

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Nomina Sacra and Social Semiosis in Early Christian Textual Practice

by

Benjamin Ryan Overcash

B.A., M.A., M.A., Grad.Dip.

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy



Department of Ancient History
Faculty of Arts
Macquarie University

March 2018

Fa freddo nello scriptorium, il pollice mi duole. Lascio questa scrittura, non so per chi, non so più intorno a che cosa.

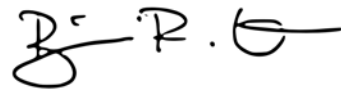
—ADSO OF MELK (UMBERTO ECO, *IL NOME DELLA ROSA*)

ABSTRACT

The practice of abbreviating and supralineating certain sacred words, known as *nomina sacra*, is a remarkably widespread phenomenon across the spectrum of early Christian textual practice, appearing in materials from sacred literature to personal letters and learning exercises. While this practice has received considerable attention in the last century, approaches have generally been deductive and descriptive, and furthermore have largely been isolated to single genres of source material, with particular emphasis on their presence in literary manuscripts. Drawing on theories of social semiotics and multimodality, the present study takes an inductive and interpretive approach by analyzing particular instantiations of this practice across the broad range of materials in which it is employed. The study is divided into two parts. Part One examines the *nomina sacra* in early Christian literary culture. The *nomina sacra* are first positioned as visually and socially oriented signifiers of communal identity and expression; attention is then turned to their use in three particular Christian literary manuscripts; and finally, an answer is explored in regard to questions raised by the sacral treatment of “cross” and “crucify” and the use of the staurogram. Part Two presents case studies to address the use of *nomina sacra* in the “everyday writing” of early Christians—that is, in their letters, learning exercises, and amulets. Throughout the study, it is argued that the *nomina sacra* are best understood not as static signifiers with a standard set of forms and meanings, but as traces of dynamic and creative lived material practices by social/semiotic agents.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Benjamin Ryan Overcash, hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis, entitled “What’s in a Name? *Nomina Sacra* and Social Semiosis in Early Christian Textual Practice,” and that it has not previously been submitted, in whole or in part, for a degree or diploma at any other university or institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material published or written by any person other than myself, except where reference is made thereof.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. R. Overcash", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Benjamin R. Overcash

March 30, 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Undertaking a PhD is an arduous endeavor, and it would not have been possible without the support and guidance of many people and institutions.

First of all, I am grateful to the various departments and bodies at Macquarie University who have provided financial support throughout the course of this work. Without the stipend afforded by the MQRES scholarship, putting life on hold for more than four years in pursuit of a PhD would have seemed a fanciful prospect. In addition, I thank the Faculty of Arts for the grant awarded from the HDR Candidate Conference Travel Scheme, as well as the Society for the Study of Early Christianity (SSEC) for the provision of a Postgraduate Travel Grant. Together, these grants enabled me to travel to the 28th International Congress of Papyrology in Barcelona to present an embryonic version of some of the work that ultimately fed into the chapters of this thesis. SSEC also generously awarded me with the Macquarie-Tyndale Travelling Scholarship for 2017, which allowed me to spend an extremely productive four-week period in Cambridge researching and writing.

During my time in the UK, I was privileged to meet with Gunther Kress in London and Larry Hurtado in Edinburgh, whose respective work in social semiotics and early Christian papyrology played a significant role in shaping this project. I am grateful for their warm generosity in taking the time to learn about my work, ask and answer many questions, and offer invaluable advice. I am also grateful to the Sackler Library at Oxford, the British Library in London, the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, and the Houghton Library at Harvard for allowing me to autopsy many of the papyri discussed in this study.

At Macquarie, my sincerest gratitude is due to Associate Professor Malcolm Choat and Dr Stephen Llewelyn, both of whom served as primary supervisors at various stages of my candidature. It was Stephen who encouraged me to investigate semiotics as a possible theoretical orientation, and his interest, challenges, and suggestions have consistently pushed my work in positive directions. Stephen has

remained a dedicated mentor and teacher to me even after his retirement, and I am truly grateful for his benevolent commitment to seeing my project through until the end. Malcolm kindly agreed to take over supervision of my project in mid-2015, and his guidance and expertise in all things papyrological have immeasurably boosted my skill and confidence as a fledgling papyrologist who stumbled into the field accidentally. I am also thankful to Alanna Nobbs, Don Barker, Brent Nongbri, and Edwin Judge, all of whom have, at some point along the way, provided feedback, resources, advice, ideas, or simply stimulating conversation.

To my dearest Australian friends—Sal and Jess, Anita and Vik, Nads and Jason, and the many others who have shown me friendship, too numerous to name—and also to my American friends, new and old: thank you for sharing this journey with me, and for all of the laughter, shenanigans, companionship, and encouragement you have gifted to me along the way.

Above all, I owe my deepest thanks to my family, to whom I dedicate this thesis. To my sister, Jessica, your close friendship and brutally honest reproofs have always kept me grounded. To my parents, Mike and Diann, words cannot express the gratitude I owe for always encouraging me to pursue the things I love, and for making innumerable sacrifices—many of which I may never know about—in order that I may do so. Finally, to my husband and very best friend, Cameron, for your limitless patience, selfless sacrifices, unwavering and all-encompassing support, and untiring willingness to listen to me drone on about papyri, I could not possibly express my degree of love and gratitude. To have done this without you is unfathomable.

Benjamin R. Overcash

March 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>xiii</i>
	<i>Editorial Conventions</i>	<i>xvii</i>
	<i>List of Tables and Figures</i>	<i>xix</i>
	<i>List of Plates</i>	<i>xxi</i>
INTRODUCTION		
	What's in a Name?	1
PART ONE: <i>NOMINA SACRA</i> IN EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE		
1	Viewing Words and Reading Images <i>Nomina Sacra</i> and Early Christian "Book Culture"	23
2	Sacred Signs in Human Script(ure)s <i>Nomina Sacra</i> in Christian Literary Papyri	43
3	Signed with an "X" Σταυρός and the Staurogram Among the <i>Nomina Sacra</i>	63
PART TWO: <i>NOMINA SACRA</i> IN "EVERYDAY WRITING"		
4	"Greetings in the L(or)d" <i>Nomina Sacra</i> in Epistolary Correspondence	85
5	"For I Could Not Identify the Syllables" <i>Nomina Sacra</i> in Learning Exercises	151
6	"Not by Incantations, but by the Name of Jesus" <i>Nomina Sacra</i> in Textual Amulets	195
CONCLUSION		
	Conclusion	225
	<i>Plates</i>	229
	<i>Bibliography</i>	249

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations for editions of papyri, ostraca, and tablets follow John F. Oates et al., *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*, <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html> (last updated 1 June 2011). Journals and standard works follow the conventions of *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014). Other abbreviations used in this work appear as follows:

APF Beiheft	Archiv für Papyrusforschung Beiheft
ASE	<i>Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi</i>
Bagnall-Cribiore	Roger S. Bagnall and Raffaella Cribiore, <i>Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt, 300 BC – AD 800</i> (ACLS Humanities E-Book edition; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).
BCNH Études	Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, «Études»
BibAC	Bible in Ancient Christianity
BL	F. Preisigke et al., <i>Berichtigungsliste der griechischen Papyrusurkunden aus Ägypten</i> , 11 vols. (Berlin and Leipzig: de Gruyter, 1922; Heidelberg, 1929-1933; Leiden: Brill, 1958-2009).
Blumell-Wayment	Lincoln H. Blumell and Thomas A. Wayment, eds., <i>Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, Documents, and Sources</i> (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2015).
Cribiore	Raffaella Cribiore, <i>Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt</i> (ASP 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996).
DDbDP	Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri (http://www.papyri.info/ddbdp).
de Bruyn-Dijkstra	Theodore de Bruyn and Jitse Dijkstra, "Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements: A

	Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets," <i>BASP</i> 48 (2011): 163-216.
<i>eBLJ</i>	<i>The Electronic British Library Journal</i>
ECS	Eastern Christian Studies
Ghedini	Giuseppe Ghedini, <i>Lettere cristiane: dai papiri greci del III e IV secolo</i> (Milan, 1923).
Gregory-Aland	Gregory-Aland numbers for New Testament manuscripts, according to the online edition of the <i>Kurzgefasste Liste</i> (http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/liste).
<i>JHNA</i>	<i>Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art</i>
JRASup	Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series
Lampe	G.W.H. Lampe, ed., <i>A Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).
<i>Lib. prec.</i>	Faustinus and Marcellinus, <i>Libellus precum ad imperatores</i>
LDAB	Leuven Database of Ancient Books (http://www.trismegistos.org/ldab).
LSJ	Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , 9 th ed. with revised supplement (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
Naldini	Mario Naldini, <i>Il Cristianesimo in Egitto: Lettere private nei papiri dei secoli II-IV</i> (STP 3; Florence: Le Monnier, 1968).
NT	New Testament
Pap.BruX.	<i>Papyrologica Bruxellensia</i>
Pap.Flor.	<i>Papyrologica Florentina</i>
Pap.Leod.	<i>Papyrologica Leodiensia</i>
PatSt	Patristic Studies
PGM	Hans Dieter Betz, <i>The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, including the Demotic Spells</i> , 2 nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
PLBat	<i>Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava</i>
QULPM	Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters

Rahlfs	Alfred Rahlfs, <i>Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum. Supplementum. Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments</i> , rev. ed. by Detlef Fraenkel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).
ScFL	Scienze filologiche e letteratura
SCJ	Studies in Christianity and Judaism
SCL	Sather Classical Lectures
SIS	Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics
SSA	Series Syro-Arabica
StAA	Studia Antiqua Australiensia
StHel	Studia Hellenica
STP	Studi e testi di papirologia
<i>Suppl.Mag.</i>	Robert W. Daniel and Franco Maltomini, eds., <i>Supplementum Magicum</i> , 2 vols. (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991-1992).
TANZ	Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlicher Zeitalter
TM	Trismegistos (http://www.trismegistos.org).
TSEC	Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity
van Haelst	Joseph van Haelst, <i>Catalogue des Papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens</i> (Université de Paris IV Paris-Sorbonne, Série “Papyrologie” 1; Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976).
VCSup	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae
WMS	Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien

EDITORIAL CONVENTIONS

Transcriptions of papyri and tablets follow the Leiden system of editorial conventions as described by Paul Schubert, “Editing a Papyrus,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 199-203. Editions and (in most cases) translations are provided for all non- and subliterate papyri under discussion in Part Two. In general, the scribe’s spelling will be retained in transcriptions, including errors, which will either be corrected in the apparatus or indicated within the transcription using the sigla below. All unattributed translations, whether of primary texts or of secondary literature not published in English, are my own.

