CLARE K. ROTHSCHILD

The Muratorian Fragment

Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
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Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity

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The Muratorian Fragment

Text, Translation, Commentary

Mohr Siebeck

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For
Hans Dieter Betz

πόλλ᾽ οἶδ᾽ ἀλώπηξ, ἀλλ᾽ ἐχῖνος ἓν μέγα.
Archilochus

Acknowledgments

The idea for the present work began in a conversation at a tiny café (now gone!) beneath the viaduct at the 57th Street train station near the University of Chicago in Hyde Park. In the course of defending my conviction to Trevor Thompson that the author of Hebrews borrowed Paul's identity, making the text pseudonymous, I acknowledged the fragility of the evidence for the theory that Hebrews was rejected in the West. "Among other problems," I said, "it is *just* as likely that the Muratorian Fragment was written in the fourth as the second century." Thompson smiled. "Or maybe, both are true," he said.

That moment inspired an SBL presentation in 2008 in which I attempted to raise suspicion – with anything but overwhelming success (Joseph Verheyden was my generous respondent) – concerning the date and provenance of the Muratorian Fragment. Following the SBL, I planned to publish the thesis as an article but postponed the project because I felt that the next necessary step was to visit the Ambrosian Library in Milan. Subsequently, I learned that such a trip was unnecessary (immediately anyway) because the Ambrosian Library is available on microfilm at the University of Notre Dame. I contacted the exemplary Notre Dame librarian, Lou Jordan, who immediately shared with me the relevant microfilm pages. Examining them, my questions increased. I consulted Hans Dieter Betz (my Doktorvater at the University of Chicago) who advised me to confer with Michael I. Allen, Associate Professor in the Department of Classics and the College and in the Department of History at the University of Chicago. Reviewing the evidence, Michael advised me to write a monograph on the topic, which is where the project has stood for a decade.

Although in the original SBL paper and its eventual publication (*NovT* 60 [2018]: 55–82), I attempt to establish the possibility that the Fragment is a Roman fake, the goal of this monograph is more comprehensive. In this book, I seek to provide access to the texts and contexts necessary for a biblical scholar to come to a decision about the Fragment's authenticity. My goal is less to persuade readers of my own conclusions (revealed in Chapter 7) than to allow each, in as informed a manner as possible, to make up their own mind.

Perhaps the most significant issue plaguing research on the Fragment is its disdain for boundaries. Proper examination of the Fragment encompasses at least three areas of research. First, most scholars interested in the Fragment work in New Testament, Early Christianity, and the Early Church. Second,

most scholars interested in the contents of its codex work in the area of Patristics and/or Late Antiquity. Finally, the codex itself (perhaps dated to the eighth century) is an object of interest to scholars working in Medieval History. Investigations of the Fragment frequently founder, not on their treatment of their area of expertise, but on their failure to interact with all pertinent areas of research. In the research for this monograph, I have become acutely aware of my inability to handle its scope – right to the brink of abandoning the project altogether. In the end, I settled for an attempt to write a meaningful study for the members of my own guild while attempting to situate or at least point to the larger contexts of individual arguments. With experts in New Testament and Early Christianity in mind, my goal is to equip readers to fairly assess as much data as possible. I offer translations of nearly all Latin and Italian texts as well as definitions of non-obvious codicological and paleographical terminology. I also provide dates of lesser-known figures from all periods of history and explanatory notes and excurses on topics sometimes obscure to NT/ECL scholars. Of specialists in these appertaining fields, I kindly request patience. When the study wanders into unknown territory, I have relied on experts and documented everything in the notes. I have earnestly endeavored to avoid errors by running nearly every aspect of the text by an expert in the relevant area. The inevitable mistakes are my own.

Over the last decade, with each setback and crisis of confidence, a few stalwart colleagues remained by my side. First and foremost, the brilliant scholar and wise friend, R. Matthew Calhoun has offered advice on all portions of the manuscript. I also wish to extend sincere gratitude to participants of the various societies of which I am a member, in particular the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas (SNTS) for which I delivered a version of this essay as a main paper at the Pretoria meeting in August 2017, receiving invaluable support, questions, and advice from a number of learned society members including Judith M. Lieu and Adela Y. Collins. In addition, I would like to thank those members of the Society of Biblical Literature, Chicago Society of Biblical Research, Midwest SBL, and Early Christian Studies Workshop who have interacted with me on this thesis, as well as others willing to dialogue with me by email, in particular Giovanni Bazzana (Harvard), Cilliers Breytenbach (Berlin), Elizabeth A. Castelli (Columbia), Paolo A. Cherchi (Milan), Stephen A. Cooper (Franklin & Marshall), Mariano Dellomo (Monte Cassino), Richard Guyg (Fordham), Hans-Josef Klauck (Chicago), David Martinez (Chicago), Margaret Mitchell (Chicago), Marco Rizzi (Milan), Johan Thom (Stellenbosch), Joseph Verheyden (Leuven), and Immo Warntjes (Dublin). Geoffrey M. Hahneman (Bridgeport, CT) and Lee Martin McDonald (Mesa, AZ) have been longstanding supporters of my work, offering hours of advice through email and personal discussion. I wish to thank Frances Spaltro (University of Chicago Laboratory Schools) for collaboration on Latin translations and Father David Monaco (Yonkers, NY), who assisted in translations of Italian. In June 2019 Don Federico Gallo accept-

