries, to each of which this time, however, he devoted a whole volume, the three parts appearing respectively in 1689, 1690 and 1693.²⁶

His last major work was his French translation of the New Testament. He felt strong reservations regarding the most recent translations, that of Denis Amelote, which became the “official” Catholic translation; the so-called New

²¹ Stroumsa, “Richard Simon ...” 94–95. Cf. also Auvray, 44: “Sound theology and properly-grounded criticism can exist side by side.”

²² Auvray, 72.

²³ Auvray, 78.

²⁴ Le Brun, 1359.

²⁵ “a monument of erudition ... one is staggered by the number of manuscripts, witnesses, and commentators from all periods that the author has consulted, and quotes directly, in relation to each book in turn of the New Testament.” (Auvray, 102) Pierre Gibert considers that Simon is here more cautious and less “committed” than in his work on the Old Testament, probably being mindful of what that had cost him, and careful to avoid further similar setbacks (Gibert, *L’Invention critique*, 286–288).

²⁶ On Simon’s working habits around this time, see *E.H.*, 100; and on his unhealthy accompanying diet, see Cochet, 351.

Testament of Mons, a product of Port-Royal, condemned in 1667 in Paris, and in 1668 in Rome; and that of 1697, the first volume of the version by the Jesuit Dominique Bouhours, with whom in the course of a typically disparaging critique of the translation, he shared his wish to make amends and rejoin the Oratory. He thus hoped to prepare the ground for a favourable response to the planned release of his own translation, some years in preparation,²⁷ until it was published in Trévoux by Ganeau in February 1702. As was the case with the abovementioned translations, Simon takes as his base text the Latin Vulgate, supplying Greek variants in accompanying critical remarks. Yet despite all Simon's safeguards and precautions—obtaining a printing privilege, approval from the royal censor,²⁸ preface retracting earlier works—there was the opposition of Bossuet who, not having been consulted, sought once again to force withdrawal from sale of a work by Simon, this time not without diplomacy. He urged Simon firstly to retract and revise, under his own guidance, the translation of the New Testament—not without merit though this be—and all his earlier “dangerous” Critical Histories and, furthermore, to consider providing his own translation of the whole Bible.²⁹ To rectify any perceived faults in his work, Simon put forward several *cartons* or corrective inserts, and agreed to additional ones. In conference, Bossuet and Sorbonne professors Nicolas Bertin and Guillaume Bourret could find no common ground on the matter. In time Archbishop Noailles expressed an unfavourable view on Simon's translation, issuing three months later a condemnatory decree, containing all of Bossuet's grievances, and banning

²⁷ Auvray, 123, n. 3.

²⁸ The Abbé Jean-Paul Bignon, adversary of Archbishop Noailles, and nephew of Pontchartrain, Director of the Book Trade (see Jack A. Clark, “Abbé Jean-Paul Bignon ‘Moderator of the Academies’ and Royal Librarian,” *French Historical Studies* 8 (1973): 213–235).

²⁹ See the detailed discussion by Albert Monod, “La Controverse de Bossuet et de Richard Simon au sujet de la ‘Version de Trévoux,’” *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 3 (1922): 197–219, 317–337. See also Auguste Bernus, *Richard Simon et son histoire critique du Vieux Testament: la critique biblique au siècle de Louis XIV* (Lausanne: Bridel, 1869), 53–54: “No doubt generally speaking Bossuet's behaviour [in 1702] was not unfair; but the secret game he was playing at this time was far from praiseworthy: making all possible overtures to Simon to get what he wanted from him, treating him with apparent amiability, he was, unbeknown to Simon, working against him; he not only made every effort to have his translation of the New Testament banned, but was laboring fervently on a work of his own, thanks to which he was convinced Simon would be destroyed ...” [To Pirot he wrote (28 May 1702):] “privately I am endeavouring to compel this author to disavow his work, and it seems he is becoming inclined to do so: this would be smoother and in a way more effective, since it would have the author's consent, which he had extended to me on a previous occasion.”

circulation and use of the translation within the diocese of Paris.³⁰ On 12 October 1702, Simon published a careful and balanced reply,³¹ under the title *Remontrance à Monseigneur le Cardinal de Noailles, Archevêque de Paris, sur l'Ordonnance Portant Condamnation de la Traduction du Nouveau Testament imprimée à Trévoux*.³² Bossuet, nonetheless frustrated by the absence of any retraction by Simon, as well as banning the translation within his own diocese, decided to issue an Epistle of Instruction, comprising a formal refutation of Simon's most harmful ideas, which were purportedly imbued with Socinian doctrine.³³ In this regard, Bossuet encountered the most bitter setback of his life. It would seem that, at the urging of his nephew the Abbé Jean-Paul Bignon, Director of the Book Trade and, in this instance, a supporter of Richard Simon, the chancellor Pontchartrain, closely observing formal procedure, required Bossuet to submit his text beforehand to the censor for the issuing of a formal imprimatur, which he was further required to print at the beginning of his text: complying reluctantly and under protest with both stipulations, Bossuet nonetheless made every attempt to resist, even enlisting support from the King, who ordered Pontchartrain, De Noailles and Bossuet to confer and settle the matter. An edict banning Simon's translation was proclaimed, and Bossuet's Epistle, followed by a second, was printed.³⁴ The tide had turned. When Simon sought to publish a reply to the first Epistle, Pontchartrain not only refused to grant the required privilege, but caused the Council of State to issue a decree withdrawing the privilege previously granted for the publication of Simon's translation in Paris.

Forced one last time to capitulate, for the closing, seemingly joyless years of his life (1702–1712), Simon withdrew to Dieppe,³⁵ reduced to selecting for

³⁰ Letter from Cardinal de Noailles, reprinted in R. Simon, *Lettres Choisies où l'on Trouve un Grand Nombre de Faits Anecdotes de Littérature* (Amsterdam: Mortier, 1730), 2:333–345.

³¹ Cochet, 369.

³² Reprinted in *Lettres Choisies* 2:346–390.

³³ Simon's *Réponse* in refutation took the form of eighteen more or less fictional letters, reprinted in *Bibliothèque critique ou Recueil de diverses pièces critiques dont la plupart ne sont point imprimées ou ne se trouvent que très difficilement. Publiées par Mr. de Sainjore [i. e. R. Simon] qui y a ajouté quelques notes* (Amsterdam: Lormes, 1708), 4:303–554 (letters xxxv to lii).

³⁴ *Instruction sur la version du Nouveau-Testament imprimée à Trévoux en l'année M. DCC. II* (1702); *Seconde Instruction sur les passages particuliers de la version du Nouveau-Testament, imprimée à Trévoux* (1703). For both *Instructions* and all related documents, see *Œuvres complètes de Bossuet* ed. F. Lachat (Paris: Vivès, 1862–1875), 3 (1863): 372–580. See also *Lettres choisies* 3:291–295 (Supplement Letter iv).

³⁵ *E.H.*, 98.

publication the best of his remaining written efforts.³⁶ Even in retirement, it seems, he was not exempt from external written assault, not could he resist the evidently ingrained impulse to respond in kind. In a pamphlet entitled *Phenomenon of Literature*, Nicolas Toinard accused Simon of having plagiarised letters by the Abbé de Longuerue: the target of Simon's response is the Jesuits, authors of the *Journal de Trévoux*, intended to observe and record developments in science and the arts. In a strange book entitled *Remarks on Vergil and Homer*, the Abbé Pierre-Valentin Faydit (1644–1709), a disgraced former Oratorian, takes aim, among other biblical scholars, at Richard Simon, the genuineness and reliability of whose faith is impugned. Simon's reply, unsurprisingly, is overlong, small-minded, and in short disproportionately fastidious. The publication of Simon's 4-volume *Bibliothèque critique*³⁷ recycled critical reviews of learned books, revived old quarrels, whilst giving rise to new ones. Eusèbe Renaudot, a former colleague of Bossuet, sent a letter denouncing Simon, as well as the Oratorians and Jesuits, and urging that he be required to disavow his hostile and supposedly unjustified statements regarding Bossuet's censure of his translation of the New Testament. A decree was issued by the Council of State, ordering the *Bibliothèque critique* to be confiscated and pulped. Called into suspicion at the instigation of the Jesuits, Simon was summoned and questioned by the local administrator concerning the writings on which he was currently working. Simon's nephew-biographer asserts that Simon thereupon burnt all his papers, for fear of their being put to undesirable use after his death, evidently having been given to understand they could be seized and scrutinized by Jesuit theologians. Apparently the trauma and ensuing stress involved in this act of panic induced a terminal fever. Yet how plausible is it, one wonders, that Simon, at 74, destroyed several crates of papers? Moreover, the posthumous inventory of his library, bequeathed to the Chapter of Rouen, includes several bound ledgers of seemingly innocuous manuscript notes, pertaining to Walton's Polyglot and other bibles, rabbinics, and patristics, as well as eight rare Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic manuscripts. Having composed his will, dated 20 March 1712, Richard Simon died in Dieppe three weeks later. With him, says Paul Auvray, died all hope of scientific exege-

³⁶ Published posthumously in *Nouvelle bibliothèque choisie, où l'on fait connoître les bons livres en divers genres de littérature et l'usage qu'on en doit faire ...* (Amsterdam: Mortier, 1714). Not all of these studies of Greek and Roman classics, philosophy, and poetry are by R. Simon, some being ascribed to Simon's pupil Nicolas Barat.

³⁷ See *supra*, n. 31.

sis in France.³⁸ His legacy, that of having “thought differently,”³⁹ lies in his establishment of the methods and conditions, the postulations, premises, and given known facts required for a “critical” approach⁴⁰ to the “history” of the Old and New Testaments. His being traditionally described as the “father of biblical criticism” is due no doubt to his having been the first to make use of internal textual evidence.

Epilogue

The memory of Richard Simon seemed consigned to oblivion when, in 1753, some forty years after the passing of Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, an Oratorian confrere and Hebraist Charles-François Leroy (1698–1787) published those works of Bossuet’s not seen during his life,⁴¹ including, in the second volume, *In Defence of Tradition and the Holy Fathers*, dating from 1691–1693 a lengthy and dense indictment of Simon’s *Critical History of the Principal Commentators of the New Testament*, later reprinted separately.⁴²

Bossuet, in his Preface, declares himself appalled that even a priest, such as R. Simon, should be acting like a heretic, defying the authority of the Church Fathers. Simon, says Bossuet, claims that his book is a work of criticism, that is to say an evaluation of faith and theology in terms of the skill with Greek and Hebrew words on which Simon prides himself. He ventures to communicate his own views, supporting or criticising whomever he likes, taking any opportunity to detract, using Socinian doctrine, from the divinity of Jesus Christ in respect of grace. This mere grammarian, far from being an enlightened exponent, does not hesitate to express opinions on matters beyond his grasp. He, Bossuet, hereby undertakes therefore to expose Simon’s support for heresies, as well as his false views, arising from his disdain for all Fathers without exception, in regard firstly to faith in the Trinity and the Incarnation, and secondly to original sin and grace.⁴³ Bossuet’s *Defence* is little more than a prolonged torrent of obloquy. The gist is as follows: Simon is devoid of any worthy intentions. His aims, in his “critical”

³⁸ Auvray, 175.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Le Brun, 1364.

⁴¹ *Oeuvres posthumes de messire Jacques-Benigne Bossuet évêque de Meaux ...* (Amsterdam: s.n., 1753).

⁴² *Défense de la tradition et des saints Pères* (Paris: Hérisant and Frères Estienne, 1763).

⁴³ *Préface de l’Auteur (Défense ...)*, 1:1–8).

history, were to neutralise all Christian tradition, to falsify the testimony of Church Fathers, especially St Augustine,⁴⁴ to demolish the authority of Ecumenical Councils, in short to eradicate the true sense of Scripture, through deceit, and playing on words. Many of Bossuet's criticisms are mere quibbles; nor is he exempt from occasional fallacious reasoning, and intellectual dishonesty. Discussion of the points at issue, not closely argued, is very often brusquely concluded with a blanket condemnatory statement, to the effect that Simon can have no possible grounds for dispute in any of these areas, since the Church Fathers themselves always upheld the Scriptures and Tradition. In addition, as everyone knows, we are told, the decisions of Ecumenical Councils are received worldwide; and tradition is sacrosanct, on the grounds that, knowing what we believe now, it is unthinkable that people believed anything else in centuries past.

The same accusations are relentlessly repeated: to discredit Simon, Bossuet labels him a heretic, adherent of the doctrines of the Pelagians (put to silence, we are reminded, by Augustine), or of those awful Arians, Socinians, or Unitarians. Simon, we are told, on the one hand attacks tradition, in the person of St Augustine, ostensibly in order to defend it, in order to maintain his own professed Catholicism. Yet whilst appearing to support tradition, he then invalidates his own arguments by petty insinuation, such as the mistranslation of a word or verse. Should there be a discrepancy between Scripture and tradition, Simon purportedly cites each of them in order to discredit the other.

About half of Bossuet's *Defence*—part 2, comprising books 5 to 11—is devoted to an extended polemic, intended to refute Simon's statements regarding original sin and grace, with particular reference to Augustine, Bossuet's own special mentor, who is always right, even when he changes his ground.

We read that in reality, Simon reveals himself, purportedly like Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), as a Semi-Pelagian⁴⁵ since he undermines the Augustinian doctrine of original sin, predestination, salvation being granted to

⁴⁴ On R. Simon and St Augustine, see Jacques Le Brun, "L'antiaugustinisme de Richard Simon", *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 229 (2012): 257–273.

⁴⁵ Opposing Augustine's extreme predestinarian views, Pelagius denied the reality to humankind of the evil consequences of the Fall, maintaining that innate human powers, or self-control, over reason, evil, and passions, can contribute to the attainment of Salvation. No group has ever actually described itself as Semi-Pelagian, the term being used retrospectively by theologians to designate Molinism, the doctrines of grace elaborated by the Jesuit Luis de Molina (1535–1600). St Augustine had begun to preach and write against Pelagianism around 411 CE.

an elite limited in number (bk. 8 ch. 5 [2:89]). Because of original sin, all are guilty, as shown by Romans 5:12, which R. Simon misinterprets: the correct reading is “everyone has sinned *in quo*” (“in him,” i.e. Adam), and not, as the Pelagians held, *quatenus* “seeing that all have sinned” (Greek ἐφ’ ᾧ), given that Adam’s guilt is transferred to all his descendants, as confirmed in 529 CE by the Council of Orange (Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 5:9 [bk. 8 ch. 14 (2:110)]), which also formally condemned Pelagian and Semipelagian doctrines. The image of sin, says St Chrysostom (bk. 9 ch. 11 [2:186]) is concupiscence, human generation being the symptom of our natural sinfulness (*κακία* = depravity) (bk. 9 ch. 11 [2:186]). Whilst God does not punish the innocent, he has no favourites (Acts 10:34); furthermore, for anyone to be damned or granted mercy, it is immaterial whether or not they have had the opportunity of baptism, even babies who are innocent because they are incapable of sinning of their own volition; for infants may die because God wishes to spare them worldly temptations and the influence of evil (Wisdom of Solomon [Apocrypha] 4:11). Whether this be justice or not, it is the decision of God, whose ways are inscrutable, and not to be questioned (bk. 9 ch. 22 [2:211]). God even restrains those who persecute Christians (bk. 12 ch. 29 [2:447]). Simon purportedly argues that according to Augustine, in light of Romans 1:24, God is the cause of all disorder [bk. 5 ch. 7 [1:348]]. From this it follows that all sin, stemming from human freewill, derives from God (bk. 11 ch. 2 [2:317]). Sin, we are told, is permitted so that God’s purpose for humankind may be fulfilled: he allows his own to fall in order to correct them (bk. 11 ch. 19, 21 [2:349, 357]): since St Peter’s presumption prevented him from asking for saving grace, it follows that God’s punishment of Peter’s temerity was a lesson to him, deliberate and necessary (bk. 11 ch. 21, 24 [2:357–359, 363–365]).

According to Paul Auvray,⁴⁶ as he has become a “standard” author, learnt in schools from primary levels, Bossuet, by virtue of this *Defence*, has the last word against Richard Simon, who had so long been the bane of his existence.

Be this as it may, even if one might perhaps agree that, literally, Bossuet did have the last word, one feels that in effect this would only be the case in the event that fair-minded intelligent readers took seriously and were persuaded by Bossuet’s virulent outpouring—some thousand pages in length—without finding its vilification ruthless or excessive, or its tone and intent unwarranted.

⁴⁶ Auvray, 163.

Pierre Gibert, while stressing the originality of Simon's "historical" approach in his writings,⁴⁷ contends on the other hand that, in Simon's works, the exegesis advances no further than that of Origen and Jerome (see *infra*, Preface, nn. 45, 46). For this reason Simon, he asserts, belongs unequivocally in the seventeenth century.⁴⁸

Paul Hazard, however, in the conclusion to a chapter entitled "Richard Simon and Biblical Exegesis",⁴⁹ asserts the contrary view: although Simon "had few direct disciples ... it was he who inspired criticism with a consciousness of its power and duties ... he was responsible for starting a widespread movement of Biblical exegesis."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ On Simon's preoccupation with the historical context of scriptural texts, and the constancy of divine inspiration within their transmission, see Gibert, *L'Invention critique ...*, 185–195.

⁴⁸ Gibert, *L'Invention critique*, 289, 290.

⁴⁹ Paul Hazard, *The European Mind 1680–1715* (coll. "Pelican", Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), part 2 ch. 3, 213–231.

⁵⁰ Hazard, *European Mind*, 231.

CHAPTER ONE

DISPROOF OF EARLY HERETICS' ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE VALIDITY OF THE BOOKS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. REMARKS ON THE PREMISE APPLIED BY CHURCH FATHERS TO PROVE THE BOOKS' GENUINENESS

Jesus Christ proclaimed he had come into the world not to destroy the ancient Law, but to fulfil it,¹ and so did not need to put down his teachings in writing. As evidence of his mission, he simply performed miracles, and based his modified doctrine on the Books of the Old Testament, the Scriptures accepted by all Jews, to whom the promise had been made of a Messiah. As far as anyone knows, he did not require his disciples to make notes about anything; all he did was tell them to preach his gospel to all nations of the earth:² *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*³ The disciples' preaching was the source of the books of the New Testament, which led Tertullian to state that the actual authors of the Gospel of Jesus Christ were the apostles, whom he made responsible for proclaiming it.⁴ In fact the Gospels were only written down because people everywhere wanted a record of the apostles' preaching to be preserved. Most of the Epistles by St Paul were written to provide education in established Churches. The only purpose in publishing the story we call the Acts of the Apostles was to inform the faithful how Christianity had progressed at the outset.

Christians then did not live in a state of their own, separate from the Jews, and actually attended all the Jewish ceremonies in the Temple and the synagogues. Whereas in Old Testament times there were official scribes responsible for documenting administrative proceedings, Christians had no such designated individuals to keep records of their most significant occurrences.

¹ Matthew 5:17.

² Matthew 28:19.

³ Mark 16:15.

⁴ Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, 4:2 (PL 2:363).

From the earliest Christian times, this gave heretics grounds for expressing doubts about the validity of the apostolic books, which seemed to them unsupported by any published evidence. St Ignatius in one of his Epistles deplores hearing people say they could not believe in the Gospel unless they found it in written archival records.⁵ To these, the Holy Martyr's response was that there *was* written evidence: for him, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and his own faith, were true archives.⁶ At the time it was difficult to distinguish between the books written by the apostles or their disciples, and apocryphal texts by false apostles, or sectarians. Every book was headed by an attribution to the apostles in general, or to one particular apostle: and heretics took advantage of the absence of any public record for settling such matters, to issue numerous forgeries, of which we still have little more than the titles and a few fragments.

Such sectarians proudly claimed to be teaching the doctrine of the apostles, or at least that of their disciples. Basilides, one of the earliest heretics, declared he had been taught by Glaucias, one of St Peter's interpreters;⁷ whilst Valentinus, with equal effrontery, asserted he had been given religious instruction by Theodas, a close associate of St Peter. They contradicted each other, however, whereas the Church Fathers took advantage of the doctrinal unanimity in the Churches founded by the apostles, citing it as proof that the apostolic books were authentic. In reply to Basilides and Valentinus, Clement of Alexandria said there was but one true Church, long established, and pre-dating all heresies, thus irrefutably disproving the doctrine of the sectarians, who had the audacity to refer to what they themselves had devised as *Doctrine of the apostles*, and impressing on them that both the teaching and the tradition of the apostles were one.⁸ Tradition, and the unified beliefs in all churches founded by the apostles, provided weapons for the first Christians in the struggle against heretics in those times, ample evidence of which is to be found in the writings of St Irenaeus, Tertullian, St Epiphanius, St Augustine, in short all Church Fathers who defended the validity of apostolic writ against heretics. Whenever sectarians argued in favour of apocryphal gospels, the Fathers used the genuine writings,

⁵ St Ignatius (ca. 35 – ca. 107, Bishop of Antioch), Epistle to the Philadelphians (Philadelphia is present-day Alasehir in Western Turkey), ch. 8 (PG 5:704).

⁶ In a marginal note R. Simon observes that instead of ἐν τοῖς ἀρχαίοις, some sources read ἐν τοῖς ἀρχαίοις "in the works of the Ancients," the latter in fact being the reading given by J.P. Migne (see n. 34 in PG 5:703–704).

⁷ Clement of Alexandria (150–215 CE), *Stromata* ("Miscellanies") bk. 7 ch. 17 (PG 9:549).

⁸ *Stromata* bk. 3 ch. 13 (PG 8:1193).

preserved in the apostolic churches as valid records, to demonstrate that such documents were forgeries. As St Epiphanius points out, anyone attempting to falsify imperial decrees is convicted of forgery, on the evidence of attested copies in palace archives. The same is true, he goes on to say, of gospels forged by heretics, the mendacity of which is revealed on presentation of the true gospels from the Churches which, in the absence of Christian archives, serve as official repositories.⁹

The authenticity of the apostolic works was so vehemently defended against early sectarians that the Gnostics had to resort to some secret and esoteric tradition in order to support their novel ideas. They shamelessly believed they were superior to the apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ, whom they accused of preaching an expurgated and distorted gospel tainted by the retention of various Jewish rites, in the belief that in this way they could impose an authoritative transformation on the apostolic texts. St Irenaeus records that it was impossible to oppose them by invoking accredited tradition, or the testimony of scripture used in Churches founded by the apostles: they placed themselves above such considerations, being firmly convinced that they alone possessed the key to a mysterious and secret religion.¹⁰ Having endowed Christianity with a philosophical slant, they sought to reconcile the two, bringing purely metaphysical arguments to bear on matters of fact. They were imbued with countless preconceptions deriving from their philosophical abstractions, on the basis of which they misrepresented the teachings of the apostles, and even those of Jesus Christ himself, on the pretext of elevating religion to a greater perfection. They claimed they were at liberty to emend the teaching of the apostles, whose knowledge of the truth was imperfect, accordingly describing themselves as “they who know,” or Gnostics, as if they alone were custodians of religious truth, and priding themselves on having corrected the apostles’ errors.¹¹ St Irenaeus vehemently upbraids them for their audacity in boasting they had rectified the shortcomings of the gospel as proclaimed by the apostles.

⁹ *The “Panarion” of Epiphanius of Salamis* tr. Frank Williams (2 vols.; Coll. “Nag Hammadi Studies,” Leiden: Brill, 1987), 1:303 (Heresy 42 Elenchus 38 [b]). The *Panarion* or “medicine-chest,” by St Epiphanius, comprises refutations of 80 heresies, references to which hereafter are cited as “Heresy” followed by designating number, and the location in the painstaking translation by F. Williams.

¹⁰ Irenaeus (ca. 130 – ca. 200, bishop of Lyons), *Contre les hérésies (Against Heresies)* bk. 3 ch. 2,2 ed. A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau (coll. “Sources chrétiennes” 210–211, Paris: Cerf, 1974), 6:26–28.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Including this lengthy discussion of the early Gnostic sect was unavoidable since they were at pains, more than any other sect in early Christian times, to generate forged works ascribed to one or other of the apostles, or to which they gave other specious titles. The traditions bequeathed by the disciples of Christ Jesus were thus vitiated by philosophers unworthy of any name other than that of semi-Christians. They professed to have an even greater awareness of religion than the apostles, and brazenly circulated newly fabricated Scriptures, inconsistent with the apostolic gospels, but which they called *The Gospel of Truth*: any writings they produced, whatever the title, must therefore be ignored.¹² This of itself suffices to show that any Gnostic gospels were forgeries, unworthy of comparison with the apostolic Scriptures accepted in the early Churches.

The same arguments also easily suffice to refute Celsus, who was constantly urging Christians to alter their Gospels, deleting and adding whatever they liked so they could disavow their original position. Origen judiciously told this philosopher, a bitter enemy of Christianity, that he was ill-advisedly and improperly comparing early sectarians with the true faithful, further objecting that, as far as he was concerned, the Gospel had only ever been corrupted by the Gnostics, or by Marcion, evil acts which must be blamed not on the Gospel, but on persons who have dared to falsify Scripture, such as the Sophists, whose false doctrine derived solely from philosophy. The same is true, continues the great man, of “progressive” sects who reshaped the teachings of Jesus Christ with innovations, for which genuine Christianity cannot be held responsible:¹³ there has always been total consensus everywhere among the various scriptural manuscripts. As will be seen further on in the present work, such variant readings as are encountered therein are not of sufficient importance to justify anyone alleging, as Celsus did, that the Christians made alterations to their gospels to bring them into line with their own preconceptions. This allegation can only be made against early heretics who, for lack of any definite principles of belief, modified the Scriptures according to their whims. Disciples of the adoptionist Theodotus were taken to task by orthodox believers for falsifying the Scriptures on the pretext of making corrections: several of them actually had

¹² Ibid., ch. 11,9 (6:172–174).

¹³ Origen, *Contre Celse (Against Celsus)* ed. Marcel Borret (5 vols.; SC 132, 136, 147, 150; Paris: Cerf, 1967–1976), 2.27 (1:357).

taken the liberty of doing so, so that their texts—variously ascribed to Asclepiades, Theodotus, Hermophilus and Apolloniades—were all different, and lacking in uniformity.¹⁴

I shall defer till later my discussion of the Gospel of Marcion,¹⁵ also mentioned by Origen, except to say that to be convinced that Gospels are indeed by the apostles, one has only to compare the Gospels and other books of the New Testament with the liturgies bearing the names of various apostles, and which are attributed to them by most Western Churches, where they have been preserved in their original purity, whereas each nation has expanded its liturgies and taken the liberty of altering them on more than one occasion. The respect invariably extended to the writings of the New Testament, to none of which any significant addition has ever been made, is clear proof that all peoples have seen them as Divine Books that must never be tampered with. By the same token all peoples have been equally convinced that the liturgies, though bearing the names of apostles or disciples of Jesus Christ, were not actually composed by those to whom they are ascribed, and that the Churches were therefore at liberty to extend or abridge them as the occasion required.

The appropriate approach to the Gnostics, already stated, applies equally well to the Manichaeans, who did not accept anything in Scripture as divine except what suited them, or rather, what happened to coincide with their preconceptions. This is what led St Augustine, writing against Faustus, one of the sect's leaders, to make the following statement: *You yourself are the only criterion of truth. Anything you disagree with, you automatically say is false.* To the sectarians he demonstrated, with evidence, that by rejecting the writings of the apostles, supported by Churches all over the world, in favour of apocryphal works that did not enjoy any authority, they were relying on nothing more than false preconceptions. If, continues St Augustine, an opponent were to argue, using your own words, that the material you yourself have written for your own purposes is false, and that, by the same token, what you deny is actually true, what would you do? How could you defend the veracity of your own writings? What earlier established authority could you adduce in their support since you have no corroborative tradition of witnesses from earlier generations? From this, St Augustine

¹⁴ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Histoire ecclésiastique (Ecclesiastical History)* 5.28.16–17 (ed. and tr. Gustave Bardy; SC 31, 41, 55, 73; Paris: Cerf, 1986 [1951]-1987 [1960]), 2:78.

¹⁵ See *infra*, ch. 15 of the present work.

concludes that there is no option other than to invoke the authority of the Churches founded in earliest Christian times, and the consensus of nations that received the books of the New Testament from the apostles.

More to the point, he observes that if it were simply a matter of variant manuscript readings, of which there are only a handful, the only thing required would be to check a particular passage in the manuscripts held by different countries, and in the event of divergent readings, preference should be given to the more frequently attested readings, or to the oldest source rather than the most recent. The Manichaeans, however, would not accept any such criteria, believing that the truth of any written text depended on the extent to which it coincided with their own thinking, relying solely on their own ratiocination in matters of fact that ultimately always depend on existing authority. Hence, when faced with passages of Scripture that clashed with their own views, they brazenly asserted that the passage in question was corrupt, or that the book in which it occurred had been produced, in the name of the apostles, by an impostor. Faustus, for instance, declared he had assiduously studied the Books of Moses without encountering a single prophecy concerning Jesus Christ, then applied the same rationale to cast doubt on all New Testament passages specifically mentioning such prophecies.¹⁶ Referring to himself, Jesus Christ said: *He [Moses] wrote of me.*¹⁷ In response Faustus states that after careful examination of the verse, his reason led him to conclude that either the verse was falsified, or that Jesus Christ had not told the truth; and that since it would be irreverent to suggest a God would tell an untruth, it was more advisable to accuse the Scriptures' authors of forgery.¹⁸ Asked why he rejected the ancient Law and the Prophets, whose authority was endorsed in the New Testament by the words of Jesus Christ himself: *I am not come to destroy the law, or the prophets, but to fulfil,*¹⁹ he strenuously denies the validity of St Matthew's words on the grounds that they are not recorded by any of the other Evangelists. Although, he continues, this statement was supposed to have been made as part of the Sermon on the Mount, since St John, who was there, does not even mention

¹⁶ Augustine, *Against Faustus (Contra Faustum Manichaeum)* bk. 11 ch. 2 (PL 42:246). In 383 Augustine, eventually disillusioned by the failure of Faustus of Milevis (late 4th century), a Manichaean, to solve many problems which had been puzzling him, ceased to be openly a member of the sect.

¹⁷ John 5:46.

¹⁸ Augustine, *Against Faustus* bk. 16 ch. 2 (PL 42:316).

¹⁹ Matthew 5:17.

it, how could St Matthew have written about it when he did not witness it? The words, claims Faustus, were written down by someone other than St Matthew.²⁰

Thus the Manichaeans gave total ascendancy to their reason, and virtually no credence to traditional authority, completely discrediting the books of the New Testament except insofar as they corresponded to their own particular preconceptions of Christianity, modifying the apostles' texts in light of these notions, contending that anything to the contrary had been interpolated in the Scriptures by later writers, who were semi-Jews.²¹

In this same passage, however St Augustine demonstrates to them that to argue in this way, in an attempt to refute facts with fanciful conjecture, would be to take leave of all reason, since it would mean that the only way to determine a work's authenticity would be simply to impugn the works accepted worldwide in the Church by common consent, and to confer apostolic status on all books written against the Church by authors who lived centuries later than the apostles. He criticises them for passing off fictions and apocrypha as apostolic, works that were obviously spurious, given the absence of any support from Church scholars living at the time.²² He calls on Faustus to prove his assertions on the basis of canonical books generally accepted by all Churches,²³ dismissing the Manicheans as wrongheaded for trying to say, on the grounds of certain contradictions contained in Scripture, or because they themselves could not reconcile the apostolic Scriptures with their own preconceptions of Christianity, that those books were written long after the lifetime of the apostles by unknown authors, who ascribed them to apostles in order to endow them with some authority.²⁴

To show them the fallacy of their thinking even more clearly, he holds up works by Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Varro, Cicero, and several others, whose authorship is unquestioned because it was established when they were alive and has remained so from one century to the next.²⁵ It would be utterly unreasonable to deny the same credence to the Church by claiming it had not faithfully preserved the books written by the apostles, whose doctrine it had duly maintained by the successive appointment of bishops.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, bk. 17 ch. 1 (PL 42:339).

²¹ *Ibid.*, bk. 33 ch. 3 (PL 42:512–513).

²² *Ibid.*, bk. 33 ch. 6 (PL 42:514).

²³ *Ibid.*, bk. 23 ch. 79 (PL 22:452).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, bk. 32 ch. 2 (PL 22:498).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, bk. 33 ch. 6 (PL 42:514).

I have devoted a certain amount of space to the words of St Augustine and other Fathers before him, because they provide solid support for the veracity of the books of the New Testament without relying on one or other kind of sophistry that has evolved in recent times. Nothing more senseless can be imagined than the creed of the former Reformed Church of France: “We accept these books as canonical, not by virtue of the common assent and consensus of the Church, but through the witness and conviction of the Holy Spirit within.” All Church fathers, however, withstood early heretics who would not accept the books as canonical “by virtue of the common assent and consensus of the Church.” For each individual in early Christian times to reason that he should not accept the divinity of any books except those which his own mind led him so to accept would have been laughable. So extremist did it appear to members of the Netherlands sect called Remonstrants that they thought Calvinists following such a line of thought were out of their minds. Simon Bischoep,²⁶ one of their leaders, examined the matter in minute detail, concluding that it made no sense to believe in an inner conviction of the Holy Spirit, over and beyond the testimony provided by the Church itself, in order to accept the divine authority of a text.²⁷ The sole requirement, say the Remonstrants, is the testimony of the Early Church, which had definite knowledge that books were written by the apostles, or approved by them, and for this testimony to have been accurately and integrally handed down to us.²⁸ The spirit of this testimony, widespread throughout the Church, is undoubtedly superior to individual conviction, which serves no purpose apart from causing division within the Church, as Grotius judiciously observed.²⁹

Nor would it serve any purpose for the Calvinists, in response to the Remonstrants, to argue that their doctrine derives from the writings of

²⁶ 1583–1643, who took on the name “Episcopius,” and to whom was mistakenly ascribed the compilation of the Remonstrance (Gouda 1610), which set forth the doctrines of Arminianism, a reaction against Calvinist determinism. Condemned by the Synod of Dort (1618–1619), the Remonstrants were not tolerated until 1795.

²⁷ Episcopius, *Opera theologica* ed. E. Courcelles and P. van Limborch (Amsterdam: J. Blaeu, 1650), 235A (book 4: *De Revelatione per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum facta*, ch. 5: *Istorum librorum auctoritatum non pendere quod ad nos a testimonio Ecclesiae*, section 1: *De libris Novi Testamenti* [BnF D2–76 (1)]).

²⁸ Episcopius, *Confessio, sive Declaratio sententiae pastorum qui in foederato Belgio Remonstrantes vocantur, super praecipuis articulis religionis christianae* (Harderwijk [Netherlands]: T. Daniel, 1622), ch. 1 §8, 3 [BnF D2–181].

²⁹ Grotius (Hugo de Groot), *Animadversiones in animadversiones Andreae Riveti* (S.l.: 1642), 7 [BnF D2–14316].

Faustus Socinus.³⁰ A consistently attested truth cannot be rejected on the grounds it will be found in the works of Socinus: heretic or no, Socinus, in his treatise *The Authority of Holy Scripture* and in another book entitled *Holy Readings*, demonstrated the truth of the Scriptures, particularly the New Testament, using the same arguments and method as St Irenaeus, Tertullian, and St Augustine. People need only read what Eusebius' *Church History* has to say on the subject to find the unbroken consensus of all the Churches in the world, since the time books were first written until his own day.³¹ In the two books Socinus draws strongly on the testimonies of the early Fathers. Are his methods therefore to be termed "socinian" because Socinus used them after the most learned Church writers had already done so? Would to God that this enemy of Catholic Church tradition had always followed the same principle, and refrained from making so many religious innovations! Nor was there anything he could do to prevent his own partisans from pointing out that, in accordance with his own principles, he had no option but to accept a tradition in the same way it is established within the Roman Church, and that it is impossible to reject the gospel ascribed to St Thomas whilst accepting the Gospel of St Matthew without thus establishing a tradition, since there is no conclusive evidence for so doing in Scripture.

To refute this argument without relinquishing his principle, to a degree Socinus dissociated Scripture from tradition, by means of a rift consisting of recorded history, other witnesses, and reasoned argument, all of which prove, independently of any ecclesiastical authority, that the Gospel of St Matthew is the true story of Jesus Christ, whereas the book under the name of St Thomas is apocryphal.³² To avoid having to accept the Church's traditions, Bishop and other Remonstrants took advantage of the same line of thinking. However, this so-called rift between Scripture and genuine tradition is identical to that established by St Irenaeus, Tertullian, St Epiphanius, St Augustine, and several other Fathers as part of their attempt to convince early heretics that the apostolic books were genuine. Socinus's histories and other documents derive from the Church, or are by Church writers: in other

³⁰ Socinus (Fausto Paolo Sozzini [1539–1604]), an Italian religious teacher, who lived and taught Unitarian doctrines in Poland from 1579, and whose works were edited in two volumes under the title *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum quos Unitarios vocant: instructa operibus omnibus Fausti Socini Senensis, nobilissimi Itali ...* (Irenopolis [i.e. Amsterdam], s.n.): 1656 [BnF D2–246 (1)] by his grandson Andreas Wiszowaty.

³¹ Socinus, *De Auctoritate scripturae sacrae* ch. II (*Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum ...*, 1:268A).

³² Socinus, Epistle 4 to Christopher Ostorod (*Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum ...*, 1:448B).

words, they are part of tradition. He himself is compelled to admit the fact, since in his treatise *The Authority of Holy Scripture* he admits that within the Church, from the apostles to Eusebius, no one doubted that the New Testament books were written by those whose names they bear, since unquestionably some heretics outside the Church not only entertained doubts on the matter, but completely repudiated those books. What misled Socinus and other sectarians was their false notion of the Church's authority, and their misconception that the Church's pronouncement that the books in the Old and New Testaments are divine and canonical relies on authority alone, and not on trustworthy written evidence.

CHAPTER TWO

TITLES HEADING THE GOSPELS AND
OTHER BOOKS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.
WHETHER THE TITLES ARE BY THE
AUTHORS OF THOSE BOOKS OR
WHETHER THEY WERE ADDED

From the ancient world we have no solid proof showing us that the names heading each gospel were placed there by the authors of those gospels. St John Chrysostom in one of his homilies specifically says that they were not. Moses, this learned bishop says, did not put his name to the five books of the Law which he wrote. Nor did those who compiled events after Moses put their names at the head of their histories. The same is true of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. As for St Paul, disregarding the letter to the Hebrews, he always stated his name at the start of his Epistles. The reason which St John Chrysostom provides is that the former writers wrote for local people, whereas St Paul wrote letters to people far away.¹ Going by this Father's testimony, it cannot be specifically proved, merely from the headings of each Gospel, that the Gospels were written by those whose names they bear, unless we adduce the authority of the early Church which added those titles. At a Conference they held at Ratisbon with some Protestants, Adam Tanner and other Jesuits² used this basic principle to show that, from the title of St Matthew, and without the testimony of ancient church writers, it could not specifically be proved that this Gospel was by him whose name it bore. The claim was that the only available proof came not from the Scripture itself but from the authority of those writers, whose names were added afterwards.³ A Protestant theologian who attended the conference wrote a book on this very subject, intending to prove the opposite of what the Jesuits claimed.⁴

¹ John Chrysostom, Hom. 11 on Epistle to Romans (PG 60:395).

² Jakob Gretser, Jakob Heilbronner, Aegidius Hunnius.

³ Adam Tanner, *Relatio compendiarie de initio, processu, et fine colloquij Ratisbonensis, quod anno Domini m.dci ... institutum fuit* (Munich: Nikolaus Heinrich, 1602) [Bodleian A 17.3(2) Linc.], 32 *recto*.

⁴ David Schram, *Quaestio hoc tempore exagitissima: quibus probationum generibus pos- sit demonstrari primum de quatuor SS. Evangelis esse Matthaei apostoli ...* (Giessen [Hesse]: Hampel, 1617 [BnF C-3410 (2)]), 18.

But the fact is that, in discussions of this kind, there is more subtlety than substance. For even if St Matthew really were the author in the title of his Gospel, one would still need to rely on the authority of all those ancient Church writers to show that the title is his, and that this Gospel really is by the person whose name it bears, unless one wished to revert to the particular mentality we just mentioned, which sensible people have no time for.⁵

Within the Church the titles are so old that Tertullian criticised Marcion for not putting a title to his copy of the Gospel of Luke⁶ (which Marcion accepted, making only a few excisions); it was, the Church Father said, as though he did not have permission to give a title to a work with whose text he had dared to interfere. In the same passage he adds that, in his dispute with this heretic, he could not let the matter pass; it was his right to judge a book without a title as spurious; but that he was willing to make that much allowance for him, because it was easy to see that, leaving aside what had been suppressed, Marcion's version of St Luke was the same as the one read in Church.⁷ This is not to say that Tertullian believed it could be proved from the titles alone that the Gospels were by those whose names they bore; otherwise he would have had to accept as genuine Gospels countless forgeries bearing the names of the apostles. In addition, he claimed, there was a need of a constant tradition based on the testimony of those who had gone before. He therefore adds, in that same passage, that even if Marcion had published his Gospel under the name of St Paul, the title would be worthless unless accompanied by testimony.⁸

He goes even further. He denies any reliance on the title which is at the beginning of St Luke in the copies held in the churches.⁹ Going on the titles alone, Marcion, and the Catholics, could say that his Gospel was genuine, so where do we stand, says Tertullian. By what yardstick shall we be able to judge which is the true Gospel, Marcion's which is corrupt or the Church's which is supposed to be complete, unless you rely on dating, the oldest being the true one, because the truth of a document always proceeds any corruption of that document: "To the extent that the false is a corruption of

⁵ On this particular subtlety, see pages 118^v and 119^r of the Ratisbon conference Acts: *Acta colloquii Ratisbonensis de norma doctrinae catholicae, et controversiarum religionis iudice, auctoritate consensus ... habiti anno M.DCI* (Munich: Nikolaus Heinrich, 1602) [Bodleian A 17.3(1) Linc.].

⁶ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* bk. 4 ch. 2 (PL 2:363).

⁷ *Ibid.*, bk. 4 ch. 4 (PL 2:364A).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.* (PL 2:365B).

the true, to the same extent the truth must have preceded what is false."¹⁰ On this indisputable premise, he shows that the genuine version of St Luke was the one used by the Orthodox Church, since Marcion himself had accepted no other before he had left the Church, saying its Jewish inclinations were too strong; and it was on this so-called inclination that he relied for not accepting this Gospel in its entirety, saying interpretations had been made by defenders of Judaism.¹¹

In fact, Tertullian concludes that there was no true version of St Luke other than his own because it preceded the one that Marcion had altered; the reason he gives is that Marcion would only have been able to change the existing version that was in the Church and which preceded his own.¹² To the objection that could have been raised with him that it is not always true that the oldest books are the most accurate, since they could have been corrupted, unless they were the genuine originals, he replies that one has to go back to the time of the apostles to be sure of having what they actually wrote.¹³ One can be sure, he holds, that something dates from the time of the apostles if one sees that it has been kept intact in the apostolic Churches.

The whole of Tertullian's reasoning shows that the continuing tradition of the Church is the criterion for distinguishing the divine and canonical books from those which are not; and that it was the Church itself which added or at least approved of the titles of the four Gospels, to let us know that the Gospels had been written by apostles, or their disciples; which is in complete disagreement with a particular approach of some Protestants. Beza, it seems, believed that the titles of the Gospels were dictated by the Holy Spirit just as was the text of those Gospels. This is what he insinuated in his reply to the defence of Sebastien Castellio,¹⁴ whom he reprimands for translating these Greek words "according to Matthew" as "by Matthew" in his Latin version of the New Testament.¹⁵ Maldonado, with far better judgment, observed that the sacred writers were not accustomed to put titles at the head of their writings;¹⁶ but that they simply leave them out,

¹⁰ Ibid. (PL 2:365B–C).

¹¹ Ibid. (PL 2:366A).

¹² Ibid. bk. 4 ch. 5 (PL 2:366B).

¹³ Ibid. (PL 2:366C).

¹⁴ Sébastien Châteillon called Castellio (1515?-1563), Calvinist theologian.

¹⁵ T. de Beza, *Responsio ad defensiones et reprehensiones Sebastiani Castellionis, quibus suam Noui Testamenti interpretationum defendere adversus Bezam, et eius versione vicissim reprehendere conatus est* [S.l. (Geneva): Estienne, 1563], 21 [Mazarine 23253 pièce 2].

¹⁶ Juan Maldonado (1533–1583, Spanish exegete, "this learned Jesuit" [see ch. 24 of the

or they include them in the opening words of their books; which he proves by examples taken from the Old Testament and from which he infers that it is possible to believe that the Evangelists did not write the titles of their Gospels. He backs this up by citing St Mark, who would have given his book two titles if he had written an earlier one entitled “Gospel according to Mark,” because he begins his story otherwise, with the words “Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” He adds, moreover, that if the Evangelists had put those titles, there would not be such evident uniformity in them. They would have used other expressions as in the other passages where they say the same things, but using different words, whereas they all have “Gospel according to N.” He further backs up his opinion by the divergence encountered between the Greek and Latin copies; the latter have “The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to N.” which, says Maldonado, is because the Greek Church put a Greek title and the Latin Church a Latin title.

Here it seems that Beza wished to opt for the title from the Latin version rather from the Greek since he accuses Castellio of mistranslation in using the expression *auctore Matthaeo*, as though St Matthew had been the author of his Gospel. In order to refute his adversary more strongly, he says that we do not find the Gospel of St Matthew, of Mark, of Luke, of John; but the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Matthew, Luke and John as in all the Latin copies.¹⁷ However, this reading is only in the Latin version, not even in all Latin copies. If Maldonado is to be believed, only the Arabic version printed in Rome has *Gospel of Jesus Christ accordingly as it has been written by St Matthew, one of the twelve disciples*.¹⁸ But it is easy to see that this Arabic title was taken in after the Latin, that those who copied or translated the Gospels in Arabic added the rest. This is why the two other Arabic editions have “Gospel of Matthew or of St Matthew.” The same applies to the Syriac, Ethiopian and Persian texts. In short, the Latin version alone has Gospel of Jesus Christ, which was probably imitated from the opening words of the Gospel of St Mark. Whatever the case, the view of St John Chrysostom who held that no other of the Gospels was originally written with the titles they have now, strikes me as much more likely than that of a handful of writers, especially among the Protestants, who ascribe the titles to the Evangelists

present work]), *Commentarii in quatuor evangelistas ...* ed. Franz Sausen (Mainz: Kirchheim, Schott, Thielmann, 1840) [BnF A-10084], 1:14.

¹⁷ Beza, *Responsio ...*, 12–13.

¹⁸ Giovanni Battista Raimondi, *Evangelium sanctum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi conscriptum a quatuor Evangelistis sanctis id est Matthaeo, Marco, Luca, et Johanne* (Rome: Medici, 1591), 2 [BnF A-548].

and hold that they are part of the Gospels. It is much more likely that the early Christians edited them at a time when it was believed that these Gospels really were by those whose names were on them. Hence we find the name of St Luke added to the start of some Greek manuscripts of the Acts of the Apostles, as I have observed in three manuscripts in the King's Library. In two of the manuscripts, we find the Acts of the Apostles by Luke the Evangelist; and in the other the Acts of the Holy Apostles by Luke the apostle.

Moreover, the Greek word Gospel, which literally means "good news," is here taken in the sense of "preaching," so that the Gospel of Matthew simply becomes the Preaching by this apostle who collected the actions and words of his master. Hence the Syrians have entitled this Gospel, "Gospel Preached by Matthew." The Arabic versions taken from the Syriac also use an Arabic word which means "preaching."

I do not believe there is any need to dwell on the words *κατὰ Ματθαίου* "according to Matthew," or *κατὰ Μάρκον* "according to Mark," for which I feel some New Testament commentators have provided explanations that are oversubtle. They fully believe that those who supplied these titles intentionally used this expression to show that neither Matthew, Mark, Luke nor John were the authors of these Gospels but that they had simply written them down. This strikes me as mere nitpicking. In the idiom of those days "according to Matthew" meant the same as "by Matthew." Just as they said the Gospel "according to the Hebrews," "according to the Egyptians" meaning the Gospel of the Hebrews and the Gospel of the Egyptians, in the same way they said "heresy according to the Phrygians" which is the same as saying the "heresy of the Phrygians." Even Beza who went much too far in criticising Castellio for his rendering of the words "according to Matthew," which he had translated as "by Matthew," admits that it is normal to say the Gospel of St Matthew and St Mark, just as it is to say the Epistles of St Paul and St Peter. He is worried that Castellio's title may give rise to the belief that the Evangelists were actually the authors of the Gospels that they published, whereas they simply recorded them as though in good Latin, *auctor* "author" did not mean the same thing as *scriptor* "writer." Rather he should have been worried about people saying that the expression according to St Matthew seems to mean that St Matthew and the other Evangelists had not written their Gospels themselves but that these were only compilations which the disciples had made of the preaching by their masters. But this objection is readily dealt with by showing there is no difference of meaning between the two expressions *κατὰ Ματθαίου* "according to Matthew" and *Ματθαίου* "by Matthew." Castellio, who claims to be conveying the meaning of the text

rather than the letter, made no error when putting “by Matthew”; thus Beza was wrong to have seized the opportunity to accuse him of having denied the inspiration of the Scriptures.

I am amazed that Grotius took Beza’s quibble seriously, and that, after him, in his commentary on this passage of St Matthew, he noted that the old title was not simply Εὐαγγέλιον, “Gospel,” but Εὐαγγέλιον Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, “Gospel of Jesus Christ,” as it is at the beginning of St Mark.¹⁹ He considers this was the reason why it did not read Εὐαγγέλιον Ματθαίου, “Gospel of Matthew” but κατὰ Ματθαῖον, “according to Matthew.” This statement is baseless; κατὰ Ματθαῖον, “according to Matthew” and Ματθαίου, “by Matthew” mean the same thing, as has been already shown. Accordingly we find “Gospel of Matthew” in all the versions, Syriac, Arabic (except for the copy in Rome, which was apparently reworked in that spot according to the Latin), Ethiopian and Persian.

Usually the great antiquity of the term Εὐαγγέλιον “Gospel” is shown by invoking these words of St Justin Martyr in his “Apologia for the Christians”: “the apostles in the acts they committed to writing, called Gospels.”²⁰ Instead of the word “Acts” in this Father’s Greek, there is the word ἀπομνημονεύματα.²¹ Today we still have four books by Xenophon relating the words and deeds of Socrates, entitled Χενόφωντος ἀπομνημονεύματα, and in Latin, in the translation by Cardinal Bessarion, *Xenophontis de factis & dictis Socratis memoratu dignis* “Memoirs of the deeds and words of the great Socrates.”²² It is in this sense that the Holy Martyr refers to the Gospels in his *Dialogue against Tryphon*, under the title τῶν ἀποστόλων ἀπομνημονεύματα, “The Apostles’ Recollections,”²³ as though the apostles’ sole intention in their writings called “gospels” was to publish the words and deeds of Jesus Christ. It is worth noting moreover that whilst the apostles did not provide the titles heading their Gospels, we have to accept them just as if they had placed them there themselves, because they have been there from the earliest stages of Christianity and they have the authority of continuing tradition in all Churches in the world. Erasmus, who had great difficulty with the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which does not bear the name of St

¹⁹ Grotius, Annotations on Matthew’s Title (*Opera omnia theologica ...*, tome II 1:4A).

²⁰ Justin Martyr, *First Apologia*, ch. 66 (PG 6:429).

²¹ ἀπομνημονεύματα “memoirs,” “recollections,” “reminiscences” (Justin, 1st *Apologia for the Christians*, 66:3 [PG 6:429]).

²² Cardinal Jean Bessarion, *Xenophontis de factis et dictis Socratis memoratu dignis ...* (Louvain: Zassen, 1533).

²³ *Dialogue with Trypho*, a Jew ch. 100 (PG 6:709). Τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα also means “records.”

Paul, declares that if the Church has made any pronouncement thereupon, he will gladly submit to its decision, deferring this to any reasons which could be adduced. "For me the judgment of the Church carries more weight," says this scholar, "than any human reasoning."²⁴

²⁴ Erasmus, *Declarationes Des. Erasmi, ... ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas sub nomine Facultatis theologiae parisiensis*, Declaration 32 (*Opera omnia* 9:864). See also *infra*, ch. 16 n. 34.

CHAPTER THREE

BOOKS PUBLISHED IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES. OF SEVERAL FORGERIES BY EARLY HERETICS. REMARKS ON THIS WHOLE QUESTION

It has already been observed that Jesus Christ published no book to make his teaching known, nor even required his disciples to write down what he had taught them, but merely to preach it to all nations of the earth. However, there have been impostors who ascribed forged books to him, as well as certain written documents in the form of letters, the forgery being self-evident because they are addressed to Peter and Paul. When writing the letters they overlooked the fact that Paul was not a disciple of Jesus Christ until after the death of this same Jesus Christ. How then, says St Augustine, could he have written to Peter and Paul as if they were cherished disciples with whom he had lived in proximity, since Paul was not among his disciples at that time;¹ quite apart from the fact that these books were full of secrets or rather superstitions pertaining to the art called magic? This is totally inconsistent with Jesus Christ who always claimed as did Christians after him to condemn such superstitions. It is not unlikely that as his amazing actions burst upon the world, along with his astonishing miracles, the chance was seized to bring out a false document to convey some or other magic secrets which it was claimed he had used. In fact, the Jews, his enemies, unable to deny the truth of his miracles, put it about everywhere that he was a magician. They even shamelessly related these fables in their Talmud, saying that Jesus had learnt the most subtle secrets of magic in Egypt. Celsus made virtually the same accusations against early Christians through the intermediary of a Jew acting as a spokesperson.² This Epicurean philosopher ascribes Jesus's miracles to magic, or rather to an art which he said was taught in Egypt.

The letter of Jesus Christ to Abgar, King of Edessa, does not seem totally fanciful since Eusebius,³ who adduces it together with the letter to Jesus

¹ Augustine, *Evangelists' Assent*, bk. 1 ch. 10 §16 (PL 34:1049).

² Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.38 (1:180–182).

³ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.13.1–22 (2:40–45).

from that Prince, declares that he got these two documents from the Edessa archives which contained the records of what happened in the reign of Abgar, and that in his own time they were still kept there written in Syriac, the language of the country from which they were translated into Greek. Nonetheless Pope Gelasius was right to reject the letter from our Lord to Abgar as apocryphal.⁴ Granted that the letters were indeed found in the archives in the city of Edessa; but we must not place our trust too readily in the beginnings of Churches; everyone enhances their history as best they can, quite unscrupulously forging documents in such cases when they have no genuine ones.

Eusebius, showing much better judgment, rejects as fairy tales certain parables and teachings that Papias⁵ attributed to Jesus Christ, guaranteeing he had heard them from people who had been taught them by the apostles.⁶ So we must not waiver from the fact that Jesus Christ set nothing down in writing, and that anything we have from him has been passed on by his apostles. This led certain pagans who worshipped him to say that they could not believe in the gospel because he himself had not written it, and his disciples, who did write it, had abandoned all restraint in making a god of him.⁷ These folk are refuted by St Augustine, in the first book of his consensus on the gospels. He says, referring to the pagans, that though they recognise outstanding wisdom in Jesus Christ, they still consider him a man, claiming that his disciples ascribed qualities to him that he did not possess.⁸ They assert their readiness to believe in his word had he himself committed it to writing, refusing nonetheless to trust the preaching of his apostles. St Augustine cites Pythagoras and Socrates, two of the greatest men in pagan antiquity who, like Jesus Christ, wrote down nothing of what they themselves had done, the same as Jesus Christ; but this does not stop people placing reliance on what their disciples said. He asks why they are more willing to believe what those two philosophers' disciples wrote about them.⁹ St Augustine's line of thought is clearly based on the supposition that we

⁴ In "Books to be accepted and rejected: Roman Council or Decree held by Pope Gelasius and bishops ca. 496" (PL 59:180).

⁵ Bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor c. 60–130. See "Fragments of Papias," Lightfoot and Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London: Macmillan, 1898), 307–329. On the origins of the Gospels of St Matthew and St Mark, see Fragments 15 and 16 (316).

⁶ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.1–17 (1:153–157).

⁷ Augustine, *Retractions* bk. 2 ch. 16 (PL 32:636–637).

⁸ Augustine, *Evangelists' Assent*, bk. 1 ch. 7 §§ 11–12 (PL 34:1047–1048).

⁹ Augustine, *Retractions* bk. 1 ch. 7 § 12 (PL 34:1048).

have nothing in writing by Jesus Christ; moreover he states this specifically elsewhere, responding to Faustus who held that anything Jesus had said about himself should be sought out. Can this be found anywhere other than in the writings of his disciples, this Father asks, adding that if there were any actual writings by Jesus Christ, how is it that they are neither accepted or read in his Church, and do not take pride of place there.¹⁰ Such is also the opinion of Origen in his first book against Celsus where he admits that Jesus made no public statement about what he had done, and that we know of this only through the accounts given by his disciples in their gospels.¹¹

In regard to forged writings attributed to apostles—gospels, acts, apocalypses or revelations and so on—they are so numerous that they can barely be circumscribed. Pope Gelasius made quite a long list of them,¹² included in the Decree of Gratian.¹³ although nearly all these forgeries are lost, a few fragments have come down to us from the ancient church writers. St Luke seems only to have written his gospel because others had attempted to do so before him without showing due integrity. This is the meaning the church Fathers usually give to this evangelist's opening words, when explaining the Greek word *ἔπεξείρησαν* which is translated in the *Vulgate* as *conati sunt*.¹⁴ Theophylact said that several individuals wrote gospels such as that of the Egyptians, another entitled "Gospel of the Twelve." He adds that these folk merely made an effort without seeing things through.¹⁵ The consensus among early Greek and Latin interpreters of Scripture is that in that passage St Luke intended to single out authors who had dared to publish false

¹⁰ Augustine, *Against Faust* bk. 26 ch. 4 (PL 42:486).

¹¹ Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.45 (1:192–194).

¹² "Gelasian Decree" (PL 59:175–180).

¹³ Around 1150, in order to simplify the science of canon law, of which he is recognised as founder, the Camaldolese monk Gratian (†1159 or before), then professor at the University of Bologna, compiled the 4,000-odd documents comprising Church laws ("canons") from all available sources, entitling the collection *Concordia discordantium canonum* ("the harmonising of dissonant canons"). For a time this compilation, completed possibly in 1151, and now commonly known as the Gratian Decree, and including the "Gelasian Decree" (see *supra*, ch. 3 n. 30) was the virtual basic text of Church law. The first part is divided into 101 *distinctiones* (i.e. causes and questions): of these, the first twenty provide an introduction to basic principles of canon law. In the sixteenth century, numerous critical notes, designated by the words *Correctores Romani*, were added by the Roman revisers (Pedro Chacon [ed.], *Decretum Gratiani, emendatum et annotationibus illustratum* ... [Rome: 1582 (BnF E-39)]). On the Gratian Decree, see also Emil Albert von Friedberg (ed.), *Corpus iuris canonici* (2d ed., Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1879). See also Dante, *Paradiso* X.103: Dante gives Gratian a place in Paradise among the twelve wise men who helped illuminate the world intellectually.

¹⁴ "They set their hand to."

¹⁵ Theophylact (11th century Byzantine exegete), Commentary on Luke 1:1 (PG 123:692).

gospels, “pseudo-apostles” as Baronius says.¹⁶ Yet several of them mistakenly adduced writings published after St Luke as examples of such false gospels.

This caused some learned commentators of the New Testament to have doubts about the explanation of this Greek word which the Fathers provided and to take exception to it in this context. Maldonado briefly recounts the opinions of several Fathers on the matter;¹⁷ and although he has no sound basis for doing so, he shares the common opinion because the verb ἐπεχειρήσαν “they set their hand to” can also be understood in a good sense.¹⁸ But whether or not there were false gospels before St Luke published his, there can be no doubt that a great many were forged subsequently by heretics. At this stage I shall not discuss the Gospel of the Nazarenes, also called the Gospel Καθ’ Ἑβραίους “According to the Hebrews,” because I am convinced that this gospel was the original of St Matthew to which, as I shall show later, some additions were made.¹⁹

The Ebionites, who used this gospel by Matthew according to the Hebrews, had fabricated others in the names of the apostles, James and John in particular, in order more easily to impress members of their Sect by these false gospels ascribed to the disciples of Jesus Christ. They even dared to forge new Acts of the Apostles which they filled with irreligious statements and malicious gossip about Paul, whom they mockingly called “the man from Tarsus,” trying thus to show that he was not Jewish by birth but a Proselyte born of a Gentile father and mother who had embraced Judaism. However, Eusebius tells us that these heretics only accepted the so-called Gospel according to the Hebrews, then disregarded the rest. As they still observed Judaism along with Christianity, they completely rejected the Epistles of St Paul whom they branded an apostate because, they said, he had abandoned the old Law, ἀποστάτην ἀποκαλοῦντες αὐτὸν τοῦ νόμου.²⁰

The Gnostics, who fondly imagined they had a better knowledge of religion than all other Christians, and considered the apostles uncouth and uncivilised when they published their Gospels, wrote a verse composition

¹⁶ “The Fathers’ firm conviction is that pseudo-apostles and pseudo-writers were castigated by Luke in these terms” (Cesare Baronius [1538–1607], *Annales ecclesiastici* ed. J.D. Mansi and D. Georgius [Lucca: Venturino 1738–1759]), vol. 1 [Glasgow Univ.: Sp Coll RF528; BnF: H161], 580 (CE 58 n. 31).

¹⁷ J. Maldonado, *Commentarii in quatuor evangelistas* ..., 3:18.

¹⁸ Luke 1:1. The connotation of ἐπιχειρέω (“take in hand”) is the difficulty, whatever the degree of success, involved in attempting or undertaking such an account, or compilation.

¹⁹ On this point, see the Editor’s Note at the end of ch. 5 of the present work. On the “Gospel According to the Hebrews,” see Editor’s Note at the conclusion of this present chapter.

²⁰ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.27.1–6 (1:136–137).

which they called Εὐαγγέλιον τελειώσεως “The Gospel of Perfection.”²¹ They also used a gospel which they ascribed to St Philip, disciple of Jesus Christ, a few words from which are recounted by St Epiphanius.²² Some members of this Sect, which had several subdivisions, had fabricated a so-called Εὐαγγέλιον Εὐᾶς “Gospel of Eve,”²³ expressing their fantasies in the name of this woman, whom they considered a pure Gnostic as she had been greatly enlightened in her exchange with the Serpent. The Sethians, a different sort of Gnostics, boasting of their descent from Seth, whom they believe was Jesus Christ, had forged an Apocalypse in the name of the patriarch Abraham.²⁴ St Epiphanius astutely observes that by publishing so many false books under famous names, Gnostics sought to mislead simple folk, making them believe that they knew everything about the life of Jesus Christ. Those among them called Marcosians²⁵ have written false accounts of his childhood, relating how he had learned to read.

The Encratites who saw the famous Tatian, disciple of St Justin Martyr as the creator of their Sect, based themselves on the Acts of St Andrew, St John, St Thomas and other apocryphal books as though they were authentic Scripture. Those who called themselves apostolici, a branch of the Encratites, followed their example in basing themselves on forged Acts of St Andrew and St Thomas.²⁶ The Origenists, whose views were similar to those of St Epiphanius of the Gnostic Sect, also used Acts attributed to St Andrew, and other books of that kind.²⁷ The Manicheans had devised a Gospel in the name of Thomas and they used the name of this gospel to impress simple persons. Cyril of Jerusalem, who lived shortly after this Sect came into being, ascribes this gospel to one of the disciples of Manes named Thomas.²⁸ This holy bishop states “let no one read the Gospel of Thomas, not one of the

²¹ Epiphanius, Heresy 26 n. 2, 5 (*Panarion*, 1:84).

²² Epiphanius, Heresy 26 n. 13, 2 (*Panarion*, 1:94).

²³ Epiphanius, Heresy 26 n. 2, 6 (*Panarion*, 1:84).

²⁴ Epiphanius, Heresy 39 n. 3, 9 (*Panarion*, 1:258).

²⁵ Epiphanius, Heresy 34 n. 18, 8 (*Panarion*, 1:228–229). “Marcosians” were the followers of the Gnostic Marcus (Rhône Valley middle 2nd century). As Scriptures, they used the Acts of Thomas and other apocryphal books. Our knowledge of them is derived solely from St Irenaeus.

²⁶ Epiphanius, Heresy 61 n. 1, 3 (*Panarion*, 2:115). The apostolici, 3rd or 4th century ascetics in Phrygia, Cilicia and Pamphilia, also called Apotactici or Apotactites, attempted to emulate the purity of the first believers, by renouncing marriage and personal possessions.

²⁷ Epiphanius, Heresy 63 n. 2, 1 (*Panarion*, 2:129).

²⁸ Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 315–386, Bishop of Jerusalem from about 349), Catechesis 4 ch. 36 (PG 33:500). The 24 “Catecheses,” delivered ca. 350 as instructions in Lent and Eastertide to the catechumens (those training for baptism) who were baptised on Holy Saturday, are Cyril’s chief surviving work.

twelve apostles but one of the three evil disciples of Manes.”²⁹ The names of these three disciples according to Cyril’s testimony were Thomas, Bad-das, and Hermas. Pope Gelasius nonetheless condemns it as being, in their view, by the apostle Thomas.³⁰ St Augustine, writing against Faustus, referred to apocryphal books used by the Manichaeans, which recounted several Acts of St Thomas, even giving some examples of them.³¹ But for the sake of brevity, I shall pass over several other gospels ascribed to apostles. Their names can be found in the catalogue of Gelasius, who included them among the apocryphal books.

Although the Church only recognises two fairly brief Epistles by St Peter as canonical, if we believe early heretics he also composed several others, listed by St Jerome, namely Acts, a Gospel, an Apocalypse, and two other books, one of them called “The Preaching of Peter,” the other “The Judgment.”³² Eusebius also mentioned these books by St Peter, adding that they were in general rejected by all Catholics because no church writer was seen to take them as authoritative.³³ This is wrong: Eusebius himself states elsewhere that Clement of Alexandria quoted the Apocalypse of St Peter. This Clement also quotes the book entitled *Κήρυγμα Πέτρου* “The Preaching of Peter.” He even reproduces some fragments of both these works as did Origen after him. It seems Eusebius merely meant that no church author had cited these books as divine or canonical. The same explanation applied to another passage of his History where he rejects as apocryphal the Gospels published by the heretics under the names of St Peter, Thomas, Matthias and other apostles, adding that no church writer from the apostles until his own time had mentioned these Gospels.³⁴

St Serapion, Bishop of Antioch,³⁵ wrote a specific letter against the Gospel attributed to Peter for the benefit of Christians from Rhossus in Cilicia, who had read the gospel and been misled.³⁶ In this letter he says that he accepted the writings of St Peter and the other apostles as being the word of Jesus Christ just as they did, but that he rejected this false gospel, a forgery in the name of St Peter, which had no basis in tradition. It was used by the heretics

²⁹ *Idem*, Catechesis 6 ch. 31 (PG 33:593).

³⁰ “Gelasian Decree” (PL 59:176).

³¹ Augustine, *Against Faustus* bk. 22 n. 79 (PL 42:452).

³² Jerome, “Peter,” *Authors of Scripture* (PL 23:608A).

³³ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.3.1–4 (1:98–99).

³⁴ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.25.6 (1:134).

³⁵ † 211: bishop from 199.

³⁶ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.12.3 (2:103).

named Docetics;³⁷ and before he actually looked at it Serapion had allowed the people of Rhossus to read it: but having subsequently found it contrary to orthodox faith in certain passages, he formally forbade them to read it. Sozomen³⁸ states that, even in his own time, every year on Good Friday in some Palestine churches the Apocalypse ascribed to St Peter was read, even though this work had been rejected by the whole ancient world.

Early church writers also refer to certain Acts of St Paul which Eusebius rejects as apocryphal. Among the books that are beyond suspicion, says this historian, we do not accept the so-called Acts of Paul; and he refers elsewhere to these Acts as forged non-genuine Scripture. Many other books were written in this apostle's name including an Apocalypse or Revelation, which Pope Gelasius placed among the Apocrypha.³⁹ Sozomen observed that in his time the majority of monks esteemed this Apocalypse highly, although it had no ancient authority. To lend weight to it, they pretended it had been discovered at Tarsus in Cilicia buried in the ground in the house of St Paul.⁴⁰ The Cainites, taking their name from Cain, whom they saw as their ancestor, had forged another work under the title of Ἀναβατικὸν Παύλου *Ascension of Paul*, the account of what happened to St Paul when he went up to heaven where he was apprised of matters which he was not to reveal.⁴¹ The Gnostics took over the use of this book too. I shall not dwell on other Epistles published under the name of St Paul, because there will be time to speak of them elsewhere.

As well as all these forged acts of apostles of which nothing remains except the titles, we have other more complete works that have been printed but which are so full of fairy-tale nonsense that it is impossible to read them without being convinced of their falsity in the process. For instance, is there anything more absurd than the gospel ascribed to Nicodemus? Nor is there anything more akin to a legend than the short book entitled "Protevangeli-um of James" which deals among other things with the birth and childhood of the Holy Virgin.⁴² Guillaume Postel, who first brought this false gospel back from the Levant, tried to tell everybody that it was read publicly in the churches of the East and that no one had any doubts concerning its

³⁷ Greek δοκεῖν "to seem."

³⁸ Salmaninius Hermias Sozomenus (early 5th century), *Ecclesiastical History* bk. 7 ch. 19 (PG 67:1477).

³⁹ "Gelasian Decree" (PL 59:178).

⁴⁰ Sozomen, *ibid.* (PG 67:1480).

⁴¹ See 2 Corinthians 12:4. Epiphanius, Heresy 38 n. 2, 5 (*Panarion*, 1:250).

⁴² The *Protevangeli-um* of James, see M.R. James, *Apocryphal New Testament* (OCP, 1924), 42-45; E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha* (London: SCM, 1963), 1:378-383.

authorship. He translated it from Greek into Latin; and Bibliander⁴³ sent his translation to the publisher Oporin⁴⁴ in Basel: and had it printed with the splendid title: "Pre-Gospel, or Historical Account of the birth of Jesus Christ and his mother the Virgin Mary by St James the Younger, first cousin and brother of the Lord Jesus, one of the first apostles, and first bishop of Christians in Jerusalem."⁴⁵ He even added two notes of his own with a preface in which he asserts, as Postel had done, that this story of the birth of Jesus Christ and the Virgin was considered as an authentic book in the churches of the East.⁴⁶ The Greek text of this short work was subsequently printed also in Basel together with the Latin version in a collection of several pieces entitled *Monumenta Orthodoxa*.⁴⁷

If the commentary on the six days of creation which Leo Allatius⁴⁸ published under the attribution of Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch,⁴⁹ who lived at the beginning of the fourth century, really is by that bishop, the *Protoevangelium* must be a fairly early work. A considerable portion of this book is narrated in such a way as to sidestep its more fanciful aspect. The terms used by Eustathius in quoting show that he did not believe it was by the St James under whose name it was published, but by another James: this is what he says about it. "Here it is worthwhile for us to go through the story that one James relates of the Virgin Mary."⁵⁰ Be this as it may, some of the details in this little story which apparently came from the Gnostics who had written several legends concerning the birth of Jesus and the Virgin, actually are in ancient church authors.

⁴³ Theodor Buchmann (1504?-1564), Reformist successor to Huldreich Zwingli at Zurich University from 1531.

⁴⁴ Johann Oporin (1507-1568) taught Greek and rhetoric at Basel University before jointly taking over the presses of Andreas Cratander: he was imprisoned for a time for having printed Bibliander's Latin translation of the Koran, which remained banned from sale in Basel, despite the imprimatur of 1543.

⁴⁵ Theodor Bibliander (ed.), *Proteuangelion ...* (Basel: Oporin, 1552) [BnF A-6544], 6. The Preface states that the *Protoevangelium* of James was translated by Guillaume Postel (1510-1581), a French humanist from Normandy, and a teacher of Hebrew and Arabic at the Collège Royal from 1539 to 1543.

⁴⁶ "Epistola nuncupatoria," Bibliander, *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Johann Jacob Grynaeus (ed.), *Monumenta SS. patrum orthodoxographa hoc est, theologiae sacrosanctae ... doctores, numero circiter lxxxv, authores partim Graeci, partim Latini* (Basel 1569) [BnF C-770].

⁴⁸ Leone Allacci (1586-1669), custodian of the Vatican Library from 1661.

⁴⁹ PG 17:609-1066.

⁵⁰ Leo Allatius *S.P.N. Eustathii patriarchae Antiocheni, et Martyris, in Hexameron Commentarius ...* [and other works] (Lyon: Durand, 1629 [Arsenal 4° T.1168]): commentary on Hexapla, 54 col. A.

I am amazed at the Protestants, who printed this Protevangelium by James, for considering it worthy of being published with several other writings of a similar kind under the title of "Orthodoxographa."⁵¹ In all seriousness, Bibliander conveys the untruths of Guillaume Postel, who had stated that the Protevangelium was the first part of the Gospel of St Mark, and even that it was the basis of the entire gospel story. He even repeats this in a short preface in which he assesses the book, saying: "This Postel prizes (the Protevangelium) as a jewel among theological books, as the basis and foundation of the whole Gospel Story, and the beginning of the Gospel according to Mark."⁵² In short he overlooks no detail in the attempt to lend weight to this miserable effort, which he finds worthwhile because it was not included in the Apocrypha with the Gospels of Nicodemus, Thomas and several others all the way through the catalogue of Pope Gelasius. But this merely proved that the Protevangelium had not been published at that time; or that, as it had not appeared in Latin, Pope Gelasius had no knowledge of it. In fact, among the Apocrypha, he in fact included a book which deals with the same material, as may be seen from the title: "Liber de natiuitate Saluatoris et de S.*** Maria, et de [vel] obstetrice [Saluatoris], apocryphus."⁵³ One wishes that the Jesuit missionary, Father Jerome Xavier, had not included so many implausible details from books of this kind in his history of Jesus Christ, which was written in Persian.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Basilius Johannes Herold [Johann Heroldt] (1511–1581?), *Orthodoxographa theologiae sacrosanctae ac syncerioris fidei doctores numero LXXVI, ecclesiae lumina, partim Graeci, partim Latini, quorum quidam nulli hactenus editi, editi, in unum Corpus redacti ...* (Basel: s.n., 1555) [BnF C-769].

⁵² Bibliander, *Censura et iudicium de Protevangelio divi Jacobi* (Basel: s.n. [Oporin], 1552), 14.

⁵³ "Apocryphal Book of the birth of the Saviour and the Holy Mary, or her midwife": "Gelasian Decree" (PL 59:176).

⁵⁴ Jerónimo Expleta y Goñi Xavier (†1617), *Historia Christi persice conscripta, simulque multis modis contaminata; Historia S. Petri sed contaminata* ("The Story of Christ in Persian, adapted: the Story of St Peter, adapted," Leiden: Elsevir, 1639 [BnF A-3287 (1–2)]). Xavier's Persian text was translated into Latin by Louis de Dieu, "professor and principal of the Walloon College in Leiden" (Michaud, *Biographie Universelle* 45:170). The translator "has added critical notes wherein he makes malicious fun of Father Xavier in regard to a few apocryphal details derived from unreliable sources." Because of these details, and the notes, the book was placed on the *Index* by virtue of three decrees, from 1641–1642. A summary of the translator's numerous "objections" (there are just under a hundred pages of them) to the more fanciful aspects of Xavier's work can be found on 283–285 of my edition of Baron d'Holbach, *Ecce Homo!* ("History of Religions in Translation," Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1995).

It would be pointless for me to devote any more space to the false Acts published under the names of the apostles. Suffice it to say that in general they were mostly written by heretics who wanted to back up their new ideas by ascribing them to disciples of Jesus Christ. Hegesippus, who lived just after the disciples of the apostles, in speaking of the Apocrypha, attests that some of those books had been written by the heretics of his own time. Hence when the early Fathers sought to decide if a book was canonical, they examined the doctrine it contained to see whether it corresponded to what was taught in the Catholic Church. They also looked at ancient church authors who lived after the apostles and before their own time, in order to ascertain what the tradition was. Serapion applied these two criteria to the gospel bearing the name of St Peter which the church at Rhossus read, believing that it really was by the person whose name it bore. In this gospel, says the holy bishop, we have found several details that fit with the true religion of Jesus Christ;⁵⁵ but there are also some which are nothing to do with it. In the same passage he considers that the Act document which had been produced was a forgery because it had no basis in tradition.

This is not to say that the Church Fathers did not sometimes use the Apocrypha, or even quote from false gospels. The so-called gospel according to the Egyptians cannot be accepted simply because it is believed to be very ancient and is mentioned by Clement of Alexandria. Nor must it be rejected on the sole pretext that the Gnostics and Sabellians⁵⁶ based their false notions on it. In their arguments, and even in their written works, the early Fathers who wrote against the Pagans or the Jews sometimes follow the rhetorical method of using reasons that are merely apparent, and spurious Acts which are not always reliable. This is particularly evident in the works of Clement of Alexandria and Origen. Clement uses this approach in relating words of Jesus Christ which are not in the four gospels supported by church tradition; he states they are in the Gospel of the Egyptians.⁵⁷ His only authority for quoting them is the heretic Cassian,⁵⁸ and along with the members of the sect of Basilides, he makes use of the writings attributed to St Barnabas. On the other hand, heretics professing Christianity as well

⁵⁵ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.12.6 (2:103–104).

⁵⁶ Followers of Sabellius, one of the group of “Modalist Monarchianists” (2d and 3d cent.), condemned as heretics because, whilst seeking to safeguard Monotheism and the Unity of the Godhead, they rejected the Logos doctrine (John ch. 1), maintaining that it was God the Father who in the Incarnation was born and died.

⁵⁷ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* bk. 3 ch. 13 (PG 8:1193).

⁵⁸ Julius Cassian (end 2d cent.), heretic (Encratic and Docetic), here cited by Clement of Alexandria.

as orthodox believers do not invariably use these apocryphal forgeries to support their new ideas. Hence to judge whether an Act has religious validity or not and can be trusted as being of divine authority, it is indispensable to apply the true criteria set out above. St Augustine holds that when such difficulties arise, consideration should be given to all the different churches and more weight given to those with greater numbers and higher status rather than those that are less numerous and are less highly considered.⁵⁹

There exist Acts of another kind, attributed to the apostles or their disciples, and which in the course of time were rejected as apocryphal, even though originally they really were by those to whom they are ascribed, or at least by their disciples who had published them in the names of their masters. But since these Acts were the subject of interpolations by heretics or others, people were obliged no longer to accept them as authentic. Among these it seems St Epiphanius placed the book called *Διάταξις τῶν Αποστόλων* (“Constitution of the Apostles”), which he often quotes as though it really were by the apostles. He even draws on it for proof to support the views of the Church at Easter when examining the position of the Audiani⁶⁰ who produced one such constitution and attributed it to the apostles.⁶¹ Instead of rejecting the constitution or even entertaining doubts about it, this Father accepted it as apostolic as they did, merely finding fault with their interpretation of it. He also said that because these Constitutions contain all church procedures, they should not be rejected on the grounds that some at that time considered them suspect. This makes me think that he had a different text from the one we use today. He seemed so convinced that the Constitutions were by the apostles that he calls them the Word of God.⁶² Nevertheless, it is more likely that the apostles who were ordered by Jesus not to write books but to preach his gospel were not the authors of these Constitutions which carry their names. Rather, just as St Mark entitles his gospel “The Gospel of Jesus Christ,” in the same way the apostolics, who succeeded the apostles and gathered together their doctrine and their constitutions, published them under the name of the apostles. This is why the name Symbol of the apostles was given to the early creed which, even though it was not written down, all churches actually held from the apostles.

⁵⁹ Augustine, *On the Christian Doctrine* bk. 2 ch. 8 §12 (PL 34:40).

⁶⁰ Followers of the rigorist Audius (4th cent.), a layman, who considered the clergy too secularised. The sect was banished by Constantine to Scythia.

⁶¹ Epiphanius, Heresy 70 n. 10, 1 (*Panarion*, 2:412).

⁶² Epiphanius, Heresy 80 n. 7, 1 (*Panarion*, 2:634–635).

[Editor's Note: On the "Gospel according to the Hebrews," see B. Ehrman & Z. Pleše, *The Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (Oxford University Press [USA], 2011), 216–221: "The Gospel according to the Hebrews was known and used in Egypt ... Confusion as to its relationship to the other Jewish-Christian Gospels is caused principally by the ways it is referenced by Jerome, who (wrongly) indicates that it was originally written in Hebrew and that it was in use by the Jewish sect known as the Nazarenes." (216)

Bruce Metzger concludes as follows his concise discussion of this gospel: "... we can see that the *Gospel of the Hebrews* differed considerably in substance and in character from the gospels that were ultimately regarded as the only canonical gospels. For this reason, as well as the fact that the *Gospel of the Hebrews* was written in a semitic language, we can understand why its use was limited, chiefly among Jewish Christians (some of whom were regarded as heretical), and was passed over by the Great Church in the period when the canon was closed" (B.M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* [O.C.P., 1987 (1988)], 168).

The most comprehensive study of this text remains that of Marie-Joseph Lagrange, "L'Évangile selon les Hébreux," *Revue biblique* 31 (1922), 161–181, 321–349. An English translation of all the fragments presented by Lagrange is also to be found in M.R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (O.C.P., 1975 [1953 corrected ed.], 1–6. Of this text, James also states (1): "... it existed in either Hebrew or Aramaic, and was used by a Jewish Christian sect who were known as Nazareans (*sic* = Nazarenes—see *infra*, ch. 5 of the present work), and that it resembled our *Matthew* closely enough to have been regarded as the original Hebrew of that Gospel. I believe few, if any, would now contend that it *was* that original ... The Stichometry of Nicephorus⁶³ assigns it 2,200 lines, 300 less than *Matthew* ... Jerome, who is our chief source of knowledge about this Gospel, says that he had made a Greek and a Latin version of it

⁶³ The writings of St Nicephorus (ca. 758–829, Patriarch of Constantinople 806–815) include a *Χρονογραφία σύντομον* (Abridged Chronicle) of world history (from Adam to his own day)—*Chronographia brevis et Michaelis et Theophili tempora*, concluding with a canon catalogue of Old and New Testament books, followed by that of the antilegomena and of the apocrypha. Next to each book is the count of its stichoi (lines). The stichometry of Nicephorus, "of uncertain date, but much older than the ninth-century chronicle to which it is attached" (James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, 3), is reproduced in Erwin Preuschen, *Analecta: Kürzere Texte zur Geschichte der alten Kirche und des Kanons* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1910), 2:62–64. See 64 for list of NT Apocrypha, namely: Apocalypse of John, Apocalypse of Peter, Epistle of Barnabas, Gospel according to the Hebrews. The chronology is also to be found in PG 100:995–1060; the stichometry for the Apocrypha is in column 1060: 4. Εὐαγγέλιον κατὰ Ἑβραίους στίχων ἑβς'. The Gospel according to the Hebrews, 2,200 lines.

(see *infra*, ch. 7 nn. 233, 258). The statement is wholly rejected by some, and by others thought to be an exaggeration.”

A more recent survey is that of Albertus Frederik Johannes Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition* (coll. “Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae*” 17, Leiden/New York: Brill, 1992), 32–33, 36–37, 39–40.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FIRST FATHERS DID NOT PRODUCE THE ORIGINALS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN THEIR DISPUTES WITH HERETICS. DISCUSSION OF EVIDENCE USED TO SHOW THAT CHURCHES RETAINED SUCH ORIGINALS

From what precedes we can infer that when the first church Fathers wished to prove the truth of the books of the New Testament, they did not resort to any originals supposedly kept in the apostolic churches but to accurate and faithful copies which were substitutes for the true originals and were identical in all the churches. On this hinges the entire quarrel of Tertullian with Marcion and that of St Augustine with Faustus the Manichaeian sectarian. These two heretics refuse to accept the approved texts used in the Catholic Church. As their authority Tertullian and St Augustine did not cite any original documents, merely the unwavering tradition in the churches.¹ Could God, it will be asked, have given his church books to live by and also let the originals of these books be lost at the outset of the Christian religion? Since the church's beginnings there have been heretics who contested the writings of the apostles; so presumably Divine Providence could have preserved the originals, at least for a time, so that these heretics could be soundly refuted by means of them.

But as I have already shown elsewhere, it is not surprising that the early Christians should have lost the originals of their early books:² they were far from having an ordered lifestyle, their meetings being severely disrupted

¹ Augustine, *Against Faustus* bk. 11 ch. 2 (PL 42:246).

² R. Simon, *De l'Inspiration des livres sacrés, avec une Réponse au livre intitulé: "Défense des sentimens de quelques théologiens de Hollande sur l'Histoire critique du Vieux Testament," par le prier de Bolleville* (Rotterdam: Leers, 1687), 179 [BnF A-3501]. In this passage, in response to the claim by J. Le Clerc (1657–1736) that since the few Epistles and other texts occupied relatively little space, there was no need of archives to store them, R. Simon states that any actual originals, by the very fact of their brevity, were all the more subject to the danger of misplacement, loss, or worse evidence of adherence to Scriptures within apostolic traditions had nothing to do with original texts as such, or their conservation for which, as confirmed in the anti-heretical works of St Augustine—also adduced by J. Le Clerc—there is no evidence whatever.

by Jews and Pagans. Nor, as already noted, were the apostles instructed by Jesus Christ to write their books; and even if they had not been written, religion would have survived through tradition in the same way it was first established before the apostles had committed anything to writing.³ For Jesus Christ only sent his apostles to all nations of the earth to preach his doctrine to them. What the first Christians called the Gospel is simply a compilation of the preaching by those apostles or their disciples.

The early heretics allowed themselves the privilege of reworking their own doctrine, and combating those texts with this or that tradition which they themselves had invented: even if they had produced the apostles' original texts, they could not have been more effectively refuted. This can be seen all throughout the books of St Irenaeus who completely understood the views of the ancient sectarians, as his surviving written testimony shows.⁴ He says for instance, of his dealings with the Gnostics, that they accepted neither Scripture nor church tradition but altered both in line with their prejudices. Hence he overlooks no detail in laying down the true traditions according to which religion was to be organised.

Although religion is the standard governing basis of what we believe, this standard on its own is not sufficient. Account must also be taken of the apostolic traditions, which can only be learned in the apostolic churches which have retained the true meaning of Scripture. St Irenaeus is in agreement with learning religion by reading the sacred books,⁵ provided they are read among the apostles' successors who are the virtual guardians of their doctrine. In those days there was no question of reading Holy Scripture from originals. Any copy used in Orthodox churches was as trustworthy as the actual original from the apostles' hands. The reliance placed on actual originals is also to be placed on the copies of apostolic writings made in the apostles' own day and subsequently circulated almost everywhere in the world. They are preserved in all the world's churches, having been translated into different languages, so that there is no book whose copies are more authentic than those of the New Testament; which mainly explains why God's Providence must be seen in the preservation of the books he gave to his church through the ministry of the apostles or their disciples.

It is claimed that evidence of early church writers proves that the original text of the apostles were conserved within the Church for several centuries:

³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* ed. A. Rousseau (2 vol., coll. "Sources chrétiennes" 100, Paris: Cerf, 1965), bk. 3 ch. 4,1 (6:46).

⁴ *Ibid.*, bk. 3 ch. 2,2 (6:28).

⁵ *Ibid.*, bk. 4 ch. 32,1 (2:798).

and although I have already discussed this elsewhere, this must be closely looked at. Firstly, a passage from Tertullian's book of injunctions against heresies is adduced where he states that the churches founded by the apostles were still in possession of the authentic text.⁶ Following another author, Pamelius claims, in his note on this passage, that the word authentic can only refer to holograph texts written in the apostles' own hand, in the same way as legal experts describe a will as authentic to distinguish it from a copy, if it has been written in the hand of the legator.⁷ Tertullian's words have also been interpreted in this way by Grotius, Walton, Huet,⁸ and several others. Grotius, giving Tertullian as his source, says that some originals in the New Testament were preserved until the beginning of the third century.⁹

But a careful examination of other passages in Tertullian's works where he uses the word authentic shows that he simply used the word to refer to books written in the language of origin. Rigault rightly observes this in his explanation of the word *authentica* in this passage from Tertullian.¹⁰ As the African churches only use the Latin version of the New Testament, Tertullian described the Greek text as authentic and he uses the word in that sense when citing this text in his book on monogamy.¹¹ St Jerome also uses a similar expression with regard to the Old Testament in contrasting the Hebrew text to the Greek and Latin versions; the former he calls the "Hebrew truth" meaning the originals of the Scripture which, like Tertullian, he actually calls "authentic books" in his commentary on chapter 64 of the Prophet Isaiah.

⁶ Tertullian, *Anti-Heretic Precepts* ch. 36 (PL 2:48).

⁷ Jacques de Joigny de Pamèle (Jacobus Pamelius), bishop of Saint-Omer (1536–1587), *Q. Sept. Florent. Tertulliani de Praescriptionibus adversus haereticos liber, cum annotationibus integris ...*, article 208 (Cologne: Birckmann, 1599), 275–276 [BnF C-2820].

⁸ At this point R. Simon provides no specific references to the works of Brian Walton and Pierre-Daniel Huet, though at the end of the present chapter he does quote from the latter's *Demonstratio evangelica*. Elsewhere in the present work (ch. 5, 17, 29, 32), R. Simon also quotes from the *magnum opus* edited by Brian Walton (1600?–1661, Bishop of Chester), the *Biblia sacra polyglotta complectentia textus originales ...* (6 vols., London: Roycroft, 1657–1669; facs. reprint: Graz: Akademische, 1963–1965). In this "English Polyglot" the Bible text appears in Vulgate Latin, Arabic, Aramaic (the Targum Onkelos), Ethiopic, Greek (the Septuagint), Hebrew, Persian, and Syriac (the Peshitta), with editorial commentary in Latin. Though dated 1657, the work was actually printed between 1653 and early 1658, apparently being published later in 1658, whilst some copies were not issued until after the Restoration, with a variant form of the preface.

⁹ Grotius, *De Veritate religionis christianae* (Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1709) bk. 3 §2 146–147 [BnF D21520].

¹⁰ Tertullian, *Anti-Heretic Precepts*, ch. 36 (PL 2:49A). Rigault, Nicolas, *Observationes et notae ad libros Q. Sept. Flor. Tertulliani* (Paris: Du Puis, 1641), 70B [BnF C-308 (bis)].

¹¹ Tertullian, *On Monogamy* ch. 11 (PL 2:946).

This is not to say that he thought they were the actual originals written in the hand of the Prophets. We use the same expression today when we say that a version of the Scriptures is not in accordance with the original. Hence the only originals that Tertullian is referring to in his book of injunctions are those we have just mentioned. As for Pamelius' objection regarding the legal significance of the word, the most learned legal experts will readily attest that the word authentic is often used in a less narrow sense. Any document, be it an original or not, which in itself provides proof, is held to be authentic. When an author publishes a manuscript stating he has taken it *ex codice authentice*, "from an authentic text," does he mean that he is in possession of the original of the book he is publishing?

The second objection comes from the case reported by Eusebius. Speaking of the zeal and charity of early Christians who went to preach the Gospel in those distant lands as the apostles had done, he says that Pantaenus left the city of Alexandria where he was Director of a Christian school to proclaim the origins of Jesus Christ to the Indians.¹² Whilst among the Indians or Ethiopians this faithful Evangelist found the text of St Matthew written in Hebrew which St Bartholomew, the apostle of those peoples, had left behind and which was believed to have been preserved there until that time.

However, apart from the fact Eusebius gives no ancient writer as his source for this story about Pantaenus, merely stating λέγεται ["it is said"], that it was a common rumour, I do not see that it can be irrefutably proved from what he says that the Hebrew text that Pantaenus found on arriving in that country was the original which St Bartholomew left behind; he merely meant that the Ethiopians had been converted to the faith of Jesus Christ by the apostle. Instead of using the Greek Gospel of St Matthew he used the Hebrew or Chaldaic text written for the early Christians in Jerusalem. If this story were true all the Ethiopian Christians would have been descended from Jews and spoken the same language as those who lived in Judaea. Nothing more than this can be inferred from Eusebius' words which may have gained in the telling with the passage of time. When St Jerome says in his catalogue of church writers that Pantaenus brought back the Gospel of St Matthew written in Hebrew characters with him to Alexandria,¹³ he seems to have misunderstood Eusebius. This historian simply says that the Ethiopian Christians had preserved this Hebrew gospel until the arrival of Pantaenus.

¹² Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.10.1–4 (2:39–40).

¹³ Jerome, "Panthaenus [sic] the philosopher," *Distinguished Men* ch. 36 (PL 23:651).

The third objection comes from the chronicles of Alexandria, where it is stated that in the church at Ephesus there was preserved a true text of the Gospel of St John written by the very hand of this evangelist. Peter, Bishop of Alexandria claimed that in John 19 verse 14 we should read ὥρα ἦν ὡς τρίτη “it was around the third hour”¹⁴ on the grounds that this reading is in reliable texts, including the one actually written in the hand of St John the Evangelist, this document being thus far preserved, by the Grace of God, in the Most Holy Church of Ephesus where it is worshipped by the faithful.¹⁵

It is easy to see that at that time anything that was said in Ephesus about an original by St John who had been bishop of the city was based merely on popular error, several similar examples of which could easily be produced. Can anything more absurd be imagined than the tradition of the Gospel of St Mark in Venice where even today they claim to possess the actual holograph? Baronius had no choice but to reject this tradition as having no basis in antiquity.¹⁶ Fabian Justinian, an Oratorian priest in Rome, who believed, as did Lucas of Bruges,¹⁷ that the Latin Gospel of Mark we possess was translated from the Greek, does not fail to recount the common belief among the folk in the state of Venice who display St Mark’s Greek original and even the ivory chair in which he wrote it.¹⁸ It is needless to refute popular traditions of this kind which, as even Baronius admits, are not based on any evidence.

¹⁴ Instead of “the sixth hour” (the reference, in R. Simon’s text, to verse 4 instead of verse 14 of John ch. 19 is presumably a printer’s error). There is very limited manuscript support for the reading “the third hour,” possibly due an attempt to harmonise the chronology with that of Mark 15:25, or to a confusion between gamma Γ (= 3) and digamma Ϝ (= 6) (see Bruce M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2d ed., Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994), 99, 216–217: in regard to ms. sources cited on page 216 line 17 and page 217 line 11, the reference to I, an inadvertent use of the Tischendorf numeration, should read 065; see J.K. Elliott, “The Citation of Manuscripts in recent Printed Editions of the Greek New Testament,” *NovT* 25, 2 (1983):129.

¹⁵ Carlo Sigonio (1524?–1584) et al., *Chronicon Alexandrinum idemque astronomicum et ecclesiasticum (vulgo Siculum seu Fasti siculi) ... Nunc integrum graece cum latina interpretatione vulgatum, opera ...* ed. Matthaeus Rader (Munich: Bergia, 1615), 518, 520 [BnF J-3265].

¹⁶ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:391 (CE 45 n. 42).

¹⁷ Lucas of Bruges, *In sacrosancta quatuor Jesu Christi Evangelia Francisci Lucae, ... commentarius* (Antwerp: Moret, 1606), 573 [BnF A-1709].

¹⁸ Fabiano Giustiniani (1578–1627), *De Sacra Scriptura ejusque usu ac interpretibus commentarius, in quo non solum ad sacrorum Bibliorum studium et sacras conciones formandas institutio traditur, sed etiam selectorum librorum in universam theologiam speculativam, practicam et positivam singularis et in totam Sacram Scripturam universalis notitia perhibetur ...* (Rome: Faciotto, 1614), 116 [Mazarine 23222].

The same can be said of the Ephesian tradition recounted by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria. Let him say which early church writers before him refer to this gospel in St John's own hand. It must be explained how and through what intermediary this original document came to be there at that time without anyone having been aware of it in the centuries before. If St Epiphanius had heard of such an original, he would without fail have sent the Alogians there, since they rejected all books by St John in general, ascribing them to the heretic Cerinthus. However, his refutation of them consists merely of sound reasoning; so far from using a worthless tradition based on only on the people's simplicity against them, he states that if they had ever rejected just the Apocalypse, it might be thought that the criteria which led them not to accept apocryphal books was excessively narrow, since that book contains things both profound and obscure.¹⁹

The final objection concerns what happened under the Emperor Zeno on the island of Cyprus where Anthimus Metropolitanus, bishop of the island, was shown in a dream where the body of St Barnabas was buried; it was in fact found in the spot that had been shown to him; on St Barnabas' chest was the Gospel of St Matthew written in St Barnabas' own hand. This copy was immediately sent to the Emperor who received it with deep respect and kept it as a precious relic in the church within his own palace. Once a year the church of Constantinople read the gospel from this august and venerable copy by St Barnabas. To make the story more plausible, testimony is provided from Cardinal Baronius who says that the story is not in doubt, being generally accepted by everyone, having moreover been written down by an orthodox monk named Alexander who lived at that time.

It is undeniable that a great many Greek historians in turn have recounted this anecdote. Theodore the Lector even provided the name of the tree under which the body of St Barnabas was found with the Gospel of St Matthew on his chest.²⁰ Nicephorus, Cedrenus, Joel, Nilus Doxapatrius, and other Greek writers also mention this Gospel of Matthew in the hand of St Barnabas: but they fail to say whether it was in Hebrew or Greek. What is most noteworthy in all this—and it is vital to the denouement of the vision of Anthimus, to whom St Barnabas appeared—is that the Greek historians together with the monk Alexander note that the people of Cyprus seized this opportunity to shake off the yoke of the Patriarch of Antioch who claimed to

¹⁹ Epiphanius, *Heresy* 51 n. 3, 4 (*Panarion*, 2:27).