αβγ	letters that are uncertain or could be read in more than one way
[]	lacuna in the papyrus
[αβγ]	letters restored by the editor
[...] or [± 3]	missing letters, the number of which is estimated
...	illegible letters, the number of which is estimated
⟨αβγ⟩	letters or words omitted by the scribe but added by the editor
{αβγ}	letters or words erroneously added by the scribe and cancelled by the editor
[[αβγ]]	letters or words that were cancelled by the scribe
(αβγ)	resolution of an abbreviation
vac.	<i>vacat</i> (empty space on the papyrus)

Additional sigla:

→	fiber orientation of the papyrus runs horizontal (recto)
↓	fiber orientation of the papyrus runs vertical (verso)
αβγ	letters or words written above the line

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

<i>Table 3.1</i>	Frequency of contraction in second- through third/fourth-century NT manuscripts	67
------------------	---	----

Figures

<i>Figure 1.1</i>	Painted cover of the Freer Gospel Codex	35
<i>Figure 3.1</i>	Percent difference from expected contraction rate	68
<i>Figure 5.1</i>	Crease patterns on papyri from the archive of Leonides	167
<i>Figure 5.2</i>	Layout of tablet codex MND 552 L, K, I, H	176
<i>Figure 5.3</i>	<i>Nomina sacra</i> in the notebook of Papnouthion	185

LIST OF PLATES

<i>Plate 1</i>	P.Beatty 2 (1 Cor 7:37–8:7)	235
<i>Plate 2</i>	P.Beatty 6 (Num 5:12–22)	236
<i>Plate 3</i>	P.Egerton 2	237
<i>Plate 4a</i>	P.Oxy. 12.1592 (recto)	238
<i>Plate 4b</i>	P.Oxy. 12.1592 (verso)	239
<i>Plates 5a–b</i>	P.Oxy. 63.4364 and 4365	240
<i>Plate 6</i>	PSI 3.208	241
<i>Plate 7a</i>	PSI 9.1041 (recto)	242
<i>Plate 7b</i>	PSI 9.1051 (verso)	243
<i>Plate 8</i>	P.Alex. 29	244
<i>Plate 9a</i>	P.Oxy. 31.2601 (recto)	245
<i>Plate 9b</i>	P.Oxy. 31.2601 (verso)	246
<i>Plate 10a</i>	P.Oxy. 2.209 (recto)	247
<i>Plate 10b</i>	P.Oxy. 2.209 (verso)	248
<i>Plate 11a</i>	T.Louvre MND 552 I face 2	249
<i>Plate 11b</i>	T.Louvre MND 552 H	250
<i>Plate 12</i>	P.Lond.Lit. 207	251
<i>Plates 13a–b</i>	P.Oxy. 34.2684 (fol. 1→ and 2→; fol. 2↓ and 1↓)	252
<i>Plate 14</i>	P.Yale 2.130	253
<i>Plate 15</i>	P.Oxy. 6.924 (recto and verso)	254

INTRODUCTION

What's in a Name?

Stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus.

—ADSO OF MELK (UMBERTO ECO, *THE NAME OF THE ROSE*)

Prelude

At the end of Umberto Eco's famous novel, *The Name of the Rose*, the aged monk Adso recounts his visit to the abbey of his youth, now in scattered ruins. The trip results in his scavenging of fragments of parchment manuscripts, "ghosts of books," that had miraculously survived the depredations of time and the fire that had burned down the library. Adso's reflection on his attempt to reconstruct the texts behind those faded and lacunose fragments is one that will resonate with any modern papyrologist:

Along the return journey and afterward at Melk, I spent many, many hours trying to decipher those remains. Often from a word or a surviving image I could recognize what the work had been. ... At the end of my patient reconstruction, I had before me a kind of lesser library, a symbol of the greater, vanished one: a library made up of fragments, quotations, unfinished sentences, amputated stumps of books.¹

¹ Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt, 1984), 500-501.

In the closing line, Adso utters the enigmatic verse: *stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus* (“Yesterday’s rose endures by its name; we preserve empty names”).² For readers, Eco preferred to leave the line’s meaning ambiguous.³ But for Adso, I imagine this maxim as a metaphor for the impermanence of material objects: when a rose is dead and gone, what remains of it—its appearance, its fragrance, the web of cultural and social associations it conjures—survives only through its name. It is left to posterity to attempt to reconstruct its elusive essence from the merely descriptive fragments its name preserves.

The purpose of the present study, then, is to ask: What’s in a name? Or more precisely, as AnneMarie Luijendijk has put it, “What’s in a *nomen*?”⁴ The principal focus of our inquiry is thus on the *nomina sacra*, that peculiar ancient Christian scribal practice in which certain names and titles are designated as sacred by abbreviating them and marking them off with a supralinear line. Although the scholarly paths of this subject are well worn, my aim is for these well-worn paths to take a new course by turning our attention to the social and semiotic dimensions of the practice across the broader corpus of literary, subliterate, and non-literary papyri in which they were employed.

Discussion about the *nomina sacra* has tended to revolve around questions about their origins, but no consensus on this matter has been reached. A handful of scholars have begun to draw attention to the social and material aspects of the practice, beginning with Harry Gamble’s passing assertion over two decades ago that “the system of *nomina sacra* ... stands out as an in-group convention that expressed a community consciousness and presumed a particular readership.”⁵ Larry Hurtado

2 Ibid., 502.

3 See Eco’s comments in the postscript, *ibid.*, 505-8.

4 AnneMarie Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (HTS 60; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 57-78.

5 Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 78.

has since sought to position the practice within an emerging “visual culture” in ancient Christianity.⁶ More recently, he has argued that the *nomina sacra*, along with other peculiarities of Christian scribal practice, such as the preference for the codex, constitute material traces of early Christian identity formation.⁷ Kim Haines-Eitzen has briefly argued that the wide, early, and varied usage of *nomina sacra* evidence the existence of informal scribal networks, and perhaps also networks between ecclesiastical communities.⁸ Finally, Luijendijk, following the lead of Gamble and Hurtado, has described the practice as “a visual expression of in-group language” that “constitute[s] a Christian sociolect.”⁹ She further proposes that the presence of *nomina sacra* in non-literary texts, such as letters, points to their authors’ Christian education and a familiarity with Christian literature.¹⁰

These new readings offer a promising point of departure for a more sustained inquiry into the complex dynamics of these social dimensions in their various textual and situational settings, and readers will discover that the present study is

6 Larry W. Hurtado, “The Earliest Evidence of an Emerging Christian Material and Visual Culture: The Codex, the Nomina Sacra and the Staurogram,” in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson*, ed. Stephen G. Wilson and Michel Desjardins (SCJ 9; Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000) 276-79; idem, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 121-33; idem, “Early Christian Manuscripts as Artifacts,” in *Jewish and Christian Scripture as Artifact and Canon*, ed. Craig A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias (SSEJC 13; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 75.

7 Larry W. Hurtado, “What Do the Earliest Christian Manuscripts Tell Us About Their Readers?” in *The World of Jesus and the Early Church: Identity and Interpretation in Early Communities of Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), 179-92; idem, “Manuscripts and the Sociology of Early Christian Reading,” in *The Early Text of the New Testament*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 49-62.

8 Kim Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 91-94; idem, “The Social History of Early Christian Scribes,” in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, 2nd ed., ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael Holmes (NTTSD 42; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 489-92.

9 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 61.

10 Ibid., 69.

thoroughly indebted to them. Drawing on theories of social semiotics and multimodality, this study explores an interpretive approach in which the *nomina sacra* are understood as traces of dynamic and creative lived material practices by social/semiotic agents. Like Adso, we will attempt to piece together what we can from tattered remnants—not, in our case, parchment manuscripts from a medieval Italian monastery, but fragments of papyri from the first four centuries of our era preserved by the arid sands of Egypt. I hope to demonstrate that the *nomina sacra* are best understood not as static signifiers with established forms and meanings that can be isolated by understanding their origins and the processes of their conventionalization, but as traces of the *various* meanings, histories, identities, and values of the ancient Christians who wrote and read them.