ed my request to see Ambr. I 101 sup. in Milan. My time in his library was unforgettable. I will always remain in his debt. Finally, the book would not be the same without the extremely generous assistance of Jeremy C. Thompson. It is not an exaggeration to say that, by the end, the findings of this book consist of our partnership. I am grateful to Henning Ziebritzki and Elena Müller at Mohr Siebeck for their interest in my work as well as to Christoph Markschies for his recommendation of the manuscript to the STAC series. The support team at Mohr Siebeck, in particular Matthias Spitzner, Tobias Stäbler, and Kendra Mäschke, as always, ably assisted in the production of this volume.

I dedicate this book to my mentor and friend, Hans Dieter Betz (Chicago). He was in the audience at my first presentation on the topic at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in 2008. When the session ended, I reluctantly asked him what he thought. In his inimitable manner, he first repeated the question, "What do I think?" after which he replied, "I think that I will never speak of the Muratorian Fragment again." As we discussed the project that evening Dieter advised me to carry out a comprehensive examination of the artifact. As one of my most ardent supporters and (as such) fiercest critics, I dedicate this work to him. My hope is that this study promotes new, ever more satisfying debates about the Fragment, stimulating respectful conversations about the questions it raises.

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List of Abbreviations

ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
ANF	*The Ante-Nicene Fathers.* Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 1885–1887. 10 vols. Repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.
AThR	*Anglican Theological Review*
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000 (Danker-Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich).
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BNF	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris
BNP	*Brill's New Pauly, Encyclopedia of the Ancient World.* Edited by Hubert Cancik. 22 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2002–2011.
BMB	*La Bibliografia dei manoscritti in scrittura beneventana*
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BP	Benedictine Prologue
BR	Biblical Research
C^c	Hypothetical manuscript archetype of the Benedictine Prologues
C	MS Montecassino, Archivio dell'Abazia, 349
C^1	MS Montecassino, Archivio dell'Abazia, 552
C^2	MS Montecassino, Archivio dell'Abazia, 235
C^3	MS Montecassino, Archivio dell'Abazia, 535
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–
CH	Church History
ChLA	Albert Bruckner, Robert Marichal et al. *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores.* Vols. 1–15, 17–18, 20–22. Olten-Lausanne, 1954–67; Zürich, 1975.
CLA	Lowe, Elias Avery. *Codices Latini Antiquiores.* Vols. 1–11 and Suppl., 22. Oxford, 1934–72. Addenda by B. Bischoff and V. Brown, *Mediaeval Studies* 47 (1985): 317–66, with 18 plates.
col.	column
CPG	*Clavis Patrum Graecorum.* Edited by Maurice Geerard. 5 vols. Turnhout: Brepols, 1974–1987.
CPL	*Clavis Patrum Latinorum.* Edited by Eligius Dekkers. 3rd ed. Brepols: Editores Pontificii, 1995.
CRBR	*Critical Review of Books in Religion*
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DACL	*Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie.* Edited by Fernand Cabrol. 15 vols. Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1907–1953.

DCB	*Dictionary of Christian Biography*. Edited by William Smith and Henry Wace. 4 vols. London: Murray, 1877–1887.
DG	*Decretum Gelasianum*
DSAM	*Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*. Edited by Marcel Viller, Charles Baumgartner, and André Rayez. Paris: Beauchesne, 1935–1995.
EBR	*Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception.* Edited by Hans-Josef Klauck et al. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009–.
EC	*Early Christianity*
ET	English Translation
expl.	*explicit* (closing words of a text)
fol./fols.	folio(s)
fasc.	quire
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
inc.	*incipit* (opening words of a text)
inf.	inferior (lower shelf)
IPE	Initiations aux Pères de l'Église
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JK	Philipp Jaffé. *Regesta pontificum Romanorum*. 2nd ed. Edited by F. Kaltenbrunner. Leipzig: Veit, 1885. Repr., Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1956.
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
l./ll.	line/lines
Lat.	Latin
LD	Lectio divina
loc.	location in e-book
LP	*Liber Pontificalis*
MC	Monte Cassino
membr.	*membranum* ("skin," i. e., parchment)
MF	Muratorian Fragment
MGH, Auct. ant.	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores antiquissimi
MGH, Epp.	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae
MS	*Mediaeval Studies*
MS/MSS	manuscript/manuscripts
n./nn.	footnote/footnotes
NA^{28}	*Novum Testamentum Graece*. 28th ed. Edited by B. Aland et al. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012.
NAPS	North American Patristic Society
NHS	*Nag Hammadi Studies*
NKZ	*Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift*
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NPNF$^{1-2}$	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 1 and 2
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament

NTApoc	*New Testament Apocrypha*. 2 vols. Revised ed. Edited by Wilhelm Schneemelcher. English trans. ed. Robert McL. Wilson. Cambridge: Clarke; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003.
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OSB	Ordo Sancti Benedicti
PG	Patrologia Graeca [= *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*: Series Graeca]. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1886.
PL	Patrologia Latina [= *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*: Series Latina]. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 217 vols. Paris, 1844–1864.
PLS	*Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum*. Edited by Adalbert-Gautier Hamman. 5 vols. Paris: Garnier, 1958–1964.
p./pp.	page/pages
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien
r.	recto
repr.	reprinted
RB	*Revue biblique*
RBén	*Revue bénédictine*
RE	*Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908.
RevSR	*Revue des sciences religieuses*
RGG	*Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Edited by Hans Dieter Betz et al. 4th ed. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998–2007.
RPP	*Religion Past and Present: Encyclopedia of Theology and Religion.* Edited by Hans Dieter Betz et al. 14 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2007–2013.
RTAM	*Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*
saec.	saeculum ("century")
S. P.	Sala dal Prefetto
Sess.	Sessorianus
SC	Sources chrétiennes. Paris: Cerf, 1943–
SCM	Student Christian Movement
ScotJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SPCK	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
sup.	superiore (upper shelf)
s. v.	sub verbo
Them	Themelios
TLG	*Thesaurus Linguae Graecae: Canon of Greek Authors and Works.* Edited by Luci Berkowitz and Karl A. Squitier. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
TLL	*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. Leipzig: Teubner; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1900–.
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
TQ	*Theologische Quartalschrift*
TS	*Theological Studies*
TSK	*Theologische Studien und Kritiken*
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
UNC	University of North Carolina

UTB	Universität Taschenbücher
Vat. lat.	Vatican, BAV, Vat. lat.
v.	verso
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
WGRW	Writings of the Greco-Roman World
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAC	*Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*
ZKG	*Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*
ZWT	*Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie*

Chapter One

History, Genre, Text

St. Ippolyts, April 15th, 1858
To Mr. A. Macmillan

> … Tregelles wants to know if any Cambridge publisher would take the risk of a quarto tract of about two sheets, with a complete facsimile of the important Muratorian fragment on the Canon at Milan. There are curious discrepancies in the collations. But last August Tregelles made an exact facsimile. … The thing will hardly sell much in England, unless trouble is taken about it; more probably in Germany. It is of much consequence; so much that Lightfoot was talking not long ago of going to Milan for the express purpose of thoroughly overhauling it.[1]

A. Introduction

The Muratorian Fragment is one of the key pieces of evidence for establishing the early canon of the New Testament. Preserved in an eighth-century (?) manuscript, it enumerates most of the books of the traditional twenty-seven book canon and specifies certain books that are to be excluded. My interest in this Fragment arose out of an attempt to ascertain the reliability of the claim that the Letter to the Hebrews was accepted in the East but rejected in the West.[2] The claim concerning Hebrews's Eastern acceptance is based primarily on $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, evidence I considered trustworthy. The claim about Western rejection is based on the Muratorian Fragment, the dependability of which I considered uncertain. Because the historical-critical method requires an understanding of the historical context of every text summoned as evidence, I naively set out to establish the reliability of the Muratorian Fragment. In these preliminary investigations, I was surprised to read the contradictory reports about the Fragment's initial dis-

[1] Letter by F. J. A. Hort as cited in Arthur Fenton Hort (son), *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1896), 397 ("age 30").

[2] With permission, I have modeled my project on the work of Matthew C. Baldwin, *Whose Acts of Peter? Text and Historical Context of the Actus Vercellenses*, WUNT 2/196 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 1–5.

covery and the contents of its codex. What is more, despite insistence by scholars of varying opinions that its date and provenance were secure, previous scholarship had not – as far as I could tell – authenticated this text.[3] It seemed, thus, that to understand the reception history of Hebrews, a thorough investigation of the Muratorian Fragment was necessary. What began as a prolegomenon eventually developed into this full-length study.

In the 1740s, Ludovico Antonio Muratori first refers to the text as "a fragment about the apostles" (*fragmentum de Apostolis*).[4] More than a century later (1868), Samuel Prideaux Tregelles refers to the Fragment with the Latinized adjective, "Muratorianus,"[5] eventually translated into modern languages as "Muratorian" (Muratorianisch, etc.). The text now known as the Muratorian Fragment (abbreviated MF throughout this study) is a short writing in Latin extant in a single codex, which has become known as the Muratorian Codex.[6] This codex has the shelfmark Ambr. I 101 sup., and belongs to the Biblioteca Ambrosiana (Ambrosian Library) in Milan, the financial metropolis of Italy's northern Lombardy region and home of Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* mural. The Fragment is located on fols. 10r–11r.[7]

Most books, articles, and other reports citing the Fragment or employing it as a witness assume that its origin is settled. It is thought to be a canon list composed sometime in the second century, most likely in Rome (based on its well-known reference to Pius, bishop of Rome, l. 76) or in the fourth century, somewhere in the East (based on a "periodic" interpretation of ll. 73–77 examin-

[3] Scholarship on the Muratorian Fragment demonstrates an unusual propensity for claiming, as opposed to arguing, consensus. Christophe Guignard, editor-in-chief of *Revue des sciences religieuses*, approved for publication in this journal a *Streitschrift* ("The Muratorian Fragment as a Late Antique Fake? An Answer to C. K. Rothschild," *RevSR* 93 [2019]: 73–90, here: 76) containing a list of corrigenda from my preview article and referring to it as "a hoax." I remain grateful for the list and have made the corrections.