²⁰ Theodore the Lector (Church reader in Constantinople, early 6th century), *Ecclesiastica historica* bk. 11 § 2 (PG 86:184).

be their ruler. There was a long standing quarrel between this Patriarch and the bishops of the island who refused to accept ordination from him because their church had been founded by the apostle St Barnabas and should therefore, they said, be independent. The Council of Ephesus had decided the matter in favour of the bishops of the island, who testified that they had always enjoyed this privilege. Still the Patriarchs of Antioch continued harassing the bishops of Cyprus, invoking the Canon of the Council of Nicaea as their authority. It is even likely that the Cypriots only escaped the jurisdiction of Antioch when that Patriarchal church was in schism. The Metropolitan of Constance also then took advantage of the fact that Pierre Le Foulon, who was Patriarch of Antioch at the time, had declared himself protector of the Eutychians. But since the whole matter had to be reported to the Emperor, the Metropolitan of Constance, who was out of favour with him, decided to pretend he had had the vision already mentioned. When this came to Zeno's attention he immediately forbade the Patriarch of Antioch to persecute the bishops of Cyprus any further.²¹

This in short was the outcome of the vision of Bishop Anthimus, who conveniently came up with St Barnabas "like a *deus ex machina*." To stand against Pierre le Foulon, Patriarch of Antioch, and so there should be no doubt about his revelation, he placed the Gospel of St Matthew in St Barnabas' hands. Mr Le Moyne, an able Protestant learned in Eastern languages, declared it was written in Hebrew because St Barnabas, being of Jewish birth, intended it for his own use and preached to his own kind.²² But it is more likely that Anthimus, who was not Jewish, came up with a Greek text; and it is scarcely creditable it would have been read in public in the church of Constantinople had it been written in Hebrew. Regarding Baronius' testimony to the monk Alexander, author of the life of St Barnabas, the cardinal is not too favourable to the monk in a different passage of the annals where he refers to him as a spinner of tales who did not write the life of the holy apostle as a true historian.²³

²¹ Jean Morin, *Exercitationes ecclesiasticae et biblicae, primae quae est de patriarcharum et primatum origine, primis orbis terrarum ecclesiasticis divisionibus, atque antiqua ... censurarum in clericos natura et praxi libri duo* (Paris: Meturas, 1669), 14 [BnF A-1361].

²² Étienne Le Moyne, *Varia sacra seu Sylloge variorum opusculorum graecorum ad rem ecclesiasticam spectantium ...* (2d ed., Leiden: Boutestyn and Van De Water, 1694), vol. 2 (*In varia sacra notae et observationes*), *20^r and 20^v [Mazarine 4° 11982] (the second volume contains commentaries on Polycarp, Barnabas, and Hippolytus whose texts, with others in Greek and Latin, are in volume 1).

²³ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:433 (CE 51 n. 53). The reference is to Alexander Monachus of Cyprus (ca. 6th cent., *Laudation of the apostle St Barnabas* (PG 87/III: 4087–4106)).

I could quote examples of other similar revelations which are just as circumstantial as that of Bishop Anthimus and none the more truthful for that. In the reign of the Emperor Theodosius there was the pretense of a revelation from God to support the false Apocalypse ascribed to St Paul. It was found buried at Tarsus in Solicia in the house of the holy apostle. In Palestine, moreover, there were a great many Alexanders or monks who widely praised this forgery, as though it really were by him whose name it bore. But by the same token Sozomen, who recounts the story, also tells us that a very elderly priest of the town of Tarsus had assured him that it was a forgery.²⁴

Moreover, we do not hear of the two greatest men of the Church—I refer to Origen and St Jerome, who searched so diligently for Bible manuscripts and went to so many churches in the East—ever mentioning original New Testament documents written by the apostles themselves. Had there been any in their lifetime, they would not have failed to mention them, especially St Jerome, who consulted countless Greek and Latin manuscripts when he reworked the ancient Latin translation of the Gospels by order of Pope Damasus. Where were the so-called originals at that time? Admittedly, people had not as yet heard of the revelation of Anthimus nor the story by the monk Alexander. Jerome does tell us that all the Latin manuscripts were different from each other. Hence, he judged it proper amid such a diversity of manuscripts to resort to the Greek original from which the Latin was taken;²⁵ but he does not mention the early originals which Monsieur Huet supposes were in church archives from the time of St Ignatius, and on the basis of which, says St Jerome, disputes were settled.²⁶ On the other hand, the Jesuit Maldonado uses the same passage of St Ignatius to prove that in early apostolic times there were people who doubted the Gospels were genuine unless they came across them in Church archives.²⁷ Finally, Tertullian and St Augustine, forceful opponents of the early heretics who nullified the truth of the apostles' writings, never adduced original manuscripts to refute them. Accordingly, as has been shown, it is totally unnecessary to do so in order to validate the Christian religion.

²⁴ Salmaninius Hermias Sozomenus (early 5th cent.), *Historia ecclesiastica* bk. 7 ch. 19 (PG 67:1480).

²⁵ Jerome, Preface to Pope Damasus on the Gospels (PL 29:527).

²⁶ Pierre-Daniel Huet (1630–1721, Bishop of Avranches), *Demonstratio evangelica* ... (Paris: Michallet, 1679), 642 [Arsenal fol. r. 1699].

²⁷ Maldonado, Preface to Gospels ch. 2 (1:5).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT STARTING WITH THE GOSPEL OF ST MATTHEW. THE ORIGINAL OF THIS GOSPEL WAS WRITTEN IN THE HEBREW SPOKEN BY THE JEWS IN JERUSALEM AT THAT TIME. REJOINDER TO REASONS CONTRARY TO THIS VIEW

It is a continuous tradition based on the general consensus of all Churches in the world that there are only four Gospels, the first of which is by St Matthew.¹ Nonetheless, there have recently been writers who believed that St Matthew is not the first to have written down the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their opinion is based on St Luke's apparent accusation (chapter 1 verse 1) of inaccuracy in those who had published gospels before him; and since it is unthinkable for such an accusation to be made against any of the three other Evangelists, they conclude that none of them had written before Luke. But the evidence of all of antiquity cannot be called into question by an hypothesis which at best is merely plausible. Hence Grotius rejects the idea as contrary to the order of the four Gospels which has been fixed for all time among all peoples, and ratified by the earliest Church Fathers.² Maldonado, who ascribes this view to Beza, uses tradition alone to oppose it, adding that if any notice is taken of heretics, nothing certain or definite on the subject of religion will be left.³

Again, unless the whole of antiquity is rejected, it cannot be denied that St Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, the language spoken by Jews in Jerusalem at that time, which was called Hebraic, being either Chaldaic or Syriac. Papias, who had lived with disciples of the apostles states this quite positively,⁴ and it was subsequently confirmed by St Irenaeus, Origen and several other Fathers. Irenaeus says that since Matthew lived among

¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* bk. 3 ch. 11,8 (6:160).

² Grotius, Annotation on Luke 1:1 (*Opera omnia theologica in tres tomos divisa, ante quidem per partes, nunc autem conjunctim et accuratius ...*, ed. Pieter de Groot [Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1679], tome II 1:113A [BnF D2-311 (2, 2)]).

³ Maldonado, *ibid.* ch. 4 (1:8).

⁴ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.16 (1:157).

Hebrews, he wrote his Gospel in their language.⁵ Origen, in the Canon he provided of the holy books, named St Matthew as the first of the Evangelists who published the Gospel in Hebrew for the Jews that embraced Christianity.⁶ The Jews called these early Christians Nazarenes, according to the Acts of the Apostles, where they accused St Paul of being the leader of the Nazarene sect.⁷ Since that time they have always called Christians by the name Nazarenes which is to be founded in their Talmud and their other holy books. Later the name was taken by certain sectarians who used this Hebrew Gospel by St Matthew of which some fragments still survive and of which we will speak later. Before going any further it is worth examining the arguments of those who claim that St Matthew did not write his Gospel in Hebrew.

Erasmus—who knew no Hebrew⁸—was one of the first to question this view commonly held throughout all antiquity; but his arguments are so weak that he sometimes makes himself look foolish.⁹ What he tries to speak about as an expert is something of which he knows absolutely nothing. For anything to do with the Hebrew language he relied on Oecolampadius¹⁰ who knew little more than he did and caused him to commit serious mistakes which opened the doors for his opponents, especially Stunica, a Spanish scholar, to take him to task for his ignorance.¹¹ Cardinal

⁵ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.8.2 (2:35). On this point, see editor's note at the end of this chapter.

⁶ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.25.4 (2:126). On twelve early canons, including those of Origen and Eusebius, see Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: its origin, development and significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978 [1977]), Appendix IV, 305–315.

⁷ Acts 24:5 (πρωτοστάτην τε τῆς τῶν Ναζωραίων αἰρέσεως).

⁸ Cf. H. Wheeler Robinson (ed.), *The Bible in its Ancient and English Versions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 161: "The study of Hebrew was eagerly pursued in Germany, and even Erasmus felt compelled to learn it."

⁹ On a mistranslation by Erasmus of a term used by Plutarch, see J.P. Heironimus, *Classical Journal* 33 (1937–1938), 426–427.

¹⁰ Johannes Oecolompadius (Johann Heussgen, Hussgen, Hauschein: 1482–1531), German religious Reformist.

¹¹ Jaime López Zúñiga († 1531, better known by his Latinised name Jacobus Lopis Stunica), *Annotationes Iacobi Lopidis Stunicae contra Erasmum Roterodamum in defensionem tralationis Novi Testamenti* (Alcalá de Henares: Brocario, 1520 in-fol., sign. A–K (unpaginated) [BnF A-1140]): also "Jacobus Lopis Stunica and his polemics with Erasmus," *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami* vol. IX/2 ed. H.J. de Jonge (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing, 1983), ch. 2, 13–40. Though Stunica "persistently tries to demonstrate on philological grounds" (*ibid.*, 20) the shortcomings of Erasmus's scholarship, and ostensibly "it was not Erasmus's philological approach to the Bible in itself which annoyed Stunica" (*ibid.*, 46), Stunica, being "inspired by a heart-felt horror of Erasmus's criticism of the traditions of the Church" (34), "ridiculed, calumniated and abused Erasmus from the first to the last page of his book," and even in the

Cajetan¹² who knew neither Hebrew nor Greek blindly accepted all the wrong things Erasmus had said about this, since he was incapable of rectifying them. However, to avoid the irrational and injudicious rejection of a tradition based on proper evidence, most Catholics do not go along with Cajetan in this. On the other hand, some Protestants readily accepted the views of Erasmus and Cajetan, fearing that, if the Gospel of St Matthew really was originally written in Hebrew or Chaldaic, and if the Greek text we have was merely a translation, they did not have the true Gospel of St Matthew. Flacius Illyricus¹³ has carefully compiled all arguments to support this view and included them at the beginning of his edition of the New Testament which he published in Greek and Latin. This is what we must now look at.

The first objection raised by this well known Protestant, along with Cajetan, is several Hebrew words which are explained in the Gospel of Matthew in another language, notably *Eli, Eli lama sabachthani*.¹⁴ If, stated the Cardinal, St Matthew had written his Gospel in Hebrew it would not have been necessary to give these words in a different language. However, these explanations must be put down to the translator rather than to the author. He goes on to say that if this were the translator's doing he should have translated all the Hebrew text of the Gospel instead of choosing just a few words as he has done; to this the response is that it was customary when translating sacred texts to leave in certain Hebrew words which they considered to be stronger, and which in any event cannot be translated exactly.¹⁵ This can

brief printed marginal notes (46). For instance, Stunica upbraids Erasmus for "departing from the Greek text" in his Latin rendering of Matthew 2:23 (*Annotaciones ...*, [7–8]): for Erasmus's response, see *Apologia respondens ad ea quae Iacobus Lopis Stunica taxauerat in prima duntaxat Noui Testamenti aeditione (Omnia opera IX/2, 82–84 and especially 83 n. 460)*. It is worth recalling the words addressed to Stunica by Cardinal Ximenes (see *infra*, ch. 20): Erasmus's first edition (1516) of the Greek New Testament "had found its way to Spain while Cardinal Ximenes was yet living: and although he saw that his own edition was anticipated, he had the nobility of spirit to repress the remarks by which Stunica sought to depreciate the work which a rival scholar had edited. 'I would (he said) that all might thus prophesy (referring to Numbers 9:29); produce what is better, if thou canst; do not condemn the industry of another'" (Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament* [London: Bagster, 1854], 19).

¹² Tommaso de Vio Cajetan (1469–1534), Dominican theologian, here cited by Mathias Flacius, is also quoted *infra* (ch. 17) by R. Simon.

¹³ Mathias Flach Francowitz (1520–1575, Yugoslavian Lutheran theologian), called Flacius Illyricus.

¹⁴ Matthew 27:46 (Mark 15:34): the words are a quotation from Psalm 22:1. For the Jews the opening words of a psalm would have sufficed to remind hearers of everything it contained (here, a prayer for sustenance and the proclaiming of divine rule and justice).

¹⁵ *Novum Testamentum Jesu Christi filii Dei. Ex versione Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami innumeris in locis ad graecam veritatem genuinumque sensum emendata. Cum glossa compendiaria*

easily be shown from the Septuagint and the other early Greek translators of the Bible. Grotius who has also raised this objection in his annotations on St Matthew responds that it was standard practice for writers and even translators to retain exceptional foreign words while providing a translation; as was always observed by the translators of the Septuagint.¹⁶

Illyricus then raises two of Erasmus's arguments, the first being that no one claimed to have seen this Hebrew Gospel because the one referred to by St Jerome was the Gospel of the Nazarenes which was written in Syriac or Chaldaic. The second is that the style of the Gospel of Matthew is similar to that of the Gospel of St Mark from which he infers that St Matthew was as much at home in Greek as was St Mark.¹⁷

St Jerome himself provides a response to the first argument, saying that most of the early Church doctors believed that this Hebrew gospel was St Matthew's original.¹⁸ Indeed, this was the one that the apostle wrote for the early Christians in Judaea who, at that time, spoke the Chaldaic language. Erasmus shows his lack of understanding on the subject; he objects that the Gospel of the Nazarenes was not written in Hebrew, but in Chaldaic or Syriac, being himself unaware that at the time Chaldaic or Syriac was referred to as Hebrew. As for the style, this argument is too unspecific to provide actual proof of anything. It is not surprising, as Stunica responds, that the style of the Gospel seems the same for all the Evangelists, although they wrote in different languages, because being Jewish, those of them who wrote in Greek mostly retained the idiom of the Hebraic language. This he shows from the example of St Luke who, although he wrote his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles in better Greek than that of the other Evangelists, nonetheless uses several expressions which are pure Hebrew.

The third objection is taken from Calvin, being based on several passages of the Old Testament quoted by St Matthew in the Septuagint version, from which he infers that St Matthew wrote his Gospel in Greek; otherwise, writing for Hebrews who were familiar with the Hebrew Bible, he would have reproduced these passages as they are in the Hebrew text. But this is a circular argument, because the Greek translator of the Hebrew Gospels of

M. Matthiae Flacii Illyrici ... (Basel 1570) [Mazarine 2250, BnF A-1594]: preface to Gospel of Matthew, 1. In this edition Erasmus's Greek text and version were effectively emended by Flacius Illyricus.

¹⁶ Grotius, *Annotationes in quatuor Evangelii et Acta Apostolorum (Opera omnia theologica ...)*, tome II 1:4A).

¹⁷ Flacius Illyricus (ed.), *Novum Testamentum ...*, 1–2 (preface to Gospel of Matthew).

¹⁸ Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 12:13 (PL 26:78).

St Matthew, translating it for Greek speakers who read the Bible in Greek, cited his Old Testament authorities in the Greek version of the Septuagint, rather than the Hebrew text which they did not understand.

To all this Flacius Illyricus adds that it is inconceivable that St Matthew would have wished to write his Gospel in a language which was no longer in use because at that time everyone, including the Jews, spoke Greek or Chaldaic: this apart from the fact that the Holy Spirit, author of those books, knew that the destruction of Jerusalem was not far away. So, he says, it seems that the Spirit would not have wished the Gospel to be published in any language but Greek, which was the common language of the Empire.¹⁹

This Protestant was seriously mistaken in thinking, with Erasmus, that the Gospel of St Matthew was supposed to have been written in ancient Hebrew when the Hebrew that the Jews in those days spoke was the Chaldaic language they had brought back from Babylon, and had hardly changed at all. It was in fact to be expected that the books of the New Testament would have been written in Greek rather than in some other language; but here we are talking about the Jews of Palestine to whom St Matthew first preached the Gospel: as those people spoke the Chaldaic language, it was essential for him to preach to them in that language. It was on this basis that all antiquity believed that St Matthew had composed his Gospel in Hebrew.

He also objects that St Matthew saw that the Jews were becoming more and more hard-hearted every day, having a strong dislike for the religion of Jesus Christ. It is thus inconceivable, says Illyricus, that the holy apostle would have written his Gospel for them in their language. What is the good of bringing up convenient explanations to explain away attested facts? There is no doubt that the Jews in Palestine received the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the ministry of St Matthew: and since they spoke Chaldaic or Syriac, he could only have provided them with his Gospel in the language that they spoke. Other arguments of this kind tendered by Illyricus in the same work must be approached in this same frame of mind. He claims for example that, had the Gospel of St Matthew really been written in Hebrew, Divine Providence would never have allowed the loss of such a great treasure. He goes on to say that if St Jerome were really convinced that the original language of the Gospel were Hebrew, he would have translated from this original, rather than the Greek, whereas it could not be said that he translated from Hebrew into Greek.²⁰

¹⁹ Flacius Illyricus, *ibid.*

²⁰ Flacius Illyricus, *ibid.*

It is pointless this Protestant calling on Divine Providence to argue against a fact about which there can be no reasonable doubt. The Fathers, and even the Jews, unhesitatingly admit that some sacred books have been lost. However this cannot be said of the Gospel of St Matthew, since we have it in Greek in its entirety. The reason the Hebrew or Chaldaic version was not preserved, is that the Churches in Judaea for which it was written did not survive for long, whereas the Churches where the Greek language flourished survived right through. It is thanks to these Churches that we still have the text of St Matthew today.

Let this serve also as a response to the objection raised by Chamier, who cannot comprehend how the Church, especially the Church of Jerusalem, could be so careless as to lose the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew in the early centuries of Christianity.²¹ But this is quite easily explained if we consider that the writings of the apostles read in the Churches were preserved by those same Churches. So there is nothing unusual about the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew being lost with the disappearance of the Churches of the Nazarenes. But it is to be noted that the Gospel was not completely lost in the early days of Christianity; the Nazarene sect, which derived from the early Nazarenes, or Judaeans Christians, long continued to read it in its assemblies. It also reached the Ebionites who made some changes in it. These alterations notwithstanding, it could still be said that this was the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, especially if one be mindful of the Nazarene text, which was more correct than that of the Ebionites, and still survived in the time of St Jerome, who translated it into Greek and into Latin. Other Christians did not bother with it because as well as not knowing the language in which it was written, they considered the Nazarenes as only part-Christians who still observed the ceremonies of the Law, and because they rejected the Ebionites as heretics.

To all the foregoing, Illyricus adds that as St Matthew was a publican, he was either part Greek or part Roman, for which reason he would have been at pains to write his Gospel in Greek for his own kind, rather than in Hebrew for the Jews. If this hypothesis were valid we could also deduce that St John, who was a Hebrew and whose mother tongue was Syriac or Chaldaic would have written his Gospel in that language for his own kind. It is pointless opposing unquestionable facts with mere arguments of convenience. Nor is there any substance to the conclusion he draws, in this same passage,

²¹ Daniel Chamier (1565–1621, pastor and theologian), *Panstratiae catholicae sive controversiarum de religione adversus pontificios corpus, tomis quatuor distributum ...* (Geneva: Roverian, 1626), 1:403 [BnF D2–108].

from certain Latin words which occurred in the Gospel of St Matthew; this he says is more usual for a Greek author than for a man who writes Hebrew, because the Greeks have more to do with the Romans than the Hebrews. But can it not be said that these Latin words are more likely from the Greek translator than from the Hebrew original? Moreover the Jews at that time who were under the power of Rome could have taken over several Latin words into their language. The same line of reasoning would resolve a further objection which he draws from the word *Petrus* which is in St Matthew. If, as Illyricus says, this apostle had written in Hebrew or Syriac, he would have used the word *Cephas* and not *Petrus*, which is tantamount to excluding the possibility of the Greek translator using the word *Petrus*.

His final argument is that in Chapter 12 of his Gospel, St Matthew takes great liberties with a passage from Chapter 42 of Isaiah which he would not have done, he says, if he had written in Hebrew because he would have reproduced the very words of the text; nor, he adds, is it conceivable that the translator was responsible for this abridgment. All these arguments, based on no solid evidence, are inappropriate. In point of fact, the apostles often quote only the sense of Old Testament passages and in a shortened form, reproducing what is relevant to the point they are making. The well-known Unitarian Wolzogen also brings together some of these arguments at the start of his commentary on the Gospels in order to show that the original of St Matthew was not written in Hebrew;²² but his approach shows that Polish monks are unschooled in matters of scriptural criticism. I pass over the remarks by Lightfoot in this matter because they strike me as too rabbinical, and even senseless. His assertion here that the Gospel of St Matthew was not originally written in Hebrew but in Greek and then translated from Greek into Hebrew so as to be read by learned Jews, is without foundation, the whole of antiquity having held the opposite.²³

There is not one Christian group in the Levant today that is not convinced that the Greek Gospel of St Matthew is neither more nor less than a version of the Hebrew text. This is why at the end of some Greek manuscripts of this Gospel we read that it was published in Jerusalem. We also find at the end of the Syriac version of this Gospel that St Matthew preached it in Hebrew in

²² Johann Ludwig von Wolzogen, *Opera omnia exegetica, didactica et polemica*, tr. from German by Joachim Stegmann the Younger (vols. 7 and 8 of: *Bibliotheca Fratrum polonorum quos Unitarios vocant* [Irenopolis (i.e. Amsterdam): s.n., 1656]): *Prolegomena in Novum Testamentum*, ch. IX, 15–16: “Qua lingua Matthaeus Evangelium scripserit” [Mazarine 2304¹, BnF D2–246 (7)].

²³ John Lightfoot (1602–1675), *Harmoniae quatuor evangelistarum* (*Opera omnia* ed. J. Textorius [Rotterdam: Leers, 1686], 1:276, 280 [Mazarine 2295]).

Palestine. Some manuscripts of the Arab and Persian translations also stated in the title at the beginning of St Matthew that it was written in Hebrew.²⁴ This ties in perfectly with the views of the early church writers which is explained briefly by St Jerome.²⁵ It all goes to show that Monsieur Voss was right to describe theologians of his party, who believed that the Gospel of St Matthew was not written in Hebrew, as semi-theologians obsessed with Rabbinism.²⁶ So ridiculous does he consider these persons that he does not wish any answer to be given them. I did think, however, that I should not overlook their arguments, in order to give myself the chance to make this matter clear: that there are many people today, especially among the Protestants whom Monsieur Voss has bombarded with insults rather than arguments, who cannot go along with him. His conjecture that the Jews in Jerusalem spoke Greek and that they used the Greek Septuagint in their meetings, is solid proof that St Matthew would have written his Gospel in Greek. So now, I have no choice but to examine the reasons underlying Monsieur Voss's contradiction, whilst demonstrating that the Jews in Jerusalem spoke Chaldaic or Syriac at the time of our Lord and the apostles.

[Editor's Note: See Bart Ehrman & Zatko Pleše, *The Apocryphal Gospels: Texts and Translations* (Oxford University Press [USA], 2011), ch. 7: "The Jewish-Christian Gospels," 197–221: "There is universal agreement that the various quotations in the church fathers cannot go back to an original Hebrew (or Aramaic) version of Matthew's Gospel—most of them have no parallel in the canonical traditions ... Moreover, there are linguistic features of some quotations that clearly indicate they derive from a Greek source. (199) Jerome claims that the Gospel written in Hebrew was preserved in the famous library at Caesarea ... Jerome also claims that he personally translated the text from Hebrew into Greek [Commentary on Matthew bk. 2, on Matthew 12:13: PL 26:78A–78B]. He may mean, however, that he translated *portions* of the text quoted in one of his sources, for example, Origen; there is no evidence to suggest that Jerome actually translated the entire work." (201) However, as R. Simon states *infra* (see ch. 7 nn. 244–246), "We know that St Jerome consulted it for Matthew 6:11."

²⁴ Walton (ed.), *Biblia sacra polyglotta complectantia textus originales* ..., 5:134.

²⁵ Jerome, Preface to Commentary on Matthew (PL 26:18).

²⁶ Isaak Voss (1618–1689), *Appendix ad librum de LXX interpretibus, continens responsiones ad objecta aliquot theologorum* (The Hague: Vlacq, 1663), *Ad Lectorem* [10] (volume unpaginated) [BnF A-3536].

See also Klijn, *Gospel Tradition*, 37–38 and n. 97; and Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament, vol. 2: History and Literature of Early Christianity* (2d ed., Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 207: “This hypothesis has survived into the modern period; but several critical studies have shown that it is untenable. First of all, the Gospel of Matthew is not a translation from Aramaic but was written in Greek on the basis of two Greek documents (Mark²⁷ and the Sayings Gospel Q). Moreover, Jerome’s claim that he himself saw a gospel in Aramaic that contained all the fragments that he assigned to it is not credible, nor is it believable that he translated the respective passages from Aramaic into Greek (and Latin), as he claims several times. Rather, Jerome found a number of these quotations in the writings of other church fathers (e.g. Origen and Eusebius) and arbitrarily assigned them to his ‘Gospel According to the Hebrews.’ It can be demonstrated that some of these quotations could never have existed in a Semitic language.”

²⁷ Cf. Robert H. Stern, *The Synoptic Problem* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 96: “97.2% of the words in Mark have a parallel in Matthew.”]

CHAPTER SIX

IN THE TIME OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES, JEWS IN THE AREA OF JERUSALEM SPOKE CHALDAIC OR SYRIAC. MR VOSS'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST THIS VIEW. CLARIFICATION OF PROBLEMS PERTAINING TO THIS QUESTION

Mr Voss shows much disdain for Protestant theologians; it is to be feared that they in turn will accuse him of upsetting the whole of tradition and even of attacking Holy Scripture and all learned theologians when he states that in the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles, the Jews in Jerusalem spoke no language other than Greek. Anyone who thinks Jesus Christ and his disciples spoke Syriac, he calls semi-learned and fanatical.¹ At this rate the whole world is full of semi-scholars and fanatics; only Mr Voss will be left as a true scholar unaffected by fanaticism. The early Church writers who said St Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew must be fanatics because they say they only hold this opinion because the Jews in Jerusalem, at that time, spoke Hebrew, that is to say the Chaldaic or Syriac language. As they have based their opinion on specific passages in the New Testament, I must discuss some of them here.

The Acts of the Apostles specifically say (21:40) that St Paul addressed the Jews in Jerusalem in Hebrew and that they gave him their attention because he was speaking their language (22:2). The Holy apostle, being from Tarsus, a town in Cilicia where he had learned Greek, would certainly not have failed to harangue them in that language had it been the language commonly used by Jews in Jerusalem. But because he was a Jew, and of Jewish parents, raised in their city and a student of Dr Gamaliel, he addressed them in the language

¹ Isaak Voss, *Ad iteratas P. Simonii objectiones responsio* (*Isaaci Vossii Variarum observationum liber* including *De Antiquae Romae et aliarum quarumdam urbium magnitudine*; *De Sybillinis aliisque quae Christi natalem praecessere oraculis*; *Ad priores et posteriores P. Simonii objectiones responsio* [part 1]: part 2 [343–397]: *Ad iteratas P. Simonii objectiones responsio* [London: Scott, 1685]), 375 [BnF Z-3902]. Auvray notes that this volume was published privately (Auvray, 85).

which that people understood. It was for the same reason that the tribune asked Paul whether he knew Greek (Acts 22:37). He presumed that Jews from Jerusalem spoke a language other than Greek, namely Chaldaic or Syriac, as is made clear in St Luke who says that the field of Judas was called Haceldama in the language then spoken in Jerusalem.² The New Testament also contains several Chaldaic or Syriac words, for example, Bethesda, Golgotha, Tabitha, and others which the Evangelists called Hebrew, as people used to say in those days. St John, referring to the pool in Jerusalem, says that in Hebrew it was called Bethesda and elsewhere he says that Gabbatha and Golgotha are Hebrew words (John 5:2; 19:13, 17).

It seems, given so much evidence from the New Testament, that there can be no doubt the Jews in Jerusalem spoke Hebrew in the time of the apostles. However, Mr Voss, setting his face against the Jews' Hebrew text, thought that the highest support he could show for the Greek version of the Septuagint was by showing that Jesus Christ and the apostles had read it in the Temple and in the synagogues of Jerusalem. But there was no need to go to such extremes or deny unquestionable evidence in order to support the ancient Greek translation against a few Protestants who had made an ill-judged attack on it. To support his theory he assumes that all over the Roman Empire Greek and Latin were the standard languages and that Hebrew was not understood even by Jews.³ Granted Greek and Latin were the languages spoken throughout the Empire: but this does not prove that no other languages were spoken. On the contrary there is proof positive in the New Testament supported by all antiquity, showing clearly that at the time Jews in Jerusalem spoke Hebrew or Chaldaic. We can also agree that the old Hebrew language at that time was no longer the vernacular, and that it was only known by priests; but from this, it does not follow that they spoke Greek. Josephus who was fluent in Greek, tells us it was not his mother tongue, or that of his kind.

Mr Voss could only answer all these arguments by maintaining that, for the duration of the Roman Empire, no language other than Greek was

² ἄκελδαμάχ (Acts 1:19).

³ Isaak Voss (1618–1689), *Appendix ad librum de LXX interpretibus, continens responsiones ad objecta aliquot theologorum* (The Hague: Vlacq, 1663), 7. This was written in reply to: *Epistola ad ... Isaacum Vossium ubi iudicium fertur super ipsius libro De Natura et proprietate lucis, et simul Cartesii doctrina defenditur, auctore Johanne de Bruyn, ...* and to *Petri Petiti de Ignis et lucis natura exercitationes, ad Is. Vossium*. Part 2 is preceded by the title: *Responsum ad Exercitationes Petri Petiti ...* [A-3536].

spoken in Jerusalem or the whole of Palestine.⁴ He tries to tell us that Syriac was spoken outside of the Empire citing as evidence the example of St Ephraem and other Fathers who wrote in that language and who were all Parthian or Arab; Syriac was spoken by the Assyrians and the Arabs who lived in Lower Syria, not by Syrians who lived in the Roman Empire; and that the language called Chaldaic in the New Testament is simply Chaldaic and not Syriac. He goes on to say that the Jews in Jerusalem could only have learnt the Chaldaic language from Jews who were beyond the Euphrates; that it is idle fancy to say the Jews in Jerusalem had traditionally preserved that language in a place where Greek had been standard for several centuries, especially as no other example could be given of a language being preserved in a particular country where a different language was spoken. Finally he concludes that the Jews in Jerusalem at the time of our Lord and the apostles had no vernacular other than Greek and Latin: that anyone who knew any Hebrew or Chaldaic had learnt it in the same way as we learn Latin today, or from doing business with Jews who lived beyond the Euphrates where Chaldaic was spoken.

Since Mr Voss could not provide straight answers to the arguments raised, merely intending to confuse the issue in the course of his long tirade, let us go through it step by step. We observe firstly that early Church Fathers who spoke Syriac and wrote books in that language are not at issue, only the Jews, so the examples he gives of St Ephraem and other Church doctors are irrelevant. He says rightly that the inhabitants of the land beyond the Euphrates spoke Syriac. It is agreed also that the Jews from Parthia or Arabia, and who were not under the power of Rome, spoke Chaldaic or Babylonian. So as not to waste time on terminology, regarding the language which is called Hebraic in the New Testament, we will call it Chaldaic, even though the early Fathers termed it Syriac and strictly it is neither Chaldaic nor Syriac but a lesser form of true Chaldaic. All that Mr Voss is entitled to infer from his conjecture is that the Jews beyond the Euphrates only spoke Chaldaic whilst worthy Jews in Jerusalem and Palestine, as well as speaking Chaldaic which their fathers had brought back from Babylon, spoke Greek which was the vernacular in those countries.

It is fanciful to say that when St Paul in Jerusalem harangued the Jews in Hebrew or Chaldaic, he was only addressing those who had come from beyond the Euphrates or those who had learned Chaldaic from them. He was

⁴ Isaak Voss, *Ad iteratas ... responsio*, 376.

speaking to all the Jews who were present; it cannot be argued that everyone listening was a foreigner. Josephus was a Jew from Jerusalem, not Parthian or Arabian. He does say though that what stopped him writing the antiquities of his nation as early as he intended was his lack of fluency in Greek which was to him a foreign language.⁵ He says elsewhere that he was born Hebrew, that he was from Jerusalem, and a Priest; and in the same passage he describes Chaldaic as the language of his country.⁶ This shows that Chaldaic cannot be limited only to the Jews who came from beyond the Euphrates, since Josephus did not come from there. Both groups spoke Chaldaic. The sole difference is that those who came from beyond the Euphrates spoke only Chaldaic, whilst those from Jerusalem, as well as Chaldaic, could also speak Greek which was widespread in Palestine.

To this Mr Voss objects that it cannot be shown that one language was preserved in a country in the presence of another: my response is that it is easy to deal with his objection limiting examples to that of the Jews we have been discussing. The story of the martyrdom of seven brothers in 2 Maccabees shows that the Jews at that time spoke Greek and Hebrew. The mother and the children answered Antiochus in Greek (7:21) whereas amongst themselves they spoke their own language which was Chaldaic. When Antiochus urged the mother to encourage one of her children to comply with his wishes (7:27), defying the ruler, she spoke to her son in Hebrew or Chaldaic which was his native tongue. Here is clear proof that Greek was the vernacular in that country, and that in addition the Jews had preserved the Chaldaic language brought back from Babylon which they called the language of the nation. Jews in Jerusalem also retained this language even though Greek was the basic language in Palestine. This is also obvious from a further instance which has been previously used to refute Mr Voss, the case of the Jews of the Spanish Rite, living in Constantinople and other cities of the Levant. These Jews have preserved their former Spanish language along with that of the countries where they live, and they even have Spanish translations of the Bible for their use.

Mr Voss's answer to this is that it could have been partly true in the time of the Jesuit Mariana, because the Jews were driven out of Spain less than a century before he wrote his history. He also says that the other historians

⁵ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* bk. 20 ch. 11 § 2 (*The Works of Flavius Josephus* tr. W. Whiston [London: Routledge, 1873], 478–479).

⁶ “in my native language”: Josephus, *The Jewish War* tr. G.A. Williamson (coll. “Penguin Classics,” Harmondsworth: Penguin, [1959] 1969, 21).

writing at that time give quite different accounts, because the Jews who were driven out of Spain and Portugal were dispersed all over Morocco; and that he does not know what is meant by the reference to Spanish Jews spreading through the Levant.⁷

But it is pointless to argue against facts that are readily available to everybody. To prove these facts there was no need of the authority of Mariana or any other historian, merely that of the actual books of the Spanish Jews, which were printed in Constantinople in Spanish and in Hebrew characters. From them we have a Pentateuch, also published in Constantinople, not only in Spanish but also in common Greek with the Hebrew text and the Chaldaic paraphrase.⁸ The first leaf of this book shows that there were two types of Jew in those places, some of whom spoke Spanish, the others common Greek; it was for them that these two versions were published, so they could understand the Scripture more easily.⁹ The Hebrew Bible of Lombroso, printed in Venice and containing grammatical notes, in which difficult words are explained in Spanish, is also widely used among the Spanish Jews in the Levant.¹⁰ It is of little relevance whether Jews from Spain and Portugal withdrew to Morocco or anywhere else, since it is beyond doubt that today in the Levant there are Jews of the Spanish Rite who have maintained their former Spanish tongue along with the native language of where they lived. This is the point: and it shows that it is quite possible for Jews to retain their former language in a country where another is commonly spoken. We also see Portuguese Jews of the Spanish Rite settled in Amsterdam retaining Portuguese along with the local language; their Rabbis even preach in Portuguese in their synagogue.

⁷ Isaak Voss, *Observationum ad Pomp. Melam appendix. Accedit ejusdem ad tertias P. Simonii objectiones responsio. Subjungitur Pauli Colomesii ad Henricum Justellum epistola* (London: Scott, 1686), 103 [BnF G-3050].

⁸ See R. Simon, *Histoire critique des versions du Nouveau Testament. Où l'on fait connaître quel a été l'usage de la lecture des livres sacrés dans les principales églises du monde* (Rotterdam: Leers, 1690), 4: "The Jews ... having forgotten the sacred language on their return from the Babylonian Captivity, nonetheless continued to read the law of Moses in Hebrew in their assemblies. They had recourse to interpreters; which gave rise to the Chaldaic Paraphrases in the territory of Jerusalem for the use of the Jews who spoke in the Chaldaic or Syriac tongues."

⁹ [Old Testament Pentateuch] (Constantinople: Soncino, 1547): contains Pentateuch in Hebrew, Aramaic Targûm ascribed to Onkelos, Modern Greek and Spanish version in Hebrew characters, with commentary by Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes) [BnF A-470].

¹⁰ Jacob Lombroso (ed.) [Old Testament in Hebrew] (Venice: Vendramini, 1637–1639) [BnF A-2314]. (Lombroso [c. 1600–1650, Venice]), an Italian rabbi and physician whose edition of the Old Testament, notable for its exhaustive commentary, also provides Spanish translations of difficult passages.

Moreover it is not true that the Jews who were driven out of Spain and Portugal all took refuge in Morocco. Some went to Italy, then later to the Levant. In any event, in Turkey today there are certainly numerous Jews who observe the Spanish Rite, and who preserve their Spanish tongue as well as speaking the local language. I would even say that some of them were in that country before the dispersion from Spain and Portugal.

The only way Mr Voss can back up his contradictions is with more contradictions. So he rewrites the passage in Acts 21:37 where the tribune asks St Paul whether he can speak Greek. He claims that everyone else is wrong and that "You know Greek" is not followed by a question mark; but that the passage should be read and translated as follows: "you know Greek so you are not the Egyptian who stirred up trouble a few days ago."¹¹ In this passage however I see no reason to change the standard reading of the Greek text and the early versions. If this passage had not clearly demolished his opinion, he would not have even thought of saying this. Admittedly, strictly speaking, in exegesis accents, dots and commas should be disregarded: though I feel it is not right to change the standard reading of the text without good reason, especially when it has the support of the early commentators. If St Paul spoke to the tribune in Greek, presumably it would be idiotic for the tribune to ask him whether he could speak that language. But this whole episode has nothing unusual about it. St Paul being hard pressed by the people asks to speak to the tribune who in turn asks him whether he can speak Greek. This implies that not all Jews in Jerusalem spoke that language. Mr Voss is full of fictions; to back up his suggestion he has to imagine that the Egyptian referred to was an Arab Egyptian from the part of Egypt where Arabic was spoken. But twist and turn as he may he cannot avoid the fact that the same passage says that St Paul spoke Hebrew (Acts 21:40), that is to say in Chaldaic, to the entire crowd that was harassing him and who listened to his speech quietly because he was speaking to them in his own language.

He is on even shakier grounds when responding to the objection that the Field of Judas was called Haceldama in the everyday language of Jerusalem which was therefore Chaldaic or Syriac, since the word is Chaldaic.¹² Surely everyone knows, he says, that even today the Jews give Hebrew names to their fields, their cemeteries and several other things? Granted. But it is stated specifically in the Book of Acts (1:19) that the field was called Haceldama from the everyday language spoken in Jerusalem.

¹¹ Voss, *Observationum*, 108.

¹² *Ibid.*

It was also put to him in refutation that the simple reason why the title on the Cross was in Greek, Latin and Hebrew was that those three languages were spoken in Jerusalem. The Jews in that city spoke Hebrew or Chaldaic. Even granting that at the time there were Jews in Jerusalem from beyond the Euphrates, he will never convince any sensible person that these were the only Jews for whom the title was intended. For that very reason it would have had to be written in the tongues of the other Jews who were also in Jerusalem at the time.

It has been demonstrated to Mr Voss that even up to the time of St Jerome the Jews in Palestine were still familiar with the Chaldaic language which their ancestors had brought back from Babylon. He asks what evidence there is for this and where this occurs in St Jerome. He ignores this Father's evidence in his Preface to Tobias,¹³ where he states that in order to translate this book from Chaldaic into Latin, he had the services of a Jew who spoke both Hebrew and Chaldaic fluently and that he had rendered in Latin what this man had explained to him in Hebrew terms. This Jew spoke Hebrew because it had a wealth of literature. He also spoke Chaldaic because the Jews who lived there still spoke that language and wrote their books in it. This is why the Talmud of Jerusalem, as well as that of Babylon, was written in that language. The same applies to the Masorah which was written in with Chaldaic vocabulary by the Jews from Tiberias. In fact the Chaldaic language had not been spoken in that country for several centuries. But a distinction must be made between the nations other than the Jews, and the Jews themselves who among themselves had continued speaking the language they had received from their ancestors.

So, when replying to Mr Voss, we do not require the example of the Parthians in order to situate the Chaldaic or Babylonian language in that country at the time of St Jerome, or of the apostles; it is explained by the Jewish custom of preserving their ancient languages, even if they were not spoken in the countries where they lived, as we have shown with the example of the Spanish Jews in the Levant and in Amsterdam at the present time. The latter write books in Spanish and Portuguese even though they live in a country where the language is Flemish. Under the title *Orden de Oraciones*, they have even made a Spanish translation for their people from the Hebrew of their book of prayers, named *Sedor tephiloth*.¹⁴

¹³ Jerome, Preface to Tobit (PL 29:25–26).

¹⁴ S.n., *Orden de oraciones de Mes arreo. s. sin boltar de vna a otra parte* (Ferrara: Abraham Usque, 1555) [British Library C.049.a.4]. See A. di L. Leone and S. Herzfeld, "The *Orden de*

Anyway in order not to waste time simply playing with words regarding the language termed Hebrew in the books of the New Testament, we will let Mr Voss call it Chaldaic, rather than Syriac. He wastes time arguing at length about words, needlessly criticising several scholars for calling it Syriac or Syro-Chaldaic. That language, he says, only exists in writings of the present day whose authors invented these frightful words to extricate themselves from difficulty.¹⁵ In my view, however, in order to convey something new, especially in exegesis, it has always been permissible to create new words giving a clear and distinct idea of what is to be explained. Now it is beyond doubt that the language termed Hebrew in the New Testament, is not strictly Hebrew or Syriac or even Chaldaic, but a mixture of Hebrew and Chaldaic or Babylonian. The scholars who created these allegedly barbaric words were fluent in those languages and knew what they were talking about when they discussed them. When St Jerome refers to the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew in use among the Nazarenes, he accepts the contrived term “Syro-Chaldaic” because he says it was written in Chaldaic and Syrian but with Hebrew characters.¹⁶ So clearly the learned Father had no hesitation in describing the language of the Jews in Jerusalem at the time of the apostles as Chaldaic and Syriac. What is termed Hebrew in the New Testament is also called Syriac by most of the Church Fathers, both Greek and Latin; the most learned critics in our own day also refer to it in this way. Only Mr Voss has taken it into his head to eschew the term Syriac, which already has the authority of his earlier works. He asks when and how the Hebrew language became Syriac.¹⁷ But as has already been pointed out, he is free to call it Chaldaic if he has such a strong objection to accepting the term Syriac used throughout antiquity by all people who have knowledge of these languages which he appears not to understand. If he had due mastery of the subject, he would not argue about a question of mere terminology.

In order to steer clear of the deliberate hair-splitting to which Mr Voss resorts in order to show that he did make worthwhile responses to the criticisms expressed of his work, I wish in this regard to repeat the views of George Amira, the learned Maronite, who published an excellent grammar in Rome. The title of his book is *Syriac or Chaldaic Grammar*,¹⁸ thus showing

oraciones de mes arreo (Ferrara 1555) and a *Bakasah* composed by Abraham Usque,” *Sefarad* 62 (2002), 99–124.

¹⁵ Voss, *Observationum*, 98.

¹⁶ Jerome, *Dialogue against Pelagians* bk. 3 § 2 (PL 23:570).

¹⁷ Voss, *Ad iteratas ... responsio*, 377.

¹⁸ Georgius Michael Amira, *Grammatica syriaca sive chaldaica ... in septem libros diuisa ...* (Rome: Luna, 1596), [4] (unpaginated) [BnF A-1694 (1)].

from the very outset that either of the two words can be used. He also supports this in three dissertations at the beginning of this grammar. In the first of these he in fact discusses the terms Chaldaic or Syriac language, and the difference between them; in the second, the history of the Chaldaic or Syriac language; and in the third, the qualities of the Chaldaic or Syriac language. As the learned Maronite was an expert in this area, I shall summarise here what he says about both languages in his Prefaces.

This language, Amira says, was originally called Chaldaic after the place name Chaldea where it was originally in use, when confusion arose regarding these languages. For this reason it was also called Babylonian, after the name Babylon, the capital of Chaldea. Subsequently it was called Aramaic or Syriac from the names Aram¹⁹ and Syria; or even Assyriac, from Assyria, because it also existed in those places. It had various other names taken from famous nations or individuals, including Hebraic, because for a time it was the language of the Hebrews. Although there is a difference between Chaldaic and Syriac, it cannot be claimed that it is a fundamental difference; for they are the same in almost every way and this explains why the expressions Chaldaic language and Syriac language are used indiscriminately in the Scriptures to refer to the same tongue. We are told, for example, that Daniel and other young Hebrews received instruction in the Chaldaic language; and a little further on it says that the Chaldeans addressed the King in Syriac, which was his language. So clearly Chaldaic and Syriac are the same language.

George Amira quotes other passages of Scripture to show that this language was also Assyrian, on the basis of the indiscriminate use by non-religious writers of the terms Chaldean, Syrian and Assyrian. From this he concludes that it is hardly surprising if the three languages were confused.²⁰ Lastly, he says that if the Jews who spoke the Chaldaic language had not Hebraised it, it would be vastly less different than it is from the Chaldaic or Syriac of native Syrians. Lodewijk de Dieu has also researched the matter thoroughly, and agrees.²¹ As is normal, he distinguishes the Chaldaic language of Daniel, of Esdras and of the Paraphrases from Syriac, while agreeing that these two languages are not fundamentally different. He agrees with

¹⁹ The biblical name for Syria.

²⁰ Amira, *Grammatica syriaca*, 2nd page of 1st dissertation (2 Kings 18, Isaiah 36, Daniel bks. 1–2).

²¹ Lodewijk de Dieu (1590–1642, pastor in Leiden), *Grammatica linguarum orientalium, Hebraeorum, Chaldaeorum, et Syrorum, inter se collatarum* (Leiden: Elzevir, 1628), [4]: “Ad Lectorem” (unpaginated) [BnF X-1551, RES-X-674].

Amira that the difference would be even less evident had not the Jews added pointing to the Chaldaic text in their books, backing this up with examples.²² It would be easy to quote others, and to show that the resemblance between the two languages led to the Jews' borrowing whole books of Scripture from the Syrians and ascribing them to their Paraphrasts. But this would be straying from the point. We must return to Mr Voss who is so touchy in this matter that he cannot bear anyone using the word Syriac to refer to the Chaldaic language, which is referred to as Hebraic in the New Testament.

As supporting evidence, this ingenious gentleman quotes the Jews who called Aramaic or Syriac the language of the Gentiles; and to drive home even more how much the Jews hated the Syrians and their language, he cites the Talmud, which says that if anyone prays in Syriac, their prayers will not be heard because the Angels ministering to God do not understand that language.²³ He also says that the Jews in Syria, who use the translation, the version that the Christians and Arabs call Syriac, call it Chaldaic. Lastly he asks which Syrian people brought the Syriac language to Jerusalem where it was supposed to have been in common use at the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles.

But had he been able to consult the Talmud, or even possessed the rudiments of the Chaldaic language, he would not have raised such feeble arguments. It is true enough that, in the books of the Talmud, the Chaldaic or Babylonian language is referred to as Arami and Syriac. The Rabbis who abridged the Talmud, and codified the decisions also refer to the Chaldaic language as Arami or Syriac. So that even Mr Voss can see how wrong he is in citing the example of the Prayer which is not to be said in Syriac, the Talmudists convey this fanciful idea on the subject of the prayer called Kadish, which is in Chaldaic but which they nonetheless refer to here as Arami and Syriac. This prayer is not as old as others which were written in Hebrew, being in Chaldaic, which the people spoke at that time. The Rabbis, forever splitting hairs, and frequently passing off fantasy as solid reason, made up this fiction which Mr Voss recounts in all seriousness. Be this as it may, this Kadish prayer which was supposedly written as the Rabbis say in Syriac, which the Angels do not understand, was certainly written in Chaldaic, in the same language as the paraphrases we have of the Bible.

It is suggested to me that in the Syriac version of the New Testament the word Aram is used to mean Greek, gentile and idolater. I do not see that this

²² *Ibid.*, [5].

²³ Voss, *Observationum*, 97.

proves the Jews did not use the words Syriac and Chaldaic indiscriminately. Apart from the fact that the evidence proves the opposite, this merely shows that the Jews considered Syria as an idolatrous land. They used the word Arami in the same way as the word Ἑλλην (hellene) is used in the New Testament to signify a Greek, a gentile and an idolater.

I grant that the version that the Christians call Syriac, the Jews call Chaldaic; but this proves nothing, since those same Jews use Chaldaic or Syriac indiscriminately to refer to the language in which they are written. The Christians in Syria most often refer to their Syriac language as Chaldaic. The Missal in Syriac published in Rome for the use of the Maronites, has the title of Chaldaic Missal.²⁴ This clearly shows that Syrian Christians most often used the words Chaldaic and Syriac without distinction.

Lastly, the objection is raised to Mr Voss of the case of Josephus, a Jew of Jerusalem, who says that before publishing his history of the Jewish war, he wrote in Chaldaic to which he refers as the language of his country.²⁵ As Mr Voss cannot deny what the historian put forward as a clear fact, he responds, as is his wont, that Josephus only wrote history in Chaldaic for Jews living beyond the Euphrates. But how likely is it that someone who claimed to have published the Jewish Wars for the Jews and, consequently, in their language, did not write it also for the people of Jerusalem which was not only their capital but also his native land? The claim is made that he only wrote it for Jews in far off lands; as this is totally implausible Mr Voss relies upon certain ambiguous terms used by Josephus.

This historian Josephus says that when publishing his history in the Chaldaic language he was taking into account τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάρους which, according to Mr Voss, designates barbarians or Jews outside the Roman Empire, since the expression οἱ ἄνω can only refer to people a long distance away.²⁶ In this way he sidesteps some very clear testimony, on the grounds that, grammatically speaking, οἱ ἄνω can refer to both time and place. In this instance it suits him to make the expression refer to place only and not to time.²⁷ But Josephus' intentions make it pretty clear that, generally speaking, he published his history in Chaldaic for the people of his nation, and for the people in Palestine rather than for the Jews living beyond the

²⁴ [Maronite missal] *Missale Chaldaicum juxta ritum Ecclesiae rationis Maronitarum: Chaldaicè* (Rome: Medici, 1592 and 1594) [BnF RES-M-B-3].

²⁵ See *supra*, ch. 6 n. 6.

²⁶ Voss, *Ad iterates ... responsio*, 374.

²⁷ Whilst the adverb ἄνω can designate both time ("formerly") and place, in the latter case it has the meaning of "above," "upwards."

Euphrates. They all spoke the Chaldaic or Syriac language, hence in his Preface this famous writer is unconcerned with any linguistic distinction when he refers to his own kind; he calls the Chaldaic language the language of his country. Elsewhere he attests that he had learned Greek through study, and that because of his own mother tongue he could not even pronounce it properly.²⁸ He was definitely not a Parthian, Babylonian, or Arab Jew, but belonged to the Jews of Jerusalem, and therefore spoke a vernacular other than Greek. In the same passage on the subject of the Greek language, he praises the people of his nation for not devoting their efforts to learning various languages, but to studying their sacred books.²⁹

²⁸ See *supra*, n. 25.

²⁹ Though in this passage Josephus did not specifically commend his compatriots for studying their sacred books, the source of this “gloss” by R. Simon was his deep conviction that acquaintance with Jewish traditions was essential for a better understanding of Christianity and Holy Scripture. See *Les Juifs présentés aux Chrétiens*. Léon de Modène, *Cérémonies et coutumes qui s’observent aujourd’hui parmi les Juifs* (tr. R. Simon); R. Simon, *Comparaison des cérémonies des Juifs et de la discipline de l’Eglise* ed. J. Le Brun and G. Stroumsa (Paris: Belles-Lettres, 1998); also Guy G. Stroumsa, “Richard Simon: from Philology to Comparatism,” *Archiv der Religionsgeschichte* 2001 (Berlin/NY: W. de Gruyter, 2010), 89–107; and Myriam Yardeni, “La Vision des Juifs et du judaïsme dans l’œuvre de Richard Simon,” *Revue des études juives* 129 (1970): 179–203.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE NAZARENE SECT AND THEIR HEBREW OR CHALDAIC VERSION OF THE GOSPEL OF ST MATTHEW

In addition to the reasons already given to show that St Matthew originally composed his Gospel in Chaldaic for Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, the example can also be given of the Nazarene sectarians, who used this very Hebrew or Chaldaic Gospel in their meetings.¹ St Epiphanius, who reported accurately on this ancient sect, tells us that along with the New Testament they accepted all the books of the Old Testament in the Jewish Canon, namely the law, the Prophets and the Hagiographers; the only difference between the Jews' doctrine ceremonies and theirs was that they believed in Jesus Christ.² They publicly professed to believe in one God and his son, Jesus Christ; they were also fully fluent in the Hebrew language. He observes also that these early Nazarenes who lived mainly in the city of Beroea, having spread all through lower Syria, were descendants of the early Christians, also called Nazarenes, who had left Jerusalem for Pella. Such were the origins, says St Epiphanius, of the sect of the Nazarenes.³ This corresponds closely with the evidence of early Church writers, who state that St Matthew preached the Gospel to Jews in Jerusalem and the whole of Palestine in their vernacular. It was preserved and read in the Churches and meetings of these Nazarene sectarians whose forebears were the early Christians in Jerusalem, and who spoke the same language as they did.

St Epiphanius also said that the Jews had a moral hatred of the Nazarenes and that three times a day at their synagogue meetings they solemnly cursed

¹ On the "Gospel of the Nazarenes," see Ehrman—Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, 201–209: "no Gospel went by that name until the ninth century ... The sources have often confused the issue ... by maintaining that it was the original (or edited) version of the Hebrew version of the Gospel of Matthew ... And it is at least possible that it was a later translation of that Gospel into Aramaic ... but it is more likely that the author of this apocryphon wrote his account in light of his knowledge of Matthew, or of the traditions that were known to Matthew" (201).

² Epiphanius, Heresy 29 n. 7, 7 (*Panarion*, 1:117–118).

³ *Ibid.*

them.⁴ May God curse the Nazarenes, they said. This imprecation of Jews against Christians under the name of Nazarenes is still to be found in their Books. St Jerome also refers to it in his commentary on the prophet Isaiah where, speaking of the Jews, he says: “Thrice every day, in all the synagogues, they curse the word Christian under the name of the Nazarenes.”⁵ Their hatred came from the fact that the Nazarenes were Jews just as they were, and accepted the whole of Moses’ law, but also preached that Jesus was the Messiah.⁶

So we must seek the original of the Gospel of St Matthew among the Nazarenes, who were descendants of the holy Christians in Jerusalem and preserved it in their churches. St Epiphanius seems convinced of this, saying blithely that they made use of the complete Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew, and that indubitably even in his own time they still had it written in Hebrew characters.⁷ He does wonder whether they had removed the genealogy of Jesus from this Gospel; the Ebionites used it too, and it was not in their version. But most probably the Nazarenes had not taken the genealogy out of their copies. For Cerinthus and Carpocrates, early heretics who also used the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew at that time, used the genealogy in full, using it to prove that Jesus Christ had sprung “from the seed of Joseph and Mary.”⁸

St Jerome, who translated this Nazarene Gospel into Greek and Latin, tells us that the Sectarrians still used it at their meetings in his own day.⁹ He had seen two copies, one kept in the Library of Caesarea, and had borrowed the other from the Nazarenes of Beroea in order to copy it.¹⁰ This was the copy he used for his translation. He also says that many people believed that this Hebrew Gospel, as used by the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, was the original by St Matthew.¹¹ Whatever the case, it seems that the earliest Church writers referred to it as the true Gospel of St Matthew. Many believed it was St Ignatius Martyr’s source for these words addressed by our Lord to St Peter and which Ignatius quotes in his Epistle to the Smyrnians: “Touch me, and see that I am not a ghost.” Eusebius and St Jerome quote these words

⁴ Epiphanius, Heresy 29 n. 9, 1 (*Panarion*, 1:119).

⁵ Jerome, Commentary on Isaiah 5:18–19 (PL 24:86).

⁶ Epiphanius, Heresy 29 n. 9, 1 (*Panarion*, 1:119).

⁷ Epiphanius, Heresy 29 n. 9, 4 (*Panarion*, 1:119).

⁸ Epiphanius, Heresy 30 n. 14, 1 (*Panarion*, 1:130).

⁹ Jerome, Against Pelagians book 3 § 2 (PL 23:570B).

¹⁰ Jerome, on Matthew, *Scriptores Ecclesiastici saecularibus litteris eruditi* (PL 23:613).

¹¹ Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 12:13 (PL 26:78).

of St Ignatius, which can still be found today in that Epistle; and Jerome observes that they are from the Hebrew Gospel of the Nazarenes which he had recently translated.¹²

It seems that as St Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch, he would have read this Gospel of the Hebrews, which was widespread in the Nazarene area of Syria. This leads me to believe that Tatian who also lived in Syria, had used the same gospel when putting together a Harmonia of his own fashioning, which St Epiphanius says some also termed the Gospel “According to the Hebrews.”¹³ This must not be taken to mean that the compilation by Tatian was the same as the Gospel of the Hebrews: that would make no sense. Mr de Valois in his notes on Eusebius makes overhasty remarks of this kind on the Gospel of Tatian.¹⁴ Referring to this same passage in St Epiphanius, Grotius more accurately remarks that Tatian’s *Diatessaron*¹⁵ had reproduced the words of St Matthew not only from the Greek manuscripts but also according to those that were in Hebrew; for this reason the Gospel usually known as Diatessaron, since it was compiled from four Gospels, was referred to by some as the Gospel According to the Hebrews.¹⁶ He believes it was also for this reason that others gave it the name of διὰ πέντε “Survey of Five” as having been selected from five Gospels.¹⁷ All this would be quite plausible but for the fact that the Gospel of Tatian as published contains none of the exceptional aspects of the Hebrew text of the Nazarenes.

Although Baronius made several mistakes in his annals on the subject of the early Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew, he is nonetheless right to consider it as the original.¹⁸ Accordingly he even goes so far as to say that if the Latin rendering of St Matthew was to be redone it should be on the basis of the Hebrew text rather than the Greek. But he is wrong in ascribing this opinion to St Jerome on the basis of that Father’s letter to Pope Damasus. In this

¹² Jerome, Ignatius, *Scriptores* ... ch. 16 (PL 23:623).

¹³ Epiphanius, Heresy 46 n. 1, 6 (*Panarion*, 1:349).

¹⁴ Henri de Valois (1603–1676, seigneur d’Orcé) (ed.), *Eusebii Pamphili Ecclesiasticae historiae libri decem* ... (rev. ed., Paris: Le Petit, 1678), part II, 74B–75B (2 parts in 1 vol., pagination in second part recommences from 1) [BnF H-78].

¹⁵ Continuous compilation of the four gospels compiled by Tatian (c. 160). See Aland, *Text*, 192–193; P.W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2008), 96–97.

¹⁶ Grotius, Annotations on Matthew’s Title (*Opera omnia theologica* ... [London: Pitt, 1679], tome II 1:4B–5A).

¹⁷ [Note by R. Simon]: Some however believe the correct reading is διὰ πάντων (Survey of all things).

¹⁸ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:196 (CE 34 n. 72).

Epistle St Jerome is speaking of the New Testament in generally asking for errors in the Latin to be corrected on the basis of the Greek text from which the Latin was derived.

Casaubon accepted, along with all antiquity, that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew,¹⁹ and could not tolerate the view of the cardinal Baronius, which he calls irreligious.²⁰ He is unable to understand how anyone could say that the authority of the Greek text of St Matthew depends on the Hebrew text which has been lost. He even claims that if we still possessed the Hebrew text today, it could not be seen as an original on which the Greek rendering should be revised, because it was only used by heretics, Nazarenes and the Ebionites, as he claims can be proved from the evidence of St Epiphanius and St Jerome. He says that Catholics who called St Matthew's Hebrew Gospel authentic are simple. He says they were too ready to take the word of heretics who boasted of having the original of the Gospel. It would be insulting to the early Church to say it would have allowed impure heretics to lay claim to a Gospel which was supposedly the true original. Lastly he says that the Hebrew Gospel used by the Ebionites and other heretics was full of pipe dreams, and corrupt in several passages, concluding from this that it cannot be seen as an original text and a proper basis for revising the Greek version which is accepted by the whole of the Church, calling this conclusion an invincible argument.²¹

But it is easy to show the weakness in all Casaubon's arguments. Far from our being able to call Baronius's view irreligious, I contend that on the contrary it has the support of evidence from all antiquity and of common sense. The fact remains, and even Casaubon admits this, that St Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, the Greek being an earlier translation. This being the case, what is wrong with calling the Hebrew text the original? Not to do so is irrational and nonsensical. It is on this premise that the Protestants revise their versions of the Old Testament on the basis of the original Hebrew. But we are told we no longer have St Matthew in Hebrew. That is so. Is this any reason not to call it authentic as the early church writers

¹⁹ Isaac Casaubon (b. Geneva 1559, †Canterbury 1614, classicist and theologian, librarian to Henry IV of France, then secretary to James I of England), *De rebus sacris et ecclesiasticis exercitationes XVI, ad cardinalis Baronii Prolegomena in Annales et primam eorum partem ... Accessit versio latina earum sententiarum et dictionum graecarum, quarum interpretatio ab auctore in prima editione, certo consilio, fuit praetermissa* (Frankfurt: Bring, 1615), 279 [BnF H-2474].

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 485.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 486.

did, since that is what it is? Had it not been lost, could we not refer to it today to clear up various difficulties in the Greek version? We know that St Jerome consulted it for Matthew 6:11,²² where the Vulgate reads *Panem nostrum supersubstantialem da nobis hodie*. He observed that in the Greek there is the word ἐπιούσιος, and in the Hebrew מחר *mahar*,²³ Latin *crastinus* meaning “for the morrow”: from which he infers that the meaning of the passage is “give us today bread for the morrow,” that is to say “for every day” as the Old Vulgate reads; also St Jerome kept the word *quotidianum* in Luke 11:3. This clarification of the obscure Greek word ἐπιούσιος is important.²⁴ Grammarians today still argue about its meaning; but the Hebrew word מחר in the Gospel of the Nazarenes resolves any doubts they may have.²⁵ It led Grotius to say that given the evidence of St Jerome’s having consulted the Hebrew or Chaldaic text on the matter, there can be no more arguing about the derivation of the Greek word ἐπιούσιος in order to decide what it means.²⁶

Casaubon goes on to say that even if we had the Hebrew Gospel of the Nazarenes today, it could not be passed off as an original because it was used by heretics and because the Catholics have always used the Greek version since the very beginnings of the Church. But even if we suppose as Casaubon does that the Nazarenes were heretics, how does that stop their Hebrew original, written in Hebrew by St Matthew, from being a true original? I should like to know whether the Hebrew text of the law of Moses is less authentic when used by Samaritans and Karaite Jews, than when used by the other Jews who are called Rabbanites from whom it came to us. The Protestants are on the same footing with the Roman church as the Ebionites once were with the orthodox. The Church places them among the heretics. But does that mean that when Protestants use the New Testament it is not authentic? No reasonable Catholic would ever say so. Thus the conclusion that Casaubon draws from the so-called heresies of the Nazarenes and Ebionites is worthless.

²² PL 26:43B.

²³ Not מחר *mahar* “to hasten,” but מחר *machar* “tomorrow’s” (see in the exhaustive discussion [Appendix I, 217–268] by J.B. Lightfoot, *On a Fresh Revision of the English New Testament* [3d ed., London: Macmillan, 1891], 237).

²⁴ “This word was unknown out of Biblical Greek” (Lightfoot, 262).

²⁵ It is essential however to bear in mind that since, as is stated here, the Gospel “according to the Hebrews” does not survive, Jerome’s recollection is the sole authority for the presence of מחר in that text.

²⁶ Grotius, Annotation on Matthew 6:11 (*Opera omnia theologica ...*, tome I, 1:78A). Cf. *supra*, n. 245.

Nor is it true that the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew was only in use among heretics, since as has been shown it was written for early Christians in Palestine, the descendants of the Nazarene sectarians, and that the Greek is no more than a rendering of it. Nor can it be said that the Catholics only accepted the Greek version of Matthew since the Jews from the area of Jerusalem who embraced Christianity, and who were called Nazarenes, were the first Christians in the world. It would be unfair to call them heretics simply because they retained the ceremonies of the old Law along with Christianity. Otherwise we would have to call the apostles heretics since they too observed them at the outset. This was at the time acceptable for the early Christians, who came from a Jewish background, and also had before them the example of Jesus Christ and the apostles.

What misled Casaubon and several others, both Protestant and Catholic, who reject the Hebrew Gospel of the Nazarenes as apocryphal, is insufficient thought about the origins of the Christian religion. Whereas the early Christians in Jerusalem and Palestine who used this Hebrew Gospel did not survive long in that initial situation, the others, who spoke Greek, spread throughout the earth, so that only the Greek was preserved by the Catholics, because all other Christians took their versions from that one. The Chaldaic language in which the Gospel of the Nazarenes was written was only known to a handful of Jews, whereas the Nazarenes who combined Judaism with Christianity came to be despised by other gentile Christians, and there was irreconcilable hatred between them. If those early Nazarenes for whom St Matthew had written his Gospel had survived today, we would doubtless give preference to their Hebrew text over the Greek version that we have.

St Jerome and St Epiphanius, far from supporting the views of Casaubon, positively contradict them, as seen from the evidence of their preceding statements. So much so that, in order to justify what he said, Casaubon deliberately altered the passage of St Epiphanius who calls the Hebrew Gospel of the Nazarenes *πληρέστατον* "integral." In face of all editions of this Father's works, and without producing any manuscript showing such an important difference, he says it should read *οὐ πληρέστατον* "which was not complete." All he says is that this passage of St Epiphanius is contradicted by another where he calls the Hebrew Gospel of the Ebionites a Gospel *οὐ πληρέστατον* "that was not complete" but *νεοθευμένον καὶ ἠκρωτηριασμένον* "corrupt and truncated."²⁷ Casaubon overlooks the fact that although the Nazarenes and

²⁷ Epiphanius, Heresy 30 n. 13, 1 (*Panarion*, 1:129).

the Ebionites both used the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew, nonetheless their versions were different. The Ebionites, as Epiphanius remarks, had altered their text, taking out the genealogy of Jesus Christ. He does not say this of the Nazarenes whose text was, as he says, very complete.

Admittedly, the Nazarenes' text did contain some additions which seemed to be interpolations. But the document must not be completely rejected on the grounds that something was added later, especially when the additions were not made by unreliable people who intended to falsify the document. Otherwise most of the Books would have to be discarded, as there are hardly any without some additions. Today there would not be any version of the New Testament, Greek, Latin, Syriac or Arabic, that could be truly called authentic because not one of them in whatever language is completely free from interpolations. I can even say that, as will be proved later, Greek copyists took great liberties when making their manuscripts.

Not that I wish to justify the vicious changes and additions in the Hebrew text of the Ebionites; Baronius himself never held that view. He merely says that for a time the Nazarenes retained the true Gospel of St Matthew, complete with no additions.²⁸ Moreover, he refutes the opinion of Bede²⁹ who held that this Hebrew Gospel should not be included among the apocrypha. Baronius considers it should be classed as apocryphal, because St Jerome, in his writings, quotes several extracts from it which are not in the surviving manuscripts or approved by the Church. It is dangerous, the Cardinal says to place it in any category other than that of the epigrapher, because there can be only one truth.³⁰ However, if by apocryphal is meant a forgery, in that sense it is wrong to say that the Gospel of the Nazarenes is apocryphal: all that can be said is that if there are substantial additions which alter the sense, it ceases to be authentic: which remains to be demonstrated. Here I am referring only to the Nazarene version, not that of the Ebionites, which was deliberately falsified by them to make it reflect their idiosyncrasies.

It is unwise to make a comparison, as Casaubon has done, between the Hebrew Gospel of the Nazarenes, and the Gospel "according to the Egyptians," the Acts of Barnabas,³¹ the Prophecy of Cham,³² or any other text

²⁸ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:320 (CE 41 n. 18).

²⁹ St Bede, 672/673–735 CE.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, col. 321 (CE 41 n. 19).

³¹ For the Acts of Barnabas, see *Apocryphal New Testament* ed. J.K. Elliott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 523–524.

³² Alluded to in passing by Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* bk. vi ch. 6 (PG 9:276).

forged by impostors.³³ On the other hand, no one has any doubt that the Gospel of the Nazarenes was in fact written by the apostle whose name it bears. As to anything the Nazarenes may have added to St Matthew's original, quite possibly they are not actual falsifications. The changes were made out of honest simplicity, and not with malicious intent. In the days of early Christianity it was customary to learn carefully what the apostles and disciples had acquired from their masters, as in the case of Papias, who lived at that time, and of Irenaeus, who lived not long afterwards and a few others. Evidently the Nazarenes expanded their Gospel of St Matthew with comparable stories which they had acquired and which they believed were based on sound evidence. Hence these should not all be set aside as false, although they do not appear in any text used by the Church. But it is noteworthy that all Churches in the world derived their version from the Greek text which does not contain these additions, because apparently St Matthew had been translated from Hebrew into Greek before the Nazarenes made their additions.

It seems also that the differences between the Nazarenes' Hebrew Gospel and our own were quite numerous, judging by the instances left to us by St Jerome here and there in his works, and by the selection compiled by commentators on the New Testament. Opinions are divided on some of the Nazarene stories and additions. Not everyone agrees, for instance, that the story of the woman taken in adultery in John Chapter 8 appeared in the Hebrew Gospel. It does seem likely, because Papias, who lived with the disciples of the apostles, says that the story of a woman accused of many sins before the Lord can be found in the Gospel known as "according to the Hebrews".³⁴ It seems this could only apply to the adulterous woman shown by St John. However, Baronius and several others after him, believe that the Papias story mentioned in Eusebius is not the same as the one in St John because Papias mentions a woman accused of several crimes, whereas St John speaks only of an adulterous woman.³⁵ But although Papias spoke in general terms, it is not likely he was referring to any woman other than the latter. Hence several scholars have thought that the woman taken in adultery actually came from the Hebrew Gospel of the Nazarenes and was later added to the Gospel of St John. In fact as we shall show later, it is absent from a great many manuscripts of that Gospel.

³³ Casaubon, *Exercitationes XVI ad cardinalis Baronii* ch. 126, 611.

³⁴ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.17, with n. 12 (1:157).

³⁵ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:815 (CE 99 n. 6).

At this stage, let me just say that if that is what happened, all the additions made by the Nazarenes to their Hebrew text of St Matthew must not be dismissed as made up stories, because they could well have come from genuine sources.

For this reason Cardinal Baronius lends his authority to an appearance by our Lord to St James,³⁶ which was only in the text of the Nazarenes, and which is related by St Jerome as follows: "Also the Gospel 'according to the Hebrews', recently translated by me into Greek and Latin, and which Origen also often makes use of, following the Resurrection of the Saviour, reads: 'When the Lord had given his grave clothes to the servant of the priest, he went to James and appeared to him (for James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour in which he drank the cup of the Lord until he should see him rising again from the dead)'; and again, a little later, it reads: "Bring a table and bread," said the Lord; then immediately the following is added: "He brought bread, and blessed and broke and gave it to James the Just and said to him: 'My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from among those that sleep.'"³⁷ Baronius also included this extract from the Nazarenes' Gospel in his Annals, saying that St Jerome believed it was genuine, since in this instance he does not dismiss it, as he was wont to do when quoting apocryphal passages.³⁸ If what the Cardinal says is correct, then most of the additions to this Gospel should be accepted, because usually St Jerome simply quotes them without rejecting them.

In regard to the account in Matthew 12 of the man with the withered hand who was cured by Jesus Christ, to the same purpose Jerome quotes the Hebrew Gospel of the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, where the story is written at greater length and with other details. There it says that the man plied the trade of a mason and that he addressed our Lord in this way: "I was a mason labouring to earn my living. I beg you, Jesus, to kill me to spare me the shame of having to beg." St Jerome, far from rejecting this story as fanciful, says on the contrary, in that passage, the Gospel of the Nazarenes from which he had taken it was considered as authentic in the minds of many people.³⁹

From the same Gospel St Jerome also quotes two other substantial passages at the beginning of his third book against the Pelagians, not detracting from them by expressing any reservations. The first is about the baptism

³⁶ Ibid., col. 226 (CE 34 n. 182).

³⁷ Jerome, "James," *Distinguished Men* (PL 23:611).

³⁸ Baronius, *ibid.*

³⁹ Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 12:13 (PL 26:78).

by St John which Jesus Christ said he did not need; and the other is a variant reading of Matthew 18 verses 21 and 22: “In the Gospel according to the Hebrews—which is in the Chaldaic and Syrian tongue, but written in Hebrew characters, and which, according to the apostles, Nazarenes still use today—or, as is generally maintained, the Gospel according to Matthew, a copy of which is held in the library at Cæsarea—the story goes: ‘Behold, the mother of our Lord and His brothers said to him, John the Baptist is baptising for the forgiveness of sins; let us go and be baptised by him. But he said to them, what sin have I committed that I should go and be baptised by him? Unless, perhaps I have spoken only in ignorance.’ And in the same volume: “If your brother slanders you, and make amends, go along with him seven times a day. Simon, His disciple, said to Him, ‘Seven times a day’? The Lord answered and said to him, ‘I say to you: up to seventy times seven.’ Even the prophets, after they were anointed with the Holy Spirit, were guilty of sinful words.”⁴⁰

The Nazarenes also had a different reading from the one in our manuscripts of Matthew 3:16–17, about the baptism of Jesus Christ. In his commentary on Isaiah, St Jerome observes that their version read as follows: “It came to pass that when the Lord came up out of the water, the entire source of the Holy Spirit came down, and alighted upon him, and said to him, Son of mine, of all the prophets, yours is the coming I have been waiting for, and I shall take my rest upon you: for you are my rest, my firstborn son, reigning for eternity.”⁴¹

Amongst the miracles that occurred at the death of our Lord in Matthew 27, in their Gospel the Nazarenes had another, that the top of the temple gate, which was unbelievably high, was smashed to pieces; whereas our manuscripts read that the veil of the temple was rent.⁴²

I pass over other examples I could have quoted of the differences between the Hebrew Gospel of the Nazarenes and the Greek which is the only one still in use in all the churches in the world. I shall simply add it to what already has been stated, in regard to Matthew 23:36: our text reads Zacharias son of Barachias, whereas in their text, according to the evidence of St Jerome, the Nazarenes had Zacharias son of Joiada,⁴³ and this reading is supported by what we know of Zacharias in the Old Testament. Judging from our manuscripts the father of Zacharias had two names; and as I found this

⁴⁰ Jerome, Dialogue against Pelagians bk. 3 § 2 (PL 23:570–571).

⁴¹ Jerome, Commentary on Isaiah book 4 (11:1–2): (PL 24:145).

⁴² Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 27:51 (PL 26:215).

⁴³ Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 23:35 (PL 26:174).

unlikely, in this passage I believe that the Hebrew Gospel is to be preferred to the other manuscripts, mainly because there was no particular motive which would have lead the Nazarenes or the Ebionites to alter their texts in that particular place.

All these examples give an idea of the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew or as others call it “of the Twelve Apostles,” which was used by the Nazarenes.⁴⁴ It could also be seen it was fairly different from what we have in our manuscripts. At the same time it would be rash to treat all these differences as fanciful, as Casaubon does; he even goes so far as to put this Gospel in the same category as the forged Gospels ascribed to St Thaddæus and St Thomas.⁴⁵ Grotius, who is more moderate,⁴⁶ believes that the Nazarenes themselves made the interpolations in their texts and which are not in our own, on the basis of accounts that they had heard. Hence when discussing the story of the adulterous woman in St John, which he considers was taken from the Gospel of the Nazarenes, he does not hesitate to invest it with the same authority as if the apostles themselves had written it. He admits nonetheless that originally it was not in the Hebrew of St Matthew nor in the Greek of St John.⁴⁷ He believed that the Palestine Nazarenes included it in their Hebrew Gospel because it came from the apostles, then Papias and other disciples of St John had added it to his Gospel which written in Greek and that the story gained approval by the Church because it had its basis in an apostolic tradition. Jansenius, Bishop of Ghent,⁴⁸ who had said the same thing before Grotius, holds that the story is canonical because Papias had acquired it from his master, and it had been approved by the Church. He does say, however, that St John might have added it himself after he had finished writing his Gospel and this is why it is absent from various manuscripts.

⁴⁴ Most critics today identify The “Gospel of the Twelve” or “according to the Twelve apostles,” mentioned by Origen, 1st Homily on Luke [PG 13:1803], with the Gospel of the Ebionites (W. Schneemelcher in E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha* 1:263–269; and see ch. 8 of the present work).

⁴⁵ Casaubon, *Exercitationes xvi ad cardinalis Baronii* ch. 119, 611.

⁴⁶ Grotius, Annotations on Matthew’s Title (*Opera omnia theologica* ..., tome II 1:4B).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 515B.

⁴⁸ Cornelius Jansen (1510–1576), *Cornelii Jansenii, ... Commentariorum in suam Concordiam ac totam historiam evangelicam partes IIII* (Antwerp: Beller, 1613), ch. 76, 562B [BnF A-15302]. Cornelius Jansen the Elder (1510–1576) is not to be confused with his nephew the Bishop of Ypres (1585–1638), who gave his name to the Jansenist doctrine. Jansen the Elder was one of the first exegetes to stress the importance of Oriental languages in attaining a proper understanding of the Vulgate, to access original scriptural texts, and to provide literal instead of mystical commentary. R. Simon here quotes from the elder Jansen’s commentary on ch. 76 of his own *Concordia evangelica* (Louvain 1529).

But this last remark seems barely plausible. Nothing can be said with certainty on the subject. All we know is that among the stories he had acquired from the disciples of the apostles, he includes one about a woman accused of various crimes before the Lord, also saying that the story is recounted in the so-called “Gospel according to the Hebrews.” Now as the woman accused of several crimes is likely to have been the same as the adulteress in St John, it can it seems be inferred from this that in Papias’ time the story was only to be found in the Hebrew Gospel of the Nazarenes. This shows that the additions to this Gospel must not all be thought of as fanciful, since Papias relates one which came from an apostolic tradition: plausibly this could also be said about the others. Hegesippus, who lived in proximity with the disciples of the apostles,⁴⁹ also sometimes used the Hebrew or Syriac Gospel of the Nazarenes, even quoting it in Hebrew; from which Eusebius concludes he must have been one of the Hebrews who embraced Christianity.

⁴⁹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.22.8 (1:202).

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE EBIONITES. THEIR VERSION OF THE GOSPEL OF ST MATTHEW. OTHER EARLY HERETICS WHO USED THIS GOSPEL

We have already observed in discussing the Nazarenes that the Ebionites used the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew, as they did; but that in order to make it fit their misconceptions, they had altered and corrupted it in some places. St Irenaeus says: “The Ebionites, who use solely the Gospel according to Matthew, were convinced that it was by Matthew himself.”¹ According to Eusebius the early Church writers called these Sectarians Ebionites, in Hebrew “poor”² because of the “poverty” of their view of Jesus Christ, whom they believed was only a man. This historian also says they only used one Gospel, the one called “According to the Hebrews,” having no regard for the others. Origen, followed by Eusebius,³ also derives the origin of the names of these heretics from the Hebrew word *ebyon*, meaning “poor” because, as he said, “of their poor intelligence and lack of wit.”

But although the name of these Sectarians does actually mean “poor” in the Hebrew language, all this strikes me as “popular” etymology and unsupported. It is more likely that the Jews gave them this name by disdain, because in those early days hardly anyone embraced Christianity but poor people. Hence Jesus said to his disciples “blessed are the poor—blessed are you if you are poor, because the Kingdom of heaven is yours” (Luke 6:20). The Kingdom of God was the Gospel in which they believed. Hence, our Lord says elsewhere (Luke 7:22, Matthew 11:5) that the Gospel is proclaimed to the poor. Origen appears to lend weight to this view in his books against Celsus,

¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* bk. 3 ch. 11,7 (6:158). See also Ehrman—Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, 210: “unlike the Gospel of the Nazarenes, the account quoted by Epiphanius shows clear evidence of having been composed in Greek (see *supra*, n. 9) ... The Gospel of the Ebionites ... was, in part, a Gospel harmony, a conflation of the accounts of the Synoptic Gospels ... Most scholars have dated the Gospel to the mid- to late second century.”

² Hebr. אֵבְיוֹן *ebyon*.

³ H. de Valois, *Eusebii Pamphili Ecclesiasticae historiae ...*, part II 47B.

stating that the word *ebyon* means “poor” in Hebrew and that the Jews who believed Jesus was the Messiah were called Ebionites or “poor folk.”⁴

Just as the Jews scornfully referred to those among them who were Christians as Nazarenes and Galileans, it is quite likely that they also called them Ebionites, or “poor folk.” It is also possible that these early Christians themselves took on this name to match their status. This is very much in accordance with the remark of St Epiphanius, that the Ebionites were proud of this name, boasting that they were poor as the apostles had been,⁵ it being customary in those days to sell one’s property and place it at the apostles’ feet. Later the words became simply the name of a sect, a branch of the Nazarenes holding particular views, but being in agreement with them over the basis of the religion in every detail of ancient Law which they retained as the Christians did. However, St Epiphanius holds that there really was a man called Ebion who gave his name to the Ebionites who lived at the same time as the Nazarenes and the Cerinthians. It may well be that this Father and everyone else who thought there actually was a man called Ebion who founded the Sect of the Ebionites had no more evidence for this Ebion than did one Spanish historian, who wrote a history of the Popes in his own language and came up with a man of his own creation called Hugo, a Sacramentary Heresiarch, after whom heretics in France were named Huguenots.⁶

St Epiphanius is more accurate in describing the origin of these sectarians which he places after the destruction of Jerusalem when the early Christians known as Nazarenes had just left the city and went to live in Pella in the Province of Decapolis. From this it seemed that the Ebionites are no more than scions of the early Nazarenes though they degraded the pure and simple faith of those early Christians. Consequently they made changes to St Matthew’s Hebrew original to make it coincide with what they believed. It is worth reproducing here some fragments of their Gospel as preserved for us by St Epiphanius.

He says first that in general the Gospel of the Ebionites was not complete but corrupt and truncated.⁷ They took out the genealogy of Jesus Christ and everything after that up to Chapter 3 of St Matthew, starting their Gospel with the words *it came to pass in the time of Herod*.

⁴ Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.1 (1:276–280).

⁵ Epiphanius, Heresy 30 n. 17, 1 (*Panarion*, 1:133).

⁶ Gonzalo de Illescas, *Historia pontifical y católica, en la qual se contienen las vidas y hechos notables de todos los summos pontífices romanos ...* (Barcelona: Cormellas, 1612, 1622), part 2 leaf 338B [BnF H-2061 and H-2062, 2 parts in 1 volume].

⁷ Epiphanius, Heresy 30 n. 13, 1 (*Panarion*, 1:129).

In the Gospel of the Ebionites the baptism of our Lord by St John is presented as follows: "When the people were baptised Jesus came also and was baptised by John and as he emerged from the water the Heavens opened and he saw the Holy Spirit of God in the form of a dove descending and coming towards him; and a voice from Heaven was heard saying 'You are my beloved Son, I am pleased in you alone.'" And it continues thus: "This day have I brought you forth. At once the place shone with light; seeing it, John spoke in these words: 'Who are you Lord?' And a voice from Heaven once more said to him: 'This is my beloved Son, in him alone I am pleased'. Then John, prostrating himself before him, said to him: 'I beg you, Lord, to baptise me yourself'. He refused and said to him: 'Let me proceed because in this way must all things be accomplished'"⁸

From what we have just quoted from the Gospel of the Ebionites, one can judge that the order of words was not exactly the same as in our text and that there were some alterations and additions. This may even be judged more clearly from another passage from the start of this Gospel: "A man named Jesus, aged about thirty, chose us and, coming to Capernaum, he entered the house of Simon Peter to whom he said: 'When I passed by the lake of Tiberias, I chose John and James, sons of Zebedee, Simon, Andrew, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot; and I called you, Matthew, whilst you were at your tax counter and you followed me. I wish you Twelve to be apostles to witness before Israel! John was carrying out baptism; they were baptised, and the whole of Jerusalem. He was clothed with camel's hair and with a girdle of skin about his loins. He did eat wild honey which tasted of manna, like a cake in oil."⁹ St Epiphanius here takes the Ebionites to task for corrupting the Gospel of St Matthew, in reading ἐγκρίδες "cakes of oil and honey," instead of ἀκρίδες "locusts" (Matthew 3:4). But this alteration could only have occurred in the Greek, and not in their Hebrew or Syriac text where there was no such similarity of words. They must have made a special Greek translation of their Gospel for their own use, or adapted our translation to fit their text.¹⁰

These Sectarians also differed from the Nazarenes in regard to Scripture: whereas, as already observed, the latter accepted the whole of the Old Testament according to the Jewish Canon, the Ebionites rejected all the

⁸ Epiphanius, Heresy 30 n. 13, 8 (*Panarion*, 1:130).

⁹ Epiphanius, Heresy 30 n. 13, 4 (*Panarion*, 1:130).

¹⁰ See Ehrman—Pleše, *Apocryphal Gospels*, 210.

Prophets, execrating the names of David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel. They followed only the Pentateuch of Moses, taking scant notice even of that.¹¹ Of what use is the Law, they said, after the coming of the Gospel? If asked why they worshipped Moses, Abraham and the early Patriarchs, they replied that they did so because Jesus had done so.

It seems that the Ebionites who only accepted the five books of Moses, and saw Joshua as no more than his successor, were descended from Samaritans who embraced Christianity in the same way the Nazarenes had done. For this reason St Epiphanius observes that Ebion was affected by a Samaritan superstition.¹² As both groups retained the old Law along with the Gospel, the Ebionites only retained the Books of Moses because these are the only five books that the Samaritans had ever accepted as Canonical. But the Nazarenes who were converted from Judaism to Christianity continued reading the whole of the Old Testament as they had done before in their synagogues. St Epiphanius also observed that the Ebionites had their Priests or Elders, and their synagogue leaders: they did not call their meetings church but synagogue.¹³ Apparently he was referring to the Ebionites who spoke Greek and also used a Greek translation of their Hebrew or Syriac Gospel. For in Hebrew or Syriac there is no distinction between the words synagogue and church; and the meaning of the two words is even the same in the Greek as can easily be shown from the Greek Septuagint.

The Ebionites, says St Epiphanius, not content with corrupting the Gospel of St Matthew, fabricated various books under the names of James, Matthew and the other disciples of Jesus Christ.¹⁴ They even ascribed some to St John, thus misusing the names of the apostles the more easily to impress their followers.¹⁵ They also used the journeys of St Peter written by St Clement: but they made so many changes that there was almost nothing genuine left. They reworked them and gave them their own particular slant, putting countless falsehoods in the mouth of St Peter to provide authority for what they did amongst themselves. It is easy to prove that these heretics cut out the genealogy of Jesus Christ from their text of St Matthew. For the Cerinthians and Carpocratians who were aware of their books, and who had the same belief regarding the birth of our Lord, did have a genealogy in

¹¹ Epiphanius, Heresy 30 n. 18, 4; 18, 7 (*Panarion*, 1:134).

¹² Epiphanius, Heresy 30 n. 2, 1 (*Panarion*, 1:120).

¹³ Epiphanius, Heresy 30 n. 18, 2 (*Panarion*, 1:133).

¹⁴ Epiphanius, Heresy 30 n. 23, 1 (*Panarion*, 1:139).

¹⁵ Epiphanius, Heresy 30 n. 15, 1 (*Panarion*, 1:131).

their text. They even used this to prove that Jesus Christ was purely a man. Now the Cerinthians had established their sect before that of the Ebionites existed. St Epiphanius even suggests that the Ebionites adopted only the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew as used by the Cerinthians.¹⁶

Cerinthus was a keen defender of circumcision as were the Nazarenes and the Ebionites. I do not know where St Epiphanius found what he says about Cerinthus, namely that he was the leader of a faction that rose up in Jerusalem against St Peter because he had been in the country of the uncircumcised and had eaten with them. The Acts of the Apostles state that the circumcised faithful argued the matter against Peter. If St Epiphanius is to be believed, the quarrel was led by Cerinthus who was still one of the faithful, and St Epiphanius said that for him this was a pretext for breaking away. From that time the Church was divided on various matters. Some among the circumcised would not comply with St Peter's vision in the city of Joppa (Acts 10:10–16, 11:1–18), claiming that only the circumcised should be accepted into the Church. These were the sectarians who retained the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew, because of their Jewish background: hence it was termed "Gospel according to the Hebrews" by the early Church writers. The rest, however, who were mainly Gentiles, used the Greek text of this same gospel, which is the only one the Church has retained. The Hebrew text only survived among a few sectarians, and was lost when those sects were dissolved.

¹⁶ Epiphanius, Heresy 30 n. 3, 7 (*Panarion*, 1:122).

CHAPTER NINE

THE GREEK TEXT OF ST MATTHEW. ITS STATUS. COMPARISON WITH THE HEBREW OR CHALDAIC TEXT. REJOINDERS TO HERETICS' OBJECTIONS TO THIS GOSPEL

The consensus of all antiquity is that the original text of St Matthew was written in the language spoken by the Jews in Jerusalem at the time, and subsequently translated into Greek: but nothing definite is known about the translator. St Jerome asserts that Matthew was the first to set down the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Hebrew, for Jewish Christians, but that we do not know who translated it from Hebrew into Greek.¹ The author of the synopsis ascribed to St Athanasius does say it was written first in Hebrew by St Matthew who published it in that language in Jerusalem; and that St James, the first bishop of the city, translated it into Greek.² He provides no supporting statement for this from any of the early Church writers. Papias on the other hand, who lived not long after the apostles, testifies that St Matthew's gospel was originally in Hebrew, and that everyone interpreted it as best they could.³ This leads me to believe that, in the early Church, various individuals had made a translation of the Gospel for their own use, just as there were various Latin versions translated from the Greek, even though there was one of them more widely accepted in the churches than the others. It appears also that the Cerinthians, the Carpocratians, the Ebionites, in short all early Sectarians, whose preference was for the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew rather than the other Gospels, also made Greek translations for their own use, as did the orthodox.

Casaubon, who has done everything possible to discredit the Hebrew Gospel used by the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, in order to provide more support for the Greek version, freely admits that the Fathers are strongly divided on the matter, some ascribing the text to St James and others to

¹ Jerome, "Matthew," *Authors of Scripture* (PL 23:621).

² *Synopsis Scripturae sacrae* (ascr. Athanasius) § 76 (PG 28:433).

³ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.16 (1:158).

St John, others to St Barnabas and yet others to St Paul and St Luke.⁴ Such a range of opinions, he continues, clearly shows that it cannot be stated with certainty who the author of the Greek version was; but he says it does serve to demonstrate that it dates from the time of the apostles who wrote it or instigated it; or rather that it should be ascribed to the Holy Spirit whose instruments they were.

But can something be “demonstrated” when it is only based on vague conjectures? Is it not wiser in this to rely on the evidence of Papias who lived with the disciples of the apostles? Had there been in his day a Greek version of the Gospel of St Matthew made by an apostle, he would not have failed to tell us; but on the contrary, he states that everyone translated it as best they could. Only the unchanging tradition of the church supports this version, and can lead us to give it preference over the Hebrew or Chaldaic text of the Nazarenes.

Protestants claim the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles for the translation of the Gospel of St Matthew from Hebrew into Greek; some Catholic theologians claim that the ancient Latin translation of the New Testament was inspired in the same way. It makes more sense to see this inspiration only in the original Scripture, which was later translated into various languages according to the needs and requirements of the churches. If we believe Casaubon and some other Protestants, only the Greek version of St Matthew is Canonical, because the church has placed it in its Canon of sacred books, not the Syriac version (though it is very old) nor any other translation.⁵ But where does it say that in placing the book of St Matthew among the canonical books, the church was referring solely to the Greek text, and excluded all the others? It refers only in general terms to the Gospel of St Matthew, which is divine and canonical in any language. Nonetheless it can be said that some nations have more accurate translations than others. This is no reason for saying that they do not all have a canonical text of the Gospel of St Matthew. Greek- and Latin-speaking Christians, followed by the Syrians, do have the benefit of other Christians having the oldest and most accurate texts. But there is no Christian nation that does not believe that it possesses the true Gospel of St Matthew, even though what they all have is simply copies.

It seems that Casaubon, who is usually moderate in his views, did not give the matter sufficient thought when he blindly took sides with a few

⁴ Casaubon, *De rebus sacris et ecclesiasticis exercitationes xvi, ad cardinal. Baronii Prolegomena in Annales et primam eorum partem ...*, 343.

⁵ Casaubon, *ibid.*

Protestants against Baronius. I am not saying I support everything that the Cardinal has put forward in this matter; but it seems to me that it is unjust to describe Catholics as heretics for defending the Hebrew text of St Matthew, in order allegedly to downgrade the status of the Greek text.⁶ Defending the Hebrew text of St Matthew takes nothing away from the status of the Greek version. The only claim here is that the Hebrew, and not the Greek, is the original; and that if that original had come down to us, there would be a case for giving it preference over the Greek version which is merely a translation. However as the Hebrew text has not been preserved intact in the Orthodox churches, and as it was, on the other hand, corrupted by the Ebionite heretics who did adopt it, the surviving fragments we have are considered apocryphal. By apocryphal is meant only that these documents are doubtful, not forged or fabricated; which is no reason for the surviving uncorrupted passages not to serve a useful purpose. We have already cited an example taken from St Jerome's commentaries on St Matthew.

It is to be wished that today we might have the complete Hebrew or Chaldaic Gospel with interpolations by the Nazarenes and alterations by the Ebionites; we would not place it among the Gospels forged by imposters, as Casaubon has injudiciously done; on the contrary it would represent for us the earliest document of the Christian religion. A possible hypothesis is that the Greek translator of the Hebrew original of St Matthew made abridgments, and sometimes took the liberty of translating the meaning rather than the words. It seems that even if nowhere else did he take liberties of this kind, he does so in the quotations from the Old Testament which are closer to the Greek Septuagint than the Hebrew text. However as St Matthew was writing his Gospel for Hebrews who read the Bible in Hebrew in their synagogues, it seems hardly likely that he would have reproduced the passages from the Old Testament differently than they appeared in their own copies. For this early Greek version to be seen as authoritative, it is enough that it was read in the churches founded by the apostles, and that it has come down through the centuries to us through consistent traditions. To show that the Greek text of St Matthew was authentic, we must rely not on the fanciful reasons of Protestants, but on this same continuous tradition in the churches.

The existence of this tradition in all churches of the world is the answer to the heretics who believed that several passages of the Gospel of St Matthew are interpolations or corruptions. The well known Manichean, Faustus,

⁶ *Ibid.*, 343–344.

unable to reconcile the genealogy of Jesus Christ at the start of St Matthew with the basic principles held by his sect, sought for explanations to show the genealogy was false, instead of considering that it had the same status as the rest of the Gospel which had always been accepted by the church. Unable to reconcile the different genealogies presented in St Matthew and St Luke, he ignores them in favour of St Mark and St John who had nothing to say on the subject⁷ and who both present Jesus as the son of David: St John calls him God; St Mark, son of God, from which Faustus draws the conclusion that the circumstances of the birth of Jesus Christ were not as St Matthew and St Luke had written.

Replying to Faustus, St Augustine says that he was not the first to notice this apparent contradiction in the two Evangelists and that countless scholars, especially in the Greek church, left no stone unturned to resolve this, as he himself attempts to do in that same passage. At the same time he condemns the Manichaeans' rejection of anything that went against their ideas as a forgery. In fact they held their views so rigidly that Faustus dismissed the Catholics who accepted the genealogy at the start of St Matthew as not Catholics, but Matthew sectarians, also stating that the genealogy was at variance with their creed. You must admit, he continues, that St Matthew was not the author of this genealogy (Faustus scoffingly terms it a "Genesisidium"), or that you have forsaken the creed of the apostles.⁸

But even without examining all of Faustus' objections in detail, it was simple to demonstrate that the genealogy had already been read in the churches since the time of the apostles; and that, as St Augustine says, the Catholic and apostolic church believed that Jesus Christ is the son of God by the virtue of his divinity and son of David by virtue of the flesh; and that this truth was so clearly proved by the writings of the apostles that unless these latter were dismissed entirely, that truth was not to be questioned.⁹

The same reasoning demolishes the objections raised by certain Anabaptists, referred to by Sisto da Siena and Baronius. As their objections are virtually the same as the Manichaeans', it is pointless to dwell on them. They contest St Matthew's account of the Magi coming to worship Jesus in the cradle, and the story of the massacre of the infants by Herod. Their evidence for this is that the other Evangelists and the contemporary historian Josephus do not mention them.

⁷ Augustine, *Against Faustus* bk. 3 ch. 1 (PL 42:213).

⁸ Augustine, *Against Faustus* bk. 23 ch. 2 (PL 42:468).

⁹ Augustine, *Against Faustus* bk. 23 ch. 5 (PL 42:468).

Sisto da Siena shrewdly responds that on that basis they could not believe in the resurrection of Lazarus because only St John records it; the silence of Josephus moreover proves nothing because he overlooks several other events which are unquestionably factual.¹⁰ People who make objections of this kind should have positive proof to support them, such as the variations within the early manuscripts, and cite some of them from which these stories are omitted. Had they proceeded thus, they could have objected with some plausibility that the stories had been added afterwards. However the stories are present in all our most ancient sources, and have been quoted since those early days by the arch-enemies of the Christian religion. They appeared in the Gospel as read by Celsus just as we understand them today.¹¹ Porphyry and Julian also had reservations about the Gospel of Matthew, and indeed about all the books in the New Testament;¹² but those reservations will be looked at later in this book.