Previous Studies and Approaches

Although Ludwig Traube is usually credited with coining the term *nomina sacra*, he in fact claimed to have borrowed it from the distinguished English palaeographer, Sir Edward Maunde Thompson.¹¹ Traube's pioneering monograph, published posthumously in 1907,¹² initiated a torrent of scholarly debate about the origin and development of this peculiar Christian scribal practice that continues more than a century on. Advancements on Traube's study have been made by, among others,

11 "Ich habe schon früher gebraucht und wende auch hier wieder an als Bezeichnung der Gruppe von alten Wörtern, bei denen im Griechischen und in der früheren lateinischen Zeit die Kürzung durch Kontraktion vollzogen wurde, den Ausdruck: Nomina sacra. Ich habe ihn dem englischen Forscher E.M. Thompson entlehnt" (Ludwig Traube, *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzung* [QULPM 2; Munich: Beck, 1907], 17).

12 See the note in the front matter of the book signed by "Die Erben," who indicate that Traube "hat mit der Ausarbeitung des Werkes begonnen, als er wußte, daß er nur noch zwei Jahre leben konnte."

A.H.R.E. Paap,¹³ Jose O'Callaghan,¹⁴ Schuyler Brown,¹⁵ Kurt Treu,¹⁶ C.H. Roberts,¹⁷ George Howard,¹⁸ Harry Gamble¹⁹ and Larry Hurtado.²⁰

The term *nomina sacra* refers to a group of words frequently written in special abbreviated forms, usually assumed to have been considered sacred in some way. These abbreviations are generally made by contraction, using the first and last letters of the word and omitting the rest, with the occasional inclusion of one or more medial letters ($\overline{\kappa\varsigma}$ for κύριος, $\overline{\pi\rho\alpha}$ for πατέρας). A few words are commonly abbreviated by suspension, using only the first two letters of the word ($\overline{\iota\eta}$ for Ἰησοῦς). Occasionally, certain words are abbreviated by a combination of suspension and contraction, using only the first two letters and the final letter of the word ($\overline{\iota\eta\varsigma}$ for Ἰησοῦς, $\overline{\chi\rho\varsigma}$ for Χριστός). A supralinear line is then drawn across the top of the letters to mark the abbreviation. The most common words to be treated in this way—sometimes called *nomina divina*²¹—are the words for “God” ($\overline{\theta\varsigma}$), “Lord” ($\overline{\kappa\varsigma}$), “Jesus” ($\overline{\iota\varsigma}$, $\overline{\iota\eta}$, $\overline{\iota\eta\varsigma}$), and “Christ” ($\overline{\chi\varsigma}$, $\overline{\chi\rho}$, $\overline{\chi\rho\varsigma}$), but there are about a dozen other words that

¹³ A.H.R.E. Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries A.D.: The Sources and Some Deductions* (PLBat 8; Leiden: Brill, 1959).

¹⁴ José O'Callaghan, «*Nomina Sacra*» in *Papyrus Graecis Saeculi III Neotestamentariis* (AnBib 46; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970).

¹⁵ Schuyler Brown, “Concerning the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*,” *SPap* 9 (1970): 7-19.

¹⁶ Kurt Treu, “Die bedeutung des Griechischen für die Juden im Römischen Reich,” *Kairos* 15 (1973): 123-44.

¹⁷ Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt: The Schweich Lectures 1977* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 26-48.

¹⁸ George Howard, “The Tetragram and the New Testament,” *JBL* 96 (1977): 63-83.

¹⁹ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 74-8.

²⁰ Larry W. Hurtado, “The Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*: A Proposal,” *JBL* 117 (1998): 655-73; idem, “Earliest Evidence”; idem, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 95-134.

²¹ The first use of the term *nomina divina* is usually attributed to Schuyler Brown (“Origin,” 19), but José O'Callaghan also hinted at the term in his study which was published in the same year: “... χριστος, ιησους, θεος, κυριος, scilicet, nomina evidentissime ‘sacra’, quin etiam, ‘divina’” (*Nomina Sacra*, 81).

appear in *nomen sacrum* form with some frequency, all of which—with a few exceedingly rare exceptions²²—are sacred names, titles, or place names.

As noted above, debate about the *nomina sacra* has tended to focus on their origins. Traube believed that the *nomina sacra* originated in Hellenistic Jewish circles from the necessity to devise a Greek equivalent to the Tetragram. Specifically, he proposed that θεός was initially contracted to $\overline{\theta\varsigma}$, without vowels, in imitation of the Hebrew consonantal writing of יהוה.²³ From here, he proposed, these Jewish scribes began writing other Greek words in contracted forms, including κύριος, πνεῦμα, οὐρανός, ἄνθρωπος, πατήρ, Δαυίδ, Ἱερουσαλήμ and Ἰσραήλ. Christians then read the Greek translations of the Jewish scriptures in which these contractions appeared, Traube suggests, and appropriated the forms, adding Ἰησοῦς, Χριστός, σταυρός, υἱός, μήτηρ and σωτήρ.²⁴

In light of half a century's worth of new papyrological evidence, including the important manuscripts in the collections of Sir Alfred Chester Beatty and Martin Bodmer, A.H.R.E. Paap set out in 1959 to reconsider the problem, examining 421 texts dated from the first through the fifth centuries.²⁵ He rejected Traube's theory of Jewish origin, since most of the papyri thought to be of Jewish origin have the words θεός and κύριος written out in *scriptio plene*. Yet, Paap accepted the substance of Traube's hypothesis—namely, that the *nomina sacra* are an imitation of a purely consonantal representation of יהוה in Jewish texts²⁶—thus positing a “Jewish

22 See note 19 in Chapter Three.

23 “Aber die Kurzformen, die dadurch entstehen, daß das Wortinnere wegfällt und außer dem ersten Buchstaben mindestens noch der letzte erhalten bleibt, die also auf Auslassung oder sog. Kontraktion beruhen, fehlen in früherer Zeit; sie kamen eben erst durch die Übersetzung der heiligen Schriften auf und, wenn nicht alles täuscht, gerade durch den Zwang, dem Tetragramm ein homogenes Gebilde gegenüberzustellen” (Traube, *Nomina Sacra*, 31; cf. *ibid.*, 36).

24 *Ibid.*, 36.

25 Paap, *Nomina Sacra*.

26 “To the Jews the name of God was a holy and therefore secret name which it was unlawful to profane by pronunciation. In the Hebrew form the absence of the correct vowels tended to preserve this mysterious character” (*ibid.*, 1).

Christian” origin.²⁷ He also sustained Traube’s conjecture concerning the priority of θεός, since, he claims, “for them [i.e. Jewish Christians] the Greek word for ‘God’ had exactly the same value as the tetragram and for that reason was entitled to a distinction in its written form.”²⁸

A decade later, in 1970, two new studies were published in response to the evaluations of Traube and Paap. José O’Callaghan updated Paap’s work, including in his analysis, among other newly published papyri, two more New Testament manuscripts from the Bodmer collection (P.Bodm. 7-8 [P⁷²] and P.Bodm. 14-15 [P⁷⁵]).²⁹ Schuyler Brown’s response was more critical. He rightly exposed the anachronism of Traube’s and Paap’s hypotheses, pointing out that all Hebrew script—not just the sacred name—remained nonvocalic until the eighth century CE, when the Masoretes began adding vowel points to manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible.³⁰ The Christian practice, he argued, is therefore unrelated to the later Hebrew consonantal rendering of the Tetragram.³¹ Notwithstanding these objections, Brown accepted that the *nomina sacra* must reflect a Christian adaptation of the broader Jewish reverence for the divine name.³² He further observed, against the claims of

27 “[T]he adoption of the principle which underlies the Hebrew tetragram shows that there must have been people who were acquainted with the Hebrew method of writing and in this way with the Hebrew text of the Tora [sic] ... And indeed, there is a group of people who do fulfil these requirements, viz. the Jews whom we know to have joined the first Christian communities outside Palestine” (ibid., 124).

28 Ibid. He continues, “To this end it was sufficient to borrow the Hebrew principle of consonantal writing. Thus θεός became θς.”

29 O’Callaghan, *Nomina Sacra*.

30 Brown, “Origins,” 9-10.

31 “However ridiculous it may sound, the fact of the matter is that the entire Traube-Paap hypothesis concerning the origin of the *nomina sacra* rests on a simple confusion between *reading* and *writing*. It is true that the *pronunciation* of the tetragram was prohibited among the Jews, but this had nothing to do with its being *written* without vowels. And, conversely, the *writing* of the *nomina sacra* in Greek had no bearing whatever on their *pronunciation*” (ibid., 12 [emphasis original]).

32 Ibid., 13-15. Brown specifically refers to the practice of writing the Tetragram in gold ink, but there are many other examples of the transcriptional consequences of the sanctity of the

Traube and Paap, that it was κύριος, not θεός, which was used to translate יהוה.³³ It is this which led Brown to the conclusion that the first *nomen sacrum* to be contracted was κύριος, and because Christians used κύριος to refer both to God and to Christ, the practice “rapidly extended in one direction to θεός and in the other direction to Ἰησοῦς and Χριστός.”³⁴

Not to be out-specified, George Howard proposed that the Tetragram was originally written both in Christian copies of the Septuagint and in Septuagintal quotations in Christian literature. It was eventually removed, he conjectures, once Christianity was composed predominantly of a non-Jewish demographic and was replaced with the contracted forms $\overline{\kappa\varsigma}$ and $\overline{\theta\varsigma}$ “out of deference to the Jewish Christians, to mark the sacredness of the divine name.”³⁵ Soon, he proposes, the original significance of these surrogates was lost and other contracted forms joined the list.³⁶

The 1970s also witnessed theories from the papyrologists Kurt Treu and C.H. Roberts. Similarly to Traube, Treu proposed that the *nomina sacra* derived from Greek-speaking Jewish circles, where θεός and κύριος were rendered in contracted form with a supralinear stroke as a way of setting these words off from the surrounding text when they stood in translation for the Tetragram. Christians then appropriated this practice and expanded it “to the remaining persons of the Trinity,

Tetragram in both Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, e.g. by writing it in paleo-Hebrew script (e.g. P.Oxy. 50.3522 and some of the Qumran scrolls), by leaving lacunae or a series of four dots wherever the Tetragram occurred (e.g. some of the Qumran scrolls), or by writing it as a paleo-Hebrew double *yod* (i.e., a double yod with a horizontal bar passing through the middle of the two letters: $\overline{\text{זז}}$; e.g. P.Oxy. 7.1007).