[4] L. A. Muratori, "De Literarum Statu, neglectu, & cultura in Italia post Barbaros in eam invectos usque ad Annum Christi Millesimum Centesimum," in *Antiquitates Italicae Medii Aevi*, vol. 3 (Milan: Ex Typographia Societatis Palatinae, 1740; repr., Bologna: Arnaldo Forni Editore, 1965), 851.

[5] Tregelles may be the first to refer to the Fragment as "Muratorianus." In an unrelated volume in which at one point he argues against the reliability of the papacy, Tregelles comments on the Fragment's title: "The earliest notice of any collected books of the New Testament is found in a remarkable testimony of an unknown writer. The document to which I refer is commonly called the Canon 'in Muratori' because it was first published by that Italian scholar and antiquary, from a MS. in the Ambrosian library at Milan." See S. P. Tregelles, *The Historic Evidence of the Authorship and Transmission of the Books of the New Testament: A Lecture Delivered before the Plymouth Young Men's Christian Association, October 14th, 1851*, 2nd ed. (London: Samuel Bagster, 1881), 15.

[6] *CLA* 3:352.

[7] A photograph of the lithograph of the hand-made facsimile by Samuel Prideaux Tregelles is available in his *Canon Muratorianus: The Earliest Catalogue of the Books of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1867). By sheer chance, it appears between pages 10 and 11 – the same two pages on which the Fragment appears in the Muratorian Codex.

ed below). Often the text is thought to be a translation of an older Greek original now lost. Authorial attributions range widely, including Gaius (presbyter) of Rome, Clement of Alexandria, and Hippolytus of Rome. Many, if not all, scholars accept that the Fragment was truncated when copied into the Muratorian Codex – comments on Matthew and Mark (possibly in the reverse order) are omitted from the beginning and a fuller discussion of heresies excluded from the end. If the text represents a translation from Greek, the reliability of the translator is difficult to judge, as all agree that the scribe who copied the text into the Muratorian Codex was unreliable, perhaps unlearned, if typical of the state of Latin letters of the day.

If arguments for a second-century date are correct, the attraction of the Muratorian Fragment for historians of the New Testament, early Christianity, early church history, late antique Christianity, and late antique religion is obvious: it represents treasured evidence of second-century ecclesiastical thought and piety with a focus on apostolic tradition, canon, and truth. Its list of NT texts, together with its reports concerning the apostles and various NT authors, provides some of the earliest evidence for the historical identities of these figures, on occasion even the details of the historical context of their inspired compositions. If, on the other hand, the Fragment was written in the fourth century, as another set of scholars believes, it joins a chorus of voices debating the canon in a later era. Gleaning valuable insights from both the second- and the fourth-century positions, the present study entertains yet a third option: that the Fragment represents a forged attempt to provide a venerable second-century precedent for a later position on canon. Like the Donation of Constantine, the Pseudo-Isidoriana,[8] and other forgeries, it betrays itself through anachronisms, clichés, mistakes, as well as an arbitrary array of sentences, phrases, and words freely excerpted from older writings without attribution,[9] the purpose of which is to trace canon publication standards of a later date back to the second-century bishopric of Pius (ca. 140–155 CE).[10]

There is no external evidence for the existence of a second-century Greek Muratorian Fragment. No independent witness mentions this text, a fact which alone casts significant doubt on its authenticity. The late fourth-century bishop Chromatius of Aquileia shares a few lines in common with the Fragment, and three eleventh- and one twelfth-century Latin manuscripts contain parallels to twenty-four lines. The Latin of these medieval manuscripts is better than that of the Fragment, suggesting to some scholars that the Fragment was copied

[8] Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[9] This includes the Bible, writings of late antique Christians, abridgments, collections (such as *florilegia*), and anthologies – both genuine and apocryphal.

[10] If there is a Greek model, most scholars surmise a provenance in the East rather than the West.

from a less corrupt original that these parallel texts also knew,[11] whether from the exemplar of the Muratorian Codex or from a branch tradition.[12] This study compares the text of the Fragment with these five and a few related Latin parallel-texts, arguing that, more often than not, the Fragment copied parallel material from sources rather than the reverse and that the Fragment is thus relevant not to the historical study of the time of an imagined pristine Greek or Latin predecessor, but to the time in which it was written down – a golden age of Latin ecclesiastical forgeries.

