

Stanley E. Porter, Chris E. Stevens, and David I. Yoon, eds., *Studies on the Paratextual Features of Early New Testament Manuscripts*. TENT 16. Leiden: Brill, 2023. ISBN 978-90-04-53794-1. Hardcover, pp. xvi + 379. €132.68.

In the effort to reconstruct the New Testament text, manuscripts are often stripped of all physicality and analyzed solely for the text they preserve. In this state, they become nothing more than digital words on a screen. An unfortunate result is a paucity of studies focused on the paratextual features of manuscripts. However, the editors of this volume are convinced that paratextual features have much to contribute to our understanding of the New Testament and thus compiled the present volume consisting of thirteen essays from various contributors, many of whom have made previous contributions to this nascent discussion. Their goal is to shed light on a neglected topic as well as spark interest for further study.

In the first essay, “What Is Paratext? In Search of an Elusive Category,” Stanley Porter explores the concept of paratext. Rather than formulating a formal definition of the term, Porter’s essay focuses on the issues surrounding such an endeavor, ultimately concluding that an all-encompassing definition remains elusive. This is partially due to the difficulty with defining the idea of text, as well as the fact that text and paratext (whatever anyone means by these) are, in many ways, inseparable. In spite of this, Porter ultimately concludes that discussing paratext as an actual concept is still useful, but one must be clear about one’s purpose and what exactly is meant by paratext when using the term. Regrettably, Porter really only engages four conversation partners in his essay: Gérard Genette, Patrick Andrist, Jorge J. E. Garcia, and John Mowitt. No doubt, paratextual work is somewhat in its infancy. However, significant work is being done in this area, such as the current Paratexts Seeking Understanding project at the University of Glasgow under Garrick Allen. In an essay seeking a definition of paratext, one might expect to see at least some work from Allen and his project integrated into the discussion as someone who has (apparently) found one.

The purpose of chapter 2, “Missing the Point: Modern Punctuation Practice as Authoritative but Possibly Problematic Decision-Making,” is to study the punctuation system in modern critical editions and determine their reliability. Hans Förster looks at four passages from the Gospel of

John (8:25, 43, 44, and 12:40) to demonstrate how punctuation has interpretive consequences. He further submits that the punctuation in these passages has resulted in an anti-Semitic interpretation of the text that is arguably absent from its earliest attainable form. In a concluding statement, he revises Adele Reinhartz's quote to read that the "gospel of love ... has been *made* an instrument of hate" (emphasis original, 58). While perhaps a bit overstated, Förster's study aptly calls attention to the need for more critical judgment toward punctuation in modern editions, since "the insertion of a question mark [or any punctuation mark] is an editorial decision introducing authoritative editorial interpretation, which might replace and obliterate authorial intent" (52).

In chapter 3, "Pointers to Persons and Pericopes? A Study of the Inter-marginal Signs in Sahidic Manuscripts of the Gospel of John," Matthias H. O. Schulz studies the function of paragraph marks and initials in Coptic manuscripts. Schulz makes clear that previous methods for dating Coptic manuscripts are being reevaluated, so studies such as his are needed. He limits his analysis to Sahidic manuscripts of the Gospel of John. His research reveals that manuscripts believed to be earlier frequently had fewer paragraph marks and initials than later manuscripts. While inconclusive, the data also suggest that the liturgical tradition exercised at least some degree of influence on the formation of these divisions; this influence may be more significant than was previously believed. Further, the purpose of marks in several manuscripts seem to be to guide users in the task of reading aloud in a public setting rather than private use.