33 Ibid., 17.

34 Ibid., 18.

35 Howard, “The Tetragram and the NT,” 76.

36 Ibid., 77.

but also to a whole host of other terms.”³⁷ Roberts argued differently.³⁸ He offered an elaborate explanation of the *nomina sacra*, placing their origin in the apostolic period or shortly thereafter, either in the community of Christian Jews in Jerusalem before 70 CE or in the church in Antioch slightly later.³⁹ He postulates that the convention was established as a kind of nascent Christian creed and that its presence in early second-century papyri—the dating of which now seems less secure⁴⁰—shows that Christianity in Egypt was launched by missionaries from Jerusalem in the subapostolic age, a conclusion he argues more fully elsewhere.⁴¹

More recent scholars, such as Harry Gamble and Larry Hurtado, have not been persuaded by Roberts’ musings. Hurtado has proposed that the practice began with the name Ἰησοῦς via suspension of the first two letters (ιη), which is also the abbreviation for the number eighteen. It is no coincidence, he suggests, that the numerical value of this suspension is also the number for the Hebrew word יח, “life.” Thus, Hurtado proposes, this *nomen sacrum* may represent a theological statement

37 “Die Christen griffen den Gebrauch auf und erweiterten ihn nicht nur—konsequenterweise—auf die übrigen Personen ihrer Trinität, sondern auch auf eine ganze Anzahl weiterer Begriffe” (Treu, “Bedeutung,” 141).

38 Against the ideas of origin proposed by Traube, Paap, Brown and Treu, Roberts argues: “In form the *nomina sacra* cannot be explained as imitative of or even adapted from either Greek or Jewish scribal practice; they no more resemble the abbreviations or symbols in Greek documents or literary texts than they do the Jewish treatment of the Tetragrammaton. Like so much in early Christianity, they are *sui generis*” (Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 47).

39 The former is proposed in *ibid.*, 44–46, but he revises his argument in favor of Antioch in C.H. Roberts and T.C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983), 57–61.

40 Presumably Roberts refers to Christian literary papyri, but he does not offer further particulars. The earliest use of *nomina sacra* in letters does not appear until the third century (see Chapter Three, note 9). The only likely New Testament papyrus that Roberts might have had in mind would seem to be P.Ryl. 3.457 (P52), but this fragment contains no extant *nomina sacra*, and the early dating is now contested. On whether *nomina sacra* may have been present in the original manuscript, see the debate between Christopher M. Tuckett (“P52 and the *Nomina Sacra*,” *NTS* 47 [2001]: 544–48) and Larry Hurtado (“P52 (P. Rylands Gk. 457) and the *Nomina Sacra*: Method and Probability,” *TynBul* 54 [2003]: 1–14). On dating, see Brent Nongbri, “The Use and Abuse of P52: Papyrological Pitfalls in the Dating of the Fourth Gospel,” *HTR* 98 (2005): 23–48.

41 See his lecture in the next chapter of *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, entitled “The Character and Development of the Church” (49–73).

prompted by the belief “in Jesus as himself powerfully alive and as life-giver.”⁴² He finds further support for his suggestion in the supralinear line placed above the *nomina sacra*, which resembles the line drawn above Greek numerical abbreviations. Ultimately, he proposes, the use of abbreviations spread to other words and the practice was perpetuated as an act of piety in the copying of Christian texts.⁴³ Perhaps more significant to our discussion than his theory of origins is the attention Hurtado has drawn to the *nomina sacra* and the staurogram as deliberately visually-oriented phenomena and as the earliest traces of a Christian “visual culture.”⁴⁴ We will revisit Hurtado’s work in this area throughout this study.

Repeating Howard’s explanation, Gamble proposed that the *nomina sacra* originated when Christian scribes began contracting θεός and κύριος in their copies of Greek Jewish texts that retained the Tetragram as a way of designating the sacred name for which these words stood. The practice was then extended to Christian texts, encompassing the names Ἰησοῦς and Χριστός, and was finally transferred to all the other commonly contracted *nomina sacra*.⁴⁵ Furthermore, Gamble draws attention to the rarity of abbreviations in fine copies of literary texts, suggesting that their presence in Christian literature points both to the practical character of these texts and to a scenario in which their scribes were their users. “The system of *nomina sacra*”, he concludes, “though not an esoteric code, stands out as an in-group

42 Hurtado, “Origin,” 667.

43 Hurtado, “Origin”; idem, “Earliest Evidence,” 276-79; idem, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 95-134.

44 Hurtado, “Earliest Evidence,” 276-79; idem, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 121-33; idem, “Early Christian Manuscripts,” 75; idem, “The ‘Meta-Data’ of Earliest Christian Manuscripts,” in *Identity and Interaction in the Ancient Mediterranean: Jews, Christians and Others. Essays in Honour of Stephen G. Wilson*, ed. Zeba A. Crook and Philip A. Harland (NTM 18; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007), 157-59; idem, “Earliest Christian Graphic Symbols: Examples and References from the Second/Third Centuries,” in *Graphic Signs of Identity, Faith, and Power in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Ildar Garipzanov, Caroline Goodson, and Henry Maguire (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 25-44.

45 Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 77.

convention that expressed a community consciousness and presumed a particular readership.”⁴⁶

Gamble’s brief but important observations regarding the social implications of the *nomina sacra* have recently been explored further by AnneMarie Luijendijk.⁴⁷ Her study, as stated in the introduction to her monograph, “investigates the situations and business of people from different walks of life and specifically questions their identity as Christians.”⁴⁸ As such, her enquiry is concerned mostly with documentary sources, although in her chapter on the *nomina sacra* she rightly recognizes the link this practice creates between the literary and documentary papyri.⁴⁹ Luijendijk largely abandons the question of origins in order to examine the *nomina sacra* as “evidence of teaching in Christian circles.”⁵⁰ Agreeing with Gamble and Hurtado, she views the practice as an “in-group language” and a peculiarly Christian written sociolect with a distinctively visual orientation. Further, she points to several educational texts where students practiced writing the *nomina sacra* and proposes that their presence in letters constitute evidence of Christian education.⁵¹

Although interest in the *nomina sacra* has largely focussed on their presence in literary manuscripts, Luijendijk’s monograph joins a few others that have dealt with their use in documents and subliterate. Don Barker has recently argued that the consistent contraction of κύριος and *plene* spelling of θεός in P.Lond.Lit. 207, a roll fragment containing a portion of the Psalms,⁵² may suggest that the *nomina sacra* originated as a way of setting κύριος apart from the rest of the text when it stands in

46 Ibid., 78.

47 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*.

48 Ibid., 2.

49 Ibid., 57. Cf. *ibid.*, 58: “Thus my approach bridges, at least partly, the gap between literary and documentary texts.”

50 Ibid., 58.

51 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 67-9.

52 This papyrus is examined in section 5.4 of Part Two of this study.

translation for the Tetragram.⁵³ He seeks support for his proposal in the Semitic custom of contracting personal names to their first and last letters, an observation made earlier by Alan Millard.⁵⁴ In time, he suggests, the practice extended to θεός by its association with κύριος, and finally to the rest of the *nomina sacra*.⁵⁵

Both Malcolm Choat and Lincoln Blumell have devoted brief sections to the documentary use of *nomina sacra* in their respective monographs.⁵⁶ Choat focuses on fourth-century Greek and Coptic documents, drawing attention to occasional Jewish, and especially Manichaean, use of *nomina sacra*,⁵⁷ as well as more secular texts employing *nomina sacra*, which he believes may be explained by the existence of schools and scriptoria in which both classical and Christian texts were studied and copied.⁵⁸ Blumell considers the *nomina sacra* to be the earliest markers of Christian identity in the letters from Oxyrhynchus, although he also notes their use in Manichaean texts beginning in the fourth century.⁵⁹ He observes that the *nomina sacra* in these letters appear most frequently in late third and fourth century letters, only occasionally in fifth century letters, and almost disappear completely in sixth and seventh century letters, whereas other Christian symbols such as the

53 Don Barker, "P.Lond.Lit 207 and the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*: A Tentative Proposal," *SHT* 8 (2007): 1-14.

54 Alan Millard, "Ancient Abbreviations and the *Nomina Sacra*," in *The Unbroken Reed: Studies in the Culture and Heritage of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Christopher Eyre, Anthony Leahy, and Lisa Montagno Leahy (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1994), 221-26.

55 Barker, "P.Lond.Lit 207 and the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*," 8.

56 Malcolm Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri* (SAA 1; Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 119-25; Lincoln H. Blumell, *Lettered Christians: Christians, Letters, and Late Antique Oxyrhynchus* (NTTSD 39; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 49-51.