B. Problems in the Study of the Muratorian Fragment

Presumed Date(s) of Composition

In works by Samuel P. Tregelles, Bruce M. Metzger, and their followers or by Albert C. Sundberg, Jr. and his followers, especially Geoffrey Mark Hahneman, a date of composition either sometime in the last quarter of the second century (first group) or in the fourth century (second group) is assigned to the inextant ancient Greek or Latin text from which it is assumed the Fragment derives. Although most scholars prior to Sundberg's fourth-century hypothesis regard the second-century date as certain, in fact skepticism about a second-century date was expressed from the moment Muratori announced his discovery. All responses to the initial discovery, as well as the subsequent revival of interest roughly a century later with Tregelles and others, are covered in a historiographical review in the next chapter. First, however, we turn to the question of what exactly Muratori discovered in Ambr. I 101 sup.

[11] Geoffrey Mark Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 9.

[12] As Hahneman writes, "If such serious errors exist in a copy of only thirty-five lines, then it is very unlikely that similar errors in transcription would not occur in a passage like the Fragment which is almost two and half times as long. The folio which precedes the Fragment also reveals the same kind of ignorance of construction, the same false criticism, and the same confusion of letters and terminations. Therefore, the carelessness of this particular scribe is probably responsible for a significant portion of the barbarous transcription of the Fragment" (*Muratorian Fragment,* 8). Hahneman also observes that fol. 1Ir displays the letter "I" as a quire mark. Because the manuscript is composed of regular quaternions, each signed in alphabetical order on the last folio, he infers from this letter (and others agree) that up to fifty-six pages have been lost (*Muratorian Fragment,* 17–18). See discussion in Chapter 3.

C. Theoretical Issues

Text and Genre

Since Muratori first laid eyes on it, and particularly since its earliest critical editions, the Fragment has been regarded as a "text" and, as such, thought to possess inherent value for the history of Christianity.[13] Specifically, it has been valued as some kind of canon list and, correspondingly, was never reduced to prefatory or other seemingly less important material. In his argument for the Fragment's fourth-century Eastern date and provenance, Hahneman characterizes the Fragment as "a good example of a catalogue,"[14] defining catalogue as "an accepted list to which nothing can be added or subtracted."[15] Hahneman selects this classification over against the textual categories of "comment," defined as "any mention of works [e. g., by a late antique Christian writer] as authoritative or as Scripture," and "collection," defined as a non-rigid but nevertheless bound group of specifiable works such as the Marcionite prologues.[16] His rationale is based on the Fragment's clear intention to both correctly and completely order and tally NT texts *and* specify omitted texts together with the justification for their exclusion.[17] Hahneman's categorization "catalogue" bolsters his argument for the peculiarity of the Fragment in the second century insofar as NT catalogues are an almost exclusively fourth-century literary phenomenon.[18] At the same time, the Fragment is not, as Hahneman points out, a good example of "an accepted list to which nothing can be added or subtracted" because its position on more than a few texts (e. g., 1, 2, 3 John, Wisdom of Solomon, Shepherd of

[13] According to Paolo Chiesa, a critical edition is "a hypothesis of a text" (*Medieval Latin Philology: An Overview Through Case Studies*, trans. Matteo Salaroli, Galluzzo Paperbacks 3 [Florence: Sismel, 2019], e-book accessed July 23, 2019, "location 1650"). The e-book is an updated and revised translation of P. Chiesa, *Venticinque lezioni di filologia mediolatina*, Galluzzo Paperbacks 3 (Florence: Sismel, 2016).

[14] Imbuing his otherwise clear argument with a measure of ambiguity, Hahneman offers a second characterization of the Fragment as "more than a catalogue" (*Muratorian Fragment*, 89). See the criticism of his position in Everett Ferguson, review of *Muratorian Fragment*, by Geoffrey Mark Hahneman, *JTS* 44 (1993): 691–97, here: 696.

[15] Hahneman, *Muratorian Fragment*, 88.

[16] Hahneman, *Muratorian Fragment*, 87.

[17] Hahneman, *Muratorian Fragment*, 88.

[18] The reviewer of Hesse and Westcott likewise notes that the term "'Canon' was not in use when this list was drawn up. Hilgenfeld thinks, indeed, that the word is in Origen, who may have taken it from the original Greek of our manuscript. This would stamp upon it an additional dignity; but it must be remembered that the adjectival use of the term, in the sense of 'canonised,' occurs only in Latin translations of Origen, and also that a Greek original of the Fragment is only an hypothesis" (Anonymous, review of *Das Muratorische Fragment*, by F. H. Hesse, and of *General Survey of the History of the Canon*, by B. F. Wescott, *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 41 (1874): 434–58, here: 436). I could not find an attribution for this review; hereafter, I refer to the reviewer as anonymous.

Hermas, Apocalypse of Peter) leaves room for doubt. Hahneman does not think this fact jeopardizes his generic categorization, arguing that, even if the details are now lost, a clear position on these texts is implied. However, just as problematic – or more – for the Fragment's categorization as a catalogue are its numerous comments. Most ancient catalogues inventory a series of items seriatim without commentary. These issues compel our reassessment of the Fragment's generic classification.