¹⁰ Sisto da Siena (Dominican, 1520–1569), *Bibliotheca sancta, ... ex praecipuis catholicae ecclesiae auctoribus collecta ... ab eodem auctore ...* (Cologne: Cholin, 1626), 739B [BnF Q-451].

¹¹ Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.27 (1:356).

¹² On Porphyry and Julian, see *infra*, ch. 21 n. 22–23 and ch. 22 nn. 11, 22, and ch. 13 n. 5.

CHAPTER TEN

THE DATES AND ORDER OF THE GOSPELS. GREEK MANUSCRIPT COPIES OF ST MARK CITED IN THIS REGARD. HIS GOSPEL GENERALLY BELIEVED TO BE THE SECOND. HIS ROLE AS ST PETER'S INTERPRETER

Although some ecclesiastical writers carefully marked the time at which they believed each evangelist published his Gospel, this cannot be ascertained because of the unavailability of old and reliable texts to rely on. I shall only report therefore on what I have read at the end of a few manuscript copies. Judging by the script, the earliest of the manuscripts that I have seen is at most 700 years old. It is written in large letters with accents and full stops and is kept in Mr Colbert's library, brought there from Cyprus. There are also several others in the King's Library where the time of each Gospel is marked.¹ As I have said, however, these manuscripts are not old. Indeed, the oldest do not contain any such notes, as it was customary in those early times to simply add to the end of each book of the New Testament, *End of a given Book, Beginning of another Book*.

Returning to the manuscripts that contain the dates of the Gospels, here is what is indicated in the copy from Cyprus that is kept in Mr Colbert's library:² *The Gospel according to Matthew was published by himself*

¹ On Colbert's Library, and the King's Library (Bibliothèque du Roi, present-day Bibliothèque nationale de France), see Alfred Franklin, *Les Anciennes Bibliothèques de Paris* tome II (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1870), 107–218; an illustrative map is to be found on 172.

² *Codex Cypricus* (BnF Greek manuscript 63 [formerly Colbert MS. 5149], Caspar Gregory K 017). Brought from Cyprus to Paris in 1673, Codex Cypricus is the oldest surviving complete witness to the Byzantine text of the Gospels. A detailed discussion and collation of the manuscript was provided in part II (*Commentatio inauguralis de codice Cyprio ...*, 53–89) of *Curæ criticae in historiam textus Evangeliorum ... Bibliothecae regiae parisiensis codices N.T. complures, speciatim vero Cypricum ...* (Heidelberg: Mohr and Winter, 1820) by Johann Martin Augustin Scholz (1820). For description and illustration, see Plate LXXV in the still authoritative survey by William H.P. Hatch, *The Principal Uncial manuscripts of the New Testament* (Univ. Chicago Press, 1939). R. Simon dates Codex Cypricus from the tenth century at the earliest; and whilst NA²⁷, 691, dates the manuscript from the 9th century, this dating is disputed by Hatch ("A Redating of two important uncial manuscripts of the Gospels—Codex Zacynthius and Codex Cypricus," *Quantulacumque: Studies presented to Kirsopp Lake by pupils, colleagues and friends* ed. R.P. Casey, S. and A.K. Lake [London: Christophers, 1937], 333–338),

in Jerusalem eight years after the ascension of Jesus Christ. The words in Jerusalem are written in a more recent hand than the rest. The Gospel according to Mark was published ten years after the ascension of Jesus Christ. The Gospel according to Luke was published fifteen years after the ascension of Jesus Christ.

In another copy that is kept in the King's Library, and which includes the whole New Testament, the date of each Gospel is presented at the beginning of the Gospels as follows: *The Holy Gospel according to Matthew written in the Hebrew language was published in Jerusalem and was interpreted by John eight years after the ascension of Our Lord; The Gospel according to Mark was published ten years after the ascension of Our Lord and was preached by Peter in Rome; The Gospel according to Luke was published fifteen years after the ascension of Jesus Christ and was preached by Paul in Rome; The Gospel according to John was preached by himself in the island of Patmos thirty years after the ascension of Jesus Christ.*³

What precedes shows the belief of the Greek Church regarding the time at which each Gospel was written, and although we cannot regard this as being reliable evidence from genuine texts, we can nonetheless infer that St Mark was second in rank among the evangelists, if we take into consideration the time when they wrote. This is also the order in which they are ranked in a fairly large number of the manuscript copies I have read. However they are differently ordered in the Cambridge Greek and Latin copy, which is one of the oldest that we have today, and contains the four Gospels with the Acts of the Apostles. In this copy, St John follows immediately after St Matthew, St Luke after St John, and St Mark is the last of the four. This order cannot be attributed to the person who put together the folios of the manuscript because the arrangement of the Gospels is marked at the end of each Gospel. Here is what can be read at the end of St Matthew: *end of the Gospel according to St Matthew, beginning of the Gospel according to John*; then at the end of St John's, we can read: *end of the Gospel according to*

on the grounds that the manuscript is evidently descended from others which cannot be dated earlier than CE 1000, and that "the script of Codex Cyprius is most like that which is found in manuscripts of the tenth century and the early part of the eleventh. Although differences in the forms of certain letters can be noted, the handwriting ... bears a striking resemblance to that of three gospel lectionaries (l 3, 296, 1599) of the tenth and eleventh centuries" (338). R. Simon further cites this Codex in ch. 32 of the present work; in ch. 11, he refers to an even earlier [8th century] ms. of the gospels which, in his time, was held in the King's Library.

³ BnF Greek manuscript 2403.

*John, beginning of the Gospel according to Luke; and at the end of St Luke we find: end of the Gospel according to Luke, beginning of the Gospel according to Mark; and finally the following words can be read at the end of St Mark, end of the Gospel according to Mark, beginning of the Acts of the Apostles.*⁴ This way of marking the end of a book and the beginning of the following one is simple, and is the oldest. None other is encountered in the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament. The manuscript copy of the Epistles of St Paul that is kept in the library of the Benedictine monks at the Abbey of Saint-Germain,⁵ and which is in no way inferior in antiquity or beauty of script to the Cambridge copy,⁶ marks the order of St Paul's epistles in the same way. On the other hand, in the more recent manuscripts and in the printed books, a few other circumstances have been added, indicating the place where the epistles were written and the persons by whom they were sent. Moreover, the order of the Gospels followed in the Cambridge manuscript is not unusual, as it is also encountered in an old catalogue of the books of the Bible which appears at the end of the Benedictines' manuscript copy that we have just discussed. It seems that this change was made by the Latin copyists who reproduced the Greeks' copies for their own use. An early Benedictine monk, Druthmar, claims to have seen a manuscript that was similar to the Cambridge copy, where St John's Gospel followed immediately after St Matthew's. It was believed that this copy had once been in Saint-Hilaire.⁷

However these differences in order of appearance in the copies of the Gospel in no way refute the universal belief of the ecclesiastical writers, all of whom rank St Mark as the second amongst the evangelists. It is also commonly believed that he was merely a disciple of the apostles and that therefore he could not have been an eyewitness to the facts he has related. He only published what he had learned from them, and mainly from St Peter, of whom he is said to have been the interpreter. "Mark," said St Irenaeus,

⁴ Codex Bezae, 6th c. (Cambridge University Library, Nn. 2. 41, Caspar Gregory D 05; see ch. 30 of the present work).

⁵ The Codex Sangermanensis (see following note).

⁶ Codex Claromontanus (BnF Greek manuscript 107, Caspar Gregory D 06, the so-called "second part" of the Codex Bezae; see ch. 31 of the present work). The Codex Sangermanensis, now in St Petersburg (St Petersburg ms. F v. 20), though a virtual copy of Codex Claromontanus (it is also designated D^{abs} for *Abschrift* "copy"), is however much more recent in date (9th c.), and does contain minor "variants" (see *infra*, ch. 31 nn. 2, 8).

⁷ Christian Druthmar, *Expositio in Matheum evangelistam familiaris, luculenta et lectu jucunda, cum epithomatibus in Lucam et Joannem. San-Martini episcopi ad Mironem regem ...* (Strasbourg: Grüniger, 1514), VIII col. B [BnF RES. A-1185].

“interpreter and follower of Peter,”⁸ as though St Peter had only preached this Gospel and that it had then been written down by St Mark. This view is very old, for Papias, who had learned of it from one of the disciples of the apostles, presents it after him in these terms. *Mark, who had been Peter’s interpreter, wrote down everything exactly as he remembered without, however, keeping the words and actions of Jesus Christ in the same order. For, since he had not followed him, he had not personally listened to Jesus Christ; but he had followed Peter who preached to the people according to their needs, without being particular about putting the words of Jesus Christ in order. This is why we cannot accuse Mark of any mistake, given that he reported some facts as he remembered them. His only aim was not to forget anything of what he had heard and not to say anything that was untrue.*⁹

This statement by Papias confirms what was said above, that the Gospels are merely collections of the apostles’ sermons, that were put into writing without particular attention to the time when the related facts took place. Indeed, these holy writers put more effort into recording a true history than into preserving full details of the exact sequence of occurrence in time. In addition, we learn from Clement of Alexandria that it was in Rome that St Peter publicly preached the Gospel; and that Mark, who had followed this holy apostle for a long time, put it into writing at the request of the local brethren. He even adds that upon learning of this, St Peter did not stop him, nor did he exhort him to do so.¹⁰ Nevertheless Eusebius states, on the authority of this same Clement, that when St Peter learned of the great eagerness expressed by the brethren in Rome to have his sermons in writing, he approved what Mark had already collected so that, after his authorisation, it could be read in the churches.¹¹

In his Catalogue of ecclesiastical writers, St Jerome merely copied and abridged the words of Eusebius in his own way, saying of St Mark: *Mark, the disciple and interpreter for Peter of Peter’s preaching, at the request of the brethren in Rome, wrote a short gospel. When St Peter had heard it, he gave his approval, and by his authority the Church appointed it to be read.*¹² The author of the *Synopsis* of the Holy Scriptures also believed that St Mark merely published the sermons of St Peter. *The Gospel according to Mark*, writes this author, *was preached in Rome by Peter the apostle and was published*

⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* bk. 3 ch. 10,6 (6:134).

⁹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.15 (1:156–157).

¹⁰ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.14.5 (1:107).

¹¹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.15.2 (1:71).

¹² Jerome, “Mark,” *Authors of Scripture* (PL 23:621).

by the blessed apostle Mark, who also preached it in Alexandria, in Egypt, in Pentapolis and in Libya.¹³ In short, all of antiquity believed, in accordance with Papias, who was a contemporary of the apostles, that St Mark's Gospel is just a collection of St Peter's sermons as he himself interpreted them. Moreover, most of the Fathers have affirmed at the same time that this collection had been made in Rome at the request of the early Christians of this city.

Papias nevertheless says nothing of the location in the passage that we have cited above, and St Irenaeus mentions it in different terms from the other Fathers. He claims that St Mark did not write down his Gospel before the deaths of St Peter and St Paul. At least this is the meaning that makes most sense from his words as they are reported in the Old Latin edition of the works of this Father,¹⁴ for this is what he says:¹⁵ *Matthew set down the gospel message for the Hebrews in their own language when Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome, and founding the Church. After their passing, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, conveyed to us in writing those things that had been proclaimed by Peter.*¹⁶ Eusebius related in Greek these same words of St Irenaeus.¹⁷ In his edition of the works of this Father, Feuardent noted that these words *post horum excessum* are not encountered in Eusebius.¹⁸ However it is possible to persuade him of the contrary by Eusebius's Greek, where we find μετὰ δὲ τὴν τούτων ἔξοδον, which St Irenaeus's early interpreter has translated as *post horum excessum*, and Rufinus *post quorum exitum*. What misled Feuardent is that Christopherson did not translate the phrase thus in his Latin version, as he believed that the Greek μετὰ δὲ τὴν τούτων ἔξοδον should be *quo edito* in Latin.¹⁹

¹³ *Synopsis Scripturae sacrae* (ascr. Athanasius) (PG 28:433).

¹⁴ The first Latin translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* was that of *Tyrannius Rufinus* or Rufinus of Aquileia (345–410), published in 402 or 403.

¹⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* bk. 3 ch. 1,1 (6:22–24).

¹⁶ Latin *post vero horum excessum*.

¹⁷ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.8.2–3 (2:35).

¹⁸ François Feuardent (1539–1610—ed.), *Divi Irenaei, Lugdunensis episcopi, et martyris, Adversus Valentini et similium gnosticorum haereses libri quinque ...* (Cologne: Mylius, 1696), 229–230 and n. 5. Feuardent here also provides Eusebius's rendering of Epiphanius's words, and the Latin version by John Christopherson (bishop of Chichester, † 1558), who translates these words *quo quidem edito* ("when this had been proclaimed"), also noting that in Rufinus's text, the translation is *post quorum exitum*.

¹⁹ John Christopherson, *Οἱ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἱστορίας Συγγραφεῖς Ἕλληνοί. Historiae ecclesiasticae scriptores graeci, nempe: Eusebii, cognomento Pamphili, ... Historiae ecclesiasticae libri X ...* (Geneva: La Rovière, 1612), 127. Marginal note reads: Ch. [sic] Τὴν ἔκδοσιν ("desisting").

If this reading were based on a few manuscript copies, there is no doubt that it should be preferred to the other. But it seems that Christopherson purposely reworked this passage in his translation, in order to harmonise St Irenaeus with the other Greek Fathers. This should never be done. For if it were permitted to change the text of the old ecclesiastical writers in those passages where they are not in agreement, especially in the case of chronology, and indications of time, they would have to be revised. This is why Jacques Grynæus judiciously restored this passage in the edition he prepared, with his corrections of Christopherson's version. In the body of his translation, he has *post obitum autem illorum*, and the Greek words μετὰ ἔξοδον in the margin, to show that this is what should be read, and not μετὰ ἔκδοσιν.²⁰ Monsieur de Valois followed this same reading in his History of Eusebius and he put *post horum interitum* in his Latin version.²¹ In his note on this passage, he even points out that Christopherson's translation is contrary to all of the Greek copies and to Rufinus.²² It should be noted, however, that the Greek word ἔξοδος and the Latin *excessus* or *exitus*, used by Rufinus and St Irenaeus's interpreter, is ambiguous because it means "exit" as well as "death." In the first sense, St Irenaeus would only have meant that St Mark published his Gospel after St Peter and St Paul had left Rome.

It was St John Chrysostom's belief, contrary to that of most of the Fathers, that St Mark wrote his Gospel in Egypt, and not in Rome. Yet he does not support his opinion by reference to any early texts but only by what was commonly held, namely that just as St Matthew had composed his Gospel at the request of the Jews whom he had converted to the faith of Jesus Christ, and who wished to have his sermons in writing, St Mark had also written his Gospel at the request of his disciples in Egypt.²³ This seems all the more probable, as the apostles and their disciples occupied the whole of their time with preaching the Gospel, and they would never have thought of putting their preaching in writing if they had not been urged to do so by the people they were instructing. I have no doubt that St John Chrysostom had in mind this general maxim of the apostles and their disciples, and that

²⁰ Johann Jakob Grynæus (1540–1617—ed.), *Eusebii Pamphili, Ruffini, Socratis, etc. ... Ecclesiastica historia, sex prope seculorum res gestas complectens, latine jam olim a doctissimis viris partim scripta, partim e graeco a clarissimis viris Vuolfgango Musculo, Joachimo Camerario et Joanne Christophersono, ... eleganter conversa, et nunc ex fide graecorum codicum ...* (Basel: Episcopius, 1570), 64.

²¹ Henri de Valois (1603–1676—ed.), *Eusebii Pamphili Ecclesiasticae historiae libri decem* ... (Paris: Le Petit, 1678), 140.

²² *Ibid.*, *Adnotationes* (separately paginated), 83B.

²³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew I:3 (PG 57:17).

he considered St Mark as being the first apostle of Egypt. It is not that we can easily reconcile the belief of this learned bishop with that of the other Fathers, by saying that St Mark gave his Gospel to the brethren of Rome as an interpreter of St Peter who preached the religion of Jesus Christ in this great city, and that later he also gave it to the first Christians of Egypt as an apostle or bishop. However we cannot ascertain anything on this subject except in general terms, because we lack reliable texts on which to base our judgment. That is why it is not surprising that the Fathers do not agree amongst themselves, especially when they discuss facts of this kind, as these are often supported by conjecture alone.

It seems that St Augustine considered St Mark only as an abridger of St Matthew's Gospel.²⁴ "Mark," says this Father, "a follower of Peter, seems to have been his manservant and an abbreviator." Indeed, if we compare these two Gospels, we will find not only the same things, but also the same expressions, that St Mark sometimes abridges, as though he had only intended to provide St Matthew's Gospel in abridged form. This would appear to prove that the latter may have written in Greek and not in Hebrew or Chaldaic, unless it can be said that the Greek version of St Matthew's Gospel was already public when St Mark composed his own. Grotius believes, on the contrary, that St Mark used St Matthew's Hebrew Gospel and that later on, the person who translated it from Hebrew to Greek used St Mark's Greek copy, having only attenuated some manners of speech that were excessively influenced by Hebrew, in order to respect the spirit of the Greek language.²⁵ But this can only be conjecture.

It should be noted that St Mark cannot be considered as a mere abridger of St Matthew, since his text is longer than that of the latter in certain passages. This is aside from the fact that, had he intended to publish only an abridged version of the Gospel according to St Matthew, he would not have removed the whole genealogy of Jesus Christ, which is one of its principal parts. It is not the practice of those who abridge the works of others to cut out the most significant parts. This is where we have to be careful, for we would without thought lend authority to the belief of the Ebionites and the Manichaeans that the genealogy that appears in the beginning of St Matthew and St Luke was added at a later date by later writers, who had, according to them, altered and interpolated these two Gospels.

²⁴ Augustine, *Evangelists' Assent*, bk. 1 ch. 2 § 4 (PL 34:1044).

²⁵ Grotius, Annotations on Matthew's Title (*Opera omnia theologica ...*, tome II 1:5B).

The role of St Mark as St Peter's interpreter, on which the early Doctors of the Church are in agreement, is not without problems. For how can it be, we might ask, that this apostle who had received the gift of tongues from the Holy Spirit, needed an interpreter, whether to write or to speak in public? But there is nothing very surprising about that. St Paul, who had a very good knowledge of the Greek language, having learned it as a youth in Tarsus where Greek was spoken, nonetheless used Titus as his interpreter. This is why St Jerome, when explaining these words of the apostle, *God who consoles the afflicted, consoled us with the arrival of Titus* (2 Corinthians 7:6), shows that the presence of Titus was a joy to St Paul as, in his absence, he had not been able to preach the Gospel as he would have liked because Titus, who was his interpreter, and who spoke Greek better than he did, served as his mediator for announcing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people.²⁶ He grants St Paul all possible knowledge of the Holy Books and of the languages, but St Paul could not, he claims, express the full majesty of the divine oracles in a sufficiently elevated manner.²⁷ This obliged him to take Titus as his interpreter, just as St Peter used St Mark to fulfil the same function. We know that Josephus himself, who had a complete mastery of Greek, and who had studied it diligently, says that he was not able to pronounce it well because of his mother tongue.²⁸

Baronius, who had reservations about this example regarding the case of Josephus, still could not give unqualified support to St Jerome.²⁹ He is convinced that the apostles, who had received the gift of tongues from God, did not receive an imperfect gift and that therefore they knew how to pronounce Greek as well as Hebrew. This is why he resorts to another kind of interpreter that is mentioned in the first Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians (verses 27–28). Since there were sometimes people of different countries and languages in the early Christian assemblies, it was necessary to have some interpreters to explain in their languages what the apostles were saying in the local language. Indeed, St Paul mentions the Church of Corinth, which was composed of many Jews who spoke Chaldaic or Syriac. This is what seems to have brought about St Paul's whole discourse on the gift of prophecy and the gift of tongues. This holy apostle excludes no one from the assembly. He permits that those who did not know the language of the country should speak their own language despite the fact that the others

²⁶ Jerome, Epistle 120 [to Hedibia *De Quaestiones XII* ch. 11] (PL 22:1002).

²⁷ Ibid. (PL 22:1001–1002).

²⁸ See *supra*, ch. 6 n. 6.

²⁹ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:388 (CE 45 n. 34).

did not understand it. His only wish is that in such cases, an interpreter be used as was the custom in the synagogues of the time. He says: *He who prophesies is preferable to one who speaks an unknown language, unless he is an interpreter, so that the Church might thus be edified.* (1 Corinthians 14:5)

However, it is obvious that Papias and the other early ecclesiastical writers did not intend to single out this kind of interpreter when they said that St Mark had been the interpreter of St Peter. Baronius himself believed that St Peter had written the epistles in Hebrew or in Syriac and that they had then been translated into Greek. He suggests that St Mark, who was his interpreter, translated the first of them.³⁰ Be that as it may, I see no reason to prevent St Peter and the apostles who did not have perfect command of the Greek language, from being given real interpreters, whether for speaking or writing. It is in this sense that the whole of antiquity has given St Mark the title of interpreter of St Peter.

³⁰ Ibid., col. 385 (CE 45 n. 28—Baronius makes no mention of Syriac).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

IN WHICH LANGUAGE DID ST MARK WRITE HIS GOSPEL? THE LAST TWELVE VERSES OF HIS GOSPEL ARE LACKING IN SEVERAL GREEK MANUSCRIPTS

Cardinal Baronius in his *Annals* left no stone unturned in the attempt to prove that St Mark, St Peter's interpreter in Rome, wrote his Gospel in Latin. He does admit that St Jerome and St Augustine hold other views. But he could have added that the consensus of the whole of antiquity was that St Mark wrote his Gospel in Greek; Baronius, author of the Lives of the Popes, was the first to state the contrary. For although our Cardinal, in support of what he says, quotes St Gregory of Nazianzus, all the latter says is that St Mark published his Gospel for speakers of Latin, and not *in* Latin. Hence the Jesuit Maldonado says without hesitation that apart from St Matthew, who wrote in Hebrew, the early Church writers all agree that the other Evangelists wrote in Greek.¹

Admittedly, at the end of St Mark in the Syriac version, it does say that he preached his Gospel in Latin in the city of Rome. But we know full well how much weight is carried by notations of this kind at the beginning and end of sacred books, especially in translations coming from the East. Although the same statement occurs in the Arabic and Persian versions, I take no account of these because they were translated from the Syriac. Like the biographer of the Popes and Baronius after him, the Syrians mistakenly believed that since St Mark was in Rome he could only have written his Gospel in the language of that country, because he put it together at the request of the faithful in that city, who spoke Latin. It is inconceivable, says our learned annalist, that the apostles could have proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in languages other than those in use among those nations.² He overlooks the fact that St Peter came to Rome to preach the Gospel to those of his own kind; and that, accordingly, St Mark must have published it in the language they knew best. Now the Jews throughout the Roman Empire, and even most

¹ Maldonado, Preface to Gospels ch. 5 (1:9).

² Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:389 (CE 45 n. 37).

of them who were in Rome at the time, definitely knew Greek, whereas very few of them knew Latin. Grotius rightly observes this at the outset in his annotations on St Mark.³

This suffices to refute all the arguments of Baronius who cannot understand how St Mark in Rome could fulfil his duties as interpreter without speaking and writing in any other language but Latin. In Rome, says the Cardinal, St Peter did speak the Roman language. So how could his interpreter, St Mark, have translated the apostles' preachings from Latin into Greek? If, he says, St Peter actually spoke Greek or Hebrew, as interpreter St Mark would only have put what he said into Latin. If it be thought that St Peter spoke to the Jews in Rome in the language they understood and that, at the request of these newly converted Jews, St Mark collected the apostle's preaching in that same language, Baronius's line of reasoning proves nothing.

To all these arguments Baronius adds the evidence of St Mark's style. He claims that anyone who knows Greek will easily see that St Mark wrote his Gospel in Latin because it contains several wrong words which are not Greek at all but Latin words Hellenized. The authority he quotes is Cardinal Sirlet who carefully collected them. From which he concludes that the arguments he presents to show that St Mark wrote in Latin are so strong that they are tantamount to proof.⁴

However, to those familiar with scriptural exegesis, his arguments cannot seem other than very weak. If this last example proves anything, it would also prove that the other Evangelists also wrote in Latin since their Gospels contain expressions that are comparable, that is to say Latin words Hellenized. It would also prove that the Syriac and Arabic versions of the Bible were originally written in Greek, then translated into Syriac and Arabic because the translations contain several Greek words which had been Syriacised and Arabified. Since St Mark in Rome supposedly wrote in Greek, there was nothing unusual about his using several Hellenized Latin words. It is customary for all peoples who speak a foreign language to include some words from their own language. Hence St Mark would have spoken the Greek commonly in use in Rome and in several other cities of the Empire where the Greeks had taken over various Latin words.

This whole discussion could quickly be settled if it were true, as claimed by the inhabitants of Venice, that the actual original of St Mark is still

³ Grotius, Annotations on Mark's Title (*Opera omnia theologica ...*, tome II 1:291B).

⁴ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:391 (CE 45 n. 41).

preserved there today. But a popular tradition of this kind, for which antiquity provides no basis, was not to be readily accepted by Baronius. Chacon, who wrote the Lives of the Popes, discusses the matter sceptically. Unlike Baronius, he makes no magisterial pronouncement that St Mark wrote it in Latin, though he does cite the archives of the Venetians, who claim they have the true original of St Mark. He relies mainly on evidence from the Syrians, and the unlikelihood of a Gospel intended for Latin speakers being in any other language but Latin. Despite this he leaves the matter unsolved.⁵ To give heed to this author is to believe that St Mark only wrote his Gospel for people who spoke Latin. At that rate it is no surprise to me that the original should be kept in the treasure house of San Marco in Venice.

It remains to discuss the last twelve verses of this Gospel, which are absent from several Greek manuscripts.⁶ St Jerome, who saw a great number of such manuscripts, says in his letter to Hedibia that in his time very few Greek manuscripts included them:⁷ this word *capitulum* in St Jerome must not be taken, as most New Testament commentators have done, to mean the whole final chapter of St Mark but only from the words Ἀναστὰς δὲ *And rising* in verse 9 to the end, as is borne out by the manuscripts I have looked at in regard to this passage; it will be shown later in this book that early church writers meant something quite different by the word *capitulum* "chapter" than what we understand today as the chapters in the New Testament and the whole Bible.

Grotius and several others do not believe that St Mark could possibly have left the whole story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ out of his Gospel.⁸ Nor can he conceive of its being written and subsequently lost, so that the passage we read today was added by a later writer. It is incredible, he says, that this should have happened to a book of which so many copies were made immediately it was published, or that the supposed author of the extra verses would have followed St Matthew. He further says that the Latin, Syriac and Arabic versions have this chapter, and that St Irenaeus, a very early witness, knew it. He does however admit that it is not in some Greek manuscripts from the time of St Gregory of Nyssa.⁹ In fine he considers that, for the reasons given, this gap in the Greek manuscripts must be due to

⁵ Alfonso Chacon, *Vitae et res gestae pontificum romanorum et S.R.E. cardinalium, ab initio nascentis ecclesiae usque ad Clementem IX ...* (Rome: Rubeo, 1677), 1:41 [BnF H-345 <vol. 1>].

⁶ On "The Ending(s) of Mark—16:9–20," see Metzger, *Commentary*, 102–106.

⁷ Jerome, Epistle 120 [to Hedibia *De Quaestiones XII* ch. 3] (PL 22:987).

⁸ Grotius, *Opera omnia theologica ...*, tome II 1:326.

⁹ St Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 330 – ca. 395, younger brother of St Basil).

copyists who, unable to reconcile what St Mark says about the resurrection of Jesus Christ with St Matthew's account, omitted the whole episode from the Marcan text. In fact this contradiction in the Gospels was used against Christians by the Emperor Julian; and in order to reconcile the two Gospels, learned Greek authors wrote books about this very point.

Maldonado on the other hand did not care for the view which ascribes this gap in the Greek manuscripts to the inability of copyists to reconcile St Mark and St Matthew at this point: if this were the real reason, the same procedure should have been applied to the last chapter of St Luke and the penultimate chapter of St John who are at even greater variance with St Matthew here than St Matthew is with St Mark. For a greater difference appears, says the learned Jesuit, between them and Matthew than between Matthew and Mark. He is also surprised that, having so carefully pointed out the differences between the manuscripts, St Jerome made so little effort to establish the status of this chapter, which cannot be dismissed as not belonging to the Gospel of St Mark.¹⁰

St Jerome's uncompromising words on the last twelve verses of St Mark were even more shocking to Baronius. The Cardinal can hardly believe that Jerome let slip words which seemed to undermine the authority of this final chapter.¹¹ Dealing with the request from Hedibia to reconcile the Gospels over the matter of the resurrection of our Lord, the learned Jerome says that the difficulty could be resolved in one of two ways.¹² The first is to reject the testimony of St Mark, which occurs in only a very small number of Greek manuscripts.

Using the words of St Jerome himself, Baronius does his utmost to show there is no reason to suspect that the closing chapter of St Mark was added afterwards. To refute Jerome he reproduces Jerome's own words from his second book against the Pelagians, where he observes that some Greek manuscripts contain a long addition at the end of the Gospel of St Mark; he also transcribes this added passage. From this the Cardinal concludes that according to what St Jerome himself says, not only was this chapter in the Greek manuscripts, but that some were to be found to which something had been added. He thus takes the opportunity of twisting the words of Jerome in his letter to Hedibia where, according to Baronius, he should not have said that this final chapter was missing from some Greek manuscripts,

¹⁰ Maldonado, *Commentarii* 3:145 (on Mark 16:1).

¹¹ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:226–227 (CE 34 n. 185).

¹² Jerome, *ibid.*

but only that a lengthy passage had been added which, he said, could have been the work of the Manichæans, who had corrupted some scriptural manuscripts.¹³ From this lastly he deduces that the Church corrected its Greek text on the basis of the Latin. Having expressed these arguments, he rebukes Cardinal Cajetan severely for taking the authority of St Jerome as grounds for doubting that the closing chapter of St Mark was genuine.

All things considered, however, I feel that Cajetan could have been less harshly treated for hesitating. I actually think that here Baronius simply copied Sisto da Siena, without investigating the matter properly. Had he looked at early Greek manuscripts, he would not have so blithely disregarded what St Jerome says about the last twelve verses of this chapter. Jerome makes a clear distinction between these verses of which he speaks in his letter to Hedibia, and the other added passage which he mentions in his second book against the Pelagians. So that the claim by Sisto da Siena that what St Jerome says can only apply to certain apocryphal passages added to some Greek manuscripts by unknown authors, is far from the truth.¹⁴ One has only to read what the holy doctor says, both in his epistle to Hedibia and his book against the Pelagians, to see that in both works he is obviously referring to two different additions. And so there can be no doubt in the matter, I shall set down here what I myself have been able to observe on this point from reading early manuscripts.

As already observed, we may take it that the whole of the final chapter of St Mark is not at issue, only the last twelve verses. This passage containing the story of the resurrection is what St Jerome calls *capitulum* "chapter." In the oldest Greek manuscript of the Gospels in the King's Library,¹⁵ after the words ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ *for they were afraid* (Mark 16:8) we read the following observation, written like the rest of the text, and in the same hand: φέρετε¹⁶ που καὶ ταῦτα "one source reads [literally 'in one place is provided'] also these things," followed by: Πάντα δὲ τὰ παρηγγελμένα τοῖς περὶ τὸν Πέτρον ... *But they reported briefly to Peter ...* After this, in the body of the text, and in the

¹³ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:227.

¹⁴ Sisto da Siena, *Bibliotheca sancta* ..., 743.

¹⁵ L 019 *Codex Regius*, 8th cent. (BnF Greek manuscript 62 [formerly King's Library MS. 2861]): for description and illustration, see W.H.P. Hatch, *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts of the New Testament* (Univ. Chicago Press, 1939), Plate XXXIX; also F.G. Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* [London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1896], plate VII 108.

¹⁶ In his text at this point R. Simon has inserted an asterisk before the word φέρετε, supplying the correct form φέρεται in the margin.

same writing, the manuscript reads: Ἔστιν¹⁷ δὲ καὶ ταῦτα φερόμενα μετὰ τὸ ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ “These things also are reported after the words *for they were afraid*: Ἀναστὰς δὲ; *And rising ...*,” and so on, up to the end of the Gospel. From this it can easily be seen that those who provided the glosses for this early Greek manuscript thought that the Gospel of St Mark finished with the words ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ.¹⁸ They did still include the rest, and in the same writing, but only in the form of an observation, because it was not read in their Church, which corresponds exactly to what St Jerome says in his letter to Hedibia. As these textual differences are substantial, it is fitting that I should also include some observations arising from this early manuscript Codex Regius.

It seems that Beza saw this manuscript, or at least one much the same; for he says in his notes on chapter 16 of St Mark, that in one manuscript he found the words Πάντα δὲ τὰ παρηγγελμένα ... added, along with the rest as reproduced above.¹⁹ But he should have made himself clearer on this point, and stated that the addition appeared in the manuscript only in the form of a *scholium* or note, and not as part of the text of the Gospel of St Mark: this is clearly what is in Codex Regius.

The same approach must be taken in assessing the other addition which St Jerome testifies to having seen in some Greek manuscripts, and which

¹⁷ R. Simon actually supplies the form Ἔστιν (from εἶναι “to be”) in the margin, here again “correcting” the apparent scribal lapse ἔστην (from ἰσθάναι “to establish”).

¹⁸ Enough has been written about the ending(s) of Mark to fill a small library. B. Metzger appropriately records (*Commentary*, 105 and n. 7) that “the earliest ascertainable form of the Gospel of Mark ended with 16.8.” A useful and cogent update, supporting this so-called “unsatisfying” or “discordant” ending, is that of Donald Harrisville Juel, “A Disquieting Silence: The Matter of the Ending” (B.R. Gaventa and P.D. Miller, *The Ending of Mark and the Ends of God* [Louisville/Harrow: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005], 1–13).

¹⁹ Theodore de Beza (ed.), *Jesu Christi Domini Nostri Novum Testamentum, sive Novum Foedus, cujus graeco contextui respondent interpretationes duae: una, vetus; altera, Theodori Bezae. Ejusdem Theod. Bezae annotationes ...* (Cambridge: Daniel, 1642 [BnF A-536; Dalton McCaughey Library ZR 1642–11799], a “corrected” edition, hereafter designated as *Novum Testamentum* [1642]), 148B. As in Beza’s 4th edition (1598), in addition to Beza’s commentary, this one contains, in parallel, the Vulgate text, Beza’s Latin translation, and largely the same Greek text as that of Robertus Stephanus’s 4th ed. (1551) of the Greek New Testament. “The importance of Beza’s work lies in the extent to which his editions tended to popularize and to stereotype the *Textus Receptus*. The King James translators of 1611 made large use of Beza’s editions of 1588–1589 and 1598” (Metzger—Ehrman, *Text*, 152). Indeed, as these authors also note, although Beza’s own manuscript collection included Codex Bezae and Codex Claromontanus (on which see ch. 10, 29 and 30 of the present work), “he made relatively little use of them. for they deviated too far from the generally *received text* [present editor’s italics] of the time” (*ibid.*, 151).

he explains as follows: In some manuscripts, notably in Greek codices, at the end of the Gospel according to Mark the following is written: "After this, when the eleven were reclining at table, Jesus appeared to them, and rebuked them for their disbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not taken the word of those who had seen him rising from the grave. And they made excuses to him, saying: Essentially this age of sinfulness and unbelief is such that it does not allow the true excellence of God to be understood through unclean spirits".²⁰ Evidently this was taken from one or two apocryphal Gospels, as we have already seen in the case of a similar passage taken from the Gospel of the Nazarenes. The Greek copyists thought they were displaying their scrupulous scholarship by including this in their manuscripts. At first they did this in the form of a comment; later copyists left the added passages in the text, but without including a note to say that they were only by way of commentary. As the added passages were not read in their Churches, they thought such minor annotations unnecessary.

Such a practice will serve to explain St Jerome's remark in his letter to Hedibia that most Greek manuscripts did not have the last chapter of St Mark, meaning the last twelve verses. Beza on the other hand protests that the chapter is found in all the ancient manuscripts he read. He did not take account of the fact that although the verses are in the early Greek manuscripts, in several of these they are included only as an extra, not part of the text. This is perfectly obvious in the early King's manuscript cited above. For although the words ἐφοβούντο γάρ and so on till the end of the Gospel are set down in the same writing as the body of the text, the additional note makes it quite clear that those who annotated this manuscript did not consider those words as part of the text. Beza noted also that these passages are indicated in the margin of the New Testament Greek manuscripts by letters of the alphabet, used as number or figures. These indications are in the early editions of the Greek New Testament by Erasmus, in the folio edition of Stephanus,²¹ and in some others. Now the King's manuscript contains no such indication alongside these twelve verses. This proves that they were not read in the Church of those who prepared this manuscript. This will all become even clearer later in this discussion, when I explain the purpose of these indications and passages in the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament.

²⁰ Jerome, *Dialogue against Pelagians* bk. 2 §15 (PL 23:550–551).

²¹ See *infra*, ch. 17 n. 16.

Euthymius has made shrewd and learned comments on the New Testament, confirming everything I have just presented, and also supporting the words of St Jerome in his letter to Hedibia. This is what he says about the words ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ in Mark 16:8: “Some commentators say that the Gospel of St Mark ends at this point, and that what follows is a later addition, though this too must be analysed, because everything in it is sound.”²²

Another manuscript of the Gospels in the King’s Library, quite early and very carefully transcribed, also contains this remark on that same passage: “In some manuscripts the Evangelist stops here; but several others contain the words Ἀναστὰς δὲ and the rest as far as the end of the Gospel.”²³ In this manuscript each small passage is marked for these final verses, as well as in all the rest of the Gospels, which proves that the verses were read in the Church where the copy was used. And the *Synaxarion* containing the Gospel lectionary for the whole year even shows the day when this Gospel is read. In the library of Mr Colbert, I have also seen a manuscript, meticulously copied, wherein the same note, expressed in the same terms, occurs after the words ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ.²⁴

I feel that these remarks which are based on reliable Greek manuscripts, more than adequately bear out St Jerome’s critical observation in his letter to Hedibia on the last twelve verses of the Gospel of St Mark. They cannot have been read in most Greek churches in his day. Jerome feels nonetheless that they must not be completely rejected, since he tries in this Epistle to reconcile St Mark with St Matthew, just as Euthymius does; and having noted that some New Testament commentators believed the words had been added, he still does not fail to analyse them, either as part of the Gospel of St Mark or separately from it.

Yet not withstanding all that precedes, there must be no doubt about the basic truth of the passage, which is just as old as the Gospel of St Mark itself. For this reason for the most part the Greeks all read it today in their churches, as can be demonstrated from their lectionaries. One such lectionary exists in manuscript form in the King’s Library. Admittedly the manuscript is not an early one; it is handsome nonetheless, and was used in

²² Euthymius Zigabenus (early 12th c.), *Commentaria in ... quatuor Christi evangelia ...* (PG 128:846). On Euthymius, see also R. Simon, *Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs du Nouveau Testament, depuis le commencement du Christianisme jusques a notre tems ...* (Rotterdam: Leers, 1693), ch. 29, 409–422.

²³ Minuscule 15 (BnF Greek manuscript 64, formerly King’s Library ms. 2868).

²⁴ Minuscule 22 (BnF Greek manuscript 72, 12th c., formerly Colbert ms. 2467).

a Church in Constantinople.²⁵ One can hardly find any evidence earlier than that of St Irenaeus, who was alive before the appearance of all this discussion of the differences in Greek manuscripts. This Father is very positive when quoting the end of the Gospel of St Mark: “At the end of the Gospel, Mark says: *And the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God.*” Here he specifically cites the nineteenth verse of the last chapter for this Gospel, which contains only twenty verses.²⁶

In any event there are no variants here in the earliest Latin or Syriac manuscripts. This goes to show that the verses were read using the Greek manuscripts from which the very early versions, especially the Latin text, were taken. They are also in the Cambridge manuscript, and the one called Alexandrinus, which are the two earliest Greek manuscripts of the Gospels which we possess in Europe.²⁷

²⁵ However R. Simon does not identify this MS.

²⁶ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* bk. 3 ch. 10,6 (6:136–138).

²⁷ But not in \aleph or B (Codex Sinaiticus or Codex Vaticanus: see Metzger, *Commentary*, 102–106).

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE GOSPEL OF ST LUKE. WHAT MADE HIM PUBLISH IT, GIVEN THE EXISTENCE OF TWO OTHERS PUBLISHED BEFORE HIS. OF MARCION AND HIS TEXT OF THE GOSPEL OF ST LUKE. THE CATHOLICS ALSO MADE SOME ALTERATIONS TO THIS GOSPEL

Early Church writers generally believed not only that St Mark compiled his Gospel from the preaching of St Peter for whom he acted as interpreter, but also that St Luke followed St Paul on his journeys, and simply made a compilation of the holy apostle's preaching. St Irenaeus says that Luke, who followed Paul, wrote down the Gospel that Paul preached.¹ Going by the testimony of these early writers, this Luke is the one mentioned by St Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians where he says, *My dear Luke the physician greets you.*² The writer of the Synopsis of Holy Scripture says Luke had the qualities of a blessed apostle and a Doctor, adding that he published the Gospel preached by St Paul.³ Nonetheless he must not be ranked among the actual apostles of Jesus Christ, as he was only their disciple. At the very beginning of his Gospel, Chapter 1, Verse 2, he himself says that he intended to base it solely on what he had learned from those who had witnessed the things he recorded. Hence Tertullian does not call him an apostle but an apostolic, saying that his expression is like that of St Mark who, he says, was simply a disciple of the apostles.⁴

At the outset of his story St Luke claims he is writing nothing in which he has not been properly instructed. Indeed his intention was to steer the faithful away from various false Gospels which had been published in his lifetime; and in case anyone objected that he did not possess the requisite qualities of an historian, because he had not himself witnessed the facts that he reported, he at first anticipates this objection in the preface to his Gospel where he claims to have set forth nothing that had not been reliably reported

¹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.8.3 (2:35).

² Colossians 4:14.

³ *Synopsis Scripturae sacrae* (PG 28:433).

⁴ Tertullian, *Against Marcion* bk. 4 ch. 2 PL 2:364.

to him by those who had seen those things with their own eyes. This led St Jerome to say that St Luke had written his Gospel on the basis of what he had heard, and the Acts of the Apostles on the basis of what he himself had seen.⁵ St Irenaeus too observes that the Evangelist faithfully recorded what he had been told by the apostles.⁶

We cannot be certain at what time St Luke wrote his Gospel. Grotius, following other writers, conjectures that he published it at the same time as the Acts of the Apostles, shortly after St Paul left Rome to go to Spain, because his account of Acts closes at about that time.⁷ If we are to believe St Jerome, he wrote it in Achaia, when St Paul was journeying in that country.⁸ Baronius uses the authority of Jerome to refute Euthymius and several other writers who claimed that St Luke had written fifteen years after the ascension of our Lord, which is also indicated at the end of several Greek manuscripts. This, says Baronius, is not possible, because it is known that neither St Luke nor St Paul went to Achaia at that time nor for a long time afterwards.⁹

However we have no exact documents to provide us with the exact time of the publication of this Gospel by St Luke. Broadly speaking we only know that the early Church writers all agree that he wrote after St Matthew and St Mark. This being so, one wonders for what reason this mere disciple of the apostles published a third Gospel being aware that the apostle Matthew who had witnessed most of what Jesus Christ did had already published one, which had been abridged by St Mark. These two Gospels were being used by all Christians at that time. What need was there for St Luke to provide another one, and even to say in his preface that those that had written before him on the subject were inaccurate?

It has led some writers to believe that the Gospels of St Matthew and St Mark had not yet been published when St Luke wrote his. But as it goes against all antiquity, Baronius claims that the two Gospels, one in Hebrew and the other, as he says, in Greek, were unknown at the time to the Greeks, and that they were therefore not available for St Luke and St Paul to teach them. Grotius too believed that St Matthew was not translated from Hebrew into Greek; and while granting that St Mark's Gospel was in Greek, says that as it was only an abridgment it could not have prevented St Luke from

⁵ Jerome, *On Distinguished Men* ch. 7 (PL 23:619).

⁶ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* bk. 3 ch. 14,2 (6:266).

⁷ Grotius, Annotations on Luke's Preface (*Opera omnia theologica* ..., tome 11, 1:330B).

⁸ Jerome, Intro. to Commentary on Matthew (PL 26:18).

⁹ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:580–581 (CE 58 n. 31).

writing his version.¹⁰ But there is nothing to show that until that time the Gospel of St Matthew was unknown to the Christians who spoke Greek, especially if we accept the view of Baronius and Grotius, according to whom St Luke did not write his Gospel until after St Paul had left Rome.

It is much more believable that this Evangelist, the faithful companion of St Paul, published his book because there were false apostles who were unsympathetic to Paul. Prevention is better than cure. Hence St Luke, seeing that false Gospels had been published in the places where he preached with St Paul, thought he should write a true one and leave this written account for the people he had taught. As his purpose was simply to prevent the spreading of false Gospels that were in circulation, it had nothing to do with St Matthew and St Mark. It is even possible that he wrote this Gospel at the request of his converts, especially Theophilus to whom it is addressed. As already observed, the other Evangelists wrote their Gospels because the people to whom they had proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ had asked them to do so.

Only the Gospel of Luke was accepted by Marcion and his followers who flourished at the time of St Epiphanius in Italy, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Arabia, Persia and several other countries.¹¹ They nonetheless suppressed various parts of it. Their text, moreover, did not bear the Evangelist's name, whether because they had received it in that form, or because it was not by St Luke. St Irenaeus criticises these heretics for making capricious alterations in Scriptures sanctioned by the Church on the basis of an unbroken tradition, and for accepting as legitimate only the sections of the Gospel of St Luke and the Epistles of St Paul which they had retained after making whatever cuts they liked in those books.¹² As they were thus flying in the face of all Church tradition, he says that these sectarians, who boasted of having a Gospel, did not have one at all.¹³

Tertullian wrote a book specifically against Marcion, whose disciples held that their Master had brought nothing new to religion when he distinguished the Law from the Gospel and that he simply re-established the principle of faith which had been corrupted.¹⁴ In accordance with the views of Cerdo,¹⁵ this heretic leader rejected the law and all the prophets;¹⁶ and by

¹⁰ Grotius, *ibid.*, 330B–331A.

¹¹ Epiphanius, *Heresy* 42 nn. 1, 1; 9, 1 (*Panarion*, 1:272, 278).

¹² Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* bk. 3 ch. 12,12 (6:232).

¹³ *Ibid.*, ch. 14,4 (6:274).

¹⁴ Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* IV,3 (PL 2:364).

¹⁵ Syrian gnostic of 2nd cent. CE.

¹⁶ Epiphanius, *Heresy* 42 n. 4, 1 (*Panarion*, 1:274).

way of authority for his innovations he based himself on the words of St Paul in his letter to the Galatians (2:6–16) where the Holy apostle said first that he had opposed Peter and some other apostles face to face because they were not proceeding in accordance with scriptural truth. Thence Marcion had taken the opportunity of altering, and even destroying the true Gospels in order to lend more authority to his own.¹⁷ Tertullian's response is that he could not accuse the apostles of falsifying the Gospel without at the same time accusing Christ Jesus who had chosen them. He further adds, that if Marcion accepted that their Gospel had been complete but that it had been interpolated by false apostles, and that it was the text with interpolations that was being used, he should at least make it clear what this original true Gospel, which had been corrupted, consisted of. Lastly he asks Marcion how he could have possibly been in possession of the true Gospel if this Gospel had been falsified to such an extent that none of the original remained.

Tertullian then says the true authority of the Gospel of St Luke is the universal consensus of the Churches founded by the apostles, and of the other churches to which they gave rise. These churches all retained the text of St Luke exactly in the same form as it was first published. Marcion's on the other hand was almost unknown; or in cases where it was known, it was also rejected. Tertullian further relies on this semi-ecclesiastical tradition to demonstrate to Marcion that he had no basis for choosing Luke's Gospel out of the four, casting the others aside as if they did not count, and as though they had not been as widely used as that of St Luke in all churches from the outset.¹⁸

He then deals with particular passages which Marcion had removed from his Gospel. He firstly objects to Marcion's suppressing the passage where Jesus Christ says that he had not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets but rather to fulfil them.¹⁹ This seems a baseless objection as those words are only in the Gospel of Matthew, which Marcion did not accept. Evidently Tertullian was confusing St Luke and St Matthew, finding something in the Gospel of Luke which is not there today. Tertullian's second objection is that Marcion removed the following from the Gospel: *I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel* (Matthew 15:24). This passage too is only in Matthew, and nowhere in St Luke. This could suggest that both of Tertullian's objections are about Marcion's Gospel in general, Tertullian evidently assuming Marcion had no reason for accepting one

¹⁷ Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* IV.3 (PL 2:365).

¹⁸ Tertullian, *ibid.*, IV.5 (PL 2:367).

¹⁹ Tertullian, *ibid.*, IV.7 (PL 2:370).

Gospel in preference to another; but in that case he was producing no specific evidence against his adversary. It is possible that Tertullian's Gospel text was not accurate and contained a mixture of readings from several Gospels. As St Epiphanius has provided a fuller discussion of the matter, with a careful examination of the passages from St Luke altered by Marcion in his text, we shall reproduce Epiphanius's observations here for a better acquaintance with the Marcionite Gospel.

In Marcion's Gospel the whole beginning of St Luke is omitted up to the words *In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar*, which is to say that the first two chapters of our edition were suppressed. Nor did he have, as we do, the particle δὲ, which means "now," providing a link with what precedes. St Epiphanius adds that as well as leaving passages out of his Gospel, Marcion retained no chronology or sequence and also made some additions which Epiphanius indicates in detail.²⁰ He noted the following changes, on which I shall comment.

In Luke 5:14, where we have εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς *for a testimony unto them*, Marcion had ἵνα ἡ μαρτύριον τοῦτο ὑμῖν "for a testimony unto you" so that what refers to priests in our text is related back to persons by Jesus Christ. In the same passage after προσένεγκε "offer" St Epiphanius also has the word δῶρον "gift" which was not in Marcion's text, nor in most of ours. But this variant is of no significance, as the meaning is the same whatever the reading; and its source can only have been copyists who left it out or added it.

In Luke 6:17 for καταβάς μετ' αὐτῶν (or, as St Epiphanius reads: κατέβη μετ' αὐτῶν) *having gone down with them*, Marcion has κατέβη ἐν αὐτῶν "descended into them." This too could be a variant not affecting the meaning: the Hebrew expression is quite common in the Scriptures. Here the Greek particle ἐν would mean the same thing as the particle בְּ *beth* in Hebrew, to which Greek ἐν corresponds. Now the particle בְּ can mean either ἐν "in," and μετὰ "with." For this reason we must not follow Father Petau in translating it as "he descended into them," but follow the Hebraism "he descended with them," as Hebraisms of this kind occur in St Luke as well as in the other Evangelists.²¹

²⁰ Epiphanius, Heresy 42 n. 11, 6 (*Panarion*, 1:280–287).

²¹ The text of St Epiphanius's works produced in 1622 by Denys Petau ("Dionysius Petavius," 1583–1652), French Jesuit theologian and philologist, accompanied by Petau's own Latin translation, is the one reproduced in PG volumes 41–43. R. Simon here calls into question Petau's translation of the note by Epiphanius (in *Heresy* 42 n. 11, 6 Refut. 5 [1:281], see preceding note) on the rendering by the heretic Marcion of Luke 6:17, which reads: "Judas Iscariot, which [...] was the traitor:" In place of the existing reading κατέβη μετ' αὐτῶν "he came down with them," Marcion has κατέβη ἐν αὐτοῖς "he came down among them" (PG 41:711).

Chapter 8 Verse 19. ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ *his mother and his brothers*. In his text Marcion did not include these words at this point, but only in the next verse: μήτηρ σου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ *Thy mother and thy brethren*. This alteration seems harmless enough: since the words are repeated, the meaning stays the same even if they only occur once. So here possibly Marcion followed the text he had without changing it.

Chapter 9, Verses 40 and 41. In his text Marcion did not have the following: οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν αὐτὸ ἐκβάλλειν καὶ πρὸς αὐτοὺς, ὦ γενεὰ ἄπιστος, ἕως ἀνέξομαι ὑμῶν; *they could not cast him out and he said to them, Oh faithless generation, how long shall I suffer you?* This is the reading given by St Epiphanius.²² Marcion's reading is briefer but it does retain the meaning. Possibly he regarded the other words as superfluous and did not want to ascribe to Jesus, speaking to his disciples, harsh words such as *Oh faithless generation*. But this was no reason for him to rewrite the passage especially without the support of reliable sources.

Chapter 10, Verse 21. Where we have *I thank thee, O Father*, Marcion did not include the word πάτερ *Father*. St Epiphanius proves that it must be included because it is repeated in the verse following. He also says that Marcion only left it out so that the passage could not be used to show that Jesus had called his Father δημιουργός “the creator.”²³ However, repetition seems to show rather that the heretic did not remove the word “Father” from his text out of malice; whether it is included or not, it does not affect the sense. Here Marcion's text also omits καὶ τῆς γῆς *and of earth*, it simply reads “Lord of Heaven.”

Chapter 11, Verses 29 and 30. From his text Marcion removed all reference to Jonah, reading simply as follows: ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη σημεῖον οὐ δοθήσεται αὐτῇ “No sign shall be given to this generation.” He also omitted the two following verses referring to the Queen of the South, Solomon, and the men of Ninevah.

Chapter 11, Verse 42. Where our text has κρίσιν “judgment,” in his text Marcion had κλήσιν “vocation.” St Epiphanius condemns this as a pernicious and deliberate alteration on the grounds that what follows clearly shows that the reading should be κρίσιν and not κλήσιν. Nonetheless, it could be that the minimal difference in Greek between these two words caused this divergent reading and that Marcion retained this copyist's error in his text.

²² Epiphanius, Heresy 42 n. 11, 6 Scholium 19 (*Panarion*, 1:282).

²³ Epiphanius, Heresy 42 n. 11, 6 Scholium 22 (*Panarion*, 1:282).

Chapter 11, Verse 49. Marcion's text also omits these words διὰ τοῦτο εἶπεν ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀποστελῶ εἰς αὐτοὺς προφήτας *therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets*. As he rejected the prophets there can be no doubt that he removed from his text words that provided clear evidence for them. From Verse 51 in the same passage he also omits these other words ἐκζητηθήσεται ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης *may be required of this generation*.

Chapter 12, Verse 6. In his text Marcion did not have οὐχὶ πέντε στρουθία ἀσσαρίων δύο πωλοῦνται; καὶ ἓν ἐξ αὐτῶν οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιλεησμένον ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ *are not five sparrows sold for two farthings and not one of them forgotten before God?*

Chapter 12, Verse 8. Instead of the words τῶν ἀγγέλων τοῦ θεοῦ *the Angels of God* Marcion simply has "of God." This in no way affects the meaning at this point and could be a copyist's omission, and St Epiphanius accuses Marcion of being equally unfaithful to the text over a detail such as this as for a more major change "because anyone who ventures to change the original in any way is not following the path of truth."²⁴

Chapter 12, Verse 28. Marcion also omits these words ὁ θεὸς ἀμφιέννυσι τὸν χόρτον *God clotheth the grass*: and in Verse 32 where we have πατὴρ ὑμῶν *your Father* he has simply πατὴρ "Father." In Verse 38 instead of these words *in the second watch or in the third* he reads "in the early evening."

From Chapter 13, Marcion cut out the first three verses, and also these words from Verse 5 εἰ μὴ μετανοήτε πάντες ὡσαύτως ἀπολείσθε *except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*.

In Chapter 13, Verse 28. Instead of the words τότε ὄψησθε Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαάκ καὶ Ἰακώβ καὶ πάντας τοὺς προφήτας ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ *then ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God*, Marcion put the following: ὅτε πάντας δίκαιους ἴδητε ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὑμᾶς ἐκβαλλομένους "when ye shall see all the righteous in the kingdom of God and ye yourself thrust out." St Epiphanius says he added κρατοθμένους ἔξω "kept out" and these other words καὶ ἐκεῖ ἔστιν ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων "there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." These last words are not an addition but a transposition; in our manuscripts they occur at the beginning of the verse. Moreover, whereas St Epiphanius reads τότε ὄψησθε "then ye shall see," the correct reading is ὅταν ὄψησθε *when ye see*: this church Father quoted Scripture from memory or made the words his own, sometimes changing some words for others, or shortening passages; and this

²⁴ Epiphanius, Heresy 42 n. 11, 6 Refut. 30 (*Panarion*, 1:283).

must be borne in mind for all other Scripture passages.²⁵ The real difference in Marcion's text lies in the word προφήτας *prophets* which he changed to δίκαιους "the righteous"; and he adds κρατουμένους ἔξω "kept out" without changing the meaning.

From this Chapter Marcion's text also omits several other words: firstly, from verse 29 ἤξουσιν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν καὶ ἀνακλιθήσονται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ *they shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God*. From Chapter 13, Verse 30: ἔσχατοι οἱ ἔσονται πρῶτοι *last shall be first*. From Verse 31: προσήλθάν τινες Φαρισαῖοι λέγοντες αὐτῷ, "Ἐξελθε καὶ πορεύου ἐντεῦθεν, ὅτι Ἡρώδης θέλει σε ἀποκτείνειν *there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee*. The whole of Verse 32 is omitted, as is Verse 33 up to the words οὐκ ἐνδέχεται *it cannot be*. From Verse 34 he cut out the following: Ἰερουσαλήμ, Ἰερουσαλήμ, ἡ ἀποκτείνουσα τοὺς προφήτας καὶ λιθοβολοῦσα τοὺς ἀπεσταλμένους *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee*; also these words from the same verse ποσάκις ἠθέλησα ἐπισυνάξει ὡς τὰ τέκνα σου *often would I have gathered thy children together*. From Verse 35 the words ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν *your house is left unto you*. And finally from that same verse he removed these words also οὐ μὴ ἴδῃτέ με ἕως εἴπητε, εὐλογημένος *Ye shall not see me, until ye shall say, Blessed*. From his gospel this heretic also cut out the complete parable of the prodigal son in Chapter 15; and these words from Chapter 17, Verse 10 λέγετε ὅτι Δοῦλοι

²⁵ This point warrants some further discussion, since although no manuscript contains the reading τότε, there is in fact witness support for both the verbal forms (also on the "affinity between the future and the (aorist) subjunctive," see M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek* [Rome 2005], 117 § 341). ὅταν ὀψήσθε is the reading (which R. Simon terms "correct") in NA²⁷. In particular the former reading ὀψεσθε is that of Codex Vaticanus, though R. Simon could not have known this, reliant as he was for this source on the *Notationes in Sacra Biblia* of Lucas of Bruges, who does not record this particular instance, and because access to the document was in any case jealously guarded (see F.G. Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* [2d ed., London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1896], 133). ὀψεσθε is also the preferred reading of Tischendorf (see *Novum Testamentum Graece* [8th ed., Leipzig: Giesecke and Devrient, 1869], 1:601–602 [ὅταν ὀψεσθε (future tense) *cum videbitis* "when ye (shall) see"; ὅταν ὀψήσθε (subjunctive) *cum videritis* "if [ever] ye see" is given as a variant]). Whilst Tischendorf does record that his "special" MS \aleph Sinaiticus reads ἴδῃτε, this reading is presumably discredited because, as he also notes, it occurs in the heretic Marcion's altered, and hence unreliable, re-wording of the Lucan text at this point (Heresy 42 n. 11, 6 Scholium 40 [*Panarion*, 1:283]). Lucas of Bruges, in his *Notationes in Sacra Biblia*, was reliant on the rather meagre collation contained in a codex produced by Werner of Nimuegen (Netherlands), "onetime" president of the Collège d'Artois (Louvain), and described as: *Novum Testamentum Graecum Basileae excusum, cum Vaticano codice, in Evangelii collatum, quondam D. Weneri Atrebatensis Collegii Lovanii Praesidis* (Lucas of Bruges, *Notationes* 21).

ἀχρεῖοί ἐσμεν, ὃ ὠφείλομεν ποιῆσαι πεποιήκαμεν *you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.* Further on also from Chapter 17 he removed several things from the passage about the lepers whom Jesus Christ met. His version of Verse 14 reads: 'Ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς λέγων· Δείξατε ἑαυτοὺς τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν "he sent them saying, 'show yourselves unto the priests.'" He made several other reworkings in the same passage so that it included Chapter 4, Verse 27: πολλοὶ λεπροὶ ἦσαν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ ἐπὶ Ἐλισαίου τοῦ προφήτου, καὶ οὐδεὶς αὐτῶν ἐκαθαρίσθη εἰ μὴ Ναϊμάν ὁ Σύρος *And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian.*

Chapter 18, Verse 19. After the words εἷς ἐστὶν ἀγαθός *none is good, save one*, Marcion added ὁ πατήρ "the Father"; and in Verse 20 in place of οἶδας *you know* he had οἶδα "I know." From this chapter he also omitted Verse 31, and from Verses 32 and 33, these words παραδοθήσεται, ἀποκτανθήσεται, καὶ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ ἀναστήσεται *For he shall be delivered, [they shall] put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.*

Chapter 19. From his text he removed all reference to the arrival of Jesus Christ and the mountain called the Mount of Olives in Bethphage; to the colt which our Lord rode when he made his entry into Jerusalem; also the other verses concerning the Temple.²⁶

Chapter 20. Marcion's text omitted the whole of the parable of the vine which was let to a husbandmen, Verses 9 to 16. From Verse 17 he removed the words Τί οὖν ἐστὶν τὸ λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες *What is this then that is written, The stone that the builders rejected.* He also removed verse 37 and part of Verse 38 about the resurrection of the dead.

Chapter 21, Verse 18. The words θριξ²⁷ ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς ὑμῶν οὐ μὴ ἀπόληται *But there shall not an hair of your head perish* were not in Marcion's text; also these words from Verse 21 τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη *Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains*, and what follows, which he removed because of the following words in Verse 32 ἕως πληρωθῆ τὰ γεγραμμένα *till all that is written be fulfilled.*

Chapter 22. Marcion's text did not include Verse 16 or Verses 35 and 36 because of the words in Verse 37 καὶ τοῦτο τὸ γεγραμμένον δεῖ τελεσθῆναι *that this that is written must yet be accomplished* and from the same verse καὶ μετὰ ἀνόμων ἐλογίσθη *And he was reckoned among the transgressors.* He also omitted what is said about St Peter in verse 50 when he cut off the ear of one of the servants of the High Priest.

²⁶ Epiphanius, Heresy 42 Schol. 40 (PG 41:752).

²⁷ R. Simon uses the alternative spelling τριξ.

Chapter 23, Verse 2. To these words τούτον εὔραμεν διαστρέφοντα τὸ ἔθνος *We found him (this fellow) perverting the nation*, Marcion adds the following: καὶ καταλύοντα τὸν νόμον καὶ τοὺς προφήτας “and destroying the law and the Prophets.” In the same verse after the words κελεύοντα φόρους μὴ δοῦναι *forbidding to give tribute*, he also added these words καὶ ἀποστρέφοντα τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ τὰ τέκνα “and corrupting the women and children.”

In Chapter 23, Verse 43, he did not include the words σήμερον μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἔσῃ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ *Today shalt thou be with me in paradise*.

Lastly from his text of Chapter 24, Marcion omitted Verse 25 and the following words from Verse 26 οὐχὶ ταῦτα ἔδει παθεῖν *Ought he not (Ought not Christ) to have suffered these things?* And in Verse 25, in place of the words ἐφ’ οἷς ἐλάλησαν οἱ προφῆται *what the prophets have spoken (all that the prophets have spoken)*, he wrote ἐφ’ οἷς ἐλάλησα ὑμῖν “what I have spoken to you.”

Such was the Gospel of Marcion from not long after the apostolic times, when it was easier to apply the truth of the Gospels according to copies which the apostles had left in the Churches that they had founded. St Justin Martyr wrote a book against this heretic who was still alive at the time when he wrote against him. St Epiphanius who preserved Marcion’s Gospel for us, refutes it with his own version which was not different to the extent of leaving insufficient material to discredit all of the changes. St Irenaeus, who also fought against the views of this heretic leader, had made the same observations much earlier. This Father claims that what remains of Marcion’s Gospel proves that he blasphemed against the one living God.²⁸

Even though some variants in Marcion’s text—some notably which are of no significance—can be ascribed to copyists, we must exercise great caution in doing so, since the fact remains that in thus altering the text, this heretic did not base himself on any earlier manuscript. As may be shown from what precedes, his sole intent was to modify the Gospel of St Luke in accordance with the particular views of his sect. Tertullian therefore subsequently recalls everything in the first two Chapters of the Gospel of Luke concerning the birth and infancy of Jesus Christ, as well as various other details clearly showing that he had a human body, objecting also that Marcion deliberately removed all this from his text, fearing that it might serve to show that Jesus Christ was a creature of flesh and blood just as we are.²⁹

²⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* bk. 3 ch. 11,6 (6:158).

²⁹ Tertullian, *De Carne Christi* ch. 2 (PL 2:755).

As well as the changes made to the Gospel of St Luke by Marcion, there are also alterations made in some places by certain Catholics. They were anxious for the Gospels not to contain anything that did not fit in with their principles, and so removed the part of Chapter 19, Verse 41, which says that Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem, on the grounds that such weeping seemed to them a weakness unworthy of our Lord. St Epiphanius cites these words, noting that they were present in all manuscripts which were not “corrected,”³⁰ going on to say that the Greeks sometimes took the liberty of correcting their manuscripts and removing from them anything they did not care for. According to this Father: “the Orthodox cut out these words through fear, unable to understand their thoughts or their purpose.” But these words are used by Christians of all nations today; and St Epiphanius shows that they are genuinely by St Luke, on the evidence of St Irenaeus who used them against certain heretics.³¹

Going by the testimony of St Hilarion, several Greek and even Latin manuscripts of St Luke did not contain verses 43 and 44 of Chapter 22 which refer to the Angel coming to comfort Jesus Christ and the sweat of blood emanating from his body.³² St Jerome appears to confirm this.³³ Now it is easy to see that the Greeks took the liberty of removing these two verses from their manuscripts for the same reason that they cut out the reference to Jesus Christ weeping. This change was then introduced into Latin manuscripts. According to Jansenius of Ghent these words were evidently removed by persons who dared not assign such strong signs of human weakness to Jesus.³⁴ This omission does not occur in any Greek or Latin manuscripts, even the oldest. Both verses occur in the text used by the Syrians and other peoples of the Levant. This omission can thus only be the work of superstitious persons who believed that Jesus Christ never yielded to such great weakness. There is no evidence that the two incidents were added to the text of St Luke: as Maldonado says, it is much more likely that they were deleted.³⁵

³⁰ This, states R. Simon in a marginal note, is how Epiphanius's term ἀδιορθώτοις is to be translated.

³¹ Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* (“the Anchored One”) § 31 (PG 43:73).

³² Hilary of Poitiers (315–367), *De Trinitate* bk. 10 § 41 (PL 10:375A).

³³ Jerome, *Dialogue against Pelagians* bk. 2 § 15 (PL 23:550–551).

³⁴ Cornelius Jansen, *Commentariorum in suam Concordiam* ..., ch. 137, 992A.

³⁵ Maldonado, *Commentarii* ... 2:330 (on Matthew 26:37). Concerning Luke 22:43–44, Maldonado also quotes from book 7 of Aristotle's *The History of Animals*, ch. 16 bk. 3, *On the Parts of Animals* ch. 5.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE GOSPEL OF ST JOHN.
HERETICS BY WHOM IT WAS REJECTED.
THEIR REASONS. RESPONSE TO THOSE REASONS.
DISCUSSION OF THE TWELVE VERSES FROM THIS GOSPEL
WHICH ARE ABSENT FROM SOME EARLY MANUSCRIPTS.
SEVERAL GREEK MANUSCRIPTS CITED
TO OVERCOME THIS DIFFICULTY.
CRITICS WHO FALSELY BELIEVED THAT
THE FINAL CHAPTER OF THIS GOSPEL
IS NOT BY ST JOHN

Exactly when St John published his Gospel cannot be stated with certainty; all we know is that his was the last to be written: we do not even have reliable documents stating the Holy apostle's reasons for undertaking the task after reading the Gospels of St Matthew, St Mark, and St Luke. Clement of Alexandria relates the views on the matter commonly held in his day, that St John read those three Gospels and while generally approving them, considered that they lacked an account of what Jesus Christ did at the outset of his ministry.¹ This, as well as the fact that he was asked to write his Gospel, says the learned Father, is what led him to do so: he has provided what appears to be lacking in the accounts given by the other Evangelists. He found it unnecessary to reproduce what St Mathew and St Luke had already written,² this being the main reason why he could say nothing about the genealogy of Jesus Christ: he judged it more appropriate to explain the nature of his Divinity. St Clement also says that John, the last of the Evangelists, observing that the three other Gospels had said everything about the physical Jesus Christ, was inspired by God and requested by his friends to write a spiritual Gospel.³ St Epiphanius too says it would have been pointless for St John to say any more about the physical Jesus Christ as the task had already been accomplished. He therefore seized on details which the other Evangelists had not mentioned.

¹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3:24 (PG 20:265).

² *Ibid.*, 3:24 (PG 20:268).

³ *Ibid.*, 6:14 (PG 20:532).

St Irenaeus says simply that St John who lived in Ephesus, published his Gospel there, providing no indication of when, nor his reasons for doing so.⁴ The writer of the *Synopsis* of the sacred books holds that the apostle preached his Gospel when he was exiled to the island of Patmos, and later published it in Ephesus.⁵ St Jerome provides more information than these others Fathers on St John's motivation for writing his Gospel. He says that St John was in Asia where the heresy of Cerinthus and Ebion, who denied the actual humanity of Jesus Christ, was spreading like wildfire, and so, at the request of nearly all the bishops of Asia and of various churches who begged him to do so, was led to write about the Divinity of our Lord.⁶ He adds that according to Church history at the insistence of these brothers, acceded to their request on condition that there was a public fasting to mark the occasion. At the end of the fast, St John was filled with the Holy Spirit and began his Gospel with these words which came from heaven: in the beginning was the word, and so on. To some this story could have seemed apocryphal, a myth such as Jews typically used when they wished to lend authority to some outstanding work: Baronius has judiciously observed that St Jerome did not base himself on any of the apocryphal books, but on an old and true story which had already been explained in more detail by other writers.⁷

On the other hand from early Christian times there were heretics who totally rejected what St Jerome said. They not only refused to believe, as he did, that St John wrote his Gospel to counter the views of Cerinthus, but they actually ascribed it to Cerinthus, who they said was the author. St Epiphanius, not knowing the name of these heretics called them ἄλογοι (Alogians), because they denied the Word (in Greek, logos). The Father says: since they do not accept the Word as preached by St John, they shall be known as Alogians.⁸

The Alogians rejected the Gospel of St John and even his Epistles and Revelation, claiming that all these texts were fabricated in Asia by Cerinthus who lived at the same time as John, and considering them unworthy to be read in Church.⁹ Lest anyone think they were undermining the authority of St John, whom they, like the Catholics, believed was an apostle, they

⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* bk. 3 ch. 1 (PG 7:845).

⁵ *Synopsis scripturae sacrae* § 76 (PG 28:434).

⁶ Jerome, Prologue to Commentary on Matthew (PL 26:18B–19A).

⁷ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:814 (CE 99 n. 4).

⁸ Epiphanius, *Heresy* 51 n. 3 (PG 41:892).

⁹ *Ibid.*

attempted to find a rational basis for their new ideas. Among other things they said that the books ascribed to St John were in contradiction with the writings of the other apostles and should not therefore be accepted as divine.¹⁰ What, they asked, was behind the opening of this Gospel: *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God?* and also verse 14: *The word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth?* What was the purpose of the words immediately following verse 15: *John bore witness to him, and cried out, saying: This was he of whom I spake:* and further on, in verse 29, *He is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world?* The Alogians adduced several other passages from St John for which there was no parallel in the other Evangelists.

In response St Epiphanius rightly says that if these were the only reasons for challenging the Gospel of St John, they should also reject the Gospels of St Matthew, St Mark and St Luke, who use the same methods of expression, and who each have their own idiosyncrasies. He says their approach was not of their own making but came from the Holy Spirit as did their doctrine. He discusses this at length and in detail.¹¹ This Father also refutes them in regard to the doctrine of St John which he states is the complete opposite of that of Cerinthus. This heretic believed that from birth Jesus Christ was not more than a mere mortal. St John on the contrary in his Gospel testifies that the Word had always existed, that it came from heaven and that it was made man. For in those early times Cerinthus and other heretics believed that Jesus was a mere mortal.¹² They even based themselves for this on the genealogy at the start of St Matthew. It appears therefore that if Cerinthus had wished to fabricate a new gospel on the basis of his heresy, he would not have left this genealogy out.

We note nonetheless that in Jesus Christ this heretic did discern something other than a mere mortal. St Epiphanius explains it thus. Cerinthus claimed that the world was not created by a primal omnipotence; but that Jesus was born of the seed of Joseph and Mary, grew up, and from almighty God on high received within him the Christ, that is, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove when he was baptised in the Jordan. To this heavenly power which he said Jesus had received at his baptism, Cerinthus ascribes all the miracles he performed later on. He also said that this power left him at

¹⁰ Epiphanius, Heresy 51 n. 4 (PG 41:893).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Marginal note: ψιλός άνθρωπος.

the time of his passion and returned to heaven whence it had come. It was perhaps on this basis that the Alogians ascribed the Gospel of John to Cerinthus, since a heretic distinguished two persons in Jesus Christ. For whilst he believed that Jesus was born of Joseph and Mary, in the same way as other human beings, he recognised in him the heavenly power which was imparted in him by the lord God of the universe. He called this power “Christ,” making a distinction between Christ and Jesus.¹³

Also St Irenaeus observed that the members of Valentine’s Gnostic sect based their doctrine entirely on the Gospel of John.¹⁴ Theodoret says they gave Jesus the name of Saviour and Christ the Word.¹⁵ The Sethian sect, a branch of Gnosticism, also held that Jesus was not the same as Christ; that Jesus was born of a virgin but that Christ descended into him from heaven.¹⁶ Theologians could find support for their views in the statements of very learned and even orthodox men, to the effect that Revelation was by Cerinthus who insolently boasted that he was a true apostle of Jesus Christ.

There were others besides the Alogians who refused to recognize, as did the entire Catholic Church, that the writings of St John were divine and canonical. Theodotus¹⁷ of Byzantium, the leader of a sect called Theodotians, followed the example of the Alogians in refusing to accept St John’s authorship of the Gospel and the Revelation of St John. But even Celsius, Porphyry, and the Emperor Julian,¹⁸ vehemently active opponents of the Gospels, did not deny that they were actually by those whose names they bore. They merely opposed them as being full of untruths and contradictions. Although Julian, speaking of the Gospel of St John, does not deny it was by the man of this name, he accuses the apostle of making innovations in the Christian religion. He says that neither Matthew, nor Mark, nor Luke, nor even Paul had dared present Jesus as a God; and that John was the first to publish it after observing that this was the belief of most ordinary people, speakers of Greek and Latin alike.¹⁹ The Emperor thus came up with imaginary reasons

¹³ Epiphanius, *Heresy* 28 n. 1 (PG 41:380).

¹⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* bk. 3 ch. 11 (PG 7:884).

¹⁵ Theodoret (ca. 393–ca. 466, bishop of Cyrrhus [Syria]), *Compendium of Heretical Tales* 1:7 (PG 83:356).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:14 (PG 83:365).

¹⁷ An Adoptionist Monarchian (c. 180).

¹⁸ Julian called “the Apostate” (332–363), Roman emperor from 361 to 363. Though no copy survives of his treatise *Against the Christians*, almost the complete text can be recovered from the *Apology against Julian the Apostate*, written in refutation by Cyril († 444), Patriarch of Alexandria.

¹⁹ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Against the Emperor Julian* book 10 (PG 76:1004[A]).

with no basis in authority because he believed it was impossible to challenge the Gospel of St John.

As has been already observed, some Greek manuscripts do not include the last twelve verses of St Mark. There are also twelve verses from the Gospel of John which are lacking in several Greek manuscripts and in some versions of the Eastern Church. These are the verses starting from Chapter 7, verse 53 and finishing at verse 11 of the following Chapter, containing the story of the woman taken in adultery. St Jerome's observations on this pericope show that, in his day, it was lacking in some Greek and Latin manuscripts.²⁰ Sisto da Siena, whilst observing that the Anabaptists based themselves on the authority of St Jerome and the testimony of other early writers to show that the story of the adulterous woman was added to the Gospel of St John, does not overcome their reservations convincingly.

Maldonado is much more accurate, having consulted early commentators on the New Testament and several Greek manuscripts on this point. He freely admits that he found the pericope in only one of a considerable number of Greek manuscripts that he read. He says it was not in the very ancient Codex Vaticanus, to which I have referred several times, nor in the chain or anthology of Greek Fathers which contains twenty-three authors, not one of whom however mentions this pericope.²¹ Those whose works have been printed, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Chrysostom, Nonnus and Theophylact do not mention it, even though Chrysostom and Theophylact wrote commentaries on the entire Gospel of St John. Lastly, Maldonado says that of all the Greek authors who have written on St John, only Euthymius, a more recent writer, discusses the story of the adulterous woman in his commentary and he does it in a way that detracts from its status rather than supporting it. For he also notes it does not occur in the best manuscripts, and that even in those where it does occur, it is marked with an obelus, showing that it was added to the text of St John.

Nonetheless, despite these arguments and others which he includes in the same passage, the learned Jesuit claims that all these commentaries must take second place to the authority of the Council of Trent which accepted that all parts of the Scripture in the form in which they are presently read in Church are Divine and Canonical. From this he concludes that the Council gave its approval to the story of the adulterous woman as canonical because it is in fact part of the Gospel of St John. And lest it

²⁰ Jerome, *Dialogue against Pelagians* bk. 2 § 17 (PL 23:553A).

²¹ Maldonado, *Commentarii* ... 5:145.

be thought he is basing himself solely on the authority of the Church, he adduces documentation, namely the words of St Jerome which have already been quoted. This Father says that in his day the story was in several Greek and Latin manuscripts.²² Also Ammonius long before St Jerome, referred to it in his *Harmonia evangelica* as did St Athanasius in his synopsis of the Holy Scriptures. Concerning the authority of St Chrysostom, who does not discuss it in his homilies of St John, Maldonado responds that because the story is straightforward, Chrysostom did not consider it necessary to comment on it. The Father actually does mention the adulterous woman in a different homily of St John. Maldonado adds that there is nothing to show that what he says in that passage was added subsequently to his text as some have thought. As well as this evidence, he cited the authority of St Ambrose and St Augustine and several other Fathers, who all knew the story, and included and discussed it in their commentaries. From this he concludes that it was genuinely written by St John as was the rest of that Gospel. He conjectures that it was cut out by some Greek who exercised his critical judgment too freely in regard to this passage.

I have spent some little time on what Maldonado says about the story of the adulterous woman which is absent from a great many ancient manuscripts, because it clarifies all the problems pertaining to the story. As this Jesuit speaks only in general terms of the manuscripts that he mentions, without actually reproducing what they contain, I shall attempt to rectify this shortcoming through the research I have carried out as accurately as possible into these manuscripts.

I shall start with the commentary of Euthymius, which I have only read in Latin, the Greek text of this author being quite rare. This is what he says commenting on the final verse of John Chapter 7:²³ "Know that after the words, *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world*, the text is absent from the best manuscripts or is marked with an obelus. It serves therefore that it was composed afterwards and inserted, the proof being that St Chrysostom makes no mention of it."²⁴ Euthymius's observation is borne out by the Greek manuscripts, some of which indeed do not contain the story; or if they do have it, it is marked with an obelus or a dagger or other sign of this kind to show that it is not a genuine part of the Gospel.

²² See *supra*, n. 20.

²³ *Sic* (i.e. 7:19, nowadays usually occurring as John 8:12).

²⁴ Euthymius Zigabenus, *Commentaria in ... quatuor Christi evangelia ...* (PG 128:1280).

The oldest of the New Testament manuscripts in the King's Library²⁵ does not have these twelve verses: but a blank space has been left in the place where they would have been written, showing that some manuscripts did have them. Evidently the scribe who worked on this manuscript did not have the verses in his source text because in his Church they were never read. In manuscripts of this kind it is customary to place the verses at the end of St John's Gospel with a short explanatory note:²⁶ but as some leaves are missing from the end of this particular manuscript, I cannot comment other than to say that this is the case in most other manuscripts of this kind, as will be seen from the next oldest manuscript.

The same library contains another manuscript of the Gospels supplemented by a selection of Greek commentators, which is usually referred to as a *catena*.²⁷ This one has the twelve verses written at the end of the Gospel of St John with the following note: "The verses marked with an obelus are not in some manuscripts and commentaries: but all the verses are in the early manuscripts." In the Oratorian Priests' Library in Paris, I have seen a similar collection or chain of Greek commentators on the Gospel of St John, compiled by Nicetas.²⁸ The text accompanying this selection does not include the story of the adulterous woman but it is placed at the end with the note: "End of the Gospel of St John." This is followed by: "But in early manuscripts I have found other material which it is appropriate to reproduce at the end of this particular Gospel, as follows: *and every man went unto his own house (7:53)*" and so on, up to the 11th verse of Chapter 8 of this Gospel. The same comment appears at the end of another similar manuscript collection of Greek Fathers' writings on the four Gospels, held in the King's Library.²⁹ At the end of St John the same thing occurs as in the Oratoire manuscript, expressed in the same tones. This bears out Maldonado's statement, already quoted, concerning the Greek *catenae* which omitted the story of the adulterous woman.

²⁵ *Codex Regius*, 8th c. (Uncial L 019; see *supra*, ch. 11 n. 15).

²⁶ See Metzger, *Commentary*, 187–189.

²⁷ The ms. in question is BnF Greek manuscript 188 (formerly King's Library no. 1883). *Catena*, from the Latin for "chains" or "links," are collections, compiled by Mediaeval scholars, of references from scriptural commentaries by one or other of the Church Fathers. For an example, see Aland, *Text*, 144.

²⁸ BnF Greek manuscript supplement 159 (formerly in the Oratoire): Nicetae, Heracleae metropolitae, *catena in Joannis evangelium*.

²⁹ The source given by R. Simon is "MS no. 1869 in the King's Library": in 1645, the first two items in the ms. bearing this number were texts by Aristotle; the third and final item has the title: *Stephani Scholia inedita in eosdem libros. XIV^e s.*

From the remarks at the end of the manuscripts adduced, it can also be seen that some Greeks believed it was wrong to omit this story from the text of the Gospel of St John, since it did occur in the early manuscripts. I believe this is why it was added in the margin of another manuscript in the King's Library which actually leaves it out, for the addition is in another, more recent hand than that of the main text. This manuscript was produced with great care; and the vocal notations over certain words to facilitate the chanting of the Gospels show it was in use in one of the Greek churches. Evidently it was not in use in the Church of St Chrysostom, since he does not comment on it in his homily in the passage of St John where we find it today; but this does not mean that it was not to be found in various manuscripts at that time.

I also ascertained its absence from another manuscript in the King's Library,³⁰ as well as from one held in the Library of Mr Colbert³¹ which also has a rich collection of manuscripts of all kinds. Actually the latter library does contain the manuscript where the whole story of the adulterous woman is written in the same hand as the rest of the text of St John: but at the start of each line a sort of asterisk has been added, as if to show that it had been copied from other manuscripts and added to the one in question.

But all things considered, the Greek manuscripts which do have it are much more numerous than those that do not; and the former include many very early ones; the Cambridge manuscript, the oldest one we have today, does have it. The Codex Alexandrinus cannot be included in the discussion as it has gaps in this spot. The story is included in one quite early uncial manuscript in Mr Colbert's library, which was brought back from Cyprus.³²

It is essential to note that in some manuscripts not only are these verses copied out in the same style as the rest of the text, but the *κεφάλαιον* or "chapter," corresponding to the story, is given in the margin.³³ For example in one manuscript in the King's Library for this passage the foot of the page is annotated *περὶ τῆς μοιχαλίδος* "of the adulterous woman"; and at the start of St John's Gospel where all the *κεφάλαια* (chapters or synopses) of the Gospel are set out as was customary in Greek manuscripts, the one headed *περὶ τῆς μοιχαλίδος* "of the adulterous woman," is included among the other headings.³⁴ Although on this point I have consulted quite a number

³⁰ Minuscule 21 (BnF Greek manuscript 68 formerly MS. 2860 in King's Library).

³¹ Minuscule 24 (BnF Greek manuscript 178, formerly Colbert MS. 4112).

³² Uncial K 017, formerly Colbert MS. 5149 (see *supra*, ch. 10 n. 2).

³³ See *supra*, ch. 11 n. 31: Minuscule 15 (BnF Greek manuscript 64, formerly King's Library MS. 2868).

³⁴ Minuscule 266 (BnF Greek manuscript 67, formerly Colbert MS. 2863).

of manuscripts where the *κεφάλαια* “synopses” are given at the beginning of each Gospel, I have found only two, in the King’s Library, containing the particular *κεφάλαιον* “synopsis” for this story.

Nonetheless, there is no doubt that for some centuries at least it has been read in all the Greek churches because it appears in their Gospel lectionary. I even found it in one handwritten copy of the lectionary, though this is of relatively recent date. It is noteworthy that, at the end of these lectionaries, there are some Gospel readings for certain holy days, but they appear to be out of place.³⁵ They may have been added as the Greek church service was developed as usually happens with all orders of service. The title is: *Gospel readings for various commemorations of Saints*. The readings are not intended for particular Saints’ Days, but for general purposes, dedicated in general, for instance, to the Angels, to the Prophets, to the apostles, to the Pontiffs, to Martyrs, to a blessed woman martyr, and also various others: for the Order of Monks and Nuns, for the Sick and Earthquakes and others. Then there are two for confession, one for men, the other for women, the latter being taken from St John Chapter 8 and expressed in the following terms: *in those days the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery and so on up to the words go and sin no more*. There is a quite an early Gospel lectionary in the King’s Library, but as it lacks the last section and is incomplete, I cannot comment on the relative age of this passage, said over women in confession, and which is entitled Ἐπὶ τῶν ἐξομολογουμένην γυναικῶν “for women taking confession.”³⁶

Maldonado provides support for the story of the adulterous woman pointing out that it occurs in the *Harmonia* by Ammonius of Alexandria,³⁷ whose evidence is more conclusive since the latter lived in the time of early Christianity. I merely observe in passing that in the “Library of the Fathers,”³⁸

³⁵ Lectionary 86 (gospels) (BnF Greek manuscript 311, formerly King’s Library Ms. 1884).

³⁶ Regrettably R. Simon does not identify this manuscript.

³⁷ Ammonius Saccas (c. 175–243) was reputedly a theosophist, and the founder of Neoplatonism, though according to Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 6.19.7 [2:115]), he was actually born a Christian, and remained so throughout his life. In any event the designation “Ammonian Sections” refers to the divisions found in the margins of most Greek and Latin manuscripts of the gospels, and intended to demonstrate the links between corresponding passages therein: the text of Matthew, taken as a base, was divided into numbered sections, each indicating parallels in the other gospels. There is evidently by now almost universal agreement among ancient philosophers and very wide agreement elsewhere that Ammonius Saccas (the teacher of Plotinus, the main warrant for calling him a founder of Neoplatonism) is different from Ammonius of Alexandria, the biblical scholar.

³⁸ Marguerin de La Bigne, *Magna bibliotheca veterum patrum et antiquorum scriptorum ecclesiasticorum ...* (Lyon: Anisson, 1677) [BnF C-781 (8)].

the work of Tatian³⁹ was printed under the name of Ammonius, and the latter's under the name of Tatian, who also included this pericope in his abridgment of the four Gospels.⁴⁰ Yet there are reasons for doubting that this work was by Tatian. As he wrote before Ammonius, there can be no better proof that the story is from earlier times than that provided by his compilation. But since there is apparent evidence that his compilation was based on the Hebrew Gospel as well as the four Greek Gospels, there will always be room for conjecture that he may have taken the story from the Hebrew or Chaldaic Gospel of St Matthew. Thus it cannot be shown conclusively that the story was part of the Gospel of St John at the time when Tatian was a disciple of St Justin Martyr.

Yet Selden,⁴¹ who is cited by Walaeus in regard to this passage from St John, places great reliance on these two early writers to show that this story was included in the manuscripts of the Eastern Church from the earliest times.⁴² His evidence for this is provided by the Canticles that Eusebius added to the *Harmonia* of Ammonius;⁴³ from this he deduces that Eusebius accepted the story as part of his New Testament text, since it occurs in the Canticles. It seems however that Selden did not examine the Canticles of Eusebius closely enough: they contain no number or sub-section specifically mentioning the story of the adulterous woman. The twelve verses in which the story is contained are included in section πς' 86, which comes before them, as can be seen from the sections or numbers in the printed Greek New Testament of Stephanus and in some other editions. In this there is agreement between the printed editions and the Greek manuscripts. Clear proof that no number or section of the Canticles of Eusebius actually corresponds to

³⁹ Tatian, born in Assyria in 2d c., was a "hearer" of Justin, subsequently converting to Christianity probably ca. 160. He is said to have founded the ascetic Encratite sect. In Syria during the third and fourth centuries, Tatian's most famous work, the *Diatessaron*, relating the life of Jesus using material found in all four gospels, was in general use.

⁴⁰ In 3:265 of M. de La Bigne, *Magna bibliotheca ...*, there is a reference to the *Harmonia* by Tatian, "or rather by Ammonius" (*potius Ammonij [sic]*); 266–299 contain the *Diatessaron*, and the story of the woman taken in adultery is in § 2 on page 285B.

⁴¹ John Selden (1584–1654), English jurist, legal antiquary, and oriental scholar.

⁴² Balduinus Walaeus (1622–1673) (ed.), *Novi Testamenti libri historici graec. and lat. perpetuo commentario ex antiquitate ...* (Leiden: Wyngaerden, 1652), 2:888–889A [BnF A-2619 (1)]. Parallel columns contain the Greek text as in Beza's 1st ed. (1565), Beza's Latin version, and the Vulgate. On 888A, there is a somewhat ambiguous reference to the use of "the Canons deriving from the 'Harmonies' by the Alexandrians Tatian and Ammonius."

⁴³ In M. de La Bigne, *Bibliotheca*, 3:266, it is stated that the "numbers" Ammonius devised by "wondrous study," were "diligently collected" by Eusebius; some hold in fact that the so-called "Ammonian Sections" were actually originated by Eusebius as part of the Eusebian canons (κανόνης), on which see ch. 33 nn. 32, 35–36 of the present work.

these twelve verses lies in the fact that this number πς' 86 also occurs in the manuscripts which omit the twelve verses. Hence the arrangement of the Canticles provides no proof that the story of the adulterous woman occurred in the manuscript to which he added the Canticles. This is not to say that, generally speaking, Selden and Waleus were wrong to accuse the Greeks of altering their manuscripts too freely, sometimes adding this or that as the mood took them.⁴⁴ It may even be that they exercised the same critical freedom on this passage from St John, and on several others as well.

The Syriac text edited by Widmanstadt, using reliable manuscripts, and of which several other editions have appeared, also omits the story of the adulterous woman.⁴⁵ On the other hand it does occur in some Syriac manuscripts from which it was taken and included in the *Biblia sacra polyglotta* published in England: it is also in Arabic translations printed in Rome and in Holland, which indicates that nowadays it is accepted in all the Eastern churches as in those of the West.

Beza, however, whilst stating that the story was lacking in only one of seventeen early manuscripts he had consulted, still regards the story as doubtful because, he says, the early church writers had unanimously rejected it, or did not mention it. He also states the unlikelihood of Jesus Christ being alone with a woman in the Temple; that the story has insufficient links with what follows; and the episode of Jesus Christ writing on the ground with his finger is quite extraordinary and also difficult to explain. In fine the great diversity of readings of this passage in the Greek manuscripts leads him to doubt the veracity of the story.⁴⁶

Calvin in his commentary on this passage is much more moderate than his disciple and actually appears more reasonable. He says: "It is clear enough that the Greeks did not know what to make of this story, nonetheless some conjectured it was drawn from elsewhere and inserted here. So as it had always been accepted in the Latin churches, and as it occurs in many Greek manuscripts and early books, and contains nothing that is unworthy of the apostolic spirit, there is no reason why we should not make the most of it for our own advantage."⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Waleus, *Novi Testamenti libri* 2:888A.

⁴⁵ Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter (1506–1559), *Syriacae linguae Jesu Christo ... Christianae redemptionis Evangelicaeque praedicationis tempore, vernaculae et popularis ...* (Vienna: Cymberrmann, 1555) [BnF RES-X-701 (2)]: in this first edition of the Syriac New Testament in the Peshitta version, Widmanstetter (also spelt Widmanstädter, or Widmanstadt) was assisted by Moses of Mardin, a Syriac Orthodox priest.

⁴⁶ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 257B.

⁴⁷ M. Réveillaud (ed.), *Commentaires de Jean Calvin sur le Nouveau Testament* (Aix-en-

In addition to what we have seen concerning the absence from several Greek manuscripts of the story of the adulterous woman, some critics have thought that the final chapter of the Gospel of St John was not by the evangelist. It does seem he intended to finish his account with the words: *and many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of disciples which are not written in this book*, etc. (20:30). Grotius supports this view, stating that the rest of the Gospel was added after the death of St John by the church in Ephesus, the same way as the final chapter of the Pentateuch and the final chapter of the history of Joshua were added to these books by the Jewish Sanhedrin.⁴⁸ But he finds no solid proof for such a sweeping statement. Additions may have been made to the stories of Moses and Joshua after the death of these Prophets: as I have observed elsewhere, those entrusted with writing the annals of the Jewish Republic, did continue with their true stories.⁴⁹ Accordingly these two chapters are not additions as such, rather a continuation of the Annals of that Republic. The same is not true of the Gospel of St John; the church at Ephesus did not have the task of continuing it. It could be said that the last Chapter of this Gospel was not placed where it should have been, and that there were changes to the integral material and the order of words. But if one reflects on St John's methods, and the relative disorder of all his material, one will hold the Evangelist himself responsible for these minor flaws, which however in no way affect the truth of what he says.

Provence/Fontenay-sous-bois: Kerygma/Farel, 1992), t. 8, 2:284 (commentary on 1John 5:7). Caspar René Gregory, writing nearly four centuries later, expresses much the same idea: "There is no help for it. These verses do not belong to the Gospel of John. They form no part of the New Testament. That is, however, no reason why we should not gladly read them" (C.R. Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament* [New York: Scribner, 1907, 516).

⁴⁸ Grotius, Annotations on John 20:30 (*Opera omnia theologica* ..., tome 11, 1:571A).

⁴⁹ See R. Simon, *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (Rotterdam: Leers, 1685), 2–3.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES AS ACCEPTED WITHIN THE CHURCH. ACTS ASCRIBED TO OTHER APOSTLES ARE OF DOUBTFUL AUTHENTICITY

Although there have been various Acts ascribed to apostles, the only ones accepted as genuine by the church are those that we have today under this title, and which historically have always been attributed to St Luke. Consequently, in some Greek manuscripts we find the name of this Holy Evangelist at the head of this work. He himself says that he is the author in the preface which he addresses to his friend Theophilus to whom he had already addressed his Gospel.¹

St Jerome states that this story was written in Rome and that it covers the period up to the fourth year of the reign of Nero, the year which, he says, which was the second year spent in the great city by St Paul.² The author of the *Synopsis* of the sacred books thought that the Acts of the Apostles had been preached by St Peter and that St Luke had then written them down.³ But virtually everything that St Luke writes is of events he himself had witnessed. This is the basis of the distinction made by St Jerome between the Gospel by this disciple of the apostles and the Acts: not having known Jesus, he could only write his Gospel based on what he had heard from others; whereas having followed St Paul on most of his journeys, he was an eyewitness of what he did, and thus published nothing which he himself had not seen.⁴

Although the title of the book refers to all the apostles in general, it gives us scant information about the whole group, only saying what happened up to the time when they separated into various provinces to preach the Gospel. St Luke then discusses the journeys of St Paul accompanied by

¹ For a present-day exegetical review, see J. Neville Birdsall, "The peculiar problems of the Acts of the Apostles," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* (Rise and Decline of the Roman World), 2.26.1, ed. W. Haase [Berlin/NY: W. de Gruyter, 1992], 158–163.

² Jerome, "Luke," *Authors of Scripture* (PL 23:619).

³ *Synopsis Scripturae sacrae* § 76 (PG 28:433).

⁴ Jerome, *ibid.*

St Barnabas, without mentioning where the other apostles went; he does not even completely cover the journeys of St Paul. If asked why St Luke did not complete his story, and why he left no written account of the other events he had witnessed, I can only give the same reply as did St John Chrysostom to the people of his time who asked the same question. The learned bishop says that what St Luke wrote on the subject is sufficient for anyone who wishes to learn from it; and that the apostles and their disciples who preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ always stuck to essentials; that they did not take time to provide written accounts because the various things they have left to the Churches are carried on by tradition alone.⁵ This needs to be examined carefully. Certainly the apostles' priority was teaching the Gospel, and they would not have written down any of their message unless strongly urged to do so by the people they taught. Tradition alone would have ensured the survival of the Christian religion without any written documentation.