Tomas Bokedal submits five theses in chapter 4, "But for Me, the Scriptures Are JESUS CHRIST: Creedal Text-Coding and the Early Scribal System of *Nomina Sacra*." First, he argues that printed editions of the New Testament should include *nomina sacra*, which (second) will foster dialogue between historians and theologians in discussions related to early Christology and creedal language. Third, Bokedal argues that the *nomina sacra*, in general, are numerically encoded to represent early creedal language. Studying the *nomina sacra* from this vantage point could reignite discussion in this area. Fourth, his essay is meant to provide tools and resources for further study of the *nomina sacra*. Bokedal focuses on the fifteen or seventeen primary words across a wide spectrum of writings and numerical combinations. Fifth, textual criticism would benefit from the present discussion, as many textual variants are likely best explained as phenomena related to *nomina sacra* and their numerical significance. While Bokedal provides a helpful list of significant numerical figures (97–

98) and makes several interesting connections between various *nomina sacra* and one or more of these figures, one gets the feeling that almost any word could somehow be made to fit. Furthermore, it is not always clear from Bokedal's charts whether the respective figures represent the tradition of *nomina sacra* in general (as if there were such a thing) or a specific manuscript. The problem with the latter is the inconsistency of *nomina sacra* tendencies within each manuscript, as well as the differing tendencies from one manuscript to another. Overall, however, Bokedal succeeds in providing a large amount of data and pushing forward the discussion about *nomina sacra* in new ways.

Chapter 5, "Segmentation and Interpretation of Early Pauline Manuscripts," is a study by S. Matthew Solomon of segmentation in early Pauline manuscripts to determine the accuracy of paragraph and section breaks in modern critical editions of the New Testament. Solomon identifies five passages (1 Cor 7:39; 14:33; Eph 5:21; 1 Tim 3:1; Phlm 7) where the critical editions need to be reevaluated and greater weight should be given to the early manuscript tradition. After a brief introduction, the essay consists of three main sections: Dividing Texts, Segmentation Features of Early Pauline Manuscripts, and Reconsidering Paragraph Divisions in Pauline Letters. In Dividing Texts, Solomon explores definitions related to textual division and the exegetical implications involved in such decisions. In Segmentation Features, he discusses all pre-400 Pauline manuscripts to determine their usefulness for determining segmentation. Unlike other essays in this volume, Solomon does not include images, which is unfortunate, as many of his points would be clearer with a visual aid. Over and against this, however, the section on Features of Pauline Manuscripts seems largely incidental to Solomon's project. He determines that many of the witnesses are not helpful for his study, yet still spends time discussing their codicological features. Furthermore, the fact that none of Solomon's arguments in the primary section (Reconsidering Paragraph Divisions) relies on data gathered from this present section makes it seem unnecessary. Positively, his argument from the third section (Reconsidering Paragraph Divisions) is well taken: there are certain places where the paragraph divisions in most critical editions deserve further attention, places where the divisions also carry exegetical implications. The early manuscript tradition can prove a useful guide in this endeavor.

In chapter 6, "Can Papyri Correspondence Help Us to Understand Paul's 'Large Letters' in Galatians?," William Varner studies the subscriptions of select documentary papyri to determine what light they shed on

Paul's mention of "large letters" in Gal 6:11. Three common explanations for this phenomenon include (1) Paul took over for his secretary at this point, (2) Paul wrote the entire letter himself, and (3) Paul's comment here refers to the long length of Galatians rather than the size of script. After a brief survey of ancient epistolary practices, Varner surveys the subscriptions from seven papyrus manuscripts, each of which changes hands from the main epistolary text. He concludes this section with a close look at the script of Gal 6:11 in P46, which Varner argues is slightly larger than the surrounding text. While this last point does not necessarily provide evidence on epistolary practice, it still could be an interpretive nod from the scribe of P46 for what this verse means. Varner then explores the reasons why Paul would write 6:11 in letters larger than the rest of the epistle (e.g., emphasis, poor eyesight), ultimately concluding that the reason is simply due to Paul's untrained hand. He further posits that Paul's specific mention of this phenomenon is best understood in the context of Gal 6:12–18, which discusses those who seek to impress based on physical, fleshly achievements. Contrary to such boasting, Paul is pointing out an obvious shortcoming in himself (poor handwriting) to emphasize his confidence in the redemptive work of Christ rather than human achievement or merit. While this final conclusion does not seem like the most obvious understanding of the passage, additional historical evidence (if it exists) could strengthen Varner's claim here. In spite of this shortcoming, this article is clear, concise, and provides a helpful survey of current discussion on this passage.