Deciphering the Genre

The Fragment is a single incomplete codicological unit in a composite codex. It is assumed to represent an originally coherent work, but B. F. Westcott recorded the possibility that the original Fragment was itself composite – "three or four different passages from some unknown author."[19] This idea, which has to my knowledge not been adequately explored, suggests at least two additional possible generic categories in addition to Hahneman's three (i. e., commentaries, prefaces, catalogues): formulae and doxography. A short review of all five may help us to get a sense of where the Fragment belongs.

1. Commentary (Gk. ὑπόμνημα; Lat. *commentarium*)

Working with Hahneman's definition, commentaries are "self-standing works containing exegetical remarks on a text. Keyed by a lemma (a short quotation) from the text under discussion, the commentary functioned as an aid for novice-learners and experienced readers alike."[20]

2. Preface (Gk. πρόλογος; Lat. *prooemium*)

I have replaced Hahneman's 'collection' with 'preface' or 'prefatory material' to refocus this category on the genre as opposed to the medium. "Prefaces" are statements that precede a text, providing relevant historical information about some aspect of its history or composition. NT prefaces may introduce individual texts (e. g., gospel, letter) or text groups (i. e., *corpus Paulinum*). Occasionally, NT prefatory material orients readers to or away from an exegetical or theological trend (e. g., so-called anti-Marcionite).[21]

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[19] "The present form of the Fragment makes the idea of a chasm in it very probable; and more than this, the want of coherence between several parts seems to shew that it was not all continuous originally, but that it has been made up of three or four different passages from some unknown author, collected on the same principle as the quotations in Eusebius from Papias, Irenaeus, Clement, and Origen" (Brooke Foss Westcott, A *General Survey of History of the Canon of the New Testament during the First Four Centuries* [London: Macmillan, [7]1896], 223).

[20] See Trevor Thompson, "Commentaries (Genre): Greco-Roman Antiquity," *EBR* 5:548–49, here: 548.

[21] Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, ed. D. E. Orton and R. Dean Andersen (Leiden: Brill, 1998), §§ 263–88. J. J. Armstrong believes that the Fragment may have preceded a commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, particularly as an

3. Catalogue (Gk. κατάλογος; Lat. *catalogus*)

Catalogues are lists (seriatim) with minimal commentary or other discursive material. In the fourth century, biblical lists sometimes separate items into categories, for example, (1) ὁμολογούμενα ("recognized"), (2) ἀντιλεγόμενα ("disputed"), and (3) νόθα ("spurious") (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.25.1).

4. Formula

Formulae are rules, methods, or formulas for regulating judicial proceedings.[22] Eucherius of Lyons (380–450 CE) utilizes this genre to articulate a wide variety of Christian ideas. In Ambr. I 101 sup., the Fragment (fol. 10r–11r) is embedded between two works by Eucherius (*Formulae*, 1r–9v, *Instructiones* 12r–19r) – the former of which is a celebrated list of *formulae*.[23] Question-and-Answer literature is a close relative of *formulae*.[24]

5. *Doxography*

Doxography (Gk. ἀρέσκοντα; Lat. *placita*) is an ancient genre popularized by Christians in which the philosophical views of a particular philosopher or philosophical school are succinctly formulated and organized by topic.

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imitation of the prologue to Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* ("Victorinus of Pettau as the Author of the Canon Muratori," *VC* 62 [2008]: 1–34, here: 31).

[22] According to Thomas O'Loughlin, "The word *formula* has a range of meanings in Latin somewhat comparable to its various uses in modern English: it can mean a legal document, be part of a fixed process, or describe a part of liturgical ritual. None of these well evidenced uses fully explains why Eucherius chose it as the title of his book or why he says in the preface that he is sending a work on the *formulae* which go to make up a spiritual understanding" ("The Spirit Gives Life: Eucherius of Lyons' Formula for Exegesis," in *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit*, ed. Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey [Dublin: Four Courts, 1995], 221–52, here: 235); Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1879), 769, s. v. *formula* I.B.4; J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 446–47, s. v. *formula* 3–5.

[23] Several scholars, including Mirella Ferrari, argue that seven fascicles containing the majority of Eucherius's *Formulae* were lost between fol. 9v and fol. 10r. See discussion in Chapter 3.

[24] This genre derives from the ancient Greek tradition of interrogating either important texts such as Homer or important customs (e. g., Plutarch, *Greek and Roman Questions*). Helpful studies on this topic include Gustav Bardy, "La littérature patristique des 'Quaestiones et Responsiones' sur l'Ecriture Sainte," *RB* 41 (1932): 210–36, 341–69, 515–37; *RB* 42 (1933): 14–30, 211–29, 328–52; Marie-Pierre Bussières, ed., *La littérature des questions et réponses dans l'antiquité profane et chrétienne: de l'enseignement à l'exégèse*, Instrumenta patristica et mediaevalia 64 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013); Yannis Papadoyannakis, "Instruction by Question and Answer: The Case of Late Antique and Byzantine Erotapokriseis," in *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didacticism, Classicism*, ed. Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 91–106; Lorenzo Perrone, "Questions and Responses," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Paul M. Blowers and Peter W. Martens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 198–209; and, Claudio Zamagni, "Une introduction méthodologique à la littérature patristiques des questions et réponses: Le cas d'Eusèbe de Césarée," in *Erotapokriseis: Early Christian Question-and-Answer Literature in Context*, ed. Annelie Volgers and Claudio Zamagni, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 37 (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 7–24, here: 10.