In the same passage St Chrysostom laments the fact that the little we do have of the history of the apostles was so neglected in his day that many were unaware not only of the author's name but also that the story had even been written.⁶ At that time it seems all people knew of the New Testament was the Gospels and the Epistles of St Paul. Perhaps these were the only texts accepted in those early times. We also see that the books in use in the Greek churches bore only the two titles: εὐαγγέλιον (Gospel) and ἀπόστολος apostle. Nevertheless, the latter book was named Πραξαπόστολος because as well as the Epistles of St Paul, it also contains most of the Acts of the Apostles and the other books of the New Testament.⁷

Since this account of the main activities of St Paul is short, in the days of early Christianity some priest in Asia took into his head to add a book entitled "The Journeys of Paul and Thecla" in the form of a supplement.⁸ From Tertullian we learn that there were women who made use of these Acts, citing the authority of the Holy apostle for them to preach in the churches and to baptise.⁹ To those who cited what these Acts say about Paul as evidence,

⁵ John Chrysostom, 1st Homily on Acts (PG 60:15).

⁶ Ibid. (PG 60:13).

⁷ Specifically it contains Acts, Epistles and Revelation.

⁸ For the "Acts of Paul and Thecla," see James Keith Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (OUP, 1994), 353, 364–374; Jeremy W. Barrier, *The Acts of Paul and Thecla: A Critical Introduction and Commentary* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009). Thecla, a Greek girl, breaks off her engagement on being converted by the preaching of St Paul, whom she follows as his assistant, subsequently escaping persecution and death in a miraculous way.

⁹ Tertullian, *De Baptismo adversus Quintillam* ch. 17 (PL 1:1328–1329).

Tertullian replies that the Asian priest who wrote them had been convicted of forgery and had himself confessed to having been led to invent them because of the affection he felt for this apostle. Tertullian refutes the Acts strongly, demonstrating that they contain a doctrine completely contrary to that of St Paul. How likely is it, he asks, that St Paul would have granted women the right to teach and baptise when he would not even allow them to take instruction in the churches where he absolutely forbade them to open their mouths?¹⁰

St Jerome, who refers to these Acts under the title of “Journeys of Paul and Thecla,” does say that it was St John who found the priest who wrote them guilty of forgery.¹¹ But Tertullian, whom Jerome quotes in the same passage, makes no mention of St John; he merely says that the priest was from Asia. Pope Gelasius classified the book among the apocrypha.¹² Baronius makes the distinction between these false Acts of Thecla and others relating the life and martyrdom of that Saint.¹³ His authority for the latter is the testimony of several church Fathers who quoted from them, notably St Epiphanius who, on the basis of these Acts, relates that Thecla, the wife of a very rich and noble man, broke off her marriage after hearing St Paul.¹⁴ The Cardinal adds that the famous Manichaeian Faustus used the same story about Thecla as a pretext for demonising the doctrine of St Paul for speaking in such a way as to make a married woman commit herself to everlasting abstinence. Baronius adds that St Augustine, who quotes and carefully refutes Faustus’s remarks, does not consider that these acts entitled “The Martyrdom of Thecla” are apocryphal.

However, it does seem that these Acts were based on the earlier ones; and it is not surprising that the church Fathers made use of apocryphal books produced by a forger because there were several true statements concerning the journeys of Paul and Thecla. Be that as it may, I think it better to exclude them entirely rather than accept one part and reject the other, because it would not be very easy to separate the true parts from the false. If the surviving fragments are anything to go by the text was a tissue of myths. Notably they state that as Thecla was St Paul’s companion on his journeys, she was somehow a part of his mission. These Acts presume that

¹⁰ Tertullian, *ibid.* (PL 2:1329).

¹¹ Jerome, “Luke,” *Authors of Scripture* (PL 23:619, 621).

¹² “Gelasian Decree” (PL 59:178).

¹³ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:398–399 (CE 47 n. 3, 4 5).

¹⁴ Epiphanius, *Heresy* 78 n. 16, 6 (*Panarion*, 2:613).

she preached and baptised. Moreover St Jerome, who had evidently read them, mentions the baptism of a lion: this led him to reject the Acts as false and apocryphal.¹⁵

As the apostles and their disciples left no written account of their journeys except what we have concerning the journeys of St Paul and St Barnabas, various accounts, ascribed to apostles, were invented. Forgeries appeared entitled "Journeys of Peter, Journeys of John, Journeys of Thomas," and so on. There were even some under the collective title "Itinerary or Journey of the Apostles." From the time of early Christianity, books of this kind were made to fill in apparent gaps in the history of the apostles, as though some need were felt for the church to have everything they did in writing. But by consensus of all the Catholic Churches, these books were rejected as apocryphal inventions, with the result that of all the Acts of the Apostles that have appeared, the only ones preserved are those written by St Luke.

Then again, from early Christian times there were sectarians, enemies of St Paul, who openly rejected the story as written by Luke, his loyal travelling companion. The Ebionites, who considered Paul an apostate, seeing that the Acts accepted by the Church were at variance with their ideas, devised new Acts, filling them with impious calumnies about St Paul so that St Luke's Acts would have no credibility. They invented this myth and that to make St Paul appear hateful, giving these out as the true reasons which had led him, as they said, to write against circumcision, the Sabbath and the entire Jewish law.¹⁶ St Epiphanius says that they used these new "Acts of Apostles" to undermine the truth. Moreover the Severian Encratites accepted the law, the Prophets and the Gospels in orthodox manner. They too slandered St Paul abominably, completely rejecting his Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles.¹⁷

Lastly, the Manichaeans, who considered their patriarch Manichaeus not only as an apostle but as the promised Paraclete, did not accept the Acts of the Apostles because they mention the descending of the Holy Spirit.¹⁸ If, says St Augustine, they were to accept these Acts which specifically describe the Holy Ghost descending, they would not have been able to say how the Holy Spirit had been sent to them in person of Manichaeus. But never mind these dreamers who saw no reason for rejecting books accepted by the whole of the Church other than that they did not coincide with their own ideas of the Christian religion. It was for the same reason,

¹⁵ Jerome, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Epiphanius, Heresy 30 n. 16, 8 (*Panarion*, 1:133).

¹⁷ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.29.5 (1:214).

¹⁸ Augustine, *To Honoratus: the Benefit of Believing* ch. 3 §7 (PL 42:70).

according to Tertullian that the Marcionites did not accept the Acts of the Apostles. At this stage I shall not discuss the Acts of Barnabas which were published under the name of John, surnamed Mark; these Acts, which so upset Baronius, were clearly a fabrication and are actually in contradiction on some points with the Acts of the Apostles, as Cardinal Baronius has stated.¹⁹

¹⁹ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:432 (CE 51 n. 51).

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

ST PAUL'S EPISTLES IN GENERAL. MARCION AND HIS TEXT OF THOSE EPISTLES. FORGED LETTERS ASCRIBED TO ST PAUL

Leaving aside the letter to the Hebrews, St Paul's name at the head of all his Epistles makes it pretty clear who actually wrote them. And as for the most part they were addressed to particular churches where they were read in public meetings, they were then passed on to neighbouring churches, and eventually to all the faithful in the same way. I shall not spend time establishing in what order they were written or at what time, because whenever they were written, and in whatever order, it in no way affects the text which will always remain the same. Nevertheless, following St John Chrystostom, who diligently examined this question, we shall observe that although the Epistle to the Romans occupies pride of place it does not mean it was the first to be written.¹ There is clear proof that the two letters addressed to the Corinthians were written earlier. The learned bishop also believes that St Paul wrote to the Thessalonians before writing to the Corinthians. This is evident all the way through the preface to his homilies on the Epistle to the Romans, where he draws on the example of the prophets who have not been arranged according to the chronological order of their prophecies. Theodoret whose discussion of the matter is most often simply a digest of St Chrystostom, compares the published order of the Epistles of St Paul with the arrangement of the psalms of David. Just as David, inspired by God, he says, wrote the Psalms, and others subsequently arranged them in order which suited them without taking any account of the time when each was written, so it was with the Epistles of St Paul.²

Marcion, whilst removing some passages from the Epistles of St Paul, accepted most of them, arranging them in the following order. First of all, the Epistle to the Colossians followed by the two to the Corinthians.³ The Epistle to the Romans was only in fourth place; then came the two to

¹ John Chrystostom, *Argumentum* to Homilies on Romans § 1 (PG 60:392).

² Theodoret, *Preface to the Interpretation of the XIV Epistles of the apostle St Paul* (PG 82:38).

³ Epiphanius, Heresy 42 n. 11, 7 Refut. 1 (39), 8 (40) (*Panarion*, 1:288–289).

the Thessalonians; after that the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, to Philemon and to the Philippians. He accepted only these ten Epistles in the order just indicated. As far as the Epistle to the Laodiceans is concerned, though St Epiphanius says Marcion accepted some parts of it, it is the same as the letter to the Ephesians as can easily be shown by the extracts from it quoted by this heretic and actually reproduced by St Epiphanius.⁴

Marcion described his compendium of St Paul's Epistles as an "apostolic." In the Dialogue against Marcion's sect, ascribed to Origen,⁵ the Marcionite speaker frequently refuses to accept the quotations from the Epistles as being by St Paul. When his opponent Adamantius quotes some of the apostles' words, he says: "I do not believe in your false apostolic."⁶ Elsewhere, when Adamantius asks him whether he believes in the apostle St Paul, he replies: "I believe in my apostolic."⁷ Adamantius, therefore, in rebuttal, does not quote the Epistles of St Paul in the form in which they were read in the church, but as they appeared in what the Marcionites called their apostolics, their grouping of the Epistles. Adamantius says: "I have your apostolic." In this regard, St Jerome, discussing the Marcionite texts, says that in their own way they forged the Epistles by the apostles, being astonished that such people could call themselves Christians.⁸

St. Epiphanius records that Marcion had changed the Epistles of St Paul in some passages which I shall enumerate here, in order.

Ephesians 5:3. Where we have *a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife*, the heretic had removed "unto his wife."

Galatians 5:9. In place of the word *leavens* he had "corrupts." This does not affect the meaning in this context so it may be a variant rather than a deliberate alteration. Moreover in the ancient Clermont manuscript held in the King's Library,⁹ the reading is corrupt; and in the parallel Latin version, which is the old Vulgate, there is a concordant reading *corrumpit* as in the present day Vulgate.

⁴ Also by W. Schneemelcher in E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2:132: see also *supra*, ch. 15 n. 19.

⁵ Though this work was earlier ascribed to Origen, the actual author is not known; Origen is sometimes called "Adamantius," the name of a fourth-century anti-Gnostic writer. "Adamantius" is the name of the dialogue's initiator: see introduction to Adamantius [*sic*], *Dialogue on the True Faith in God: De Recta in Deum Fide*, ed. and tr. R.A. Pretty (coll. "Gnostica," Louvain: Peeters, 1997), 9–16.

⁶ *Dialogue ...*, section 1 (PG 11:1724).

⁷ *Ibid.*, section 2 (PG 11:1765).

⁸ Jerome, Preface to Epistle to Titus (PL 26:555).

⁹ See *infra*, ch. 30 n. 4 of the present work.

In 1 Corinthians 9:8, where we have *saith not the Law the same*, Marcion in his text had "although the law of Moses saith not the same."

In 1 Corinthians 14:19, Marcion altered the sense of the words *in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding*. In his version, instead of τῷ νοῦ μου *with my understanding*, he had διὰ τὸν νόμον "because of the Law." Evidently, however, this reading of Marcion's resulted from the fault of a copyist, who read διὰ τὸν νόμον instead of διὰ τοῦ νοός μου, as in today's Greek churches; this reading is much closer to Marcion than that of St Epiphanius, although the latter concurs with the two oldest Greek manuscripts that we have, namely the Codex Alexandrinus, and the one called Claromontanus in the King's Library. In both manuscripts the reading is τῷ νοῦ μου, and in the parallel Old Latin text in the Claromontanus manuscript, there is *sensu meo*. The reading τῷ νοῦ μου also occurs in the ancient manuscript of the Epistle of St Paul in the library of the Benedictine Fathers of the Abbey of Saint-Germain; though in the parallel Latin version the reading is *per sensum meum*. This leads me to believe that the translator of this early version had διὰ τοῦ νοός μου in his Greek text, as we have today. St Epiphanius nonetheless accuses Marcion of deliberately corrupting the words of St Paul in this way, to fit in with his own ideas.

In 2 Corinthians 4:13, where our text says *having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written* Marcion had removed the words *according as it is written*. Regarding this passage St Epiphanius criticises Marcion, saying whether he includes these words or not, the line of thought is clear enough. It is moreover possible that the words were not in his Greek source; and if these were the only changes the heretic made in the Epistles of St Paul, there are no grounds for accusing him of corrupting them, for there are much greater and more numerous differences than these in our own manuscripts.

Also, I do not actually see that Marcion committed some monstrous error by placing the Epistle of the Romans fourth in order in his text. If St Epiphanius is to be believed, the heretic only did so because he wanted nothing legalistic. However, contrary to what the Father continually supposes in his dispute with Marcion, St Paul himself did not set out these letters in the order we have them today. Epiphanius even agrees that the Greek manuscripts do not all have them in the same order: when he accuses him of placing the letter to Philemon ninth whereas Paul, as he says, places it tenth, he also says the manuscripts came immediately after the Epistle to the Hebrews which was in fourteenth place in both manuscripts. He goes on to say that there are others where the Epistle of the Hebrews is in tenth place just before the two addressed to Timothy and those addressed to Titus and Philemon.

St Epiphanius here also attests that he has nothing to say about the Epistle to Philemon because Marcion had completely corrupted it.¹⁰ On the other hand Tertullian states that this Epistle was not corrupted by Marcion, because it was too short. He is merely astonished that whilst the heretic did accept this letter addressed to an individual, he would not have accepted the two written to Timothy and the one to Titus, these last three discussing matters concerning the Church. I believe, he said, that he wanted to give the impression that the Epistles were actually fewer in number.¹¹ St Jerome, having the same approach to the Epistle to Philemon as Tertullian, even proved it was by St Paul on the authority of Marcion since although the heretic rejected some of them, and altered the ones he made use of, he accepted this one in its entirety, leaving it unchanged because, as he said, it was too short.

If we are to believe St Epiphanius, in the Book he entitled “apostolic,” Marcion had included an Epistle of St Paul to the Laodiceans. But at the same time he also admits that what the heretic quotes from the Epistle to the Laodiceans also occurs in the letter to the Ephesians. For this reason, in Marcion’s compendium it should be called “to the Laodiceans”, and not “to the Ephesians.” Otherwise it would look as though he had accepted eleven of St Paul’s Epistles whereas he had accepted only ten. Tertullian, moreover, criticised him for replacing the title of the letter to the Ephesians for a different one, but he does make the judicious observation that the change of title is of no importance on the grounds that when St Paul wrote to a particular church, he was writing simultaneously to all the others.¹²

He is more justified in taking him to task for removing the word “prophets” from his text of Ephesians 2:20: whereas our text has *and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*, Marcion’s only has “are built upon the foundation of the apostles.” Tertullian also evidently criticised Marcion for removing the words “which is the first commandment with promise” from Ephesians 6:2, saying that if he did omit them, the commandment reads: “Honour thy father and thy mother.” Also St Jerome criticised Marcion for omitting the words “God the Father” from his text of Galatians 1:1 in order to give the impression that Jesus, and not his Father, brought about his own resurrection.

¹⁰ Epiphanius, Heresy 42 n. 11, 17 (*Panarion*, 1:334).

¹¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 5:21 (PL 2:524).

¹² Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 5:17 (PL 2:512).

In addition to these various readings from the Marcionite “apostolic”, the Marcionite who appears in the dialogue ascribed to Origen, says that the apostolic 1Corinthians (15:38) does not contain the words “But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him” but reads ὁ θεὸς δίδωσιν αὐτῷ πνεῦμα καθὼς ἠθέλησεν “God giveth it a spirit as it hath pleased him.”¹³ And in the apostolic this is immediately followed by these words: “it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.” These words actually do occur in our text though in a different order (verses 44 and 42).

Tertullian thoroughly demolishes these sectarians for only accepting the parts of St Paul's texts that coincided with misguided bias, showing that they might just as well have rejected everything St Paul wrote as only part of it. He asks Marcion for evidence regarding the apostolics which he ascribed to St Paul. He asked him to provide reliable indications that the book really was by the apostle, and to tell him who gave it that title, and through which tradition it had come down to him.¹⁴

The same questions could be put today to some Protestants who accept the writings of the apostles, but who at the same time are unwilling to submit to the true traditions of the church to which they owe the apostolic texts. Who told them that the texts ascribed to St Paul which they read are really by him? Tertullian asks Marcion whether it is because the apostle himself said it. Anyone, he adds, can testify on their own behalf; but we do not believe them unless we suspect the testimony comes from others, because no one can testify to their own deeds. This is a strong argument against the Marcionites who do not accept the Acts of the Apostles which, however, strongly bear witness to the doctrine contained in the Epistles of St Paul.¹⁵

Origen uses the same reasoning in his dialogue against the Marcionites, to refute the Marcionite he presents therein, and who says: “We accept neither the prophet nor the law because they do not come from our God; but we do accept the Gospel and the apostle.”¹⁶ Adamantius in reply asks him which apostle he accepts. “Paul,” says the Marcionite, to which Adamantius replies: “How can you know that Paul wrote the Epistles you read, and ascribe to him, since there is no mention of this in the Gospel?” As these heretics

¹³ *Dialogue on the True Faith*, section 3 (PG 11:1867).

¹⁴ Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 5:1 (PL 2:469).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Adamantius (Origen), *Dialogue on the True Faith*, section 2 (PG 11:1777).

accepted only the Gospel of St Luke, after modifying it to fit in with their own notions, and their apostolics, Adamantius presses them strongly on the point, and says in his conclusion against them that, according to their own principles, no Scripture bears witness to St Paul since there is no mention of him in the Gospel. The Marcionite has to resort to St Paul's having described himself as Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 1:1). But in rebuttal, Adamantius quotes these other words of St Paul: "he who testifies in his own favour carries no conviction," thus demonstrating to his interlocutor that anyone giving evidence on their own behalf is not to be believed.¹⁷

Epiphanius also criticises Marcion for quoting a passage from the epistle of St Paul to the Ephesians under the title of a letter by this apostle to the Laodiceans, saying there was never any such among the Epistles of St Paul.¹⁸ But all that can be inferred from this is that Marcion made a mistake concerning the title of the Epistle, calling the letter to the Ephesians by the name of Letter to the Laodiceans.¹⁹ Then again, St Epiphanius is right in saying that there never was a letter to the Laodiceans. The fragment published under this title by Lefèvre d'Étaples,²⁰ Sisto da Siena,²¹ and some others and even printed in some Bibles, is a document devoid of any authority. This is not to say that in the time of the early church there did not exist an Epistle bearing this title and ascribed to St Paul; but the most learned Fathers rejected it as a forgery, an aberration. For this reason St Jerome states that in his time it was virtually rejected;²² so there was no genuine Epistle to the Laodiceans other than the Epistle to the Ephesians whose title was really changed by the Marcionites. Of the Marcionites, Tertullian says that these heretics called the Epistle to the Ephesians as we know it under the title "Epistle to the Laodiceans."²³

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Epiphanius, Heresy 42 n. 13, 1 (*Panarion*, 1:335).

¹⁹ Tertullian (*Adversus Marcionem* 5:17 [PL 2:512]) in fact says that the Marcionites considered Ephesians as being "the Epistle to the Laodiceans," and that it was Marcion himself who made the alteration to the title.

²⁰ Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1450?-1536, also known as Jacobus Faber Stapulensis), *Epistolae divi Pauli apostoli, cum commentariis ...* (Paris: Jean Petit, 1531), folio CXLVII^rv [BnF A-1282 (1)]. The text of the "Epistola ad Laodicenses," followed by a survey of sources and variants, is placed within the author's series of commentaries on the Pauline Epistles, between Colossians and Thessalonians.

²¹ Sisto da Siena, *Bibliotheca sancta a Fratre Sixto Senensi, ex praecipuis catholicae ecclesiae auctoribus collecta, et in octo libros digesta ...* (Paris: Thierry, 1610), 91-92 [Univ. Glasgow Bm3-c.9].

²² Jerome, "Paul," *Authors of Scripture* (PL 23:621).

²³ Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 5:11 (PL 2:500). In some MSS., Ephesians 1:1 reads "Laodicea" instead of "Ephesus."

Those who assumed there was an Epistle from St Paul to the Laodiceans gave as their authority these words from Colossians 4:16: *when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans.*²⁴ On these last words, St Chrysostom has observed that before him someone had noted that this was not a letter sent by St Paul to the Laodiceans, but a letter that the Laodiceans had written to Paul because the text does not read “to the Laodiceans” but “written from Laodicea.”²⁵ Theodoret, who reproduces this in his commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians, was thus led to conclude that the letter to the Laodiceans, which circulated in some hands in his day, was a forgery.²⁶ Baronius rightly prefers the view of these two Greek Fathers to that of some Latin writers who believe that St Paul wrote fifteen letters, one of which as they said was lost.²⁷ Evidently Father Amelote sought to lend weight to this view when he translated this passage of the Epistle to the Colossians as: “you should also read the one I am writing to the Laodiceans.” But if the reading in his text was ambiguous, he should have retained this ambiguity in his own translation instead of smoothing it out by providing us with an Epistle from St Paul to the Laodiceans which, according to the early Church writers, never existed.²⁸

I pass over two other epistles once published under the name of St Paul—a third to the Corinthians, and a third to the Thessalonians—because they have even less authority than the so-called Epistle to the Laodiceans. We should merely observe that in St Paul’s time some impostors circulated forged letters ascribed to him in order to lend authority to their own doctrine. He was thus obliged to put his name at the end of his letters in a particular way, as he himself attests in 2 Thessalonians 3:17.

²⁴ See Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2:128–132. W. Schneemelcher notes that Gregory the Great “must ... be reckoned among the positive witnesses for this epistle handed down in Latin,” despite however having already discussed and rejected the theory of the Epistle to the Laodiceans being a book “forged in Paul’s name for the sect of Marcion,” further dismissing it as “nothing other than ... this paltry and carelessly compiled concoction”: seemingly the author assembled some twenty verses from the Pauline epistles, thus providing a “clumsy forgery” whose purpose was “to have in the Pauline corpus the Epistle to the Laodiceans mentioned in Colossians 4:16.”

²⁵ John Chrysostom, Homily 12 on Colossians §1 (PG 62:382).

²⁶ Theodoret, Commentary on Colossians 4:16 (PG 82:625).

²⁷ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:656–657 (CE 60 n. 14).

²⁸ Denis Amelote (1606–1678), *Le Nouveau Testament de Nostre Seigneur Jesus-Christ, traduit sur l’ancienne edition latine, corrigée par le commandement du pape Sixte V. Et publiée par l’autorité du pape Clement VIII. Avec des notes sur les principales difficultez, la chronologie, la controverse, and plusieurs tables pour la commodité du lecteur* (Paris: Muguet, 1688) [BnF A-2568 (2)], 2:284 and n. on v. 16.

I shall not spend time here on the Ebionites, of whom I have already said enough. If these heretics had openly declared themselves against St Paul, even writing forged Acts to disparage him and his doctrine, there was no way they were going to accept his Letters, which demolished everything they said. The Severian Encratites, who had a comparable dislike of this holy apostle, also completely rejected his Epistles.²⁹ Origen also mentions a sect calling itself the Helkesaites,³⁰ which only accepted part of the canon of the sacred books in the Old and New Testaments, but which completely rejected St Paul, and had some book or other forged, pretending it had come down from heaven.

It is not surprising that so many early heretics openly rejected the writings of St Paul; they claimed that not having known Jesus Christ he could not describe himself as his apostle. They also criticised some of his teachings for going against the law of God. In short they considered him as an innovator who they said used the introduction of Christianity to the Gentiles as an excuse for ruining the Sabbath, circumcision, and the other ceremonies of the old Law. This is why in his letters the Holy apostle frequently said that his enemies were wrong to question his status as an apostle. Although he had not met Jesus Christ, he proves irrefutably that he made no innovations to the Gospel since he made no statement about anything which he had not previously discussed with the apostles. This led Tertullian to say that St Paul went to Jerusalem with the express purpose of talking over everything relating to the preaching of the Gospels with the apostles or to avoid anything that contravened their doctrine.³¹ He goes on to say that after this apostle had conferred with them and when they reached a firm agreement on a definite and reliable conception of the faith, they parted, and all went their separate ways to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

On this same basis St Augustine rejects a forged Epistle which the Manichaeans had published under the name of Jesus Christ. Is there anyone so insane, asks the learned Father, as to believe that the Epistle ascribed to Jesus Christ by the Manichaeans is genuine, and that the Gospel of St Matthew which has always been preserved in the church is not by this Holy apostle? Is it reasonable, he asks, to accept the testimony of an unknown man which did not appear in the world until over two hundred years after Jesus Christ, seeing that since the church itself would not believe that St Paul

²⁹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.29.5 (1:214).

³⁰ Helkesaites (or Elkaisites), Jewish Christian sect (end 1st c. CE), Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.38 (2:140).

³¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 4:2 (PL 2:364).

had been called to be an apostle immediately after the ascension of our Lord without his having discussed the doctrine he preached with the apostles?³²

A precept widely accepted among early church writers is that Jesus Christ alone is the author of the Christian religion and that his apostles, who witnessed his deeds and heard his words, have passed down to us only what they saw or had learned from the Master. When the objection was raised with the early Fathers that neither the Gospels of St Mark and St Luke nor even the Epistles of St Paul should be accepted because their authors were not apostles but apostolics, the Fathers replied that these apostolic men had only written from what they had learned from the apostles who were their teachers. The conclusion was that these writings should have the same authority as if the apostles themselves had written them. For this reason, when Tertullian speaks about St Luke and St Mark, who he says were only apostolics, he goes on to say that they did not act alone, but wrote conjointly with the apostles and after the apostles; and thus that their doctrine could not be suspect since it had the authority of their Masters, even of Jesus Christ who had created those Masters.³³ What Tertullian says about St Mark and Luke also applies to St Paul. Thus are refuted all the arguments of the early heretics, who refused to accept his writings because they denied he was a true apostle.

All that the Manichaeans, already mentioned, accepted by St Paul was what coincided with their own idea of the Christian religion. The notions of these sectarians was senseless: for them it was enough to find two contradictory statements by this apostle to deduce that one of the two was obviously corrupt; it was not possible, they said, for him to say one thing in one place and the opposite in another. When Faustus was asked whether he accepted Paul as apostolic, he replied that he did. When it was demonstrated to him from the writings of St Paul that he must believe that Jesus Christ the Son of God was physically descended from David he said it was unbelievable that the apostle of God should set down contradictory statements which cancel each other out.³⁴ He held that interpolations were made in the Epistles of St Paul as in the Gospels. Moreover the better to display the mental cunning through which he came up with new answers, he said that the apostle's contradictions could be reconciled by saying that he had more than one opinion on a particular matter, and that the objection raised was Paul's earlier opinion which he abandoned upon being better informed.

³² Augustine, *Against Faustus* bk. 28 ch. 4 (PL 42:487).

³³ Tertullian, *ibid.* (PL 2:363).

³⁴ Augustine, *Against Faustus* bk. 11 ch. 1 (PL 42:243–244).

But enough of these heretics who had no sort of principles and were thus sometimes forced to resort to their Paraclete, their great refuge. More or less the same thing can be seen in some Protestant visionaries who, for lack of reason, resort to some particular spirit or other which reveals to them the mysteries of the Christian religion. I would beg these persons to reflect on the conduct of the early church writers in the dispute against heretics, and on their method of reasoning. Therein they will find neither Paraclete nor individual personal spirit but reasoning that is sound, and far removed from the fanaticism running riot in our own time.

Getting back finally to St Paul. The strangeness of these other heretics was so extreme that St Irenaeus was obliged to correct some sectarians who stated that only St Paul knew the truth and to him alone had been revealed the mysteries of the Gospel. St Irenaeus refutes them with the words of Paul himself when he testifies to the apostolic status of St Peter.³⁵

³⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* bk. 3 ch. 13,1 (6:250).

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS: IS IT BY ST PAUL, AND IS IT CANONICAL? VIEWS OF THE EARLY EASTERN AND WESTERN CHURCHES; VIEWS ON THIS EPISTLE FROM MORE RECENT TIMES

As my sole purpose in this book is to discuss the text of the New Testament and to establish as far as I can which texts are by the apostles, I shall not spend time on individual discussion of every Epistle by St Paul: the place for that is a commentary on Scripture, not a critical history of the text. So I am dealing straightaway with the Epistle to the Hebrews, whose authenticity in early times was evidently questioned, notably in the Western churches, some of which would not allow it to be read in public meetings. Even today some learned critics, whilst accepting that it is both divine and canonical, doubt that St Paul was the author. So it is appropriate to examine such evidence in the matter as we have.

Tertullian established a commonsense principle: "Earliest means most reliable." If this rule be followed, there will be no room for doubt that the Epistle to the Hebrews is actually by St Paul. It seems the Eastern Churches had no doubt. In the Eastern Church the Arians were the first suddenly to reject this Epistle since it was not favourable to their innovative ideas. In this they clashed with the general consensus of the Churches of the East. Consequently Theodoret, speaking of these heretics, was led to say that they should at least have some consideration for the passing of time and bear in mind that the Epistle had been read in the churches since the time when they accepted the writings of the apostles. To refute them he cites the testimony of Eusebius of Caesarea about whom they could not have any suspicions since they considered him as one of their leaders.¹ But their leaders, and this Eusebius, accepted that the Epistle addressed to the Hebrews was by St Paul and that all the early writers believed it as well.²

As to the evidence from early writers, however, this can only be said of those in the Eastern church; Eusebius himself has recorded that in the

¹ Theodoret, *Argumentum* to Commentary on Hebrews (PG 82:673).

² *Ibid.* (PG 82:676).

western churches some of them did not accept this Epistle, but the authority of these western writers must not be discounted since, as Eusebius also records, St Clement, the Bishop of Rome, who lived earlier than those writers, cites it in his Letter written on behalf of his own church to the Corinthians. By virtue of the authority of Paul, disciple of the apostles, Clement shows that the Epistle to the Hebrews was rightly placed among the apostolic writings. He entertains no doubt about the authorship since most of the early church doctors, especially in the East, believe it was genuinely by St Paul. But they are not in agreement over the exponent, since they thought he had written it in Hebrew. Some, says Eusebius, claim it was translated by St Luke, others by St Clement. Eusebius bases this view on the style of the Epistle, which closely resembles that of St Clement.³ Then again Clement of Alexandria uses these stylistic similarities to show that the Epistle to the Hebrews, which he says was by St Paul, was translated by St Luke.⁴

Origen in his homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews thought that the ideas were those of St Paul but that the expression was too refined and elegant to be by St Paul who expressed himself very simply. This disparity of style is ascribed by the learned critic not to the translator but to someone who wrote down simple thoughts. Origen says: "I believe the thought is that of the apostle but that the expression belongs to someone else who would have made a compilation of his master's ideas in order to write them down." But Origen goes on to say here that, even in his day, some churches did not ascribe the Epistle to the Hebrews to St Paul; and he even considers that nothing definite can be said concerning the person who composed it. If a church presents the Epistle as being by St Paul, he says, that is commendable, since the early church had reason to believe that it is by him: but God only knows who actually wrote it.⁵

The Greek Fathers before and after Origen, and even most of the heretics, only refer to the Epistle as being by the Holy apostle. The Melchisedekians⁶ gave precedence to Melchisedek⁷ over Jesus Christ, taking the Epistle of St Paul to the Hebrews as their authority. The Cathars, an offshoot of the Novationists, also based themselves on Hebrews 6:3–6:⁸ "It is impossible for

³ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.38.2–3 (1:153).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.14.2 (2:108).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.25.13–14 (2:128).

⁶ Epiphanius, Heresy 55 (*Panarion*, 2:77–86).

⁷ Epiphanius, Heresy 55 n. 1, 2 (*Panarion*, 2:77). See also Hebrews 6:20, 7:1; and Genesis 14:18.

⁸ Epiphanius, Heresy 59 (*Panarion*, 2:102–113).

those who were once enlightened to be renewed again until repentance.” Hieracas, the Egyptian, the leader of the Hieracite sect, whose numbers included several Egyptian monks, claimed he could use this Epistle to the Hebrews to prove that Melchisedek was the Holy Spirit.⁹ Lastly, several other heretics outside the Church never considered anyone but St Paul as its author, which leads me to believe that this view was based on an early church tradition.

However, at the time of Pope Zephyrinus in the early 3rd century, the famous writer Gaius,¹⁰ in a published version of his dispute with the Caphrygians,¹¹ accepts only thirteen Epistles by St Paul, not including the Epistle to the Hebrews. Eusebius, referring to this dispute, observed that even in his day some Romans still did not accept the Epistle to the Hebrews as being by St Paul,¹² and speaking elsewhere of the Letters by apostles, having said that St Paul’s fourteen Epistles are known to everyone, he goes on to say that some had rejected the Letter to the Hebrews on the grounds that the Roman church did not believe it was by St Paul.¹³

Baronius treats that historian unfairly, accusing him of trying to write favourably about his cronies in the Arian party, and insinuating that the Roman church had doubted the genuineness of this Epistle.¹⁴ Apart from the fact that in this passage Eusebius merely reports an established fact which St Jerome himself subsequently discussed in detail in that same passage, Baronius declares his support for those who believed that the Epistle to the Hebrews really was by St Paul saying that later in his History he would explain what the belief of the early church writers was in the matter. He does this in such a way as to show that, until Gaius, none of these early writers, even in the Roman church, doubted the authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Yet the fact remains that Tertullian ascribed it to St Barnabas, albeit without giving us his reasons.¹⁵

Baronius also found himself in difficulty when trying to explain the views of St Jerome who stated that although the Epistle was always accepted as

⁹ Epiphanius, Heresy 55 (*Panarion*, 2:77–86).

¹⁰ Early 3d century orthodox Churchman (see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.20.3 [2:120]).

¹¹ Another name for the adherents of Montanism, an apocalyptic sect inspired by one Montanus, who preached the imminent coming, near his native Phrygia, of the Holy Spirit (see Epiphanius, Heresy 48 [*Panarion*, 2:6–21]).

¹² Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.20.3 (2:120).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 3.3.5 (1:99).

¹⁴ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:668 (CE 60 n. 43).

¹⁵ Tertullian, *De Pudicitia* ch. 20 (PL 2:1021).

being by St Paul in the Eastern churches, the Latins often did not include it among the canonical Epistles;¹⁶ he also says the same thing elsewhere in his writings. But since most of the Roman Fathers, even in his own day, accepted that the Epistle was not only canonical but was in fact by St Paul, the Cardinal thinks that St Jerome made a mistake, basing himself entirely on the evidence of Caius and Eusebius without even investigating the practice of the Roman churches.

I admit that, as was his custom, Jerome, speaking of Caius in his book on church writers, simply copies what Eusebius had said. But this is not true of the other instances where he states, without relying on Eusebius, that this Epistle was commonly not accepted by the Latins.¹⁷ He also says that the Epistle was not accepted as being by St Paul since, although he was writing to Hebrews, he relied on points of Scripture which did not occur in their text. This is evidence enough that at that time there were churches where the Epistle to the Hebrews was not accepted as canonical. But this only applies to the western churches, since he agrees that it was generally received in all the eastern churches. In his letter to Dardanus he further said that, disregarding the standard practice in his own day, he accepted the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse as canonical books, even though the Latins did not accept the former or the Greeks the latter.¹⁸ Here he follows the early writers who said that both works were canonical as was the case in his own time. So we cannot agree with Cardinal Baronius when he says that when St Jerome stated the Epistle to the Hebrews was commonly not accepted by the Latins in his time, he was relying solely on the evidence of Caius, and did no more than copy what Eusebius wrote; for he makes clear reference to what the practice was in his own time.

But, it will be said, St Hilarion, St Optatus, St Ambrose, St Augustine, and other church Fathers who lived before St Jerome, or were his contemporaries, had no doubt that the Epistle was canonical and divine, but they also believed it was by St Paul. How then could Jerome possibly have said that it was not accepted by the Latins in his day? It is true that the foregoing were Latins, and that some of them, who were St Jerome's contemporaries, all ascribed the Epistle to the Hebrews to St Paul. He himself says this in his writings several times. Unlike Baronius, however, I do not conclude from

¹⁶ Jerome, Epistle 129 [to Dardanus] (PL 22:1103).

¹⁷ Jerome, Commentary on Isaiah 6:9 (PL 24:99).

¹⁸ Jerome, Epistle to Dardanus (*ibid.*, 1103–1104).

this that the learned Jerome did not properly examine the practices of his church, or that he was too ready to accept the words of Eusebius,¹⁹ but I shall state that a distinction must be made between Church customs and what is said by particular writers. When St Jerome said that in his day the Epistle to the Hebrews was not accepted by the Latins, he was setting down what happened in various Western churches who in fact did not use it in their public meetings. But this does not mean that the Church Fathers at that time did not accept it as being canonical and by St Paul. Bearing this in mind, any discrepancy between St Jerome and other Latin Fathers will be easily resolved.

The distinction made between the Churches' attitude to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and that of individual writers, is borne out by the fact that there are very early Greek manuscripts of the Epistle of St Paul also containing the Old Latin version, and in which the Epistle to the Hebrews is unmistakably separated from the rest of the Epistles. I believe there can be no other reason for separating it than that the Latins who copied these manuscripts did not, as I shall show, ever read from this Epistle in their churches. We shall see moreover, that not all early Latin writers ascribe the Epistle to the Hebrews to St Paul. Not only did Tertullian only ever refer to it as being by St Barnabas, it seems it was never received as part of the canon in the Church of St Cyprian, as he never refers to it in any of his writings. Saying, as Baronius does that this holy bishop was merely following Tertullian, whom he constantly read and referred to as his Master, does not solve the problem. I have no doubt that if in his lifetime, in his Church, the Epistle to the Hebrews had been read aloud and been considered as being by St Paul, he would have referred to it along with the others.

Evidence against ascribing this Epistle to St Paul is not strong enough to refute that of so many writers who did ascribe it to him. Firstly the objection raised by St Jerome in his commentary on Isaiah, and based on the passages from the Old Testament, that the author of the Epistle did not use the Hebrew Bible but the Greek Septuagint, proves absolutely nothing.²⁰ It would first be necessary to prove that it was originally written in Hebrew, which will not be easily done. Even supposing that it could be, one could always say, as in the case of the Gospel of Matthew, that the Greek translator quoted passages from the Old Testament in the Septuagint, which was in use by most Jews at that time.

¹⁹ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:672 (CE 60, n. 52).

²⁰ Jerome, Commentary on Isaiah (ibid.).

If we are to believe Origen, a very learned scriptural exegete, the Epistle was written in Greek by one of St Paul's scribes or disciples who merely set down what he had learnt from his Master. This effectively refutes the argument of differences in style usually raised in regard to this Epistle, namely that its style is very different from that of the other Epistles by St Paul. The matter was raised by Theophylactus who held that St Paul wrote the Epistle in Hebrew and that it was translated into Greek by St Luke, as some believe, or by St Clement; this he judged to be more likely because of stylistic similarities.²¹

The third argument against St Paul's authorship of this Epistle is that if it were by him he would have placed his name at the beginning as in his other Epistles. Theodoret, putting forth this argument on behalf of the Arians, replied that this letter is very different from the others bearing the name of the apostle. According to Theodoret, Paul stated his name at the start of the other Epistles because they were written to Gentiles, and he was their apostle; whereas it was not appropriate to put his name at the beginning of a letter to Jews when he was not their apostle.²² This argument was also available to the Arians in the works of Clement of Alexandria, who lived before the heresy came about, and who also puts forward another argument in the passage, although it is based merely on a conjecture, as was the first argument. He says that St Paul was careful not to put his name on a letter to people who opposed him; and that he was wise not to identify himself, so that those persons would not be disinclined to read the Epistle.²³

There is a fourth argument for not ascribing the Epistle to the Hebrews to St Paul, which appears to carry more weight than the others. It seems the author sought strictly to disallow the chance to repent after baptism. In Chapter 6, verse 4 he says that once people have seen the light, that is, been baptised, then turned their backs on it, they cannot start over again by repenting. This is diametrically opposed to New Testament teaching and church practice. This it appears was what prevented some Latin churches from reading the Epistle aloud in their meetings, especially after the Novationists started using it to justify their schism. Theodoret says that the Novations made use of these words to bring down the truth. I have the answer to this argument in an Old Latin translation predating St Jerome. Whereas in today's Vulgate the Greek word ἀδύνατον ("impossible") is translated by

²¹ Theophylactus, *Commentary on Hebrews* 1:2 (PG 125:193).

²² Theodoret, *Argumentum* to *Commentary on Hebrews* (PG 82:676).

²³ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.14.1–3 (2:106–107), quoting Ὑποτυπώσεις, lost work by Clement.

impossibile, in this other version it is rendered by *difficile*: and this version, be it noted, customarily translates word for word from the Greek and so is unidiomatic; but here the translation, instead of being strictly literal, rather conveys the meaning. This proves that, at that time, the Latins found the expression was harsh and contrary to what the church felt. It was partly for this reason also that Luther at first denied that the Epistle to the Hebrews was by St Paul, or any other of the apostles.

Erasmus, in his notes on this Epistle, observes that St Ambrose, who wrote commentaries on all of St Paul's Epistles, did not provide one for this Epistle because it was only received within the Roman church at a very late stage. He also says that the Greeks accepted it with delight, because it contradicted the Arians who rejected it. But he is wrong; he ascribes commentaries to St Ambrose which he did not write and which the shrewdest scholars believe are by Hilarion, Deacon of Rome. Nor is it true that the Greeks accepted it after it was rejected by the Arians; for Clement of Alexandria who lived before Arius stated that it was by St Paul; moreover, on this point, the opponents of the Arians adduced the general consensus of church writers before their heresy existed.²⁴

Erasmus it was also who shocked most theologians, particularly those of the Faculty of Paris, with the two following statements: "the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews has always been in doubt; and truth to tell I still have doubts."²⁵ So shocking did the wise Masters of Paris find this that they censured the statements as follows: "These two statements are impudent and schismatic, going against the customs and decrees of the church in the Councils of Nicaea, Laodicea, the third Council of Carthage, where St Augustine was present, and a Council of 70 bishops presided over by Pope Gelasius."²⁶ To this those theologians added the testimony of St Denis whom they call a disciple of St Paul, St Clement, Innocent I, St Chrysostom, St Gregory of Nazianzus and other church Fathers, concluding it was false to say that there have always been doubts about the author of the Epistle to Hebrews, since Origen attests that all early church writers before him accepted it as being by St Paul.

To refute Erasmus, they also cite the words of St Peter at the end of his second canonical Epistle to the Hebrews (2 Peter 3:15) where he specifically says

²⁴ Erasmus, *Declarationes ... (Opera omnia ... ed. J. Le Clerc [Leiden: Vander Aa, 1703–1706], 9:865)*, Declaration 33.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, col. 865 (*Censura* 32).

that Paul, his most dear brother, had also written to them. They entertained no doubt that by this St Peter meant the Epistle of St Paul to the Hebrews. Responding to the Doctors of Paris, Erasmus merely says none of the Councils discussed the authorship of the Epistle but only its authority; the title was added to the Epistle as a designation; and the fact that several persons had quoted it as being by St Paul was not in dispute.

As this generalised response does not do justice to the authority of the Councils which attributed the Epistle to the Hebrews to St Paul, I shall reproduce the judicious observations of all these problems put forward by Estius, a learned Doctor of the Faculty of Douai. Having discussed the matter of the Epistle's authorship, he goes on to ask whether St Paul's being its author is an article of faith, so that believing the opposite would be heretical, as Catherine, Sisto da Siena, Alfonse and other modern writers believe on the authority of various Councils, and the practice of the whole church, which ascribes it to St Paul when reading it in the Offices.²⁷

Estius, all these authorities notwithstanding, does not consider it an article of faith, on the basis of positive statements by several church Fathers, St Jerome and St Augustine among them. We have already the former's views on this matter. St Augustine, referring to this Epistle, says unequivocally that many believed it was by St Paul, and that others said it was not.²⁸ Here indubitably this church Father was not referring to Catholic writers. As to the Councils, Estius replies that some took place before the time of these two Fathers, so no proof can be derived from those Councils. He adds the same is true of the rest, because the intention of the assembled bishops was not to decide on the authorship of the Epistle but to place it with the other Letters by St Paul within the canon of Scripture. In support of this he cites those very Councils, adducing the following words from the Council of Carthage in evidence: thirteen Letters by Paul, one to the Hebrews. He states that the Council refers individually to the Letter to Hebrews because unlike the others it was not unquestionably by St Paul. He also said that St Augustine had high regard for this Council, and would have entertained no doubts over the Epistle's authorship, had he been convinced that the Council had settled the matter. Augustine, he says, knew that decisions made by Councils are not articles of faith, backing this up with examples.²⁹

²⁷ Willem Hesselszoon Van Est (called Estius), *Absolutissima in omnes beati Pauli et septem catholicas apostolorum epistolas commentaria tribus tomis distincta ...* (Paris: Leonard, 1679), 3:868A [BnF A-1289 (2)]: preface to commentary on Hebrews.

²⁸ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* ("On the City of God"), bk. 16 ch. 22 (PL 41:500).

²⁹ Van Est, *op. cit.*, 3:868A.

But despite all this Estius concludes, along with the theologians of Paris, and with Melchior Cano,³⁰ that it would be most rash to suggest that St Paul was not the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.³¹ Nonetheless he does not venture to declare that those who deny that it is by St Paul were being heretical: a judicious remark, evidently, since there is no question of heresy in this matter. I have moreover spent time on what Estius says because it sheds light on everything that concerns the author of the Epistle of the Hebrews while at the same time warning theologians not to be hasty where heresy is concerned.

Similarly the judgment of the theologians of Paris goes no further than judging Erasmus to have been rash in this matter. However, in their censure on the author of each book of the New Testament, they also say that no Christian is permitted to have any doubts regarding the authorship.³² At that rate, according to the decision of the Theology Faculty of Paris, anyone doubting that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews is a bad Christian, though not a heretic. Erasmus, instead of providing precise answers to these wise Doctors, skirts around their statements using generalisations. He states he does not believe that any accepted church practice immediately became an article of faith.³³ Yet he also declares his submission to the ruling of the church by going on to say that his own reason told him that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not by St Paul nor by St Luke; the second Epistle ascribed to Peter was not by him; and that Revelation was not by the apostle John; that his hesitation in accepting these things came from not knowing whether the church had so stamped its authority on the titles of the sacred books, that just as it had decreed not only that the content of the books was not to be questioned, it also decreed that indisputably those to whom the books were attributed were the authors. "If that is so," says Erasmus, "I spurn the reasons for my doubts; for I give preference to the specific judgment of the church over all human reasons."³⁴

The whole problem comes down to knowing whether the church, when declaring the books of the Old and New Testaments canonical and divine, also declared that they were by the authors whose names they bear. It is

³⁰ Francisco Melchior Cano (1509?-1560), bishop of Canary Islands (quoted *infra* in the present work, ch. 17 n. 9).

³¹ Van Est, *op. cit.*, 868B.

³² See *supra*, ch. 2 n. 23. Erasmus, *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas sub nomine Facultatis theologiae parisiensis* (*Opera omnia* 9:863 [Censura 32]).

³³ *Ibid.* [Declaration 32].

³⁴ *Ibid.*, col. 864.

important to bear this in mind in connection with the other books in the New Testament which remain to be discussed in this book.

On more than one occasion Lutherans have been criticised because their patriarch did not accept this Epistle in the belief it was not by any of the apostles. But as well as having it in their German Bible along with the rest of St Paul's Epistles, they reply that their Master was entitled to have the same doubts as so many early writers had done, but that he did not fail to accept its true worth and that it had been written by a disciple of the apostles.³⁵ In the discourse heading his commentaries on this Epistle, Calvin says: "I for my part cannot believe that it was written by St Paul."³⁶

It seems the Unitarians would have been expected to exclude the Epistle of the Hebrews from the canon as the Arians had done, yet although convinced there is no firm evidence concerning its authorship, they nonetheless accept it along with the other Letters of St Paul. Socinus, accordingly, whilst presenting the reasons for doubting it is by St Paul, also says that it remains nonetheless divinely inspired. He admits that there is good reason to doubt that it really was written by the author to whom it is attributed: but he also says whether or not one knows who wrote a particular book, it does not follow that the book is not authoritative or even less authoritative than if the author's identity was known.³⁷ Enyedi, a subtle Unitarian, also examines this question closely in his discussion of the passages from the Epistle to the Hebrews. He summarises everything he has read on the subject in Erasmus, Beza and other commentators. However, after providing a precise outline of the arguments for not ascribing this Epistle to St Paul, leaving its authorship open to doubt, he nevertheless includes it in the canon.³⁸

It is worth noting that whilst orthodox believers found the Epistle to the Hebrews useful for refuting the Arians, the arguments were not so clear cut as to prevent the latter using the Epistle to support their innovative ideas against the Catholics. The point is illustrated by St Epiphanius, who says that although the heretics did not accept the Epistle to the Hebrews as an apostolic text, in order to undermine the church's faith they did not hesitate

³⁵ Balthasar Raith (1616–1683), *Vindiciae versionis S. Bibliorum germanicae, B.D. Martini Lutheri labore editae* (Tübingen: Cotta, 1676), Thesis xx 12–13 [Tübingen Univ. Libr. Ge 485.4°].

³⁶ V. Bridel (ed.), *Commentaires de Jean Calvin sur le Nouveau Testament* 8, 1:14 (*Argument, Epistle to Hebrews*).

³⁷ Socinus, *De Auctoritate Scripturae sacrae* II (*Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum ...*, 1:269A).

³⁸ György Enyedi (1551–1597, Hungarian: from Cluj, in present-day Romania), *Explicationes locorum Veteris et Novi Testamenti, ex quibus Trinitatis dogma stabiliri solet* (S.l., s.n., s.d.) [Klausenburg, 1598], 378–381 [BnF D2–1418].

to use these words from Hebrews 3:1–2: δέξασθε³⁹ τὸν ἀρχιερέα ἡμῶν πιστὸν ὄντα τῷ ποιήσαντι αὐτὸν “accept the High Priest of our profession who was faithful to him that appointed him.” From the words *who is faithful from the one who appointed him*, they concluded that Jesus Christ was a created being.⁴⁰

As to the written style in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the early church writers all considered that the Greek text we have is too pure and too elegant to be that of St Paul. But we are not therefore entitled to conclude that the Holy apostle wrote it in Hebrew or Chaldaic. I prefer to follow Origen in thinking that it was written in Greek by one of St Paul’s scribes or interpreters, then attributed to Paul throughout antiquity because of the grandeur of what it says, this context being conveyed with a certain turn of phrase which could only be that of a learned Jew from the Pharisean sect. Even today Jews who are familiar with their ancient writers freely admit that there is something grand and sublime about the Epistle. If we knew specifically to which Hebrews it was addressed, we could more easily tell in what language it was written. But as the matter is of little importance, and we can do no more than conjecture about it, we shall leave it at that.

³⁹ Here R. Simon reproduces the word δέξασθε “accept,” which is present in this passage as quoted by St Epiphanius (see following note: the same verb does occur in this form in 2 Corinthians 11:16); the Greek text of Hebrews 3:1 has κατανοήσατε “consider.”

⁴⁰ Epiphanius, Heresy 69 nn. 37–38 (*Panarion*, 2:355–357).

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE CATHOLIC OR CANONICAL EPISTLES IN GENERAL AND IN DETAIL: CLARIFICATION OF PROBLEMS PERTAINING THERETO

The seven Epistles we call Catholic or universal were so called by the Greeks because most of the Epistles were not written to particular churches as were those of St Paul. It seems that particularly in the Western churches there was a move to describe them as canonical because there was some doubt as to whether some of them should have been included among the canonical books. Cardinal Cajetan believed that the Epistle of St James, which is addressed to the twelve Jewish tribes in general, merited the designation of “book” rather than Epistle because it was not intended to be distributed to Jews dispersed among several nations.¹ But in this he is mistaken, because Epistles were addressed not only to individual congregations but to communities, even when these were divided among different nations, and these Epistles are called καθολικαὶ “catholic” or secular letters.

The author of the *Preface* to the canonical Epistles—ascribed to St Jerome, and occurring in most manuscripts, and the early Latin editions of the Bible—notes that, in his day, the order of the Epistles was not the same in Latin manuscripts as in the orthodox Greek texts. Whereas, in the latter, the Epistle of St James came first, at the head of the others the Latins had placed the Epistle of St Peter, bearing in mind his preeminent place among the apostles.² The same author claims to have rearranged them in their original order, placing the Epistle of St James first, followed by the two Epistles of St Peter, the three by St John and lastly the Epistle of St Jude. This is in fact the order which they occur in the Greek manuscripts and even in the early Latin Bibles, seven or eight centuries old. St Jerome retained the same order in his major prologue entitled “Galeatus.”³

¹ Tommaso de Vio Cajetan, *Opera omnia quotquot in Sacrae Scripturae expositionem reperiuntur, cura atque industria insignis Collegii S. Thomae complutensis ordinis Praedicatorum* (Lyon: Prost, 1639), vol. 5 (*In omnes D. Pauli et aliorum apostolorum Epistolas commentarii nunc denuo recogniti ...*), 362 [BnF A-830 (5)].

² Jerome, Prologue to Canonical Epistles (PL 29:821).

³ R. Simon errs: it is the canonical books of the Old Testament that Jerome considers in his

The Syrians retained this same order in their version, as shown in the edition by Widmanstadt.⁴ However, in their early manuscripts on which this edition was based, they do not have the second Epistle of St Peter, or the second and third by St John, or the Epistle by St Jude. Evidently these Epistles were not present in the Greek manuscripts which the Syrians translated into their language. Yet it seems there was some inconsistency regarding the order of these Epistles; in the most recent canon of the Epistles, the Letters of St Peter are placed first, followed by those of St John. The Epistle of James is down in third place. The bishops at Trent, following the Council of Florence, also arranged them in this order. Calvin, in his commentary on the canonical Epistles even went so far as to place the Epistle of St Peter ahead of all the others. But the preferred order is that occurring in the Greek and Latin manuscripts and some oriental versions.

In regard to the authority for these Epistles, there is great difficulty. As we have seen, the Syrians omitted some of them from their text of the New Testament. They would not have done so had those Epistles been in use in the Eastern churches, when they made their translation from Greek into Syriac. However they have since translated them, and printed them as well; and they are therefore to be found in the Arabic translation of the New Testament. This point will be discussed in more detail in the second book⁵ of the present work which will be specifically devoted to the various versions. But as at this stage I shall only be discussing the text, let us examine the views of the Church Fathers on this.

Eusebius, while stating that the Epistle of St James brother of the Lord and the other Catholic Epistles were in use in most churches, adds that few early writers refer to these Epistles or to that of St Jude. What he means apparently is that few doctors of the early church refer to it as being canonical. Accordingly in his listing of the books of the New Testament in another part of his History, Eusebius includes the Epistles of St James, St Jude and the second and third of St John among Scriptures not accepted by all churches as canonical, even though several early church Fathers had discussed them.

Prologus Galeatus "Helmeted Preface," preceding the books of Samuel and Kings (PL 28:547–558; *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem* 1:364–366).

⁴ See *supra*, ch. 13 n. 32 of the present work.

⁵ R. Simon, *Histoire critique des versions du Nouveau Testament, ou l'on fait connoître quel a été l'usage de la lecture des Livres Sacrés dans les principales Eglises du monde* (Rotterdam: Leers, 1690).

St Jerome, who customarily follows Eusebius in his list of church writers, presents a virtually identical view in regard to the Epistle of St James. He says first that St James, first Bishop of Jerusalem, wrote only one of the seven canonical Epistles; then, to show that not everyone agreed that it was actually by James, adds that it was said to have been written by someone else under the name of James, even though the Epistle did come to be considered as canonical in the fullness of time.⁶

Cardinal Cajetan refers to the same passage in St Jerome to show that there was some doubt as to whether this Epistle was by St James, brother of the Lord. He even gave his remarks on this Epistle the title “Commentary on the Epistle bearing the name of St James.” In this he is more scrupulous than St Jerome, who had no difficulty in saying it was by St James. In fact in that passage Jerome simply repeats the view regarding the authorship of this Epistle which was held by various people. But since it was ascribed to James when read in the churches, as has been the constant practice since that time, the Cardinal is being overcautious as when he goes on to say that there is nothing apostolic about the greeting at the start of this Epistle; on the contrary, he says, it is quite profane, making no mention of Jesus Christ, of grace, or of peace; and, says the cardinal, he does not call himself an apostle but Servant of Jesus Christ.⁷

Sisto da Siena includes this last objection among the reservations expressed by Martin Luther in regard to this Epistle and it may be that Cajetan based his remarks on the gist of what was said by this sectarian.⁸ But the objection is so feeble, and indeed ill-considered, that the Lutherans have taken no account of it any more than they have of various other objections raised by their Master to the Epistle of St James, for nowadays they accept it just as the Catholics do. What is unforgivable is that in some editions of the German Bible they retain Luther’s prefaces to the Epistles to the Hebrews and the Epistles of St James, even though these letters are part of their canon. For the prefaces undermine their acceptance of the Epistles in their Bible.

I could have wished that Melchior Canus and other learned theologians had not cited certain Decretal Epistles—wrongly ascribed to early Popes—as their authority for saying that people believed this Epistle really was by St

⁶ Jerome, “James,” *Authors of Scripture* (PL 23:609).

⁷ Cajetan, *ibid.*

⁸ Sisto da Siena, *Bibliotheca sancta ... ex praecipuis catholicae ecclesiae auctoribus collecta* ... (Cologne: Cholin, 1626), 769–770 [BnF Q-451].

James from the earliest Christian times.⁹ We do not need proof of this kind. Although early opinions on the matter were divided, it is enough that after giving the matter due thought, later generations found sufficient ancient evidence to include the Epistle of St James among the canonical books of the New Testament and that today every church in the world accepts it as such.

Calvin, more moderate in this regard than Luther, instead of inappropriately rejecting the Epistle of James on the grounds that it appeared to contradict St Paul, preferred to reconcile St James's doctrine of faith and works with St Paul's. The fact, he said, that this Epistle contains nothing unworthy of an apostle of Christ is enough for me to accept it. The Lutherans themselves soon realised that their prophet was coming out with his prophecies with insufficient prior meditation on what he was putting forward.¹⁰ Raith, who wrote an apologia of this Dr Martin, confirms that, in the first edition of his German Bible, Martin had written that, compared to the Epistles of St Peter and St Paul, that of James was merely *epistolam stramineam* "an epistle of straw." But when he had become more fully enlightened on the matter these words were removed from subsequent editions and are absent from editions later than 1526.¹¹ One member of that sect nevertheless published a book in Strasbourg in 1527, in which he has strange things to say about the Epistle of St James. He says he cannot support it because its author misquotes Scripture and is the only writer to contradict the Law, the Prophets, Jesus Christ and the apostles. He rejects what the writer says as pointless, even saying that one single testimony cannot be belief, especially when the Holy Spirit and many witnesses to the truth say otherwise. After having vilified the author of the Epistle ascribed to St James, he says at the end of his book that people should not hold it against him for treating the author so harshly. The author deserves this antipathy, he says, because he has introduced us to a notion of justification other than by faith.¹² Could anything be more insolent than this sectarian's setting up his ill-judged prejudices in opposition to the witness of all churches in the world?

⁹ Francisco Melchior Cano, *De locis theologicis libri duodecim* (Salamanca: Gast, 1563), 38B [BnF D-9].

¹⁰ *Commentaires de Calvin* tome 8 2:9 (*Argument*, Epistle of James).

¹¹ Balthasar Raith (1616–1683), *Vindiciae versionis ...*, Thesis XXI 11–12.

¹² Andreas Althamer (1498–1539?, Reformist and humanist from Brandenburg-Anspach), whose work *Conciliationes locorum Scripturae, qui specie tenus inter se pugnare videntur, centuriae duae ...* (1527) discussed some 160 alleged discrepancies in Scripture, cited by Grotius in *Rivetiani apologetici pro schismate contra Votum pacis facti discussio*, 722 (*Opera omnia theologica ...*, tome III).

Socinus discusses the authority for this Epistle with much more moderation and perception. This hero of the Unitarians makes it clear that in the early stages that there were doubts about the authorship of the Epistles of St James, the second of St Peter and that of St Jude because these were discovered after the compilation of the other New Testament books was made. However, he says, as it was subsequently acknowledged that they really were by the apostles whose names they bore, most of the churches had no further reservations, and the Epistle of St James was placed ahead of the other two. In regard to this Epistle, moreover, Socinus demonstrates its longstanding antiquity from the early Syriac manuscripts.¹³ He therefore not only accepts them as canonical but also believes that they actually were by those whose names they bear.

Although there is consensus that the first of the Catholic Epistles is by St James, who this James was remains to be ascertained. The difficulty is not resolved by the title of the Epistle which is different according to the different Greek manuscripts. Indeed these titles prove nothing, since they date from after the lifetime of the authors who wrote the books. Some manuscripts have simply “Catholic Epistle of St James,”¹⁴ others have “Catholic Epistle of the apostle St James.”¹⁵ This is also the title retained in the Vulgate, and carried over by Beza in his Greek edition of the New Testament where he has “Catholic Epistle of the apostle James.” But Stephanus, in his splendid in-folio Greek edition of the New Testament simply has “Catholic Epistle of James,”¹⁶ nor does Crespin’s Geneva edition of 1565 differ from this.¹⁷ Similarly we read “Epistle of St James” in Köpphel’s Strasbourg edition of 1524.¹⁸ The same applies to the Venice edition of 1538 by Melchiorre Sessa,¹⁹

¹³ Socinus, *De Auctoritate Scripturae sacrae* ch. 1:2 (*Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum ...*, 1:268B).

¹⁴ Minuscule 82 (BnF Greek manuscript 237, formerly King’s Library MS. 2869).

¹⁵ Minuscule 302 (BnF Greek manuscript 103, formerly King’s Library MS. 2872).

¹⁶ Robertus Stephanus (1503?-1559), *Novum Jesu Christi D.N. Testamentum ex bibliotheca regia* (Paris 1550, 2 parts in 1 vol. in-fol.); Stephanus’s 3d edition of the Greek New Testament, known as the *Editio regia* [BnF RES-A-513 bis].

¹⁷ Τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης ἅπαντα ... [New Testament in Greek] (Geneva: Crespin, 1565) [BnF A-6289]; the 2d edition publ. Jean Crespin (or Crispin, 1520–1572); preface by Crespin; the text is a reprint “in a small volume (3³/₈ by 5¹/₂ inches)” of Stephanus’s 4th edition (1551) “with only half a dozen minor alterations” (Metzger—Ehrman, *Text*, 151).

¹⁸ Τῆς Θείας Γραφῆς = *Divinae Scripturae veteris novaeque omnia* ed. Johannes Lonicer, with preface by the printer Wolff Köpphel (Strasbourg 1524–1526, the earliest in-8° printing) [BnF RES-A-5627].

¹⁹ Τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης ἅπαντα = *Novi Testamenti omnia* ed. Melchiorre Sessa (Venice: Nicolinis de Sabio, 1538, 2 vols. in-16°): follows the text of Erasmus’s 1st ed. in the Aldine

the 1534 Paris edition of Simon Colines,²⁰ and several others: this is easier and closer to the Greek text in which St James ascribes no qualification to himself other than that of James, servant of God and Jesus Christ.

Grotius also, for the same reasons, rightly retains this title, objecting the view of those who attribute the Epistle to James the son of Zebedee who was put to death by Herod before the Gospel of Jesus Christ had spread much beyond Judaea.²¹ Nor does he believe that the author of the Epistle was James the son of Alphaeus, because at the beginning of his Epistle, he would have described himself as an apostle, a title which conferred great authority on what the person had to say. He concludes therefore that it must be ascribed to James who was made first Bishop of Jerusalem by the apostles. This is virtually what St Jerome said in his catalogue of church writers.²² He does not call James an apostle, simply the brother of the Lord which is the title given to him by the Arabian translator in the title of this Epistle as published by Erpenius.²³

St Jerome here says nothing that goes against the views of Hegesippus, a serious author who lived not long after the apostles. This great man observes that there was more than one James at that time; and of the one which concerns us here he says that, being a brother of the Lord, he assumed the leadership of the church of Jerusalem along with the other apostles: and that it is commonly agreed that he was called James the Just, which he has always been called since the time of Jesus.²⁴ Hegesippus therefore does not believe he was an apostle, since he says that he took care of the Jerusalem church in company with the apostles, distinguishing him from the other persons called James only in that he was also called the Just.

(Venice) impression of 1518 [BnF A-6283 (1), A-6283 (2)]. See Metzger—Ehrman, *Text*, 149 and n. 28: "A beautifully printed pocket-sized edition (its pages measure 3 by 4 inches) ..." See W.H.P. Hatch, "An Early Edition of the NT in Greek," *HTR* 34 (1941): 69–78. Hatch indicates (71) that only seven copies of the complete edition ... are known to exist today. Presumably the Bible Society does not hold its own copy of this edition, which is mentioned only in a footnote [entry 4611 n.] in *Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scripture in the Library of the British and Foreign Bible Society* ed. Thomas Herbert Darlow and Horace Frederick Moule (London: Bible House, 1903–1911), 2:583.

²⁰ Simon de Colines (1480?–1546, ed. and publ.), 'H Καινή Διαφήκη (Paris 1534): follows the 3d edition by Erasmus, with some variants [BnF A-6282].

²¹ Grotius, Annotations on Title of Epistle of James (*Opera omnia theologica* ..., tome II 2:1073A).

²² Jerome, "James," *Authors of Scripture* (PL 23:609).

²³ Thomas Erpenius (1584?–1624), *Novum D.N. Jesu Christi Testamentum arabice* (Leiden: Erpenius, 1616). BnF A-2561 or A-100114.

²⁴ Quoted by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.4–7 (1:86–87).

However, Baronius and Estius after him claimed that this third James, as opposed to the two others, who was only Bishop of Jerusalem and not an apostle, is an imaginary James who never existed. But since what this Cardinal says is based only on very shaky evidence and since by saying this he goes against all ancient tradition, we should disregard everything he says in contradiction of the views of Hegesippus and St Jerome, and even of the evidence provided by the Epistle's author who would not have failed to call himself an apostle of Jesus Christ at the start of his Letter if he really had been one.

This author provides a satisfactory reply to Cardinal Cajetan, who sought to undermine the authority of the Epistle on the grounds that this James did not call himself an apostle but merely a servant. As to the Cardinal's further statement that this author makes no mention of God or Jesus Christ,²⁵ the contrary is evident from the very first words of the Epistle where the author claims no other qualifications than those being Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ* (James 1:1). There was no better title he could have given himself to express his qualities, especially as he was writing to Jews who were used to the title "servant of God" from reading the Old Testament, and by adding the words, "and of the Lord Jesus Christ," he shows himself be a minister of the new Law as announced by the Messiah.

Finally we note that in the Syriac version the title reads simply "the Epistle of James the apostle," and the Ethiopian version does not differ from this. But in the collective title the Syrians gave the three Catholic Epistles in their early manuscripts, it says that the three Epistles are by James, Peter, and John, witnesses of our Lord's Transfiguration. This would indicate that the James in question was the son of Zebedee, however, when including this inscription in their version the Syrians were obviously wrong.

Turning to the Epistles of St Peter and St John, Eusebius includes the first Letters of these two apostles among the canonical writings of the New Testament as accepted by common consensus of all the churches. He also observes that there were doubts concerning the second Epistle of St Peter and the second and third of St John.²⁶ St Jerome also says that, in the early days, the second Epistle of St Peter was considered doubtful because of the different style in these two Letters.²⁷ The testimony of Clement of

²⁵ Cajetan, *Opera omnia*, 362.

²⁶ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.25.3 (1:133–134).

²⁷ Jerome, "Simon Peter," *Authors of Scripture* (PL 23:607).

Alexandria, who includes all the Epistles we call Catholic among the canonical Scriptures of the New Testament, is quite unreliable since he also includes the Epistle of Barnabas and the Book entitled the "Revelation of Peter."²⁸ Despite his great learning, Clement did not make an accurate distinction between the Books of Scripture generally accepted by all churches, and those two others which are either doubtful or apocryphal. He accepts all the texts on several occasions using the method of the ancient rhetors who did not place high value on accuracy in their thinking.

Clement's disciple Origen had some hesitation in including these above-mentioned Epistles among the canonical books. As they were not universally accepted in his day what he has to say about them is very cautious. He says: "Peter, upon whom the Church of Jesus Christ is built, left one Epistle which is generally accepted, and possibly a second, about which there is some doubt. John too left one Epistle, a very brief one, and possibly two others: not everyone agrees that they are by him."²⁹ This shows that within the church there was never any doubt about the authority of the first Epistles by those two apostles, nor that they really were by those whose names they bear; and also that although there were some doubts about the others, these doubts were not unanimous, since Origen says they should be accepted as genuinely by the apostles to whom they are attributed.

The author of the synopsis of Holy Books has no doubts in the matter. He says that the second Epistle of St Peter is just as genuine as the first, and that St Peter wrote it to new converts to Christianity.³⁰

Cajetan, who has such difficulty accepting the Epistle to the Hebrews, and that of St James, is more moderate in regard to those presently under discussion. He claims that saying that the two Epistles of St Peter each have a different style is not solid proof that he is not the author of the second one, since the same reasoning could apply equally to the first Epistle as to the second.³¹ But the Cardinal overlooks the fact there that no church has ever doubted that the first Epistle of St Peter was really written by him. Thus on the basis of that document, the genuineness of which is unquestioned, it has been possible to make an assessment of the second one which does not enjoy the same level of support. If difference of style alone were enough to assess whether a text were genuine or not, the view of the early church

²⁸ Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 6.14.1 (2:106).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.25.10 (2:127).

³⁰ *Synopsis Scripturae sacrae* § 54 (PG 28:408).

³¹ Cajetan, *Opera omnia*, 381.

writers as reported by St Jerome, and which is based on the difference of style, is proof enough that the second Epistle ascribed to St Peter is not by him. Cajetan is on much more solid ground when he goes on to say that different styles do not necessarily prove different authors. Jerome, in fact, having noted the stylistic differences, explained them by virtue of St Peter having different interpreters. He assumes that St Peter did not write his Letters in Greek himself, but had interpreters, who were fluent in Greek; the New Testament actually refers to people who acted as interpreters in the time of the first apostles.³²

On the basis of this, which has the support of the early Church Doctors, St Jerome says that St Peter made use of different interpreters according to the different occasions.³³ Baronius goes so far as to infer that Jerome believed St Mark had translated the first Epistle of St Peter from Hebrew into Greek.³⁴ But all St Jerome actually says is that the apostles who were not fluent in Greek had scribes and interpreters.

Calvin, after a lengthy examination of these differences of style characterising the different writers of the two Epistles, nonetheless accepts that the second is both divine and canonical. "Whichever the case," he says, "since the majesty of Christ's spirit permeates every part of the Epistle, I could not in all conscience reject it completely, however much I fail to discern in it St Peter's true and normal way of expressing himself."³⁵ Flacius Illyricus wrote glosses on the Epistle, without having the suspicion of a doubt that it was written by him whose name it bears.³⁶

Grotius prefers to attribute the Epistle to one Simeon or Simon who succeeded St James as Bishop of Jerusalem, rather than to Peter. He believed that the original title of the Epistle was changed and that it read simply "Simon Servant of Jesus Christ" and not "Simon Peter Servant and apostle of Jesus Christ" as we have today.³⁷ This might seem likely if it were based on the evidence of manuscripts or early documents. But his thought is based solely on deductive reasoning which is not conclusive. He claims that the Epistle, or at least the third chapter, could not have been written until after the destruction of Jerusalem since it speaks of the complete destruction of

³² Jerome, Letter to Hedibia ch. 10 (PL 22:1002).

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:385 (CE 45 n. 28).

³⁵ *Commentaires de Calvin* tome 8 2:171.

³⁶ On Flacius Illyricus, see *supra*, ch. 5 of the present work.

³⁷ Grotius, Annotations on 2 Peter ch. 1 (*Opera omnia theologica* ..., tome II 2:113A).

the world which was eagerly awaited by Christians in those days. By now St Peter had perished under Nero and, says Grotius, no Christian expected the ultimate destruction of the world until after the Jewish state was destroyed.

But it does not follow from this that Jerusalem had already been destroyed. This was already a general belief among the disciples of Jesus in his lifetime. They were already awaiting his glorious reign which, as they thought, could only be founded on the destruction of the Jewish state. This is why, in Matthew 24, when Jesus talks to them of the destruction of the Temple, he is also alluding to his own advent. According to Maldonado, the disciples believed that the destruction of the temple and the end of the world were inseparable and that Jesus did not want to disillusion them for fear that, seeing their hopes dashed after the destruction of the Temple, they would become inactive.³⁸

So St Peter may well have written this Epistle before the fall of Jerusalem, specifying to the faithful in Chapter 3 of the Letter that Jesus had not postponed the realisation of his word as some of them had thought. The early Christians eagerly awaited the destruction of the temple which they expected to be followed by widespread destruction of the world. In that passage St Peter encourages them to wait patiently since, in the eyes of God, a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day (2 Peter 3:8). Grotius's conjecture seems no more solid therefore than that of Didymus, who lived around 300 CE, and who rejected the Epistle as spurious because as he said its third chapter refers to some sort of renewing of the world as found in the doctrine of the platonist philosophers.³⁹ There is nothing in the whole of that chapter that is not in complete accord with the early Christian doctrine concerning the end of the world.

The second and third Epistles of St John, about which some early Christians also had doubts, need not detain us for long. Papias who lived with disciples of the apostles says there were two Johns who lived in Asia, one of them the apostle and the other a priest and disciple of the apostles.⁴⁰

Papias, who had been a disciple of the latter does not refer to him as anything other than a priest. Because of this several church writers thought he was the author of the second and third Epistles ascribed to the apostle John. In fact he does not describe himself as an apostle, but only as a priest, ὁ πρεσβύτερος.

³⁸ Maldonado, *Commentarii* ... 5:145.

³⁹ Didymus the Blind (c. 313–398, Alexandrian theologian) PG 39:131–1818.

⁴⁰ Cit. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3:39.5 (1:154–155).

Eusebius, following Papias, lends his own support to those who thought there were two persons called John in Asia. Still further support was given to this view by the existence in Ephesus of two tombs of John. Jerome, who usually translates Eusebius's observations from Greek into Latin, says the same thing.⁴¹ He also says however that there were some who believed that both graves belonged to St John the Evangelist. He reproduces this story when discussing Papias, saying that he is doing so because a great many people did not believe that this other John, referred to simply as a priest, and not the apostle, was not the author of these two Epistles.⁴²

The author of the synopsis⁴³ of Holy Scripture nonetheless ascribes these two Epistles as well as the first to the apostle St John; and the Latin church which ascribes them to John in its Offices has evidently given them canonical status, thus following the testimony of the earliest writers in that church. This is why the apostle's name has been retained in the Latin title of the three Epistles in the Vulgate, *Beati Joannis Apostoli*. In the Syriac text of the second and third Epistles, as printed in the English Polyglot Bible, the heading is simply the name John, whereas the first is headed by John the apostle, evidently to show that the Epistles had two different authors.⁴⁴ Erpenius, who published an Arabic version, attributes all three Epistles to the apostle John, whom he refers to as "John the son of Zebedee" in the title of the first two Epistles, and as "John the apostle" in the title of the third.⁴⁵

Lastly, the early church had similar doubts about the Epistle of St Jude as for those already discussed. Eusebius therefore included it among the books of the New Testament not generally accepted by all churches.⁴⁶ St Jerome makes the same observation, also saying that the grounds for rejecting it were that it quoted the book of Enoch which was apocryphal; but that this had not prevented its being ranked with the sacred Scriptures on the basis of its antiquity and its being in common use.⁴⁷ It was also generally accepted by both Eastern and Western churches. Protestants and Unitarians also included it in the canonical books of the New Testament.

Luther had doubts about it as he did in regard to the Epistle of St James. But instead of completely rejecting the Epistle, the people who follow Luther

⁴¹ Jerome, "John," *Authors of Scripture* (PL 23:623–625).

⁴² Jerome, "Papias," *Authors of Scripture* (PL 23:637).

⁴³ *Synopsis Scripturae sacrae* (PG 28:409, 412).

⁴⁴ Brian Walton (ed.), *Biblia sacra polyglotta ...* (London: Roycroft, 1657–1669), 5:914 [BnF A-2560]; on this "English Polyglot," see ch. 4 n. 8 of the present work.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 924 and 926.

⁴⁶ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.25.3 (1:133).

⁴⁷ Jerome, "Jude," *Authors of Scripture* (PL 23:613).

in this do their best to temper their Master's word. Calvin, whilst admitting that opinions were divided about this Epistle in the early Church, also says: "However, since it is worthwhile to read it and since it contains nothing that detracts from the purity of the apostolic doctrine; and since all good people have long considered it to be authentic, for myself I am happy to rank it with the other Epistles."⁴⁸

From the words of St Jerome quoted above, Cajetan infers that this Epistle carries less weight than the apostolic writings that have never been in doubt.⁴⁹ This statement would have been true enough in early times when the Epistle was not accepted by all churches; but at the time when this Cardinal was writing there was no church that did not accept it as divine and canonical. It carries no less weight therefore than the other sacred books in the ecclesiastical canon.

Grotius did not believe that the Epistle was by the apostle Jude, because the author simply describes himself as servant of Jesus Christ. He also says that if it had been considered as genuinely apostolic, it would have been translated into all languages and accepted by all churches. He therefore considers that it is by Jude, Bishop of Jerusalem in the time of the Emperor Hadrian. The opening words of the Epistle show that it can only have been written by the apostle St Jude since he identifies himself as Jude servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James. Saying, as Grotius does, that the words "brother of James" are a later copyist's interpolation to give the impression that Jude actually was an apostle is a circular argument.⁵⁰ To prove an interpolation, manuscripts of the Epistle must be shown in evidence, or early documents which bear out this version. If anyone wished completely to discredit the Epistle of Jude they would say, on the same authority as Grotius said, that the forger added the name Jude brother of James. This is why simple deduction must never be used to discredit documents which are ancient and which are accepted by everybody.

Admittedly the Epistle of Jude is less often quoted by early church doctors than most of the other books in the New Testament, and it is not included in the early Syriac manuscripts. The only conclusion to be drawn from this is that the Epistle was not at first accepted in every church. Possibly therefore it was published in the days of early Christianity in the name of St Jude brother of James, yet not translated into the languages of all churches because most

⁴⁸ *Commentaires de Calvin* tome 8 2:299 (*Argument*, Epistle of Jude).

⁴⁹ Cajetan, *Opera omnia*, 399.

⁵⁰ Grotius, Annotations on Epistle of Jude (*Opera omnia theologica* ..., tome II 2:1151A).

of them were not ready to accept that it was written by him whose name it bears. Clement of Alexandria places it alongside the other books in the Scripture, but, as we have already observed this Father included in his list some texts which were not canonical, even though they were attributed to one or other of the apostles. The only possible conclusion to be drawn from this is that, from the time of Clement at least, this Epistle was attributed to the apostle St Jude. Eusebius refers to it in his history of the church, not ranking it with the apocrypha, but with books about which certain churches entertained some doubt. Today there is no church which does not accept it as divine and canonical. In the printed Syriac edition it is entitled "Letter of Jude, brother of James."⁵¹ Exactly the same title appears in the Arabic edition published by Erpenius. In the Arabic text printed in the English Polyglot Bible it is entitled "Blessed Epistle of the Blessed Jude brother of the Lord."⁵²

⁵¹ *Biblia sacra polyglotta*, 5:928.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 929.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

EXEGETIC DISCUSSION OF 1JOHN 5:7, NOT PRESENT
IN MOST GREEK MANUSCRIPTS OR OTHER WESTERN
TEXTS, NOR IN THE EARLIEST LATIN MANUSCRIPTS.
THE PREFACE TO THE CANONICAL EPISTLES ASCRIBED
TO ST JEROME IN CERTAIN LATIN BIBLES IS NOT BY HIM.
THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF PROVING THAT THE TEXT
OF ST CYPRIAN CONTAINED THE SELF-SAME
PASSAGE FROM THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST JOHN

The remarks of various learned men on the “comma Johanneum” (1John 5:7–8) do not deter me from examining it afresh and checking it in as many Greek and Latin manuscripts as possible. Nowadays in all Greek lectionaries designated as apostolic, and in all Latin versions, the following words appear: *For there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.* However it is difficult to find any Greek manuscripts containing this passage. I am not referring merely to early versions, but those in our own day. Erasmus accused the Greeks of reworking their text in light of Latin versions, but, as will be shown from the following discussion, he is wrong. It is far more likely that this reading was originally a marginal scholium, later added to the text by copyists. This is the impression I received from reading various Greek manuscripts, and it also appears that the same interpolation occurred in the early Latin manuscripts. This, however, did not occur until after the time of St Jerome, who was not responsible for this interpolation as Socinus, following Erasmus, has accused him of being.

Search as I might in the King’s Library, and in the library of Monsieur Colbert, both of which have an abundance of good manuscripts, I did not find a single one containing this passage. In the King’s Library I consulted seven, six of which have the numbers 5, 302, 337, 465, 605, 2298.¹ There are scholia in some of these manuscripts; but no scholiast mentions the passage in question. Nor did I find it in the five manuscripts from Monsieur Colbert’s

¹ Here the original catalogue numbers of these minuscule manuscripts have been replaced by the Gregory-Aland numbering. The seventh manuscript was presumably the Latin source referred to below (see *infra*, ch. 18 n. 14).

library that I consulted and which are numbered 33,² 62, 296, 468, 601. Some of the manuscripts however are written on paper and are fairly recent. There is even a very finely calligraphed in-16^o, which I believe has been written since the invention of printing. Yet the passage in question is not there, any more than in the earliest manuscripts.

I could adduce even more Greek manuscripts I have seen, and the variants in which I have recorded. But more deserving of attention is the fact that, in the margin of some of the manuscripts I have enumerated, minor notes or scholia have been added alongside this passage and, it seems, have subsequently become part of the text. For example in manuscript 465, facing the words ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῆ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα (*For there are three that bear record on earth, the Spirit and the water, and the blood*) we find this scholium: τουτέστι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, καὶ ὁ πατήρ, καὶ αὐτὸς ἑαυτοῦ “that is to say, the Holy Spirit, and the Father, and he himself.” From this it can be seen that by the three witnesses St John speaks of—the spirit, the water and the blood—the scholiast understood the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit. Thus what was originally a scholium has, as often happens, eventually become part of the text. In this same manuscript alongside the words οἱ τρεῖς τὸ ἓν εἰσι (“and the three are one”), the following note has been added: τουτέστι μία θεότης εἷς θεὸς “that is, one Divinity, one God.” This manuscript, about five hundred years old, contains very few scattered scholia. A similar adaptation is to be found in manuscript 62. In the margin, as well as the words εἷς θεὸς μία θεότης (“one God, one divinity”), the scholiast added the following: μαρτυρία τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος “a bearing of witness to God the Father and the Holy Spirit.”

This, I believe, is the origin of the passage in question, which is very difficult to find in the manuscripts, even though it is now present in their lectionary. This is a much more likely explanation than Erasmus's statement that the Greek manuscripts where it does appear were altered on the basis of the Latin sources. Erasmus therefore could not include it in the early editions of his New Testament. For this he cannot be held entirely to blame since he was not obliged to print anything that did not occur in his manuscripts. Nonetheless he has been strongly criticised for this on the grounds that he sought to favour the Arian party. Jacques Lopes Stunica says it was wrong of him to remove this passage from his edition, on the assump-

² “Queen of the cursives.” In poor condition, says Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament* (London: Bagster, 1854), 161 n. (For illustration, see Aland, *Text ...*, 143).

tion that the Greek text was corrupt in that place.³ But although this Spanish scholar had consulted manuscripts, he does not quote a single one in support of what he says. All he does is to cite, as his authority, the preface by St Jerome at the beginning of the canonical Epistles which Stunica uses to prove that the words were present in the early Greek manuscripts which St Jerome used when revising the Old Latin text.

Erasmus, in his response to Stunica, justifies himself moderately well on the basis of the Greek manuscripts he had read. Nevertheless, despite the authority of all his manuscripts, he found it appropriate to insert this passage by St John in a new edition of his New Testament. His sole evidence for making the change was, he says, a Greek manuscript he had seen in England, and which he believed had been reworked on the basis of Latin manuscripts.⁴ As we shall further show, he was wrong to believe that the Greeks revised their New Testament text on the basis of the Latin version after they became reunited with the Roman church.

If, as Erasmus assumes, this was in fact the case, it was very wrong of him to alter his Greek edition on the basis of a single manuscript which he believed was corrupt. He appears to display even less judgment by wildly criticising St Jerome as if the latter were responsible for the interpolation in Latin manuscripts: *For there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.* In this he accuses Jerome of being far too rash, and of showing vacillating judgment.⁵ If we accept what Erasmus says, this means that St Jerome was guilty of forging the passage, unscrupulously altering the Old Latin version in accordance with his own prejudices, without the support of reliable manuscripts.

Faustus Socinus did not lose the opportunity of turning Erasmus's remarks to his own advantage. But he does say also that St Jerome may have

³ Jaime López Zúñiga, *Annotationes Jacobi Lopidis Stunicae contra Erasmus Roterodamum in defensionem translationis Novi Testamenti* (Alcalá: Brocario, 1520 [unpaginated]) [BnF A-1140]. For Erasmus's reply, see *infra*, n. 5. On Stunica, see also *supra*, ch. 5 n. 11. Cf. S.P. Tregelles, *An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament* (London: Bagster, 1854), 23 n.: "Some of Stunica's criticisms on Erasmus are singularly amusing. The Complutensian text had spelled Spain in Rom. 15:24 Ἰσπανία, as it stands in a few of the later MSS.; Erasmus had spelled it Σπανία; it is scarcely credible that Stunica should have charged Erasmus with casting an intentional slight upon his country, by taking away one of the letters with which it is spelled."

⁴ On Erasmus and the *Comma Johanneum* (1John 5:7–8), see the article by H.J. de Jonge (*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 56 [1980], 381–389); also Metzger—Ehrman, *Text*, 146–147 and nn. 21–24. On the authenticity of the passage, see Metzger, *Commentary*, 647–649.

⁵ Erasmus, *Apologia respondens ad ea quae in Novo Testamento taxaverat Jacobus Lopis Stunica* (*Opera omnia* ... IX/2, 254).

had one or even several manuscripts in which the interpolation was made in such a way as to make the deception impossible to detect, which caused him to lend his authority to this reading against the authority of so many other manuscripts.⁶ Such is the reasoning of our Unitarian, showing as usual more subtlety than sound scholarship. But ingenious reasoning alone is not enough to resolve matters of this kind; evidence from careful examination of documents is required as well. Erasmus had read various Greek and Latin manuscripts of the New Testament and had also consulted the manuscripts used by St Jerome: had he taken the trouble to subject the so-called Prologue by Jerome to the canonical Epistles to careful scrutiny, he would no doubt have decided to reject the Prologue as apocryphal, rather than describing St Jerome as a forger.

It is appropriate at this stage to say something about the Prologue to the canonical Epistles, which is attributed to St Jerome, and which only occurs in the early Latin editions of the Bible under the title: "Here begins the Prologue to the seven Canonical Epistles by the Blessed Father Jerome." The author complains that the interpreters have not provided a faithful translation of the Epistles, especially in 1 John 5:7 where the Trinity is described as three in one. He accuses these inaccurate translators of serious error because in their version they have retained only these three words *water, blood and spirit* and for leaving out the words *Father and spirit* which constitute genuine testimony of Catholic belief in the mystery of the Trinity.⁷

The new edition with commentary of the works of St Cyprian has recently been published by the Bishop of Oxford, who lists a great many Latin Bibles containing this Prologue by St Jerome. He is also indignant that it has been omitted from Latin Bibles printed in our own day. Let men of learning, says the learned bishop, decide whether this omission occurred by chance or through malice. He cannot conceive why it has been omitted from recent editions of the Latin Bible, since it is present in the manuscripts and nearly all the early printings.⁸

However, those who have published Latin Bibles without the Prologue must not be accused of dishonesty. Admittedly the Prologue is included along with St Jerome's other prefaces to the Bible in Latin manuscripts

⁶ Socinus, *In Epistolam 1. Johannis* [re 1 John 5:3] (*Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum ...*, 1:241A).

⁷ Jerome, Prologue to Canonical Epistles (PL 29:827–831).

⁸ St Cyprian of Carthage († 258), *Opera, recognita et illustrata a Joanne Fello. Accedunt annales Cyprianici, sive brevis historia chronologica delineata a Joanne Pearsonio, ...* ed. John Fell (1625–1686, Bishop of Oxford) (3d ed., Oxford: Sheldon, 1700) [BnF C-889], 79 n. 1.

which are no more than six hundred years old. The first Latin Bibles were apparently printed in accordance with manuscripts of this type. This is not true of those which are seven or eight hundred years old, only of some of them. It may well be that the Bibles from which the Prologue is omitted were based on manuscripts of the latter kind. It must also be noted that neither the name of St Jerome nor any other writer occurs in the title of this Prologue in some of the early manuscripts which do contain it; there is therefore good reason to doubt that it was the work of St Jerome.

If anyone takes the trouble to make a side-by-side comparison of these early Latin Bibles, they can easily see that whoever made a single compilation of all the books in the Latin Bible, most of which were translated or emended by St Jerome, also wrote this Prologue. Since he did not have prefaces by Jerome for every book, he remedied the situation by including some written by himself and others taken from the writings of St Jerome. Thus we read for example, in the manuscript of Charles the Bald,⁹ a preface to the Acts of the Apostles bearing the title "Preface by Jerome." It is nonetheless certain that St Jerome did not specifically compose a preface to the Acts: the compiler of the books in the Latin Bible took it from Jerome's grand Prologue entitled *Prologus Galeatus* "Helmeted Prologue." It is expressed as follows: "The Acts seem to reecho a candid history of the apostles, interwoven with that of the infant church, but if we realise that their author is Luke whose renown lies in the gospel,¹⁰ we shall similarly observe that everything he says is healing for a weary soul."¹¹ There is also some evidence that when whoever compiled the books of the Latin text we call the Vulgate could not find a preface by St Jerome specifically on the canonical Epistles, he made one up imitating Jerome's style, borrowing some of his expressions and even including the name of Eustochium.¹²

There is some evidence as well that when this Prologue was written the Trinity interpolation was present in some manuscripts of the Epistle of St John or at least in some Latin versions. Hence the author who did not have access to Greek manuscripts was led to believe that since the passage in question was missing from some Latin manuscripts, it was the work of careless translators. It must be noted that the addition is absent from several

⁹ Paris: BnF, manuscrit latin no. 1.

¹⁰ See Colossians 4:14, 2 Corinthians 8:18.

¹¹ *Biblia sacra vulgatae editionis Sixti V. and Clementis VIII. pont. max. auctoritate recognita. Editio nova, notis chronologicis et historicis illustrata*, ed. Claude Lancelot (1615?-1695) (Paris: Antoine Vitre, 1665-1666) [BnF A-2363], 370; Jerome, Epistle 53 §8, to St Paolino of Nola (PL22:548).

¹² St Julia Eustochium (370-ca. 419), addressee of epistles from St Jerome.

early copies of St Jerome's Bible which do however contain the Prologue, as I myself have discovered from two manuscripts, one in the King's Library, and the other in Mr. Colbert's. It is extremely odd to find the canonical Epistles headed by a preface in which St Jerome complains of the inaccuracy of early Latin translators who omitted a whole verse, which he himself restored on the basis of the Greek, from 1 John Chapter 5: and then to find that this very verse is missing when one actually reaches that point in the Epistle. I believe that the only possible explanation for this anomaly is that the copyists who wrote the description of the preface were using Latin Bible manuscripts from which the verse was omitted, since it is not in Jerome nor in the Old Latin version which was in use in his day. Had Jerome been responsible both for the Prologue and the addition to the Epistle of St John, the addition would have been included in all of Jerome's Latin Bibles. The inconsistency in manuscripts seems to me clear proof that Jerome did not write the Prologue as an introduction to the canonical Epistles.

Further evidence that St Jerome is not the true author of the Prologue or the addition, lies in the fact that the addition has been inserted in the margin of several early manuscripts from which that text was absent. For it was not likely that St Jerome would have spoken favourably of his own new edition of the canonical Epistles because of the changes he had made, particularly in the first letter of St John,¹³ and that there was no trace of any such change in the text. Accordingly, it was copyists, or the owners of the manuscripts, who judged it proper to bring the text into alignment with the Prologue through the addition in the margin of the verse concerning the testimony of Father, Son and Holy Spirit which was already present in the work of some church writers. People who included this addition in the margin of their manuscripts could hardly all keep to the same wording, so that it occurs with different wording in different manuscripts. These discrepancies obviously prove that St Jerome could not have been the author of this addition which is actually the work of individuals who sought to adjust the text of St John in accordance with the Prologue. Here I shall reproduce some examples of this rewording as it occurs in several early Latin manuscripts of St Jerome's Bible.

In the margin of King's Library manuscript 3584¹⁴ alongside the words *Three there are that bear witness* the following words have been added: "in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit: and three there are who bear

¹³ Jerome, Prologue to 7 Canonical Epistles (PL 29:831).

¹⁴ Paris: BnF manuscript latin 807, Lectionary of Offices.

witness on earth, and these three are one." The hand in which the addition is written does not seem to be any more recent than that of the text. A similar example occurs in Colbert library manuscript 158¹⁵ where alongside those same words: *Three there are that bear witness*, the following have been added in the margin: "in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit: and three there are who bear witness on earth, blood, water, and flesh." Moreover to make the text correspond more closely to the addition, part of the text itself has been scratched out and rewritten. The only example of the addition in three early manuscripts in the Benedictine library of the Abbey of Saint-Germain occurs in the margin of one of them, the addition dating from the same period as the text. Admittedly it does occur in an eight-hundred-year-old manuscript from the time of Lothaire II,¹⁶ but the text shows signs of curious interference. In this manuscript the original reading was "three there are who bear witness ('on earth' is added above the line), spirit, water, and blood; and the three are one: and three there are who testify from Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit: and the three are one." But the words "testify from Heaven" were subsequently erased and replaced with the words "bear witness in Heaven."

All these various changes are clear proof that the addition was in no way present in the early published manuscripts of the Bible of St Jerome; hence it is not to be found in a lectionary of the Gallican church written at least a thousand years ago, published by the Benedictine Father Mabillon.¹⁷ In fact Victor, Bishop of Vita, who lived one hundred years after St Jerome, seems to have been the first to add this passage to his works. In Book 2 of his work *History of the Vandal Persecution* he presents it as follows: "Until now, for us to make it clearer than light that the Holy Spirit is of one divinity with the Father and the Son, the evidence is in the testimony of John the Evangelist. For he says: 'There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.'¹⁸ It was then quoted by St Fulgentius¹⁹ at about the same period. But I shall save a

¹⁵ Paris: BnF manuscrit latin 4²: Biblia Aniciensis vol. 2.

¹⁶ Ca. 835 to 869: reigned from 855.

¹⁷ Jean Mabillon, *De Liturgia gallicana libri III, in quibus veteris missae, quae ante annos mille apud Gallos in usu erat ...* (Paris: Martin and Boudot, 1685 [BnF B-1696]), 476.

¹⁸ Victor "Vitensis" (bishop of Vita [Tunisia], late 5th c.), *Historia persecutionum, quas in Africa olim circa D. Augustini tempora ...* [composed ca. 485] in Jean Quintin, et al., eds., *Opus historiarum nostro seculo conuenientissimum, in quo multa circa urbes, arces, and insulis habentur* [Basel: Westheimer, 1541] [BnF RES-G-2126], 371–483, 437. Also PL 58:227 where text appears in *Historia Persecutionis Africae Provinciae* book 3 ch. 11.

¹⁹ Fulgentius (468–533, bishop of Ruspa [= Koudiat Rospa, Tunisia]), *Against the Arians* book 1 objection 10 (PL 65:224A).

longer discussion of this for the second book of the present study, which will contain a discussion of the versions of the New Testament.

I am aware that various scholars claim that this passage is quoted in the works of St Cyprian who lived long before St Jerome. Bishop Fell of Oxford used what is in St Cyprian as support for the Prologue by St Jerome, and to prove also that Jerome cannot be accused of forgery because all he did was to restore the original Latin edition in its pristine purity.²⁰ The Oratorian Amelote²¹ declares that the passage is present in St Cyprian's book on the unity of the church, even though he freely admits that it is not in St Athanasius, St Cyril, St Gregory of Nazianzus, St Chryostom, Didymus or, among the Latin Fathers, in Augustine, St Leo, Bede, and various others.

However, if the text was there in St Cyprian's copy of the New Testament, does anyone believe that St Augustine would not have used it as evidence against the Arians in his own day?²² In point of fact after close examination of the aforesaid passage of St Cyprian, all I have found was that the worthy bishop had simply reproduced the words "and these three are one" about which there has never been any doubt, and for which he proved that the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit were one, saying: "The words refer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and these three are one." What is in all our Greek and Latin manuscripts regarding the testimony of spirit, water and blood, which are said to constitute a unity, is applied by Cyprian to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This in no way resembles a direct quotation, as if the words had been taken from the scriptural text.

Anyone who doubts that such was St Cyprian's true meaning need only consult the learned Facundus,²³ who belonged to the same African church, and who provides a detailed synopsis of Cyprian's words using them as Cyprian did to prove the mystery of the Trinity. Throughout his discussion he assumes that the passage from Chapter 5 of St John's Epistle reads: *Three there are that bear witness on earth, spirit, water, and blood*. But he also says that these must be applied to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He held that

²⁰ See *supra*, n. 578.

²¹ Denis Amelote, *Le Nouveau Testament de Nostre Seigneur Jesus-Christ. Tome 3. Les Epistres catholiques et l'Apocalypse. Traduit sur l'ancienne edition latine corrigée par le commandement du pape Sixte V* (Paris: Muguet, 1666–1670) [BnF A-6429 (3)], 104–105 nn. on verses 7 and 8.