57 "As with many of the other criteria of Christian authorship ... Manichaean usage again can be detected, in both a literary and documentary context" (*ibid.*, 122).

58 *Ibid.*, 123. We will examine *nomina sacra* in learning exercises in Chapter Five of this study.

59 *Ibid.*, 50. With regard to the Jewish evidence, there is a single fragment of LXX Kings, which intermittently employs the *nomina sacra* for κύριος and Ἰσραήλ, but these occur only at the ends of lines and appear to be abbreviations. There are also synagogue inscriptions from the sixth century which have contractions of κύριος and Ἰσραήλ, but without the supralinear stroke. On the latter, see also G.H.R. Horsley, "Nomina Sacra in Synagogue Inscriptions," *NewDocs* 1:107-12.

christogram, staurogram and $\chi\mu\gamma$ appear with greater frequency as the centuries progress.⁶⁰

These more recent studies in particular, with their attention to previously neglected evidence and new approaches that acknowledge the visual and social significance of the *nomina sacra*, have helped to move the discussion forward. Yet, there is still much work to be done. Previous approaches have been largely heuristic and descriptive, and furthermore, have isolated discussions to single genres of source material, leaving gaps in the larger picture. Scribal use of *nomina sacra* in Christian literary papyri have received a disproportionate share of attention. Moreover, more recent discussions that have begun to draw attention to the social and visual dimensions of the practice would benefit from an appropriate theoretical framework. Accordingly, the objectives of this study are twofold: first, to begin to construct a more panoramic view of the *nomina sacra* by analyzing particular instantiations of the practice across the broad body of materials in which it is employed; and second, to apply a theoretical point of view that will help modern observers of this ancient Christian scribal practice to see these social and visual dynamics from various angles.

Social Semiotics and Multimodality

Social semiotics is an approach to communication that seeks to understand how signs are produced and transmitted in and through social processes. The term “social semiotic” was coined by the influential linguist Michael Halliday, who described language as a semiotic system, “not in the sense of a system of signs, but a systemic resource for meaning ... a *meaning potential*.”⁶¹ Although Halliday’s application was limited to verbal language, Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress, in their seminal work

⁶⁰ Ibid., 51.

⁶¹ M.A.K. Halliday, “Systemic Background,” in *On Language and Linguistics*, ed. Jonathan Webster, vol. 3 of *Collected Works of M.A.K. Halliday* (London: Continuum, 2003), 192–93 (emphasis original). The term “social semiotic” was coined in his book *Language as Social Semiotic: The Interpretation of Language and Meaning* (London: Edward Arnold, 1978).

Social Semiotics,⁶² pioneered a shift of emphasis from verbal language to other, non-linguistic systems of representation, thereby establishing social semiotics as a branch of semiotics in its own right.

Social semiotic theory posits that communication consists of complex “social structures and processes, messages and meanings” expressed through “a multiplicity of visual, aural, behavioral and other codes.”⁶³ It is a process of production, circulation, and reception of meanings “under specific social conditions, through specific material forms and agencies ... in relation to concrete subjects and objects, and is inexplicable except in terms of this set of relationships.”⁶⁴ Communication is thus understood as a situated and socially embedded activity that reflects the histories, identities, and values of the individuals and groups involved.

The key methodological thread that runs through social semiotics and its descendent, multimodal discourse analysis, is the contention that all signs are agentively made. That is, the relation of signifier to signified (“form” to “meaning”) is always motivated, consciously or subconsciously, by the interests of agentive sign-makers.⁶⁵ Agency is possible through the existence of choice.⁶⁶ When communicating an idea, sign-makers choose from a selection of semiotic resources (or “resources of and for making meaning”⁶⁷) the form that is most apt to represent the specific meanings they want to communicate at that moment. The signifiers

62 Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress, *Social Semiotics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988). This was an extension of their earlier work, *Language as Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1979), which laid out much of what would come to be called critical discourse analysis.

63 Hodge and Kress, *Social Semiotics*, vii.

64 *Ibid.*, 122.

65 The issue of “motivated” versus “arbitrary” signification is the primary dividing line between social semiotics and traditional (Saussurian) semiotics. In social semiotic theory, all signification is viewed as resting on the agentive action of sign makers. See especially Gunther Kress, “Against Arbitrariness: The Social Production of the Sign as a Foundational Issue in Critical Discourse Analysis,” *Discourse & Society* 4 (1993): 169–91.

66 Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 109.

67 Gunther Kress, *Literacy in the New Media Age* (London: Routledge, 2003), 9.

used in making signs are always socially, culturally, and historically situated artifacts, and thus are constantly invested with new meanings, that is, “transformed,” in each use.⁶⁸ Jeff Bezemer and Gunther Kress summarize the approach in this way:

In the overarching and integrating theory of social semiotics, the core questions are those about meaning and *meaning-making*, about the *resources* for making meaning, about the social agents as *meaning-makers* and about the characteristics of the *environments* in which they act.⁶⁹

The principles developed from social semiotic theory, and their subsequent application to visual design by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen,⁷⁰ gave rise to the development of theories of multimodality and multimodal communication. A multimodal view of communication recognizes that messages are always composed of semiotic resources drawn from a multiplicity of different modes, such as linguistic, aural, visual, gestural, and spatial.⁷¹ Writing, for instance, is a multimodal resource because it combines language with visual markings, layout, color, and style of handwriting. Reading is also a multimodal exercise insofar as it entails the interpretation of multimodal signs, and if reading aloud, translates them into the aural mode.⁷² Each mode has particular affordances, that is, “what it is possible to express and represent readily, easily, with a mode, given its materiality and given the

68 Gunther Kress, *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication* (London: Routledge, 2010), 54-55.

69 Jeff Bezemer and Gunther Kress, *Multimodality, Learning and Communication: A Social Semiotic Frame* (London: Routledge, 2016), 16 (emphasis original).

70 Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2006).

71 The New London Group, “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures,” *Harvard Educational Review* 66 (1996): 60-92; Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication* (London: Arnold, 2001), 1-23; Kress, *Multimodality*, 1-5.

72 The process of translating a semiotic resource from one mode into another, such as writing to speech, is labelled by Gunther Kress as “transduction” (*Multimodality*, 125; idem, *Literacy in the New Media Age*, 149).

cultural and social history of that mode.”⁷³ Each of these modal resources works in conjunction with the other, and in relation to the social, cultural, and historical contexts of which they are a part, to create an “ensemble” rich with meaning potential beyond that of a single mode.⁷⁴ Although multimodality theory has been further developed within Systemic Functional Linguistics, scholars working in this field are principally concerned with verbal language.⁷⁵ Hence, the more visually-oriented variation of multimodal social semiotics developed by Kress and van Leeuwen is emphasized in this study.

The notion of multimodality lends itself well as a theoretical underpinning to discussions about the *nomina sacra*, a practice Hurtado has appropriately described as “hybrid phenomena that uniquely combine textual and visual features and functions.”⁷⁶ Thus, as Kress contends, “[l]anguage is not the full carrier of all meaning, nor even all ‘central’ or ‘essential’ meaning.”⁷⁷ As we will observe in the pages that follow, the communicative potential of the *nomen sacrum* form is realized not only in “what it says” semantically, but also in “how it looks” visually and in the unique lived experiences of those who produce and interpret them.

73 Gunther Kress and Carey Jewitt, “Introduction,” in *Multimodal Literacy*, ed. Carey Jewitt and Gunther Kress (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 14.

74 Kress and van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse*, 58-59.

75 See, for example, the chapters by Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen, “The Multimodal Page: A Systemic Functional Exploration,” and Paul J. Thibault, “Writing, Graphology, and Visual Semiosis,” in *New Directions in the Analysis of Multimodal Discourse*, ed. Terry D. Royce and Wendy L. Bowcher (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2007), 1-62 and 111-45, respectively; also Paul J. Thibault, *Brain, Mind and the Signifying Body: An Ecosocial Semiotic Theory* (London: Continuum, 2004).

76 Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 121.

77 Gunther Kress, “Sociolinguistics and Social Semiotics,” in *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics and Linguistics*, ed. Paul Cobley (London: Routledge, 2001), 69.

Limitations and Method

Necessarily, a study such as this one will be subject to certain constraints, and thus one must be selective in relation to sample size, language, geographic region, and time period. Regarding to the last criterion, I limit my scope to sources dated up to and including the fourth century, allowing in some cases for a reasonable degree of flexibility as demanded by the vagaries of palaeographical dating. The fourth century lends itself naturally as a rough chronological terminus due to the affirmation and ensuing expansion of Christianity during the course of that century. Although a few inscriptional examples of *nomina sacra* survive from this period at Dura Europos and perhaps Megiddo,⁷⁸ the focus of the present study will be on moveable writing surfaces: papyri, parchment, and tablets.⁷⁹ The geographical boundary of this study, Egypt, perhaps owes more to the happenstance of preservation than to the design of the author; in many cases, the surreptitious harvesting and trade of papyri during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries will preclude a more localized identification. Finally, the language of texts selected for analysis is confined to those written in Greek.