Linnea Thorp and Tommy Wasserman collaborate in chapter 7, "The Tradition and Development of the Subscriptions to 1 Timothy," and turn their attention to all extant subscriptions in 1 Timothy in order to trace the history of its development and determine what light it sheds on the history of interpretation. Subscriptions remain a largely underexplored paratextual feature of New Testament manuscripts, with the most comprehensive study being David Champagne's 2012 unpublished dissertation (which Thorp and Wasserman utilize extensively). After a brief history of research and background on subscriptions in 1 Timothy, the authors discuss their method for selecting and analyzing the data. Of the 415 extant Greek manuscripts of 1 Timothy, 310 contain a subscription; of these, 29 are lacunose and 2 illegible. The remainder are included in the study, in addition to "a limited range of versional evidence," including significant bilingual Greek-Latin manuscripts (184). While their criteria for what qualifies as a significant witness is not discussed, one wonders whether this supplemental versional evidence should be broadened slightly to include significant

witnesses beyond just the Latin tradition. Thorp and Wasserman utilize a three-tiered approach to organize and analyze the variants. Type 1 are simple subscriptions consisting of title only (προς τιμοθεον α), which seven manuscripts contain. This early type of subscription represents a time when the Pauline letters were collected, potentially reflecting a canonical edition. Type 2 subscriptions are semielaborated and include some type of terminal modifier (e.g., επληρωθη; επιστοπη) but no information regarding place of composition. Type 3 are elaborated subscriptions that usually contain information about place of origin, the earliest of which is Codex Alexandrinus (which predates the Type 2 subscriptions by a century). Of the four locations found throughout the subscription textual tradition (Laodicea, Nicopolis, Macedonia, and Athens), Laodicea is the earliest and attested by the majority. The authors argue that the Type 3 subscription as it occurs in Alexandrinus may predate the υποθεσις/argumenta, Euthalian apparatus, and Latin prologues, although the relationship between these features and their influence on one another may be more complex. In sum, this essay offers sound evidence that the subscriptions in 1 Timothy developed over time and sheds light on what the church believed regarding the letter's origin.

In many ways, chapter 8, "Second Timothy: When and Where? Text and Traditions in the Subscriptions," builds on the previous, although the method is modified to fit the unique textual characteristics of 2 Timothy subscriptions. Of the 521 Greek manuscripts that contain subscriptions, 485 meet all necessary criteria for analysis. Conrad Thorup Elmelund and Tommy Wasserman utilize a three-tiered classification system similar to the above study, although they further divide Type 2 into five subgroups and Type 3 into six subgroups. Many subscriptions seem to reflect some theory regarding the reception history of 2 Timothy, so the authors briefly survey this topic. The Type 3 subscriptions exhibit a strong consensus regarding Rome as the place of composition. The exception is Codex Alexandrinus, which lists Laodicea (Elmelund and Wasserman argue that this is likely a scribal mistake). While there is consensus among ancient sources regarding Paul's martyrdom in Rome, disagreements exist regarding where 2 Timothy fits within Pauline chronology. The Euthalian apparatus and Theodoret of Cyrrihus hold to a single Roman imprisonment, whereas Eusebius and Theodore of Mopsuestia (as well as the *Chronicle* section of the Euthalian apparatus, which is dependent on Eusebius) assume two imprisonments. Furthermore, the tradition surrounding Timothy's episcopate (found specifically in Acts of Timothy and the Martyrdom of

Timothy) has also left its mark on Type 3 subscriptions. One helpful addition to this study would be the inclusion of versional evidence, specifically Latin, given the prominence of Rome in the 2 Timothy tradition. Overall, this study aptly demonstrates the influence of these extracanonical works on textual transmission and interpretation of 2 Timothy.