²² Cf. B. Metzger, *Commentary*, 648: "The passage is quoted by none of the Greek Fathers." Cf. also the acerbic observation by the eminent Richard Bentley (1662–1742): "The Antenicene and Nicene Fathers confuted Arianism without the aid of this passage, to which they never refer because it was not in their copies of this Epistle" (R. Bentley, *The Correspondence* ed. J.H. Monk, J. and C. Wordsworth [London: Murray, 1842], Letter 100 [2:529–530]).

²³ Facundus (fl. 546–571), bishop of Hermiane (Tunisia).

the persons of the Trinity are represented by three earthly witnesses, spirit, water and blood; and, to lend weight to what he says, he adds that St Cyprian understood the passage from St John in the same way.²⁴

If John Fell of Oxford had compared Facundus and St Cyprian, he would not have opposed Erasmus and Socinus with such a feeble defence of St Jerome, who needs no defence because he did not write the Prologue to the canonical Epistles, or the passage added to Chapter 5 of the Epistle of St John. Bishop Victor, less attentive, quotes the testimony of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as if it actually were by St John, whereas St Cyprian and Facundus only use it as an explanation of the testimony of spirit, water and blood. The same thing happened with the edition of the works of St Athanasius, published with an index of Scripture passages quoted. 1John 5:7 occurs throughout this index as if Athanasius had quoted it in those terms. In his dispute with Arius, however, he only quotes the words καὶ οἱ τρεῖς τὸ ἓν εἰσι “and the three are one and the same,” applying them to the Trinity.²⁵

There is no doubt in my mind that what St Athanasius said led some Greek scholiasts to insert the above-mentioned note in the margins of their manuscripts and that the note subsequently became part of the text. This seems to be far more likely than the view of Erasmus, who thought that the Greek manuscripts that included the testimony of Father, Son and Holy Spirit were revised on the basis of Latin manuscripts. His theory would have seemed more probable had he been referring solely to Greek manuscripts written by Latin writers for their own use. But for the Greeks, even after reuniting with the Latins, to have revised their New Testament manuscripts on the basis of Latin texts flies in the face of all probability. On the contrary it seems that the manuscripts to which they have referred since that time do not contain the aforesaid testimony.

The remark on this passage from St John which was put forward, following other commentators, by the theologian Froidmont of Louvain, has no foundation in fact. He accepts that St Augustine and various other Roman Fathers did not have the passage in their text; but he goes on to say that the Arians have removed it from various manuscripts and that the Latin version used by St Augustine and the others was based on the text that had been

²⁴ Facundus, *Pro Defensione Trium Capitulum* book 1 section III § 9 (*Opera omnia* ed. J.-M. Clément and R.V. Plaetse [“Corpus Christianorum” Series Latina 90A (Turnholt: Brepols, 1974)]), 12–13.

²⁵ Athanasius, *Disputatio habita contra Arium in concilio Nicaeno* § 45 (PG 28:499).

corrupted by the Arians.²⁶ Nothing could be more absurd than such a notion, the only evidence for which is the Prologue that is ascribed to St Jerome. How could the Arians be accused of altering the passage in their Greek New Testament manuscripts since it is absent from the text of St Cyprian who lived before anyone had heard of Arius? Any such alteration would have had to filter through to all churches: but it is not present in any New Testament editions by one or other Syrian sect or any other Eastern group.

Moreover whilst the passage does not occur in most Greek or other Eastern manuscripts, nor even in the early Latin texts, I fail to see how the Antitrinitarians can use this against the Catholics; the most learned New Testament commentators do not use it to explain the Trinity. As was then the custom, early church writers who mentioned it in connection with this mystery imbued the Scripture with certain theological significance in line with the accepted belief within the church. The Greek and Roman churches accept the words as part of 1 John 5:7; whether they be accepted or not, they can always be used to prove the Antitrinitarians wrong since, from the earliest times, the church Fathers related the testimony of spirit, water and blood to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. By means of the unity of these three witnesses they showed that the persons of the Trinity are one.

It is therefore pointless to argue whether or not we should accept a passage which in itself does not prove the Godhead of the Trinity but which assumes it in line with the thought of the earliest theologians. I doubt that when various present-day theologians observed that the passage speaks of the unity of testimony, they were speaking in favour of Arianism. By their testimony, says Father Amelote, the three are one. The Father bears witness to Jesus Christ by the Jordan, the Word through his words and actions, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and through the gift of miracles.

I fail to see the purpose of the great critical apparatus of New Testament editions cited by Sand²⁷ on the basis of others from which the passage in question is missing. As most of these Greek editions were based one upon the other, and very few of them were based on actual manuscripts,²⁸ the fact that there are so many of them proves nothing. For instance I do not

²⁶ Libert Froidmont (1587–1653), *Commentaria in omnes B. Pauli et septem canonicas aliorum Apostolorum epistolas ...* (Louvain: Nempaeius, 1663) [BnF A-1292], 657A.

²⁷ See following note.

²⁸ Johann Crell, *Scriptura S. Trinitatis revelatrix ...* (Gouda: Graef, 1678) [BnF D2–4983], 104–109 (though the supposed author of this work was Christopher Sand [1614–1680], whose name appears in R. Simon's main text, he does give the correct author's name, albeit in the Latinised form Hermannus Cingallus, in his marginal reference).

believe that the Strasbourg edition of 1524 nor the Paris edition of Simon de Colines of 1534 have any manuscript basis.²⁹ The printer Wolff Köpphel does not mention manuscripts in his preface to the Strasbourg edition; on the contrary, he states that he is doing no more than reprinting, with new type and in a new format, what had already been printed previously.³⁰ Simon de Colines did not provide a preface for his Greek edition, which leads me to believe that he used earlier editions to alter it to suit himself. Erasmus was one of the first to take the opportunity of omitting the passage from his editions of the Greek New Testament following the first which appeared in 1516; the passage is absent from his second edition, that of 1519.³¹ On the other hand, the editions that followed the Complutensian or Alcalá edition of 1515³² all included the verse; this explains its presence in the splendid edition by Stephanus³³ and most of the others. Only the manuscripts must be taken into account, not the printed editions unless, like the editions of Alcalá or Erasmus, they were based directly on manuscript readings.

We can also discount the very numerous editions of Luther's German text used to refute the Lutherans by Sand. They are no more than reprints of the first edition in which Luther followed the text of Erasmus or someone else, since at the time there were several others available, even in Germany, from which the passage in question was omitted. I doubt that this Northern patriarch took the trouble to read the Greek manuscripts. Most of his supporters say that he did when told that their Master falsified the Scripture by deleting a passage from the New Testament which proves the mystery of Trinity. They claim he could have left it out because he was following the Haguenau Greek edition of 1521³⁴ which predated his own translation. To this objection, Raith retorts that Luther intended to exclude from his version of the New Testament anything that was not consistent, and could therefore have omitted a verse which was spurious and which was not present in the Aldus

²⁹ Τῆς Θείας Γραφῆς = *Divinae Scripturae veteris novaeque omnia* (1524–1526, printed by Wolff Köpphel: see *supra*, ch. 17 n. 18); S. de Colines, Ἡ Καινὴ Διαθήκη (1534: see *supra*, ch. 17 n. 20).

³⁰ Τῆς Θείας Γραφῆς (1524–1526), [3]: *Ratio partitionis*.

³¹ Erasmus, *Opera omnia* 6:1079–1081 n. 3 (in col. 1080 Erasmus cites St Jerome, also noting that the *Comma* is present in the Aldine and Complutensian New Testaments, and in one codex of the Vulgate held in Britain).

³² See *infra*, ch. 20 n. 13 of the present work.

³³ See *supra*, ch. 17 n. 16 of the present work.

³⁴ See Nikolaus Gerbel (1485?–1560) (ed.), *Novum Testamentum graece* (Haguenau: Anshelm of Baden, 1521) [BnF A-2551], 259^v re *Comma Joanneum*: πατήρ λόγος πνεῦμα omitted. This first separate edition of the Greek New Testament contains no critical apparatus whatsoever; nor is the text divided into chapters or verses.

edition he is believed to have used.³⁵ Also Luther was convinced there were other passages that provided a solid basis for belief in the Trinity.

This explanation is plausible since Luther claimed to have made his translation directly from the Greek. But even if the Master did happen to get it right in this instance, I fail to see why his followers altered that passage of his text, or why they pass off something they believed to be spurious as the true word of God. According to their own practice, it would perhaps have been more appropriate to retain the old German text and simply include the questionable passage in the margin, as a note. However they are at present using it to combat the Antitrinitarians as if it were solid proof of the mystery of the Trinity, blissfully unaware that in this way they are providing the Antitrinitarians with an opportunity to defeat them. The only reason for accepting the passage as authentic is the authority of the church itself. Even the Greeks agree on this with the Romans who are their opponents.

The Calvinists show more consistency in their versions of the New Testament than do the Lutherans. Although they claim to be translating from the Greek, all their translations have nonetheless retained this passage. Beza, while admitting that it does not occur in most of the early manuscripts, states nonetheless that it must be retained in the text of which it is an integral part.³⁶ Diodati has also retained it in his Italian translation claiming that the unity to which it refers is just as much an essential unity as a consensus of testimony.³⁷ Calvin, however, who is usually careful not to use weak arguments against the Antitrinitarians, is here much more reticent when discussing the words *three are one and the same*, saying this is not a matter of essential similarity but of consensus.³⁸

He was as well aware as Luther that the passage was absent from the majority of manuscripts, and was also well aware of the difficulty in reconciling words of Jerome in the Prologue attributed to him with the early Greek texts. But he is unwilling to dismiss the matter for fear of shocking persons of shaky faith. I reproduce here his actual words; it also demonstrates how he left loopholes for himself when it came to discussing passages of Scripture which he thought to be spurious: "St Jerome says that although some

³⁵ Raith, *Vindiciae versionis* ..., 18–19.

³⁶ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 735B.

³⁷ *La Sacra Bibbia, tradotta in lingua italiana ... Seconda edizione, migliorata, ed accresciuta* tr. with commentary by Giovanni Diodati (1576–1649) (Geneva: Chouët, 1641) [BnF A-366, A-367], 308.

³⁸ *Commentaires de Calvin* tome 8 2:284 (commentary on 1 John 5:7): see also *supra*, ch. 13 n. 34.

have omitted the entire passage, out of malice rather than ignorance or error, even then, it was done only by the Latins. I have great difficulty in declaring myself on the matter, especially as the Greek manuscripts themselves are in disagreement. Further, since the flow of the text is not affected if the passage is included, and since I see that it does occur in the best and most correct manuscripts, for my own part I am happy to accept it."³⁹

³⁹ Calvin, *ibid.* R. Simon presents the same viewpoint elsewhere. As sequels to the present study, he wrote two further "parts": textual criticism of the versions and principal commentators on the New Testament (*Histoire critique des versions du Nouveau Testament* (1690); *Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs du Nouveau Testament depuis le commencement du christianisme jusques à notre temps* (1693), describing the three parts as a single *ouvrage* ["work"]). The last of these books is accompanied by a discussion of manuscripts cited in all three, entitled: *Dissertation critique sur les principaux actes manuscrits qui ont été cités dans les trois parties de cet ouvrage [...]* (separately paginated).

Further, in his own punctilious translation of the New Testament (known as the "Version de Trévoux": *Le Nouveau Testament de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ traduit sur l'ancienne Edition latine. Avec des remarques literales et critiques sur les principales difficultez* [Trévoux: Ganeau, 1702 [BnF A-6447 (4)]), in a footnote to 1John 5:7 (4:191), Simon observes that "learned Roman Censors", i.e. editors (listed in James Townley, *Illustrations of Biblical literature: exhibiting the history and fate of the sacred writings ...* [New York: Lane and Sandford, 1842], 2:170), whilst recording the lack of manuscript support for the passage in question, considered that it should be retained, both in a projected but never realised Greek New Testament under the editorship of Joannès Matthaïos Caryophilis who, by order of Pope Urban VIII, collected readings from twenty-two Greek manuscripts, which he collated with the Polyglot *Biblia Regia* of Antwerp (1569–1572), as well as in the 1592 *Vulgata Clementina*. We note that the collations were first published by Pierre Poussines, *Catena patrum Graecorum in Evangelium secundum Marcum* (Rome: Barberini, 1673), 460–528 cit. R. Simon, *Dissertation critique ...*, 10. Though Simon felt sure the MSS. included B (Codex Vaticanus) which, in the event, does not contain the *Comma Johanneum*, he was mistaken (see English translation of John David Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament* (2d ed., London: Rivington, 1802), vol. II part I, 213). Had the "Roman Censors", says Simon, observed the same exegetic principles they themselves had shown when examining the relevant passages of Cyprian and Athanasius, they would have designated these words from 1John 5:7 as questionable (in a note, or with an obelus): *... in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one*. R. Simon also notes (*Dissertation critique ...*, 9B): "I myself, having read several Greek manuscripts other than those I had already consulted for the first two parts of this Critical History, have in fact not found it in any of them." Why, then, in light of all this, did Simon nevertheless include the *Comma Johanneum* in his own translation of the New Testament, despite its absence from the Vulgate, Simon's base text (see his own preface: in the *Nouveau Testament de Trévoux*, any Hebrew or Greek considerations were taken account of in marginal notes intended to cast doubt on traditional readings supported by Church authority), used in churches and all Christian societies, and sanctioned in 1546 by the Council of Trent (see *Cambridge History of the Bible* [C.U.P., 2008], 3:205, 208)?

Undoubtedly Simon, by including the *Comma Johanneum*, sought to forestall any possible charge of unorthodoxy, or hostile intervention from Archbishop Bossuet (Auvray 124–131). On the question of risk-taking, see also especially Metzger—Ehrman, *Text*, 148 ("it is not safe to deny that this verse is an authentic part of St John's Epistle") and n. 26.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

REVELATION: EARLY VIEWS ON THIS BOOK; HERETICS WHO REJECTED IT; THEIR REASONS; DISCUSSION OF THEIR REASONS. LEARNED CATHOLICS IN THE EARLY CHURCH ALSO ASCRIBED IT TO CERINTHUS. MODERN VIEWS ON THIS BOOK

The one remaining book of the New Testament to be examined is Revelation which St Jerome says, in one of his letters, was unanimously accepted in the Greek churches of his day.¹ But if we heed the maxim of Tertullian, *illud verum quod prius*,² we shall give preference to the general view of early church writers rather than that of some Greek churches, which came later. It was on this basis that Grotius assessed the book when he said that Justin, St Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St Cyprian, whose word in this is reliable, all said it was by the apostle St John.³ Flacius Illyricus said the same thing before Jerome, stating that the best approach was to rely on the assertions of church Fathers who lived closest to the time of John.⁴

On these grounds Baronius made the judicious observation that what St Jerome says concerning the view of Revelation held in the Greek churches could not be entirely true, since St Epiphanius who lived at that time, and who was only slightly older than Jerome, defended the authority of Revelation against the Alogian heretics and the Theodocians.⁵ Baronius nonetheless admits this does not mean that Jerome maligned the Greek churches of his day. He believes Jerome had in mind Saints Basil (ca. 330–379), Amphiloicius (ca. 340–395),⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa (younger brother of St Basil, ca. 330–395), and the Council of Laodicea, none of whom include Revelation within the Canon of Scripture.⁷ He makes

¹ Jerome, Letter 120 [to Dardanus] § 11 (PL 22:1002).

² "That which is true came first."

³ Grotius, *Opera omnia theologica* ..., 11, 2:1159A.

⁴ Flacius Illyricus (ed.), *Novum Testamentum* ... (see *supra*, ch. 5 n. 13), 1303.

⁵ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:800 (CE 97 n. 6).

⁶ The *Iambics for Seleucus* contains a list of books of Bible (PG 39:9–130).

⁷ Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1:801 (CE 97 n. 7).

a distinction between these church Fathers and the Alogians and Theodocians because unlike the latter they did not deliberately and quickly undermine the authority of Revelation. St Epiphanius himself does not greatly depart from the view of St Jerome when he says that even though the Alogians generally rejected everything we have by St John, they could have been forgiven in a sense, if they had confined their objections to Revelation, an obscure and inscrutable book.⁸

The Alogians claimed that Revelation, and the other books by St John, were written by the heretic Cerinthus, endeavouring to show this on the basis of the similarity of the doctrine of Cerinthus and the doctrine in the books by the apostle, especially his Revelation, against which they raised particular objections.⁹ Of what relevance to us, they asked, can Revelation be when St John starts talking about seven angels and seven trumpets? To this St Epiphanius replies that God wished his servant John to know everything that was most secret in the law and the prophets so that he could convey it in a spiritual and intelligible way.¹⁰ Whilst the heretics ridiculed the passage about the seven trumpets, he found them guilty of malice or ignorance, invoking the authority of St Paul who also mentions the trumpets in his first letter to the Corinthians (15:52) where he says *The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.*

Further to undermine the authority of Revelation, some Alogians adduced these words from 2:18: "Write unto the angel of the church in Thyatira."¹¹ At that time there was no Christian church in Thyatira, they say. How then could St John have written to a non-existent church? Assuming as the Alogians did that there was no church there at that time, St Epiphanius is obliged to resort to prophetic spirit to resolve this difficulty. He claims that St John, being inspired by God, foresaw what would happen there with the passage of time. He therefore describes in as much detail as possible the condition of the city of Thyatira at the time when it was controlled by the heretics called Phrygians. He shows how it later became a very famous orthodox church.¹² The Holy Spirit, he says, intended to show through this passage of Revelation that this Church must have been living in error after the time of St John and the other apostles. This, says Epiphanius, occurred 93 years after the ascension of Jesus Christ.

⁸ Epiphanius, Heresy 51 nn. 3,4 (*Panarion*, 2:27).

⁹ Ibid., n. 32,1 (*Panarion*, 2:64).

¹⁰ Ibid., n. 32,4 (*Panarion*, 2:64).

¹¹ Ibid., n. 33,1 (*Panarion*, 2:65).

¹² Ibid., n. 33,3 (*Panarion*, 2:65).

Since St Epiphanius, in his answer, actually agrees with the theologians that there actually was no Christian church in the city of Thyatira at that time, Socinus will have none of what Epiphanius says, being convinced that the text of Revelation clearly shows there was such a church.¹³ He believes that there were several cities by that name; but he still fails to prove the theologians wrong by showing that there was any church in Thyatira in the lifetime of St John. Confronting them with the specific words of Revelation, he assumes in his reply what actually has to be proved: on this basis the sectarians claimed to have undermined the authority of Revelation. It seems that in Epiphanius' lifetime there existed no list of bishops of Thyatira nor any other document showing that such a church was founded at the time of the apostles. On this account, Grotius provides a more judicious answer, namely that there was indeed no gentile church in Thyatira when St John wrote Revelation; but there was a Jewish church similar to the one that existed in Thessalonica before St Paul preached there.¹⁴

The Alogians also ridiculed Revelation 9:14: *Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates*. But here St Epiphanius accuses them of ignorance, saying that the four angels in the Euphrates represent the countries that had lived on the river, the Syrians, the Babylonians, the Medes, and the Persians. He goes on to say that words in Revelation "loose the four angels in the Euphrates" make perfect sense since their nations are in submission to the angels, St John's meaning being that, once unleashed, these nations would make war on other nations.¹⁵ This is not the time to examine whether St Epiphanius's words apply to this passage of Revelation; we shall merely make the general observation that since the book is a prophecy and not a history, its author undoubtedly expressed himself in the figurative style of the Prophets. Theologians therefore were wrong to challenge Revelation on the grounds that it contains rare expressions, unless they sought to show that the New Testament is devoid of prophecy.

Gaius, the orthodox writer already mentioned, who lived in Rome under Pope Zephyrinus (198–217) also attributed Revelation to Cerinthus.¹⁶ He made fun of that heretic who played the great apostle, writing revelations which he pretended were given to him by angels, and which promised that

¹³ Socinus, *Lectiones Sacrae (Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum ...)*, 1:306A).

¹⁴ Grotius, *Opera omnia theologica ...*, tome 11, 2:1168B.

¹⁵ Epiphanius, Heresy 51 n. 34, 1–3 (*Panarion*, 2:66).

¹⁶ Cit. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.28.2 (1:137). In this passage quoted by R. Simon, Eusebius does not specifically claim that Gaius attributed Revelation to Cerinthus, states that Cerinthus refers to "revelations" supposedly recorded by "a great apostle."

after the resurrection the reign of Christ Jesus would come on earth. He allocated a span of a thousand years to this physical sovereignty which was to be accompanied by enjoyments of every kind. For this reason Gaius said Cerinthus was an enemy of the Holy Scripture, and also showed the same attitude to Revelation, which he believed was by Cerinthus and not by St John.

Dionysius the Great, Bishop of Alexandria, vigorously defended the authenticity of Revelation, whilst observing that some writers, attributing Revelation to Cerinthus, claimed that he had put St John's name to it to lend weight to his fanciful notions about the personal reign of Jesus Christ on earth. When this notion of an imaginary rule lasting a thousand years spread within the church, the learned bishop refuted it in two books entitled *Περὶ ἐπαγγελιῶν* "Promises," taking an Egyptian bishop called Nepos to task for discussing God's promises to men in Scripture from a completely Jewish standpoint, asserting there would be this personal reign on earth for a thousand years, during which time all manner of pleasures would be enjoyed.¹⁷

Nepos had published a book on the subject called *Ἐλεγχος ἀλληγοριστῶν λόγος* "Refutation of the Allegorists," poking fun at Catholics who placed allegorical interpretation on the passage of Revelation dealing with the reign of a thousand years (Revelation 20:4). The book strongly affected the thinking of its readers because its author enjoyed great prestige for his diligent study of Scripture. His reasoning moreover seemed all the more probable because it was based on the literal meaning of the Scripture, whereas the opposite view from his seemed based purely on allegories which proved nothing. The honour paid by Dionysius to his opponent, who was no longer alive but whose faith and great ability he commends, is on record. But he also says that since he loved truth above all else, he was led to write against the book by Nepos which was held in such esteem in Egypt that many, obsessed with the idea of a thousand-year reign on earth, preferred its doctrine to that of the Gospels and the apostles' letters. Rather than renounce his teachings, some of Nepos's defenders preferred to break away from the church, dropping the idea however when Dionysius had pointed out its fallacies in the course of a public debate.

Against those who reject Revelation as a forgery by Cerinthus, the learned bishop defends its authority in a quite judicious way. He appears in no way to

¹⁷ Eusebius, *ibid.*, 3.28.3–4 (1:138); 7.24.1–5 (2:201–203). Here again, though Eusebius refers to Dionysius and to the Revelation of St John, he does not state that Dionysius ascribed Revelation to Cerinthus.

cling to his own standpoint and conceals none of the arguments put forward by his opponents, freely admitting that some church writers before him manfully opposed Revelation, refuting it point by point, and claiming that it contained neither rhyme nor reason.¹⁸ They also asserted that the book's title was invented by Cerinthus and could not be applied to a book based, as they said, on such profound ignorance.

Notwithstanding all these objections, Dionysius argues that he cannot reject it, since it was supported by most of his colleagues; in regard to the objections to Revelation, he replies that its author's language contains a sublime and hidden meaning which he unhesitatingly holds in reverence despite not understanding it, believing that faith prevailed in this over all knowledge. "I do not condemn what I cannot understand," he says; "I admire it because I have not been able to explain it." He nonetheless examines every part of the book in detail, knowing that a literal explanation based on the apparent meaning of the words, is impossible. He also accepts that it was written by a man named John who was inspired by God, though he does not admit that this was John the apostle. His basis for this is that the apostle St John never put his name to anything he wrote and never referred to himself, whereas the author of Revelation refers to himself at the outset of his book and several times later on, notably in the letter to the seven churches of Asia which he begins with the words *John to the seven churches which are in Asia* (Revelation 1:4), whereas St John did not even place his own name at the head of his Catholic Epistle but immediately got on with what he had to say. Nor does his name occur at the beginning of the two other short Epistles that are ascribed to him.

Divergence of style leads Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, to conclude that Revelation is not by the apostle John. He also says that it is not clear who the John of Revelation was, since there is insufficient distinction between him and others having the same name. He does prove, though, that there is no likelihood of his being John surnamed Mark, who is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as travelling companion of St Barnabas and St Paul, because this Mark did not go as far as Asia with them. For this reason Dionysius considers that Revelation was by one of the Johns who lived in Ephesus, where there are two tombs marked with the name John. Again he invokes differences in style to show that the apostle John who wrote the Gospel and one of the Epistles cannot be the author of Revelation. The two

¹⁸ Eusebius, *ibid.*, 7.25.1–27 (2:204–210).

former books, he says, have the same content and same expressions whereas Revelation is totally different.

I should say that I have spent time on the judgment made by Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, on Revelation, and which is developed by Eusebius, since this judgment says in few words everything there is to be said on the matter. He also makes us aware that early church scholars had great respect for tradition when it came to deciding whether a book was canonical or not. We observe also that to this end they followed the standard principles of exegesis: Dionysius submits Revelation to close critical scrutiny in terms of its vocabulary and syntax, which he says do not belong to standard Greek, but are full of invented words and solecisms.

The distinction he makes between two Johns who lived in Ephesus is based on what is said by Papias, contemporary of those who followed the apostles. Eusebius includes this testimony in his history, saying that he does so specifically because if the apostle John is not the real author of Revelation which bears the name John, it was probably written by the other John. However the earliest church Fathers, Justin and Irenaeus, were unconcerned with any such distinction, or with the difference in style which Dionysius particularly stresses.

Nor can anything be made of the fact that in most Greek texts of Revelation, manuscript and printed, the title bears the name Ἰωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου “John the Theologian,” not “St John the Apostle”; those responsible for this title merely intended to specify that it was St John the Evangelist—the Greek Fathers called him the theologian par excellence—to distinguish him from the other Evangelists.

Scriptures used in all Eastern churches today state that Revelation is by St John the apostle. The name is not present in the early Syriac manuscripts. This is because it was not there in the Greek text from which the Syriac translation was made. Revelation is ascribed to St John the Evangelist in the Syriac text of the English Polyglot Bible; and in the Arabic text contained in the same edition, it bears the name of John the apostle, Evangelist; whilst in Erpenius's Arabic edition, it is attributed to St John the Evangelist. I am not saying that later titles of this kind do not carry great authority. I am only mentioning them to show that there was general consensus within the Eastern and Western churches in regard to the author of Revelation.

Turning to the handful of unusual expressions occurring only in Revelation, notably the one about Jesus Christ reigning on earth for a thousand years with saints (20:6), Illyricus has rightly observed that since the style of the book is prophetic, its expressions must be understood in a mystical

sense.¹⁹ In this he appears to have been more judicious than Luther, who did not escape being criticised by Bellarmin and other polemicists for not considering Revelation as a prophetic and apostolic text. An attempt to justify him has nonetheless been made by his followers, who all accept Revelation as divine and canonical. Disregarding his first preface, they claim that in his revised preface he never said anything that had not already been stated by some church Fathers, namely that it had not been proved beyond doubt that Revelation was by the apostle John.²⁰

Erasmus too had a difference of opinion in this regard with the theologians of Paris, who censured one of the statements made by him, according to which heretics and orthodox Christians who accepted Revelation as canonical, also admitted that there had long been certain doubts about its authorship.²¹ Erasmus's statement was not erroneous; it was a fact that could easily be verified from the writings of the early church scholars. This did not stop the theologians of Paris from censuring the statement and saying that church practice and the decisions of Councils showed that everybody knew Revelation was the work of the apostle St John. The Councils they cited as their authority were the Third at Carthage, the Council of Rome under Pope Gelasius, and the Council of Toledo (633) under Isidore of Seville.²² They also invoked the authority of St Dionysius the Pseudo-areopagite, St Irenaeus, St Justine, Pope Innocent the First, St Augustine and St John of Damascus.

Evidently Erasmus's response was that what *he* said had the support of orthodox writers as well, and that citing all those other authorities did not prevent what he said from being true. He might also have said that none of those Councils had made any decision regarding the authorship of Revelation but simply went along with the view commonly accepted in their day, which held that the author was St John. But instead of saying that, he gave answers that were vague and irrelevant. He said that at the time the world was full of apocryphal books with false titles and that even the most worthy people were convinced that there was no impropriety

¹⁹ Mathias Flach Francowitz ([called (Matthias) Flacius Illyricus] (ed.), *Novum Testamentum ... ex versione Erasmi ...* (Basel: s.n., 1570), 1304 [BnF A-1594]). See also Metzger—Ehrman, *Text*, 206.

²⁰ Christian Kortholt (ProRector of University of Kiel), *De Canone Scripturae Sacrae tractatus, quo de libris Scripturae canonicis et apocryphis ... ex instituto disputatur, errores card. Bellarmini hujusque propugnatorum Jacobi Gretseri et Viti Erbermanni, jesuitarum, refelluntur ...* (Kiel: Reumann 1669), 343 [BnF D-663 (1)].

²¹ Erasmus, *Declarationes ...* (*Opera omnia* 9:867).

²² *Ibid.*, 9:867–868.

in making false statements of this kind. He then launched an attack on Isidore of Seville, saying that he lacked intelligence and judgment, and was unable to make proper use of his library. Isidore was, he said, like Bede, an incompetent compiler, except that Bede had greater judgment and eloquence.²³

Erasmus's learning was ill-directed. If Isidore and Bede really were incompetent compilers, Erasmus should have demonstrated that they were mistaken in following the views of St Justin, St Irenaeus and the earliest church Fathers, rather than those of other writers who had lived much later than when Revelation was written. His response to the censure was more calculated than his original statement to cause irritation to the theologians of Paris, since to all intents and purposes, he was glibly criticising these worthy Ministers for reading nothing but Rhapsodists or incompetent compilers.

Admittedly, to avoid shocking them he also said, in regard to the titles of the books of Scripture, that he submitted completely to the judgment of the universal church provided the "universal" church did not include anything that had indiscriminately become a Christian practice, or the personal opinions of a bishop.²⁴

If we go by the views of Socinus, a hero to the Unitarians, in assessing the latter's views, in discussing Revelation they have shown much sense. Socinus says that by common consensus the book was always ascribed to the apostle John.²⁵ To the objection that some scholars have had doubts about this, he replies that their judgment must give way to that of Justin and Irenaeus, who lived just after Revelation was written. He says that also the matter of stylistic differences between Revelation and other works by St John must take second place to arguments that show Revelation is by him, since even those who do not accept Revelation found the arguments so convincing that they were forced to admit that Revelation was written by someone who sought to convince everyone that St John was its author.²⁶ This last remark seems more ingenious than convincing, but we must not hold this against the Unitarians, since they never studied early Church authors properly.

Lastly, the Commentaries on Revelation by the Calvinists prove that they placed it among the divine and prophetic books; were they deprived of

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., col. 868.

²⁵ Socinus, *De Auctoritate Scripturae sacrae* ch. 1:2 (*Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum ...*, 1:269A).

²⁶ Ibid., 269 col. A–B.

this prophecy, they would be displeased. On this point Beza provided a special discussion which is found at the start of his notes on the text. It answers the objections published by Erasmus to undermine the authority of Revelation, which he did not find to be the case with any other book of the New Testament.²⁷ Calvin, perhaps fearful of making a fool of himself with unfounded explanations of such an obscure book, made a wise decision in not publishing a commentary on Revelation. His followers did not profit from his example, several of them having set forth their vision of the book in the manner of a prophet.

Apart from the books in the New Testament hitherto discussed which are generally accepted as divine and canonical by all churches, various churches have made use of other books which however do not carry the same weight. Cataloguers of sacred books however have not always shown the same discrimination, giving all books equal status as being part of Holy Scripture. Some Church Fathers have even referred to some books as sacred books as if they were of actual inspiration. But it can easily be seen from the writings of those same Fathers that the works in question only had the approval of certain individuals whose judgment cannot be considered as authoritative.

I would have discussed these other books at length, had my purpose here not been to discuss only the books of the New Testament that are generally accepted by all churches; but I must remain within my own parameters. Let me just say that in an early catalogue of books of the Bible, at the end of two very early manuscripts of the Epistles of St Paul,²⁸ immediately following the Epistle of St Jude we find the Epistle of Barnabas, the Revelation of John, the Acts of the Apostles, the Book of the Shepherd, the Acts of Paul and the Revelation of Peter. The catalogue also gives the verses in each book of the Bible. What stands out is that the Epistle to the Hebrews is missing. Yet it is included in these manuscripts written in Greek and Latin in the same hand as the other Epistles of St Paul; but in accordance with the practice of some Western churches, it is placed on its own at the end of the catalogue as if to show it was not by Paul.

²⁷ Beza, "Prolegomena in Apocalypsin Joannis," *Nouveau Testament* (1642), 743–744.

²⁸ R. Simon gives his source as *Catal. Libror. Script. S. ex Codd. mss. Bibl. Reg. and S. Germ.*

CHAPTER TWENTY

OBJECTIONS RAISED TO THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BY THE JEWS AND OTHER ENEMIES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. DID THE EVANGELISTS AND THE APOSTLES USE THE GREEK SEPTUAGINT WHEN QUOTING THE OLD TESTAMENT? ST JEROME'S VIEW ON THE MATTER. HIS MISPLACED PREFERENCE FOR THE JEWISH HEBREW TEXT OVER THE SEPTUAGINT

Having presented, in general and in detail, the case for the books of the New Testament, it is worth my while examining the main ways in which the authority of these books has been questioned and the reservations expressed in regard to the apostles who published them. Mohammedans usually explain the necessity for the coming of their prophet by saying that, as the canonical books of the Jews and Christians were completely corrupted, God needed to send a new prophet to earth to teach men the true religion. It would be pointless to refute them since they provide no real evidence for what they suggest. The Jews and philosophers, ill-disposed towards Christians, have made specific attacks on the writings of the Evangelists and the apostles. They have shamelessly called them forgers or at the very least ignorant men who allegedly misquoted the books of the Old Testament. They accuse them of completely distorting the meaning of the passages they quote. Such are the strongest objections raised against the authority of the New Testament, a reply to which must be provided.

Turning first to objections raised by Jews, their premise is that when a document is produced as proof, it must be in the original wording of the document, or in certified copies. This, they say, the disciples of Jesus have failed to do. If the Old Testament passages they quote are compared with the original Hebrew, one finds that in more than one instance they have departed from it, which shows either that they are guilty of forgery, or that their sources were corrupt and therefore quite unreliable.

My response to this is that when the apostles preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ they had no need to use the Hebrew text of the Bible. It was on the contrary more appropriate to reproduce passages from the Old Testament as they appeared in the Greek versions that were in common use. Not many

Jews at that time knew the Hebrew language whereas Greek was in use throughout the Empire. Accordingly, since Jesus did not send his disciples to preach the Gospel to a select group of learned Jews who knew Hebrew, but to all nations on earth, most of whom spoke Greek, not only must they have spoken to them in Greek, but also quoted them passages from the Old Testament as they appeared in the long familiar Greek version. At that time there was also a complete Bible in Greek produced several centuries before by Jews and which for this reason was above suspicion. It is therefore unjust to accuse Evangelists and apostles of forgery when citing Scripture other than in the original, since they used Scripture as used and approved of by the Jews.

Admittedly if the people whom the Gospel was proclaimed had known Hebrew, it would have been better to quote the Hebrew original than the Septuagint: the original is always preferable to a translation. But given the situation with which they were then faced, the apostles very wisely preferred the Greek text to the Hebrew Bible which hardly anyone understood. For this reason from its earliest beginnings the Church has only used the early Greek version of the Scriptures, and apart from Syria, the entire eastern Church recognises no other.

I do not consider it necessary to prove that when they wrote, the apostles quoted passages from the Old Testament in the Septuagint and not from the Hebrew text: possessing the rudiments of the two languages is sufficient to be aware of this. I admit that at one stage St Jerome sought to prove the contrary, adducing passages from the Old Testament quoted in the New and which, he said, are only present in the Hebrew original.¹ But it can easily be seen from what he himself says that he only defended this viewpoint in order to give more authority to his new translation from the Hebrew, seeing that the most learned men of his time were strongly opposed to this translation and accused him of trying to introduce Judaism into the Church.

Accordingly we see how St Jerome here responds to his opponents, justifying himself as best he can: "Let our adversaries teach any accepted proof not in the books of the Hebrews; argument over."² As evidence for what I am saying, I need no other witness than Jerome himself, who established the following general principle for all quotations from the Old Testament, not only in the writings of the apostles but in those of their disciples: "when the apostles or apostolics address the people, they habitually use the testimony

¹ Jerome, Preface to Commentary on Isaiah bk. 15 (PL 24:513D).

² *Ibid.*, 513–514.

already published abroad among the nations.³ In other words the Septuagint, being in Greek, was in use by all nations who spoke Greek, whereas the Hebrew text was only used in Jewish synagogues. By this same principle Jerome shows that when St Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles to tell people about the early beginnings of the Christian religion, he could not quote from the Old Testament in any other form than that of the version of Scripture already widespread among all nations.⁴

Nothing is more ridiculous than the view stubbornly held by some Protestants that despite the quotations by apostles being identical with the text of the Septuagint, the apostles reproduced their Old Testament quotations from the Hebrew text. They claim the textual resemblances are the work of some or other writers who lived after the apostles and, they claim, rewrote every passage of the Septuagint which is quoted in the New Testament. They further claim that the Evangelists and the apostles were not concerned with meaning, but solely with the words of the Scripture. When asked what reasons they have for suggesting such a strange paradox, the only reply they can make is that it is impossible to believe that the minds of the apostles were inferior to the mind of some minor Greek interpreter or that they could have preferred the stream to the spring by abandoning the Hebrew canon to follow some dubious procedure, especially when it came to defending the fundamental tenets of religion against the Jews.

Such is the approach of some Hebraist Protestants, based on their own principles, to facts that are as plain as day; it supplants an examination of the facts on their own merits. It is worthwhile spending time on this plausible viewpoint, which has been well and truly refuted by Louis Cappel.⁵ Judiciously the learned Protestant observed that the minds of the apostles were not dependent on the mind of an interpreter; rather, through pious concession, and with true Christian foresight, since it was immaterial whether the passages in question were quoted according to the Hebrew or the Greek, they followed the Greek version that was in common use.⁶

Although the apostles preferred the Greek Septuagint to the Hebrew text, this is not to say that the Greek version is superior to the Hebrew as some scholars, Catholics especially, have been too ready to believe. The

³ Jerome, *Hebraic Questions on Genesis* 46:26–28 (PL 23:1002).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Louis Cappel (1585–1658), *Critica sacra, sive de variis quae in sacris VT libris occurrunt lectionibus libri sex* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1650): Appendices (444–557), section v: *Quaestio de locis parallelis Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, 450 [BnF Rés. A-1334].

⁶ *Ibid.*

apostles' motives in giving preference to the Septuagint must be taken into consideration. Since they do so solely in line with the knowledge of the nations they taught, who read the Bible in Greek, we are not entitled to ascribe superior authority to the Septuagint over the Hebrew text which they never used. In the Hebrew or Chaldaic Gospel of Matthew the Old Testament quotations were from the Hebrew text because the Palestine Jews for whom he wrote used the Hebrew Bible. At that time people who did not know Hebrew had glosses on the Hebrew text written in Chaldaic; this means that if Matthew had quoted the Bible in the vernacular he would have quoted from these Chaldaic glosses and not the Greek Septuagint which Palestine Jews did not use.

We note also that the Evangelists and the apostles were not concerned with the strict letter of the text in their quotations, since this in no way fitted in with their purposes. Quite often they simply reproduced the sense of the words, adapting them to the point they were making. This is common practice and does not mean that anyone who adduces documentary proof in this way when they are writing can therefore be accused of forgery. One can only say a text is forged when its meaning is altered. This did not happen when the apostles quoted Scripture according to established practice, which no one criticised. The same is true of the Scripture passages quoted in the works of most Church Fathers. They did not hesitate to change a word when it did not affect the meaning. This is how Old Testament passages quoted by the Evangelists and the apostles must be approached. Even though the passages are from the old Greek version, they do not always reproduce the text word for word.

I am aware it will be objected that the Greek translation has not retained its original purity and thus can no longer be a reliable yardstick for accessing the accuracy of passages quoted by the apostles. But whatever the changes undergone by the Greek text, it is more than adequate, as we still have it to settle any question that arises. Early Church writers all agree the Evangelists and the apostles were more concerned with meaning than with literalness when quoting from the Old Testament, as Jerome frequently says throughout his writings.⁷ Elsewhere he says: "We must take careful note of something I have already discussed more than once, namely that the Evangelists and apostles did not translate word for word, nor did they follow the Septuagint text as used in their lifetime: but being Hebrews, and knowing the Law, they reproduced Scripture in their own words."⁸

⁷ Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah* bk. 3 ch. 7 [Isaiah 7:14] (PL 24:109B).

⁸ *Ibid.*, bk. 9 ch. 19 [Isaiah 19:13–14] (PL 24:332C).

By saying that the apostles did not quote word for word from the Old Testament in what they wrote, this learned man is in agreement with the other Church Fathers. But his preoccupation with the Hebrew text when writing his commentaries on most of the Prophets led him to say that the apostles used their own words rather than those of the Septuagint. But it is easy to show that the opposite is true; and in this regard the majority of Protestants are wrong to neglect the old Greek translation: without having prior familiarity with the text of the Septuagint, it is impossible to understand the books of the New Testament properly. The Evangelists and apostles developed their style under the influence of those early translators, and not that of the Jewish Hebrew text. I fail to understand on what basis St Jerome could say that since St Paul was born a Jew, when, in the second chapter of 1 Corinthians, he uses the Hebrew text when paraphrasing the words of the Prophet Isaiah 64:4, he was principally concerned, as usual, with their meaning.⁹ However, nothing in that passage from Isaiah obliges us to consult the Hebrew text rather than the Greek in order to explain the meaning of what St Paul thought.

By that stage St Jerome was solely concerned with finalising his new translation of the Scriptures from the Hebrew, thus pacifying a large number of persons who were maligning him in that regard. This approach pervades his commentaries on the Old Testament, particularly the ones on the major Prophets. In advance he covers himself against the possible objection from either side that the Church should not accept any version of the Old Testament other than the one deriving its authority from the apostles. Such a severe objection must have affected his mind greatly; and while not venturing to say that the apostles always followed the Hebrew text, he does attempt to cover himself by saying that sometimes they followed neither the Hebrew nor the Greek, because their customary concern was the meaning, and not the words.

Such is his approach to words of the prophet Jeremiah (31:15): *a voice was heard in Ramah*, etc.: St Matthew (2:18), he claims, was quoting neither from the Hebrew nor from the Septuagint.¹⁰ This, he asserts, shows that the Evangelists and the apostles were unscrupulous, following neither one version nor the other, but that because they were born Hebrew they expressed the Hebrew version in their own words (this generalised approach is typical of almost everything he wrote).

⁹ Ibid., bk. 17 ch. 14 [Isaiah 64:4–5] (PL 24:622B).

¹⁰ Ibid., bk. 6 [Isaiah 31:15] (PL 24:877A).

However, it is more accurate to say that when the apostles and Evangelists taught people who were familiar with the Greek Bible, they used expressions from it when quoting, though without slavishly following it word for word, because their sole concern was the meaning. To show that St Jerome is mistaken, the same Scripture passage just quoted is all that is required. One has only to compare the Hebrew text with that of the Septuagint: whereas the Hebrew has ברמה¹¹ which, in his version, Jerome, along with some Jews, translates as *in excelso* “in the highest,” the Septuagint, converting this into a proper name, has ἐν Ῥαμὰ *in Rama*, which St Matthew did follow when quoting the passage. Admittedly, in regard to other words in this verse St Matthew is closer to the Hebrew than the Septuagint if one judges by the way St Jerome reproduces the verses according to the Rome edition.¹² For Matthew’s text, in line with the Hebrew, reads καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν παρακληθῆναι *and she would not be comforted*, whereas the Septuagint reads οὐκ ἤθελεν παύσασθαι “she would not cease.”

Yet there is some indication that the old reading in the Septuagint does correspond with what Matthew wrote: the reading occurs in the Alexandrine manuscript, in the editions printed by Aldus,¹³ in the Complutensis of Alcalá,¹⁴ and even in the Arabic version, which was translated from the

¹¹ Seemingly in error, R. Simon reads כרבה.

¹² *Vetus Testamentum juxta Septuaginta ex auctoritate Sixti V. pont. max. editum* (Rome: Zannetti, 1586 [BnF A-52]), the “Roman” or “Sixtine” Septuagint, under the direction of cardinal Antonio Carafa (1538–1591).

¹³ The printing office started in 1494 in Venice by Aldus Manutius (Aldo Manuzio, 1450?-1515), was the Aldine Press, famous for creating smaller, more affordable books (called octavo) than the great Gutenberg, and for the introduction of “Aldine Type” i.e. italics. Credited with having most widely disseminated Greek learning in the West (31 first editions), Manuzio was the first to publish a complete Bible in Greek: Πάντα τὰ κατ’ ἐξοχὴν καλούμενα Βιβλία θείας δηλαδὴ γραφῆς παλαιᾶς τε καὶ νέας = *Sacrae Scripturae veteris, novaeque omnia* (Venice: Aldo Manuzio, [1519] 1518, in-2° [BnF A-47]). This includes the first edition of the Septuagint (the Complutensis Polyglot [see following note], though printed in 1517, was not published till 1520), the Aldine text in fact being favoured by scholars and reformers; the New Testament follows the edition by Erasmus. Whatever its supposed aesthetic shortcomings, for several generations, the Greek font developed by Aldus was standard in typography. Both Greek letters and Arabic numerals are used to distinguish chapters in the Old Testament, but not in the New; verses are not delineated. The Aldine press was continued by Aldo’s son Paolo (1512–1574), and grandson Aldo until the latter’s death in 1597 (the Sixtine-Clementine Latin Bible, also known as the Clementine Bible, for centuries the standard edition, was first published in 1592 in Rome by Aldo Manuzio the Younger).

¹⁴ Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros (1437–1517), cardinal and archbishop of Toledo, was responsible for publishing the first polyglot edition of the whole Bible, the “Complutensian Polyglot” (from Latin *Complutum* i.e. Alcalá de Henares), 6 volumes in-folio, 1514–1517: volume 5 (1514) contains the earliest actual printing of the Greek New Testament. However cross-references are limited to those between the Old and New Testaments; chapter numbers

Septuagint. It is worth stating here that although the Rome edition of the Septuagint is by far the best because it is the earliest and the simplest, it does contain some errors. It must be conjectured that long before Origen, semi-learned men, Jewish or Christian, who had some knowledge of Hebrew or, more likely, consulted dictionaries of Biblical Hebrew, made changes to some passages of the Greek Septuagint. I believe that this verse from Jeremiah is among those that were altered in the Septuagint.

Originally emendations of this kind only appeared in the margin of Greek manuscripts as scholia, to show that the Hebrew word had more than one interpretation; then it so happened that the scholium or marginal reading became part of the text. As in those days it was customary to have glossaries of the vocabulary of all respectable authors, I have no doubt that the same applies to Bible vocabulary, and even to each individual book. The Hellenistic Jews who used the Hebrew text of the Law and the Prophets in their synagogues in addition to using the Septuagint, had Greek dictionaries of this kind in which they noted down the meanings of Hebrew words such as the word $\eta\eta\eta$ ¹⁵ from Jeremiah 31:15 which the Septuagint renders by the word $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\lambda\eta\theta\eta\gamma\alpha\iota$.¹⁶ However, since the Septuagint translates the same Hebrew word elsewhere by $\pi\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\sigma\alpha\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ ¹⁷ as recorded in those dictionaries, someone will have written down $\pi\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\sigma\alpha\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ alongside $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\lambda\eta\theta\eta\gamma\alpha\iota$ in the margin of his copy; then the former word, which was originally a marginal scholium, actually became part of the text and is the only reading retained in the Rome edition.¹⁸

This has to be said so that the distinction can be made between the correct readings and various false glosses which appear in the Septuagint; I would provide examples of this here if I were not worried about digressing too far. St Jerome makes no mention of it: all his assessments of the Septuagint were based on the version that he was using so that he overlooked the fact that that version had been corrupted by false glosses from the very earliest copies, long before the time of Origen whose exegesis did not

are removed, and verse numbers not included (see Metzger—Ehrman, *Text*, 138–140 and nn.).

¹⁵ *nawkham* “to comfort oneself.”

¹⁶ Aorist passive infinitive of $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ “to encourage,” biblical “to comfort”: cf. Genesis 5:29, 37:34, Psalm 23:4, 71:21, 119:50, 119:76, 119:82, Isaiah 54:11, 66:13.

¹⁷ Aorist middle infinitive of $\pi\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu$ “to stop,” Middle Voice “to cease”: cf. Genesis 18:33, Numbers 16:31, Judges 15:17.

¹⁸ *Vetus Testamentum juxta Septuaginta ex auctoritate Sixti V. pont. max. editum* (Rome: Zannetti, 1586 [BnF A-52]), the “Roman” or “Sixtine” Septuagint, under the direction of cardinal Antonio Carafa (1538–1591).

rectify matters. Once this notion is established, it can serve as a principle for supporting the quotations made by the Evangelists and the apostles, such quotations not always diverging from that early Greek translation as much as St Jerome believed.

The learned Father did none the less locate four or five passages which he claims are reproduced word for word in the New Testament as they appear in the Hebrew text, though in a different form in the Septuagint. He frequently cites these examples to his critics to prove to them that since the Evangelists and the apostles were Hebrew they made use of the Hebrew version rather than the early Greek version. At the same time he thus attempted to safeguard himself against criticisms coming from all sides of his new translation of the Bible. He claims that St Matthew quoted the words of Hosea 11:1 as follows: "I have called my son out of Egypt." There is no doubt, he says, that St Matthew used a Hebrew source since the Septuagint reading is: I called his children out of Egypt.¹⁹ "Let anyone," he continues, "who maligns my translation consult the Scripture from which the passage was taken by the Evangelist." He makes the same point in his commentary on St Matthew, asking anyone who rejects the Jewish Hebrew version whether they can find the passage occurring in this form anywhere in the Septuagint. Believing this to be impossible, he refers such people to the new translation of the prophet Hosea. But he answers his own criticism when he goes on to admit to his opponents, that in this instance St Matthew was quoting from Numbers 23:22 Θεός ὁ ἐξαγαγῶν αὐτὸν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου, *God brought him out of Egypt*. This is also the view of the most learned Greek commentators who lived before St Jerome. Of this passage in Matthew, Theodorus of Heraclea says, "it is written in the book of Numbers,²⁰ God called him out of Egypt."²¹

Even supposing that, as seems more likely, St Matthew had Hosea 11:1 in mind, why will people not concede that such—as quoted by St Matthew—was the reading in the Septuagint, and that the variant is due to glosses on the old Greek version, made by persons who believed that by translating the

¹⁹ Jerome, Commentary on Hosea 11:1–2 (PL 25:915A).

²⁰ Numbers 23:22.

²¹ Pierre Poussines, *Symbolarum in Matthaeum tomus prior exhibens catenam graecorum Patrum unius et viginti ...* (Toulouse: Boudé, 1646–1647) [BnF A-1800 (1)], 30. Also Joseph Reuss, *Matthäus-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt und herausgegeben* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957), 60: Theodore of Heraclea Fragment 12 (citing Numbers 24:8); source: *Catena in Matthaeum et Marcum* [BnF Greek MS. 194 (formerly King's Library MS. 1892, 2), f. 12^b (13th cent.)]. On this point, and on Theodore, see R. Simon, *Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs du Nouveau Testament*, 438. On Theodore, see also *infra*, n. 666.

phrase as τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ *her sons*²² (as though the Hebrew text read בניו “his sons” or “his children” instead of בני “my son(s)”), the meaning was made clearer, on the grounds that what follows is in the plural form. It is possible to give other examples of such changes, the responsibility for which must fall upon those individuals who, by their wrong glosses, altered the old Greek Septuagint version. It seems therefore that originally the Septuagint reading was the same as is found in Matthew 2:15, and even in Aquila, whose Greek rendering of Hosea 11:1 also reads ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐκάλεσα τὸν υἱόν μου *Out of Egypt have I called my son*.²³

St Jerome again scores over his adversaries in his commentary on Zechariah 12:10, *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced*. In his Gospel St John (19:37) quotes this passage according to the Hebrew text, whereas the Septuagint reads: *They cast their eyes on me because they have mocked me*. Jerome says that St John being born a Hebrew was unconcerned by anything contained in the Septuagint version and so translated the line from Zechariah word for word as he knew it in Hebrew.²⁴ Let anyone who does not believe this point out the passage of Scripture which St John drew on. He further says that the similarity between the letters ר ו and ד ו in Hebrew led the translators to make an error, because, he says, they misread דקר ד *dacaru* “they have pierced” as דקר ד *racadu* “they danced.”

But I would say that, since St John followed the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew elsewhere in his Gospel, there is no reason for saying that he consulted the Hebrew text in this instance whilst disregarding the Greek text of the Septuagint. I am inclined to think that originally the Septuagint text corresponded to what is in the Hebrew and also to what is in St John. Such confusion of letters has led to other mistaken changes to the true and original reading of the text; this is what would have happened to that verse from Zechariah, which should be restored in the Septuagint on the basis of what is in the Gospel of St John. This view is borne out by the fact that St Cyprian followed this latter reading in the early Latin version which was made from the Septuagint. In this instance Cyprian's reading carries more weight than that of Greek scholiasts, even though they too read ἐξεκέντησαν *they pierced* as in St John and in the Hebrew text, since these scholiasts mostly make use without acknowledgement of the commentaries of Aquila

²² Actually *his* sons (or “his children”).

²³ Cited in Origen's *Hexapla* (see *supra*, Preface n. 2, xv): Frederick Field (ed.), *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1875), 2:958. Around 130 CE, Aquila of Sinope (Sinop, Turkey) produced an ultra-literal Greek rendering of the Old Testament.

²⁴ Jerome, Commentary bk. 3 ch. 10 on Zechariah (12:10) (PL 25:1514).

or some other Greek translator. Thus one must beware of confusing the Septuagint text with that of other early Greek translators.

Now would be the time to give examples of such changes that have affected the original translation of various passages in the Septuagint, but this would constitute an inappropriate digression; let the preceding general observations suffice to support the quotations occurring in the Evangelists and the apostles. I shall not spend time examining in detail other Old Testament passages which St Jerome says were reproduced according to the Hebrew rather than the Greek by the apostles in what they wrote. Not only would this require lengthy discussion, but the principles here set out thereto are an adequate response to all the arguments raised by St Jerome, who himself admits more than once that when preaching the Gospels to people who spoke Greek, the disciples of Jesus most likely used the early Septuagint Greek text which was available to everyone, rather than the Hebrew text which was only used by Jews and even then was only understood by a very small number of them. We turn now to the other main criticism of the books of the New Testament, the assumption that not only did the apostles and the Evangelists change words in passages that they quoted, but distorted the passages, giving them a totally different meaning than their authors had intended.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

DISCUSSION OF FURTHER DOUBTS ABOUT THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. PART OF THE EVANGELISTS' AND APOSTLES' INTERPRETATIVE METHOD WAS TO APPLY PASSAGES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TO THE MESSIAH, A COMMON JEWISH PRACTICE. THIS, AND AN ACCEPTED JEWISH TRADITION, PROVIDE THE ONLY POSSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR VARIOUS WORDS HAVING A WIDER MEANING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THAN THE OLD

There is nothing new about the considerable doubts concerning the Old Testament testimony used by the Evangelists and apostles in their writings to shore up the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. By presenting Christians with these doubts, Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, and the Jews claimed to show the weakness of the evidence for the Christian religion. But in saying that such evidence is the only basis for Christianity they are wrong. The miracles of Jesus are clear proof of his mission. And even supposing, as they do, that the application of these Old Testament passages is not always justified, one cannot conclude from this that Christianity is based on untruths.

To assess the thinking of Jesus and his disciples as shown in the books of the New Testament, Jewish practices at that time must be borne in mind: and if it be shown that their thinking and their applying of various scriptural passages to the Messiah was consistent with the practice of those days, it would not be fair to blame them for it. To spare them such criticism, we have only to look at the ancient Jewish books, especially their Chaldaic paraphrases and their Midrashim or early allegorical commentaries. In regard to the Messiah these works explain various passages of the Scripture which appear to have quite a different meaning if they are merely taken literally.

Moreover, their own Rabbis frequently give more than one meaning to various passages, one purely historical and the other, more extended, which in a sense could be called mystical or allegorical even though in its own way it is just as literal as the first. In this way they sometimes make the same passage refer to David and to the Messiah. All their early Midrashim or allegorical commentaries, their oldest interpretations of the Bible, use this method. It was only when they started having disagreements with Christians that their scholars began to emphasise the literal meaning: it was simple

to refute the Christians, observing the very principles that were already in place. Why then do they find it curious that the Evangelists and the apostles coming from the same background as they should use the same method to argue against them? Why in regard to the Messiah do they desire to limit themselves to evidence based on mystical and allegorical interpretations of the Scripture when they themselves have always used the method we have outlined?

If the Jews were pressed forcibly in regard to the Old Testament passages used to bring about belief in the Messiah, one of the fundamental articles of their religion, they would have a deal of difficulty resolving the doubts they could be faced with in this regard, without resorting to the mystical and allegorical interpretations which are supposed to be actual evidence since they are based on the traditions of their Fathers. One of their early scholars, a Rabbi, flatly denied the coming of the Messiah because he believed there was no literal and obvious evidence for it in Scripture; but this did not lead to his being expelled from his Community, all of which shows that belief in the Messiah was not yet considered to be a basic article.

The Jews abandoned their own method when objecting to the disciples of Jesus Christ that their interpretation of Scripture is not properly literal but allegorical, since allegory proves nothing. True, allegory alone cannot provide proof positive as the basis of a religion; but when allegories have a basis in religion, they can be used and applied to truths in that tradition which have already been established. Any doubts raised by the Jews can thus be resolved without going into detail on the passages in the New Testament which they claim were wrongly applied to our Messiah: they can no more reject a method coming from their own scholars and customs than they themselves can renounce the idea of the Messiah whom they are expecting.

Moses bar Cephas, a Syrian scholar who examined the matter,¹ said that anyone who claims that the Old Testament can only be interpreted literally and historically and not mystically is a heretic. If such were the case, he says, it would provide evidence for Midrashim and the Marcionite heresy. Nor could it be explained from where the early Fathers and Prophets derived what they say about the coming of the Messiah. He claims, in short, that such an approach is pure Judaism. To this one may add it is pure Sadduceeism.

¹ Moses Bar-Kepha (ca. 815–903, Jacobite bishop), *Tractatus De Paradiso*. Though in his day the Syriac original was thought lost, R. Simon probably knew this work in the Latin translation by Andreas Masius (*De Paradiso Commentarius* [Antwerp: Plantin, 1569]). R. Simon cites from part 1 ch. 3, 22.

Orthodox Jews all agree that the articles of their faith cannot depend solely on literal and historical meaning without tradition.

The validity of this approach can be seen from the situation of the anti-Trinitarians: in disputing with the Catholics they reject Catholic traditions, disregarding tradition and accepting only literal interpretations of Scripture; but when disputing with Jews they are forced to accept that as well as the literal meaning, there is further significance. This is obvious from the writings of various Unitarians including Socinus and Enyedi² who admirably demonstrate the unreliability of their approach. When putting various anti-Catholic principles in place they did not foresee that by the same token they were lending weight to Sadduceism and Manicheism.

Faustus, a hero of the Manichean party, observing that the New Testament explicitly states that Moses wrote about Jesus Christ, but finding nothing literally referring to Jesus in the Books of Moses, rather than abandon his belief, declared that the writings of the Evangelists were corrupt. In this he did show a greater consistency between his principles and his reasoning than the anti-Trinitarians, who accept some traditional elements but not others. In matters of religion they adopt a different approach with the Jews than with the Catholics. The points at issue are matters of fact requiring clarification, and cannot be proved in the light of reason alone. Account must also be taken of tradition. For this reason as long as the Jews continue to dispute the Old Testament passages quoted by the Evangelists and the apostles in the New by the use of reason alone, they can make no headway against them since it is easily shown that in so doing those writers were following the customs and the tradition of their own time.

The book containing the most quotations of this kind is the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which passages from the Old Testament are not interpreted literally, but solely in terms of allegory. This even led some writers to suspect that St Paul could not have written the Epistle. However, bearing in mind the Pharisean method of interpreting Scripture, it is virtually impossible not to ascribe the Epistle to the holy apostle who became acquainted with the most minute subtleties of occult and mystical interpretations of the Bible when studying under the learned Gamaliel in Jerusalem. When I asked a Jew who was conversant with the ancient writers to read this Epistle he unhesitatingly told me that it could only have been written by some great Mekubal³ from his nation. He said nothing about St Paul distorting

² Enyedi, *Explicationes locorum Veteris et Novi Testamenti ...* (see *supra*, ch. 16 n. 38), 129.

³ Mekubal = cabbalist.

the meaning of Scripture through whimsical allegory, but praised his great knowledge of the sublime significance the Bible contains, continually referring to his great Mekubal for whom he had nothing but admiration.

So convinced of this was that subtle Unitarian Enyedi⁴ that having enumerated all the stock arguments against the Epistle to the Hebrews, he goes on to say that anyone who does not take most of the Old Testament quotations and examples it contains in a mystic and spiritual sense, but in a literal sense, will make blatantly silly mistakes.⁵ Elsewhere he expresses the assumption that, at that time, the Jews approved of interpreting the Scripture in this way which Jesus Christ himself used in discussions with the Pharisees, who observed it in the same way. As an example he quotes the first verse of Psalm 109 [110]: *the Lord said unto my Lord* which Jesus Christ took (Matthew 22:44) as referring to the Messiah and not to David. Enyedi says that Christ in no way acted inappropriately by explaining the passage in a mystical sense. At the time there were three Jewish sects. Whereas the Sadducees took Scripture literally, the Pharisees also accepted a mystical sense. For this reason Jesus in his discussions with the Pharisees applied a method on which they both agreed—mystical interpretation of Scripture. Since he knew that, taken literally, the Psalm referred to Solomon, or rather to David, but was also commonly applied to the Messiah, he stated openly that David had the Messiah in mind when he wrote it. Unless the Pharisees went against the principles of their own sect, they could not say he was wrong.⁶

What Enyedi says is in accordance with the method already mentioned for refuting the Jews who accuse the Evangelists and the apostles of wrongly interpreting the passages of the Old Testament which they quote in their writings. I would also point out that some traditions were accepted by other sects as well as the Pharisees. These traditions include belief in the Messiah, which can scarcely be demonstrated from the Books of Moses alone. The Samaritans, however, who have only ever accepted the Pentateuch as divine and canonical Scripture, believed in those days, and still believe in the Messiah. Their authority for this is certain passages in the Law which appear to have a different meaning if taken literally. From this I conclude that not only Pharisees but other sects as well made use of spiritual and mystical interpretation. The Pharisees however placed too much importance on this,

⁴ For the second time in the present work (see ch. 16 n. 38), R. Simon describes Enyedi in this way!

⁵ Enyedi, *Explicationes*, 380.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

and went too far. This is why our Lord sometimes criticised them for misuse of the traditions, though he avoided rejecting the traditions as such. In the same way the Caraitic Jews, whilst having no time for the fables that can be found in the Talmud, do not completely reject all the traditions that this Book contains.

Were the Unitarians to give some thought to the principles outlined here, which moreover provide sufficient refutation to Jewish objections to the Books of the New Testament, they would persist less strongly with the literal interpretation of certain Scriptural passages, as opposed to certain theological interpretations provided by the early Fathers. In the same way as Jewish tradition has lent weight to various non-literal interpretations of the Old Testament, the same procedure has been adopted by Church Doctors in interpreting Scripture. Such interpretations are to be found in all early Church writers. I shall limit myself to the evidence provided by one author about whom the Unitarians can have no reservations: Theodore of Heraclea, an Arian agitator, of whose learned Bible commentaries, however, there survive only fragments, in the anthologies or *catenae* ("Chains") of the Greek Fathers.⁷

This eminent theologian distinguishes two meanings, literal and theological, which he applies to these words from Psalm 32 [33], verse 6: *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth.* Literally he takes the term *λόγῳ* "word" as [...] "decree," and the words *πνεῦμα στόματος* "the breath of his mouth" as *τῆ δυνάμει* "power": so, literally, the passage says that "that the world was created through the will and omnipotence of God." This, says Theodore, is the immediately apparent meaning; he then says that according to the true theological meaning the passage refers to the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.⁸ We may also describe as "theological" the meaning given by Jesus Christ and his apostles to various passages in the Old Testament, since it was in agreement with Jewish theology at that time, especially that of the Pharisees, the leading sect and the one with the most influence among the people. Jews today are in complete agreement with their views. The early Christians were taught Scripture by them and imitated them in their interpretation of the Holy Books.

⁷ On *catenae*, see *supra*, ch. 13 n. 14. Of Theodore († ca. 355), St Jerome states: "In the reign of Constantine, Theodore, bishop of Heraclea in Thrace, an elegant and clear writer with a keen sense of history, published commentaries on Matthew, John, the apostles, and the Psalms" (Jerome, *On Distinguished Men*, ch. 90 [PL 23:695]).

⁸ Balthasar Cordier, *Expositio Patrum graecorum in Psalmos* (Antwerp: Moret, 1643–1646) 1:566 (on Psalm 32:6) [BnF A-1009 (1)]. On Theodore, see *supra*, n. 666.

Michael Servetus⁹ is another scholar who makes several references to a mystical and spiritual sense of Scripture, ranking this equally with the literal sense. In this way, he claims, Jesus Christ can easily be discerned in the Books of the Law. Nowhere, he says, is this more naturally applied than in St Paul's application to Jesus, as creator of Heaven and Earth, of the following words from Psalm 101: *of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth*:¹⁰ "And although many think that these words are forcibly made to apply to Christ, yet that is their proper sense, as the apostle teaches."¹¹ To this he devotes a deal of space, applying several other Psalms to Jesus Christ in the same way, even though one would normally take them to refer to God in general: "... there is a similar opinion about other Psalms, although they explain them otherwise if they have no knowledge of Christ."¹² This is not the place to discuss where Servetus's principles lead. I have quoted him solely to show that, in order to interpret various scriptural passages, greatest opponents of the Church's traditions and beliefs are forced to accept that they have a theological meaning which can only come from belief and common acceptance, since they admit that different meanings are ascribed to those passages by people who do not know about Jesus Christ.

Socinus found this the quickest and most effective way to refute objections to the books of the New Testament raised by the Jews and other enemies of the Christian religion. He takes it as given that Old Testament passages quoted in the New have more than one meaning, especially prophecies, which he says were formulated in this way in order that predictions would remain unclear until they actually happened.¹³ He also says that since the Jews, who are opponents of the Evangelists and the apostles agree about the existence of more than one meaning, no one should be surprised about it. But I doubt that this Unitarian could convince the Jews of this unless he adopted a different approach from the one he uses in his disputes with the Catholics. Strictly speaking, all passages of Scripture only have one literal meaning. The wider meaning which we are compelled to accept, as do the Christians, comes from received tradition and authority. As both Jews and Catholics have given their approval to such traditionalists, they are in no

⁹ 1511–1553.

¹⁰ Psalm 102:25a.

¹¹ I.e. in Hebrews 1:10: see Michael Servetus, *De Trinitatis erroribus libri septem* (S.L., s.n., 1531) [BnF D2–4947], 94^v; English translation by Earl Morse Wilbur, *The Two Treatises of Servetus on the Trinity* (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1932), 146.

¹² Servet, *De Trinitatis ...*, 95^f.

¹³ Socinus, *Lectiones Sacrae (Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum ...)*, 1:291A).

position to accuse the apostles of distorting the true meaning of Scriptural passages through false interpretations, unless they themselves abandon the interpretations provided by their own scholars. Let us now examine particular passages for which the Emperor Julian and the Jews have criticised Christians.

The first comes from the words of the prophet Isaiah [7:14]: *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*¹⁴ St Matthew [1:23], applying these words to the Messiah born of a Virgin, quotes them as follows: *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they will call his name Emmanuel.*¹⁵ The Jews accused the Evangelist of misquoting the words of the Prophet and of applying them wrongly. Firstly, they say that the Hebrew word *almah* does not mean “virgin” as St Matthew translates it, but simply a girl, virgin or no. They attempt to prove this using other passages from the Bible.

However, St Jerome says that *almah* does basically mean “virgin,”¹⁶ indeed a virgin who is secret or withdrawn, and that the word has the same meaning in the Punic language which derived from Hebrew. The Father’s learned commentary is particularly appropriate because it not only supports St Matthew, but also shows that the Septuagint did translate the Hebrew word *almah* correctly. There is therefore no need to enter into a long detailed discussion or check every occurrence of the word in the Old Testament.¹⁷ The Jews are refuted by their own early Greek version as followed by St Matthew, or rather his interpreter. Jews who lived long before Jesus Christ could not possibly have deliberately falsified the meaning of this passage by a mistranslation. The accusations they level at St Matthew should be directed towards their own.

Second, they claim that the Hebrew does not say *καλέσουσι* “they shall call” but *καλέσευσεis* “you shall call” in regard to the girl who was to name her son Emmanuel. St Jerome admits that all the early Scholars translated the Hebrew as “you shall call” and that this passage is about the girl. But he also

¹⁴ Hebrew וקראת “and she shall call” or “and you shall call”; LXX καλέσευσεis “thou shalt call.” R. Simon translates “you [plural] shall call.”

¹⁵ NA²⁷ καλέσουσιν “they shall call.”

¹⁶ Jerome, Commentary on Isaiah bk. 3 ch. 7 (PL 24:108B). עלמה *’lmh* (Isaiah 7:14) in fact designates a sexually mature young woman, secluded and shut off from the sight of men, who has not had her first child. Elsewhere in Hebrew, a “virgin,” regardless of age, is called בתולה *bthulh*.

¹⁷ Evidence adduced above (see preceding note) suggests, however, that there is such a need (in this instance, Richard Simon appears uncharacteristically to be sidestepping the point at issue).

says that the Evangelists and the apostles were not concerned with slavishly reproducing the words of the Old Testament, merely with conveying the meaning:¹⁸ and this—even though some Greek manuscripts¹⁹ do in fact read *καλέσεις* “thou shalt call”—is sufficient explanation.

As to the meaning of the passage, the Jews claim that it cannot be applied to the Messiah as St Matthew did, since it refers to something that was still to take place. St Jerome observed that they understood it to refer to Esecias, son of Achas, because Samaria was captured in his reign. But he refutes them solidly, pointing out to them that Achas was already aged before he reigned. Jerome also quotes another explanation by a Christian who he claims was a Hebraist.²⁰ This author believed that the passage referred to the Prophet Isaiah’s wife who had two children, Shearjasub and Immanuel,²¹ the latter exemplifying Jesus Christ. But irrespective of what Jerome says, I see nothing in all of this that does not sit perfectly well with the principles of Christianity which he himself sets out elsewhere. Like most prophecies this one has two meanings: the first and immediate reference is to the wife of the Prophet Isaiah; the second, which could be described as spiritual or mystical, is wider and belongs to the time of the Messiah, and in its own way is just as literal, being based in theology and Jewish tradition. Assuming the existence of two meanings easily counters their objections, whereas it is more difficult to respond if one insists that the prophecy only refers to the Messiah. As this principle is of fundamental importance and can serve to resolve various difficulties of this kind, it is appropriate to adduce the authority of the early Church writers, especially St Jerome, who laid it down in his commentaries on the Prophet Daniel. Porphyry claimed that the Book of this Prophet contained nothing that was not historical. His view of King Antiochus corresponds to the Christian view of the Antichrist and the end of the world. Whilst the early Church doctors did not completely reject the view of Porphyry, they did claim that Antiochus was the epitome of the anti-Christ.²² To best clarify their standpoint, they provided this splendid principle: the Holy Scripture customarily uses classic models to indicate the truth of things to come.²³ To support this they quote the example of Psalm

¹⁸ Jerome, *ibid.*, col. 109B.

¹⁹ As does the text in LXX. See NA²⁷ 3. Here again, R. Simon translates *vous appellerez* “you [plural] will call.”

²⁰ Jerome, *ibid.*, col. 109C–D. It is noteworthy, however, that R. Simon’s notion of Hebraizing is not present in this passage in PL.

²¹ Shearjashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, according to Isaiah 7:3, 8:3.

²² Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* 11:21 (PL 25:565D).

²³ *Ibid.*, col. 566A.

71 [72] which refers to Jesus Christ; even though the title applies the Psalm to Solomon, not everything contained in the Psalm can apply to him.

From this the early Church writers deduced that as Solomon and the saints in the Old Testament were prototypes of Jesus Christ, it must also be believed that the prototype of the Antichrist was Antiochus, a most vicious King who persecuted the Saints and profaned the temple. St Jerome ascribes two meanings to the prophecy of Daniel: and just as he cannot be accused of supporting the impious statements of Porphyry, who held that the Book of Daniel was not as ancient as Jews and Christians said it was, people who partly accept Jewish interpretations of the prophecies while still applying them in a wider sense to the Messiah as the Evangelists and the apostles did, cannot be accused of Judaization.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

ANALYSIS OF VARIOUS OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES SEEMINGLY QUOTED BY THE APOSTLES IN AN INCORRECT SENSE. VERIFICATION OF CRITICISMS MADE OF THEIR WRITINGS. ESTABLISHMENT OF BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR REFUTING THE JEWS AND THE EMPEROR JULIAN

A detailed analysis of all the Old Testament passages quoted by the Evangelists and the apostles in their writings would be tedious and even pointless: commentaries are available for consultation, especially those of Maldonado and Grotius, who customarily observe the principles already established. Our principles must be valid, since they have the support of both Jews and Christians. Since my purpose here is to provide a general guideline to refute Jewish criticisms of the books of the New Testament, it will be appropriate for me to reproduce just some of the quotations so that the guidelines will become clearer.

One of the most difficult instances to reconcile is Micah 5:2, quoted in Matthew 2:6. It is clear as day, says St Jerome, that the latter does not correspond to the Hebrew text nor the Greek of the Septuagint.¹ In the same place he quotes the views of various authors who held that the Evangelists and the apostles did not quote accurately because they relied on their memories.² But as this is harmful rather than supportive of the truth of the Gospels, he resorts to a different solution. He says that Micah 5:2 reproduces the words of Jewish scholars, and that Matthew used their words in quoting the passage in order to show that these scholars were negligent in their study of the Scripture. But there is nothing to suggest that the Evangelist sought to accuse them of ignorance.

Yet it cannot be denied that Herod is being addressed by the Jews to whom therefore the quoting of this passage from Micah must be ascribed. All St Matthew is doing is recounting as a historian what happened between King Herod and the chief priests and scribes. The ruler asked them where the Messiah was to be born. Their reply that he would be born in Bethlehem from the tribe of Juda, backing up this statement with this quotation from

¹ Jerome, Commentary on Micah 5:2 (PL 25:1197A).

² Ibid., col. 1197A-AB.

the Prophet Micah: *and thou Bethlehem in the land of Juda art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.* If the quotation is inaccurate we must blame the learned Jews who were speaking, not St Matthew. It will be asked: is it possible that the most learned then at living in Jerusalem would have erred when quoting a passage they knew so well? Should they not have quoted it as it appears in the Hebrew text, which says that Bethlehem was a little town? In St Matthew the learned men say on the contrary that Bethlehem was not little.

Some commentators have attempted to resolve the anomaly by supposing that the Jews had taken this passage to be in the form of a question. As there is no question mark in Hebrew, they could thus explain it away without altering Micah's words. This could be easily confirmed from several examples in Jewish books. In his Syriac translation Gabriel Sionita actually translates this passage as a question even though the passage corresponds exactly to the Hebrew.³ Tertullian and St Cyprian had the word *non* in the Old Latin translation suggesting that the Septuagint reading should have been $\mu\eta\ \delta\lambda\iota\gamma\omicron\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ "not least," a reading confirmed by Origen.⁴ Nonetheless it may be that these writers have the passage as it occurs in St Matthew and not as it occurs in the prophet, or that they even quoted the words of Micah as they are reproduced in St Matthew. Quoting the Old Latin St Jerome has *modica es* "thou art small"⁵ without any negative, corresponding to the Hebrew.

Mr Pocock⁶ found another way of reconciling these two verses without postulating a question. He claimed that the Hebrew word צַעִיר in Micah 5:2,

³ *Biblia Hebraica, Samaritana, Chaldaica, Graeca, Syriaca, Latina, Arabica: quibus textus originales totius Scripturae Sacrae, quorum pars in editione Complutensi deinde in Antuerpiensi ... extat, nunc integri, ex manuscriptis toto fere orbe quaesitis exemplaribus, exhibentur* ("Paris Polyglot"), ed. Guy Michel Le Jay (1588–1674) (Paris: Vitre, 1645 [i.e. 1629–1645]), 10:676 [Glasgow University Library Sp Coll Euing Dk-b.2]: in this Latin rendering, by Gabriel Sionita, of the Syriac text, verse 1 [sic] of Micah ch. 5 reads: *Tu verò Bethlehem oppidum, num paruum es ut censearis inter myriadas Iudae?*

⁴ Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.51 (1:214).

⁵ I.e. "insignificant" (disparaging connotation).

⁶ Edward Pocock (1604–1691). See Leonard Twells (ed.), *The Theological Works of the learned Dr Pocock* (London 1741), vol. 1: Appendix—*Notae Miscellaneae* ch. 11 134–139: reconciling Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:6. The two verses appear to be in contradiction, Matthew it seems having intentionally misquoted Micah, the better to convey the prophet's apparent meaning, that the insignificant little town of Bethlehem would acquire significance and renown through the birth of Jesus (135, quoting Cappel). According to footnote 43 on Origen, *Against Celsus* 1:51 in J.P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca* [PG 11:753–755, note 43], it was known that צַעִיר *tsair* meant "famous," "illustrious" as well as "least," and that Matthew had rightly conveyed the prophet's thought with the words $\omicron\delta\delta\alpha\mu\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\alpha\chi\iota\sigma\tau\eta\ \acute{\epsilon}\iota$ *thou art by no means the least.*

usually translated “little,” in this context means “great” because it does have both meanings. He has Rabbinic evidence to support him,⁷ and further evidence can be found in early Greek commentators. It seems likely that the Jewish priests and scribes quoted this passage to King Herod as it occurred in paraphrases used for teaching the people at that time, rather than adhering literally to the text which was only understood by scholars. What I find convincing in this interpretation is that instead of the words “and you Bethlehem Ephrata” or, as the Septuagint has it, “Bethlehem house of Ephrata” they used the expression that was more familiar at the time “and you Bethlehem land of Juda.”⁸

The Hebrew and the Septuagint read “among a thousand in Juda”⁹ and St Matthew “among the princes of Juda.” This difference in interpretation occurred because the same Hebrew word which is in Micah can have two meanings depending on the pointing of the vowels or rather depending on the whim of the copyists who, as the mood took them [*sic!*], added or deleted the letter ׀ on which depends the difference of meaning. The scribes read the word as אלוֹפִי *aluph* with the letter ׀ *vav*, whereas the Septuagint took it as אלֶפֶי *alphe* as do the Jews today in the Masoretic Hebrew. Variants of this kind are perfectly common in Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible. When they are encountered, therefore, account must be taken of the meaning, rather than the way the Hebrew words are transcribed. In the time of King Herod the Jews understood this word in Micah to be the Hebrew אלוֹפִי *aluph* including the letter *vav*.¹⁰

St Jerome, attempting to justify the freedom of his own translation by stressing the meaning rather than individual words, gives this example from the prophet Micah to show there is a discrepancy between the Hebrew and the Septuagint, and what is found in St Matthew. He goes on to say that his purpose in saying this was not to accuse the Evangelists—along with Celsus, Porphyry and the Emperor Julian—of falsifying the text, but to prove the ignorance of his opponents, and to show them that by the use of a simple letter he could take the same liberty as did the apostles when translating the Scriptures.¹¹ Here the learned Father ascribes to St Matthew

⁷ Ibid., 135–136A (4 instances).

⁸ γῆ Ἰουδα (Matthew 2:6).

⁹ אלֶפֶ *alph* “family,” also “thousand” (allusion to the Israeli custom of dividing their tribes into thousands).

¹⁰ אלוֹפִי (including ׀ *vav*) *aluph* “friend,” “chieftain,” “governor,” hence “princes” in Matthew 2:6 (this form could in fact also be shortened to אלֶפֶ *alph* [see preceding note]).

¹¹ Jerome, Epistle 57 § 9 [to Pammachius “De optimo genere interpretandi”] (PL 22:575).

the same practice as he ascribes to the Jewish scholars in his commentaries on the Prophet Micah. Whatever the case, it is more appropriate to reconcile the two differing interpretations by going back to the original, rather than stressing any differences.

In the same chapter of his Gospel [2:15] St Matthew applies the words of Hosea [11:1] to the Messiah: *out of Egypt have I called my Son*. It is obvious that the Prophet is speaking of the people of Israel whom God refers to as his Son. To this objection raised by the Jews, the answer is that the people represented the Messiah, to whom a literal reference to Israel was consequently applied in a mystical and spiritual sense as was then the custom. On this point it is worth consulting Maldonado's commentary on this passage of St Matthew where the learned Jesuit also lays down firm principles to explain most other quotations by the Evangelists and the apostles taken from the Prophets. He makes the judicious observation that a prophecy is said to be fulfilled when it is literally carried out but also when the figurative meaning of the Prophet's words is realised. By way of example he quotes St Paul's letter to the Hebrews [1:5] where what is said of Solomon in 2 Samuel 7:14 is applied to the Messiah: *I will be to him a Father and he shall be to me a Son*. The same applies to the prophecy of Hosea. According to Maldonado the people of Israel exiled in Egypt can be seen as prefiguring Jesus Christ who was also to be exiled there, just as today the mystical body of the Church represents the physical body of Jesus Christ who in the same way post-figured Israel, both of them being designated as "Sons of God."¹²

The Jews cannot ignore this mystical and spiritual meaning, based on the theology of their earliest scholars, and examples of which are in most of their Books. For this reason all their objections to the authors of the New Testament recoil on them since the Evangelists and the apostles have simply followed the example they themselves have given. When making prophecies refer to the Messiah, they used the method approved of by the Jews, especially the Pharisees. All surviving Jews in the world, except for a very small number of Karaites, are descended from these Pharisees who ascribed a sublime and mystical meaning to the Scriptures as well as a literal and historical sense. Accordingly both meanings occur in the commentaries by their Rabbis.

Origen, in his books against Celsus, stressed the sublime sense of prophecies with all his might, calling it "a mystical theory of the Prophets" τῶν προφητῶν μυστικῆ θεωρίᾳ, and saying that the Prophets did not limit themselves

¹² Maldonado, *Commentarii* ... 1:76 (on Matthew 2:15).

to the immediately obvious historical sense or to the words and letter of the Law.¹³ He held as a general principle that the Prophets' predictions concerning the Messiah are different, some enigmatic, others allegorical and yet others different again including some that are actually literal.¹⁴ To the Jews who so strongly stressed the literal and historical meaning of prophecies in their disputes with Christians, the same answer could be made as on a similar occasion Origen made to Celsus in regard to the words placed in the mouth of a Jew by Celsus. He criticised him for making the Jew speak out of context and out of character, since the Jew's words were more typical of a Samaritan or a Sadducee than a true Jew.¹⁵

I myself have always used this method when encountering Jews who attacked the writings of the Evangelists and the apostles in the way outlined above. They never make any further response, being stymied by the principles of their own scholars, though they do point out that the mystical and allegorical interpretations from their former teachers did provide Christianity with a great advantage. When I ask if they wish to give up the principles of their own Rabbis in favour of Sadducees or even Karaite principles, they let it be known that they have a great aversion for those people. This is the approach to take when arguing with Jews about religion. When this approach is used against them, they are very much at a loss, being confronted by the same arguments they use against the above-named sectarians.

Getting back to the testimony of Old Testament Prophets quoted in the New Testament, in Chapter 2 of St Matthew's Gospel this passage from Jeremiah 31 is made to refer to the Messiah: if it is taken literally there seems to be no relation between the two: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children because they were not" (Jeremiah 31:15). Maldonado states that the Jews relate this passage of Jeremiah to the capture of the two tribes;¹⁶ and there is no doubt that this is real meaning and that the name Rachel signifies the whole country of the two tribes.

In that case, the Jews will say, why did your Evangelist explain it by the massacre of the children on the appearance of your Messiah? To answer them is simple: there is nothing unusual about this, or that conflicts with the interpretations given by their own teachers. To use their own terminology

¹³ Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.6 (1:294).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, bk. 1 ch. 50 (PG 11:753).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, bk. 1 ch. 49 (PG 11:752).

¹⁶ Maldonado, *ibid.*, 1:78 (on Matthew 2:18).

it is a “derash”¹⁷ or allegorical meaning, which corresponds perfectly well to the massacre of the innocents. The similarity between the two events led St Matthew to draw the parallel between the children and what took place at the time of the tribes of Juda and Benjamin, as observed by Crell following Maldonado.¹⁸ Faustus Socinus too thought that the Jews interpreted this passage in a literal sense, observing that Tremellius and Junius held that it could only be understood literally as interpreted by St Matthew.¹⁹ There is nothing absurd about this, he says, if it is allowed that Old Testament prophecies have more than one meaning; it is indeed right and proper that the prophecies should be seen in this way. If a dual sense is not recognised, the Jews will be given the opportunity of accusing the Evangelists and the apostles of interpreting ancient prophecies falsely.

The same Chapter of Matthew contains another quotation from the Prophets in general, which seems even more remote than anything mentioned hitherto. The Evangelist says (2:23) that Jesus *came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene*. As he does not specify any prophet in particular it is difficult to know which prophet it was who predicted that the Messiah would be called a Nazarene.²⁰ St John Chrysostom, unable to locate these words in any of the Prophets, holds that one must not make undue efforts to track them down since several books of the Prophets have been lost as can be shown, he says, by the histories in the Paraleipomenon.²¹ The author of the *Incomplete Work on St Matthew* notes that the Evangelist did not say “by a prophet” but *by the Prophets*, to show he was not referring to the testimony of any prophet in particular, only that it could be derived from prophets in general. He goes on to say that at that time there may have been other prophetic

¹⁷ Additional or non-literal meaning; homiletic interpretation (from שׂר “seek out,” “ex-pound”).

¹⁸ Johann Crell (Socinian theologian, 1590–1636), *Opera omnia exegetica, sive ejus in plerosque Novi Testamenti libros commentarii, maximam partem hactenus inediti ...*, 1:134 (vol. 8 of series *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum quos Unitarios vocant* (Amsterdam: Philalethius, 1656) [BnF D2–246]).

¹⁹ Socinus, *Lectiones sacrae* (*Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum quos Unitarios vocant* 1:292B). John Immanuel Tremellius (Giovanni Emmanuele Tremellio, 1510–1580), an Italian Jewish convert to Christianity, and Franciscus Junius (the elder), his son-in-law (François du Jon [1545–1602]) produced a Latin translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew (Frankfurt 1575–1579), and the New Testament from Syriac (Geneva 1569).

²⁰ Unless it be a mistaken recollection of Judges 13:7, the statement “he shall be called a Nazarene” does not exist anywhere in the Old Testament.

²¹ John Chrysostom, Homily 9:4 on Matthew [2:23] (PG 58:180). In the Septuagint and the Vulgate, the Books of Chronicles are called *Paraleipomenon* [*Bible*], i.e. books containing material omitted from the Books of Kings.

books which were not included in the canon of sacred texts.²² There seems to be some support for this in St Jerome who refers in his works to other books of the prophets than those we have today and which were read by members of the Nazarene sect, the descendants of the early Christians in Jerusalem also called Nazarenes, for whom St Matthew wrote his Gospel.

This notwithstanding, Jerome does not resort to this solution in his commentary on this passage, stating first as had the author of the incomplete work,²³ that by citing the prophets in general, St Matthew wished to indicate that he was not reproducing the words of any prophet in particular, but simply the meaning. Now since the word Nazarene meant “holy,” all Scripture says that the Lord will be holy. But he does follow this answer with a more specific explanation, which seems more plausible, being based on Isaiah 11:1 which, according to Hebraic truth as he claims, says: *there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and the Nazarene shall grow out of his root.*²⁴

I have no doubt that the Jews would reject utterly this rendering of the words of Isaiah and the quotation in St Matthew because the Hebrew does not read *Nazaraeus* “Nazarene” as St Jerome translates but *netser* meaning “flower”²⁵ as he himself renders it in his translation of the prophet.²⁶ He even states in his own commentary on the verse from Isaiah that the Hebrew word meaning Nazarene is written with the letter נ²⁷ but that in this case the word is written with צ and so has the meaning “flower.”²⁸

²² PG 56:646. In his edition of the *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum* (*Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 87B, Turnholt: Brepols, 1988) J. van Banning suggests the author was an Arian bishop or priest living in the second or third quarter of the 5th century; the text was first published at Cologne in 1487; it appears in the Latin version of St John Chrysostom's works (Venice 1503, 7:2–124), and in *Patrologia Graeca* also as part of John Chrysostom's works.

²³ Franz Mali (ed.), *Das “Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum” und sein Verhältnis zu den Matthäuskomentaren von Origenes und Hieronymus* (Coll. “Innsbrucker theologische Studien 34,” Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1991), 104 (in this book, the *Incomplete Work on St Matthew* is accompanied by the commentaries on Matthew by Jerome, and Origen).

²⁴ Jerome, Commentary on Matthew, bk 1 (2:23) (PL 26:29). Matthew 2:23 states that Jesus was called Ναζωραῖος because he grew up in Nazareth. See J.A. Sanders, “Ναζωραῖος in Matt 2 23,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84 (1965): 172: “the first evangelist cryptically permits the word, by an indefinite reference to ‘the prophets,’ to convey a second, equally important meaning. Matthew employs a wordplay on a village name ... to signal the double truth of Jesus's background: the historic home of his youth and the theological grounding of his mission.” See also G.F. Moore, “Nazarene and Nazareth,” F.J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity* (London: Macmillan, 1920), part 1 vol. 1 Prolegomena 1 Appendix B, 426–432.

²⁵ נצר *ntsr* “shoot,” “sprout,” “descendant.”

²⁶ Isaiah 11:1 (Vulgate): *flos de radice eius ascendet.*

²⁷ נזיר *nazir* “separate,” “consecrated,” “bound by a vow to God,” e.g. Samson and Samuel (Judges 13:3–7, 1 Samuel 1:1) were Nazirites.

²⁸ Jerome, Commentary on Isaiah bk. 4 (11:1–2) (PL 24:144).

What St Jerome says regarding Isaiah Chapter 11 seems to negate what he says in his commentary on Matthew Chapter 2. Since the learned Father, in his scriptural commentaries, usually reproduced what he had read in other commentators rather than actually setting out his own views, it is not surprising sometimes to encounter contradictions. Nonetheless, his knowledge is most useful for ascertaining the meaning of the most awkward passages in the sacred books. What seems to me most likely is the view of those who believe that in this verse St Matthew quoted Isaiah 11:1. It seems St Jerome ascribed this view to the Nazarenes when he stated in his commentary on Isaiah that the most learned from among the Hebrews held that this was the source.²⁹ The Hebrews referred to are the members of the Nazarene sect who called themselves Hebrews, which indeed they were. Since they knew Matthew's gospel in Chaldaic or Syriac, the allusion to the Hebrew word *netser* in Isaiah was much more obvious to them from the text they used than from the Greek, and even more so to those who were fluent in Hebrew and Chaldaic.

To settle the matter properly, this passage from Matthew needs to be read in the Syriac version which undoubtedly is the same as the Chaldaic original. The Syrians also read the two words Nazareth and Nazarene with the letter *ṣ* *tsade*. And this must be the reading in St Matthew, who was not referring to the Old Testament Nazarenes,³⁰ whose name is written with a *ṭ* *zayin*. In accordance with Jewish practice at the time, he was simply alluding to the Hebrew word *netser* in Isaiah meaning "flower" and which is spelt with a *ṣ* *tsade* as is the name of city of Nazareth.³¹ Jews are in agreement with Christians, be it noted, that the passage from Isaiah referring to the "flower" called *netser* in Hebrew refers to the Messiah. As this was common knowledge, St Matthew, writing in Chaldaic for the newly converted Jews from Jerusalem who were familiar with the interpretations of this kind, brought in the Hebrew word *netser* or "flower."

One has only to consult the Jewish Talmud, their book entitled Zohar, and their ancient Midrashim or allegorical commentaries to find identical interpretations of Scripture based on no more than reference to words, or even just to letters. If the Jews were able to absorb this they would not use the word false or even ridiculous in regard to the quotation in St Matthew who they say distorted the words of the prophet Isaiah in a false reference to his

²⁹ Jerome, Commentary on Isaiah 11:1–2 (PL 24:144C).

³⁰ Or rather "Nazirites" (see *supra* n. 709).

³¹ נִצְרַת *ntsrt* (Nazareth).

Messiah: the Evangelist writing for Jews who had just embraced Christianity, followed the usages and practices that were standard among them in his day. Unless this ancient usage is applied great difficulties will be encountered in most Old Testament passages quoted by the Evangelists and the apostles to bear out what they have to say.

Thus, to provide a solid response to the Jews, we must do the same, reminding them of the practice used by their forebears which they cannot discount without flying in the face of their own religion. The same approach will serve to refute the impiety of Julian,³² who accused the Christians of abandoning the Law and the prophets, even though they claimed to follow them.³³ He called them brazen for daring to describe themselves as Israelites when, as he said, their doctrine was diametrically opposed to that of Moses and the early prophets.³⁴ But it is easy to prove him wrong: the Christians were true Israelites, for they did not turn their backs on the Law or the prophets, even though they sometimes interpret them in a mystic and spiritual way. As we have seen, such interpretation is in conformity with the doctrine of the early Jews.

That same emperor refused to admit that the Books of Moses had any meaning other than a historic and literal one, arguing to refute Christians that the words in Deuteronomy 18:15 *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet like unto me* could not refer to Jesus, son of Mary, since Moses is specifically referring to a prophet who would be a man such as he was, not the son of God.³⁵ Admittedly, this passage from Deuteronomy, which refers literally to Joshua as his successor, and even to other judges and prophets within the Hebrew state, was also applied to Jesus Christ by St Peter and St Stephen.³⁶ But if those prophet judges did prefigure the Messiah, why should not the same words be applied to him in the sublime and spiritual sense already discussed, seeing that the Rabbis frequently make such applications?

Other objections the Jews raise to the quotations scattered throughout all the books of the New Testament can easily be dealt with by the method outlined above. The apostles, carefully observing the interpretations in common use in their own day, used the same approach in almost every case.

³² See *supra* ch. 13, and *infra*, nn. 33–34.

³³ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Against the Emperor Julian* book 7 (PG 76:864B).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, bk. 8 (PG 76:885B).

³⁵ *Ibid.* (PG 76:888A, B).

³⁶ Acts 3:22, 7:37.

The Jews cannot attack it without simultaneously undermining their own beliefs and agreeing with the Sadducees. On this basis St Matthew applied to St John the Baptist the words of the prophet Isaiah (40:3): *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord*. It is obvious that the Evangelist used a “derash” or spiritual and allegorical meaning to refer to the literal and historical return of the Jews to Jerusalem from their captivity in Babylon.

In addition to discussing these basic principles for refuting the arguments raised by the Jews and the Emperor Julian, it is appropriate to point out that various words in the New Testament have a wider meaning than in the Old: this can only be explained in terms of usage at that time, and of traditional ideas or traditional beliefs among the Jews. Nothing in the Books of Moses gives a clear idea of the nature of another life which the Jews called “the world to come.” Nor obviously is there anything about paradise or hell in the ancient Law or of rewards for the righteous and the punishment of the sinners in another life. Since they do not even have actual words to describe those things, they have to use allegorical terms. For example, the word “Gehenna” from the Hebrew “Gehinnom”³⁷ has a totally different meaning in the Old Testament than in the New, where it means the fire of hell. Thus St Jerome was led to say that the word Gehenna does not occur in the ancient writings, and that Jesus Christ was the first to use it.³⁸ This does not mean that Jesus was the first person ever to use the word in the meaning it has in the New Testament: among the Jews at that time, especially the Pharisees, it was in common use in that sense. St Jerome simply meant that the word does not occur in that sense anywhere in the Old Testament even though their paraphrasts and their earliest Rabbis used it with the same meaning as Jesus Christ did.

The same process can be applied to the Hebrew word שׂאֵל *sheol* which in Old Testament Hebrew means “sepulchre”³⁹ and which the Septuagint nearly always translates as Ἕδης “hell” as if most often intending the word

³⁷ *Valley of Hinnom* (Joshua 15:8), possibly the valley of the Cedron, though Hinnom remains unidentified; Jeremiah 19:6 predicts its becoming *The valley of slaughter*; γέεννα is the final and fiery place of punishment after the Last Judgment (Mark 9:43–47).

³⁸ Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 10:28 (PL 26:28).

³⁹ Whilst the usual word for “sepulchre” in the Old Testament is קֶבֶר *qever* (Genesis 23:6, Judges 8:32, 2 Samuel 2:32, 2 Kings 13:21, 23:17), שׂאֵל *sheol*, customarily encountered in the sense of “wasteland,” “world of the dead,” also means “grave,” notably in the Psalms (6:5, 30:3, 31:17, 49:14–15, 88:3, 89:48, 141:7); cf. also Genesis 37:35, 42:38, 1 Samuel 2:6, 1 Kings 2:6, Job 7:9, 24:19, Isaiah 14:11, 38:10, 38:18, Ezekiel 31:15, Hosea 13:14.

to describe a subterranean place for souls after they have been separated from the body. In Acts 2:27 St Peter uses Psalm 16:10 to refer to the Messiah: *Thou wilt not lead my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.* Literally, the passage refers to David saying that God would not allow his enemies to put him to death, the primary meaning and literal meaning of Hebrew *שׁאול sheol* and *שׁיחא shiycha* being “sepulchre” and “pit.” But in Acts, when St Peter relates this Psalm to the Messiah who was pre-figured by David in a spiritual and mystical sense, the Greek word *ᾗδης* and *διαφθοράν*, which he found in the Septuagint, mean “hell” and “corruption.” The apostle’s use of the words of the Psalm to refer to the resurrection of the Messiah is in no way contrary to beliefs held at that time by the Jews who believed in the resurrection of the dead. They also believed that there were places underground where souls went after being separated from bodies. Unless all these things are pointed out, the books of the New Testament do not make proper sense.