Analysis

According to these categories, the Muratorian Fragment represents neither commentary (scriptural exegesis) (#1 above) nor catalogue (seriatim list) (#3 above). It resembles doxography (#5) in its initial comments on the gospels of Luke and John,[25] but this similarity does not persist after the presentation of the gospels. As Westcott once noted, the Fragment resembles an amalgamation of pieces – brief seriatim prefaces (i. e., name of biblical book followed by brief mention of relevant historical information) mixed with other non-preface material.[26] One might argue that the Fragment represents preface material based on its parallels (twenty-four lines) in the so-called Benedictine Prologues, four copies of a prologue to Paul's epistles discovered in three eleventh- and one twelfth-century manuscripts at the Benedictine monastery on Monte Cassino.[27] Yet at least three aspects advise against this labeling. First, the preface-like material in the Fragment is shorter than that of other works. Where a typical preface includes two to five sentences about a single work, some books in the Fragment receive comment only as part of a group (Paul's letters) or not at all.[28] Second, a significant percentage of the Fragment's lines cannot be qualified as preface material: lines 18–26, for example, constitute a Rule of Faith. Third, banned books (ll. 81–85) rarely receive comment in biblical prefaces.

The Fragment often fails to link commentary on one book to commentary on the next, suggesting, as Westcott observed, a certain separability of the underlying generic traditions. Such a chain-link presentation of some brief prefatory-like statements in asystematic alternation with non-prefatory statements (e. g., Rule of Faith, catalogue of heresies), incorporating aspects of both canon and creed, suggests the generic classification *formulae* or its close relative – question-and-answer literature – characterized by simple, disconnected propositions representative, rather than comprehensive, of a single theme and aim.

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[25] In particular, the triadic emphasis on *tempus, locus, and persona*. On the general background of this triad, see D. W. Robertson, Jr., "A Note on the Classical Origin of 'Circumstances' in the Medieval Confessional," *Studies in Philology* 43 (1946): 6–14, esp. 10. On occurrences in Irish exegesis, see Thomas O'Loughlin, "*Res, tempus, locus, persona*: Adomnán's Exegetical Method," *The Innes Review* 48 (1997): 95–111; and on occurrences in an *accessus*, see Franck Cinato, "'Accessus ad Priscianum' de Jean Scot Erigène à Létald de Micy," *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 70 (2012): 27–90.

[26] Westcott, *General Survey of the History of the Canon,* 223.

[27] See discussion in Chapter 5.

[28] Hermann Freiherr von Soden (*Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911–1913]) offers the most complete collection of Greek prologues.

Excursus: Decretum Gelasianum

One additional genre warrants mention. A decretal is a papal letter containing an authoritative decision on a point of ecclesiastical law. The oldest decretal may date to the fourth century – the letter of Pope Siricius (384–398) to Himerius, bishop of Tarragona in Spain, dating to 385.[29] The so-called *Decretum Gelasianum* (*DG*) or the Gelasian Decree is a decree erroneously attributed to Pope Gelasius including a canon list of twenty-seven books of the NT. The work takes it name from a tradition that it was a decretal of Pope Gelasius I, bishop of Rome from 492 to 496. It is a five-chapter anonymous text[30] likely written in southern Gaul or northern Italy in the sixth century.[31] The second chapter contains a list of biblical books known as the Damasine List (because it was purportedly ordained as canon by authority of a council of Rome under Pope Damasus I, bishop of Rome from 366 to 383) or *De libris recipiendis et non recipiendis*. The list includes the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in that order; fourteen Pauline epistles; seven general letters: two of Peter, one of James, one of the apostle John, two of "the other John the presbyter," and one of "Judas the Zealot." The Muratorian Fragment shares verbal similarities with this fictitious decree, including the following: an emphasis on the number seven (*DG* 1.1; 2.4 || MF ll. 49, 58); reference to the oneness of the holy spirit (*DG* 1.3; MF ll. 19) and "universal catholic church" (*DG* 2 pref.; 3.1 || MF ll. 56–57, 66);[32] language of "receiving" and "not receiving" (*DG* 2 pref., 3 pref., 5 || MF ll. 66, 70–71);[33] reference to the passion of Peter (*DG* 3.2 || MF l. 37); association of Wisdom with Solomon (*DG* 2.1 || MF l. 70); use of the epithet 'canonical' for the catholic epistles (*DG* 2.4 || MF l. 69);[34] reference to the apostolic seat in the city of Rome (*DG* 3 pref., 3.3; "city of Rome," 4.3 || MF ll. 74–76); reference to the "prophets" and "apostles" (*DG* 3.1 || MF l. 79–80); and, a list of heretics and heretical works (*DG* 4.1; 5 [also, schismatics] || MF ll. 65, 81–84). Finally, both texts refer to a past pope (*DG*: either Damasus, pref. or Gelasius, 3 pref.; MF l. 76: Pius).