Chapter 9, “Composite Citations in New Testament Greek Manuscripts,” is a collaborative essay by Sean A. Adams and Seth M. Ehorn, who study the paratextual features of all papyri and a selection of early majuscules to determine what scribes understood about composite citations. They define composite citation as “when literary borrowing occurs in a manner that includes two or more passages (from the same or different authors) fused together and conveyed as though they are one” (227). They begin with a brief discussion of the types of paratextual features in general, with a specific focus on those used to indicate citations, which includes blank spaces, punctuation marks, ekthesis and indentation, paragraphos, diplai, rubrication, and source attribution. The first section of analysis focuses on the Greek papyri. Of the limited examples of marked citations, no distinction exists between regular citations and composite. The next section focuses on early majuscules, specifically Codices Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, Bezae, and Claromontanus. The authors conclude that “most NT scribes in the fourth–sixth centuries display some method for signaling cited text,” although none did so consistently (256). They also claim that some scribes were aware of the source text and, concerning composite citations, took measures to separate foreign material from the cited text, although the evidence they submit for this phenomenon could be variously interpreted. The final section deviates from the book’s focus on early manuscripts to include Codex Boernerianus (GA 012), a ninth-century Greek-Latin diglot. The scribe of this later manuscript does, in fact, take measures to indicate the various sources behind composite citations, although not consistently. Overall, the study does seem to provide evidence for the development of paratextual features for indicating composite citations (although it may be difficult to reach this conclusion given the early evidence alone). However, the authors are not clear about which passages they surveyed. Some sort of rationale for selecting passages would be helpful, as well as a table that depicts their total findings. As it stands, they present a seemingly ad hoc selection of examples, which leaves little room for further discussion.

In chapter 10, “Titus in P32 and Early Majuscules: Textual Reliability and Scribal Design,” Chris S. Stevens makes use of manuscript criticism,

which is not a term common to textual criticism or biblical studies. Manuscript criticism does not focus on textual interpretation but instead studies the physical features of manuscripts from multiple angles (e.g., physical features, layout, segmentation, scribal design). Stevens is not exactly clear how manuscript criticism differs from paratextual studies. Stevens initially outlines his study as having three major sections: an examination of “various aspects” of P32, an examination of P32 using a comparative method to highlight scribal choices and paratextual features, and a look at the scribal design of Titus in Sinaiticus for its potential liturgical use (268). However, as the study progresses, he includes an additional section on ancient reading that was not included in his outline. Unfortunately, this essay is quite disjointed, and its purpose is unclear. Initially, it seems as if Stevens is focusing the study on Titus in P32. This focus shifts slightly as he employs Codex Sinaiticus to supplement P32 for the purpose of theoretical reconstruction. The study then takes another turn as Stevens explores a series of short lines that Codex Sinaiticus has in Titus. He concludes that this phenomenon was for the purpose of public reading (which he states as four separate conclusions, although he actually only makes one point, 284). In the end, he circles back and points out how P32 has an agreement of 99.85 percent with the letters of Sinaiticus and 99.1 percent with its words. Thus, P32 is a “potential parent” of the text of Titus in Sinaiticus. However, he previously pointed out how P32 agreed with the letters of Codices Alexandrinus and Claromontanus 100 percent of the time (272). Is P32 a parent of these other witnesses as well? Further, is the very limited amount of extant text in P32 sufficient to make such bold statements? While this essay makes a lot of interesting points, it is not clear how the sections work together or connect to one another, and some of the conclusions are unclear.

In chapter 11, “The Scribal Use of Ekthesis as a Paragraph Marker? The Galatians Text in Codex Sinaiticus as a Test Case,” David I. Yoon analyzes the ekthesis features in Codex Sinaiticus to determine their function. The common assumption is that ektheses function as paragraph markers. Yoon wants to provide evidence for or against this belief by first developing a definition of paragraph and then comparing the ekthesis marks in Sinaiticus to see whether they fit this definition. He limits his analysis to the text of Galatians and determines that the ekthesis marks do, indeed, function as paragraph markers, although not necessarily as “paragraph” is defined in a modern sense. Yoon utilizes linguistic analysis to develop his definition of paragraph, beginning with the smaller units of clause and sentence. His basic definition of a Greek clause is a unit that “contains an explicit