It is generally held that in the time of our Lord and the apostles, the Jews believed various things which were based solely on tradition, and of which there was no literal proof anywhere in the Old Testament. The writings of the Evangelists and the apostles have to be understood in light of this Jewish belief and not of any notion of their beliefs based solely on the books of the Old Testament which contain only part of their religion, the rest being contained within their traditions. The Jews are in agreement with this principle. They have retained the traditions they believe to have been soundly based, even the Karaite Jews, who strongly opposed the Talmudic traditions which had degenerated into fairy tales.⁴⁰

Early heretics, unaware of these considerations, simply challenged the books in the New Testament, saying that they were subsequent interpolations, rather than admit that the apostles were capable of things they themselves could not understand. Such an attitude prevented the Manicheans from finding specific references to Jesus Christ in the Law of Moses, so that they dismissed as false anything from the Pentateuch that was applied to Jesus in the New Testament. It never occurred to them that at the time of Jesus and the apostles, mystical and spiritual meanings in Scripture

⁴⁰ On R. Simon’s equivocal attitude towards the Karaites, see Guy G. Stroumsa, *The Discovery Of Religion In The Age Of Reason* (Harvard U.P., 2010), 73–74, and nn. 51–53. For the supplement on the Karaites in R. Simon’s French translation (1674) of Leon da Modena’s *Rites ... of the Present Jews* (1637), see J. Le Brun and G. Stroumsa (ed.), *Les Juifs présentés aux Chrétiens* (Paris: Belles-Lettres, 1998), 110–118.

were accepted by all Jews with the possible exception of some Sadducees, whereas it is on that very basis that the writings of the Evangelists and the apostles must be understood.

This being the case, anyone claiming that all the apostles' quotations must be taken in a literal sense, especially in the case of those used to prove a point, are mistaken. Admittedly a Scripture passage taken in an allegorical sense does not generally speaking prove anything; but in this case the allegorical meanings were generally accepted and indeed based on authoritative traditions. It was therefore allowable for the apostles to apply them to what they said and even draw conclusions in support of their intentions, just as the Pharisees did in their disputes with the Sadducees. Whilst it is true that the allegorical meanings did not of themselves prove anything, they do nonetheless imply a pre-established belief on which they were based.

It would seem that Theodore of Mopsuestia⁴¹ actually used this method in his commentaries on the Psalms and the Prophets,⁴² and that he was dismissed as anti-Jewish because his explanation of the ancient prophets was ignored except for the literal and historical content. No account was taken of the spiritual and mystical sense in which, as did the whole Church, he applied the prophecies to the Messiah. If Facundus⁴³ is to be believed, this great man who had total knowledge of the Scriptures was treated unjustly. Theodore, he says, was accused of destroying all prophecies referring to Jesus by making the same error as the Manicheans. But Facundus also shows how unfounded this accusation was, by quoting Theodore's own words in his commentary on the Psalms where he himself criticises the Jews for doing what he himself was accused of doing.⁴⁴ From this he concludes⁴⁵ that it was wrong to represent Theodore as irreligious for believing, as the Jews did, that Jesus Christ was no more than man, seeing that Theodore had strongly argued to the contrary. It is not appropriate to discuss here whether, as Facundus states, Theodore was misjudged. I merely mention the fact to show that great men realised a long time ago, that as has just been demonstrated, Scripture contains meanings of both kinds.

⁴¹ Theologian from Antioch (ca. 350–428), whose orthodoxy, among others, was upheld (albeit not unreservedly) by the sixth-century bishop Facundus (see *supra*, ch. 18 n. 23) in his treatise *Pro Defensione Trium Capitulum* (book 9 ch. 1).

⁴² See PG 66:9–1020.

⁴³ Facundus, *Pro Defensione Trium Capitulum* book IX section III (*Opera omnia* ed. J.-M. Clément and R.V. Plaetse [Turnholt: Brepols, 1974]), 262.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 263.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 265.

Undoubtedly Christianity derives from Judaism. Christians, in common with the Jews, worship the same God and believe in a Messiah as promised in the books of the Old Testament. For these reasons Christians who limit scriptural interpretation to a literal and historical meaning cannot be accused of inclining to Judaism over Christianity because they recognise the Scriptures have a secondary meaning, spiritual and mystical, which they themselves apply to the Messiah. This additional meaning is the same as what the Jews call "derash." In short, to sum up, Christianity and its basic principles cannot be properly understood without a knowledge of Judaism, from which it derives.

Celsus, Porphyry, Julian and the Jews raised various other objections to the writings of the Evangelists and the apostles. The main one is the discrepancy in the genealogy of Jesus as presented by St Matthew and St Luke. They claim that not only are the two Evangelists not in agreement but that they made statements which are manifestly untrue. It would be pointless, however, to dwell on this point which has been properly explained by various New Testament commentators and even in books specifically dealing with the matter. I shall merely make the general observation that the Jews' objections to the genealogies can be easily refuted. If they raise with Christians the contradictions between our Gospels and the books of the Old Testament, they can be silenced by one's pointing out that the same contradictions can be found between Chronicles or Paraleipomenes, which they ascribe to Esdras, and other historical books in the Old Testament. If their Rabbis cannot reconcile these apparently extreme discrepancies, they have to admit that genealogies which are the same but are set out in those books in more than one way came from different sources. Is it not just as likely that the Evangelists compiled their genealogies of Jesus from sources available to the Jews at that time but to which we no longer have access? Hence rather than making rash judgments or attempting to rewrite the genealogies on the basis of mere conjecture, it is better to leave things as they are.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

WERE THE BOOKS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT INSPIRED?
REFUTATION OF THE OPINIONS OF GROTIUS AND SPINOZA.
CARDINAL DU PERRON'S MISTAKEN EXPLANATION OF THE
WORDS REFERRING TO INSPIRATION IN 2 TIMOTHY 3:16.
QUARREL ON THE SUBJECT OF INSPIRATION BETWEEN
THE JESUITS AND THE THEOLOGIANS OF LOUVAIN.
THREE JESUITS' PROPOSITIONS CONDEMNED
BY THE DOCTORS OF LOUVAIN AND DOUAI.
DEFENCE OF THE PROPOSITIONS AGAINST
THEIR CENSURING BY THOSE THEOLOGIANS

I have already discussed the inspiration of Scripture elsewhere in general terms:¹ but since I have only done so in passing to respond to criticisms made of my critical history of the Old Testament, I shall now examine it with specific reference to the writings of the Evangelists and the apostles. That the books in the Old Testament were written by persons inspired is a common Jewish belief which has passed from Jews to Christians, and led Origen to say that both groups accept that the Scriptures were written by the Holy Spirit.²

Christians extended this inspiration to the books in the New Testament. A small minority of scholars hold that the only inspired Scripture is what was written by prophets. They denied that the histories were inspired saying that one does not need to be a Prophet to write history. Such is the view expressed by Grotius, who says that if St Luke had been inspired by God when writing his story, he would have followed the examples of the Prophets and this inspiration rather than rely on the reliability of the witnesses he quotes to support him. Nor, says Grotius, did Luke need any inspiration to record the Acts of St Paul since he himself witnessed them. He concludes that the writings of St Luke are in the canon not because they were inspired but because the early Church considered they were written by holy believers, and because they present matters that are fundamental to our

¹ See Auvray, 89–92; Jacques Le Brun, "SIMON (Richard)," fasc. 71:1368.

² Origen, *Against Celsus* 5.60 (3:162).

salvation.³ He repeats all these things in one of his works against Rivet who had described his views as irreligious. Here he also says that Esdras and St Luke were not Prophets but serious and prudent men who did not set out to deceive anyone nor were themselves deceived. He adds that St Luke did not say as the Prophets had done, “the word of the Lord was sent to Luke”; nor that the Lord said to him, “Write.”⁴

Grotius is followed in this opinion by Spinoza⁵ who presents a more detailed discussion in his book *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. Whilst not denying that the apostles were Prophets, he asserts there is some doubt that they wrote their books as Prophets at the express command and under the inspiration of God like Moses, Jeremiah and others. He claims that a stylistic examination of the apostles writings shows that they wrote as individual scholars and not as Prophets because they have no prophetic qualities. His reasoning follows that of Grotius. Prophets, he says, habitually testified that they spoke on the orders of God, not only in their prophecies but even in their letters, in which are to be found revelations.⁶

This view held by Grotius and Spinoza was recently revived in two letters contained in a book entitled “Opinions on *Critical History of the Old Testament*”⁷ by theologians in Holland. As there have been lengthy replies to these two letters and also to further discussion subsequently published on the matter, it would be pointless to repeat here what has already been

³ Grotius, *Votum pro pace ecclesiastica, contra examen Andreae Riveti et alios irreconciliables* ... (S. l., 1642) [BnF D2-5099 pièce 1], 136.

⁴ H. de Groot, *Rivetiani apologetici pro schismate contra Votum pacis facti discussio* (*Opera omnia theologica* tome III 723A).

⁵ Dutch Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632–1679) derived his knowledge of Christianity from Protestant sects in Holland. He was a noted pantheist, and an opponent of rabbis and of Calvinist pastors: G. Rabeau declares (art. “Spinoza,” *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* 14:2:2501) that, for believers, certain passages in the *Theologico-politicus* are as offensive as anything by Voltaire. In his *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (1670) he rejected the Cartesian distinction between natural and revealed religion. He questioned the “divine” inspiration of Scripture, claiming that, according to the New Testament, God revealed himself to the apostles solely through Jesus, who claimed to be neither a prophet nor the Jewish Messiah, but the “Son of Man” (see Jean-Robert Armogathe (éd.), *Le Grand Siècle et la Bible* (“La Bible de tous les temps” [Paris: Beauchesne, 1989]), 6:35; on the rise of Spinozism in France, see Paul Vernière, *Spinoza et la pensée française avant la Révolution* (Paris: P.U.F., 1954), 1:91–120. On R. Simon and Spinoza, see Gibert, *L’Invention critique*, 177–179 and 265–267.

⁶ Benedict [Baruch] de Spinoza (1632–1677), *Tractatus theologico-politicus* ch. II section 1 (*Œuvres* ed. F. Akkerman et al. [Paris: P.U.F., 1999], 3:410).

⁷ Jean Leclerc, *Sentimens de quelques théologiens de Hollande sur l’Histoire critique du Vieux Testament composée par M. Simon où, en remarquant les fautes de cet auteur, on donne divers principes utiles, pour l’intelligence de l’Ecriture sainte* (Amsterdam: Desbordes, 1685).

said elsewhere. Suffice it to say in general that those persons are mistaken in refusing to accept any inspiration other than that of prophecies. True history and letters are not written in the style of the Prophets. This is why what St Luke wrote does not begin “the word of God came to Luke”; nor is this true of any other evangelist. Neither the books of Moses or Joshua, nor in short any of the historical books of the Old Testament are written in what Grotius and Spinoza call the prophetic style. Yet Josephus, and all Jews of that time and of the present, describe the books as prophetic in the belief they were genuinely inspired by God.

In order to be divinely inspired a book does not have to have been dictated word for word.⁸ Those authors conceived a false notion of scriptural inspiration so that they argued from a standpoint that is belied by the totality of Jewish and Christian antiquity. When Jesus promised his apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them in every aspect of their ministry, he did not deprive them of their reason or their memory. Inspired though they were, they were still human beings and behaved as such. I grant that they had no need to be inspired in order to record events which they witnessed but this does not mean that they were not inspired by the Holy Spirit in everything they wrote to prevent their falling into error.⁹

Certainly all early Church writers accepted that the Evangelists and the apostles were endowed with inspiration. By the same token they refer to the care and accuracy they showed in the writing of their books in the same way as for other writers who were not inspired. Is it for Grotius to conclude from this that the early Church teachers did not accept that the books of the New Testament were inspired? It is not; those same teachers clearly state that they did. One has only to cite what Papias, a contemporary of the followers of the apostles, has to say in this regard when discussing the Gospel of St Mark.¹⁰ He affirms that though the Evangelist may not

⁸ Cf. *supra*, ch. 2 nn. 14, 16, 18.

⁹ See R. Simon, *Lettre à monsieur l'abbé P[irrot], D[octeur] and P[rofesseur] en Th[éologie] touchant l'inspiration des Livres Sacrés par R[ichard] S[imon] P[rieur] d[e] B[olleville]* [hereafter *Lettre sur l'inspiration*] (Rotterdam: Leers, 1687); this opuscle, accompanied by a second (see *infra*, ch. 26 n. 13), was republished under the title *De l'Inspiration des livres sacrés*, also preceded by the original title page (Rotterdam: Leers, 1687). R. Simon holds (*Lettre sur l'inspiration*, 3) that “All scripture is inspired by God” (2 Timothy 3:16). But although authors, scribes and copyists, being guided by the Holy Spirit, did not err in what they wrote, this is not to say they were infallible—they were human beings with failings, though this in no way diminishes the authority of what they wrote—similarly, whilst their texts were exclusively divine or supernatural, reason and experience played their part therein. On these points, see also the following chapter.

¹⁰ See *supra*, ch. 10 n. 9.

have respected the chronological order of events in his account, he must not therefore be accused of serious error, because he recorded events as he remembered them, being less concerned with the order in which they happened than not to say anything that was not true. Papias or rather one of the apostles' followers whose words Papias quotes in this passage, did not claim that because of this the Gospel of St Mark was not inspired. One has only to consult the other early Church writers who from the way they express themselves might make Grotius and Spinoza think they did not accept that the books of the New Testament were inspired, nonetheless, specifically state elsewhere in their writings that they were inspired.

The strongest support that Christians have for the Christians being inspired is in the words of St Paul to Timothy: *all Scripture is divinely inspired* (2 Timothy 3:16). Grotius did his utmost to interpret this passage in a different way: his ingenious statements have been refuted elsewhere. It is as clear as day, as I have shown, that the learned critic made several slips in attempting to distort the true interpretation of St Paul's words to make them coincide with his line of thought.¹¹

It is surprising that Cardinal Du Perron, being once convinced the Scripture was inspired, did all he could to deprive Christians of the evidence for that inspiration. Polemicists become obsessed with refuting their opponents, losing sight of the inherent and true sense of the Scripture passages they quote to support their arguments. This is what the Cardinal did in his response to the King of Great Britain. Just as Protestants spare no effort to enhance the authority of Scripture alone, unsupported by any traditions, Du Perron for his part spared no effort in reinforcing the authority of such traditions. To refute him the Protestants cited the words of St Paul: "all Scripture is divinely inspired and profitable for teaching." Such is the translation of these words written by St Paul to Timothy. The Cardinal strenuously objects to this translation on the grounds that the Greek does not read ὅλη "whole, entire, complete" but πᾶσα "all [of]"; and that the reading is not πᾶσα ἡ γραφή "all of the Scripture" but πᾶσα γραφή "every Scripture, any Scripture," without the article.¹²

¹¹ R. Simon, *De l'Inspiration des livres sacrés, avec une réponse au livre intitulé: "Défense des sentimens de quelques théologiens de Hollande sur l'Histoire critique du Vieux Testament," par le prieur de Bolleville* (Rotterdam: Leers, 1687) [BnF A-3501 2^e pièce], 167.

¹² Jacques Davy Du Perron (1556–1621), *Réplique à la réponse du sérénissime roy de la Grand Bretagne, par l'illustrissime ... cardinal Du Perron ...* (2d ed., Paris: Estienne, 1622) [BnF D-971], bk. III "The apostolic Traditions," ch. 4: New Testament: Secondary Objections, 683–684.

To what purpose does the Cardinal resort to such grammatical and dialectical subtleties on this point? Admittedly he cites the authority of St John Chrysostom, Theodoret, and other Fathers in support of what he says. But, in order to demolish him, I myself need no authority other than that of these very same Church Fathers. It is pointless dwelling on something that can easily be verified: since everyone has access to the works of these Church Fathers it will suffice to quote St John Chrysostom whose words are quite different from those ascribed to him by Du Perron. Contrary to the Cardinal's assertions, the learned bishop did not say that Paul's words must be translated distributively as "any Scripture" rather than collectively as "all Scripture." On the contrary, he states in his homily on this passage of St Paul that the holy apostle is referring to all Holy Scripture which Timothy had studied since his childhood; and he concluded that all such Scripture is useful and profitable Πάσα οὖν ἡ τοιαυτη ὠφέλιμος καὶ θεόπνευστος.¹³ In this instance by "Scripture" he obviously means all of the Old Testament.

Evidently Du Perron himself had not read St John Chrysostom's homily nor the other Greek Fathers whom he quotes. His research minions were misled because they only looked at the Latin version of the homily which contains, from the Vulgate, *All divinely inspired Scripture is useful*. But, as has been demonstrated elsewhere, the Old Vulgate, in line with the Greek, read, *All Scripture is divinely inspired and useful*, and the passage must be taken *collectively* and not *distributively*.

This is not to say that the Vulgate cannot also be read in the same way. It translates as "all Scripture that is inspired is useful," not as Father Amelote and the authors of the Mons translation¹⁴ render it: "all Scripture that is inspired by God is useful." As shown in the Reply to the *Défense des sentimens de quelques théologiens de Hollande*,¹⁵ the Syriac, Arabic and Ethiopian versions which the Cardinal cites in support of his reading, have a completely different meaning from the one he ascribes.

¹³ John Chrysostom, Homily 9:1 on 2 Timothy [3:16] (PG 62:649).

¹⁴ Amelote, *Le Nouveau Testament de Notre Seigneur Jesus-Christ* 2:356; *Le Nouveau Testament de Notre Seigneur Jesus Christ, traduit en françois selon l'edition vulgate, avec les differences du grec*, vol. 2: *Les Epistres de S. Paul. Les Epistres canoniques. L'Apocalypse*, 276: "Toute écriture qui est inspiré de Dieu est utile ..." (Mons: Migeot, 1667—in fact printed in Amsterdam by Elzevir; 1st ed. of the Port-Royal translation by Antoine Lemaistre, completed by his brother Isaac Lemaistre de Sacy (1613–1684); also called the Mons New Testament [BnF A-6433 (2)]).

¹⁵ See *supra*, ch. 23 n. 11.

In any case, I fail to see why Cardinal Du Perron feels so strongly about the way these words of St Paul should be translated and why he infers that if those words proved anything, through faith every book in the Canon could be used for general teaching of all Christianity. He says that the word *πάσα* “every” without the article refers distributively to each book in the Scriptures. But the Greek Fathers did not bother to distil St Paul’s words with such subtleties to interpret them as if the reading actually was *πάσα ἡ γραφή*, “the whole of Scripture,” with the article. Catholics must agree with Protestants that the whole of Scripture is profitable for teaching, since this does not rule out tradition which, concomitantly with Scripture, constitutes the basic principle of Christianity. So the Cardinal’s whole argument is ingenious, but nothing more: his quibbles on the meaning of the passage from St Paul are irrelevant, and fly in the face of all antiquity.

Estius on the other hand interprets the passage too broadly. He does interpret the Vulgate aright in relation to the Greek text from which the Latin was derived: but he distorts the meaning utterly by inferring from it that all Holy Scripture was dictated by the Holy Spirit, not merely the content but even the very words, which would mean that every word and all word order in Scripture specifically came from God.¹⁶ Such a view is contrary to the doctrine of most early Church writers, who give no indication of understanding inspiration to refer to anything more than content. But because Estius taught theology in the University of Douai, he was compelled to use the words of the Douai theologians who had published a decree in this regard against the Jesuit Fathers of Louvain who had put forward propositions stating the direct opposite. Estius himself was the chief author of the censure opposing the propositions. Here is my own account of the whole dispute on the subject of inspiration, between the doctors of Louvain and Douai and the College of Louvain Jesuits.

Opposition to Jesuit theology from theologians who claim to observe the doctrine of St Augustine in their schools and their books is not new. When, in 1586, in their Louvain College, the Jesuit Fathers put forward propositions relating to grace, predestination and Holy Scripture, which appeared radical to the doctors of Louvain and Douai, the latter censured the former, making public their reasons for doing so. As we are not concerned here with grace and predestination, but only with Holy Scripture, I shall limit myself to

¹⁶ Willem Hesselszoon Van Est (called Estius), *Absolutissima in omnes beati Pauli et septem catholicas apostolorum epistolas commentaria tribus tomis distincta ...* (Paris: Leonard, 1679) [Mazarine 1053], 826.

matters of Scripture. The Louvain theologians' censure, which appears at the end of a book printed in Paris,¹⁷ is addressed to the entire assembly of Jesuits in Louvain in these words: "To the Reverend Fathers in Christ, to the Father Rector and the other Father professors of the college named the Society of Jesus in the University of Louvain: the Dean and other faculty teachers in that university wish everlasting salubrity and peace."

While declaring everlasting war on the Jesuits, at the same time the learned masters still wished them everlasting peace. They described the Jesuits' doctrine as strange, shocking, and dangerous. Three of the propositions censured are as follows:

1. It is not mandatory for every word in Holy Scripture to have been inspired by God.
2. It is not mandatory for the writer to have found all truth and pronouncements through inspiration.
3. A book such as Second Maccabees, that was simply set down by individuals without assistance from the Holy Spirit, becomes Holy Scripture if the Holy Spirit makes it known that the book contains nothing that is false.¹⁸

These three propositions came from the writings of the Jesuit Fathers who gave instruction in theology in their College at Louvain. Being thus taken to task for those scandalous propositions, instead of retracting the propositions, they openly defended them, providing additional explanations. The propositions make sense, and indeed hardly differ from the theology of the early Fathers: they are the ones who should be heeded, not the sacred faculty of theology of Louvain whose condemnation was totally insulting to the order of Jesuits. According to the terms of the censure, the three statements border on the early heresy of the Anomoeans¹⁹ who held that in many instances the Prophets and the apostles spoke merely as human

¹⁷ Florence Conry ([or Conroy: in Irish Flaithri O'Mulconry] (1612–1694, founder of the Irish (Franciscan) College of St. Anthony at Louvain), *Peregrinus Jerichuntinus, hoc est, de Natura humana feliciter instituta, infeliciter lapsa, miserabiliter vulnerata, misericorditer restaurata* ... (Paris: Caleville, 1641 [BnF D-3975]), an independent discussion of St Augustine's teachings on original sin, the grace of Christ, free will, etc., the "Pilgrim of Jericho" being human nature itself, the robber Satan.

¹⁸ [Lenaert Leys (Leonardus Lessius), 1554–1623, Jesuit theologian], *Censurae Facultatum Sacrae Theologiae Lovaniensis ac Duacensis. Super quibusdam articulis de Sacra Scriptura, gratia et praedestinatione Anno Domini 1586. Lovanii scripto traditis* (Paris 1641) [BnF D-10886], 2 (*Assertiones*).

¹⁹ 4th century exponents of an extreme Arian doctrine, according to which Father and Son are essentially not the same.

beings.²⁰ St Jerome, in the preface to his commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to Philemon, refers to this doctrine which was censured in the person of Erasmus. To refute the propositions they cited the Council of Trent, the Second Epistle of St Peter, St Paul's second letter to Timothy and the authority of the early Fathers who stated that the sacred writers' tongues and hands served as a pen for the Holy Spirit.

Before pursuing the arguments of the Louvain theologians, I shall quote the censure pronounced by the theological faculty of Douai. These theologians testified that they had studied and examined the Jesuits' propositions on the orders of the archbishops of Cambrai and Malines and the Bishop of Gent. Unlike the doctors of Louvain, they do not wholly condemn the propositions, instead relating their censures to each proposition separately. To refute the first two, they cite St Augustine who they said believed that the biblical writers were granted the faculty of speaking thus and the manner of composing their texts from God. They also cite the distinguished scholastic theologian Gabriel, according to whom, they claimed, the apostles were inspired with various natural truths and that although writing it involves effort and meditation, a book can still be inspired.²¹ Those same theologians give Jesus Christ as an example, saying that if he had written the book in his human capacity, he could have meditated and applied himself to the work whilst his mind, his mouth, his tongue, his hands and his fingers were everlasting instruments of the Holy Spirit.²² This was the approach taken by the doctors of Louvain in their attempt to demolish the propositions of the Louvain Jesuits, which they found scandalous. They even went so far as to say that the propositions were religiously subversive, asserting in regard to the second proposition that if it were granted that every truth and every statement in Scripture were not necessarily a result of immediate inspiration even in a single instance, then there would be everlasting disagreement, not merely over what was directly inspired in Scripture but over all the Gospels, the account of which could not have been made known by any means other

²⁰ *Censurae Facultatum ...*, 22.

²¹ Gabriel Biel (ca. 1420–1495), co-founder of the University of Tübingen and its first professor of theology. Called by some “last of the Scholastics.” See Gabrielis Biel, *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum*, book 3, ed. Wilfred Werbeck and Udo Hoffmann (Tübingen: JCB Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1979), *Distinctio* 25: The Holy Spirit revealed faith to the apostles, who were traditionally supposed to have dictated the articles of the Apostles' Creed, dating in Received Form from 5th–7th c. (445); *Dubium* 2: with the passing of time, faith was increased through individuals' own intellectual exertions (*propter clariorem eruditionem*, 458).

²² *Censurae Facultatum ...*, 68.

than human: on a wider scale it would be even questioned whether all books of Scripture that are not prophetic were actually directly communicated to their authors by the Holy Spirit.²³

Our theologians considered the third proposition the most dangerous of all, at variance with St Paul, who assures us that all Scripture is divinely inspired, and a divine doctrine dictated by the Holy Spirit. For this reason they claim the decrees of the Popes and Councils were never counted as divine Scriptures, even though the Holy Spirit bears witness through the Church that such decrees contain nothing that is untrue. In fine they say that the Louvain Jesuits' last proposition can have no validity unless it be admitted by the same reasoning that if the Holy Spirit made it known that there is nothing untrue in the histories of Thucydides and Livy, that these histories should be included in Scripture as well. They close their censure with the following general statement: "the fact that something has been granted the seal of approval does not mean it was originally divinely inspired; on the contrary, things meet with approval because they were inspired."²⁴ Let us now see whether the doctors of these two theological faculties were right to address such insulting rejection of the three propositions to the Order of Jesuits.

Before anything else we note that in Rome in that same year of 1586, the Jesuits published the Study Directives for members of their company under the title *Ratio Studiorum* including, among those recommended for the guidance of their theologians, the following proposition regarding the inspiration of Scripture: "In the originals and early copies that are not corrupted it is most likely that the content was specifically dictated by the Holy Spirit though in differing ways depending on the estate of the different individuals concerned."²⁵

This showed that at that time the Jesuits in Rome did not believe that all Scripture was identically inspired; when they say that every word was inspired they particularise, by adding: as far as the content is concerned. Moreover what they say about the content being inspired is presented as no more than a likely opinion, such that they believe that the reverse is equally probable. Admittedly the views of the theological faculties of Louvain and Douai were the most commonly accepted in the Schools at that time. But

²³ Ibid., 68–69.

²⁴ Ibid., 71.

²⁵ *De Scripturis Canonicis earumque editionibus* n° 2 (Jean Azor et al. [eds.], *Ratio atque institutio studiorum per sex patres ad id jussu R.P. praepositi Generalis deputatos conscripta* [Rome: Collegium Societatis Jesu, 1586] (Mazarine 8° 26985 A [RES.])), 323.

the Jesuits, who thenceforward had learned scholars in their Society saw that such views made no sense, and were also at variance with the views of the earliest church doctors. The Jesuits at the College of Louvain in no way contravened the regulation or constitution of their founder which specifically forbade them to “present new opinions,” since that directive goes on to say “unless it be with the consent of the Superiors.”²⁶

Nothing could be shrewder than the way the constitutions of the Society circumscribed the freedom of thought it granted to its instructors. Ignatius Loyola instructed them to follow the most reliable and the most widely accepted doctrine in any discipline. But since it is not easy to say which are the most reliable opinions and those most widely accepted, he directed that the choice be made by the Rector who had to take account of the views established by the whole of the Society for the greater glory of God.²⁷

When the Jesuits made their appearance in the world, there began to emerge much greater resources for the study of theology than hitherto. They were wise therefore to avoid blind obedience to the doctrines of St Thomas and St Augustine as was then the custom in most Universities. Accordingly, in regard to the inspiration of Scripture, they were right not to give unquestioning support to what was most widely accepted in these Schools in their day. The freedom to prophesy which they granted to their professors of theology led them to make new discoveries in that discipline: it is to this that I ascribe the rigour the Louvain Jesuits showed, maintaining their views on inspiration unhampered by the official line taken by the theology faculties of Louvain and Douai who had not investigated the matters in sufficient depth.

Censuring the Jesuits did not stop the two faculties from subsequently teaching the same doctrine on scriptural inspiration in their Louvain College. A few years afterwards, Cornelius a Lapide gave public lectures on Holy Scripture in Louvain itself, continuing to do so for sixteen years. He even published his lectures on the instruction of the Archbishop of Malines and his Superiors, starting with his commentaries on the Epistles of St Paul which he dedicated to the archbishop. In what he says about the verse by Paul concerning scriptural inspiration he is diametrically opposed to Estius who was teaching at that time in the University of Douai. It can clearly be seen that this Jesuit expressly stressed this difficulty, having in mind the

²⁶ *Ratio atque institutio studiorum Societatis Jesu, auctoritate septimae congregationis generalis aucta (Institutum Societatis Jesu [Antwerp, Meurs, 1635] (BnF H-15397), 5:3:24).*

²⁷ *Ibid.* See also the historical and updated edition by A. Demoustier etc., *Ratio studiorum. Plan raisonné et institution des études dans la Compagnie de Jésus*, in Latin, French tr. by L. Albrieux and D. Pralon-Julia (Paris: Belin, 1997).

censures by the Louvain and Douai theologians. In his commentary on the Pauline passage, he sets out the propositions which those doctors had censured.

Although Cornelius a Lapide's Commentaries are readily available, it is appropriate at this stage to reproduce what he actually said, from which it can be judged that the Jesuits of Louvain took no account of the censures published by Louvain's theologians. "Observe, the Jesuit says, that the Holy Spirit did not dictate all sacred books in the same way. He revealed and dictated to Moses and the Prophets the words of the Lord and the Prophecies. But as to the histories and exhortations to piety which the hagiographic writers learnt by seeing or hearing them or through reading and meditation, they were not necessarily inspired or dictated by the Holy Spirit: the writers knew them perfectly well. Hence St John says (19:35) that he wrote what he had seen. St Luke also testifies (1:2) that he wrote his Gospel based on what he had learned from the apostles."²⁸ All this clearly belies the censures of the Louvain and Douai doctors. The Jesuit expresses himself clearly and distinctly, plainly reaffirming the views held before him by teachers of theology in their College at Louvain.

But it may be argued that the same views were held by Grotius and Spinoza, who did not recognise any inspiration in Scripture except in the prophetic books: so it is appropriate to include here Cornelius a Lapide's observations in that same commentary on the way in which the histories and moral works were inspired. "It is held nonetheless, he goes on, that these works were dictated by the Holy Spirit as well, firstly in that their authors were assisted by the Holy Spirit so that they would never make a mistake; secondly, because the Holy Spirit caused them to express themselves in one particular way rather than another. Hence the Holy Spirit was not the source of the conceptions or the memories of what they knew; inspiration extended solely to their expressing themselves in a particular way." The learned Jesuit thus defined the inspiration of the historical and moral books in Holy Scripture. Evidently this is clear common sense, whereas there is something in the views of the doctors of Louvain and Douai, and the Calvinists incidentally, that is offensive to reason and experience.

It would be pointless to argue that those views were something of a novelty of which this Jesuit was unaware: he had already expressed them in those various Schools where the argument caused such a stir when the

²⁸ Cornelis Cornelissen Van Den Steen (called Cornelius a Lapide), *In omnes divi Pauli epistolas commentaria ...* (Leiden: Candy, 1644) [BnF A-890], 733.

three propositions were put forward by theologians in his Order. He gave the appearance of clarifying the matter in his commentaries on St Paul, so that it would become common knowledge that the censures pronounced by the Louvain and Douai faculties were totally unfounded and devoid of rationality. Moreover the Netherlands Jesuits' provincial, who approved the books publication, certifies it had been read and written for theologians from their Order. Also the commentaries are prefaced by the approval from the Netherlands Censor of Books, who is a Canon in Antwerp. However, in order to demonstrate conclusively that the views held by the Netherlands Jesuits on scriptural inspiration are in no way scandalous or dangerous, we shall look into the reasoning on which the Louvain and Douai theologians based their Censures.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE ARGUMENTS PUT FORWARD BY LOUVAIN AND DOUAI SCHOLARS IN CENSURING THE PROPOSITIONS OF THE LOUVAIN JESUITS CONCERNING SCRIPTURAL INSPIRATION. ONE LEARNED PARIS THEOLOGIAN'S HIGHLY INDEPENDENT VIEW OF THE MATTER

As I have no further documents published by the Jesuit fathers of Louvain in support of their propositions concerning scriptural inspiration, apart from what I have already produced, I shall attempt to compensate for this by examining the arguments employed in the censure published by the Louvain and Douai faculties of theology. I should like to think that the theologians' sole motive was to defend truth, that is, that their archaic opinions and personal animus had no part in this entire quarrel. As to the Jesuits, it would appear they put forward these views in their Flanders colleges strictly in line with the freedom granted to their instructors never to enter lightly upon the defence of opinions. However ancient, that appeared indefensible. In short, the Jesuits claimed not to follow slavishly the guiding opinions of their teachers. Such a practice being so eminently sensible, it is wrong to accuse them of questioning received opinions having no authority in most Schools when those opinions have no solid basis: this is actually what happened to them in the matter under discussion.

As one of their basic arguments for their censure, the Louvain theologians state that the Jesuits' three propositions are identical to an early standpoint that was condemned among the Anomoeans and recorded by Saint Epiphanius: but one has only to check Saint Epiphanius's text to see that the argument is baseless. He says that the Anomoeans blasphemed against the prophets and the apostles and when pressed strongly they fudged the difficulty by saying that the apostle spoke in a human capacity.¹ Is there anything like this in the three propositions discussed above? Did the Jesuits of the Louvain college suggest that the writings of the apostles contained

¹ Epiphanius, Heresy 76 n. 54 (*Panarion*, 2:566).

false things on the grounds that they were speaking as human beings? Such was however the view of the Anomoeans who could not counter the arguments put to them which were taken from the books of the New Testament, and said that the writers of those books had spoken as, and only as, human beings in those passages.

The same response applies to the argument doctors based on the preface to Saint Jerome's commentaries on Paul's Epistle to Philemon. Here Jerome mentions heretics who rejected the Epistle on the grounds that the Holy apostle was not guided by the spirit of God when writing it.² But even if one conceded to the heretics that Saint Paul and the other apostles were not inspired in everything that they wrote, it does not follow that some of their writings should be excluded: one has only to observe, as did the Jesuits of Louvain: that even passages that were not inspired contained nothing that is not true. They were given to us as such by the Holy Spirit.

The Amonoean sectarians inquired of the orthodox whether Saint Paul needed to be inspired in order to say (2 Timothy 4:13): "When you come bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books," and other statements of this kind.³ I admit that there was no need for God to dictate things of this kind to Saint Paul or other sacred writers. This same view is held by the Louvain Jesuits and was subsequently confirmed in the same passage by Cornelius a Lapide whose words are quoted above; but they do not infer from this that the only portions of Scripture to be accepted are those dictated by the Holy Spirit. It suffices to believe that the sacred writers were guided by the Spirit of God in everything they wrote so that they would not make mistakes.

The Louvain theologians also criticised the Jesuits for reviving a standpoint condemned in the person of Erasmus. But it is easily shown that nothing they suggested resembled in the slightest what was said by Erasmus. He was accused of believing that in the writings of the apostles there were mistakes attributable to lapses of memory. Nothing along such lines is to be found in the three propositions of the Louvain Jesuits who, believing that the sacred writers were in no need of inspiration to record or to set down things that they knew, were not thus led to claim that those writers sometimes made mistakes because of a bad memory. Erasmus in one of his Apologies actually makes every effort to disprove the accusation, protesting that he had merely reproduced what Saint Jerome had said in that regard

² Jerome, Preface to Commentary on Philemon (PL 26:599–601).

³ Jerome, *ibid.*, citing 2 Timothy 4:13 (PL 26:601).

and that he had said nothing that was at variance with Saint Augustine. Be this as it may, Erasmus denies any intention of saying the apostles had lapses of memory. I am not saying whether or not Erasmus was mistaken in this; suffice it to say that I have demonstrated or that I have made clear what he was supposedly criticised for saying, and also that there was nothing along those lines in the Jesuits' three propositions that were censured.⁴

To refute them the theologians also cited the authority of the Council of Trent (Session 4), the words of Saint Peter (2 Peter 1:21) and Paul (2 Timothy 3:16). But there is nothing in any of these with which the Louvain Jesuits are not in agreement. The most relevant passage is the verse from the Epistle to Timothy: however, the observations of Cornelius a Lapide quoted above relate to this very verse. Nor did the Jesuits deny the testimony of the early Fathers that the tongue and hand of the sacred writers served as a pen for the Holy Spirit. In his commentary on Paul's Second Letter to Timothy the same Cornelius a Lapide explains it at length, demonstrating that it is not inconsistent with his standpoint on scriptural inspiration: it cannot be claimed that the Holy Spirit deprived the Evangelists and the apostles of the use of their reason and their memory.

The arguments presented by the doctors of the Douai theological faculty are no more convincing than those of their colleagues in Louvain. Their main authority is passages quoted from Saint Augustine; but as they contain nothing very precise, discussion would be pointless. For example, they quote from Augustine's books on the Evangelists' Assent.⁵ It was in this work, however, more than any of his others, that Augustine stressed how the early authors made use of their reason and memory when composing their Gospels. This work it was that led Erasmus and other scholars to postulate that the apostles' memory was not always reliable, and that in some instances they had chosen the wrong words.

Admittedly, St Augustine does also state that the apostles' memory lapses were rectified by the Holy Spirit. But personally I found it preferable not to say they made mistakes rather than, as Augustine goes on to say, even after admitting they had made errors, they would not correct them, on the grounds that everything they had done was the work of the Spirit of God directing their thoughts. Erasmus in one of his Apologies even resorted to Augustine's own Response. As he could not deny having said that memory

⁴ Erasmus, *Apologia adversus Monachos quosdam Hispanos* (*Opera omnia ...*, ed. J. Le Clerc [Leiden: Vander Aa, 1703–1706], 9:1073).

⁵ PL 34:1041–1230, quoted *supra* in ch. 3 n. 1 of the present work. Passages cited here are not identified by R. Simon.

lapses on the part of the Evangelists had caused them to confuse the name of one Prophet with another, he attempted to wriggle out of it by saying that⁶ when both memory and forgetfulness are under the control of the Holy Spirit, forgetting something is just as helpful as remembering it accurately. Maldonado rightly ascribes this view to Bede as well as Augustine, and rightly rejects it; it is indefensible, which is why nothing along these lines is to be found in the Louvain Jesuits' propositions.

The words of Gabriel quoted by the Douai theologians⁷ to show that the apostles were inspired with various natural truths, and that inspiration is compatible with work and meditation on the part of Holy authors, will make sense if inspiration is taken to mean guidance from the Holy Spirit to prevent the apostles making lapses. If on the other hand it be held that the Holy Spirit dictated the fact that they themselves had witnessed, that is indefensible as Cornelius a Lapide has shown. Postulating that Jesus could have used meditation and applied himself like any other man if he had written a book, proves nothing. If you imagine him writing books about events he had actually seen, you would have to say the Holy Spirit would not have to have been instrumental in these things being recorded. Instances of this kind, somewhat metaphysical, can only be appreciated by those who are familiar with scholastic sophistry.

To the argument that unless all scriptural truth were directly inspired, one could argue forever about what was directly inspired and what was not, I reply that in accordance with the principles of the Jesuit Cornelius, it is simple to distinguish between both kinds of inspiration. He rightly intimates that direct inspiration has no role to play in the history of events seen or heard about, or in moral exhortation, since these have nothing to do with prophecy.

But it will be said that such reasoning raises doubts as to whether non-prophetic books such as the Gospels were directly inspired. My reply is that on the contrary there can be no grey areas in this regard; Cornelius clearly demonstrates from the words of Saint John and Saint Luke that no direct inspiration was necessary for the writing of the history. The Evangelists set down what they saw, and what they learned from reliable sources.

Maldonado, on this premise, discussing the words of Jesus in Matthew 26:28: "This is my blood, the blood of the new covenant" and comparing them with Jesus's words in Luke 22:20: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" confidently states that Jesus's actual words are as reported by Saint

⁶ Erasmus, *ibid.*

⁷ *Censurae Facultatum Sacrae Theologiae Lovaniensis ac Duacensis*, 68.

Matthew and not by Saint Luke. The reason the learned Jesuit presents in support of this view is that Saint Matthew was there when it happened, *Matthaeus qui aderat*. He concludes that since Jesus could not have made a statement in more than one way, it is preferable to follow Saint Matthew who was an eyewitness and who was followed by Saint Mark, rather than Saint Luke and Saint Paul who were not there. Clearly, Maldonado in this instance is not concerned with inspiration since he claims Matthew simply wrote down what he had witnessed.⁸

Not that I think that Maldonado's "anti-Protestant" evidence in this instance is conclusive proof: it has to be assumed that the Evangelists expressed themselves in their own particular way. It suffices that amongst themselves they agree on the substance of these matters without having to agree on the actual words. Each of them was entitled to express himself as he chose, so that Maldonado's reasoning does not necessarily show that Jesus must have used the words recorded by Saint Matthew rather than those recorded by Saint Luke and Saint Paul.

The Douay theologians have even more to say regarding the Louvain Jesuits' third proposition than the other two. They claim it is manifestly wrong for investing books, written by men totally unassisted by the Holy Spirit, with divine and canonical authority. Whilst admittedly the Jesuits have put forward the same proposition, which closely resembles the views of Grotius and Spinoza, the Douay theologians also claim assurance from the Holy Spirit that such books do not contain a word of truth.

The same line of reasoning, they further assert, would entitle the decrees of Popes and Councils to be described as "holy scripture," on the grounds that such decrees unquestionably contain no element of falsehood; the histories of Livy and Thucydides could also be counted as "holy" if there were testimony from the Holy Spirit to the effect that their works contain nothing that is not true. But none of this follows logically from the Louvain Jesuits' third proposition, whose premise is that the writings are adduced by the Holy Spirit as appropriate canonical texts for religious guidance, whereas decrees issued by Councils and Popes of themselves contain nothing of the kind: if they did, they would no longer been seen simply as decrees of the Church, but as works offered to the Church as a gift, in place of the doctrine of faith and morality. The reference to Livy and Thucydides, who had nothing to say about anything to do with our salvation, is quite irrelevant.

⁸ Maldonado, *Commentarii ...* 2: 314 (on Matthew 26:28).

Turning to the Douay theologians' maxim, according to which "the fact that something has been ratified does not mean that it necessarily derived from inspiration, but that on the contrary, it was ratified in fact because it was inspired": it does not disprove the Jesuits' proposition, whose constant premise is that the books are attested, if not directly inspired, by the Holy Spirit. A number of learned theologians, moreover, hold that in order to set down all he has to say about the creation and ancient patriarch's genealogies in the book of Genesis, Moses had no need of inspiration from God: in that regard he simply relied on what he had learned from the recollections of his ancestors. To quote the Jesuit Pereyra, "he had been taught and instructed partly by his forefathers, to whom the doctrine of such matters had been virtually handed down from Adam, by his descendants' most reliable tradition, and transmitted to Moses."⁹ Was it necessary, for example, for Moses to be inspired by God in order to record the Israelites' daily activities and their various encampments in the desert after their exodus from Egypt? It is needless for me to devote any further discussion to something I believe I have made abundantly clear. Far from my finding fault with the Louvain Jesuits' propositions, they are, in my view, both accurate and sensible. The scholars who raised such heated objections to them followed the time-worn views they had been taught, relying solely on their own preconceptions, too readily rejecting matters to which they gave insufficient thought, and of which they had no proper understanding.

In this regard a learned Doctor of the Faculty of Theology in Paris has put forward a proposition that is diametrically opposed to the views of the Louvain and Douay theologians, and which many may find somewhat unorthodox.¹⁰ Nonetheless, with the backing of some of his colleagues, his book has been reprinted several times; in fact a new edition has just been brought out in Paris,¹¹ with the approval of the Faculty's Doctor Cocquelin, Chancellor of the University, who claims to have read and reread the work. You will surmise that I refer to *Analysis of Divine Faith* by Henry Holden, who evinces his deep contemplation on the principles of theology throughout his book. On the inspiration of Scripture, he has this to say:

⁹ Benito Pereyra, *Præfatio in Genesim (Commentariorum et disputationum in Genesim* [Cologne: Hierat, 1601—BnF A-1780 (1)], 1:5A).

¹⁰ Henry Holden, *Divinae fidei analysis, seu de Fidei christianae resolutione libri duo ...* (Paris: Blaizot, 1652) [Mazarine 24383], bk. 1 ch. 5, 82.

¹¹ H. Holden, *Divinae fidei analysis ...* (Paris: J. and M. Villery, in-12° (2 parts in 1 volume), 1685 [BnF D-21361]).

The especial succour afforded by God to the author of each and every book which the Church accepts as the Word of God, readily extends to matters that are purely doctrinal, or are closely and necessarily related thereto. In regard to matters outside the authors' purposes, or relating to other matters, in my judgment God provides no more than the assistance he normally extends to any other writer of great piety.¹²

I merely quote the opinion of this Doctor from the Faculty of Theology in Paris, without venturing to refute it, since it enjoys the support of such learned scholars; however, I cannot concur with it entirely. He would have done well to give examples of what he means by matters that are not "purely doctrinal" or completely "related thereto."

De Dominis,¹³ from whom Holden evidently derived his principles, subtly examines the matter in more detail. Since, he says, the object of our faith consists solely of things revealed, it does not purely and simply include everything that is in the Scriptures, nor is this an integral part of what we believe: the content of Scripture is not limited to things revealed. He illustrates this line of thought with examples, concluding that it is to some extent possible to make excuses for learned Catholic theologians who held that lapses of memory caused the Evangelists to make mistakes, such as mixing up names, or disagreeing on the time or circumstances of the occurrences they relate, provided that the occurrences themselves are not called into question, nor essentially discredited. Provided, he continues, that the truth remains substantially unaffected by any such lapses, they can have no adverse effect on beliefs, since they have no connection with anything we must accept with divine faith: they only relate to what we acquire through our senses, and human senses, even those of the sacred writers, are fallible when it comes to anything apart from substantial fact.¹⁴

Yet although De Dominis provides quite a lengthy analysis of this view, he admits that he does not venture totally to subscribe to it. He recognises that the Bible does contain passages in which the writers evidently made mistakes; and that although the standard explanations for such difficulties are strictly circumscribed, for pious souls they must suffice, even though they do not meet the requirements of rigorously inquiring minds. He himself

¹² H. Holden, *Divinae fidei analysis ...* (1652 ed.), 82.

¹³ Marcantonio De Dominis (1566–1624), b. Dalmatia (Croatia), man of science, sometime Jesuit, and apostate (he wrote against the Roman and Anglican Churches), Archbishop of Split 1602–1616.

¹⁴ De Dominis, *De Republica ecclesiastica* (London: Bills, 1617–1622) (BnF E-222), book 7 ch. 1, 11B, 12A.

preferred to adopt an indulgent approach, rather than hold a sacred writer responsible for the most minor of lapses, even when the matter is of no consequence. Then again he does not deprecate the standpoint of Catholic scholars who recognise that although errors of this kind are to be found, since even in regard to the essence of things revealed, there can be nothing more calculated to undermine the authority of Holy Scripture than qualified and partial explanations, which seem merely risible to those who do not believe as we do. Seemingly the Archbishop of Split had difficulty committing himself over so delicate a matter.

In this regard Dr Holden's most helpful injunction is not to rely on the words of Scripture alone to accept or reject anything that is purely metaphysical. As he himself says in that same passage, although the Scriptures contain nothing that is untrue, the forms of expression used in Scripture can appear incongruous, having mostly been adjusted to conform with people's generally accepted modes of thought. Such too is the view of St John Chrysostom, who observed that St Paul often used familiar everyday expressions, the better to identify with his hearers.¹⁵

¹⁵ John Chrysostom, Homily 5:2 on Philippians ch. 2 (PG 62:248).

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

SPINOZA'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST INSPIRATION IN THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Spinoza knew virtually nothing about the books of the New Testament; however, this did not stop him from devoting an entire chapter of his *Theologico-politicus* to attempting to prove the absence of any inspiration in the books, succeeding merely in throwing further light on what Grotius, at various points in his works, had already said on the subject. His basic principle is that, in what they wrote, the apostles' role was not that of prophets, but simply of teachers;¹ hence they had no need of "inspiration." But distinguishing in this way between "prophets" and "teachers" does not explain away the inspiration with which the apostles are credited, and by which simple means, as already explained, they received direction from the Spirit of God.

It has been said that whereas God commanded the Prophets to publish their prophecies abroad, he did not command the apostles to do so: as stated at the outset of the present work, early Church writers attest in regard to the gospels that they were written purely by chance at the request of the early faithful. Just as I believe God ordered Prophets to proclaim their word to the people of Israel, I honestly do not think the Evangelists or the apostles received specific instructions from God, or even from Jesus Christ, to publish written works to educate the primitive Christians. What we are told is that Jesus commanded his disciples to go and preach the Gospel to all nations on earth: and their accounts, which we call Gospels, are neither more nor less than their collective preaching, enlivened by the spirit which their Master had promised them.

Spinoza goes on to say that the Prophets indicate not only in their prophecies, but also in their letters, that God speaks through them, his evidence for which is the letter from the prophet Elijah to King Jehoram, as related in 2 Chronicles 21:12, and which begins: "Thus saith the Lord."² Nothing like this, says Spinoza, is to be found in the Epistles of the New Testament; it is, on the contrary, on his own authority that St Paul says "in my opinion" in 1 Corinthians 7:40.

¹ Spinoza, *Tractatus theologico-politicus* ch. 12 section 4, 3:442.

² *Ibid.*, 412 (ch. 11 section 1).

The apostles may not have expressed themselves in exactly the same way as the Prophets, but this does not mean that the former were not directed by the spirit of God in every act of their ministry: there was no need for them to endorse every utterance by repeating that it was the Lord speaking. To carry out their mission all they had to do was to make it known that Jesus Christ had sent them to proclaim the truths of the Gospel, and that when entrusting them, in his Father's name, with this mission, he had specifically said: *it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you* (Matthew 10:20).

Admittedly St Paul is referring to himself in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, where he uses the expression *κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην according to my opinion*; but in the same breath he also says: *δοκῶ δὲ καὶ γὰρ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἔχειν And I think I too have the spirit of God*. Where Spinoza errs is in thinking that a man cannot use his brains and be led by the Spirit of God at the same time, which is like saying that when a man becomes a spokesman of God, he ceases to be a man, being no more, if I may venture to use the expression, than a purely passive instrument. Nor is it true that the apostles never stated, when setting out to write, that God was speaking through them: the introduction to the letter they sent to their brethren in Antioch contains the words *it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us* (Acts 15:28), so that their brethren would know that the instructions came from God, and that they themselves were only his spokesmen.

Other statements by St Paul, adduced by Spinoza as evidence that the apostle wrote on his own initiative without guidance from the Spirit of God, can easily be accounted for in terms of the principles presented above. Invariably the man assumes that inspiration totally excludes the use of reason: this is quite wrong. He says that because the apostles discuss everything, they give the impression of arguing rather than prophesying.³ But in addition to his having a false notion of prophetic inspiration, what he says can be refuted simply by citing the instance, already quoted, of the apostles having met for discussion and deliberation, where they unhesitatingly used the words *it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us* when expressing their decision—clear evidence that the Spirit of God, whilst providing guidance in their meeting, did not restrain them from participating in active discussion. Inspiration and argument are inter-dependent: neither excludes the other.

³ Ibid.

For Spinoza, prophets are more like visionaries, driven not by any prophetic spirit, but by a spirit of madness. A prophet, he claims, is banned from having recourse to reason, since basing one's teaching on reasoned arguments leaves one open to objections raised by other people.⁴ But a careful reading of the books of Moses, whom Spinoza includes among the Prophets, will reveal that this legislator sometimes did rely on reason. Reliance on rationalism alone does admittedly leave one open to criticism: but this cannot apply to anyone who argues, as did Moses and the other Prophets, under the guidance of the Spirit of God. Spinoza himself gives an example of this (Deuteronomy 31:27): *While I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death?* No one denies that these words of Moses are, in every sense, rational; and if the Prophets' hearers raised objections to the reasoned arguments through which the former conveyed the will of God to them, this was no reflection on their prophetic spirit.

Spinoza, however, whose entire disquisition relies on the premise of a wrong conception of prophecy, holds that Moses was here simply using a moralistic tone, in the style of an orator, and in the most graphic manner he could devise, to foretell the Israelites' coming revolt.⁵ But whether Moses spoke in an oratorical manner, or any other manner, is immaterial: the fact remains that here—as in various other instances where he expressed himself in the same way as anyone else—he made a reasoned statement. There was no need for all his thinking and exhortations to be dictated to him by God; it sufficed for God to guide Moses with his Spirit, saving him from falling into error. If this be conceded, it may unhesitatingly be taken for granted that, as Spinoza says—and as has already been shown elsewhere—Moses made various other statements that did not derive from any revelation.

In fact he is obliged to admit the possibility that revelation was the source of what the Prophets said, and hence that prophecy and revelation are not incompatible.⁶ It is therefore possible that the apostles used reasoned statements to convey the truths they proclaimed to the nations, whilst being at the same time inspired by the Spirit of God. Nonetheless he goes on to say that what the Prophets knew through revelation resembles inherent knowledge in proportion to the extent to which they used reasoned statements;

⁴ Ibid. (section 2).

⁵ Ibid., 414 (section 3).

⁶ Ibid.

and that the characteristic of their supernatural awareness was the way they came out with aphorisms and commands that were not dependent on reason. What made Moses the greatest of the Prophets, says Spinoza, was that he never resorted to formal argument, whereas St Paul does so constantly, making deductions from suppositions, as evidenced by the Epistle to the Romans, all of which leads Spinoza to believe that the apostle's letters were not the result of supernatural revelation.

The man repeatedly fails to distinguish between prophecy and delirium. Whilst the lawgiver Moses made pronouncements and proclaimed commands in God's name, he nonetheless used reasoned argument elsewhere, and if he did so less frequently than St Paul, it was because he was writing history, wherein arguments were not required, whilst St Paul wrote as a teacher of nations, drawing conclusions from established premises. This is not to say that his method relied solely on reason: his reasoning was open to supernatural enlightenment, and guidance by the Spirit of God. If this be accepted, whatever the arguments put forward by Spinoza to show that, on the whole, what St Paul said is no more than admonition and moral exhortation, none of the arguments nullifies the notion of apostolic inspiration, as expounded in the two preceding chapters as well as by the Louvain Jesuits. It has been demonstrated that it was not necessary for St Paul and the other apostles to have all their moral discourses dictated to them by God, who in order for them to convert the nations, left them to use their own innate awareness, and every resource their reason could provide for them.

This same approach will serve to refute all the other arguments put forward by Spinoza, since invariably what he says is based on a false conception of how the New Testament writers were inspired, the authentic explanation of which can in no way be invalidated by any of his arguments, even though it is actually possible to find oneself in agreement with much of what he contends. As I have already written at some length on this matter in my two *Responses to the Views of Holland Theologians*,⁷ there is no need for me to

⁷ R. Simon, *Réponse au livre intitulé "Sentimens de quelques théologiens de Hollande sur l'Histoire critique du Vieux Testament," par le prieur de Bolleville [Richard Simon]. Outre les réponses aux théologiens de Hollande, on trouvera dans cet ouvrage de nouvelles preuves et de nouveaux éclaircissemens pour servir de supplément à cette "Histoire critique"* (Rotterdam: Leers, 1686) [BnF A-3500]: Simon's reply to Leclerc's book of 1685 disparaging Simon's *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (see *supra*, ch. 23 n. 7).

R. Simon, *De l'Inspiration des livres sacrés, avec une Réponse au livre intitulé: "Défense des sentimens de quelques théologiens de Hollande sur l'Histoire critique du Vieux Testament," par le prieur de Bolleville* (Rotterdam: Leers, 1687) [BnF A-3501]: the *Réponse* [BnF A-3501 2^e pièce] is Simon's reply to Leclerc's rejoinder (1686) to the preceding title (see *supra*, ch. 4 n. 2).

repeat here what I had to say in both those works. All that the said theologians did, in order to denounce the inspiration of Holy Scripture, was to expand on the arguments put forward by Spinoza, who overelaborated the matter on the basis of his particular misconceptions and preoccupations. Had he read the works by Catholic scholars who have discussed the matter with discernment, he would have seen straightaway that most of his arguments are invalidated by facts which no one disputes, and are therefore worthless. Thus in order properly to demolish his mistakes and avoid giving them credence when refuting him, it is vital not to take him to task wrongly, on points that are in fact valid, even though he does use these as a starting point for deductions that are distended, or wrong.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

THE EVANGELISTS' AND APOSTLES' STYLES. VIEWS HELD ON THIS SUBJECT BY MODERN WRITERS AND EARLY CHURCH SCHOLARS, FOLLOWED BY CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

The last hundred years have seen the appearance of several books about the Evangelists' and apostles' written style. Stephanus' discusses it in the preface to his Greek New Testament,² which also contains some examples from a promised book wholly devoted to the subject, intended to show that the sacred authors had a considerably more polished style than some scholars have thought. Loath to see their written Greek dismissed as unrefined and barbaric, in some passages of his preface Stephanus expresses admiration for the authors' stylistic elegance. He is notably protective of St Paul, believing he had a thorough knowledge of Greek writers, including poets, whose diction Stephanus claims he occasionally imitates, and concluding from this that it was inconceivable that the holy apostle was not a master of the Greek language.³

We also have a dissertation by Sebastian Pfochen entitled *Purity of the Greek Language in the New Testament*, wherein the author spares no effort to show that the latter is written in proper Greek, in a style not entirely alien to that of secular writers.⁴ All the Hebraisms supposedly present in the writings of the apostles, he refutes: and in order to reinforce their unrelatedness to the Greek expressions to which they purportedly correspond, he shows the legitimacy of those Greek expressions by citing comparable examples taken from secular authors.⁵

¹ Here, and later in the chapter, R. Simon mistakenly refers to Henri, the eldest son of Robert Estienne (Robertus Stephanus).

² R. Estienne, *Novum Jesu Christi D.N. Testamentum ex bibliotheca regia* (Paris 1550: see *supra*, ch. 17 n. 16 of the present work).

³ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴ S. Pfochen, *Diatribes de linguae graecae Novi Testamenti puritate ...* (Amsterdam: Janson, 1629 [BnF X- 6625]), 12.

⁵ Pfochen claims, for instance (*Diatribes*, 21), that the Greek phrase ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν in Matthew 2:18, rendering כִּי אֲנִי from Jeremiah 31:15 (38:15 in Septuagint), literally "for [her sons] are not," i.e. they have gone, is not merely the literal Greek equivalent of a purely Hebrew idiom,

Some learned critics, however, deny the apostles any purity and elegance of style, unhesitatingly presenting them as barbarous authors of works riddled with innumerable Hebraisms. Castellio,⁶ who was sufficiently versed in Hebrew and Greek to pass judgment in this case, says that the apostles, being Hebrews by birth, used Hebrew expressions in their writings independently of the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit of God dislikes Hebraisms as much as Graecisms.⁷ He claims that the Spirit dictated the content, not the words, leaving the apostles free to express themselves in their own way, a view not dissimilar to that held by the Louvain Jesuits.

Hebraisms, Castellio further says, simply muddy what the apostles have to say, making it unclear. To explain why they did not acquire a proper mastery of Greek which, with its abundant vocabulary, lends itself to clarity, Castellio says that because they were accustomed to reading the Hebrew Scriptures, and insufficiently fluent in Greek, as can be easily shown from what they wrote, they readily lapsed into the idiom of their mother tongue⁸ (as evidence for this, he asserts that the French and Germans are incapable of writing Latin without Gallicisms and Germanisms). This latter view, which has met with the support of highly able scholars, is closer to the views held by the early Church writers. I think we are bound to accept what the Greek Fathers say, since it provides reliable testimony to the Evangelists' and apostles' Greek style.

In this regard, greatest attention must be paid to the opinions of Origen who, of all the Greek Fathers, was the most accurate and probing textual critic. Taking up the challenge from the enemies of our religion, who belittled the Prophets and apostles because of the way they wrote and because they claimed that the same ideas had been far better conveyed by ancient philosophers, Origen replies that this was no reason for disdaining Jewish

as is clearly shown by the occurrence of the same expression elsewhere in the Septuagint, and in Euripides: in Genesis 37:30, אִינוּ הַיֵּלֶד אִינוּ is rendered in the Septuagint by τὸ παιδάριον οὐκ ἔστιν (literally "the boy is not," i.e. he has gone); also χαιρετ' οὐκέτ' εἶμι' ἐγὼ Farewell: I am no more (Euripides, *Hippolytus* line 357).

⁶ Sébastien Châteillon called Castellio (see *supra*, ch. 2 n. 13). Castellio's defence of his own translations of the Bible (*Defensio suarum translationum Bibliorum et maxime Novi Fœderis*) is to be found on 423–506 of the following: S. Castellio, *Biblia sacra ex Sebastiani Castellionis interpretatione, ejusque postrema recognitione. Cum annotationibus ejusdem, et historiae supplemento ab Esdra ad Machabaeos, et inde usque ad Christum, ex Josepho. Accessere in nova hac editione ejusdem delineatio reipublicae Judaicae ex Josepho, nota prolixior in caput IX. Epistolae ad Romanos, nec non Defensio versionis Novi Foederis contra Th. Bezam* (In-2°, Frankfurt: Fritsch, 1697 [BnF A-245]).

⁷ Castellio, *Biblia sacra*, 427.

⁸ *Ibid.*

and Christian books, since it was an indisputable fact that the Jews wrote before the Greeks.⁹ As writers the latter, he concedes, are altogether more stylish: but he also points out that this does not mean that their writings as such are superior to those of the Jews and Christians. Indeed, he observes, there is a richness in the use of the Hebraic language in the books of the Old Testament. Although he does not say the same of the works by the apostles, their priority was eloquent utterance of content rather than diction, even if there in fact is a lack of refinement in the way they write.

The Jewish Prophets and the disciples of Jesus, Origen says, were not concerned with stylistic elegance, or anything resembling what the Bible calls human or “fleshly” wisdom.¹⁰ A Greek intending to preach a doctrine that would be meaningful to an Egyptian or a Syrian would sooner have learned their barbaric tongues, says the learned Father, than attempt to convey anything significant in Greek. The same applies, says Origen, to those singled out by Divine Providence, who were salt of the earth individuals, not learned Greeks. Eloquence was useless for winning over common folk: it was essential to speak the same language as they did, using their basic idiom.

All this is fundamental for a proper understanding of how the apostles and Evangelists expressed themselves, despite the preconception of some Protestants who balk at the idea of the apostles saying anything too simplistic in case it detracted from scriptural authority. To the Corinthians, who were contemptuous of the way he spoke, St Paul himself makes it clear that he had not come to tell them the Good News of Jesus Christ by means of high-flown eloquent discourse or worldly erudition.¹¹ I have avoided formal language, says the apostle, *lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect*.¹² Of this passage from St Paul, St John Chrysostom observes that though the apostles may not have used the language of luminaries in their preaching, it was not because they were insufficiently gifted in language, but to avoid detracting in any way from the Gospel message.¹³ Even though Apollos, he continues, was an eloquent man, he was not sent to Corinth¹⁴ for that reason, but because being “mighty” in the Scriptures, he convincingly silenced the Jews.¹⁵

⁹ Origen, *Against Celsus* 7.4, 7, 18 (4:20–22, 30–32, 52–58).

¹⁰ Σοφία σαρκική (2 Corinthians 1:12). Origen, *Against Celsus* 7.60 (4.153–155).

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 2:1.

¹² 1 Corinthians 1:17.

¹³ John Chrysostom, Homily III ch. 3 on 1 Corinthians (PG 61:26–27).

¹⁴ Acts 18:24, 19:1; 1 Corinthians 16:12.

¹⁵ John Chrysostom, Homily III ch. 4 on 1 Corinthians (PG 61:27).

Here St Chrysostom is at pains to demonstrate how unrefined the apostles were in expressing themselves, and how unskilled they were in Greek. If the disciples of Jesus Christ are disparaged by the Greeks for untutored expression and a lack of literary merit, we should, he says, endorse and indeed lend added support to their criticisms. He even takes to task those of his contemporaries who sought to represent St Paul as learned and eloquent. Alluding in this regard to one contemporary argument between a Greek and a Christian, he describes as ludicrous the latter's assertion that St Paul knew Greek perfectly well. The whole argument arose from a comparison of St Paul and Plato, in which the Greek attempted to show that St Paul was illiterate, while the Christian, in his simple way, sought to demonstrate that St Paul was more learned and eloquent than Plato.¹⁶ Chrysostom indicates that in this instance the Greek was saying what the Christian should have been saying, whereas what the Christian had to say would have been better coming from the Greek.

Thus there is nothing new about Christians contending that the apostles wrote flawless Greek. Had Stephanus, Pfochen, and others like them been alive at the time of St Chrysostom, they too would have been thought wrong-headed by him: he would have told them, as he did his contemporaries: To save yourself from this, and to avoid being mocked by the Greeks in this dispute, go ahead: criticise the apostles for being devoid of literary skill, since this is all to their credit.¹⁷ The value of the Gospel does not lie in any knowledge or eloquence on the part of the apostles, but in the power of the word of God. Muslims admire the grandeur and majesty of their Koran. But Christians, convinced of the truth of their religion, which was preached by unimportant and uneducated men, discern only simplicity, and even commonness in most books of the New Testament. To speak of the disciples in this way, St Chrysostom adds, is not derogatory; rather it is commendatory, since, such as they were, they acquired worldwide renown.¹⁸

Origen, therefore, and other later Church Fathers, do not scruple to offer examples of the apostles' rough and basic style, or even to adduce solecisms. Whereas, he says, the apostles knew all there was to know about religion, they were in no doubt as to their unschooled and limited literacy, and readily recognised the poor quality of their writing and their poverty of expression. More than once Origen observes that what St Paul says is often

¹⁶ Ibid. (PG 61:27).

¹⁷ Ibid. (PG 61:27–28).

¹⁸ Ibid. (PG 61:28).

unclear because his style is cluttered and encumbered with syntactic hyperbaton and even with nonexistent word-forms. St Irenaeus too comments on St Paul's hyperbaton which he ascribes to the apostles' brusqueness and impetuosity. It would be an endless task—had I wished to undertake it—to enumerate every Greek writer's comments about the Evangelists' and the apostles' rough and basic style; they do not even spare St Luke, even though it is generally thought he had a more thorough knowledge of Greek than the other New Testament writers.

In their prefaces to St John, the Greek scholiasts, following St Chrysostom, record that he was the son of a poor fisherman from a wretched village in Galilee called Bethsaida and, being a vulgar and uncultivated fisherman himself, could neither read nor write, being completely ignorant of what worldly people call literature.¹⁹ Such is the tenor of what Cardinal Toledo says about St John's style of writing, in the synopsis preceding his thoughtful commentary on that Evangelist's gospel. In order to understand this gospel which, he says, is riddled with Hebraisms, a knowledge of Hebrew as well as Greek is mandatory. He urges especial consideration of causal, inferential, subordinative, and other particles, which are vitally significant throughout the text since the meaning of some parts of the texts is entirely dependent on them.²⁰

Enyedi, the subtle Unitarian, also has much to say about this Evangelist's style, which he admits is very obscure and difficult to comprehend. "If, he says, stylistic grandeur consists of unclear, disjointed, and elliptical forms of expression, weighed down with allegory, I admit that, in that sense, St John's style is sublime: nor does he record any pronouncements by Jesus that are not either allegorical or incomprehensible."²¹ He stresses the obscurity of the gospel's opening which, he says, is made up entirely of figurative language and out-of-the-way expressions. Nor, continues the Unitarian, is there a single word or phrase that is not susceptible of different, or even contradictory interpretations.²² Be this as it may, I admire the obstinacy with which, on the sole basis of texts which they themselves acknowledge as obscure

¹⁹ The source from which R. Simon here quotes is given as a manuscript (unspecified) in the Library of Colbert.

²⁰ Francisco de Toledo (1532–1596), *In sacrosanctum Joannis Evangelium commentarii ...* (Rome: Vatican, 1590 [vol. 2 is dated 1589]) [BnF A-4372], [viii] (unpaginated).

²¹ G. Enyedi (see *supra*, ch. 16 n. 38 of the present work: Hungarian, from Cluj, in present-day Romania), *Explicationes locorum Veteris et Novi Testamenti ...*, 136 (the subject of 132–149 is the "obscurity" of ch. 1 of the Gospel of John).

²² *Ibid.*, 137–138.

and unintelligible, the Protestants and Unitarians confidently oppose what is commonly believed by churches all over the world. Admittedly not all Protestants agree that the Scriptures are enigmatic, especially in key passages; the Unitarians do seem to have greater integrity in this regard, since they refrain from denying what is a plainly obvious fact, merely seeking to delimit the number of basic tenets in what we believe.

Studying the Greek of non-biblical authors is not sufficient, since the New Testament writers have an awkwardness of style requiring particular perseverance. In the preface to his edition of Euthymius's gospel commentaries, Henten rightly notes that the apostles and the Evangelists, all Jewish by birth, were influenced by the innate character of the Hebrew language in which, among various particularities, a verbal tense other than the one expected frequently occurs. This Hebraic style, he continues, was imitated not only by St Matthew but by the other Evangelists also.²³ To become familiar with this style, it is useful to read the Greek Septuagint, which the apostles imitated. It is essential also to study the individual style of all the New Testament books, since although they are all written in an idiom which I have elsewhere termed "synagogical,"²⁴ each writer is idiosyncratic in his own way.

Most elusive of them all is St Paul, who sometimes reaches the culmination of his thought before completing his sentence: hence the frequency of hyperbaton and transposition in his Epistles. For this reason Jean de Gaigny, who wrote learned and judicious scholia on these texts, says that reading St Paul is a *lectionem turbulentam et salebrosam* "confused and rugged" process.²⁵ So convinced is he that clumsiness of style obscures the meaning that he considers it virtually impossible to interpret the Epistles unless one can enter into St Paul's frame of mind. Though the Protestants' cast of mind is totally alien to that of the Holy apostle, he admires the impudence and impertinence they display in boasting of their ability to comprehend the Epistles relying solely on their own intelligence.²⁶ "I shall have reason to be

²³ Euthymius Zigabenus [early 12th cent. Byzantine theologian], *Commentaria in ... quatuor Christi evangelia ex Chrysostomi aliorumque veterum scriptis magna ex parte collecta* ... tr. Jan Henten (Louvain 1544) [BnF A-1156], v^v; PG 129:44.

²⁴ See R. Simon, *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (Rotterdam: Leers, 1685), bk. II ch. I: "Des versions de la Bible en general," 182.

²⁵ Jean de Gaigny (?–1549), *Brevissima et facillima in omnes D. Pauli Epistolas scholia, ultra priores editiones, ex antiquissimis graecorum authoribus, abundè locupletata. Itidem in septem Canonicas epistolas and D. Joannis Apocalypsin, brevissima scholia recens edita* ... (Paris: Gaultherot, 1547) [BnF A-8872], [1] (unpaginated).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, [3–4].

proud of myself," affirms the theologian, "if in some way I clarify the obscurity of expression which, according to more than one scholar, St Paul deliberately affected."²⁷ In effect St Paul was following the workings of his own mind, which presented him with several thoughts at the same time, which is why so often he expresses only part of an idea, and fails to deal with the counter-arguments he himself raises to the points he makes.

I am aware that in his books on Christian doctrine St Augustine devotes a chapter specifically to demonstrating that there is a genuine eloquence to be found in the Scriptures, most notably in St Paul, in whose writings he discerns flawless wisdom compellingly expressed²⁸ (though of necessity the views of the Greek Fathers must carry more weight in this regard, since St Augustine did not know Greek). St Augustine is here concerned with content rather than expression, a kind of expressive forcefulness which he calls wisdom. Now St Augustine may well have perceived certain figures of speech in St Paul's style: but if this suffices to show that St Paul was endowed with eloquence, then on this basis there is hardly any writer who could not make the same claim. Granted, the apostle does express himself forcefully, his thought is elevated, and his religious knowledge is impeccable: but all this does not equate to "eloquence," in the common use of the word. Criticised by the Corinthians as unrefined, he himself admits that he is lacking in elegance, being totally unschooled in the arts of speech.²⁹

St Augustine breezily asserts that rather than his own personal humility, the source of St Paul's admission was an acceptance of inability to express his deep and secret thoughts. Born a Jew, and a pupil of Gamaliel, the apostle was at a loss, states St Augustine, when attempting to express what was in his mind, even though he had studied Greek since childhood in Tarsus, Cilicia. Following Origen, and adducing examples that I shall not examine here, he claims St Paul had ways of expressing himself that were characteristic of his native Cilicia, which was to be expected given that Vergil, despite a perfect command of Latin, nonetheless used certain turns of phrase that were typical of his native Gaul.³⁰

Nor, in his offhand discussion of St Paul's style, does St Augustine present anything not already to be found in earlier Church writers, and which his contemporary St Jean Chrysostom would have discussed in more detail in

²⁷ Ibid., [5].

²⁸ Augustine, *On the Christian Doctrine* bk. 4 ch. 7 §14 (PL 34:96).

²⁹ 1 Corinthians 2:1 (also 1:17, 2:4).

³⁰ Jerome, Epistle 121 [to Algaria] (PL 22:1029).

the eloquent homilies he delivered in public. Dissenting from the views of St Chrysostom and the most learned ancient scholars, St Augustine for his part thought it was his duty to vindicate St Paul in order to refute certain of his contemporaries who held the apostle in disdain on the grounds that his utterances revealed a lack of eloquence.³¹

Yet even though Origen speaks unashamedly of St Paul's solecisms, judiciously he observes that being designated by God for a New Testament ministry, in his preaching the holy apostle made known the worth and excellence of the Gospel, not the sapience of human beings, so that the peoples' conversion would be seen as coming from the power of God, and not from worldly wisdom.³² St Paul and the other apostles have no need of apologists to protect them against disparaging remarks about the way they wrote: for the preaching of the gospel, God's desire was to make use of simple unlettered fishermen, not orators.

In any case, apart from anything else, it is perfectly possible to show that most words used by St Paul and the other New Testament writers in fact were in fact proper Greek, even if they did not always use standard idioms or turns of phrase; nor is this anything out of the ordinary, since every nation has its own particular ways of expressing ideas, and one can easily tell that even though proper Greek or Latin words are used to express these ideas, the actual modes of expression are not standard Greek or Latin. One has only to glance, for instance, at the Greek version of the Psalms and the Old Latin translation based on the Greek, in order to perceive this or that which does not pertain to the genius of Greek and Latin, even though proper Greek or Latin vocabulary is used throughout. This explains why some Greek Fathers, who were thoroughly versed in their mother tongue, occasionally do not comprehend the Greek of the Septuagint.

Be it noted also that if the early Church writers had been as familiar with Hebrew as with Greek, they would not have found scriptural expression to be as barbarous as some have held. I am astonished that St Jerome, who pos-

³¹ Augustine, *ibid.*

³² *The Philocalia of Origen* ch. 4 § 2 (ed. J. Armitage Robinson [Cambridge: C.U.P., 1893], 42); Origen, *Philocalia* 4.2 (Origène, *Philocalie* 1–20 *sur les Ecritures*, tr. and ed. Marguerite Harl [and *Lettre à Africanus* ...], Paris: Cerf, 1983, 272). Origen further intimates that "poverty of style" here actually prevents readers from being sidetracked by ornamental writing to the detriment of the evangelical message. The *Philocalia* is a compilation (ca. 360?) of selected passages from the writings of Origen (ca. 185–ca. 254), traditionally ascribed to Basil of Caesarea and Gregory Nazianzen, and evidently intended to preserve the thought of the Alexandrian theologian, many of whose standpoints were encountering determined opposition.

sessed a mastery of both tongues, did not take the opportunity of explaining the writers' apparently strange uses of words and expressions, instead of accusing them of solecisms and barbarisms, in this presumably following Origen, whom he often copies. In point of fact, at times he does express admiration for St Paul's greatness of mind, conceding that the holy apostle had in fact diligently read secular authors, whom he sometimes quotes. Yet, when all is said and done, it was not St Augustine's wish for eloquence of discourse to be sought out within the writings of the apostles, since Jesus Christ did not choose orators and philosophers as the constituent members of his Church, but men who came from the dregs of society.³³

³³ Jerome, Commentary on Galatians 3 (PL 26:400D).

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

THE HELLENISTIC LANGUAGE:
IS THERE SUCH A THING?
MOST DISAGREEMENTS ON THE
MATTER ARE PURELY NOMINAL.
THE ARGUMENTS ADDUCED BY CLAUDE
SAUMAISE TO DISPROVE THE EXISTENCE OF THIS
LANGUAGE SERVE RATHER TO SUBSTANTIATE IT.
THE GREEK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CAN BE
DESCRIBED AS “SYNAGOGICAL” GREEK.
THE HELLENISTIC JEWS, LIKE ALL OTHER JEWS,
USED THE HEBREW BIBLE IN THEIR CONGREGATIONS

Certain passages from the Acts of the Apostles¹ are customarily adduced as proof that, at the rise of Christianity, the Jews were divided into two groups, one called simply “Hebrews,” the other “Greeks.”² The Jews remaining in the area of Babylon from the time of the first dispersion, who spoke the language in use beyond the Euphrates, continued to call themselves Hebrews: their language, although Chaldaic, can thus be termed “Hebraic.” Those who inhabited Palestine after captivity in Babylon also considered themselves Hebrews, having retained the Chaldaic language—which they called “Hebrew”—they had brought back from Babylon. In their services they read from the Hebrew text of the Law and the Prophets, which they expanded with glosses in their vernacular Chaldaic.

“Greeks” was the name given to the Jews from Alexandria and several other places where Greek was the language spoken. In their services, these Jews used the Greek Septuagint, with which they supplemented the Hebrew text to facilitate interpretation. They were referred to as “Hellenistics,” or Greeks, because of the language they spoke, and because they were accustomed to reading books written solely in Greek. Retaining nonetheless a special respect for the original Hebrew Bible, they continued, like the other

¹ Acts 6:1 refers to “Hellenistic Jews” and “native Jews”: see also Acts 17:4, 12; 18:4, 19:10, 17; 20:21, 21:28.

² The term “Ἕλληνες (“Greeks”) also designated non-Jews generally, Gentiles, and pagans.

Jews, to read from the Hebrew text in their synagogues, as is still the practice in synagogues all over the world. Spanish Jews, for example, who use the Spanish order of service, as do the Tudesque or German Jews, and in short all Jews, whatever their nationality, use the original text of Holy Scripture in their services (they are called Spanish or German only because of their vernacular tongues).

The same was true in early times of the Hellenistics, or Jews who spoke Greek, or the language we today call “Hellenistic,”³ in which most of their books were written. Whilst its vocabulary is Greek, the turn of phrase is Hebraic or Chaldaic, as is still to be found in the Spanish Jews’ translations of the Bible, which use a particular form of Spanish which is difficult to comprehend without a knowledge of Hebrew. This applies also to their other Bible translations, in any language: not only do they invariably include Hebrew or semi-Hebrew words, but their own special way of expressing themselves in the vernacular has specific links with the Hebraic language. It was in this form of Greek that the Septuagint was composed, as were the books of the New Testament, the language being termed “Hellenistic” because it was used by Greek-speaking Jews, those in fact who are referred to as “Greeks” in the Acts of the Apostles.

Isaak Voss,⁴ accustomed as he is to putting forward paradoxes for which he has no solid basis, claims that “Hellenists” was the name given to Jews who followed the Greek factions, as in the word ἑλληνίζειν in the same way that ῥωμαϊζειν and περσίζειν mean following the Roman or Persian faction. In this way he frequently brings to bear his incomparable judgment, on the basis of notions that are no more than grammatical, without stopping to think whether such notions are relevant to the matters to which he applies them. Moreover even if the grammatical sense of the word ἑλληνίζειν were the sole criterion, in secular as well as Church writers, it unquestionably means “to speak Greek,” and in particular to use the language in its standard or classical form. Isaak Voss contends that the Jews referred to as “Hebrews” were those who, through over-zealous regard for their Law, resisted Greek or Roman domination, refusing to condone their nation’s paying tribute to foreigners, whereas those who willingly paid up, he holds, were called “Hellenistics.”

All this however is the stuff of pure fiction, flying directly in the face of the reference to Hebrews and Greeks in Acts 6:1, which speaks of Hellenists

³ I.e. Greek mingled with Hebraisms.

⁴ 1618–1689: see *supra*, particularly ch. 6.

and Hebrews. For St Chrysostom, Theodoret, Oecumenius, and several other Fathers, “Hellenistics” were Jews whose native tongue was Greek; whereas other Jews spoke Chaldaic or Babylonian. On this point Oecumenius states that St Luke called the former Greeks or Hellenistics, not because of their religion, but because they spoke Greek;⁵ they were Jews, just as were those of the latter group, but because the former no longer spoke the Hebraic or Chaldaic tongues, they were commonly not so called. Since their return from Babylon, the Hebraic language had been part of the life of Palestinian Jews, who considered themselves superior to other Jews, dispersed throughout different countries of the Roman Empire, where their language was Greek.

In our own time the ablest scholars reaffirm the existence of the Hellenistic tongue, drawing on it frequently to explain various passages in the New Testament. However Claude Saumaise, and Jean de Croÿ as well, lose no opportunity to decry this language which they say no ancient nation knew of, and which, they continue, is idle fancy as it has no basis in any early Greek dialect. Saumaise has written two books specifically on this matter, the first entitled *Commentary on the Hellenistic language*, the second *The Hellenistic Tongue Disproved*.⁶ In all fairness, in both he does display great learning; yet, so far from discrediting the “Hellenistic” tongue, as he claims to do, in more than one instance he actually corroborates it.

Advocates of the Hellenistic tongue have never held that there once existed a Greek dialect of this name: hence all of Saumaise’s lengthy discussions relating to the various Greek dialects, and accounting for most of the contents of both his books, are quite irrelevant. Since moreover I have no wish to quibble about the meanings of words, I agree with him that the word “Hellenistic” in fact does mean “Greek,” and that those who do not speak standard Greek should be described as “non-Hellenistics” rather than Hellenistics. Indeed when formally banning Christians from studying Greek, the Julian the Apostate used the word ἑλληνίζειν which, consequently, means “to speak standard Greek.” Hence when lampooning this Emperor, his former fellow-student St Gregory of Nazianzus calls him φιλέλλην καὶ φιλόλογε

⁵ Oecumenius (bishop of Tricca in Thessaly, 10th century), *Commentary on Acts 6:1–2* (PG 118:124).

⁶ Claude Saumaise, *De Hellenistica Commentarius, controversiam de lingua Hellenistica decidens et plenissime pertractans originem et dialectos graecae linguae* (Leiden: Elsevir, 1643, in-16°) [Mazarine 20340]; *De Hellenistica Commentarius Funus linguae Hellenisticae, sive confutatio exercitationis de Hellenistis et lingua Hellenistica* (Leiden: Maire, 1643, in-16°) [BnF X-7203].

“discursive lover of Greece,”⁷ having also said: “The author of this law forbids us to speak the language of Attica, but has failed to stop us speaking the truth.”⁸

In that sense, strictly speaking the only true Hellenistics are those with a proper mastery of Greek, which is contrary to what is meant by the language known as “Hellenistic,” and which I should prefer to call “synagogical Greek,” since it originated in the synagogues of the Jews. Now those who call the language “Hellenistic” do so solely on the authority of what the Acts of the Apostles say about the so-called “Greek Jews,” and not on the basis of the usual acceptance of the word. Saumaise also concedes there are numerous Hebraic expressions in the Septuagint and in the writings by the apostles: he merely refuses to accept that the language in which these are written should be called “Hellenistic” since, if it were, the same word should apply to the language of the Old Latin Bible, on the grounds that this too contains Hebraisms. However, in order to be described as “Hellenistic,” it would have had to be written in Greek. The language of the Septuagint and the New Testament is not called “Hellenistic” simply because it contains Hebraisms, but because it is Greek interspersed with Hebraisms.

People can call the language by whatever name they wish, provided there is general acknowledgment of the phenomenon in itself: there is no need to argue about terminology when there is substantial agreement. So then, in his two books Saumaise premises certain principles plainly substantiating the language which some sixteenth-century scholars termed “Hellenistic.” He asserts for instance that the Septuagint translators, masters of the Greek language, could have produced a “more Greek-ish” version, unhampered by so many Hebraisms and barbarisms. The Hebraisms, he contends, are the result of the translators being overly concerned to provide a literal rendering of Hebrew words, and convey the vigour they contain in the original. According to this hypothesis, the Septuagint is not written in proper Greek, but a Greek interspersed with Hebraisms, in which Greek words are actually assigned new meanings, the better to express the sense of the original—all of which in fact corresponds to what is known as the “Hellenistic” language, and Saumaise, without realising it, thus emerges as a great “Hellenisticarian.”

He goes on to say that the Septuagint translators did not derive the Hebraic turns of phrase in their version from the rich resources of Greek,

⁷ St Gregory of Nazianzus (329–389), *Oration 1* (Against Julian) §105 (PG 35:640).

⁸ *Ibid.*, §5 (PG 35:536).

but from the Hebrew text, which they followed too slavishly. With this statement, Saumaise has gone out of his way to endorse the existence of synagogical—otherwise known as “Hellenistic”—Greek. The actual term or terms used to designate this language are not important, provided there is agreement on what the language is. He concedes there has always been agreement that the vocabulary of the Septuagint is Greek, whilst the idiom is Hebraic:⁹ but if this be agreed, why write two fairly weighty tomes with the sole purpose of arguing about the name by which the language should be known? His overriding concern is to prove that in Greek there was never any such thing as a “Hellenistic” dialect.¹⁰ Granted; just so: it is for this very reason that I have elsewhere¹¹ referred to the language of the Greek Jews as “synagogical”; and by the same token, it is possible in our own time to distinguish between the “synagogical” language of the Spanish Jews’ Bible, and standard Spanish. The same process gave rise to “synagogical” Arabic, “synagogical” koine Greek, and “synagogical” Persian. In short, using the vernacular in use wherever they were, the Jews used a “synagogical” idiom in their Bible translations and prayer books. If this be not borne in mind when reading the Septuagint and the New Testament, it is impossible to attain a proper awareness of the style in which they are written, which is not a standard Greek idiom: this is admitted even by Saumaise, along with those he dismisses as “Hellenisticarians.”

In light of this, I fail to see the purpose of most of the questions discussed in Saumaise’s commentary on the Hellenistic language. What is the point, for instance, of so fastidiously examining whether the language of the Septuagint translators represents a particular dialect, or whether the Greeks had more than five dialects, whether these included those that are termed “Hellenistic,” or whether this term is appropriate to designate a style consisting of Greek words and Hebrew ideas? This approach enabled him easily to produce weighty tomes, since therein he hardly discusses the specific subject matter at all. Having looked at each of the Greek dialects, he concludes that since it was not the language of any one nation in particular, and was devoid of any special characteristics distinguishing it from the other dialects, strictly speaking “Hellenistic” Greek is manifestly not a dialect.¹²

⁹ C. Saumaise, *De Hellenistica Commentarius ...*, 33–34 (dedicatory letter).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹¹ See *supra*, ch. 26 n. 24.

¹² *Ibid.*, 84.

But his brief was not to prove this particular point, since it has already been agreed that, as he says, what certain learned scholars have defined as the “Hellenistic language” does not correspond to any ancient Greek dialect. They simply assert that because this language is so permeated with Hebraisms, it is not unalloyed Greek: Hellenistic, they submit, is a language composed of Greek words and Hebraic forms of expression. The real point at issue therefore is to ascertain whether the Septuagint and the books of the New Testament are written in this way. As Saumaise himself agrees that they are, it follows that their authors have a particular language in common, deriving not from any Greek dialect, nor any specific nation, but from Jewish or Hellenistic synagogues. Today, on the same principle, in order to find out in what language Bibles were printed in Ferrara or Constantinople, I would ascertain what customary procedures were in the synagogues, not try to identify a particular Hispanic nation who spoke a particular language. From attending the Greek Jews’ synagogues, and from reading the Septuagint they used, the apostles became accustomed to using their words and expressions: since they themselves were Jewish by birth, and Chaldaic was their mother tongue, they could hardly avoid interspersing Hebraic and Chaldaic expressions when writing in Greek.

Jean de Croÿ, holding the same views as Saumaise on the matter, like Saumaise also substantiates the Hellenistic language whilst claiming to disprove its existence. He first notes several irrelevant items; then, in order to refute Heinsius,¹³ an advocate of the “Hellenisticarian” camp, he affirms that the Evangelists and apostles were not “Hellenistic,” on the grounds that, not knowing proper Greek, they “Hebraise,” using Hebraic, Chaldaic, or Syriac expressions. By his statements he evinces proof that there was a “Hellenistic” language, consisting of Greek words, and Hebrew or Chaldaic expressions. He challenges Heinsius to show how he can reconcile two mutually exclusive possibilities: that St Paul and other New Testament authors could be “Hellenistics” whilst using Hebraic expressions. Arbitration is simple:

¹³ Greek-speaking Jews living in Greek communities (notably in Alexandria) were formerly called Hellenists. Their language, mingling Greek words with Hebrew expressions, and in which the Septuagint and the New Testament were written, was designated as “Hellenistic” by Daniel Heinsius, *Aristarchus sacer, sive ad Nonni in Johannem metaphrasin exercitationes* ... (Leiden 1627 in-8°) [BnF C-2586], ch. 10, 826. Heinsius, and others, were excessively criticised by Saumaise, who sought to demonstrate that “Hellenistic” was not an actual language or dialect, and that the term itself was unknown throughout antiquity (in effect the matter is appropriately settled by R. Simon himself, in the opening sentence of the ninth paragraph of the present chapter).

as already observed, Heinsius and the other “Hellenisticarians” do not use “being Hellenistic” in its most common Greek sense of “speaking standard Greek,” but in the sense stated above.¹⁴ Thus Croÿ, like Saumaise, is merely quibbling about words: to obviate further contentiousness, let us define the language as “synagogical Greek.”

Yet the question will be asked: how could the Hellenistics have known synagogical Greek—a combination of Greek with Hebraic and Chaldaic expressions—when none of them was familiar with spoken Hebrew and Chaldaic, whereas Greek was their vernacular? Philo, one such Greek Jew, who was fluent in Greek, gives no hint of anything remotely resembling “synagogical” Greek in any of his works. The answer is that the Hebrew Bible continued to be read by the Greek Jews in their synagogues, as it was by the Jews claiming to be wholly Hebrew. Whilst the Hellenistics did in fact write works of their own in standard Greek, unaffected by the synagogical idiom, this was not the case with their Greek scriptural texts and certain others of their books, in which they adopted Hebraic forms of expression because they were showing literal respect for the Hebrew text. The same can be said in the defence of the Jewish versions of the Bible in Arabic, Persian, Spanish, and Koine Greek, in all of which direct Hebraisms can be discerned, even though the translators were Jews whose native languages these were. For this the only possible explanation is that, in their translations, they were over-scrupulous in following the original Hebrew.

Whilst it is true that most advocates of the Hellenistic language think that the only Greek Bible read in their synagogues by the Greek Jews was the Septuagint, they are under a misapprehension. Even Saumaise, who openly avows his vigorous repudiation of the Hellenisticarians, nonetheless affirms that in their synagogues, in whatever country, the Jews always read from the Hebrew text of the Scriptures. Anyone citing Justinian’s Constitution 146 as proof that this is not the case, has not made a careful scrutiny of the wording of this document, the tenor of which is diametrically opposed to such a view. Despite this, Louis Cappel,¹⁵ and various other scholars invoke this Emperor’s *Novella* as evidence that the Hellenistic Greeks’ liturgies and services were conducted in Greek until 600 CE, and that until that time, the Septuagint was the only Bible text used in their synagogues. This is also

¹⁴ Jean de Croÿ, *Sacrarum et historicarum in Novum Foedus observationum pars prior* (Geneva: Chouët, 1645) [BnF A-3235], 262.

¹⁵ L. Cappel, *Critica sacra* ... [see *supra* nn. 642–643 of present work], Appendices, section v: *Quaestio de locis parallelis Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, 465–466.

the view put forward by Grotius in his note on Acts 6:1, which alludes to the Greek Jews who, says Grotius, were orthodox Jews from Alexandria and surrounding areas, who had continued to read the Scriptures in Greek, a practice that persisted till the time of Justinian, as the Novella 146 appears to suggest.¹⁶

However, the wording of this novella specifically shows that the reverse is true. In Justinian's time, the Jews were divided into two groups: one group wanted only the genuine Hebrew text to be used in the synagogues, whilst the other, being unfamiliar with Hebrew, also made use of the Septuagint to attain a proper comprehension. Being aware of their dissension, the Emperor Justinian attests that it pleased him to settle the matter by decree. Their disagreement is outlined as follows: some of them wanted only the Hebrew text of the Scriptures to be used for public readings in the synagogues; while others held that the Hebrew original must be supplemented by the Greek version. Special attention must be paid to this last point, which shows that, contrary to common belief, Greek Jews did not limit themselves to using the Greek Bible in their synagogues, but amplified the Hebrew text with readings from the Greek.

The truth of this is brought home even more clearly by the terms of Justinian's edict, which pronounced in favour of Jews accustomed to reading a version of the Scriptures in Greek, or any other appropriate vernacular, in addition to the Hebrew original in their services, decreeing that Jewish persons who wished to do so might read the Scriptures in Greek in countries where the people spoke Greek, or in any other language, such as Latin, according to the language of the country where they lived.¹⁷

Cappel¹⁸ attempted to prove that learned Jewish leaders at that time forbade the public reading of the Scriptures in any version other than the original Hebrew, further deducing that the contemporary Jewish use of the liturgy in Hebrew, instead of the vernacular, was not introduced until the publication of the Talmud, and cited this edict as evidence. Had he read Justinian's Constitution carefully, he would have seen that the Hebrew text of the Law and the Prophets was in use in synagogues all over the world, but that it was supplemented by a version or paraphrase in the

¹⁶ Grotius, Annotation on Acts 6:1 (*Opera omnia theologica* ..., 2:592A). The "Novellae" are part of the *Corpus Juris Civilis* (statement of Roman Civil Law) published in 533 by Justinian I (Emperor from 527–565).

¹⁷ *Justiniani principis Novellae constitutiones latine* ... (Basel: Hervage, 1561) [BnF F-5138], *Constitutio* 146: "De Hebraeis quomodo oporteat eos scripturas legere," 418–420.

¹⁸ L. Cappel, *Critica sacra*, 466–467.

vernacular of each country. In Jerusalem and all of Palestine, for instance, those who considered themselves native Jews accompanied the reading of the Hebrew original by a paraphrase in Chaldaic. It seems also that the origin of the Jewish custom, still observed today, of privately reading a “Parasça,”¹⁹ or passage from the Chaldaic paraphrase²⁰ on Saturdays, was simply the practice of using a paraphrase to complement the reading of the Hebrew text.

Hence, it cannot be inferred that the Jewish elders of those times banned the reading of the Scriptures translated into Greek or into any other language because these were the only versions read in the synagogues: they decreed that the Hebrew original must no longer be supplemented with translations in other languages, as had hitherto been the practice, with interpreters communicating the sense of the Hebrew text in the vernacular. This is borne out by the Talmud and all other books dealing with laws and customs of the Jews, among whom there now remains no trace of this ancient practice. Admittedly they possess translations of the Bible in their own vernacular, but these are for private use only. The same applies to Jewish rituals, which are conducted in Hebrew in all their synagogues, even though the people have access to versions of them in other languages.

¹⁹ *parashah* תרשפ “portion” (weekly Torah portion, any subsection of the weekly lesson read on Sabbath).

²⁰ A Targum (Jewish Bible) written in Aramaic (see *supra*, ch. 6 n. 8).

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

A FULLER DISCUSSION OF SAUMAISE'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE "HELLENISTIC" LANGUAGE, WITH INCIDENTAL EXPLANATIONS OF VARIOUS PROBLEMS PERTAINING TO THE SUBJECT

It would have been appropriate at this point to itemise the most frequent Hebraic expressions occurring throughout the New Testament. However, my purpose here is to provide only a general discussion of the style of the New Testament books, and in any case, the expressions are tabulated and discussed at length in the commentary on New Testament Hebraisms by the younger Johannes Vorst;¹ also useful is Thomas Gataker's reply² to the dissertation by Pfochen,³ both of which, along with other similar works, I shall discuss in the third part of this historical survey. Here I shall concentrate solely on the arguments by which Saumaise claims to show that nothing that has ever been said about the Hellenistic language has any basis.

The learned scholar asserts that since the name "Hellenists" can only apply to Jews dispersed through various countries outside Judaea, the Septuagint translators cannot possibly have been Hellenistics, whereas there is universal consensus that the translators came from Jerusalem, and were therefore native Jews. The scriptural text used in Jerusalem was in Hebrew, not Greek; any gloss that was added was written in the Jewish vernacular of Jerusalem, which was Chaldaic. The same applies, Saumaise continues, to the apostles: since most were of Jewish birth, and lived in Judaea, even after the death of Jesus Christ, how could they possibly have been Greek or Hellenistic? Only St Paul, who came from Tarsus in Cilicia, where Greek was the vernacular, could claim to be a Hellenistic Jew. However, having been raised in Jerusalem, and studied under the well-known rabbi Gamaliel, he

¹ Johannes Vorst (1623–1676), *Philologia sacra, qua, quicquid hebraismorum in toto Novo Test. reperitur, id pene omne recensetur, in certas classes digeritur ...* (Leiden: Baron, 1658).