These boundaries notwithstanding, we are still left with a wider body of source material than can feasibly be evaluated in the manner undertaken here. Accordingly,

78 While the evidence at Dura Europos is securely dated to the early third century CE, the dating of the mosaics at Megiddo is contested. See Edward Adams, "The Ancient Church at Megiddo: The Discovery and an Assessment of its Significance," *ExpTim* 120 (2008): 62-69. For a general discussion on the *nomina sacra* in these inscriptions, though perhaps less critical than might be desirable, see James R. Wicker, "Pre-Constantinian *Nomina Sacra* in a Mosaic and Church Graffiti," *SwJT* 52 (2009): 52-72.

79 Although a relatively small number of ostraca containing *nomina sacra* are extant, none that date before the fifth century are known to me. No ostraca are therefore included in this study. See M. Gustave Lefebvre, "Fragments grecs des Évangiles sur Ostraca," *BIFAO* 4 (1904): 1-15; Ernst von Dobschütz, "Zur Liste der NTlichen Handschriften," *ZNW* 32 (1933): 185-206 (188); Cornelia Eva Römer, "Ostraka mit christlichen Texten aus der Sammlung Flinders Petrie," *ZPE* 145 (2003): 183-201; Peter M. Head, "Additional Greek Witnesses to the New Testament (Ostraca, Amulets, Inscriptions, and Other Sources," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes, 2nd ed. (NTTSD 42; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 433-38.

for each chapter in which individual papyri are examined, I have sought to represent texts which involve renewed scrutiny of previous discussion, introduce previously neglected evidence, or illuminate broader historical or social issues.

Finally, I provide critical transcriptions of all non-literary papyri examined in Part Two of this study, both for the convenience of readers and to facilitate our analyses of the materials. All of the papyri under discussion have been examined by me, either by autopsy or by means of high-resolution images. For readers' convenience, plates are provided in the back matter. While it is not my explicit aim to produce new editions, I have occasionally ventured to make minor modifications to the transcriptions of the original editors or to propose alternative readings, in which cases it is my hope that readers will find these suitable.

This study is divided into two parts, the first of which examines the use of *nomina sacra* in early Christian literature. Because the predominant focus of previous scholarship on the *nomina sacra* has been on their use in literary manuscripts, this section will be relatively concise in order to allow more attention to be given to the non-literary texts examined in Part Two. Chapter One introduces the notion of multimodal literacies and explores the ways in which the *nomina sacra* and other material features of early Christian “book culture” functioned as a means of transmitting important meanings about Christian theology and identity multimodally, that is, through media other than reading and writing. In Chapter Two, we narrow our focus to examine the use of *nomina sacra* in three specific Christian literary manuscripts: namely, the Chester Beatty Pauline codex, the Chester Beatty Numbers-Deuteronomy, and the Egerton Gospel. Chapter Three explores how σταυρός and the embedded staurogram came to be included so early and so consistently among the *nomina sacra*, a practice otherwise reserved almost exclusively for names, titles, and placenames.

Part Two examines the use of *nomina sacra* in the forms of textual practice classified by Roger Bagnall as “everyday writing,” that is, the various kinds of texts

not intended for public circulation or temporal durability.⁸⁰ In Chapter Four, we will examine the use of *nomina sacra* in six personal letters representing a variety of situational, social, and personal circumstances. Chapter Five addresses the presence of *nomina sacra* in three writing and reading exercises, at least two of which seem to come from traditional primary educational settings. Finally, Chapter Six considers how *nomina sacra* were employed and understood as visually-oriented sources of ritual efficacy in three textual amulets from late antique Egypt.

As a final caveat, it warrants mentioning explicitly that this examination does not purport to offer a comprehensive treatment, nor do I make any assertions regarding the representative nature of these sample texts for the practice of using *nomina sacra* more generally. The chance nature by which our sources have come down to us necessarily prohibits any such claim. What I do hope to offer, however, is a preliminary methodological step towards thinking and speaking more clearly about how the *nomina sacra* may have functioned as markers of Christian group identity in various contexts of signification.

80 Roger S. Bagnall, *Everyday Writing in the Graeco-Roman East* (SCL 69; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 3-4.

PART ONE

***Nomina Sacra* in Early Christian Literature**

CHAPTER ONE

Viewing Words and Reading Images: *Nomina Sacra* and Early Christian “Book Culture”

Once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, “and what is the use of a book,” thought Alice, “without pictures or conversations?”

—LEWIS CARROLL, *ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND*

1.1 | Introduction

In his now classic study on *historiolae* in amulets and incantations, David Frankfurter observes: “One must remember that in a semi- or non-literate society written words are usually not sacred semantically but rather visually—as concrete symbols.”¹ We will come to amulets later in this study; however, Frankfurter’s statement raises a consideration of crucial importance for the present chapter, and indeed for every chapter in this thesis: namely, that discussions about communication and representation in the ancient world must take into account modes other than written and spoken language and the various ways in which these modes can be produced, understood, and responded to.

¹ David Frankfurter, “Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of the Magical *historiola* in Ritual Spells,” in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, ed. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 463.

In this chapter, I describe some of the ways in which the visual, the material, and the linguistic interface in early Christian “book culture” and explore how messages might have been communicated through early Christian textual objects even when their audiences were largely illiterate in the medium of written language. My intention is to establish the basis for our study of the *nomina sacra* in the pages that follow by challenging the foregrounding of the written word in discussions about how objects of early Christian inscription convey meaning, and to establish the need to look beyond the written linguistic mode in discussions about ancient literacies.

1.2 | From “Literacy” to Multimodal Literacies

The matter of literacy in antiquity is notoriously complex.² The standard view, advanced by William Harris’ enormously influential study, is that the overall literacy rate in the Roman Empire generally did not exceed about ten percent, and in some provinces was likely even lower.³ “The written culture of antiquity,” Harris concludes, “was in the main restricted to a privileged minority—though in some places it was quite a large minority—and it coexisted with elements of an oral culture.”⁴ Harris’ conclusions are affirmed by Gamble in his study of early Christian books and readers, who adds that “it cannot be supposed that the extent of literacy in the ancient church was any greater than that in the Greco-Roman society of which Christianity was a part.”⁵

2 Chris Keith, *The Pericope Adulterae, the Gospel of John, and the Literacy of Jesus* (NTTSD 38; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 53-94; William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker, eds., *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Alan Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 132-84; Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 1-41; J.H. Humphrey, ed., *Literacy in the Roman World* (JRSup 3; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991); William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

3 Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 22 and 328-32.

4 Ibid., 337.

5 Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 5.

The matter is complicated, however, by an important caveat that will be continually evident throughout the pages of this study: namely, that literate ability manifests in various shades, gradations, and modalities, rather than in the simple black and white dichotomy of “literate” versus “illiterate.”⁶ Furthermore, while it is relatively certain that the broad set of skills involved in creating and using written texts was scarce in the ancient world compared to modern standards, reading and writing hardly seem to have been much less embedded in ancient social practices than they are today.⁷ Hence, the earliest extant material artifacts of Christian culture, as Hurtado has contended emphatically, are objects of written linguistic expression: books, letters, reading and writing exercises, amulets, and the like.⁸ We will examine the use of *nomina sacra* in all of these sites of textual practice in due course, but first we must deal with the fundamental question regarding the extent to which the *nomina sacra* may have been meaningful to Christians across the spectra of social standing and literate ability. For this purpose, I begin in the area where the peculiarities of ancient Christian textual practice are most evident: namely, book culture.

Theories of multimodality and multimodal literacies—a theoretical thread that runs through this entire study—challenge the assumption that the affordances of written language outstrip those of other modes of communication (e.g. visual, aural, spacial, and gestural) by considering the multifaceted ways in which humans

6 This qualification is not lost on Harris, who posits several degrees of literacy, with “scribal literacy” on the one end of the continuum and “craftsman’s literacy” on the other (*Ancient Literacy*, 7-8).

7 See Greg Woolf, “Literacy or Literacies in Rome?” in *Ancient Literacies*, ed. Johnson and Parker, 46-68; Alan K. Bowman, “Literacy in the Roman Empire: Mass and Mode,” in *Literacy in the Roman World*, ed. Humphrey, 119-31; John S. Kloppenborg, “Literate Media in Early Christ Groups: The Creation of a Christian Book Culture,” *J ECS* 22 (2014): 21-59 (26-29).

8 See in particular Hurtado, “Earliest Evidence”; idem, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*; and recently, idem, “Earliest Christian Graphic Symbols.”

negotiate the processes of making meanings.⁹ Thus a multimodal approach to communication “means looking at language as it is nestled and embedded within a wider social semiotic.”¹⁰

Written language has certain meaning potential or modal “affordance,”¹¹ but its effectiveness as a communicational medium depends on how well it is understood within the context of its use. In other words, the efficient communication of messages requires communicators to select modes and media most suitable both to represent the idea they want to communicate and to be understood by the intended recipient(s). In Graeco-Roman literary culture, where the written word was largely secondary to memory and orality, the full meaning potential of written language could be realized through the affordances of the reader’s oral/aural performance: gesture, tonality, pitch, rhythm, gaze, facial expression, proximity, and the like. Hence, as Pieter Botha remarks, “the Greco-Roman texts we possess today are, in many ways, either relics of or at least starting-blocks for performances, presentations, recitals, vocalizations, and such.”¹²

But what of the written word itself? Were the elements and media of writing, without the accompaniment of a lector, void of multimodal and multiliterate semiotic potential—that is, in the recent words of one scholar of ancient orality, simply “‘sound recordings’ of oral speech” whose “full potential could only be truly actualized if they were reconstituted as oral speech”?¹³ In this chapter and

9 The New London Group, “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies”; Kress and van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse*, 1-23; Kress, *Multimodality*, 1-5.