or implicit subject and an explicit or implicit predicate” (291). He further argues that the word *sentence* implies orthographic features that did not exist in the ancient Greek language. Thus, he prefers the term *clause complex*, which he defines as “a complex of clauses consisting of a primary clause and any secondary or embedded clauses attached to it” (293). From here, Yoon moves to define *paragraph*. Unlike clause and clause complex, Yoon believes the paragraph to be more inherently subjective and dependent on the individual author. Thus, he does not formulate a working definition of paragraph but instead outlines three minimal criteria: (1) delimited by orthographic features; (2) cannot be defined according to lexicogrammatical categories, since paragraphs function in the semantic stratum; (3) functions arbitrarily. Due to this definition (or lack thereof), Yoon is able to conclude that the ekthesis features in Sinaiticus’s text of Galatians do indeed reflect paragraphs, even though these markers occur, on average, every two verses. One wonders whether Yoon’s definition of paragraph is too vague. Perhaps better explanations exist regarding the function of ekthesis in Sinaiticus, such as aids for public reading or use. Yoon gives attention to such explanations but ultimately maintains his conclusion. Nevertheless, he presents a compelling argument in a logical format. He also includes an appendix with the ekthesis divisions throughout Galatians for readers’ further study—a welcome addition indeed.

In chapter 12, “Miniature Codices in Early Christianity,” Michael J. Kruger explores the characteristics and uses of miniature codices in early Christianity. These volumes, which were 10 cm or less in size, emerged around the first century and gained popularity throughout the fourth and fifth centuries. Their content is what sets them apart from amulets, which are of comparable size. Essentially, the distinguishing features of miniature codices in terms of content are continuous text (as opposed to several different partial units of text characteristic of amulets) and high scribal quality. Kruger applies the term *hybrid* documents to works that appear as miniature codices on the outside but are actually amulets on the inside. In terms of the function of miniature codices, Kruger submits four likely possibilities: private reading, portability, expression of devotion, and protection/healing. None of these functions is mutually exclusive of the others. In sum, Kruger provides a sound study on miniature codices. While this type of study is arguably not directly related to the focus of the book (paratextual studies), there is some overlap between the two topics.

In the final chapter, “Marginalia in New Testament Greek Papyri: Implications for Scribal Practice and Textual Transmission,” Michael P.

Theophilus creates a catalog of the marginal content found in New Testament papyri, classifying them according to the type of notation made. He then analyzes the data for what light they might shed on scribal practice, textual transmission, and exegesis. Theophilus uses Kathleen McNamee's *Annotations in Greek and Latin Texts from Egypt* as a base for his own. McNamee cataloged and classified 293 Greek and Latin texts from Egypt that ranged from the third to seventh centuries, although she excluded biblical texts. Theophilus does the same for biblical papyri with some necessary modifications to McNamee's classification system. Theophilus begins with a description of the marginalia in all thirty-one papyri included in his study, followed by a chart that lists each papyrus name/reference, date, form (e.g., codex, roll), provenance (if known), marginalia type, and location where the marginal note occurs. The marginalia fall into one of eight classifications based on function: document title, pericope title, sigla indicating transition from one language to another, textual amendment, textual amendment through interlinear addition, insert marker, subject heading, or scribal gloss (352–57). In general, width of the margin has no bearing on the length or type of marginal gloss, and the marginal notes parallel those found in other Greco-Roman codices (e.g., written in the left margin, sigla for variants and corrections, use of interlinear space for corrections and variants). Theophilus's study fills a void in scholarship and provides a useful tool for any who are studying marginalia features or papyri in general.

The editors conclude the volume with three overarching conclusions. First, paratextual features provide us with codified representations of how early scribes, copyists, or editors understood and interpreted the text. Second, some paratextual features were for the purpose of reading aids, although these do not necessarily represent the earliest versions of the text. Third, paratextual features should be considered and included in a study on manuscripts and their reading. Such conclusions are welcome and aptly summarize the volume. This work achieves its purpose in shedding light on a neglected area and igniting further interest. I highly recommend this book for anyone within fields related to textual and paleographic studies.

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