² Thomas Gataker (1574–1654), *De Novi Instrumenti stylo dissertatio, qua Sebastiani Pfochenii de linguae graecae Novi Testamenti puritate diatribe ad examen revocatur, scriptorumque loca obiter explicantur atque illustrantur* (London: Harper, 1648) [BnF A-3585].

³ See *supra*, ch. 26 nn. 4–5.

himself said that he was a native Hebrew, “a Hebrew of the Hebrews.”⁴ As a member of the Pharisaean sect in Jerusalem, he cannot be ranked with the Hellenistic Jews who read the Scriptures in Greek in their synagogues.⁵

These objections can be all easily resolved at a stroke. Even though Jews dispersed beyond Judaea in countries where the vernacular was Greek are referred to as Hellenistics, the fact remains that there were true Hellenistics to be found in Judaea itself. Any Jew who wrote in the “synagogical” Greek discussed in the previous chapter can be termed “Hellenistic” because of the language in which his books were written. On this basis, if it be agreed that the Septuagint translators came from Jerusalem, they were actual “Hellenistics,” since the Greek of their translation was laden with Hebraic and Chaldaic expressions. In the same way the apostles, who were born in Galilee and therefore native Jews, were also “Hellenistic” Jews in the sense that they wrote their books in synagogical Greek. Moreover whilst St Paul was actually born a Hellenistic, since he spoke Greek from infancy, having received his schooling in Jerusalem, he became a true Jew in that he was brought up in the same rituals and customs as others of his nation. Yet when account is taken of the idiom in which he wrote—Greek infiltrated with Hebraic expressions, which is the essence of the Hellenistic language—he must be seen as a Hellenistic.

To this Saumaise responds that though languages over time are still known by the same name, linguistic habits change. This means that sentences in Hebraic or Syriac which are conveyed in Greek words represent a nation’s language or a particular dialect: this is simply a new parlance.⁶ Though poetic style in Greek, for instance, is quite different from everyday language, no one has ever said that it was a separate language. For the same reason no one claims that Hellenistic parlance is a particular dialect familiar to a whole nation, much less an everyday language in common use: no one has sought to extend its use outside synagogues or the writings of those who use synagogical language. Even if one wished, and not without justification, to describe it as a special development of the Greek language, this is beside the point: it is the phenomenon itself, and not its name, that is the point at issue. Saumaise concedes that the language of the Septuagint and the New Testament books is Greek pervaded with Hebraisms: this of itself suffices to substantiate the existence of the Hellenistic language.

⁴ Philippians 3:5.

⁵ C. Saumaise, *De Hellenistica Commentarius* ..., 16–17 (see ch. 27 nn. 6, 9 of the present work).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

Even if, which is perfectly possible, the Hellenisticarians misused the term "language," the clarification required is for them to explain how they understand the word, and to state openly that they had not the remotest intention of using it to refer to a national everyday language: after all, it is agreed that the Greek or Hellenistic Jews all spoke the Greek vernacular in use wherever they lived. St Paul spoke Greek as it was spoken in Tarsus in his day; Philo spoke Alexandrian Greek, studying it thoroughly and as a result had a very polished literary style. But then again, not all Greek or Hellenistic Jews wrote in this "Hellenistic" parlance, which was reserved principally for use in synagogues, being derived from the language of the Scriptures. Native Jews who wrote in Greek were more "Hellenisticarian" than actual Greek Jews, because their style contained more Hebraic or Chaldaic expressions than that of the Hellenistics, whose first language was Greek.

Even if it be conceded, as Saumaise surmises, that most of the disciples of Jesus Christ, being Galileans, men from the dregs of society, knew no language other than Syriac, this is not proof that the New Testament books written in Greek are not in fact written in the Hellenistic idiom. All he can possibly conjecture from his supposition is that initially the apostles would have written in their vernacular Syriac, and that their writings were translated into Greek by fluent Greek-speaking interpreters who accompanied them on their journeys. This is in fact the view of Saumaise, who thinks that most of the apostles did not learn Greek until relatively late in life, when commanded to go and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. Nor is it inconceivable, he continues, that some of them proclaimed the Gospel to the Greeks and Romans through interpreters, since the only apostles who preached in Greek were those who, like St Paul, were of Greek birth.⁷

However, so far from disproving the Hellenistic language of the New Testament books, Saumaise's hypothesis lends further weight to it, since in the same breath he also affirms that the books in Greek that were translated from Hebrew or Syriac contained more Hebraic or Syriac expressions than were to be found in books originally written in Greek. In light of this, he goes on to claim that there are far fewer Hebraisms in St Luke or St Paul, whose mother tongue was Greek, than in St Matthew, whose work was a translation from Hebrew or Chaldaic. As an authority for this, he even cites St Jerome who, he says, perceived the stylistic differences between the books translated into Greek and those originally written in that language.⁸ The

⁷ *Ibid.*, 254.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 258.

only possible inference from his conjecture is that the books by the Galilean disciples of Jesus Christ were the work not of Hellenistic Jews, but of native Hebrews who wrote in Chaldaic, the language of their land.

He is not entitled to infer that the Greek text in these books, as it has come down to us, is not synagogical Greek: that this is in fact precisely what it is follows logically from the distinction he himself makes between works that were written originally in Greek, and those that were translated into Greek from Hebrew or Chaldaic. But then again, this does not justify rejecting the continuously sustained ancient tradition, which held that, of the Evangelists, only St Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew. As to Saumaise's belief that Hebraisms are more numerous in the works translated into Greek from Hebrew than elsewhere, Vorst demurs. Convinced that they are more frequent in the Gospel of St Luke than in the others, he claims he can easily point to fifty Hebraisms in that gospel's first chapter, and four or more in a single verse.⁹ It may indeed be the case that St Luke writes in a purer Greek than the other gospel-writers, whilst at the same time some passages evince modes of expression that are typically Hebraic or Syriac.

In face of the stated position of all early Church writers, Saumaise affirms that St Paul was the only one of the apostles who knew Greek, alleging that all the others quote from the Old Testament in Hebrew, instead of the Septuagint.¹⁰ But this is demonstrably untrue; whilst at times St Jerome may have thought it was the case, he constantly argues to the contrary, on the basis of solid reasoning. Saumaise goes on to say that the reason there are discrepancies between the wording of the Old Testament passages as quoted in the New, and as they appear in the Septuagint, is that the Evangelists and the apostles' source was the Hebrew text which, as rendered into Greek by interpreters, sometimes differs from the Septuagint. However, if that were true, the translators would at least have used different Greek vocables to convey the Hebrew text, which moreover they would have respected: but such is not the case, since their text corresponds much more commonly to the Septuagint than to the Hebrew. As has been pointed out elsewhere, the discrepancy occurs because reproducing scriptural quotations word for word was not a priority for the apostles, whose fundamental concern was for the Scripture's meaning.

⁹ Johann Vorst, *De Hebraismis Novi Testamenti commentarius, cujus pars una antehac seorsum prodit, nunc vero alteram sibi junctam habet, cum indicibus ...* Amsterdam: Waesberg and Weyerstraet, 1665 [BnF A-4414 (2 parts in 1 vol).], part 2: *Pars altera Philologiae sacrae qua, quicquid hebraismorum in toto Novo Test. reperitur, id pene omne recensetur ... atque ipsarum linguarum orientalium collatione illustratur ...* "Dedicatio," [3].

¹⁰ Saumaise, *De Hellenistica Commentarius*, 255.

Then again, Saumaise continues, as Jews in those days were familiar with both Syriac and Hebrew, was there any need for St Peter, apostle to the Jews, to have known Greek? To say that Jews at that time all knew Hebrew and Syriac, is wrong: throughout the Roman Empire, only the Jews in Palestine understood Syriac or Chaldaic and, moreover, those with more than basic education also knew Greek. Among them only a handful of scholars knew Greek, whereas Greek was in common use throughout most of the Empire: in Rome, where St Peter went with St Mark, more Jews spoke Greek than any other tongue. To those who argue that, as is constantly attested by ancient tradition, St Mark acted as St Peter's interpreter, my response is that this does not constitute proof that St Peter knew no Greek whatsoever, seeing that not one of early Church scholars who refer to Mark as St Peter's interpreter denies that the holy apostle knew Greek; St Paul, who Saumaise asserts had a better knowledge of Greek than of Hebrew, had Titus as his interpreter.

Now Saumaise may be quite right in asserting that, as St John was a Galilean, he was more at home in Hebrew, or rather Chaldaic, than in Greek: but this does not entitle him to infer a greater likelihood that the apostle wrote his Gospel in Hebrew rather than Greek. Having settled in Greek-speaking areas, as their apostle he taught the nations in their own vernacular; accordingly he wrote his Gospel, which is virtually a compilation of his preaching, in Greek also.¹¹ In light of this, I fail to see that Saumaise has established a solid basis on which to make the general inference that the apostles' works were written in their mother tongue, Syriac, being then translated into Greek either by Syrians fluent in that language, or even by Greek converts, whose services they used as assistants or interpreters in preaching the Gospel. However, even so, as already discussed, and even if there were such people as Saumaise conjectures, that the books of the New Testament were written in synagogical Greek can still be asserted nonetheless. There is much more evidence suggesting that these books were indeed the work of the apostles, who were Galileans, since if they had used the services of Greek scholars, the texts would not contain so many Hebraic expressions: the style of St John's Gospel demonstrates that it was more likely to have been written by a Galilean than a Greek.

Be this as it may, Saumaise has no option but to concede that the New Testament texts are marked by forms of expression that are decidedly Syriac: and of such, it is said, is the Hellenistic language. He differs from the Hellenisticarians only in that whereas he ascribes Syriac expressions to the

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 258.

apostles' interpreters, the former ascribe them to the apostles themselves.¹² However, whether the apostles really did produce the Gospels, or were only intermediary interpreters, the fact remains that there is general acknowledgment of the phenomenon in itself: Saumaise thus substantiates the Hellenistic language, rather than disproving its existence.

Turning to St Paul and St Luke, who possessed native fluency in Greek, Saumaise concedes that their works too are sprinkled with Chaldaic expressions, suggesting by way of explanation that since they knew both Chaldaic and Greek, they wrote in a mixture of the two tongues.¹³ Whether or not this is what happened, Saumaise is unable to deny that there is as much synagogical Greek in the works of St Paul and St Luke as in those of the other apostles, though he does qualify this by stating that St Paul and St Luke lapse less frequently into Hebraisms than do the interpreters who, if he is to be believed, translated the Hebrew or Chaldaic texts of the other apostles into Greek. However, as already noted, Vorst identifies more Hebraic expressions in St Luke than in the other New Testament writers. Accordingly, St Matthew excepted, the best solution is to ascribe the authorship of the books to the apostles, not to their interpreters or assistants.

It is true to say, as does Saumaise—or rather as do the Greek Fathers on whom he draws for the passage in question—that as the apostles were lacking in refinement or literary merit, they wrote their books in a simple style, and in the language in use among unlettered folk which, in a sense, actually lends greater clarity to what they say, since the language used is by and large free of figurative expressions. Yet although the apostles use mainly simple words that were in common everyday use, and therefore readily understood, it is possible to discern certain characteristic expressions and turns of phrase that were typical among their kind and which, given our unfamiliarity with the common usage of those times, can seem obscure. Whilst their style is for the most part straightforward and uncomplicated, when an attempt is made to penetrate to the true significance of their thought, if the actual grammatical sense is scrutinised, inevitably it is difficult to follow. In those days the Jews had very different modes of expressions from ours, which is the main explanation for the elusive qualities in the books of the New Testament.

When they are translated into other tongues, maximum care must be taken above all to avoid departing from the words of the original: the translator who seeks simply to convey the general meaning without paying due

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

attention to each word, runs the risk of getting it wrong, and of ascribing thoughts to the authors which they never entertained. Such was the source of major disputes between Beza and Castellio, the former stressing the importance in any translation of the New Testament of retaining most of the Hebraic expressions: since they are impossible to render in another tongue, and are susceptible moreover of more than one interpretation, the most appropriate procedure is to reproduce them, rather than offer an interpretation which could be wrong, thereby also depriving others of the chance to construe them in their own way.¹⁴ By contrast Castellio held that a commentator should do no more than provide distinct indication of any Hebraisms by the use of notes. A more detailed discussion of such Hebraic expressions will be presented in the second book of the present History, in the course of examining the different versions of the New Testament.¹⁵

¹⁴ Theodore Beza, *Responsio ad defensiones and reprehensiones Sebastiani Castellionis, quibus suam Noui Testamenti interpretationum defendere adversus Bezam, et eius versione vicissim reprehendere conatus est* (S.l. [Geneva], Estienne, 1563) [Mazarine 23253 pièce 2], 6.

¹⁵ See *supra*, ch. 6 n. 8.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

OVERALL VIEW OF GREEK MANUSCRIPTS,
INCLUDING SOURCES ALREADY MENTIONED.
COMPILATIONS OF THE DIVERSE READINGS
FOUND IN THOSE MANUSCRIPTS.
OBSERVATIONS ON NEW TESTAMENT
EXEGESIS IN GENERAL.
HERETICS WRONGLY ACCUSED OF
CORRUPTING THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT

Although various scholars within the Greek Church have undertaken the task of providing an accurate text of the books in the New Testament, no individual Greek source was singled out and adopted by all Greek Churches as being altogether more reliable than the others. Consequently there have always been numerous variants in the texts used by the different churches. According to Origen, an expert in exegesis, the wide range of divergent readings in the Greek was due in part to copyists' carelessness, and partly to the liberties taken with the texts by New Testament scholars, who made excisions and interpolations as the mood took them. Origen's assertion is irrefutably borne out by the observations already made concerning the final chapter of Mark (16:9 and following), and John 7:53–8:11 (the woman taken in adultery). It would be demonstrated even more clearly if there were some surviving manuscripts from those times, which could be compared with those that are extant: but hardly any of these date from before the seventh century and, as will be seen in the next chapter, even those that *are* older suffer from the flaws identified by Origen, thus being substantially different from the texts in use today.

In the same passage, Origen goes on to say that he had gone some way to rectifying the various blunders in Greek copies of the Septuagint, correcting and emending them in accordance with exegetic principles. He also explains the method he used in carrying out this laborious work, which met with all the success for which he could have hoped.¹ However, he did not

¹ Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* bk. 15 (Origen, *Matthäuseklärung* ed. E. Klostermann [coll. "Die Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte," Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, <1968–1976>], 3:2:387–388; PG 13:1293).

work on the books of the New Testament to the same extent, although he did seek out the most reliable manuscripts and, as the occasion arose, provided various exegetic observations on certain passages. Post-Origen scholars took no account of the distinction between versions of the New Testament, though they did distinguish between two versions of the Septuagint, the κοινή or “common” text,² and the version as corrected by Origen³ which, despite its imperfections, was considered as the “true” Septuagint, and used by most western churches as a basis for revising their scriptural texts.

Although Origen and other scholars, occasionally quoted by Jerome, also made corrections to the text of the Greek New Testament, evidently the former’s exegesis in this area did not carry the same weight of authority as his work on the Old Testament: had it done so, we should now have had a “Masoretic” Greek version of the Evangelists’ and apostles’ writings, as the Jews had for the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.⁴ This version would not contain the same wide range of variants as there are now, because Origen’s text would have been scrupulously followed by one and all, in the same way as the Jews observe the text as standardised by those of their scholars known as Masoretes. Accordingly the Jews have not preserved early manuscripts of Hebrew Scripture, all of which were incorporated within the Masorah, which they hold to be infallible: so convinced are they that their Books of the Law, in their present form, conform absolutely to Moses’ original, that they no longer set store by their ancient scriptural sources, preserving no early scrolls or books in their synagogues. The Jews of the Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam possess at least fifty scrolls—most finely transcribed, but all new—of their *Sepher tora* or Book of the Law. They ignore any request for access to ancient scrolls, in the knowledge that there can exist no possible textual variation between ancient texts and new.

For Christians, it is a different matter: as they have never had a Masoretic text they could reproduce exactly when making their own copies of the Greek New Testament, it is not surprising that these contain a far greater number of variants than are found in the Jews’ Hebrew Scriptures. I shall

² Koine was the common literary language of the Greeks from the close of the Classical era (about 330 BCE) to the early 4th century CE (ca. 330).

³ Origen’s edition of the scriptures, in six parallel columns—hence the title “Hexapla” Ἑξαπλά *sixfold*—contained four Greek versions including the Septuagint in a revised text with critical signs, together with the Hebrew text, and the same transliterated into Greek letters (PG 15–17).

⁴ *Mas[s]ora[h]* (from Hebrew variation of *māsōret* “bond” [Ezekiel 20:37]): Hebrew Bible with critical notes and commentary, compiled from the 6th to the 10th centuries CE.

even go so far as to say that the very existence of this multitude of variants lends the manuscript sources a greater weight of authority than if there were no variants at all: a written work passing through so many hands could not possibly be immune to alteration unless it were first corrected in line with some referential source, then meticulously reproduced in that form, as was the case with the Hebrew of the Jews' Old Testament. It is a useful thing for there to be varying versions of a book, so that the true text may be ascertained. For this reason, the books of the New Testament warrant greater credence than most others, since all the countries to which Christianity spread had their own copies or versions.

These must be our basis for ascertaining the most reliable text, since no originals have come down to us. As accurately as may be possible, we shall scrutinise the Greek manuscript sources and also the earliest translations from the Greek. No one printed edition of the Greek is to be favoured over another unless it be based on more authoritative manuscripts. Our preference shall be for editions containing the variant readings from a selection of manuscripts in addition to the text. Since passages from the Greek manuscripts were read aloud in Churches where only the time-honoured readings were retained, copies with alternative readings in the margin are few and far between. As variants are recorded only in separate works—mainly in the scholia appended to the Greek text, and copies of which are generally kept in good libraries—in addition to manuscript sources, the scholia must be consulted as well.

In more recent times when the proper study of Greek has been re-established, various scholars have produced worthy editions of this kind. Valla was the first to consult Greek sources, and Latin as well, citing several of them in his annotations, printed in Basel through the good offices of Erasmus;⁵ and although he dwells somewhat pedantically on finer points of Latin grammar,⁶ we shall ever be in his debt for bringing these discoveries to light at a time when Europe was still barbaric. Erasmus, following in Valla's footsteps, undertook the task of providing commentaries on the New Testament, containing references to a great number of Greek and Latin manuscripts he had consulted. Some editions of his New Testament also

⁵ Lorenzo della Valle (called Valla, 1405/1407–1457), *In Novum Testamentum annotationes apprime utiles ...*, ed. Erasmus (Basel: Cratandre, 1526) [BnF A-7027 (1)]. Despite the heading (3) "Ex diversorum utriusque linguae codicum collatione ad notationes," R. Simon's assertion about Valla's citations appears unfounded.

⁶ E.g. (*Annotationes*, 140) quibbling over the difference between *gigni* and *nasci* in regard to the expression "born again" in John 3:3–5.

contain an appendix listing variants in the Greek manuscripts. Erasmus was evidently much better schooled than Valla in scholarship of this kind, especially in regard to knowledge of manuscripts. Yet his exegesis is occasionally too free and imprecise: faced with Greek manuscripts exactly corresponding to the Latin sources, he thinks the former were corrected in line with the latter. For example, he says that in the Greek manuscript from England (in which 1John 5:7 states that it is the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit who bear witness in heaven) was actually altered by the Greek copyists on the basis of the Latin version following the reconciliation of their respective Churches;⁷ but this can never be proved one way or the other. Furthermore, the passages he claims to have emended have no bearing whatsoever on the Greek and Latin Churches' disagreements: in fact the Greeks have never been more hostile to the Latins than since their reunion at the Council of Florence.⁸ Most delegates who had accepted the Decree of Union were no sooner back in their own churches than they reassembled at Constantinople to register a protest against everything to which they had agreed in Florence (the deeds of protestation and the names of the signatories still survive).

No praise is high enough for the splendid in-folio edition of the Greek New Testament by Stephanus, who demonstrates therein his learning and his sound judgment.⁹ Whereas Cardinal Ximénez, to whom we are indebted for the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament,¹⁰ did in fact seek out reliable manuscript sources, he failed to record the variant readings in the margin of his edition, simply retaining in the text the readings he himself considered to be the best.

Stephanus rectified this shortcoming, judiciously recording the variants contained in sixteen manuscript sources in his marginal notes, so that, even though he mostly follows Ximénez's text, one is spared the trouble of consulting the latter, unless one be genuinely convinced that, in the passages in question, the readings chosen by Ximénez actually are the most reliable. It matters not whether a particular reading be incorporated within the text or recorded in the margin, provided that it is made clear that the variants in the margin come from manuscripts having the same authority as the sources for the readings retained in the text. For the sake of uniformity, ideally

⁷ Erasmus, *Ad Jacobum Lopicam Stunicam ... (Opera omnia, 9:353).*

⁸ 16th (or 17th) Œcumenical Council (1438–1445).

⁹ See *supra*, ch. 17 n. 16 of the present work.

¹⁰ See *supra*, ch. 20 n. 13 of the present work.

scholars editing the Greek New Testament should have followed the first printed text exactly—that of the Complutensian Polyglot—and confined themselves to recording the variants in their manuscript sources as marginal notes.

Theodore Beza presented an even greater number of manuscript variants than did Stephanus; but whereas, like Stephanus, he should have inserted these in the margin of his Greek text, he merely included them in his largely unhelpful commentary. He also failed to record them in their entirety, for fear of upsetting those of wavering faith among his followers whose veneration for the Word of God would have been weakened by the sight of so many possible alternative readings. For the majority of manuscript sources, he states his indebtedness to Stephanus, who had supplied him with a text derived from a comparison with at least twenty-five manuscripts, and the majority of printed editions.¹¹ He also possessed a very early manuscript, which he often mentions in his commentary: the first part of this manuscript, containing the Gospels and Acts, is held at Cambridge in England, and the second part, containing the Pauline Epistles,¹² is in the King's Library.¹³ The manuscript—in which Beza himself was not properly versed—will be discussed in chapter 30.

Volume 6 of the English Polyglot Bible¹⁴ includes the most extensive catalogue hitherto made available of variants in New Testament manuscripts, as well as genuinely informative observations by scholars, including Lucas of Bruges,¹⁵ on the subject of the different readings, for merely providing a list of these is less than satisfactory. In fact all scholars listing the variants in the sources they have consulted suffer from the serious shortcoming of

¹¹ Dedicatory Epistle to Queen Elizabeth I of England (dated 19 December 1564), Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), [11]: this originally appeared in Beza's 1st edition (1564); his 4th ed. of 1598 contains a second such Epistle.

¹² Codex Bezae (see *infra*, ch. 30 nn. 3, 4–5, 7), and Codex Claromontanus (see *infra*, ch. 30 n. 8, ch. 31 nn. 5, 7–8, 12 and *passim*).

¹³ Present-day Bibliothèque nationale de France (see *supra*, ch. 10 n. 1).

¹⁴ See *supra*, ch. 4 n. 8.

¹⁵ *Biblia polyglotta ...* vol. 6 [BnF A-23 (6)], 36 (section numbered separately), previously published as Lucas of Bruges, *Notationes in sacra Biblia quibus variantia discrepantibus exemplaribus loca ... discutiuntur ...* (Antwerp: Plantin, 1580), 382 [BnF A-4136]. The *Notationes* were in fact instrumental in establishing the Latin Vulgate text for the edition of 1590 issued under the authority of Pope Sixtus who declared in the Bull authorising its publication that it was definitive and unalterable: hence the revised text, containing some 4,900 corrections, issued by Clement VIII and in fact known as the Clementine edition, was nonetheless entitled *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae Editionis Sixti Quinti Pont. Max. jussu recognita atque edita* (Rome 1593).

not pointing out the particular merits and drawbacks of those manuscripts, based on careful examination. Relying as they did on the accuracy of the persons they employed to carry out the most tiresome business of identifying variants, they themselves frequently did not see the various manuscripts at first hand when making their compilations, which are not always reliable.

The Oxford in-8° of 1675¹⁶ is superior to all other printed Greek New Testaments in that it records more variants than any previous edition, with the added convenience of making both text and variants accessible at a glance. Textually, however, it is little more than a collation of existing printed texts, reproducing the errors contained in earlier editions instead of rectifying them with due care. Discussing such errors would be pointless at this stage, since I gather that a new amplified Oxford Greek New Testament is in publication:¹⁷ that it will be of great use—provided it is accurate—is unquestionable.

Earlier, Etienne Courcelles's¹⁸ Greek New Testament, containing a considerable number of variants, was published in Amsterdam by Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir. However, his edition is less than ideally informative: whilst he reproduces the variant readings, he fails to specify their

¹⁶ John Fell (1625–1686) (ed.), *Novi Testamenti libri omnes. Accesserunt Parallela Scripturae loca ...* (Oxford: 1675. In-8°) [BnF A-6312]. Fell consulted over a hundred manuscript sources including Coptic and Gothic versions: "Unfortunately ... about twenty of these witnesses, including Codex Vaticanus (B), are not cited individually, but only in statements concerning the total number of manuscripts which agree in any particular reading" (Metzger—Ehrman, *Text*, 153–154); however, notes K. Aland (*Text*, 9), "this indirect criticism of the Textus Receptus failed to produce any changes in it. Its authority only increased."

¹⁷ In fact John Mill's in-folio *Novum Testamentum Graecum* did not appear until 1707, though the editor's work had already progressed considerably when, in 1685, he was appointed Principal of St Edmund Hall (see Frederick Henry Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* [1st ed., Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, 1861], 2:200–203).

¹⁸ Étienne de Courcelles (1586–1659, Arminian theologian, pastor in France) (ed.), 'H Καινή Διαθήκη. *Novum Testamentum. Editio nova: in qua diligentius quàm unquam antea variantes lectiones tam ex manuscriptis quàm impressis codicibus collectae, and parallela Scripturae loca annotata sunt ...* (Amsterdam: Elzevir, 1658) [BnF A-6310 (1) (2)]: on this edition, see Eduard W.E. Reuss, *Bibliotheca Novi Testamenti graeci cujus editiones ab initio typographiae ad nostram aetatem impressas quotquot reperiri potuerunt collegit, digessit ...* (Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1872), 129–130 §4; and Alfons Willems, *Les Elzevier: histoire et annales typographiques* [Brussels: van Trigt, 1880], item 1239. On Courcelles, C.R. Gregory observed: "It is true that, as the necessities of that day demanded, he printed for the most part the Elzevir text of 1633 with but few variations. But he added a very learned preface and a great many various readings both from manuscripts and from earlier editions. He placed the heavenly witnesses, 1John 5:7, in a parenthesis. The reward of his labours were attacks made upon him as a favourer of Arianism" (Caspar René Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament* [New York: Scribner, 1907], 445).

manuscript sources, simply providing a list of the latter in his preface. Though he planned to provide a fuller edition, promising to include the Latin Vulgate text accompanied by the variant readings appearing in Latin manuscripts,¹⁹ evidently he did not keep his promise, since the second edition of his Greek New Testament is the same as the first, except for the inclusion as footnotes of certain variants, printed separately in the first edition at the end of Acts and the Pauline Epistles.²⁰

Mr Saubert²¹ has edited the Gospel of St Matthew: had he been able to complete an edition of all New Testament books, it would have been second to none. In addition to the variants contained in Greek manuscripts, he records divergent readings to be found in other versions, and by which the Greek variants are confirmed; he also provides an illuminating and reliable partial commentary. Though he has made errors here and there, it is difficult for one individual working alone to complete research of this kind, which would involve a single individual consulting each and every manuscript, an impossible requirement. Though scholars are thus forced to rely on the accuracy of others, Mr Saubert nonetheless identified certain errors in the Walton Polyglot.²² He also prefaced his work with a learned preface,²³ containing judicious observations on the different Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, and on the variant readings that exist.

Though I could name various other scholars who have examined these matters, as most of them have done so only in passing, I reserve the right to speak about them elsewhere, in a context providing the opportunity to consider their work as a whole. At this stage I shall simply mention those who have provided compilations of Greek readings that lend support to the Old Latin version. Despite having roundly criticised this latter, Beza was forced to admit that there are passages in it deriving from more reliable Greek sources than those which survive today.²⁴ On occasion he even

¹⁹ Ibid., [IX] (pages unnumbered).

²⁰ Ἡ Καινὴ Διαθήκη = *Novum Testamentum. Editio nova: denuo recusa: in qua diligentius quam unquam antea variantes lectiones ... collectae, and parallela Scripturae loca annotata sunt, studio and labore Stephani Cellæi* (= É. de Courcelles) (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1675) (R. Simon's claim is borne out by Reuss, *Bibliotheca Novi Testamenti*, 130 entry 80).

²¹ Johann Saubert jn. (1638–1688), *Variae lectiones textus graeci Evangelii Sancti Matthaei, ex plurimis impressis ac manuscriptis codicibus collectae, et cum versionibus partim antiquissimis, partim praestantissimis, nec non Patrum veteris Ecclesiae Graecorum Latinorumque commentariis collatae, praemissa epicrisi de origine, auctoritate et usu variarum Novi Testamenti lectionum graecarum in genere* (Helmstadt: Muller, 1672) [BnF MICROFICHE M-17175].

²² Ibid., 59.

²³ In his preface (ibid., 1–56), the author has much to say about Martin Luther.

²⁴ Beza, Epistle (see *supra*, n. 11), [3].

takes Erasmus to task for unjustifiably departing from the Old Latin text on the grounds that it did not correspond to the Greek.²⁵ This, says Beza, only applies in the case of newer Greek texts: the Old Latin version is in fact consistent with the early Greek sources. In light of this, it seems that Protestants are not always justified in abandoning the Old Latin in favour of the Received Greek text: Beza himself is not innocent of this very same error of judgment for which he criticises Erasmus. Not that preference must invariably be given to the oldest written sources over less ancient manuscripts (only originals written in the apostles' own hand could lay claim to such infallibility). The point is, simply, that authors of recent translations of the New Testament from the Greek are not always accurate, because they have only used a very limited number of printed editions of the Greek, instead of consulting a range of manuscript sources, and attaining due awareness of the numerous textual variants.

The noble Spaniard Pedro Faxardo, Marquess de los Velez,²⁶ was the first scholar to provide a compilation of such variants. The Jesuit Mariana claims²⁷ that Faxardo compared the text of the revised Vulgate with that of sixteen Greek manuscripts (eight of these were in the Royal Library of Spain), making scrupulous annotations in the margin of a Greek New Testament to indicate all variants which supported the Old Latin version, in passages where the Old Latin differs from the Received Greek text—inestimably praiseworthy labours, except that the specific source of each

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Pedro Faxardo de Zuñiga, Marquess of los Velez and Molina († 1647: not the same person as the Paraguayan Jesuit Pedro Faxardo, bishop of Buenos Aires). On the “Velezian readings” included by Walton in his vol. 6, see Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament* (London: Bagster, 1854), 38–39. “They were first printed in 1626, by De la Cerda, in his *Adversaria Sacra*. He says that the Greek Testament, in the margin of which they were written, had passed into his hands from Mariana, the Spanish historian. Mariana says that he did not know how the copy had come into his possession; but he found in it the various readings of sixteen Greek MSS. inserted by a former owner, Don Pedro Faxardo, Marquis of Velez. The marquis seems to have stated that eight out of the sixteen MSS. which he used, had come from the Library of the King of Spain. Mariana was surprised to find that the cited readings bore a strong resemblance to the Vulgate, so that he thought that there might be some imposture in the matter. In fact, but little doubt was soon felt that the readings in question were not derived from any Greek MSS. whatever; so that the empty boast of having used sixteen MSS. passed for what it was worth, and the readings themselves have long ceased to be cited. Walton, however, is not to be blamed for inserting these readings in his collection. Critical studies were not then sufficiently advanced to authorise the *selection* of materials: all that was presented required to be brought together; the quality and value of the material so obtained might be for after consideration.”

²⁷ Juan de Mariana, *Tractatus VII. II: Pro editione vulgata* (Cologne: Hierat, 1609) [BnF Z-669], 83B.

Greek variant was not given. Though Mariana himself had not seen these manuscripts, he does assert that the majority of them were very old—such was evidently the sole observation Faxardo had made concerning the relative worth of the manuscripts he used. Mariana made a copy of the Greek New Testament wherein Los Velez had recorded the variants, and presented it to La Cerda, another Jesuit, who published the variants in his book *Adversaria Sacra*;²⁸ they have since been reprinted in various compilations of New Testament variants.

Instances where Greek New Testament sources confirm the text of the Revised Vulgate have also been recorded by the Oratorian Jean Morin,²⁹ who claims to have identified 440 instances where the Vulgate is supported by ancient Greek manuscripts.³⁰ His primary concern is to demonstrate the textual parallels in Codex Bezae (for the Gospels and Acts)³¹ and in the manuscript Beza calls *Claromontanus* (i.e. “from Clermont”) for the Epistles of St Paul.³² He could not have made a better choice of sources to attain his objective of demonstrating to Protestants that the New Testament, and the Old, contain an immense number of variant readings: no sources contain more of them than do these two manuscripts. He includes also

²⁸ Juan Luis de La Cerda (1560–1643), *Adversaria sacra ... Accessit eodem autore Psalterii Salomonis ex graeco ms. codice ... latina versio, et Ad Tertulliani librum de pallio commentarius auctior ...* (Lyon: Roville, 1626) [Mazarine 840], ch. 91, 129B; the list of Los Velez variants is on 129–144. Whilst they were for many years accepted as readings of certain Greek manuscripts supporting the Latin Vulgate, in 1751 Johann Jakob Wettstein (also Wetstein [1693–1754], Swiss theologian and New Testament exegete) demonstrated that the readings were in fact translated from Latin sources, and thus of no critical value. [R. Simon also refers to the Los Velez variants *infra*, in ch. 32 of the present work, *passim*].

²⁹ Jean Morin, *Exercitationes biblicae. De Hebraei Graecique textus sinceritate, germana LXXII. Interpretum translatione dignoscenda, illius cum vulgata conciliatione, & iuxta Iudaeos diuina integritate; totiusque Rabbinicae antiquitatis, & operis Masorethici aera. explicatione, & censura. Pars prior* (Paris: Vitray, 1633). Ch. III and IV of the second *Exercitatio* (46–61) are headed: “De Hebraei Graecique textus sinceritate.”

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

³¹ No other known manuscript contains so many transpositions, additions and omissions of words, sentences, verses, and even events as does Codex Bezae, whose text of Acts, for instance is nearly one-tenth longer than is or was usual, e.g. 12:10, 19:9, 25:20, 29 (see Metzger—Ehrman, *Text*, 70–73). Codex Bezae is the sole source for two *agrapha*, or sayings of Jesus not elsewhere recorded in the Gospels, in Matthew 20:28 and Luke 6:4 (see NA²⁷, 57, 171). Given the manuscript’s exceptionally numerous and remarkable deviations from what was and is generally regarded as the “standard” New Testament text, and the fact that Beza himself made relatively little use of them in his own published editions of the Greek New Testament, when donating it in 1581 to Cambridge University, could he conceivably—despite all the courtly statements in the speeches of dedication and thanks—have presented it rather as a curiosity, or by way of pleasantry? See also *infra*, ch. 30 nn. 3–7.

³² On Codex Claromontanus, see the present work, ch. 31 n. 4 and *passim*.

some explanatory notes; and, after citing a considerable number of variant readings supporting the text of the revised Vulgate, by way of conclusion states that, in their own translations of the scriptures, in many instances Protestants had misguidedly followed the “standard” Greek version as their authority instead of the text as found in manuscript sources to which they themselves refer.³³ To illustrate the point, Morin cites the translation by Beza which in more than one instance follows the “standard” Greek edition in preference to the manuscripts. He notes also that, in his Greek New Testament, Stephanus retains several readings not supported by any of the manuscripts he cites. Yet the Protestants have preferred to use Stephanus’s main Greek text as the basis of their translations, rather than taking account of the variants printed in the margin. There would be no harm in this if they had adopted the same approach for their printed translations as that used by Stephanus for his edition of the Greek New Testament: if only they had indicated all variants in the margin of their published versions, no one could have accused them of ignoring the early manuscript sources in favour of the “standard” printed Greek. For the sake of unanimity in their translations, and to avoid implied criticism of this source or that, they simply chose the readings they felt were most likely to be right.

Denis Amelote is entitled to recognition for incorporating manuscript source variants matching the Old Latin text in his French translation of the New Testament. But when he claims to have worked on “these sublime time-honoured manuscripts” with such accuracy as has never before known before, he is guilty of immodesty and sheer untruthfulness. He says: “I have brought hitherto unequalled diligence to bear, in order to demonstrate how the Latin is in accordance with the early Greek, and with the original text itself. All manuscripts over a thousand years old, [including some from the sixth and seventh centuries, and others of similar antiquity] preserved throughout Christendom, I have scrupulously examined, collecting extracts from every one of them. I have consulted more than twenty of the manuscripts held in France; all those held in the Vatican and major libraries in Italy; sixteen from Spain, not counting those put to use by Cardinal Ximénez in realising the consummate Alcalá Bible;³⁴ the manuscripts in England and the northern countries, and many from all over Greece, together with the passages quoted by all the Church Fathers.”³⁵

³³ Morin, *Exercitationes* ..., 118.

³⁴ See *supra*, ch. 20 n. 13.

³⁵ Denis Amelote, *Le Nouveau Testament de Nostre Seigneur Jesus-Christ*, Preface (unpaginated), 1: [9] [BnF A-2568 (1)].

Anyone reading this would think that Amelote had personally looked at all the manuscripts he mentions, or at least selected passages from those manuscripts. But the whole of this lengthy utterance is mere rhetoric intended to confer more ample grandeur on his subject matter, his conception of which is exaggerated. Amelote admitted as much when showing the draft of his preface to one of his fellows, who urged him to rewrite it, especially the passage enumerating all his manuscript sources, whilst confronting Amelote with instances, in editions already published, of all the variants he was adducing. Amelote replied simply that his subject matter demanded that he express himself in elevated terms, in order to make an impression on the minds of his readers. Thus all the “sublime and time-honoured manuscripts” he examined are seen to be nothing but rhetorical assertions.

For had he carried out such painstaking research, he should have told us more than what is contained in printed catalogues. True, he did write to Spain, to inquire what had become of the Los Velez manuscripts.³⁶ Archbishop Aubusseau of Ambrun, French ambassador to the Spanish court at that time, and a friend of his, responded that there was no knowledge in Madrid of the Marquess’s manuscripts. When claiming he had several divergent readings through the intermediary of friends, he is pursuing this same rhetorical device. For every one of the variants he adduces had already been published in volume VI of the English Polyglot, or by Lacerda, or by Jean Morin, from whose work he conceived the idea of collating all variants supporting the Old Latin version. It would not be difficult to demonstrate to him—using his own terminology—that his knowledge of exegesis was imperfect. It seems that not only did he himself fail to acquire first-hand knowledge of the manuscripts he cites, but he had actually misread the printed catalogues of the manuscripts. I should dearly like to know what he means by “the two manuscripts at Magdebourg College, Oxford,” which he mentions in both prefaces to his New Testament in French. In the catalogue of manuscripts printed in volume VI of the English Polyglot, he found: *Magd. 1. New Testament complete except Revelation, in Oxf. Magd. College*; and *Magd. 2. Epistles to Rom. & Corinth. with Cath. Oxf. Colleg.* As everyone knows, the abbreviation *Oxf. Magd. Coll.* means Magdalen College, Oxford. But such is the ground-breaking nature of Denis Amelote’s scholarship that he discovers two New Testament manuscripts held at “Magdebourg” College, Oxford;

³⁶ See *supra*, n. 25.

from these, if we take him at his word, he even copied some passages. In his Latin preface, he describes the manuscripts as follows: *Magd. 1: Magdeburgensis Collegii in Oxon. New Testament complete, except for Revelation. Magd. 2: Magdeburgensis College, codex of Epistles to Romans and Corinthians.*³⁷ This he repeats in his preface in French.³⁸ I shall defer discussing Amelote's collation of variants until I come to comment on his French translation and commentary, in the second part of the present work.³⁹

Antoine Arnauld,⁴⁰ in his *New Defence of the Mons New Testament*,⁴¹ easily refutes him,⁴² though I only wish he had not described as “imaginary” what Amelote, and Mallet⁴³ after him, call “Common Greek,”⁴⁴ or, to put it more clearly and without any ambiguity, the “common” version of the Greek New Testament text. True, both gentlemen's notion of “common” Greek was wrong; but this does not prevent us from quite properly using the expression when examining “standard” editions of the Greek New Testament alongside the variants found in numerous early manuscripts. In this sense the word κοινή or “common” was formerly used to distinguish the widely used Greek Septuagint from the text as corrected by Origen.⁴⁵ It is also true to say that various alterations were made to the “common” Greek: hence there is no

³⁷ Amelote, *Nouveau Testament*, 1:577.

³⁸ In point of fact, Amelote does not do so; whilst including “those from England,” the enumeration of Greek mss. in the passage quoted above contains no reference to mss. held in Magdalen College.

³⁹ R. Simon, *Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs du Nouveau Testament* ch. 58, 882–891.

⁴⁰ Antoine Arnauld (1612–1694), *Nouvelle Défense de la traduction du Nouveau Testament imprimée à Mons, contre le livre de M. Mallet, Archidiacre de Rouen* (Cologne: Schouten, 1682) [BnF D-12405 (1)], vol. 1. Arnauld was an influential apologist of Jansenism, supported *inter alios* by Pascal in the *Lettres provinciales*: see also Preface to present work, xxvii and n. 14.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴² i.e. Arnauld demonstrates that the Old Latin is not a more reliable source than the Greek.

⁴³ Abbé Charles Mallet, *Examen de quelques passages de la traduction française du Nouveau Testament imprimée à Mons ...* (2d ed., Rouen: Viret, 1677 [BnF A-10088]). In Amelote's translation of the New Testament (see *supra*, ch. 15 n. 28) and, to all appearances, in Mallet's study, “common Greek” corresponds to the (commonly) Received Text of the New Testament (see Metzger—Ehrman, *Text*, 149–152), or perhaps the Greek text of Erasmus (*ibid.*, 142–149): any passage where this differs from the Vulgate—itself a translation, though approved by the Church (Mallet, 3)—Mallet terms “corrupt”; the “true” Greek text he nowhere identifies.

⁴⁴ See Arnauld, *ibid.*, 47–58, *Livre premier, chapitre VII: “Du 5. sophisme de M. Mall ... Grec vulgaire ...,”* “... as M. Mall. calls it” (*ibid.*, 11, and see especially 56, where the author alludes to the “phantosme” created by Mallet).

⁴⁵ See *supra*, n. 2.

call to depart from the Vulgate whenever it does not exactly correspond to the “common” Greek. In this regard, it is unlikely, as stressed by the Jesuit Mariana, that all discrepancies between the Greek and Latin texts can be ascribed to the author of the Old Latin version.⁴⁶ In Mariana’s view, this translator would have followed the best attested manuscripts available at the time, whereas the manuscripts used for translations published over the last century are minimal in number, and less reliable.

If this be the case, then the text in printed New Testaments can be described as being in “common” Greek, as compared to that of the early manuscripts used by the Latin translator, though these sources cannot be said to be written in apostolic Greek, or to represent the “original” Greek. Jean Morin too uses the term “common” Greek when referring to the New Testament text as published in our own times, enjoining Protestants to consider that “for all the times they seize upon differences between the Vulgate and the common Greek, these are not the result of some error, but that the text corresponds to the oldest codices, from which present-day Greek texts differ.”⁴⁷

Distinguishing in this way between different Greek texts of the New Testament derives from basic principles of exegesis: it is not a recent phenomenon. Bible texts in everyday use, as opposed to versions that were considered more accurate because they had been revised by scholars, were always described as being in “common” Greek; Jews similarly correct their own everyday scripture texts in accordance with the Masorah. This exegetic principle is exemplified by “Hilary Deacon of Rome”⁴⁸ in his commentary on Romans 5:14. He rejects the “common” text found in the Greek versions, asserting that these are less reliable than the Latin because they contain so many variant readings. “We should, he says, approach Greek codices as if they did not vary from each other.”⁴⁹ He turned instead to earlier Greek sources, from which the Old Latin version was translated: being convinced that the Latin sources were free of textual corruption, he held that the Greek on the basis of which they were made, was the original and true text.

⁴⁶ Mariana, *Pro editione vulgata*, 83B.

⁴⁷ Morin, *Exercitationes* ..., 92.

⁴⁸ Ambrose (ca. 339–397, bishop of Milan), *Commentaria in XIII Epistolas Pauli* (PL 17:96B). This set of Latin commentaries on the Pauline epistles has been mistakenly ascribed to various authors, also including (as in this instance, by R. Simon) “Ambrosiaster”: whilst St Augustine, among others, ascribes the commentary on Romans to “St Hilary.”

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

On the basis of this, Denis Amelote makes a distinction between the text of present-day editions, which he terms “common” Greek, and the true original. However, this does not prove that the latter is completely error-free, and therefore invariably to be preferred to the so-called “current” Greek, which is only referred to in this way because it has appeared in print in recent times.⁵⁰ Since there are in fact instances where this text corresponds to scriptural citations found in the earliest writers, this “common” Greek may well represent original readings. Bearing this in mind, Deacon Hilary adduces three criteria for deciding which texts are better: “I consider that something is accurate when reason, history, and authority are observed.” His authorities for what he considers the correct reading of Romans 5:14 are Tertullian, Victorinus Afer,⁵¹ and St Cyprian. On this basis, he considered the “common” Greek text of his time was unreliable, in light of the variant readings to be found in earlier and better attested sources. I am not concerned with assessing the Deacon’s accuracy in this particular instance, but with stressing the principle he expounds for distinguishing between a so-called every-day or common version, and an earlier and more reliable text.

Once this principle is accepted, we shall be spared many of the pointless issues, raised in all seriousness in regard to “common” Greek by Mr Arnould, and which he contends must be settled before this matter can be discussed. The learned gentleman then attempts to demonstrate that the designation “common Greek” cannot be applied to the editions produced by Stephanus or Cardinal Ximénez, or anyone else, because the expression is a meaningless invention by Denis Amelote,⁵² who has “devised a so-called ‘common’ Greek, as inaccurate as he could make it, for direct comparison with the Vulgate, whose perfection its faults would serve to emphasise.”⁵³ I grant that Amelote made wrong assumptions regarding what he terms “common” Greek: but if this latter be approached in the way set out above, it ceases to be wishful thinking, or a fantasy. Not that the Mons New Testament translators were justified in sometimes following the “common” Greek

⁵⁰ The “current” Greek text to which R. Simon refers is the *Textus Receptus* (i.e. the printed “Received” Greek text), dating from the 3d edition (1550) of the Greek New Testament published by Robertus Stephanus, which remained the “standard” text until the start of its “overthrow” with the appearance of Lachmann’s Greek New Testament of 1831 (Metzger—Ehrman, *Text*, 170–194).

⁵¹ Gaius Marius Victorinus Afer (4th century theologian and rhetor), *In Epistolas Beati Pauli* (PL 8:994).

⁵² See *infra*, ch. 31 n. 23.

⁵³ See *supra*, ch. 29 nn. 35–38.

text in their version, to the exclusion of all other Greek sources: given that some Greek sources do correspond to the Latin text, it is untenable to maintain that, in some passages, the Greek reading is invariably different from the Latin. But this is not to say that the Greek sources which match the Latin invariably contain more reliable readings than those of the everyday or common Greek version. All readings must be considered, as does Deacon Hilary, in accordance with exegetic principles, to establish which readings are supported by reason, historicity, and authority. Whether they are to be found in ancient manuscripts or printed editions, Greek textual readings satisfying all three of these criteria will represent the oldest and most reliable text.

So the notion of Greek New Testament texts held by some scholastic theologians and canonists, based on the pretext of upholding the authority of the Old Latin, could not be more wrong. They claim that in any passage where a contemporary printed Greek edition differs from the Latin text, preference must always be given to the Latin, on the grounds that truth dwelt continuously within the Church of Rome, whereas the Greeks falsified their scriptural texts (as schismatics do). However, the fact that the scriptural texts used by Origen, Chrysostom, and other Eastern Church Fathers in times preceding the schism, was identical to that used by so-called Schismatics today, clearly demonstrates the total baselessness of such an accusation.⁵⁴

Yet this idea, unfair as it is, has been around for centuries. No sooner was some scriptural discrepancy detected, favouring one side or the other, than the group thus favoured was accused of corrupting Holy Writ, even though the variant readings were nearly always the result of copyists' errors. Deacon Hilary, in the passage cited above, describes the idea as a motivating factor, declaring that the belligerent spirit which dominated both sides, was the actual cause of variant readings in Scripture, and that since neither side enjoyed sufficient authority in its own right, both sides falsified the word of the Law when disputes arose, in order to pass off their own views as Law.⁵⁵

Although such things did occasionally happen, mainly in early heretical sects discussed at the outset of the present work, I am convinced that most New Testament textual variants that were ascribed to schismatic disputes came about in the same way as did variant readings in any other book. For

⁵⁴ The schism between the sees of Constantinople and Rome: i.e. Greek and Latin Churches, whose culmination is usually ascribed to the anathema of 21 and 24 June 1054 pronounced by Pope Leo IX against the Patriarch of Constantinople.

⁵⁵ Ambrose, *ibid.*

instance, how many theologians today believe that the testimony of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was deleted from 1John 5:7 in early Greek manuscripts to lend weight to the heresy of Arianism?⁵⁶ And how many more claim that the words were a deliberate interpolation in the Greek text by the Arians, to prove that the unity of Persons in the Trinity is not a unity of essence but of unanimity? Grotius, one of the latter, considers that, for this reason, the Arians, far from excising any of the text, actually added some words, while on the other hand it was the Catholics who deleted the reference to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, leaving just the words *and these three are one*, which could cause no unrest for them, but which, according to Grotius, had also been inserted by the Arians:⁵⁷ however, all of this is based on no more than conjecture on his part. Everyone's prejudices affect the way they think: some blame the Arians for this interpolation, others the Catholics. But the whole conflict came about solely because the ancient New Testament manuscripts, and other documents which can be used to ascertain how these variant readings came about, were not studied with sufficient care. I shall not bother to resume my examination of this verse from the first Epistle of St John,⁵⁸ which clearly demonstrates the means by which the added words found their way into the passage, even though they were not in the early Greek or even in early Latin manuscripts.

So whenever early Church writers blame heretics for all the variants in Scripture, they are hardly to be taken seriously. We have already seen, in my exegetic history of the Old Testament, that most Church Fathers made the same baseless accusation against the Jews. Whenever supporters of the Latin New Testament texts attempt to show that the Latin sources are older than the Greek, they never fail to mention that it was within the Greek Church that the majority of heresies arose. Before making accusations, however, it must be established whether there is any substance in the points thus raised since, generally speaking, an original is of necessity more accurate than any translation, unless it can be shown that certain passages of a given translation in fact represent the original, the original having meantime been tampered with.

Members of the Macedonian sect⁵⁹ were once singled out as the culprits for interpolating the word ἁγίου *Holy* in John 7:39, for which the standard

⁵⁶ Cf. the statement by Richard Bentley (*supra*, ch. 18 n. 22).

⁵⁷ Grotius, Annotations on 1John 5:7 (*Opera omnia theologica ...*, tome II 1:1143A).

⁵⁸ See *supra*, ch. 18.

⁵⁹ To Macedonius († ca. 362), bishop of Constantinople, is ascribed the founding of the "semi-Arian" Pneumatomachi sect, whose adherents denied the full Godhead of the Holy Spirit.

reading is οὐπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα ἅγιον⁶⁰ *for there was not yet [any] Holy Spirit*; whereas the Vulgate has *Nondum enim erat Spiritus datus* “For the Spirit had not yet been given.” The Old Latin translator’s Greek text did not have the word ἅγιον, which is also absent from other Greek sources, most notably the oldest manuscript in the Colbert Library,⁶¹ and from the Syriac version. This leads me to believe that the word was an interpolation, not found in the Greek original. But no one is entitled to infer from this that the Macedonians were responsible for this interpolation: nor are there grounds for accusing them of the many similar interpolations to be found in other passages. It is far more likely that the Greek scholiasts, anxious to specify that the reference in this passage was to the *Holy Spirit*, inserted the word ἅγιον in the margin, a scholion which subsequently became part of the text.

The same is true of the Latin word *datus* “given,” which occurs in only one Greek source, Codex Vaticanus which, according to Lucas of Bruges, includes the word δεδομένον⁶² (“given”). It seems highly probable that *datus* was added by the Latin translator, duly mindful that the context of the passage is the gifts of the Holy Spirit; similarly, δεδομένον could have become a marginal scholion in one or other Greek manuscript. The Syriac version, which exactly matches the Latin, reads *had not yet been given*; also the three printed Arabic versions read *had not yet come*, which is the same meaning. Grotius held that the Greek δεδομένον and the Latin *datus* were added in order to preclude any hint of the Macedonian sect’s heretical untruth.⁶³ But there is no need whatsoever to involve these sectarians in order to explain the addition of this word, which simply served to clarify the Greek ἦν *was*, which retains its verbal function, and is not to be taken as a noun in this context. Finding that all Greek sources read οὐπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα ἅγιον *for there was not yet [any] Holy Spirit*, Jansenius, Bishop of Ghent, also believed that the Greek ἅγιον *Holy* had been replaced by *datus* in the Latin rendering, because the original reading initially appeared irreverent, as though the Holy Spirit had not hitherto existed.⁶⁴

In any event, as has just been demonstrated, changes of this kind crop up of their own accord, independently of all these theological standpoints.

⁶⁰ ἅγιον is a variant (as is δεδομένον: see *infra* n. 62, and NA²⁷ 272, apparatus line 7).

⁶¹ K 017 (Colbert 5149, now BnF Greek manuscript 63), the “Cyprus” manuscript: see *supra*, ch. 10 n. 1.

⁶² A variant reading: see *supra*, n. 60, and ch. 12 n. 24.

⁶³ Grotius, Annotations on John 7:39 (*Opera omnia theologica* ..., tome II 1:514A).

⁶⁴ Cornelius Jansen, *Commentariorum in suam Concordiam* ..., 560A. See also Metzger, *Commentary*, 186: “... lest an uninformed reader imagine that John meant that the Spirit was not in existence prior to Jesus’s glorification, copyists introduced a variety of modifications.”

When any part of the text is ambiguous, or unspecific, the passage is explained in scholia, which can easily become part of the text when the explanation is very brief, and even more easily in the case of a translation. In regard to this particular verse, Alfonso Salmerón, S.J., seems to me to be nearer the mark than Jansenius of Ghent or Grotius. He says, simply, that the early Greek manuscripts had *sanctus* (“Holy”) instead of *datus* (“given”), but that this divergence in no way affects the meaning, since the word *datus* here has to be understood, even though it is not present in the Greek.⁶⁵ Moreover in the Greek the original and true reading was οὐπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα for the *Spirit was not yet there*; and the Old Latin reads *nondum enim erat Spiritus*, as do other early Latin manuscripts. Lucas of Bruges notes that this was exactly how St Augustine read the phrase when specifically discussing it.⁶⁶ Indeed as this reading is the simplest, and the most natural, it is likely to be the original.

When reading early Church writers’ denunciations of heretics for falsifying Holy Scripture to promote their own new doctrine, it is as well to be properly informed: frequently the accusations have no basis in fact. In John 3:6 for instance, although the words *quia Deus spiritus est* “because God is the Spirit,” evidently added by some Catholic scholar as a gloss, were present in the Latin New Testament used by St Ambrose, they are not present in any Latin version in current use. Yet the holy bishop uses this passage as a starting point for railing against the Arians, accusing them of removing the words from the text they used. Would to God, quoth he, that you had excised them only from your own copies, and not from the Church’s own text. His accusations are so specific that he even states the time when he thought this irreverent act could have taken place; he feared also that the Arians had similarly corrupted the Greek texts used by the Eastern Church, adding: Though you may have set aside the words, you could not eliminate the faith.⁶⁷

A basic exegetical examination of what St Ambrose says the Arians excised from the Gospel of St John, indicates that the words were added by some Catholic persons in whose Old Latin text, John 3:6 read: *Quod natum est ex Spiritu, spiritus est, quia Deus est spiritus* “That which is born of the spirit is spirit because God is the spirit,” an addition never formally approved by any Church. Yet the same accusation was again unhesitatingly levelled against the Arians by Fulbert, Bishop of Chartres: because the Arians denied

⁶⁵ Alonso Salmerón, *Commentarii in evangelicam historiam et in Acta apostolorum nunc primum in lucem editi ...* (Cologne: Hierat, 1602) [A-1228 (8)], 293–294.

⁶⁶ Lucas of Bruges, *Notationes in sacra Biblia*, 382.

⁶⁷ Ambrose, *De Spiritu sancto* bk. 3 ch. 10, 59–60 (PL 16:789–790).

the Holy Spirit, he says, they excised the words *The Spirit of God*, uttered by our Lord, from the Gospel of St John.⁶⁸

Even less plausible is the charge made against the Nestorians by Socrates, in his *Church History*, of excising the words πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ λύει τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν *Any spirit that sets Jesus apart is not from God*, from 1John 4:3. He says Nestorius was unaware that the reading had the support of ancient manuscript sources, ἐν τοῖς παλαιοῖς ἀντιγράφοις; and that persons separating the Divine from the Human in Jesus Christ have removed the words from the texts they use.⁶⁹ Early Scripture commentators also observed, on the same grounds, that certain individuals who sought to separate the man from God, falsified the Epistle. St Fulbert, in the passage already cited,⁷⁰ also asserts that the words *Any spirit that sets Jesus apart is not from God* were deleted from 1John 4:3 by heretics such as Nestorius, and others.⁷¹

But does it make sense to accuse Nestorius and his sectarians of falsely supporting the reading found in every modern Greek edition, and in the Western versions, since not only is the reading found in St Cyprian, but attested by St Polycarp, a contemporary of the apostles' disciples? Unquestionably the alternative reading, the authority for which is the author of the Vulgate, is from a very early period. But evidently it is a scholium, or gloss, which later became part of the text. The word λύει *sets apart* was used to reinforce μὴ ὁμολογεῖ *does not confess*,⁷² the more strongly to refute early Heretics who denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, or saw Jesus and Christ as separate entities. This explains why both expressions are to be found, sometimes combined, in some early Fathers. Whatever the case, Socrates was wrong to reject the original and true reading in the Greek text of St John on the grounds that it lent weight to the views of the Nestorians. In the final analysis, there are two readings—both from early times—of the one passage: application of the rules of exegesis, as outlined above in regard to Deacon Hilary, is the only way to ascertain which is the true, or the better reading.

⁶⁸ St Fulbert (c. 960–1028), *Epistola v [olim 1]: De tribus quae sunt necessaria ad profectum Christianae religionis* (PL 141:197).

⁶⁹ Socrates "Scholasticus" (c. 380–450), *Historia ecclesiastica* bk. 7 ch. 32 (PG 67:809, 812).

⁷⁰ St Fulbert, *ibid.*

⁷¹ According to the doctrine of Nestorianism (from the name of Nestorius, a monk, † ca. 451), Christ was not simultaneously both God and man, but two conjoined Persons, one Divine, the other Human.

⁷² "Although several scholars ... have argued that λύει is the original reading ... [its] origin ... is probably to be sought in second century polemic against the Gnostics" (Metzger, *Commentary*, 644–645).

CHAPTER THIRTY

GREEK MANUSCRIPTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.
THE OLDEST SURVIVING MANUSCRIPTS WERE THE WORK OF
LATIN WRITERS, INTENDED FOR USE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.
PRINTED VERSIONS CAME FROM THE GREEK CHURCHES.
THE OLD LATIN TEXT USED IN WESTERN CHURCHES
BEFORE ST JEROME WAS BASED ON EARLY
MANUSCRIPTS CONTAINING INACCURACIES.
THE CAMBRIDGE MANUSCRIPT, AND WHY IT
DIFFERS SO MARKEDLY FROM OTHER GREEK SOURCES

Scholars who have published the variant readings in the different Greek sources for the New Testament would have done well also to comment on the relative merits of those sources. Since they have failed to do so, I shall endeavour to compensate for those shortcomings, so that the most accurate readings can be identified from among a diverse multitude. The previous chapter, quoting Origen, showed the great confusion resulting from the considerable liberties taken by Greek scribes who copied out the Books of the New Testament, and even by the scholars who corrected them. In his letter to Pope Damasus, who gave him the task of revising the Old Latin, St Jerome makes the same affirmation, with particular reference to early Latin sources.

In order to correct the great number of errors in the Old Latin, St Jerome believed it was totally indispensable to have access to the original Greek since in addition to the myriad errors by copyists, authors of the various Latin versions—as numerous as the individual copies—all sought to alter the Old Latin text in accordance with their own views.¹ The task was all the more awkward because the Greek sources were scarcely more reliable than the Latin: attempting to correct errors in the Latin on the basis of inaccurate Greek was, it seems, an unsound approach. St Jerome draws attention to the odd way the copyists had altered the Latin versions in use in his own time, “harmonising” one gospel with another, borrowing from one what

¹ Jerome, *Preface to the Gospels* [to Pope Damasus] (PL 29:526).

was apparently missing from another.² If one of the gospels happened to express something differently from another, the copyists standardised the others on the basis of the gospel they had read first, so that these early versions were in total disarray, various details from St Luke and St Matthew being added to St Mark, others from St John and St Mark being used to supplement St Matthew: in short, each gospel contained something borrowed from the others. Though St Jerome's observation appears to refer solely to Latin copies, what follows here will show that it applies equally to various Greek texts used in his day.

But for the fact that some of the early copies to which St Jerome refers still survive today, it could readily be imagined that he was exaggerating their shortcomings in order to stress the need for a revision of the Latin text that corresponded to Greek sources which were just as defective. One such source, made by copyists from texts in use before St Jerome's revision, and now held in Cambridge, is the Calvinist Theodore de Beza's diglot Gospel manuscript, in Greek and Latin,³ discovered in a Lyon monastery. He never appreciated the book's true worth, believing it to have been altered in places by a supposedly ignorant caloger⁴ who also added marginal notes or variants.⁵ But these are not the work of a caloger: as will be shown later in the present study, only the Latin churches, never the Greek, ever used diglots containing the Greek and the Old Latin. Accordingly, when Beza asserts the manuscript came from Greece because he found it contained notes written in Greek,⁶ he is manifestly wrong. He did not realise that Latins with some knowledge of Greek included the Greek text alongside the Latin text of their New Testaments, and of the Psalms.⁷

² Ibid. PL 12:527–528.

³ Cf. Aland, *Text*, 109: "The Latin text is related to the accompanying Greek text, standing independently of the main Latin tradition, and probably representing a secondary product."

⁴ An individual monk in the Greek Orient, from the order of St Basil (καλόγηρος "venerable"). Beza refers to "some untutored old Greek monk."

⁵ Beza, Letter (6 December 1581) to Cambridge Univ. "Quatuor Evangeliorum ... barbaris adscriptis alicubi notis apparet" cit. *Codex Theodori Bezae Cantabrigiensis: Evangelia et Apostolorum Actus complectens, quadratis literis, Graeco-Latinus* ed. [Thomas Kipling—published anonymously] (Cambridge 1793), preface XXI–XXII.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ [Editor's note:] The most detailed, thorough, balanced and comprehensive study of this manuscript that I know of is the unpublished doctoral thesis completed for Murdoch University in 1995 by the late Kenneth E. Panten, *A history of research on Codex Bezae, with special reference to the Acts of the Apostles: evaluation and future directions*, available online at URL: <http://researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/244>. (This thesis is also recommended by Metzger—Ehrman, *Text*, 73 n. 33). On R. Simon and Codex Bezae, see Panten 5–8. A

People at that time were not biased in favour of the Latin version to the extent of believing that the Greek original was not necessary sometimes, in order to rectify, indeed even to understand the Latin. It was on this basis that St Jerome and St Augustine judged it appropriate to correct several incorrect passages in the Latin text in light of the Greek. To make the latter more readily accessible, those wanting to know more included the latter alongside the Old Latin in the same volume. Beza failed duly to notice that in manuscripts of this kind both the Greek and Latin texts were copied out by the same hand, and that the Greek script in them more closely resembles the squarish early Latin uncial characters than the narrower and more elongated Greek letters of the time.

I myself became aware of this when using the second part of the Cambridge manuscript, held in the King's Library,⁸ and another similar manuscript in the library of the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Germain.⁹ The Greek and Latin texts in these two manuscripts of the Pauline letters are so close that it would seem that one was copied from the other, but for the fact that Codex Sangermanensis is less disfigured by alterations, and the characters used by its copyist are taller and grander. It can easily be seen from the script used in the two manuscripts, and the Old Latin text accompanying the Greek, that they were made by Latin speakers for the use of their Church. Both texts are written by the same hand and using exactly the same characters, to the extent that some of the handwriting in the Latin text consists of Greek characters, purely and simply.

There is one highly unusual characteristic, common to both manuscripts, and typical only of the Latin Church. Whilst it is beyond doubt that the Greek Churches considered the Letter to the Hebrews as Pauline, several Latin Churches did not accept this epistle, which these two manuscripts do not place together with St Paul's other Letters, but separately at the end of the codex. This cannot be explained in terms of a transposition, or anything else that can be blamed on the persons responsible for binding the leaves of the two manuscripts, since the beginning and the end of each of the Pauline

bibliography on the manuscript is to be found in J.K. Elliott, *A Bibliography of Greek New Testament Manuscripts* (Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, C.U.P., 2000), 49–53. An exhaustive physical bibliographic study (scribe, correctors, sense-lines etc.) is that of David C. Parker, *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and its Text* (C.U.P., 1992).

⁸ Codex Claromontanus (D^p 06 [6th century], BnF Greek MS. 107).

⁹ Codex Sangermanensis 0319 (already mentioned *supra*, ch. 10 nn. 5–6; see also *infra*, ch. 31 of the present work), 9th century, mistakenly held by some to be a copy of Codex Claromontanus containing the Pauline epistles.

letters, presented in the same order as we have them today, are specifically indicated. However, the Epistle to the Hebrews is not mentioned, because the Churches where these manuscripts were in use believed it was not by St Paul, or even canonical, which is why the Epistle to Philemon is immediately followed by a list—excluding Hebrews—of all books read in those Churches. Hebrews occurs only as a *hors d'œuvre*, a book not enjoying the same authority as the others.

All this clearly proves that these two manuscripts of the Pauline epistles, of the same kind as the Cambridge manuscript of the Gospels and Acts, could not have been written by speakers of Greek since, except for the Arians, all Greek Churches have always accepted the Letter to the Hebrews as divine and canonical, and never separated it from the other epistles by the apostle. Nor is it credible that the Greeks would have wished to supplement their Greek texts with a Latin rendering, which they could not understand, and which was of no use to them. Lastly, the very numerous errors in the Greek text of these two manuscripts is further proof that they were the work of Latin copyists whose knowledge of the Greek language was nil. I do not just mean elementary mistakes in spelling, which can occur in the work of Greek as well as Latin copyists: I am referring to words being wrongly used, which can only be ascribed to the latter, and of which I would give examples were I not convinced that I have clearly proved that Latin copyists were responsible for producing diglot manuscripts of this kind, as used in Western Churches before St Jerome's revision of the Vulgate.

Had Beza taken due consideration of all these factors in regard to Latin manuscripts, and borne in mind what St Jerome observes in his letter to Pope Damasus, he would have discerned the reasons why there is such a discrepancy between them and other manuscript sources, on which recent printed editions were based. St Jerome points out that the former were modified by harmonising several gospels, and altering one in the light of another. These selfsame shortcomings can be perceived by applying what St Jerome says to the Codex Bezae, wherein passages from other gospels are added to St Matthew, on the basis of whose genealogy moreover that of St Luke has been altered. In the letter by Beza already cited, his textual criticism of the manuscripts of his day is so closely linked to the Codex Bezae that it seems his sole intention was to provide reliable information regarding that manuscript, which is so different from the others that Beza claims he never ventured to publish all the discrepancies for fear that certain persons would be shocked.

However, whilst pointing out that the copies of the Old Latin accompanying the Greek in manuscripts of this kind were full of mistakes, St Jerome

also states that there were other more accurate Greek sources which he used when revising the Old Latin, thus obviating the possibility of anyone being shocked. For his revision the learned scholar resorted to older, more accurate Greek manuscripts, thus removing any confusion in the Latin text and accompanying Greek texts at the time.¹⁰ For the Gospels, he supplemented the Greek text with Eusebius's canons,¹¹ which are still to be found at the start of some manuscripts, both Greek and Latin, and even some printed editions.¹² The canons indicate what is particular to each Gospel, their similarities, and what they all have in common, thus to some extent rectifying the muddled aspects of the "common" texts.

He also says that despite all this, he steered a middle course, only correcting errors affecting the meaning, in order to avoid major departures from the Old Latin that was in general use.¹³ This judicious approach to revision also illustrates why the Codex Bezae differs so markedly from the standard Greek text in use today, and why the revised Vulgate more closely matches the Greek sources pre-dating St Jerome's revision than do the printed editions deriving from the texts in use in Greek Churches. He himself attests that he did not invariably follow the Greek sources on which he based his revision of the Old Latin, retaining the Old Latin wording where certain passages matched the Greek text—that of the Codex Bezae, Codex Claromontanus, and Codex Sangermanensis—on whose basis they were originally translated or modified.

Erasmus, and some of his successors, did not know what the difference was between the two kinds of Greek text, believing that the Greek sources which more closely matched the Old Latin had been corrected in light of the revised Vulgate. This is attested in the Response, pertaining to 2 Corinthians 2:3, sent by Erasmus to Stunica, who had found the expression *super tristitiam*—as in the revised Vulgate—in an old Greek manuscript from Rhodes. Erasmus held that the reading was repudiated by many early manuscripts he had seen in England, Brabant, and Basel; and he conjectured that the Rhodes manuscript should be grouped with manuscripts he had seen which had been altered in line with the revised Vulgate, adding that he would lend more credence to a Greek manuscript that disagreed entirely with the latter.¹⁴

¹⁰ Beza, *ibid.*

¹¹ See *infra*, ch. 33 n. 31.

¹² Jerome, *Preface to the Gospels* [to Pope Damasus] (PL 29:528).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ See Stunica, *Annotationes 2 Corinthians ch. II*, signature Gii (unpaginated); Erasmus,

It may be that the Greek manuscripts Erasmus claims to have seen were altered in places by Latin copyists: but whilst I myself, in the earliest manuscripts we possess, have encountered corrections of this kind, they were all made on the basis of other Greek sources, not solely on the basis of the Latin. To demonstrate the fallacy of Erasmus's conjecture, I need no other example than that which gave him cause to make the above exegetical assertions in the belief that the Rhodes manuscript had been corrected in line with the Latin. As well as in the Rhodes manuscript (cited by Cardinal Ximénez in his Alcalá Polyglot edition¹⁵), in 2 Corinthians 2:3, the reading ἐπὶ λύπῃ *beyond grief* occurs in Codex Claromontanus and Codex Sangermanensis which, as already seen, are both examples of unreliable early Greek manuscripts corresponding to the Old Latin, part of which St Jerome testifies to having retained in his revision to avoid departing too far from the Old Latin version, which was in common use.

On checking, I in fact found the words *super tristitiam* in the Old Latin text accompanying the Greek in both Claromontanus and Sangermanensis. St Jerome retained the words in his revision, in accordance with his professed exegetical practice of only correcting errors if they affected the meaning of the text. Erasmus would have been less wide of the mark had he simply said that the words came from elsewhere in St Paul's writings, since the early manuscripts unquestionably contain other such additions, even of synonymous expressions, alternative readings of which both have been included by copyists for fear of making an omission. Even if there were grounds for supposing that the Greek text was corrected in line with the Latin, this could only apply to the early Greek versions used in Latin Churches before St Jerome, and not to those of more recent times. However, it is more likely that the Latin text was corrected in line with the Greek, by which I mean the substantially altered Greek manuscripts from which the Old Latin version was made, and which Jerome had to correct in line with other Greek sources that were more accurate.

However, I have great difficulty in believing that so many shortcomings were present in the Old Latin from the outset: at that time possibly the Greek sources used were not so corrupted as they were subsequently to become.

Apologia respondens ad ea quae in Novo Testamento taxaverat Jacobus Lopis Stunica (Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami vol. IX/2 ed. H.J. de Jonge), 192.

¹⁵ Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros (1436–1517), Archbishop of Toledo, at whose expense the Complutensian Polyglot (i.e. Multilingual Bible of Alcalá [in Latin "Complutum"]) was compiled and printed (Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros [ed.], *Biblia polyglotta ...* [6 vol. in-fº, Alcalá 1514–1517]).

Latin scholars generally accepted the principle of making corrections in accordance with the original text. The Greek text having been impaired by glosses and additions, Latin copyists apparently also took the liberty of expanding their texts with those glosses and additions, which were so numerous that St Jerome dared not go to the extent of completely transforming the Latin text by removing them all. Anticipating the ways he would be criticised for doing so, he said: "Anyone observing the fundamental difference between the Old Latin, and my revision, will at once declare me an ungodly forger for daring to make such radical changes to the Church's long-established text."¹⁶

On the direction of Cardinal Ximénez, Stunica compared several Greek sources with the printed Latin version. On this basis, he was able to report that the Latin sources were a perfect match for the Greek, not that of the present-day printed editions, but in the sources used by St Jerome in his revision: these, he also states, were in fact early manuscripts.¹⁷ And yet, we are not entitled invariably to infer from this that the readings in those early manuscripts must always be considered more accurate than those in the sources we refer to as "recent," as the latter may well correspond to the sources used by St Jerome, who maintains that he avoided following his sources slavishly, for fear of seeming to modernise the Latin text too markedly. Stunica adds also that, even if there are discrepancies between the Latin version and the early Greek, there being no change to the meaning, these are a matter of only a few words, since St Jerome did not want to introduce alterations in passages where the sense would remain unaffected.¹⁸

It is therefore wrong to claim, as some scholars have done, that the revised Vulgate represents the apostles' actual original text in every instance where it matches the ancient Greek sources already discussed. These latter were markedly flawed; and as I have demonstrated, St Jerome, despite using better attested Greek manuscripts in producing his revision, deliberately retained some of those flaws. I shall defer discussing whether St Jerome revised the Pauline Epistles and the rest of the New Testament as well as the Gospels, until my analysis of the different versions in the second part of the present work. For the moment, suffice it to say that whether it was done by St Jerome

¹⁶ Jerome, *Preface to the Gospels* [to Pope Damasus] (PL 29:525).

¹⁷ Jaime López Zúñiga, *Annotationes Iacobi Lopicis Stunicae contra Jacobum Fabrum Stapulen* (Alcalá de Henares: Brocario, 1519, in-fol., sign. A–D (unpaginated) [BnF A-2064]).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

or another, the Old Latin text of the Pauline Epistles underwent revision in the same way as the Gospels, as much as possible of the Old Latin being retained.

Beza, being unaware whence came the very numerous different readings in his Codex Bezae—which alone contains more variants than all other Greek sources put together—admits that he detected nothing within the variant readings to make him suspect that the text has been falsified by early Heretics.¹⁹ He claims that, on the contrary, he found it contained a number of noteworthy characteristics, as well as some passages where, to a greater or lesser degree, it differed from the standard text, whilst being in agreement with either the Greek or Latin Fathers. He also claims to have identified readings giving support for the Old Latin. These variant readings are moreover mainly the work of Greek scholars, who amplified one gospel text on the basis of others in order to clarify the Evangelists' and apostles' writings, and used simpler terminology to elucidate anything that seemed obscure or awkward.

The practice of crediting the apostles with speaking better Greek than they write in their own works dates from very early times. A striking example is to be found in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius who notes, as had others before him, that Tatian, pupil of St Justin Martyr, not only incorporated all four Gospels into one, but also took the liberty of emending what St Paul wrote, crediting him with more accurate and clear expressions.²⁰ Some Greek Churches did not scruple in the least to use Greek scriptural texts reworked in this way, perhaps not even accepting other versions. Most amazing is Theodoret's account of several Churches in his diocese, unaware of Tatian's mischief, using his gospel digest for reading aloud because of its brevity. In the Churches where Tatian's "gospel" was held in high esteem, the learned bishop claims to have located over two hundred copies of it, which he removed, and replaced with the four Gospels.²¹

Nothing of this kind is to be found in Codex Bezae, wherein, as was customary in those early times, corrections were made by Orthodox scholars, who took the liberty of borrowing from one Gospel what they believed another lacked, and inserting it as a sort of supplement. This is what happened in Codex Bezae, for instance, in Matthew 20:28 where, as various scholars have noted, after the word *πολλῶν* for *many*, an extra passage, in both Latin and Greek, were interpolated after Beza.

¹⁹ Beza, *ibid.*

²⁰ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.29.6 (1:214).

²¹ Theodoret, *Compendium of Heretical Tales* bk. 1: XX (PG 83:372).

I reproduce it here with the same errors as in Codex Bezae, whose Greek text is in uncials, without accents or word-breaks.²² St Jerome, fulfilling his commission from Pope Damasus, deleted this interpolation from the Old Latin, soon noticing, as he proceeded according to his principles of revision, that the interpolation came from Luke 14:8–9, except for minor differences in the wording, where substitution of synonyms is a common feature. On consulting early Greek manuscripts, especially those including the Eusebian canons, from Canon x St Jerome at once observed that the passage occurred only in section 178 of St Luke, and must therefore be removed from section 204 of St Matthew where it had been inserted in this early manuscript. For this reason he incorporated these selfsame Eusebian canons in his Latin version (revised in accordance with reliable Greek manuscripts) in order to cleanse the Latin text of a confusing muddle, thus differentiating between the features that were unique to individual gospels, and those that were common to all of them.²³

There is no need to mention the various other additions of this kind in Codex Bezae, which can be consulted in Beza's notes in his edition of the New Testament,²⁴ in volume vi of the English Polyglot,²⁵ and in the Greek New Testament printed in Oxford.²⁶ It only remains to be observed that Beza, and even the other scholars who had no awareness of how these changes came about, only came up with wild conjectures on the subject, whereas if they had borne in mind St Jerome's observations in his letter to Pope Damasus when examining Codex Bezae, they would have realised that, to some extent, the Greek and Latin sources did correspond to the latter. The learned Father revised them in light of more reliable Greek sources. If we still possessed other Greek manuscripts of the Gospels and Acts from the same period as Codex Bezae, we would find they contained the same interpolations. Both the Greek and the Latin texts of St Paul's Epistles in Codex Sangermanensis tally exactly with the manuscript in the Royal Library, the second part of Codex Bezae.²⁷

²² See NA²⁷, 57 for the interpolation in verse 28. Metzger, who also reproduces and translates the interpolation (*Commentary*, 53), terms it "a piece of floating tradition, an expanded but inferior version of Luke 14:8–10." See however I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978 [1986]), 581: "[the saying] is, however, not derived from Luke but represents a translation-variant of the same Aramaic original, with Luke giving the more literary version."

²³ Jerome, *Preface to the Gospels* [to Pope Damasus (PL 29:528)].

²⁴ See *supra*, ch. 29 n. 11.

²⁵ See *supra*, ch. 4, n. 8.

²⁶ See *supra*, ch. 29 n. 16.

²⁷ See *infra*, ch. 31 n. 8.

In John 6:56, only Codex Bezae, in fact, contains two extra sentences.²⁸ Beza himself was amazed to encounter this addition in “a single early codex,”²⁹ though evidently he had in mind a manuscript other than Codex Bezae, since he inserts the addition immediately after verse 53, whereas in Codex Bezae it occurs in Section 68, after the word ἀὐτῷ in verse 56. It also occurs at this point in one of Stephanus’s sources, which is probably where our Calvinist took it from, making no reference to the Codex Bezae, which he owned. Had he consulted the latter, in his note on the passage he would not have said that he could not quite bring himself either to reject the addition, mainly because the first part of it occurred elsewhere, or to accept it, since he had encountered it in only the one manuscript. Impelled by his own leanings rather than by a concern for truth, he goes on to say: “Having found nothing like it anywhere else, I suspect that the second sentence was invented: no other passage mentions consuming the body without blood;³⁰ and the manuscript containing this reading was part of a collation made in Italy, where words attacking the Bohemians—and hence the Gospel—could easily have been interpolated.”³¹

So blinkered by Calvinism was the man’s vision that he overlooked the presence of this addition in a manuscript he actually owned, and which he often describes as *vetustissimum et admirandae vetustatis codice*, “a very early, and hence venerable codex.” No one in those early times cared about the Bohemians; in this passage the source collated in Italy with several others, drawn on by Stephanus, is authentic. Presumably the extra sentences were taken from a manuscript akin to Codex Bezae, from a time when no one was concerned with excluding the Cup from the Eucharist, or with so-called Evangelical Protestants. Still, as already observed, early manuscripts of this kind were supplemented with scholia, and with glosses mostly taken from other passages of the same books. Now is not the time further to illustrate Beza’s dishonesty in his New Testament commentary: this can be done more appropriately elsewhere. All I have sought to do here is to publicise the ancient Codex Bezae, regarded in wonderment up to now because of its variations, unparalleled in number and, hitherto, impossible to explain.

²⁸ See NA²⁷, 268 regarding verse 56; also Metzger, *Commentary*, 183: “a homiletic expansion [...] For the thought, compare 10:38 and 6:53.”

²⁹ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 252A (the annotation here cited actually refers to John 6:53).

³⁰ See John 6:53, 6:55.

³¹ Beza, *ibid.*

Jean Morin, though entrusted by the Dupuy brothers with the list, compiled by Cambridge librarian Junius, of every instance where Codex Bezae differs from other manuscripts, only published the variants matching the text of the revised Vulgate. Yet he could not help being struck by the particularly substantial discrepancies in the Gospel of Luke, where Codex Bezae manifestly differs not only from the standard Greek but the Vulgate as well. The discrepancies, says Morin, extend to whole sentences being deleted, inserted, mutilated, or reworded. He claims that the divergence between Codex Bezae and all other sources surpasses the difference between the Septuagint and the Masoretic Hebrew, if one disregards the various transpositions by which in any case the text is not impaired. He says, however, that since Codex Bezae consistently matches the other sources elsewhere, the Lucan text it contains must have been copied from a different manuscript of St Luke's gospel, into which the textual variations had made their way over time.³² Yet, being unacquainted with the reasons for such discrepancies, he does not venture any definite assertions, going on to say that, conceivably, passages from some hypothetical gospels were inserted in some manuscripts of the Lucan text, from which subsequently they were diligently expunged by the Church Fathers. His uncertainties would all have been alleviated had he paid due attention to the preface addressed by St Jerome to Pope Damasus.

Proof that Codex Bezae was not deliberately falsified by heretics lies in the fact that it retains the same order of events: the textual variations therein do not provide support for any unorthodox views, consisting for the most part of the substitution of some words for others, or the addition of passages taken from the other gospels for the sole purpose of clarification. It can thus be inferred that the discrepancies are merely the result of the liberties taken with the text in those days in order to make the New Testament more straightforward, scant heed being given to preserving the original wording provided the meaning remained undistorted. Whilst revising the Old Latin, St Jerome, foremost among textual critics, also emended the early Greek sources, of which it was a faithful parallel, on the basis of other more reliable Greek manuscripts, especially those containing the ten canons of Eusebius, which were in use in the Greek Churches before the time of St Jerome, and are still preserved there, on the authority of those same Eusebian canons.

³² Jean Morin, *Exercitationes ecclesiasticae et biblicae ...*, *Exercitatio* 2 ch. 3 part 3, 93–94.

One of the most startling variations in Codex Bezae is found in the genealogy of Jesus, in Luke 3:23–31: it is the same as that found in St Matthew, except that it goes back to Solomon.³³ It is plain to see that this genealogy was specifically remodelled on that of St Matthew 1:1–17, with the addition of the persons omitted in the latter. In his commentary on the passage, Beza notes the variation, admitting he does not know how it could have come about, since the Syrian translator and all early Church writers completely disagree with the genealogy, he himself being reluctant or not brave enough to differ from them. He conjectures that the divergence could have occurred in the lifetime of the gospel writers themselves, owing to a falsification of the genealogy by the Jews to forestall any credence being placed in anything else the Gospels contain.³⁴

There is nothing more absurd than this conjecture, used by Beza to accuse the Jews of a criminal act that never occurred to them, and which in any case would not have been of any advantage to them, since they could not have falsified every copy Christians had in their homes. St Jerome mentions the variation in his letter to Pope Damasus: and as has been observed more than once since then, neither other early New Testament sources, nor the Christians, not even the Orthodox, must be held responsible for this divergent reading in Codex Bezae. St Jerome states that in those days people took the liberty of changing the Gospel text on the basis of whichever Gospels they read first.³⁵ It was clearly on such a basis that the genealogy in St Luke was altered in Codex Bezae, with what was thought to be missing being supplemented with material from the Old Testament. No accusations were made against the Jews: in the Western Churches especially, copies of this kind, in both Greek and Latin, were commonplace before St Jerome's revision of the Old Latin. Although it could easily be demonstrated that parts of the Gospel of St Mark were modified in line with the Gospel of St Matthew, certain words actually being replaced with synonyms that seemed more precise, such an undertaking would be pointless, since the variants in Codex Bezae can be consulted in volume VI of the English Polyglot Bible, and

³³ NA²⁷, 162. According to Metzger (*Commentary*, 113 n. 1), "... Luke's entire genealogy falls into an artistically planned pattern ... 77 generations from Adam to Jesus." Marshall (*Commentary on Luke* 158, 160, 161) stresses the probable inaccuracy of Luke's genealogy "in some details," and the impossibility of reconciling Matthew's list with Luke's, the latter containing 57 names between Abraham and Jesus, as against Matthew's 41; Marshall is also convinced that Luke, a non-Jew, traced Jesus's ancestry beyond Abraham back to Adam, to stress the significance of Jesus for Gentiles as well as for the Jews.

³⁴ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 166B.

³⁵ Jerome, *Preface to the Gospels* [to Pope Damasus] (PL 29:528).

the Oxford edition of the Greek New Testament.³⁶ Whatever was required, I myself have provided by pointing out the true cause of the very numerous variants, textual critics' conjectures intended to explain them being invariably far-fetched, or just plain wrong.

When scholars emended these early copies, they were not concerned with preserving what the Evangelists and apostles actually wrote, which they paraphrased if they thought it was overly succinct, whilst on the other hand abridging the text in passages they felt were too wordy, transposing superfluous words to countless other passages. There is no need to go through all the textual alterations to the Gospels and Acts in Codex Bezae in order to state, once and for all, that, in both cases, the scholars' sole purpose was to make everything clearer. This is especially true of the alterations made to the book of Acts, with which the Early Church took considerable liberties. Still we find, however, that in those early times, when accurate preservation of the Evangelists' and apostles' original wording was not a priority, whatever changes were made to these books of Scripture, the meaning of the text, in spite of everything, was not affected. The one overall objective was to make it easier for the faithful to understand the Scriptures, which were riddled with Hebraisms and excessively terse expressions requiring elucidation, to which end, as the purpose dictated, the text had to be reworked.

But then again, some alterations in Codex Bezae, consisting of additional material, do not fall into this category. In Luke 6:5, for example, after the word *σαββάτου*, in Codex Bezae there is an addition:³⁷ "The same day seeing a man working on the Sabbath, he said to him: 'My friend, if you know what you are doing, you are blessed; if not, you are accursed, and a transgressor of the Law.'" Perhaps in early Christian times this was a familiar incident in an apocryphal text possibly ascribed to the apostles or their followers, from which it might have been taken. This would explain why scholars, who only ventured to emend the earliest New Testament texts in order to make them more accessible to all, would have had no qualms over inserting stories of this kind, which they believed were authentic: in chapter 7 we have already seen similar instances in the Gospel of the Nazarenes. If today we still had a

³⁶ See *supra*, ch. 29 nn. 15, 16.

³⁷ See NA²⁷, 171, apparatus line 6 (var. Luke 6:4). Consensus of scholarly opinion rejects the authenticity of this agraphon, which is undoubtedly is not part of the Lucan text (Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*, 233). On Codex Bezae (manuscript source D: see *supra*, Preface n. 10), see also Metzger, *Commentary*, 117: "The scribe (or editor) of D thus makes Luke enumerate three incidents concerning Jesus and the Sabbath, and climaxes the series with the pronouncement concerning the sovereignty of the Son of Man over the Sabbath."

reasonable number of manuscripts such as Codex Bezae, which were in use especially in the Western Church before the time of St Jerome, we might find they contained other added passages such as the one just quoted, and which are now lost because hardly any examples of books from those earliest times have come down to us.

Although Christians, unlike the Jews, evidently did not have Masoretes or textual critics to endow the New Testament books with the kind of uniformity we have encountered for several centuries in Greek manuscripts, and Latin copies as well since the time of St Jerome, apparently the Greeks adhered to certain manuscripts, emended by learned exegetes, which they considered more reliable sources than the rest, and which became their "Masorah" or text of reference. It was in line with such manuscripts that St Jerome, on Pope Damasus's orders, revised the Old Latin.

We turn now to the second part of the ancient Cambridge manuscript, containing the Epistles of St Paul.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

THE SECOND PART OF THE CAMBRIDGE MANUSCRIPT, CONTAINING THE EPISTLES OF ST PAUL: EXAMPLES OF THE VARIANT READINGS IT PRESENTS: EXEGETIC OBSERVATIONS

The diglot parallel Greek and Latin editions, in common use before St Jerome, and of which only rare examples survive today, are ideal examples of what New Testament Greek manuscripts were like in the earliest days of the Church. Obviously they could only be of Western origin, being written in Greek and Latin by the same hand: looking for such editions in Eastern churches would be fruitless. We are indebted to the monks for preserving some of the manuscripts. As already stated,¹ the Cambridge Codex was discovered in a monastery in Lyon. In their library, the Benedictine monks of the Abbey of Saint-Germain have the second part² of a comparable manuscript, containing the Epistles of St Paul. Pierre Pithou was particularly awed by the great age of both these manuscripts, which he consulted, noting that the first was thought to have come from the Church at Lyon: the second from the famous Abbey of Corbie (France).³ When Christian Druthmar, a former Benedictine monk who lived in the Abbey, spoke of a Greek manuscript thought to have belonged to St Hilarion, and in which the Gospel of St John came immediately after St Matthew,⁴ he was referring

¹ In the previous chapter, third paragraph.

² Codex Sangermanensis, containing the Pauline epistles, a supposed copy of Codex Claromontanus (see *supra*, ch. 30 n. 12), a 9th c. ms. acquired, following an accidental fire at the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés (19–20 August 1794), by Pierre Dubrowski, secretary to the Russian Embassy (see Alfred Franklin, “L’Abbaye de Saint-Germain-des-Prés,” *Les Anciennes Bibliothèques de Paris* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1870), 1: 107–1134, and especially 1240: now in the State public Saltykov-Shchedrin Library, St Petersburg [F v. 20]). Not related to Codex Bezae (see *supra*, ch. 30; and Aland, *Text*, 110).

³ Pierre Pithou, *Opera sacra, juridica, historica, miscellanea* ed. Charles Labbé (Paris: Cramoisy, 1609) [BnF F-5479], 11.

⁴ Christian Druthmar, *Expositio in Matheum evangelistam familiaris, luculenta et lectu jucunda, cum epithomatibus in Lucam et Joannem. San-Martini episcopi ad Mironem regem ...* (Strasbourg: Grüniger, 1514), [19] [BnF RES. A-1185].

to the first part of Codex Sangermanensis. The King's Library has another Greek and Latin manuscript of the Pauline letters⁵ which is identical to that of the Benedictines: whilst the characters are not as large or as grand, they have the same form, and belong to the same period. The Codex Claromontanus is also even more disfigured by innumerable corrections than Codex Sangermanensis: the latter does have corrections in places, but they are much more discreetly entered.

In fact both manuscripts can fairly be seen as a continuation, i.e. the second part, of the Cambridge manuscript (Codex D 05) of the Gospels, because they contain the Western Churches' ancient Greek and Latin versions, as used before St Jerome revised the latter. Admittedly, in his letter to Pope Damasus, St Jerome mentions revising only the four Gospels:⁶ nor is there any other evidence that he revised the rest of the New Testament in the same way. But in any event, definitely the whole of the Old Latin version was revised, by order of Pope Damasus, along the same lines as St Jerome revised the Old Version of the Gospels.

In his Notes on St Paul, Theodore Beza often quotes this early manuscript, which he called the "Clermont Codex."⁷ He also believed it was the second part of the Codex D. In this he is not mistaken: it is in the Greek and Latin script of the early Greek and Latin manuscripts that were in everyday use before St Jerome. For both scripts to be considered as authentic, provided that both are in fact from the same period, it is not essential for both to have been the work of the same hand, further evidence that both Codex Sangermanensis and Codex Claromontanus represent the second part of Codex D, since the Old Latin text is found in both, accompanying the Greek text, to which it corresponds.⁸

⁵ Codex Claromontanus (BnF Greek manuscript 107, hereafter designated by siglum Do6), 6th c. See *infra*, n. 962; also Metzger—Ehrmann, *Text*, 73–74: "The work of at least nine different correctors has been identified; the fourth of these added accent and breathing marks in the ninth century." An edition of the ms. was produced by C. Tischendorf (*Codex Claromontanus sive Epistulae Pauli omnes graece et latine ed codice parisiensi celeberrimo nomine Claromontani* [Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1852]).

⁶ *Praefatio ... in Evangelio (Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983), 2:1515.

⁷ Thus named by Beza himself, who obtained it in the city of Clermont-en-Beauvais in Northern France (not present-day Clermont-Ferrand [Auvergne]).

⁸ Cf. however T.H. Horne, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* (London: Cadell, 1828), 137: "Dr Mill [1645–1707, published Greek New Testament in 1707] contended that the Codex Claromontanus was the second part of the Codex Bezae; but this opinion has been confuted by Wetstein, who has shown that the former is by no means connected with the latter, as appears from the difference of their form, their orthography,

In his *Exercitationes* on the Bible, Jean Morin⁹ provides a lengthy discussion of Codex Claromontanus, which he borrowed from Messieurs Dupuy to identify various readings that were sources for the text of our Vulgate. He is convinced that the Latin text accompanying the Greek is the Old Version used in Western Churches before the revision carried out by St Jerome, by command of Pope Damasus, on the basis of early Greek manuscripts. Judging by the appearance and size of the Greek and Latin characters, some of which have been obliterated by time, and of the Latin text, which he compared with our Vulgate and the quotations in the Early Fathers, he considers that the manuscript in fact pre-dates St Jerome.¹⁰ As proof of the manuscript's antiquity, he also supplies the list of biblical books from the end of the manuscript, in which the twelve Minor Prophets come before the Four Major Prophets, and the Gospel of John comes before those of St Mark and St Luke, and which includes the Book of the Shepherd,¹¹ the Epistle of Barnabas, and other books as part of the scriptural canon: this manuscript, says Jean Morin, could hardly have been produced after the time of St Jerome.

True, Greek and Latin manuscripts like this do pre-date St Jerome: witness the Old Latin version, as used in Western Churches before the time of Jerome's revision. But what Jean Morin says does not prove they were actually written before that time: when copying old books, the monks could have imitated the presentation of even older ones, which is what I believe happened here. Physically, it is undeniably very old: yet the specialists place it in the seventh century at the earliest, and certainly there exist codices of this kind that are no older than that. Nor do I see that the fact of letters being almost obliterated in a manuscript has anything to do with the manuscript's age: all it shows is that it was written in poor quality ink. Codex Sangermanensis, which is just as old,¹² and has even larger script, still looks so splendid

and the nature of the vellum on which they are written. Bishop Marsh [Herbert Marsh (1757–1839)] adds, on the authority of a gentleman who had examined both manuscripts, that the Codex Claromontanus contains only twenty-one lines in each page, while the Cambridge manuscript contains thirty-three lines in a page; the abbreviations in the two manuscripts are also different." It is worth noting also that whereas the Greek and Latin texts of Codex Bezae have been harmonized, this is not the case in Codex Claromontanus.

⁹ J. Morin, *Exercitationes biblicae de hebraei graecique textus sinceritate, germana LXXII ... Pars prior ...* (Paris: Vitray, 1633) [BnF A-351], 107.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹¹ See Lightfoot and Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 189–290 (supposedly, the text was communicated to Hermas by an angel in the form of a shepherd).

¹² Today's experts attribute Codex Sangermanensis to the ninth century, Claromontanus to the sixth.

that, judging by the ink and the parchment, on the evidence of a few pages, one would think it had just been produced (to preserve ancient manuscripts, sheets of paper must be inserted between the leaves of parchment to stop the ink rubbing off). Lastly, anyone can add an old catalogue of Bible books to the end of a manuscript.

To my mind, as I have already stated, the strongest evidence for the manuscript's age is that the Epistle to the Hebrews is not grouped with the other Epistles of St Paul, but on its own, separated from the Letters read in Church. Jean Morin's statement that the catalogue included at the end of the manuscript was inserted before the Epistle to the Hebrews on sheets that happened to be blank, is ill-considered: all was done intentionally, the letter to Philemon being the last of the letters included in manuscripts of this kind which they had copied for their own use. Since adherents of the Latin Church believed neither that the Epistle to the Hebrews was by St Paul, nor that it was canonical, they did not include it with the other epistles, which also explains why the list of scriptural books was placed directly after St Paul's Epistle to Philemon.

Had Beza given due consideration to the corrections in this Clermont manuscript, as he calls it, he would have realized that the Greek Churches never used codices like this, so that, contrary to what he says, they did not originate in Greece. The very numerous blunders, in the Greek especially, show that it could obviously not have been produced by anyone even slightly familiar with that tongue. Most of the errors—not only are words misspelt, some are mutilated—have been rectified. Also in several instances the Greek has been brought into line with other Greek sources corresponding more closely to our Received Text. Presumably this was done by speakers of Latin, who also rectified the Old Vulgate in line with St Jerome's revised version.