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[29] Greg Peters and C. Colt Anderson, eds., *A Companion to Priesthood and Holy Orders in the Middle Ages,* Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 109.

[30] The five parts are: (1) Christ and the spirit; (2) canonical books; (3) Rome, Alexandria, Antioch; (4) list of received books; and (5) list of apocryphal books.

[31] Ernst von Dobschütz argues that all five chapters belong to the same pseudonymous work written between 519 and 553 in Italy (*Das Decretum Gelasianum de libris recipiendis et non recipiendis in kritischem Text,* TU 38/4 [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912]) reasoning that (a) all versions (i. e., shorter recensions) seem to be derived from the full five-part text, which contains a quotation by Augustine from ca. 416, implying that the text postdates Damasus; and, (b) had it been an official decree of Gelasius it would have been known and used by Dionysius Exiguus and Cassiodorus, implying it predates the latter (d. 590). In his review of this volume, F. C. Burkitt believes Dobschütz has convincingly made his case: (*JTS* 14 [1913]: 469–71, here: 470). The *Decretum* may reuse an older text: Eduard Schwartz, "Zum Decretum Gelasianum," *ZNW* 29 (1930): 161–8; Ursula Reutter, *Damasus, Bischof von Rom (366–384): Leben und Werk*, STAC 55 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 468–513.

[32] Lietzmann notes this parallel (*Das Muratorische Fragment*, 9).

[33] Cf. also "receive to be read" *DG* 4.4 || MF l. 77.

[34] Hahneman observes this parallel (*Muratorian Fragment*, 162). He discusses the *Decretum Gelasianum* with three other canon lists (i. e., the Laodicene Canon 60, a Roman canon from ca. 400, and *Synopsis Veteris et Novi Testamenti*), the authenticity of which is so seriously disputed that he does not include them in his conclusions to the chapter (156–63, 180–82).

Interest in orthodoxy on the part of Carolingian scholars spurred numerous copies of this text, some regarding it as a decretal by Gelasius, others as a work by a Roman council under Damasus.[35] The earliest manuscript of *De libris recipiendis*, Brussels, Royal Library 9850–52 was copied circa 700. The complete text is preserved in the mid-eighth-century Ragyndrudis Codex (fols. 57r–61v) now in the cathedral treasury at Fulda. The *Decretum Gelasianum* traveled with the works of Eucherius in, for example, MS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14469.[36] According to Rosamond McKitterick, "In nearly every case its codicological context is that of coherent and deliberate miscellanies of texts which provide guides to orthodox and approved Christian writings."[37] Fictitious attribution of the text to an early pope bolsters the authority and hence usefulness of the guide and attempts to date it earlier than it was written. While the verbal similarities between these two texts are only marginally suggestive, and notable differences between the two texts include absence in the Fragment of Hebrews, 1, 2, Peter, and James, the codicological function of the *Decretum Gelasianum* may be instructive for our understanding of the Fragment.

Eucherius of Lyons

As noted, the Fragment is embedded in the Muratorian Codex between two treatises by the mid-fifth-century bishop Eucherius of Lyons. Frequently neglected by scholars, Eucherius, bishop of Lyons (d. 450 CE), is a significant fifth-century theologian who lived in southern Gaul. Cassiodorus mentions him with honor among the *introductores scripturae divinae* ("those who have written introductions to the sacred scriptures"),[38] that is, as an individual able to help the faithful understand *quae prius clausa manserunt* ("that which was inaccessible before") and quotes a lengthy paragraph from Eucherius's chapter on numbers verbatim.[39] Originally, Eucherius's two works would have comprised roughly half of the codex.[40] If the Fragment's genre is not commentary (#1 above), catalogue (#3 above), doxography (#5), or preface (#2 above), it may be worth considering whether its simple, disconnected propositions bear a relationship to *formulae*, the genre of Eucherius's important treatise, *Formulae spiritalis intellegentiae*.

According to Thomas O'Loughlin, legal applications of this genre involve "a fixed rule, method, and process for carrying out a case, and in particular a rule

[35] Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 202–5.

[36] McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, 203, 208. The combination was commonly found together in a variety of exegetical handbooks.

[37] McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, 203.

[38] Cassiodorus, *Inst.* 1.10.1 (R. A. B. Mynors, ed., *Cassiodori Senatoris Institutiones* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1937], 34). Cf. Thomas O'Loughlin, *Adomnan and the Holy Places: The Perceptions of an Insular Monk on the Locations of the Biblical Drama* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 30.

[39] Cassiodorus, *Inst.* 2.4.8 (ed. Mynors, 141–42). See Alexander Souter, "'Cassiodorus' Copy of Eucherius' *Instructiones*," *JTS* 14 (1913): 69–72.

[40] See discussion in Chapter 3.

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