10 Carey Jewitt, “Multimodal Discourses across the Curriculum,” in *Discourse and Education*, ed. Marilyn Martin-Jones, Anne-Marie de Mejía, and Nancy H. Hornberger, vol. 3 of *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, 2nd ed., ed. Nancy H. Hornberger (Berlin: Springer, 2010), 1.

11 The affordance of a mode is “what it is possible to express and represent readily, easily, with a mode, given its materiality and given the cultural and social history of that mode” (Kress and Jewitt, “Introduction,” 14).

12 Pieter J. J. Botha, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), 25.

13 Holly E. Hearon, “A Social Semiotic Multi-Modal Approach to Communication Practices in Early Christianity,” *JECH* 4 (2014): 44-67 (55). See, similarly, Botha, *Orality and Literacy*, 54: “Greco-

throughout this thesis, it is my contention that the meaning potentials of various types of early Christian texts are realized not only in their linguistic content, but also and equally in their visual and material constitution. By recognizing literacy in this way, I believe that we will be better able to understand how groups construct identities through processes of “ongoing design and redesign of identities across the social and cultural practices of meaning making.”¹⁴

1.3 | Books and “Reading Cultures”

Before we turn to explore the idea of Christian literary culture as a multimodal phenomenon, it will be profitable to review the scholarship that has prompted recent interest in the subject of ancient reading cultures and communities. Almost two decades ago in his still highly influential study, “Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity,” William Johnson argued that previous attempts to portray ancient reading have been too broadly sweeping.¹⁵ Instead, he argues,

[t]he more proper approach ... is to understand the particular reading cultures that obtained in antiquity, rather than to try to answer decontextualized questions that assume in “reading” a clarity and simplicity it manifestly does not have.¹⁶

In order to achieve this, he sets out some parameters for assessing what he calls “reading events”: the type of text being read; the context in which it is read; the community (actual or imagined) by whom it is read; the inherited traditions which shape the reading event; and the extent to which the reading is linked to the identity

Roman communication was connected to the physical presence of people and to living speech to an extent that is consistently underestimated today.”

14 Carey Jewitt, “Multimodality and Literacy in School Classrooms,” *Review of Research in Education* 32 (2008): 241-67 (260).

15 William A. Johnson, “Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity,” *AJP* 121 (2000): 593-627. More recently, see his *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3-16.

16 Johnson, “Sociology of Reading,” 606.

of the reader.¹⁷ In terms that would resonate with the social semiotician, Johnson defines "reading" as "the negotiated construction of meaning within a particular sociocultural context."¹⁸ He thus speaks of "reading cultures" and "reading communities" in order to draw attention to the inescapably social nature of reading.¹⁹

While the scope of Johnson's study is necessarily limited—he chooses to focus on reading practices within the elite circles of the early Roman empire—his broader articulation of the way in which the material and sensory aspects of reading "interlock as a system"²⁰ with social and cultural values and senses of group identity is easily transferrable to other ancient "bookish" settings. Before proceeding to ask such questions about Christian "book culture," then, it is worth rehearsing Johnson's description of the material and aesthetic aspects of the literary culture of the Graeco-Roman elite.

Until well into the Roman era, the dominant medium for high literature was not the codex, but the bookroll. Text was inscribed horizontally across the roll in narrow left- and right-justified columns, usually 4.5 to 7.0 centimeters in width, 15 to 25 centimeters in height, fifteen to twenty-five letters per line, with an intercolumn space of 1.5 to 2.5 centimeters.²¹ The layout is remarkably precise for a hand-produced item: the measurement from the left edge of one column to the left edge of the next

17 Ibid., 602-3; idem, *Readers and Reading Culture*, 11-12.

18 Johnson, "Sociology of Reading," 603. According to Hodge and Kress, "meaning is always [socially] negotiated in the semiotic process" (*Social Semiotics*, 12).

19 Johnson defines his terminology as follows: "Partly in order to avoid the political and other baggage that follow the term 'literacy,' I will prefer the following terms: 'reading' (by which I mean the experience of reading, broadly conceived), 'reading events' (by which I mean to emphasize the contextualization of a particular 'reading'), and 'reading culture' (by which I mean to signal the cultural construct that underpins group and individual behaviors in a reading event)" ("Sociology of Reading," 602 n. 20).

20 Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture*, 201.

21 Johnson, "Sociology of Reading," 609; cf. idem, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), esp. 85-156.

stays generally within ± 1.5 millimeters and almost never exceeds 2 millimeters, about the width of a broad pen stroke.²² The orientation towards detail is further realized in the intentionally right-slanting columns, kept on a consistently slight bias by ruling dots set out as guides.²³ The column was thus

organized as a tight phalanx of clear, distinct letters, each marching one after the other to form an impression of continuous flow, the letters forming a solid, narrow rectangle of written text, alternating with narrower bands of white space.²⁴

Despite the clear and consistent literary hands in which such texts were typically inscribed, several features give the impression that the design placed a significant demand on the reader. One of the more obvious of such features is the way in which the columns of writing were laid out in continuous bands of evenly-spaced letters, without separation of individual words. There is also usually little to no punctuation or sense unit demarcation to aid in decipherment, apart from the occasional *paragraphos*, nor headers or column markers to mark larger structures. “The impression of uninterrupted succession, of a coherent whole, seems paramount.”²⁵ Johnson observes further:

The product seems, to the modern eye, something almost more akin to an art object than a book; and, with its lack of word spaces and punctuation, the ancient bookroll is, to the modern perception, spectacularly, even bewilderingly, impractical and inefficient as a reading tool. But that the ancient reading and writing systems interacted without strain is indisputable: so stable was this idea of the literary book, that with only small variations it prevailed for at least seven hundred years in the Greek tradition. The economical hypothesis is that the reading culture was likewise

22 Johnson, “Sociology of Reading,” 612; idem, “The Ancient Book,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 259.

23 Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus*, 91–99. Despite Cavallo and Maehler’s objection that “as far as Hellenistic books are concerned, this seems highly unlikely,” I find Johnson’s case for the intentional slanting of the columns persuasive (Guglielmo Cavallo and Herwig Maehler, *Hellenistic Bookhands* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008], 19).

24 Johnson, “Sociology of Reading,” 609.

25 Ibid.

stable, and that readers were so thoroughly comfortable with the peculiarities of the writing system that adjustments ... proved unnecessary over a great deal of time.²⁶

The peculiarity of such a format is noteworthy given that non-literary papyri and functional copies of literary texts, such as teachers' models and student exercises (some of which we will encounter later in this study), would often employ spacing between words or sense units, syllable markers, punctuation, accents, and/or ek-/eisthesis.²⁷ Thus, "the net effect is designed for clarity and beauty, but not for ease of use, much less for mass readership."²⁸

The continuous format of the text ensured the need for special training in order to read it, a reality borne out in learning exercises such as P.Lond.Lit. 207 (discussed in Chapter 5) which demonstrate the necessity to practice syllable and word division.²⁹ The literary bookroll was thus exclusive by design: it was a demonstration not only of the owner's aesthetic refinement, but also of her or his intellectual and cultural attainment. One did not need to be able to decipher the blocks of continuous letters in order to receive the intended message: the material form of the

26 Ibid., 609-10.

27 Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 81-8. Cribiore points out that accents may occasionally be found in literary papyri where they may clarify ambiguous readings, but they were usually added by the reader and not written by the original scribe (ibid., 85). Cf. Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus*, 36: "In the case of both punctuation and lectional aids, it seems that the scribe copied from his model the essentials, but remained attentive to the need to reproduce clean, unencumbered text."

28 Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture*, 20.

29 According to Cribiore, "a pupil upon joining a grammarian's class still needed considerable assistance in decoding words written in continuous blocks—*scriptio continua*. Since books for beginning readers were not produced on a regular basis, models prepared by teachers fulfilled an invaluable function. Homer and Isocrates were transcribed on tablets with words separated, with some lectional signs (such as occasional accents and breathings), and sometimes with syllables separated by one or two dots" (*Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001], 134). See also idem, *Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 81-88.

bookroll, and the public reading of it, was itself a visual signifier of high culture—or as Johnson puts it, an “icon of elitism.”³⁰

As Gamble has recognized, “Christian congregations were not reading communities in the same sense as elite literary or scholarly circles, but books were nevertheless important to them virtually from the beginning.”³¹ Johnson’s treatment has thus given rise to significant interest in the distinctive features of Christian book culture during the course of the last decade. The most prominent voice in this discussion, Larry Hurtado, has argued that there is “a distinguishable Christian reading-culture” among the early Christians, and that “early Christian manuscripts are direct artifacts of it.”³² In particular, Hurtado has pointed to distinctive visual features of Christian manuscript culture, such as the preference for the codex and the use of the *nomina sacra* and the staurogram, as evidence of “a concern for imprinting a distinctive semiotic quality on early Christian manuscripts.”³³

This emerging interest in early Christian book culture has already devoted much attention to the features of Christian manuscripts affecting the public reading of scripture, especially those understood to most affect readers in the middling and lower ranges of the literacy continuum.³⁴ In what follows, I intend to focus instead

30 Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture*, 26.

31 Harry Y. Gamble, “Book Trade in the Roman Empire,” in *The Early Text of the New Testament*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 34.

32 Larry Hurtado, “Manuscripts and the Sociology of Early Christian Reading,” in *The Early Text of the New Testament*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 49. See also idem, “What Do the Earliest Christian Manuscripts Tell Us About Their Readers?” in *The World of Jesus and the Early Church: Identity and Interpretation in Early Communities of Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), 179–92.