Hence the marginal notes in these manuscripts must not be ascribed to calogers, as Beza mistakenly did, but to Western monks familiar with Greek; and the corrections in the codices, which passed through several hands, are from different periods. But in any case, the original Greek and Latin texts are still visible, especially in Codex Sangermanensis, which was altered so deftly that often the correction is no more than a light pen stroke on a letter. Seeing moreover that the differences between Claromontanus and Sangermanensis are so minimal, from now on I shall be referring to the latter rather than the former, which is in less good condition.

Generalising, Jean Morin asserts that the Claromontanus text of the Pauline epistles differs less than that of Codex Bezae than from the received text of the New Testament, and despite being older than that of our Vul-

gate, corresponds to it more closely.¹³ The same must be said of Sangermanensis: the two manuscripts are so similar that it seems one was a direct copy of the other. Clearly there is greater uniformity in the Pauline letters between Claromontanus and the received Greek text and the Vulgate, because the question of modifying the text of one Epistle in comparison with the others—as happened with the Gospels—never arose. Furthermore, in early Church times the Epistles were considered important, rather than being overlooked like the book of Acts, which in fact has been freely altered in various places since then. However, a careful examination of the passages where these ancient pre-Jerome MSS. of the Pauline epistles differ from the received text shows that alterations were made along similar lines and in the same way—addition of glosses, synonyms and extra words, conflation of passages—as in the Gospels and the book of Acts. Numerous transpositions have been intentionally made in the text, evidently to clarify the meaning or to avoid the hyperbatons that are so common in St Paul. Other passages are shorter than in the received version, either for the removing of superfluous material, or because such was the original text: indeed our two manuscripts may well contain the original reading, for although they have alterations, these do not occur throughout the whole of the text. To give a better idea of this, I shall give examples from the Epistle to the Romans, showing that, in comparison with the Vulgate, this second part of the Cambridge manuscript presents more variants.

In Romans 1:7, Codex Sangermanensis¹⁴ does not have ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ *beloved of God*; nor are these words present in the accompanying Latin; they add nothing to the meaning, which is made sufficiently clear from the words that follow: κληπτοῖς ἁγίοις *who are called saints*.

Chapter 1 verse 13: Instead of the standard reading οὐ θέλω *I would not have*,¹⁵ 0319 has οὐκ οἶμαι, and the Old Latin has *non arbitror* (“I do not suppose”): but the standard reading is in the margin of 0319, as is frequently the case.

Chapter 1 verse 16: 0319 does not have τοῦ χριστοῦ *of Christ* after the words τὸ εὐαγγέλιον *the gospel*, as is also true of both the Old and the New Vulgate: τοῦ Χριστοῦ is also absent from other early Greek manuscripts, and is visibly an interpolation.

¹³ Morin, *ibid.*, 55B.

¹⁴ Hereafter designated by the siglum 0319.

¹⁵ Literally “I do not wish.”

Chapter 1 verse 29: Between the words ἀδικία *unrighteousness*, and πονηρία *wickedness*, 0319 has κακία *evil*,¹⁶ as in the Old Latin, making πονηρία seem superfluous. With the omission of the word *nequitia*, unnecessarily added on the basis of the Greek, the reading in the revised Vulgate is the same as before.

Chapter 1 verse 31: The word ἄσπονδους *trucebreakers*,¹⁷ not originally in 0319, has been added by a corrector; similarly, whereas the word was not in the Old Latin, the revised Vulgate has *sine foedere*,¹⁸ as in the received Greek text.

Notably in 0319 there are several additions of this kind, written in the same hand as the main text, usually as footnotes, with a corresponding mark, as if they were actual omissions, though usually they are alterations, based on other Greek sources. In the Latin text, whilst for the most part the additions are present also, here and there the Latin does not exactly correspond to the addition in the Greek; the same is true of Codex Claromontanus. In the process of copying these manuscripts from early texts, scholars introduced corrections, other changes being added subsequently as well.

Chapter 1 verse 32: After the word ἐπιγρόντες *knowing*, 0319 has οὐκ ὀνόσαν,¹⁹ both Old and revised Vulgate texts similarly having *non intellexerunt*. In his note on this passage, Erasmus states²⁰ that since the equivalent of *non intellexerunt* is not in the Greek, the only reason it could be present in Latin manuscripts is that it was added to the Latin text. Jean Morin on the other hand asserts that *non intellexerunt* in the Latin was not added by St Jerome, but that a pre-Jerome scholar either included words in the Old Latin text corresponding to the Greek text in his own day, or made additions of this kind on the basis of Greek manuscripts that were similar. Morin concludes that the alteration was subsequently made, not to our Vulgate, but to the standard Greek text.²¹

However although St Jerome, reviser of the Old Vulgate, was not responsible for adding *non intellexerunt*, which is there in Claromontanus and 0319, this does not mean that Jean Morin is right to conclude that wherever an addition of this kind occurs, what the older manuscripts say is more reliable

¹⁶ Codex Claromontanus: κακία (second corrector: see Tischendorf, *Prolegomena* xxii).

¹⁷ Or "implacable" (see 2 Timothy 3:3).

¹⁸ Actually it has *absque foedere*.

¹⁹ Δο6 ἔνοησαν.

²⁰ Erasmus, *Opera omnia* vol. 6 (New Testament with notes), col. 568 (note on Romans 1:32).

²¹ Morin, *ibid.*, 56A.

than our standard Greek text, since the purpose of altering the manuscripts was to give them greater clarity. In any such instance they should be compared with the other manuscript sources and, if none of these provides support, it means it was in the old manuscripts, whose text was matched by that of the Old Latin, that the changes were made. St Jerome attests to retaining some of the additions in his revised text—the Vulgate we use today—because they did not affect the meaning.

Jean Morin goes on to say that if we could have access to manuscripts from the fifth century or earlier, we would see at once that their text corresponds exactly to that of our Vulgate wherever the Vulgate text differs from the standard Greek.²² However, even supposing this were true, could it be claimed, as Amelote does,²³ that in every instance the New Vulgate corresponds to the apostles' original words? The sole judge I invoke regarding this dispute, which has fiercely divided opinions over the last century, is St Jerome himself, who paints us a strange picture of old manuscripts from before CE 500. He had the task of revising the highly inaccurate Old Vulgate on the basis of Greek manuscripts that were more reliable.²⁴ However, having his own particular way of fulfilling the task, to some extent he preserved the Old Vulgate, in passages he could have corrected in line with the Greek sources. Is anyone going to suggest that in passages that were deliberately left alone from an unwillingness to change them, our Vulgate reproduces the true original apostolic text? From all this it can be seen that Jean Morin, and Denis Amelote after him, did not have proper knowledge of the “venerable and august manuscripts from the fifth century and before.” The great age of a document does not guarantee its worth or accuracy, especially when there is evidence the document was invalidated at the time in question.

Chapter 3 verse 12: 0319 does not include the Greek words οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα²⁵ or, in the accompanying Old Latin, *non est qui faciat bonum* “there is none that doeth good,” from Psalm 14:3 (Psalm 13:3 in the Septuagint). They have merely been added to both Greek and Latin text as supplementary footnotes coming from the standard Greek text and the revised Vulgate. Whilst they are present in all Greek sources, in accordance with the Hebrew, they are not included by St Justin in his Dialogue against

²² Ibid.

²³ Amelote, Preface to *Nouveau Testament*, [4, 8]. The “old Italic,” Amelote asserts, corresponds to the Greek “earliest original” (*sic*), nor does anyone doubt that Jerome restored it to its “pristine purity.” On κοινή or “common” Greek, see *supra*, ch. 29 n. 2.

²⁴ Jerome, *Preface to the Gospels* [to Pope Damasus (PL 29:527)].

²⁵ All in Do6.

the Jew Tryphon: they constitute one of many instances of repetition in the Psalms, and so were possibly deleted as redundant around the mid-2nd century by some person or persons working on the Greek text. Now in place of those words, St Justin has οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων *There is none that understandeth*, which comes from verse 11 in the same chapter.²⁶ However, scriptural quotations by Church Fathers cannot be taken as authoritative: their countless inaccuracies show how injudicious it would be to rely on them as a basis for altering Greek New Testament manuscripts.

Chapter 4 verse 9: After the word περιτομήν *circumcision*, 0319 has μόνον *only*: and although this is absent from the parallel Vulgate text, it is in the revised Vulgate, and its inclusion is essential for the sake of the meaning.

Chapter 4 verse 16: 0319 includes the word μόνον *only*, which is the reading in the standard Greek text, though not in the Old Latin, which read simply *non ei qui ex lege est* “not to [the seed] which is of the Law”; the Greek in 0319 also includes the standard reading ἐστιν *is*.

Chapter 4 verse 23: At the end, after the word αὐτῷ *to him*, 0319 repeats the words εἰς δικαιοσύνην *for righteousness* from verse 22; similarly the Old Latin has *ad justitiam*, which is also retained in the revised Vulgate.

Chapter 5 verse 1: Instead of the standard ἔχομεν *we have* (Latin *habemus*), 0319 has the subjunctive ἔχωμεν, and the parallel Latin *habeamus* [“may we have”].

Chapter 5 verse 2: 0319 omits τῇ πίστει *by faith*, and the parallel Old Latin omits *per fidem* which, however, the revised Vulgate includes, in line with the standard Greek.

Chapter 5 verse 5: 0319 omits τοῦ δοθέντος ἡμῖν *that is given to us*²⁷ and the Old Vulgate omits *qui datus est nobis*,²⁸ though the words are included in 0319 in both languages, as a footnote, probably taken from another source.

Chapter 5 verse 12: After ἀνθρώπους *men*, ὁ θάνατος *death* is omitted from 0319.

Chapter 5 verse 16: Instead of the participle ἀμαρτήσαντος *sinning*, 0319 has the noun ἀμαρτήματος *sin*; both Old and revised Latin texts read *peccatum*.

Chapter 5 verse 18: 0319 has τὸ σικαίωμα *righteousness* instead of ἐνὸς δικαιώματος *one righteous act*; both Old and revised Vulgates have *justitiam*.

Chapter 6 verse 11: 0319 omits τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν *our Lord*; and the Old Latin omits *Domino nostro*.

²⁶ Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* § 27 (PG 6:533).

²⁷ Present in Do6.

²⁸ However *qui datus est nobis* is the reading in both the Old and New Vulgate texts.

Chapter 6 verse 12: 0319 omits ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ *in the lusts thereof*; and the accompanying Old Latin omits *in concupiscentiis ejus*.

Chapter 6 verse 16: 0319 omits εἰς θάνατον *unto death*; and the Old Latin omits *ad mortem*.

Chapter 7 verse 6: Instead of ἀποθανόντες *having died*, 0319 has [τοῦ νόμου] τοῦ θανάτου [*from the law*] *of death*; both Old and revised Vulgates have [*a lege*] *mortis*, and the same reading is in Origen. In his commentary on this passage, Beza notes that he had only found this reading in his Codex Claromontanus.²⁹

Chapter 7 verse 14: 0319 has γὰρ rather than δέ:³⁰ these two conjunctive particles are often interchangeable, both in Greek sources and in the early versions.

Chapter 7 verse 15: τοῦτο *this* is not to be found in 0319 and the Old Vulgate does not have *hoc*, nor [*quod volo*] *bonum* “the good that I would,” as in the revised Vulgate.

Chapter 7 verse 25: Instead of εὐχάριστῶ τῷ Θεῷ, 0319 has ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ *the grace of God*, and both Vulgates have *gratia Dei*.

Chapter 8 verse 38: This verse is set out in 0319 as follows: ... ἄγγελος, οὐτε ἐξουσία, οὐτε ἀρχαί, οὐτε ἐνεστώτα, οὐτε μέλλοντα, οὐτε δύναμις; and in the Old Latin thus: *neque Angelus, neque potestas, neque initia, neque instantia, neque futura, neque virtus*.³¹

Chapter 9 verse 31: 0319 omits the first occurrence of [νόμον] δικαιοσύνης [*the law*] *of righteousness*; and the Old Vulgate omits *justitiæ* at this same point.³²

Chapter 10 verse 1: Instead of ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἐστὶν *on behalf of Israel* is ..., 0319 reads ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν *on behalf of them*; and the Old Vulgate has *pro illis*, these words being preceded in the revised Vulgate by *fit* (“let it be done”).

Chapter 10 verse 8: After the word λέγει *saith*, 0319 has γραφήν *Scripture*; and both Old and revised Vulgates have *Scriptura*.

Chapter 10 verse 17: Instead of [ῥήματος] Θεοῦ [*the word*] *of God*, 0319 has Χριστοῦ *of Christ*, and both Vulgates read *Christi*. Despite recording three

²⁹ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 414A.

³⁰ D o6 has δέ.

³¹ “Neither an angel, nor power, nor new beginnings, nor things present, nor things to come, nor personal excellence.” Instead of the words *Angelus, potestas, initia, virtus* “an angel, power, new beginnings, excellence,” the revised Vulgate text has, in this order: *Angeli, principatus, virtutes, fortitudo* “Angels, principalities, acts of valour, strength.”

³² The best MSS. repeat δικαιοσύνης *of righteousness*; similarly the revised Vulgate repeats the word *justitiæ* (... *legem justitiæ, in legem <justitiæ> non parvenit* “... the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness”).

manuscript occurrences of Χριστοῦ, Beza declares himself unable to grant it his approval.³³ In early Greek manuscripts the words θεοῦ, Κυρίου, Χριστοῦ were quite commonly interchangeable in their abbreviated forms, copyists frequently substituting one term for another because they were transcribed in abbreviated form, thus: ΘΥ. ΚΥ. ΧΥ.

Chapter 10 verse 20: 0319 does not have the words ἀποτολμᾷ καὶ *is very bold, and ...*; nor are the words *audet, et ...* in the Old Latin: for the meaning, moreover, they are superfluous.

Chapter 11 verse 6: 0319 omits the following, as do both Vulgates: εἰ δὲ ἐξ ἔργων, οὐκέτι ἐστὶ χάρις· ἐπεὶ τὸ ἔργον οὐκέτι ἐστὶν ἔργον *But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.* Although these words are not included by Origen, St Chrysostom, or St Ambrose, according to Beza they are in all Greek sources except Claromontanus, and should therefore be included to complete the antithesis which the passage expresses between works and faith.³⁴ Erasmus, inclining towards the standard reading,³⁵ would have given it proper support had he only consulted the two diglot editions with the parallel text in Latin. Grotius agrees with Erasmus.³⁶ Van Est, unwilling to venture an unequivocal statement, simply suggests the probability of the words being an interpolation in the Greek text; and yet he rejects Cajetan's assertion that they were not in the Vulgate.³⁷

Chapter 11 verse 13: ἑθνῶν ἀπόστολος *the apostle of the Gentiles* is missing from the Greek text of 0319 and *Gentium Apostolus* from the accompanying Latin, though the words are present in a footnote by the same hand as the main text, with a standard referring mark.

Chapter 12 verse 11: The abbreviation KY, such as appears in 0319 gave rise to variant readings in the Greek sources, some of which have Κυρίῳ *Lord*, others καιρῶ *time*. But the correct reading is Κυρίῳ, to which *Domino*, in both Vulgates, corresponds.

³³ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 435A–B.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 437A.

³⁵ But in fact the Received Text *does* contain the words εἰ δὲ ἐξ ἔργων, οὐκέτι ἐστὶ χάρις· ἐπεὶ τὸ ἔργον οὐκέτι ἐστὶν ἔργον. Does R. Simon mean Erasmus was inclined to *omit* the words? They are absent from several Greek sources, and are not in any Latin source (clearly an addition by some misguided copyist, according to Erasmus, Zegers, Van Est and Grotius, says Pierre Sabatier (1682–1742), *Bibliorum Sacrorum Latinae versiones antiquae: seu vetus Italica* ... (Reims: Florentain, 1743), 3:635).

³⁶ Grotius, Annotations on Romans 11:6 (*Opera omnia theologica* ..., tome II 2:739A).

³⁷ Willem Hesselszoon Van Est, *Absolutissima in omnes beati Pauli et septem catholicas apostolorum epistolas commentaria tribus tomis distincta ... Accedunt huic novissimae editioni ... textus sacer Clementinae editionis, annotationes locorum communium ad fidem et mores pertinentium, nec non index novus* ... (Paris: Leonard, 1679) [BnF A-1289 (1)], 1:126.

Chapter 12 verse 14: The words τοὺς διώκοντας κτλ *them which persecute* etc. are thus transposed in 0319: καὶ μὴ καταράσθε, εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς διώκοντας ὑμᾶς *and curse not, bless them which persecute you*. This is matched by the Old Latin text, which reads: *et nolite maledicere, benedicite persequentes vos*.

Chapter 12 verse 17: The words *non tantum coram Deo, sed etiam ... not only in the sight of God, but also ...*, are in the revised Vulgate, but not in the Old Latin, or in the old or new Greek versions.³⁸

Chapter 13 verse 5: ἀνάγκη *must needs be* is not in 0319 and *necessitate* is not in the Old Latin, which simply reads *subditi estote = ὑποτάσσεσθε be subject[ed]*; but *necessitate* has been added in the margin of the Latin text, and ἀνάγκη as a footnote in the Greek.

Chapter 13 verse 9: οὐ ψευδομαρτυρήσεις *Thou shalt not bear false witness* is not in 0319 and the Old Latin does not have *non falsum testimonium dices*.

Chapter 13 verse 12: Instead of ἀποθώμεθα *let us cast off*, 0319 has ἀποβλώμεθα, which does not affect the sense. Also in this verse, instead of ὄπλα *armour*, 0319 has ἔργα *works*, and the Old Latin has *opera*.

Chapter 14 verse 9: In 0319 the words καὶ ἀπέθανεν ... are transposed thus: καὶ ἔζησεν, καὶ ἀπέθανεν, καὶ ἀνέστη *and lived and died and rose again*, and the accompanying Latin text has *et vixit et mortuus est et resurrexit*. *Vixit* is not in the revised Vulgate, the reviser evidently considering that the word ἀνέζησεν, or ἔζησεν as in 0319 was synonymous with ἀνέστη, and that they were two readings of the same word.

Chapter 14 verse 10: In 0319 the second occurrence of σου *of thee* is followed by ἐν τῷ μὴ ἐσθίειν, matched in the Old Latin by *in non manducando*. In the same verse, instead of Χριστοῦ, 0319 has θεοῦ, and the Old Latin has *Dei*.

Chapter 14 verse 19: In 0319 after ἀλλήλους *one another*, the word φυλάζωμεν has been added, to which the reading *custodiamus* corresponds in both Vulgates.

Chapter 15 verse 11: After the word πάλιν *again*, 0319 has λέγει *he says*.³⁹

Chapter 15 verse 13: The words ἐν τῷ πιστεύειν *in believing* are not in 0319; and the Old Latin does not have *in credendo*.

Chapter 15 verse 19: Instead of Θεοῦ, 0319 has ἁγιοῦ, the Old and revised Vulgates have *sancti*. The following words have been transposed, with some

³⁸ *Sic*: by “old” and “new,” presumably here R. Simon means 0319 and the Received Text respectively. The reading *προνοοούμενοι κατὰ ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων*. *providing for good things in the sight of God [but] also in the sight of men* found in some Greek MSS., is evidently a “harmonisation” derived from 2 Corinthians 8:21.

³⁹ As in the preceding verse (15:10).

changes, thus: ὥστε πεπληρωσθαι ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ μέχρι τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ κύκλω *so that to have fulfilled from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum*; whilst the Old Latin reads: *ita ut compleretur ab Jerusalem usque in Illyricum et in circuitu*. Although this chapter does contain some other transpositions, as they are of no importance, I shall leave them out: presumably words were transposed for the purpose of clarifying the meaning.

Chapter 15 verse 24: 0319 does not contain the words ἐλεύσομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς *I will come to you*; the words are also absent from both Vulgates.

Chapter 15 verse 27: The words εὐδόκησαν γάρ *For they thought it good* are not in 0319; nor are the words *placuit enim eis* in the Old Latin.

Chapter 15 verse 29: 0319 does not have εὐαγγελίου τοῦ *of the gospel*; and *Evangelii* is not in the Old Latin.

Chapter 15 verse 30: After the word προσευχαῖς *prayers*, 0319 has ὑμῶν *your*; and both Vulgates have *vestris*.

Chapter 15 verse 32: Instead of Θεοῦ, 0319 has Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ; the Old Latin has *Christi Jesu*. Instead of συναναπαύσωμαι ὑμῖν *I may rest with you*, 0319 has ἀναφύξω μεθ' ὑμῶν *I may with you be refreshed*; and the Old Latin has *refrigerem vobiscum*.

Chapter 15 verse 33: In 0319 the imperative ἦτω *be* has been added after εἰρήνης *of peace*; and both Vulgates have *sit*.

Chapter 16 verse 2: After the word αὐτή, in 0319 the following words are transposed, with some changes, thus: καὶ ἐμοῦ καὶ ἄλλων πολλῶν *of myself and of many others*⁴⁰ whilst the Old Latin has *mihi et multis aliis*.

Chapter 16 verse 3: Instead of Πρίσκιλαν, 0319 has Πρίσκαν; both Vulgates read *Priscam*. In 0319 this verse also contains some words transposed [from verse 5], the express purpose of the transposition evidently being to avoid hyperbaton: at the end of verse 3, after the word Ἰησοῦ, 0319 has καὶ τὴν κατ' οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίαν⁴¹ *and the church in their house* (the Old Latin reads *et domesticam eorum Ecclesiam*), followed by verse 4 (οἵτινες ὑπὲρ etc.).

Chapter 16 verse 5: Instead of εἰς Χριστόν, 0319 has ἐν Χριστῷ. But in the case of variants such as these, which are quite usual in Greek manuscripts, the primary concern must be for the meaning of the text, rather than deciding whether to read εἰς or ἐν. A similar case occurs in the verse following:

Chapter 16 verse 6: Instead of εἰς ἡμᾶς *for you*, 0319 has ἐν ὑμῖν *on us* (both Vulgates read *in vobis*), seemingly a double-variant: yet copyists in

⁴⁰ The addition of the word πολλῶν in Codex Claromontanus was the work of D², i.e. the 9th century corrector.

⁴¹ In Codex Claromontanus, this addition is the work of correctors (D^{*2}): see NA²⁷, 438.

transcribing quite often mistakenly used one of pronominal forms ἡμεῖς and ὑμεῖς instead of the other.

Chapter 16 verse 15: Instead of Ὀλυμπᾶν, 0319 reads Ὀλυμπιᾶν⁴² and both Vulgates have *Olympiadem*.

Chapter 16 verse 16: 0319 does not have the words ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι πάσαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ⁴³ *all the churches of Christ salute you*; and the Old Latin does not include *salutant vos omnes Ecclesiae Christi*.

Chapter 16 verse 17: 0319 has ἐρωτῶ *I beg* instead of παρακαλῶ *I beseech*, and both Vulgates read *rogo*. In this same verse, after ἀδελφοί *brethren*, and before σκοπεῖν *to watch*, the word ἀσφαλῶς *carefully* has been inserted (the Old Latin reads *diligenter*). Also, after ἐμάθετε [*ye*] *learned*, 0319 has λέγοντας ἢ *saying, or ...*; in the Old Latin there is *dicentes vel facientes*.⁴⁴

Chapter 16 verse 18: The words καὶ εὐλογίας *and fair speech* are not in 0319 and *benedictiones* is not found in the Old Latin.

Chapter 16 verse 21: After the second occurrence of the word μου *of me* (the last word in the verse), 0319 includes καὶ αἱ ἐκκλησίαι πάσαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ *and all the churches of Christ*,⁴⁵ and the Old Latin reads *Ecclesiae universae Christi*. And finally:

Chapter 16 verse 27:⁴⁶ After αἰῶνας *ages*, 0319 has τῶν αἰώνων *of the ages*,⁴⁷ and both Vulgates have *sæculorum*.

The variants presented in this chapter and the one preceding, give an idea of the state of the Greek text in the early Greek manuscripts, as used mainly in Western churches before the time of St Jerome: the Old Latin version, also used in those Churches, corresponded to the Greek text those early manuscripts contained.

Whilst the revised Vulgate often does correspond to the Greek in those manuscripts, it frequently differs from it as well. Hence, contrary to the assertions of Jean Morin and Denis Amelote, the Vulgate text is not invariably to be preferred in passages where it matches the old Greek sources,

⁴² The (false) form Ὀλυμπιᾶν must seemingly be peculiar to 0319, since D has the standard reading Ὀλυμπᾶν.

⁴³ In Codex Claromontanus, these words were added by the first corrector (D*): see NA²⁷, 439.

⁴⁴ In addition to Do6, Fo10 and Go12, this variant is attested by ℱ⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ In Codex Claromontanus, these words were added by a corrector (D*).

⁴⁶ D includes verse 24, i.e. the benediction: Ἡ χάρις τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. ἀμήν. "The grace of our lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." It is not in ℱ⁴⁶ ℱ⁶¹ Ɀ A B C etc.

⁴⁷ Evidently this longer reading is a scribal "expansion of the doxology" (Metzger, *Commentary*, 477): it is not present in ℱ⁴⁶ B C etc. though it is attested by ℱ⁶¹ *vid* Ɀ D P etc.

since there are many other passages where it does not match. If, as these two scholars appear to imply, the old Greek version really did reproduce the apostles' original text, then it would be a total reproduction of the original, from beginning to end. If such were the case, then the Old Latin text—which follows the old Greek exactly—would have to be retained in its entirety: but St Jerome held that the Old Latin, being greatly flawed, was unquestionably in need of correction. I would have included, at this stage, the variant readings presented by 0319 in the other Pauline epistles, were I not concerned that the present discussion is becoming too lengthy; it will, however, be more appropriate to do so when discussing the Old Latin version, and especially the passages where it corresponds with pre-Jerome Greek sources, in the second part of this history of exegesis.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

OTHER GREEK MANUSCRIPT SOURCES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. VARIANTS CONTAINED IN THOSE MANUSCRIPTS, WITH CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

Our libraries hold quite a number of Greek manuscript sources for the New Testament, referred to and used by Greek scholars. Whilst they contain numerous variant readings, these are not significant. What they do have in common is considerable differences from the sources we have just examined—copies made by speakers of Latin—as I have ascertained by consulting a number of the manuscripts in the Colbert Library and the King's Library.¹ Admittedly I have not come across any manuscripts there as old as the Greek texts accompanying the Old Latin version preceding that of St Jerome: even though there are some from approximately the same period, they are extremely rare. Among them must be included Codex Vaticanus, referred to by some scholars, who have recorded certain of its variants in their work.

The manuscript discovered in Alexandria (Egypt), now known as Codex Alexandrinus, is just as old. Following Cyril Lucar,² some English scholars claim, though without any proper evidence, that this Greek copy of the Old and New Testaments, was written over 1,300 years ago by an Egyptian lady called Thecla. When the Patriarch Cyril presented this Bible to Charles I of England,³ it was in his interest to make it as old as possible. There was more than one Thecla; the name was also given to Roman ladies in St Jerome's day who had retired to the solitude of the East, where one and all admired their great piety. They knew Greek, and were curious to read the Scriptures in that tongue. There were also monasteries dedicated to St Thecla; and it might well be that this manuscript had belonged to one such. In any event,

¹ See *supra*, ch. 10 n. 1.

² Cyril Lucar (1572–1638), patriarch of Constantinople.

³ In 1628, through the intermediary of the English ambassador Sir Thomas Roe. Originally it was offered to James I, but did not reach England till 1627. In the British Museum from 1757, it is now held in the British Library.

it is unquestionably very old; yet, as may easily be seen from the variants recorded in the English Polyglot Bible,⁴ it differs from other Greek sources referred to by Latin writers. Grotius too records most of these variants in his notes on the New Testament:⁵ be advised, however, that this commentator does not always quote with total accuracy. In short, I cannot with certainty rule out the inclusion of the manuscript called Alexandrinus (or even the one held in the Vatican) among those described by Latin copyists in the earliest times.

I am not for one moment suggesting that Cardinal Ximénez failed to consult the most ancient Greek New Testament manuscripts when preparing his edition.⁶ But it is to be feared that some readings he included on the grounds that they corresponded more closely to our Vulgate, came from ancient sources that were corrupt. It may be also that the text of Stephanus's edition, based on comparisons with several Greek manuscripts held in Italy, also contains readings from those same corrupt sources, including the Old Latin version. The same reservation must be borne in mind regarding the sixteen manuscripts used by the Marquess de los Velez,⁷ in some of which several passages correspond to our Vulgate. The point of making general observations of this kind is to compensate in some way for the shortcomings of scholars who have failed properly to detail the merits and demerits of their manuscript sources. Erasmus and Beza, dedicated scholars in this area, use several such Greek manuscripts, but often commit errors when referring to them. They were completely unaware of the difference, discussed above, between the two types of Greek sources of the New Testament. In this regard, having adduced several examples of variants in the manuscripts described by Latin writers, it is proper that I also cite some of the variants in the other Greek manuscripts. As acquaintance with these can be made from several existing compilations, I shall discuss only major variants, deserving of some critical comment.

St Matthew, chapter 1 verse 11: the standard Greek text reads Ἰωσίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰεχονίαν *Josias begat Jechonias*, which is supported by the Old Latin and Syriac versions, and the other Eastern Church translations. However one of Stephanus's sources reads: Ἰωσίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰαχείμ: Ἰαχείμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰεχονίαν, a reading found in several other Greek manuscripts cited in the English Polyglot, except that they spell it Ἰωαχείμ

⁴ See *supra*, ch. 29 n. 10.

⁵ Hugo de Groot (1583–1645): cited *supra*, *passim*.

⁶ See *supra*, ch. 30 n. 15.

⁷ See *supra*, ch. 29 nn. 26 and 28.

instead of Ἰακείμ. Flacius Illyricus inserted it in his edition of the Greek New Testament, also making the same alteration in the Erasmus translation, which accompanies his text, *Josias autem genuit Jakin. Jakin autem genuit Jechoniam*.⁸ Simon de Coline also followed this reading in his Greek New Testament, on the basis of which Castellio's Latin rendering has *Josias Joacimum. Joacimus Jechoniam*.

It would seem from the earlier versions of Beza's edition of the New Testament, where the passage reads: *Josias autem genuit Jakim. Jakim autem genuit Jechoniam*, that he too followed the reading in Stephanus's manuscript source. Yet he retained the standard reading in his Greek text; and, as can be seen from his expanded commentary,⁹ did subsequently change his mind, saying that despite the support in one of Stephanus's manuscripts for the reading he had earlier followed, the reading was contrary to historic truth: and also stating, on the authority of Jacques le Fèvre and Martin Bucer—who, he claims, had actually seen Stephanus's source—an error had found its way into that manuscript which, he asserts, should be corrected to read as follows: Ἰωσίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν Ἰακείμ καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ. Ἰακείμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν Ἰεχονίαν ἐπὶ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος.¹⁰ On this basis, he adds, he had revised his own edition: in his latter editions, however, in both the Greek and the Latin text, the wording retained is the standard Greek.

In his commentary on this passage from St Matthew, in place of the standard Greek and Vulgate texts, the Jesuit Maldonado prefers the reading in the Stephanus manuscript (or rather the Jacques Le Fèvre manuscript). His chief authority is that of St Epiphanius, who held that in this passage the ordinary Greek versions had a mistake, on the grounds that copyists, seeing the name Jechonias used four times, surmised that this was needless repetition. Maldonado states: I do agree with St Epiphanius's opinion that a transcriber's omission occurred in this passage, resulting in the implication that Joachim son of Josias was the father of Jechonias; however, I do not agree with him that it occurred within the phrase *Jechonias begat Jechonias*, but in the following: *Joachim begat Jechonias* ... For this reason I believe the passage should be restored thus: *Josias begat Joachim and his brothers around the time of the Babylonian deportation, and Joachim begat Jechonias*.¹¹

⁸ M. Flach Francowitz (see *supra*, ch. 5 n. 13), *Novum Testamentum* ..., 7.

⁹ Beza, *Theodori Bezae Annotationes Miores in Nouum D. Nostri Iesu Christi Testamentum* (s.l., s.n., 1594), 4.

¹⁰ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 2A–B.

¹¹ Maldonado, *Commentarii* ..., 1:27–28 (on Matthew 1:11).

Yet despite the authority of Greek manuscripts supporting this reading, I am convinced that because the standard reading is the oldest and the simplest, it must be retained in both text and translation. That other reading came about because scholiasts observed in the margins of their texts that there was a missing generation, which they thereupon supplied in their note or scholium, this being then incorporated into the main text. Yet so far from adducing any early manuscript in support of the changes he made, St Epiphanius in fact supposes that in his day the text was the same as the standard Greek text is now, merely observing that anyone willing to check the passage in reliable manuscripts will be in agreement with his alteration. However, not only does he fail to mention any specific manuscript of this kind, he makes blatant errors, which are at odds with the account given in the Old Testament. It seems that his sole reason for altering the standard text was that whereas, supposedly, there ought to be fourteen persons in each of the three sections into which St Matthew divided the genealogy of Jesus, the third group only has thirteen. This, he says, resulted from an error made by copyists who saw the name Jechonias occurring more than once, and thought that the second Jechonias—who actually had every right to be there—should be excluded from the number of individuals comprising the genealogy of Jesus Christ.¹²

In response to Porphyry, who accused St Matthew of falsehood in this passage, St Jerome makes a similar observation at the start of his commentary on Daniel, to the effect that one generation appears to be missing from St Matthew, because the second group ends with Joakim the son of Josias, and the third begins with Joachim son of Joakin.¹³ But he provides no support from any Greek source for this. His sole concern was to refute Porphyry, whose stricture was based on the premise that the earliest manuscripts were identical to the present-day Greek text. There was nothing wrong with clarifying this passage from Matthew in a note, but it is not acceptable to insert a note into the text itself, which is why St Jerome did not include it when revising his Latin edition by order of Pope Damasus,¹⁴ in line with reliable Greek sources—further proof of the need to confine oneself to the standard Greek text, which is the oldest. In his commentary on St Matthew, Jerome merely makes an observation along the lines mentioned above, making no change to the gospel text itself.

¹² Epiphanius, Heresy 8 n. 8,2–4 (*Panarion*, 1:28).

¹³ Jerome, Commentary on Daniel 1:1 (PL 25:495).

¹⁴ Jerome, then secretary to Pope St Damasus, was thus commissioned at a Council held in Rome probably about 382.

If we want to place Jechonias at the end of the preceding series of fourteen, the next section will have only thirteen names, instead of fourteen. So we bear in mind that the first Jechonias was confused with Joacim, whilst the second (Jochin) is the son, and not the father. The first name is spelt with a C and an M, the other with CH and N. The confusion among Greek and Latin scholars resulted from an error by copyists, and the protracted period of time.¹⁵

Jerome here assumes that some, following St Epiphanius, have taken the text to mean that there was more than one Jechonias, he himself indicating the distinction by using two different spellings, in accordance with the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. But such a revision has no support from any source for St Matthew, unless there be some manuscript that is corrupt. In any event, I myself have no knowledge of what the text said in Greek and Latin manuscripts of the New Testament before Jerome, as the first nineteen verses of St Matthew are absent from the Codex Bezae, which only begins with the word παραλαβεῖν in chapter 1 verse 20.

The author of the "Unfinished Work" on St Matthew,¹⁶ using a text identical to our standard Greek, notes that there is a divergence from the book of Kings, and that the genealogical order should be presented thus: Josiah was the father of Eliakim, whose name was changed to Jehoiaquin, who was the father of Jeconiah.¹⁷ The author simply points out that, historically, such is the genealogy according to the Old Testament; he makes no change to the standard text of St Matthew, adding that it does not rule out Josiah's grandson Jeconiah being designated as his son, since a grandson can well bear the same name as a son.¹⁸

In Matthew 2:17, whereas the standard text has ὑπὸ Ἰερεμίου, one of Robert Stephanus's manuscripts has ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ Ἰερεμίου,¹⁹ a reading also attested by another early manuscript cited by Mr Saubert,²⁰ and by the Codex Bezae. Though Beza himself came across the reading in only the one manuscript, this did not stop him giving it preference over the other, one the grounds of its being more consistent with St Matthew's style, and of

¹⁵ Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 2:17 (PL 26:28).

¹⁶ PG 56:627–628 (see *supra*, ch. 22 nn. 22–23).

¹⁷ 2 Kings 21:26, 23:34; 1 Chronicles 3:15–16.

¹⁸ *Jeconiah* in fact was a variant name for *Jehoiaquin* (2 Chronicles 36:8).

¹⁹ R. Estienne, *Novum Jesu Christis D.N. Testamentum ...* (1550), 3 (see *supra*, ch. 17 n. 16 of the present work).

²⁰ As early as 1672 Prof. Johann Saubert of Helmstedt (see *supra*, ch. 29 n. 21), the first German to engage in discussion of specific problems of textual criticism with Dutch and English scholars, began collecting variant readings (see also Aland, *Text*, 9).

its being more forcefully expressed, thus showing us that the Lord speaks through the mouth of Prophets.²¹ But since the words κυρίου διὰ are present in so few other manuscripts, there is a much greater likelihood that they were interpolated in the Codex Bezae; nor can it be said they are entirely typical of St Matthew's style, since the Evangelist does not employ them in various other passages that are in fact composed in that style. Lastly, it is unwise to adopt a reading supported by a minimal number of manuscripts in preference to that of the majority of Greek manuscripts, on the grounds that its expression seems stronger. For according to the laws of textual criticism, the best reading will be at once the simplest, and supported by the majority of manuscripts, which is why St Jerome gave precedence to Greek sources over the Old Vulgate.

Chapter 2 verse 18: whilst all Greek sources for the New Testament have ἐν Ῥαμᾶ, in *Rama*, a place-name, Origen notes that the word denotes a high place, and that some manuscripts have, ἐν τῇ ὑψηλῇ in *the highest*.²² But this latter reading occurs only in the Septuagint text of Codex Alexandrinus, where the meaning of the Hebrew word *rama* has been inserted. Although St Jerome, translating from the Hebrew, does have *in excelso* "in the highest," he nonetheless retains *in Rama* in the Old Latin version based on the Septuagint, and in his own edition of the Gospels, merely noting in his commentary that *rama* is not the name of a place near Gabaa, but that the word means *high*, so that, he says, the passage means: *A voice was heard on high*,²³ in other words that the voice was heard far and wide.

In the same verse, the words θρήνος καὶ *lamentation, and* are not in 22, nor in the quotation of the passage in the *Dialogue against Tryphon* by St Justin Martyr;²⁴ nor are they in the Vulgate, though they do occur in the Old Vulgate and the Codex Bezae.

²¹ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 7B.

²² Pierre Poussines, *Symbolarum in Matthaeum tomus prior exhibens catenam graecorum Patrum unius et viginti ...* (Toulouse: Boudé, 1646–1647) [BnF A-1800 (1)], 32. Subsequently, in his *Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs du Nouveau Testament*, R. Simon had second thoughts about this reference (ch. XXX, 422–437: "Des chaînes grecques sur le Nouveau Testament"), asserting the implausibility of Origen's having made such a statement, the shortcomings of compilers of these *catenae* who abridge and even modify passages quoted, and the resulting inaccuracies, as in the instance quoted above from the work by Poussines. Having consulted King's Library ms. 1879 (BnF manuscript grec 187), which reads: "A few manuscripts of the Prophet have: *the voice was heard on high*," Simon specifies that the variants occur in manuscripts of Jeremiah, and not of Matthew.

²³ Jerome, Commentary on Matthew ch. 1 (PL 26:23).

²⁴ Jr 38.15 LXX 31:15 MT.

Chapter 3 verse 11: the words *καὶ πυρὶ* and [*with*] *fire* are absent from a great many Greek sources, including seven drawn upon by Stephanus, and seven more in volume VI of the English Polyglot, which also omits them; nor did I encounter them in 23 and 24. They are, however, present in Codex Bezae, and the Old and New Vulgates: St Jerome retained them in his new edition, and even discussed them in his commentary, though without indicating that there were any variants for the passage, which also appears thus in the earliest Greek and Latin Fathers. This led Erasmus to conjecture that some of the latter had deleted the words from their texts because there were heretics who actually practised baptism by fire. But the conjecture is unconvincing, since the same words occur in all Greek manuscript sources for Luke 3:16. Such, Lucas of Bruges considers, was the source of these words, which were added to St Matthew by copyists.²⁵ Maldonado rightly observes that in this case the particle *and* is an explicative and not a conjunctive particle, the inclusion of the preceding explicative words showing that the passage referred to the Holy Spirit's descent in the form of fire at Pentecost, and not to the Holy Spirit in general.²⁶ The fact that Mark 1:8 reads simply ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ *with the Holy Spirit* might lead one to suspect that the words *καὶ πυρὶ* were actually added to the Gospel of St Luke as well as St Matthew: yet two manuscript sources for Mark, cited in the English Polyglot, include *καὶ πυρὶ*. Still, however this latter verse be read, it cannot be used to finalise the passage in St Matthew's gospel, of which Mark is often merely an abridgment.

Chapter 5 verse 22: all Greek manuscripts have ἐκῆ *without a cause*, as does the Old Vulgate, as well as the Codex Bezae. St Augustine, however, despite knowing this reading from his contemporary Latin versions, had a change of heart about it because he did not come across it in any Greek versions.²⁷ Seemingly he disregarded the Old Vulgate, instead adopting the view of St Jerome, who omitted the words *sine causâ* from his new Vulgate,²⁸ observing in his commentary on the passage that although they may exist in some manuscripts, they are not to be found in the genuine ones, judging therefore that they must be deleted. Yet, as noted by Lucas of Bruges, of all

²⁵ See *Biblia maxima versionum, ex linguis orientalibus ...* (Paris: Bechet and Guillaume, 1660), 18:78B [BnF A-44 (18)].

²⁶ Maldonado, *Commentarii ...* 1:104 (on Matthew 3:11).

²⁷ Augustine, *Retractions* bk. 1 ch. 19 § 4 (PL 32:615). See also Metzger, *Commentary*, 11.

²⁸ Matthew 5:22 in Vulgate (PL 29:546B); Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 5:22 (PL 26:36).

the Greek manuscripts cited thus far, only Codex Vaticanus omits εἰκαῖ.²⁹ It was present in the Greek source used by the author of the Syriac translation, who retains the Greek word, which he simply transcribes in Syriac characters.³⁰ It occurs in the sources used by the earliest Greek and Latin Fathers. Only some Latin Fathers after St Jerome's revision in the fourth century believed it did not belong in the text. It would be perhaps not inappropriate to restore *sine causâ* in the Vulgate, which flies in the face of ancient tradition and the majority of manuscripts on this particular point.

Chapter 5 verse 27: The words τοῖς ἀρχαίοις *by them of old time* are not present in seven of Stephanus's sources, nor in some others cited in volume VI of the English Polyglot, nor do I find them in 22, 23, or 24. Yet St Jerome still included them in his new Vulgate.³¹

Chapter 5 verse 30: This verse is not in the Codex Bezae, nor in another source cited in volume VI of the English Polyglot; nor do I find it in 25. It would seem this was purely an accidental omission on the part of the manuscript copyists, because of homoeoteleuton, γεένναν *gehenna* being the final word in both verses 29 and 30: such omissions quite commonly occur.

Chapter 5 verse 44: Codex Bezae includes εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς καταρωμένους ὑμᾶς, καλῶς ποιεῖτε τοὺς μισοῦντας ὑμᾶς *bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you* and also these words, in the same passage: ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐπηρεαζόντων ὑμᾶς, καὶ [*pray*] *for those who insult you and ...*, virtually synonymous with what follows immediately.³² None of these words are in 22. St Jerome did not include the first four words in his new edition. Zegers thinks they were taken from Luke chapter 6, and interpolated in St Matthew.³³

Chapter 6 verse 4: St Jerome did not include the words ἐν τῷ φανερωῶ *openly* in his edition, nor are they in Codex Bezae, nor, as Lucas of Bruges observes,³⁴ are they to be found in Codex Vaticanus, nor did I myself find them in 22 or 23. Yet St Augustine states that although in his day several manuscripts included the word *palam* ["openly"], it was not there in the original Greek,

²⁹ Lucas of Bruges, *Notationes in sacra Biblia*, 350.

³⁰ Jean de La Haye (ed.), *Biblia maxima versionum* [Texte imprimé], ex linguis orientalibus: pluribus sacris ms. codicibus: innumeris fere SS. et veteribus patribus, et interpretibus orthodoxis, collectarum. Earumque concordia cum Vulgata, et ejus expositione litterali; cum annotationibus ... (Paris: Henault, 1655–1660) [BnF A-44 (18)], 18:78B.

³¹ P. Sabatier, *Bibliorum Sacrorum ...*, 27. New Vulgate *antiquis* Old Vulgate *ab antiquis*.

³² διωκόντων ὑμᾶς [*who*] *persecute you*.

³³ Zegers, *Castigationes in Novum Testamentum ...*, 17^v.

³⁴ Lucas of Bruges, *Notationes in sacra Biblia*, 351.

to which he gave preference over those Latin sources.³⁵ On the other hand it was on Augustine's authority that the Jesuit Maldonado sought to replace the word in our Vulgate, claiming it was there in the Old Vulgate before the revision by St Jerome who corrected the old text in accordance with the manuscripts already mentioned, and from which, says Maldonado, ἐν τῷ φανερωῷ had been deleted. He goes on to say that the contrast conveyed by *in abscondito* and *in propatulo* is proof that ἐν τῷ φανερωῷ belongs in the Greek text, and *palam* in the Latin.³⁶ Jerome did retain the older readings from some Greek and Latin manuscripts in his edition; so Maldonado is mistaken in asserting that Jerome revised the Old Vulgate in light of contemporary Greek manuscripts from which ἐν τῷ φανερωῷ had been removed. Codex Bezae shows the opposite; and moreover, St Augustine's statement clearly assumes that *palam* was absent from some Latin sources of the Old Vulgate. Lastly, Maldonado's argument, based on the contrast between *in abscondito* and *in propatulo*, proves nothing: the sense remains complete whether *in propatulo* is included or not.

Furthermore, the words ἐν τῷ φανερωῷ, which actually are part of the standard Greek text of chapter 6 verse 18, are not in any of Stephanus's sources, nor in Codex Bezae or Codex Vaticanus, nor in yet another source quoted by Saubert; nor did I find them in 22, 23, or 25.

Chapter 6 verse 13: although the words ὅτι σοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας *for thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever* are absent from one of Stephanus's manuscripts, from Codex Bezae, and from another early source quoted by Saubert, they are present in most Greek manuscripts, and even in some early Greek Fathers. In this case, however, preference must be given to a minority of Greek sources rather than the majority, since this minority are in agreement with the earliest Latin Fathers. It is clear enough, too, that this addition to the Greek, taken from the Greek liturgy, was inserted in the gospel texts they used in their churches. Several changes were also made to the Greek in those churches' lectionaries,³⁷ as I observed in my discussion of them.³⁸

Chapter 6 verse 25: the words καὶ τί πητε *and what ye shall drink* are neither in 22, nor in our Vulgate.

³⁵ Augustine, *The Lord's Sermon on the Mount according to Matthew* bk. 2 ch. 1 § 9 (PL 33:1274).

³⁶ Maldonado, *Commentarii* ... 1:186 (on Matthew 2:4).

³⁷ See list of sources for Matthew 6:13 in NA²⁷ 13; also Metzger, *Commentary*, 13–14.

³⁸ See *supra*, ch. 18 of the present work.

Chapter 8 verse 13: After the words ὥρα ἐκείνη *the selfsame hour*, three of Stephanus's sources have καὶ ὑποστρέφας ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῇ ὥρᾳ εὗρεν τὸν παῖδα ὑγιαίνοντα *and the centurion having gone home to his house in that very hour found the servant in good health*. The added words also occur in other manuscripts cited in volume VI of the English Polyglot; I also encountered them in 22, but could not ascertain whether they are present in Codex Bezae, as it has some leaves missing at that point.

Chapter 9 verse 13: The words εἰς μετάνοιαν *to repentance* are absent from two of Robertus Stephanus's sources, as well as from 22, and Codex Bezae. St Jerome, not finding them in the Old Vulgate, did not include them in his new version.³⁹

Chapter 10 verse 8: The words νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε *raise the dead* are not in nine of Stephanus's sources, nor in others cited by Saubert, nor in three Colbert library manuscripts.⁴⁰ They are present in Codex Bezae, but transposed. St Jerome, whilst retaining the transposition in his new edition, just as it appeared in the Old Vulgate, does not include the words *mortuos suscitare* when quoting the verse in his commentary. Evidently they were not in the Greek manuscripts he considered to be the most reliable. This did not stop him keeping the words in his own Latin version: he had not set out to provide a complete revision of the Old Vulgate.

Chapter 10 verse 12: After the word αὐτήν, five of Stephanus's sources, Codex Bezae, and other manuscripts cited by Saubert have λέγοντες· εἰρήνη τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ *saying, Peace to this house*. I have seen them also in 22. They are present in our Vulgate, though St Jerome omitted them from his edition,⁴¹ and they are absent from some Latin manuscripts.

Chapter 10 verse 23: In 22 and 23, after the word ἄλλην I read the following addition: Κἄν ἐκ ταύτης διώκωσιν ὑμᾶς φεύγετε εἰς τὴν ἄλλην *and if they drive you out of this [city], flee ye into another*: two of Stephanus's sources, and Codex Bezae also contain similar material. But St Jerome, considering this a pointless addition, included none of it in his new edition.⁴²

Chapter 10 verses 40–41: The whole of verse 40 is missing from 22, evidently a copyist's omission owing to homoeoteleuton, since verses 40 and

³⁹ Evidently they were inserted in Matthew on the basis of Luke 5:32.

⁴⁰ Quite possibly minuscules 22, 23, and 24 or 25, already cited by R. Simon in this chapter.

⁴¹ In Matthew 10:12, the words *dicentes: Pax huic domui* ("saying: Peace to this house"), though absent from the present-day Vulgate, and also from Jerome's commentary on this verse (PL 26:64A), are present in both the Old and New Vulgates (Sabatier, *Bibliorum Sacrorum*, 3:56) and Jerome's Vulgate text as published in *Patrologia Latina* (PL 29:553C).

⁴² *Vetus Italica* and Vulgate have *fugite in aliam*.

41 both begin with ὁ δεχόμενος *he that receiveth*. In verse 41, the following words are absent from Codex Bezae: καὶ ὁ δεχόμενος δίκαιον εἰς ὄνομα δικαίου μισθὸν δικαίου λήψεται *And he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward*. Seemingly they were deliberately excised from this manuscript because they seemed to be a repetition of what precedes. In accordance with other more reliable Greek manuscripts, St Jerome restores them in his new edition.

Chapter 11 verse 1: The word δώδεκα *twelve* is missing from 22.

Chapter 11 verse 2: In place of δύο, Codex Bezae has διὰ, and also *per discipulos*⁴³ in the accompanying Old Latin text, a reading supported by the editor of the Syriac version, who also had διὰ in his Greek original. In the new Vulgate, however, in accordance with the other Greek sources, St Jerome has *duos de discipulis* “two of the disciples.”

Chapter 12 verse 26: The words πῶς οὖν σταθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ; *how shall then his kingdom stand?* are absent from 25.

Chapter 12 verse 31: τοῖς ἀνθρώποις *unto men* is not in 22.

Chapter 12 verse 32: τοῦ ἁγίου *Holy* is not in 23.

Chapter 12 verse 35: τῆς καρδίας *of the heart* is not in 22 or 25, nor in several sources cited in the English Polyglot volume VI nor, as he himself notes, in one of the sources cited by Stephanus. St Jerome, not finding it in the Old Vulgate, did not include it in his revision.

Chapter 12 verse 36: ἀργόν *idle* is not in 24. Beza, in his commentary on the verse, notes that the word was absent from one of his sources.⁴⁴

Chapter 13 verse 11: Instead of τῶν οὐρανῶν *of heaven*, 23 and 24 have τοῦ θεοῦ *of God*.

Chapter 13 verse 35: St Jerome records a variant not in any Greek manuscript or any of the old versions, stating that in some sources, instead of *Prophetam*, as in the Old Vulgate, and as retained in his revision, he read *Esaiam Prophetam*, which led him to the conclusion that the original reading was *Asaph Prophetam*, because the Prophet witness here referred to comes from Psalm 77, one ascribed to Asaph; he also believes that the name Isaiah was deleted because the book of this Prophet was not the source.⁴⁵ But I feel it is more likely that what we have today in all Greek sources and all translations is the original reading, and the true one. Overlooking the fact that some Psalms have specific headings, Matthew said the words came

⁴³ Vetus Italica reads *mittens discipulos suos*.

⁴⁴ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 44A.

⁴⁵ Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 13:35 (PL 26:92).

from “a prophet,” actually meaning David, to whom the Psalms are commonly ascribed. It may be that subsequently, as a scholium for this verse of Matthew, the name *Asaph* was inserted, and later altered to read *Isaiah*, the revised scholium then surviving, as often occurs, in the sources St Jerome claims to have seen.

Chapter 13 verse 41: ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου *The Son of man* is not in 24, nor is ἐκ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ *out of his kingdom*.

Chapter 13 verse 55: Instead of Ἰωσῆς *Joses*, Codex Bezae, K 017 and 23 have Ἰωάννης *John*;⁴⁶ 24 has Ἰωσή *Jose*.

Chapter 14 verse 24: ἦν γὰρ ἐναντίος ὁ ἄνεμος *for the wind was contrary* is not in 23.

Chapter 14 verse 33: after ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ *in the ship*, the word ἐλθόντες *came*⁴⁷ is not in 22.

Chapter 15 verse 8: τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν *with their mouth*, present in both the Hebrew and the Septuagint text of the prophet Isaiah 29:13, is not in Codex Bezae, having evidently been discarded as repetitive. It is not present in the Old Vulgate: nor did St Jerome include it in his revised text.

Chapter 15 verse 31: Whereas the words κυλλοὺς ὑγιεῖς *the maimed [to be] whole* are present in Codex Bezae and the Old Vulgate, they are absent from St Jerome's revised Vulgate, and from one of the Los Velez sources.

Chapter 15 verse 36: ἑπτὰ *seven* is not in 24: such an omission could easily have occurred, especially in the earliest manuscripts, when numbers were simply indicated by letters, as in Codex Bezae which just has the letter ζ. Beza notes that the words καὶ τοὺς ἰχθύας *and the fishes* are absent from one of his sources.⁴⁸

Chapter 16 verse 2: After the word οὐρανός *sky*, K 017 has καὶ γίνεται οὕτως καὶ πάλιν *and it happens thus, and again*.

Chapter 16 verse 3: The word ὑποκριταὶ *hypocrites* is not in 22 or 23, nor in Codex Bezae. Not finding it in the Old Vulgate, St Jerome also omitted it from his revision.⁴⁹ After οὐ δύνασθε *can ye not*, 25 also has καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς *and being answered he said to them*.

Chapter 16 verse 11: After the words εἶπον ὑμῖν [προσέχειν] *I spake to you [to beware]*, three of Stephanus's sources, and also 24, have προσέχετε δὲ *but take heed*.

⁴⁶ Incorrect (error, or memory lapse?): K 017 does in fact read Ἰωσῆς.

⁴⁷ Literally *having come*.

⁴⁸ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 55B.

⁴⁹ Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* bk. 2 ch. 16 v. 1 (PL 26:112–113). Evidently the word was borrowed from Luke 12:56.

Chapter 16 verse 13: The pronoun με *me* is absent from one of Beza's sources,⁵⁰ nor did St Jerome include it in the new Vulgate: judging by his commentary on the passage, it appears he did not believe the word should be there, since he wrote: *Volunt scriptorum vitio depravatam, ut pro bar Johanna, hoc est, filius Ioannis, bar Iona scriptum sit, una detracta syllaba.*⁵¹ However, in accordance with Codex Bezae, it was there in the Old Vulgate.

Chapter 16 verse 17: Whereas the standard text has Βαριωνά, St Jerome notes that some believed this to be a copyist's error, and that the text should read not *bar Jona*, but *bar Johanna*, "son of John."⁵² Junius also included Ἰωννα in the Greek edition of Wekel,⁵³ but the former reading, which has the support of all the manuscripts, is the original reading and the true text: in those days the Jews used shortened forms of various names, so that *bar Jona* was equivalent to *bar Johanna* and in St Matthew, contrary to St Jerome's interpretation, it does not mean *son of the dove*⁵⁴ but *son of John*.

Chapter 17 verse 20: Instead of ἀπιστίαν *unbelief*, 22 has ὀλιγοπιστίαν "littleness of faith": though the sense is unchanged, this appears to be a gloss by a scholiast wishing to soften the term by replacing it with one meaning *little faith*.

Chapter 17 verse 23: καὶ ἔλυπήθησαν σφόδρα *and they were exceeding sorry* is not in K 017.

Chapter 18 verse 10: ἐν οὐρανοῖς is not in 25.

Chapter 18 verse 11: Beza claims some Greek manuscripts do not have this verse;⁵⁵ but the early Greek Fathers were familiar with it, and it occurs in all the early texts.

Chapter 18 verse 29: St Jerome's revised Vulgate does not have εἰς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ *at his feet* which were also absent from the Old Vulgate; nor are

⁵⁰ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 56B.

⁵¹ These words are in Jerome's commentary on Matthew 16:17.

⁵² Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 16:17 (PL 26:117).

⁵³ R. Simon's memory plays him false: the reading is Βάρ Ἰωνά (as in L (BnF Gr 62) and 33 (BnF Gr 14) *inter al*): see François Du Jon (1545–1602) or Friedrich Sylburg (1536–1596) (ed.), *Τῆς Θείας Γραφῆς, παλαιᾶς δηλαδὴ καὶ νέας Διαθήκης, ἅπαντα = Divinae Scripturae, nempe Veteris ac Novi Testamenti, omnia recens à viro doctissimo ac linguarum peritissimo diligenter recognita, and multis in locis emendata, variisque lectionibus ex diversorum exemplarium collatione decerptis, et ad hebraicam veritatem in veteri Testamento revocatis aucta and illustrata* (Frankfurt: heirs of Andreas Wechel, Claude de Marne and Jean Aubry, 1597). In-2°, [8]-1098-[2], 918 [BnF A-51]. According to the Latin preface, the text of the New Testament is that of the 1568–1569 edition of Robert Estienne (1540–1570, son of Robert Stephanus: father and son had the same forename).

⁵⁴ Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 16:17 (PL 16:117B): *filius colombae*.

⁵⁵ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 62B.

they in Codex Bezae, having apparently been deleted as superfluous, though Beza contends they were in all the sources he used.⁵⁶ Ten of Stephanus's sources do not have πάντα *all*. In K 017 I found the words transposed thus: ἀποδώσω σοι πάντα.

Chapter 18 verse 35: τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν *their trespasses* are not in Codex Bezae, nor in 25, though here they have been added in the margin by a later hand. St Jerome, in accordance with the Old Vulgate, did not include them in the New; though Beza claims to have found them in all of his sources.⁵⁷

Chapter 19 verse 9: In place of μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ, *not for fornication*, Codex Bezae has παρεκτός λόγου πορνείας *apart from a matter of fornication*,⁵⁸ meaning the same thing. 25 actually contains both readings, though the latter has been struck out.

Chapter 19 verse 17: Whilst the standard Greek text reads [τί με] λέγεις ἀγαθόν; οὐδεὶς ἀγαθός, εἰ μὴ εἷς, ὁ Θεός *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God*,⁵⁹ 22 has ἐρωτᾷς περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ; εἷς ἐστὶν ὁ ἀγαθός *Why questionest thou me about the good? One [alone] is [the] good*, a reading supported by two of Stephanus's sources, Codex Bezae, and Codex Vaticanus. Present in the Old Vulgate, it was retained by St Jerome in his revision, except that he added the word *Deus* "God," which was not there before.

Chapter 19 verse 20: ἐκ νεότητός μου *from my youth* is not in 22, or in several early Latin manuscripts. However, as Lucas of Bruges observes, the scholars in Rome who revised the Vulgate, found it appropriate to retain them:⁶⁰ they are to be found in the Old Vulgate and the New.

Chapter 20 verse 7: The words καὶ ὃ ἐὰν ᾗ δίκαιον λήψεσθε *and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive*, though not in Codex Bezae or Los Velez, are in all other manuscripts and the early Eastern texts. Absent from the Old Vulgate, they were not restored by St Jerome in the New. There are several other words from Chapter 20 not in Codex Bezae or Los Velez or the Vulgate, but which are in fact to be found in all the other Greek manuscripts. It would appear that the Marquess de los Velez was using a source closely resembling

⁵⁶ Ibid., 63B–64A.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 64B.

⁵⁸ This wording is the same as in Matthew 5:32.

⁵⁹ As in Mark 10:18, Luke 18:19.

⁶⁰ Lucas of Bruges, *Romanæ correctionis in latinis Bibliis editionis vulgatae, jussu Sixti V, ... recognitis, loca insigniora, observata ...* (Antwerp: Moretus, 1603), 80a [BnF A-7464] (such is also the reading in Mark 10:20).

Codex Bezae, which in many cases he followed, though it differed from the other manuscripts. Not surprisingly, in these instances the new Vulgate and the Old correspond to Codex Bezae and Los Velez, because St Jerome himself states that at the time he revised the Vulgate, he did not alter it completely in accordance with the Greek sources for fear of shocking the fainthearted, and giving the impression of being a revolutionary by departing too far from the early Western Church texts.

Chapter 20 verse 22: μέλλω πίνειν καὶ, *I shall drink of*,⁶¹ and ..., instead of καὶ, three of Stephanus's sources, as well as 23 have πίνω ἤ, whilst 24 has ἤ or. In the Greek manuscripts, replacement of the conjunction καὶ with the disjunctive ἤ occurred quite commonly. In the same verse, Codex Bezae, two Stephanus sources, Los Velez, 22, and the Vulgate do not have the words καὶ τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι βαπτισθῆναι; *and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?* It looks very much as if they were taken from St Mark,⁶² and added to St Matthew at this point: this would explain why those same sources do not have these words from the verse following: καὶ τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι βαπτισθῆσθε and *ye shall be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with.*

Chapter 21 verse 31: Instead of ὁ πρότερος *the former*, as in all Greek sources, in its Greek text Codex Bezae has ὁ ἔσχατος *the latter*, and *novissimus*⁶³ in the accompanying Latin, as do some early Latin Fathers. Despite the reading *novissimus* being in the Old Vulgate, St Jerome discarded it, contending that genuine sources read *primus*.⁶⁴

Chapter 21 verse 45: In place of Φαρισαῖοι *Pharisees*, 23 and some other sources read Γραμματεῖς *Scribes*.

Chapter 23 verse 14: This verse is absent from both the Greek and Latin texts in Codex Bezae. In the margin of their edition, the Louvain scholars also cite ten Latin manuscripts which do not include it.⁶⁵ It also seems that St Jerome did not include it in his revision, since although he discusses other verses referring to the Pharisees in his commentary, he does not discuss this one, even though the verse is included in the accompanying Latin text.

⁶¹ Literally [*I am*] *about to drink*.

⁶² In Mark 10:38–39.

⁶³ *novissimus* “youngest”; also “last,” as in “the last line” (of soldiers).

⁶⁴ Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 21:32 (PL 26:156).

⁶⁵ A misrecollection? Though some scriptural cross-references are present, the text of Matthew 23:14 (and 27:35, see also *infra* n. 82) is not accompanied by references to manuscript sources in either *La Sainte Bible, nouvellement traduite ...* (Louvain 1550) or *Le Nouveau Testament ... traduit ... par les theologiens de Louvain* (Antwerp: Plantin, 1573).

Some New Testament commentators note that the verse did not occur in the texts used by Origen and Eusebius. Though I myself did nonetheless find it in quite a number of the manuscripts I consulted, in most of them it is transposed: five Colbert library manuscripts have verse 14 before verse 13.⁶⁶ Stephanus does not record the existence of any variant readings in his sources.

Chapter 24 verse 2: Οὐ βλέπετε *See ye not ...* The negative particle οὐ is not in Codex Bezae, nor in five of Stephanus's sources, nor do I find it in 24; as it is not in the Old Vulgate, St Jerome did not include it in his revision.

Chapter 24 verse 9: 24 does not have the words τῶν ἐθνῶν [*by*] *the nations*. Beza notes that it is not present in one of his sources, but goes on to say that the meaning is more far-reaching if the words are left out.⁶⁷

Chapter 24 verse 36: In Codex Bezae, οὐδὲ ὁ υἱὸς *nor the Son* has been inserted after τῶν οὐρανῶν *of the heavens*. It seems likely that since no other sources contain these extra words, they were taken from Mark 13:32, where such is in fact the wording. St Jerome felt no compulsion to include them in his revision, even though they are to be found in some copies of the Old Vulgate dating from his lifetime. He also notes that they were not present in Greek sources used by Origen or Pierius,⁶⁸ nor indeed in many Greek sources at all.⁶⁹

Chapter 25 verse 13: The words ἐν ᾧ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεται *wherein the Son of Man cometh*⁷⁰ are not in Codex Bezae or Codex Alexandrinus, in 22, in three of Stephanus's sources, or in Los Velez; nor did St Jerome include them in his revision.

Chapter 26 verse 3: The words καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς *and the Scribes* are not in Codex Bezae or Codex Alexandrinus, nor in two of Stephanus's sources, nor in others cited in volume VI of the English Polyglot, nor did St Jerome include it in his revision. In the same verse, instead of εἰς τὴν αὐλήν *in the court*, 26 has [εἰς τὴν] ἀρχήν,⁷¹ evidently a copyist's error.

Chapter 26 verse 11: The words πάντοτε γὰρ [τοὺς πτωχοὺς] *for always [ye have] the poor* are not in 24 or 26; while in 22 and 25 they are transposed to read τοὺς πτωχοὺς γὰρ πάντοτε.

⁶⁶ There seems no doubt that verse 14 is an interpolation deriving from Mark 12:40 and/or Luke 20:47.

⁶⁷ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 79B.

⁶⁸ See *supra*, Preface n. 6.

⁶⁹ Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 24:36 (PL 26:181).

⁷⁰ An "echo" of Matthew 24:44?

⁷¹ "in the first place," "in the first instance."

Chapter 26 verse 24: Instead of παραδίδοται *is betrayed*, Los Velez has the future tense παραδοθήσεται *shall be betrayed*, as in the Old and the New Vulgates;⁷² Codex Bezae has the present tense παραδίδοται *is betrayed*.

Chapter 26 verse 26: In place of εὐλογήσας *having blessed*, Codex Alexandrinus, K 017, 22, 24, 25 and 26, as well as seven of Stephanus's sources and some editions of the New Testament, have εὐχαριστήσας *having given thanks* though in this context the variation does not affect the sense.⁷³

Chapter 26 verse 28: Instead of ἐκχυνόμενον *being shed*, Los Velez is the only source that reads ἐκχυθησόμενον *to be shed*, as in the Vulgate.

Chapter 27 verse 9: All Greek manuscripts mentioned thus far have Ἰερεμίου *Jeremiah*. However the passage here quoted by St Matthew is not in Jeremiah, but in Zechariah⁷⁴ 11:13, which has led some New Testament commentators to believe that a memory lapse caused the Evangelist to put down the wrong name for the Prophet on whose witness he was drawing. Others have more plausibly ascribed the blame for the error to copyists of some manuscripts, having seen the name in the abbreviated form ZPIO, then mistakenly setting it down as IPIOY. In 22, I actually found the name Ζαχαρίου *Zechariah* all the way through. Then again, the error is noted by Origen and St Jerome, and so must have occurred very early on. The latter refers to an apocryphal book lent to him by a Nazarene sectarian, and attributed to Jeremiah, in which the selfsame passage occurs word for word.⁷⁵ It is therefore possible that in their Hebrew text of St Matthew, the early Nazarenes had the name of the prophet Jeremiah, which was retained in the Greek version of St Matthew. Codex Bezae having a torn leaf at this point, it is not possible to say whether or not it has the standard reading.

Chapter 27 verse 34: In place of ὄξος *vinegar*, Codex Bezae, Los Velez, one Stephanus source, and K 017 read οἶνον *wine*, as in the Old Vulgate, though St Jerome's revision has *acetum*. Beza too believed the correct Greek reading was οἶνον *wine*, as also found in St Mark 15:23.⁷⁶ However, it cannot reliably be decided whether a reading in one gospel is accurate on the basis of what another Evangelist wrote; indeed it appears that St Jerome actually decided that, in this instance, instead of the reading in the Old Vulgate, the Greek sources, which he believed were more accurate, were to be preferred.

⁷² Sabatier, *Bibliorum sacrorum ...*, 3:162.

⁷³ Cf. however verse 27; also Mark 14:23, Luke 22:19.

⁷⁴ Zechariah 11:13 (the actual reading "Jeremiah" is not in question).

⁷⁵ Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 27:9 (PL 26:205).

⁷⁶ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 95A. *Acetum*, ὄξος corresponding to the Latin *posca*, a mixture of sour wine and vinegar and water which Roman soldiers were accustomed to drink, occurs (later) in Mark 15:36, as well as in Luke 23:36 and John 19:29.

Chapter 27 verse 35: The words⁷⁷ ἵνα πληρωθῆ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ προφήτου, Διεμερίσαντο τὰ ἱμάτιά μου ἑαυτοῖς, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἱματισμὸν μου ἔβαλον κλήρον⁷⁸ *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: "They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots"* are absent from K 017, 24, 26, Codex Bezae, Codex Alexandrinus, all of Stephanus's sources, one ancient source cited by Saubert, and some sources cited in the English Polyglot volume VI. Not finding them in any early manuscript nor in the Syriac version, Beza concluded they had been taken from St John and interpolated in this verse of Matthew.⁷⁹ Then again, they are present in the Vulgate, as well as in the text of St Matthew accompanying St Jerome's commentary: but in light of what his commentary says at this point,⁸⁰ it can easily be seen that he did not include them in his revision;⁸¹ furthermore, in the margin of their edition of the New Testament, the theologians of Louvain cite fifteen Latin manuscripts not containing the words.⁸²

Chapter 27 verse 49: This verse is absent from one of the sources in volume VI of the English Polyglot. At the end of the verse, after the word αὐτόν, two of Stephanus's sources add the following: ἄλλος δὲ λαβὼν λόγχη ἔνυξεν αὐτοῦ τὴν πλευρὰν καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ὕδωρ καὶ αἷμα *and another taking a lance pierced his side, and forthwith came there out water and blood*. Lucas of Bruges points out that these words are not by St Matthew, but were taken from John 19:34.

Chapter 27 verse 64: νυκτὸς *by night* is not in Codex Bezae, Codex Alexandrinus, Los Velez, two of Stephanus's sources, K 017, 22 or 25; nor did St Jerome include it in the revised Vulgate.

Chapter 28 verse 2: Though the words ἀπὸ τῆς θύρας *from the door* are in all the other manuscripts, they are not in Codex Bezae or the Los Velez sources; St Jerome did not include them in his revised Vulgate, since they are not in the Old; and after the word θύρας, 22 and 26 and various other sources in volume VI of the English Polyglot have τοῦ μνημείου *of the sepulchre*.

Chapter 28 verse 7: Whilst being present in all other Greek sources, the words ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν *from the dead*, are not in Codex Bezae, the Los Velez sources, or the new Vulgate, evidently being considered superfluous.

⁷⁷ Psalm 22:18.

⁷⁸ Quoted exactly from the Septuagint in John 19:24 (see C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* [2d ed., London: SPCK, 1978], 550–551; D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* [Leicester/Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press/Eerdmans, 1991], 612).

⁷⁹ Beza, *Novum Testamentum* (1642), 95A.

⁸⁰ PL 26:209–210.

⁸¹ They are not to be found in VN.

⁸² See *supra*, n. 65.

There would be no point in listing the variants in all the other New Testament books, even if the record were limited to some of the major differences. The above suffices to show that the texts were not immune from the corruptions inflicted on all books by the passing of time, and by copyists' blunders.

As I feel that till now hardly anything has been published about the manuscripts held in the Colbert Library, I have concentrated on these, in preference to the King's Library holdings.

In the second part of this work,⁸³ I shall show in more detail how these various New Testament sources differ, concentrating particularly on our Vulgate text, and the early versions used in the Eastern Churches, and comparing these with the Greek manuscripts on which they were based. Actually I have already touched on St Jerome's methods used for revising the Old Vulgate in accordance with the most reliable Greek manuscripts available in his day.

⁸³ *Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs du Nouveau Testament depuis le commencement du Christianisme jusques a notre temps* (cited *supra*, *passim*).

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

PRESENTATION AND APPEARANCE OF GREEK NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS. SEPARATING OF VERSES, CHAPTERS, AND OTHER TEXTUAL ELEMENTS. THE CANONS APPENDED TO THE GOSPELS BY EUSEBIUS, AND THEIR USE

The earliest Greek New Testament manuscripts are written as continuous text, with no separation between chapters and verses, and no actual spacing between words; the same therefore applies to these manuscripts as I have said elsewhere regarding the books of the Hebrew Old Testament, where the start was shown simply by a single *pasuk*¹ or verse. Unknown back then were punctuation marks and other signs nowadays used to make book text clearer and easier to read. Even after they were introduced, signs of this kind, and accents, were ignored by copyists in the earliest Greek manuscripts, and hardly occur at all in Greek manuscripts from before the seventh century CE. Codex Bezae, already mentioned, has no such signs, nor accents. Punctuation is nonexistent in Codex Claromontanus and Codex Sangermanensis,² and whilst accents are used, in Claromontanus they are not in the same hand as the main text, having been added evidently at a later stage. Not that the use of accents and punctuation is of more recent date than these two manuscripts; but copyists commonly ignored them; only the very meticulous and scholarly-minded had them added to their copies.

George Syncellus refers to a Greek manuscript of the Bible, copied with great care, including stops and accents, claiming it had come to him from the Caesarea Library in Cappadocia, and that the plate on the front showed it had been copied from an ancient manuscript edited by the great St Basil.³ The same applies to manuscripts in Hebrew copied by Jews: the use of accents, and of points to indicate vowels, occurs in hardly any of these from

¹ פסוק a biblical verse.

² 0319 (St Petersburg): see *supra*, ch. 31.

³ Georges Syncellus (fl ca. 800), *Georgii monachi ... quondam syncelli Chronographia ab Adamo usque ad Diocletianum et Nicephori patriarchae, ... breviarium chronographicum ab Adamo ad Michaelis et ejus F. Theophili tempora ... (Corpus byzantinae historiae, Paris: Typographia Regia, 1652) [BnF Réserve J-128], 203.*

before the eleventh or twelfth century, except in those produced with the most scrupulous care. Then again, they do have texts from the thirteenth century or earlier, which mention points and accents being in use at that time.

All the signs used in Greek New Testament texts today are also mentioned in the works of the earliest Church writers, which use the terms *section* and *chapter*. In some instances they specify the places where signs must be included to remove any ambiguity in the text, especially instances where heretics relied for support on differences in punctuation. But all in all it must be admitted that, in this regard, nothing definite is really known. By and large everyone used the signs depending on their own particular cast of mind, which in turn was influenced by commentators on scripture, and copyists as well. This explains the proviso given by Father Denis Petau⁴ regarding the correct punctuation of St John 1:3: having first summarised what St Epiphanius and other early Church scholars had said to refute heretics, Petau goes on to say that any variations in punctuation came about solely from the different approaches of the various copyists and commentators, and must not be ascribed to any malice on the part of persons who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit, or to any other heretics.

In fact orthodox authors have sometimes been in disagreement over these matters; indeed, the same author may cite the same passage in his works more than once using different punctuation in different places, in which case precious little can help us decide in favour of a particular punctuation rather than another apart from common sense, and the principles of exegesis. Personally I feel that the majority of reliable manuscripts and the consensus of commentators are what must be followed: for example, leaving aside St Augustine's observations on punctuating John 1:3, the verse reads thus: χωρις αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν *without him was not anything made that was made*.⁵ This reading, supported by the earliest Greek Fathers, is in virtually every manuscript. The alternate reading, which places the stop after the word ἓν *one [thing]*, seems forced and, if punctuated thus, would have to be rendered *Without him was not made anything. What was made was life in him*. Note here that several Greek sources do in fact have the stop after the word ἓν, but the stop is equivalent to our comma in those

⁴ Aka Dionysius Petavius (1583–1652, Jesuit theologian and historian), *De Trinitate* book II (*Theologica dogmatica* [Paris: Cramoisy, 1644–1650: BnF D244 (2)], 2:136).

⁵ Vulgate *et sine ipso factum est nihil quod factum est* (the text as cited by R. Simon reads *illo*, instead of *ipso*).

manuscripts, which use two kinds of stop, one of which corresponds to our full-stop, the other to what we call a comma.

Yet St Augustine frequently lent his support to the alternate sense—with the stop after the word *nihil* “nothing”—insisting moreover that the passage is thus punctuated in the best manuscripts: not only must there be a stop after *nihil*, but also a comma after the words *quod factum est*.⁶ He censures any scholars inserting a comma after the pronoun *illo*, as having done so in order to lend weight to their own way of thinking.⁷ He even adduces reasons to refute them; but more often than not, this sort of reasoning has more subtlety than solidity: everyone punctuates the gospel text in their own way, because everyone’s reasoning is governed by principles they themselves consider to be right. Nowadays there is no argument about the punctuation of John 1:3; yet in those early times opinions were so divided by such quibbling that four different ways were devised of punctuating John 1:3.

What emerges from this is that although most copyists disregarded punctuation and the other signs, these nevertheless were included in some manuscripts. Scriptural exegetes, when they saw fit, also observed them in their commentaries; but as they did not have the actual originals, with signs included, of the Gospels and the apostles, nothing can be stated with any certainty in this regard. Prudence moreover is essential when reading the early Fathers, especially in their writings against contemporary heretics, from whom they distance themselves as much as they can. But in any event, all that is usually required to decide these matters is a grain of common sense, without subtle quibbling over fine points. Nowadays, for instance, initially no one would hesitate to criticise innovators attempting to gain support for their own views by reading Luke 23:43 as follows: σοι λέγω σήμερον, μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἔσῃ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ *Today I say unto thee, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise*, placing the comma after the word *σήμερον* *today*, whereas the standard manuscript and printed texts have the comma after the pronoun σοι *unto thee*,⁸ giving a quite different meaning: *I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise*.

In addition to the signs already discussed, there is another, commonly found in all ancient books, which was devised to separate the verses. In those days one could tell the size of a book from the number of verses

⁶ Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* (“The Literal Meaning of Genesis”) bk. 5 ch. 14 § 32 (PL 34:332).

⁷ Augustine, *ibid.* § 31 (PL 34:332).

⁸ Actually, after λέγω *I say*.

it contained. A verse was simply a line, in Greek *στίχος*:⁹ the number of lines in a volume was ascertained by counting the number of verses. Some scholars however could not understand how the size of a book could be properly defined by lines or verses: the sheets of parchment used being of different sizes, correspondingly the lines were of different lengths, so the length of a book could not be determined by the number of lines. Such was the standpoint taken by Croÿ¹⁰ in refutation of Casaubon,¹¹ and which he supported by citing ancient writers, claiming to have proved that *στίχος* means a complete period, or part of a period.

However, given the old parchments of which the volumes or scrolls were comprised, the argument is self-defeating: each scroll contained several pages, all of the same size, each page had a certain number of lines, and each line had a fixed number of characters. Jews today still observe the same standard in their scrolls, which have to be of a fixed width and height; there must be thirty characters in each of the lines, which they call *sitta*,¹² and which are identical to the Greek *στίχος* and the Latin *versus*. It must on no account be imagined that the way the Rabbis divide their scriptural texts was of their own devising: as I have demonstrated elsewhere, they followed the practices used by other nations. Since moreover they have retained the ancient practice of using scrolls, it is in part from them that we must learn how these scrolls or ancient volumes were divided.

As for explaining how the same length of lines or verses was maintained in standard books made of different-sized parchment or paper, when the sheets were not wide enough for a whole line, the remaining letters or words were simply written below the line. The format of one line for each verse was apparently the intended layout for Codex Claromontanus and Codex Sangermanensis, the diglot Greek and Latin manuscripts of the Pauline letters: if such was not the intention, the copyists, failing accurately to

⁹ A verse or line of writing. Stichometry (see also *infra*, n. 1102), dating from the pre-Christian era, refers to calculating the length of a manuscript from the number of lines. For Bible manuscripts, a line was apparently reckoned as having 15 syllables. The Codex Sinaiticus (4th-century manuscript of the Bible, discovered 1844, hence unknown to R. Simon), contains one of the oldest surviving examples.

¹⁰ Jean de Croÿ, *Sacrarum et historicarum in Novum Fædus observationum, pars prior* (Geneva: Chouet, 1645), ch. 11, 82 [BnF A-3235].

¹¹ See *supra*, ch. 7 and 9. Croÿ is referring to Casaubon's edition (1598), of *The Deipnosophists* by Athenaeus of Naucratis book vi ch. 10. In 1587 Casaubon had also published his own translation of the New Testament.

¹² *Sitta* [singular] שִׁטָּה indication (not visible) applied to parchment to ensure script will be rectilinear.

reproduce the earlier texts on which these codices were based, evidently misunderstood what the ancient lines or verses were about. That said, the fact still remains that it was widespread and common practice for early writers to note down at the end the number of verses their books contained.

I am well aware that there are other “verses,” as found in our Scriptures today: these are defined in terms of a saying, or the sense of a passage, and thus came about in different circumstances from the Greek *στίχος* and the Latin *versus*. In this regard we have followed the example of the Jews, who divided up the whole Bible into verses of this kind, the purpose of the new division of verses being to delimit the passages to be read from Scripture in their synagogues and schools. Instances can be found in some Greek New Testament manuscripts and manuscript lectionaries, where I have encountered, firstly, the opening and closing points for readings which they call *ἀναγνώσματα*,¹³ not dissimilar to what we call “chapters”; and secondly, signs in the form of a cross where, as is customary in the Greek Church, the reader makes a slight pause at the end of a statement, or in Greek *ῥῆσις*:¹⁴ this too we would describe as a verse or a saying.

Croÿ’s assertion¹⁵ that the Greeks indicated at the end of their gospels the number of words and verses they contained, is wrong: the examples he gives after Saumaise obviously refer to statements, not to words, as can be proved from his own quotations from a manuscript where Matthew is credited with *ῥήματα βφκβ* (2,522 words) and *στίχους βφξ* (2,560 “verses”), Mark with *ῥήματα αχοε* (1,675 words) and *στίχοις αχίς* (1,616 “verses”). Even allowing that, in this context, the Greek word *ῥήματα* be taken as meaning “words,” as Croÿ says,¹⁶ what could possibly be the ratio of words to “verses”?¹⁷ The two Gospels would have almost the same number of words as “verses”—2,522 words and 2,560 “verses” in St Matthew, 1,675 words and 1,616 “verses” in St Mark.¹⁸ Accordingly, the word *ῥήματα* must refer to the number of sentences, and *στίχος* must be taken to mean “length of a line,” i.e. the old meaning of “verse” (or else some other type of verse).

Several Greek New Testament manuscripts have the number of verses in each book entered at the end. Stephanus sometimes gives these, in his

¹³ Passages read aloud (“things to be known,” related to Greek *γινώσκω* *learn, come to understand*): see also *infra*, n. 26.

¹⁴ A saying, speaking, speech.

¹⁵ Croÿ, *ibid.*, 5.

¹⁶ Croÿ, *ibid.*, 5–6.

¹⁷ In any case, as already observed (see n. 5), *στίχος* does not mean “verse.”

¹⁸ Mark has 634 verses.

splendid Greek edition; and it would not be an onerous task to provide all of them. That, however, strikes me as pointless, quite apart from the fact that the manuscripts where I have seen them are not old ones, and the details they contain are not consistent. At the end of Nicephorus's¹⁹ *Chronology*, Scaliger printed a *stichometry* or verse-total of all the books in the Bible, ascribing it to that patriarch.²⁰ Previously Mr Pithou published the same *Stichometry* with the same attribution.²¹ However, it occurs in the works of other Greek historians, and so is from an earlier period. As seen earlier, it is also included at the end of the two early diglot manuscripts, already discussed, of the Pauline letters. Now, not making any changes whatsoever to the order of books or the format, I shall quote the sections relating to the "verses" of the New Testament (this ancient catalogue, in Latin,²² does have something odd about it):

	<i>no. of</i> <i>"verses"</i>		<i>no. of</i> <i>"verses"</i>
Matthew	2,600	1 Peter	200
John	2,000	2 Peter	140
Mark	1,600	James	220
Luke	2,900	1 John	220
Romans	1,040	2 John	20
1 Corinthians	1,060	3 John	20
2 Corinthians	70 (an error)	Jude	60
Galatians	350	Epistle of Barnabas	850
Ephesians	375	Revelation	1,200
1 Timothy	208	Acts of Apostles	2,600
2 Timothy	288	Book of the Shepherd	4,000
Titus	140	Acts of Paul	4,560
Colossians	251	Revelation of Peter	270
Philemon	50		

¹⁹ On the stichometry of St Nicephorus, see Editor's Note at the conclusion of ch. 3 of the present work.

²⁰ In *Thesaurus temporum: Eusebii Pamphili Cæsareæ Palæstinæ Episcopi, Chronicorum canonum omnimodæ historię libri duo* (Amsterdam: Janssonius, 1658 [BnF G-688]), Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609) located, compiled and edited all extant chronological documents in Greek and Latin. Individual works are paginated separately: *Chronography of the Patriarch Nicephorus* is paginated in volume II from 301–312, the stichometry appearing on the closing page.

²¹ Pierre Pithou, *Opera sacra* ..., 15–18.

²² R. Simon gives his (Latin) sources simply as "manuscripts in the King's Library and the Saint-Germain library."

Rather than the verse-division developed in recent times, as found in printed Bibles today, Casaubon,²³ who had considerable experience of Greek, wished that some exegete would reintroduce the former system, which he preferred, and which was used in the manuscripts, consisting of titles and chapters.²⁴ Extended sections and shorter sections, he states, were respectively called τίτλους *titles* and κεφάλια *chapters*.²⁵ He might also have said that the word κεφάλιον *chapter* could be used to designate long sections as well, then having the same meaning as what the Greeks called τίτλος *title*.²⁶

When early Church Greek and Latin writers quoted from scripture, the respective use of κεφάλιον and *capitulum* to mean “chapter” was quite standard. Although reintroducing this older system, using manuscripts as a basis, would not be difficult, at this stage I shall not go beyond discussing points relating to the New Testament. According to Codex Regius [L 019], in regard to “titles” and “chapters” of this kind, St Matthew has 68 and 355 respectively, St Mark 48 and 234, St Luke 83 and 342, St John 18 and 231. These details correspond to those presented in the entry τίτλος in Suda,²⁷ except for the erroneous reading λς (36) in this latter source, which should read σλς’ (236), as in some manuscripts and printed editions of the Greek New Testament, including the Stephanus folio.

At the beginning of Codex Regius it also states that St Matthew contains ξή (68) chapters, which means that in this context a “chapter” is equivalent to what is described a “title” at the end of the book; the same applies to the other three gospels. This shows that the word “chapter” can have two meanings, denoting either a brief or an extended passage. In the headings of most Greek New Testament manuscripts, as well as the earlier editions of Erasmus, Stephanus’s folio, and others, the number of κεφάλια “chapters”

²³ See *supra*, n. 9.

²⁴ Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614) et al. (eds.), Ἡ Καινὴ Διαφύκη = *Novum Testamentum Obscuriorum vocum and quorundam loquendi generum accuratae magnaevae accessiones ...* (Geneva: Estienne, 1617) [BnF A-10609], 363.

²⁵ In classical usage, τὸ κεφάλιον meant “the main point.”

²⁶ Or “section.”

²⁷ *Suda* (or *Suidas*) is not an author’s name, but the title of a Byzantine tenth-century compilation: despite interpolations and some corrupt textual content, its alphabetical entries remain a valuable source for ancient scholarly authorities, some of whose works are now lost. See article Τίτλος “Title,” Σουιδας: *Lexicon Graece et Latine* ed. L. Kuster (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1705) 3:480B: the error here indicated by R. Simon (“Mark 36 chapters”) was perpetuated in this compendium, and survives even in the most recent critical edition (*Suidas Lexicon* ed. A. Adler [Leipzig: Teubner, 1928–1938], part 4:563).

stated before each book shows how many extended sections it contains. The purpose of this is the same as that of an analytical index, or a table setting out the book's principal contents at a glance, as the best Greek copyists did, providing initial synopses, called κεφάλια ("chapters"), of the books they reproduced. In the margins of their text, or at the top or bottom of its pages, they also provided signs, which they called τίτλοι "titles," showing where each "chapter" began. In light of all this, the words τίτλος and κεφάλιον both refer to the same thing: as I myself have ascertained by comparing several Greek New Testament manuscripts, the only distinction is that "chapters" occur where a book starts, whilst "titles" are inserted in the margin.

But then again, in Greek New Testament manuscripts the word κεφάλιον ("chapter") also refers to shorter passages, designated in the margin by alphabetic numerals.²⁸ They were used by Erasmus in the earlier editions of his New Testament, then in the folio edition of Stephanus, who also added them separately at the end of Luke, specifying τμβ' (342) κεφάλια or "chapters," and at the end of Mark, giving the figure σλς' (236). Now according to Codex Regius St Mark has only σλδ (234) chapters: and there is in fact disagreement among the various Greek sources, especially in regard to the Gospel of St Mark. As discussed earlier, texts of Mark used by more than one early Greek Church did not have the last twelve verses (16:9–20), beginning Ἄναστὰς δὲ πρωτὶ *on rising early* etc., and thus they could have had fewer "short sections" in their manuscripts than the standard number. Then again, there are manuscripts where "section" 234 is designated as the final one, alongside the words Ἄναστὰς δὲ etc., there being no other "sections" corresponding to those twelve verses. Furthermore the verses were definitely read aloud in the Churches using those manuscripts, since the words τέλος *end* and ἀρχὴ *beginning* were inserted at that point, to indicate the start of a new reading. Yet all this proves nothing, since the authority for it is the *Synaxarion* or Greek lectionary:²⁹ thus in order to reconcile New Testament text with current practice, discrepancies of this kind were settled by reference to the lectionaries in use in Churches at the time.

As Codex Regius shows, in the Churches where Mark 16:9–20 were not accepted, this gospel was credited with only σλγ' (233) "chapters" or short

²⁸ See *supra*, n. 1097.

²⁹ In this context *Synaxarion* (Greek συναξαρίον) refers to the compilation of scripture readings corresponding to daily feasts to be observed (primarily the term designates the account of the life of a Saint, to be read at morning service in some Greek or Eastern Churches, or a compilation of such readings): see also the following note.

sections. The same lower figure is found in 269, a more recent manuscript, where the final “short section” begins at *καὶ ἐξεληθούσαι* and *going out* [16:8], as in Stephanus’s edition, where the same passage is also given the “section” number 233. Although the number of “short sections” ascribed to Mark’s gospel was higher than 233 in the Churches that did accept chapter 16 verses 9–20, they were not unanimous. Some of them, taking verses 9–20 as a single passage, assigned 234 “sections” to the Marcan text, while others divided verses 9–20 into more than one section. For some manuscripts Stephanus has the figure *σλς´*, and I have even seen one manuscript where the gospel is credited with *σμά*(241) sections.

These various divisions in the scriptures date from very early on: St Justin Martyr refers to these “short sections” as *περικοπαί*.³⁰ Both *περικοπή* *section*³¹ and *κεφάλιον* *chapter* are used indiscriminately by Eusebius in his letter to Carpianus, which was printed together with the ten Canons he so ingeniously devised to show any similarities and idiosyncrasies in the four Evangelists at a glance.³² Dionysius the Great,³³ discussing writers who did not accept the book of Revelation, says they analysed all the “chapters” of which it is comprised. In short, virtually all early Greek scholars used the word *κεφάλια* in the sense of pericopes or “short sections.”³⁴

These “sections,” while not being actually invented by Eusebius, were very profitably used by him in the ten Canons, which in fact were of his devising, and which St Jerome applied to the Latin manuscripts of the gospels in the same way he saw them applied to the Greek texts. Readers not having access to manuscripts should consult the early editions of the Greek New Testament published by Erasmus, or to Stephanus’s folio edition. Here, at the start of each gospel, the ten Canons are set out under ten separate headings, with their corresponding section indicated in the margin of the gospel text by alphabetic numerals,³⁵ the canons to which they correspond

³⁰ *Dialogue with Tryphon* ch. 65 (PG 6:625), evidently the earliest use of the word in this sense (mid-2nd century).

³¹ Historically, a “trimming” or “cutting around.”

³² The Greek text of the letter to Carpian, with the Canon Tables in Roman numerals, can be found on pages 84–89 of NA²⁷. In this edition, the Eusebian section and canon numbers are given in the inner margins: “... Eusebius divided the four Gospels into small units by content, and organized them into ten canons. Canon I lists the pericopes represented in all four Gospels, canons II–IV those in three, canons V–IX list those found in only two Gospels, and canon X lists the sections which are peculiar to each gospel” (NA²⁷, 79; for examples, see *ibid.*).

³³ Bishop of Alexandria, † 264, cit. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 7.25.1 (2:204).

³⁴ I.e. a passage of scripture for reading aloud.

³⁵ See *supra*, n. 27.

being indicated by a Roman numeral for each of the ten Canons, the highest being x (i.e. 10). Following Eusebian practice, these Roman numerals should appear in red, to make them more easily distinguishable from the others. Robertus Stephanus distinguishes them from section numbers by inserting a short line above each of the latter, a practice completely and scrupulously observed also in the Latin editions of the New Testament. No need for manuscript evidence here: one has only to look at the start of the Gospels in our earliest printed Latin Bibles, and in the margin of each Gospel text, to find Eusebius' ten Canons, indicated in Roman numerals, accompanied by the section numbers in Arabic numerals.

It was virtually inevitable that the Greek copyists, reproducing Eusebius's canons, would insert wrong letters, thus making errors; while examining several manuscript copies, I found various divergences. Admittedly these can easily be corrected, except where the manuscripts contain discrepancies over the number of sections. Comparing for instance the ten Canons as presented in Stephanus's edition and as they appear in the majority of manuscripts, leaves no doubt that the last twelve verses of St Mark were part of the Greek text in Eusebius's day, since Canons x and viii include that Evangelist's sections σλδ' (234) and σλέ(235), both of which are contained in those twelve verses.

But then again, it could be that these two sections were added to the Eusebian Canons by individuals whose Churches accepted the twelve verses as part of Mark's gospel. If so, the Canons would not be a reliable criterion for this passage, but for the fact that we know the verses were in the Marcan text before the time of Eusebius. Section 234 of Mark is shown as part of Canon viii by Mariano Vittori,³⁶ who included the Canons in the Works of St Jerome at the head of the latter's commentaries on St Matthew. Yet in the margins of the Marcan text, he indicates only 233 sections:³⁷ and it is noteworthy that section "233," the final one, starts at the words *at illa exeuntes* etc. (chapter 16 verse 8), the inference being that the rest of the Gospel text was not actually by Mark. This same insinuation is made in the letter to Hedibia by St Jerome, who states therein that hardly any of the Greek manuscripts included this final *capitulum* ("chapter"),³⁸ using the term to refer to the last twelve verses

³⁶ Mariano Vittori, bishop of Rieti, responsible for some textual revisions in this edition of Jerome (see following note).

³⁷ St Jerome, *Epistolae ... et libri contra haereticos ... Adjecta est operis initio vita D. Hieronymi ...*, ed. M. Vittori (Rome 1571–1576), 6:120 [BnF C-419 (6)].

³⁸ Jerome, Epistle to Hedibia, qu. 3 (PL 22:987).

(this was irrespective of whether chapter 16 consisted of only one small section—as indeed is borne out in some manuscripts, which present only one—or more than one section, as occurs in other manuscripts). Be this as it may, it does appear that in this regard Mariana was less than consistent, since he shows more Marcan sections in the Eusebian Canons VIII and X than he provides in the margins of the Evangelist's text. On this point the Basel edition of Jerome's works is more accurate, giving the number of sections in the margins of the Marcan text as 235, the same as in the Eusebian Canons.³⁹

It would be pointless to discuss the chapters and sections in the book of Acts or the Pauline epistles, since they are available in the printed commentaries ascribed to Eecumenius.⁴⁰ Let me at this stage just include one more type of division, termed ἀναγνώσματα *readings*.⁴¹ Dividing the whole New Testament into various readings occurred very early on, and in Codex Bezae the divisions are actually marked. Provided the word “chapter” be understood in the sense of *title* or “major section,” there is no major difference between a “chapter” and a “reading”: care must be taken, however, not to confuse one with the other, as some writers have done. There are more “titles” or “long sections” than there are “readings,” as I ascertained when consulting manuscripts where the readings are specifically marked: on the basis of the Greek Church lectionaries, in some manuscripts the words τέλος *end* and ἀρχή *beginning* have been added, showing the close of one reading and the start of another. Hence the margins of these manuscripts include not only synopses of the sections (be these called “titles” or “chapters”), but also the days when the passages were to be read in Church. The Greek copyists derived this material from their lectionaries, even compiling a Table called *Synaxarion*⁴² which they included in the books at the start or at the end. Since the matter has not so much to do with Greek New Testament manuscript exegesis as with practices in the Greek Church, I shall leave it at that, except to point out how tiny changes were introduced into some Greek copies because the beginning and the end of a reading were affected by the way the passage was read in Church. For example in some places the words δέ *now*, γάρ *for*, οὖν *therefore*, and other similar particles, were omitted when they occurred as the first word of a reading; similarly pronouns were

³⁹ Complete works of St Jerome (Basel: Frobenius, 1524–1526), 9:70 [BnF C-939 (9)].

⁴⁰ Eecumenius' commentaries on Acts and the Epistles of Paul are contained in PG 118 (see *supra*, ch. 27 n. 5).

⁴¹ See *supra*, n. 12.

⁴² See *supra*, n. 28.

replaced with proper names; and sometimes at the start of a reading, for the sake of the meaning, it was necessary to add proper names, which copyists then added to their texts. Due awareness of this is essential, or the number of variant New Testament readings will reach unjustifiably high proportions; in the event, simply consulting the Greek Church lectionaries is all that is required to check the starting point of a given reading.

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