33 Hurtado, “Manuscripts and the Sociology of Early Christian Reading,” 62.

34 See recently, Dan Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity: Lectors, Manuscripts, and Sound in the Oral Delivery of John 1–4* (NovTSup 163; Leiden: Brill, 2016), especially 17–118; and on the matter of numerals and public reading, Zachary J. Cole, *Numerals in Early Greek New Testament Manuscripts: Text-Critical, Scribal, and Theological Studies* (NTTSD 53; Leiden: Brill, 2017), 198–223. See also Hurtado, “Manuscripts and the Sociology of Early Christian Reading”; idem, “What Do the Earliest Christian Manuscripts Tell Us About Their Readers?”; Harry Gamble, “Literacy, Liturgy, and the Shaping of the New Testament Canon,” in *The Earliest*

on the ways in which the material and sensory aspects of early Christian book culture may have served the production and reception of meanings through modes and media other than verbal language. In other words, I would like to challenge a singular conception of literacy—namely, reading and writing—as an assumed prerequisite to meaningful engagement with early Christian literature and literary culture and propose an alternative framing of such discussions in terms of multimodal literacies.

1.5 | Ancient Christianity and Multimodal Literary Culture

The official legitimization and ensuing rapid expansion of Christianity in the fourth century appears to correlate with what Patricia Cox Miller has designated as a “material turn” in the signifying practices of ancient Christians. As Miller describes it, this turn marks “a shift in the late ancient Christian sensibility regarding the signifying potential of the material world ..., a shift that reconfigured the relation between materiality and meaning in a positive direction.”³⁵

Although this semiotic shift was often instantiated in displays of opulent spectacle cultivated by imperial patronage, the enduring importance of accessibility is nevertheless easily detected. In particular, Christian literary tradition became an object to be viewed as much as it was a collection of texts to be read or heard. At the end of the seventh century, for instance, Pope Gregory I argues that “what writing offers to readers, painting offers to unlearned viewers; for in painting ... those who do not know letters can read.”³⁶ In the following century, the Syrian Christian monk and ardent iconophile, John of Damascus, similarly defends the need for visual access to scriptural tradition:

Gospels: The Origins and Transmission of the Earliest Christian Gospels – The Contribution of the Chester Beatty Gospel Codex P⁴⁵, ed. Charles Horton (JSNTSup 258; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 27-39; and idem, *Books and Readers*, 32-41.

35 Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 3.

36 Gregory the Great, *Ep. 13* (*Nam quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis praestat pictura cernentibus, quia in ipsa ... legunt qui litteras nesciunt*).

But since not everyone knows letters or has leisure for reading, the Fathers determined to depict these events [i.e. the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus], like heroic monuments, in images for a concise memorial [ἐν εἰκόσι ταῦτα γράφεσθαι εἰς ὑπόμνησιν σύντομον].³⁷

Despite its *raison d'être* as a repository for the written word, the scriptural codex arguably became the quintessential embodiment of this turn towards what we might call a “visual grammar” of Christian worship.³⁸ Indeed, we may be able to detect the the early beginnings of the emerging scriptural book-as-object in the imposing parchment codices of the fourth century, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.³⁹ Literary witness to this phenomenon also begins to appear around this time. In the late fourth century, the Christian pilgrim Egeria recounted her visit to Constantine's Church of

37 John of Damascus, *Exp. fid.* 4.16.

38 Visual grammar, as defined by Kress and van Leeuwen, is “the explicit and implicit knowledge and practices around a resource, consisting of the elements and rules underlying a culture-specific form of visual communication” (*Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, 2nd ed. [London: Routledge, 2006], 3). Other sensory modes were, of course, also targeted (e.g. sound and smell in the cantillation of scripture and the burning of incense), but our principal focus at present is on communication by means of the visual mode.

39 As Harry Gamble has recently argued, the immensity of these books would likely make them too unwieldy for functional public use in ecclesiastical settings; Gamble thus suggests that they may have been commissioned for private use (Harry Gamble, “Codex Sinaiticus in its Fourth Century Setting,” in *Codex Sinaiticus: New Perspectives on the Ancient Biblical Manuscript*, ed. Scot McKendrick et al. [London: The British Library; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2015], 11). As we will observe in our analyses of schooltexts and amulets in Chapter Five and Chapter Six, it is true that not all Christian manuscripts were intended for public handling and reading, and neither Sinaiticus nor Vaticanus bear the physical signs one might expect from such use (on which, see the fascinating forensic studies on the handling and veneration of medieval manuscripts by Kathryn M. Rudy, “Dirty Books: Quantifying Patterns of Use in Medieval Manuscripts Using a Densitometer,” *JHNA* 2 [2010]: 1-44; idem, “Kissing Images, Unfurling Rolls, Measuring Wounds, Sewing Badges and Carrying Talismans: Considering Some Harley Manuscripts through the Physical Rituals they Reveal,” *eBLJ* [2011], article 5; idem, “Touching the Book Again: The Passional of Abbess Kunigunde of Bohemia,” in *Codex und Material*, ed. Patrizia Carmassi and Gia Toussaint [WMS 34; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018], 247-326).

These objections notwithstanding, the grandiosity and sumptuous quality of these books, together with the skill with which they were composed and their columnar layout with generous spaces and wide margins, make it almost inconceivable to me that these books could not have been designed as objects to be looked at as much as—if not more than—they were to be used. On early Christian books as material objects, see further the excellent collection of essays in James W. Watts, ed., *Iconic Books and Texts* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2013).

the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, where she observed the bishop, in a cloud of incense, processing towards the door of the sanctuary bearing the gospel book before opening it to read the resurrection narrative.⁴⁰

The cover decorations of Christian literary codices—as John Lowden has called it, their “visual argument”⁴¹—also became increasingly elaborate. In his letter to Eustochium written in 384 CE, Jerome speaks disapprovingly of luxurious codices made with purple-died parchment, written in gold lettering and bedecked with jewels, “while Christ lies at the door naked and dying.”⁴² While Jerome does not explicitly identify these extravagantly ornamented books as scripture, visual representations of such gold and gem-encrusted gospel codices, as well as surviving material examples from slightly later periods,⁴³ make this association probable. The famous sixth-century Justinian mosaic in the apse of the San Vitale Basilica, for instance, depicts a processional scene similar to that witnessed by Egeria in the

40 The passage reads: “After these three psalms are recited and three prayers made, behold, censers are brought into the cave of the Anastasis so that the whole basilica of the Anastasis is filled with odors. Then the bishop, standing within the *cancelli*, takes the book of the gospel and proceeds to the door, and the bishop himself reads [the narrative of] the resurrection of the Lord” (*Dictis ergo his tribus psalmis et factis orationibus tribus ecce etiam thymiataria inferuntur intro spelunca Anastasis, ut tota basilica Anastasis repleatur odoribus. Et tunc ubi stat episcopus intro cancellos, prendet evangelium et accedet ad hostium et leget resurrectionem Domini episcopus ipse*) (*Itin. Eger. 24.10*).

41 John Lowden, “The Word Made Visible: The Exterior of the Early Christian Book as Visual Argument,” in *The Early Christian Book*, ed. William E. Kingshirn and Linda Safran (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 13–47.

42 Jerome, *Epist.* 22.32 (*Inficiuntur membranae colore purpureo, aurum liquescit in litteras, gemmis codices vestiuntur, et nudus ante fores earum Christus emoritur*). On the dating of this letter, see John N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 100.

43 For bindings, see Lowden, “The Word Made Visible,” and plates between pages 26 and 27. A number of purple NT parchment codices survive from the late fifth and sixth centuries in both Greek and Latin, all written in silver or gold lettering (most often silver with gold *nomina sacra*). See Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 2nd ed., trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 127; and Hugh A.G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to its Early History, Texts, and Manuscripts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 187–88.

fourth century: a priest carries a codex decked with a gold and gem-studded binding while another priest follows swinging a golden censer.⁴⁴ Paul the Silentiary describes an identical ritual at the Hagia Sophia, adding that surging crowds strove to touch and kiss the golden-bound gospel book as it was processed down the aisle.⁴⁵

The wooden covers of the Freer Gospel Codex, themselves elegantly painted, depict the four evangelists, each bearing a gold book studded with jewels. Interestingly, the evangelists are depicted piously covering their bare hands with their cloaks as they hold the gospel books, “also perhaps a reminder of how the Freer Gospels themselves would have been carried.”⁴⁶



Figure 1.1 Painted cover of the Freer Gospel Codex, depicting the evangelists Luke and Mark bearing gold books with gem-studded covers.⁴⁷

44 For a plate and description, see Kurt Weitzmann, ed. *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), 76-78 (nos. 65-66), available at <http://library.metmuseum.org/record=b1039461>.

45 Paul the Silentiary, *Descr. ambonis*, 247-51: “From here the priest [lit. ‘gospel man’], lifting up the golden book, passes along. And as the crowd surges, in honor of the immaculate God, to touch the sacred book with their lips and hands, unceasing waves of moving people break all around” (ἐνθεν ὑποτροπάδην χρυσέην εὐάγγελος ἀνὴρ βιβλὸν ἀερτάζων διανίσσεται. ἰεμένης δὲ πληθύος, ἀχράντοιο θεοῦ κατὰ μύστιδα τιμὴν, χεῖλεα καὶ παλάμας ἱερὴν περὶ βιβλὸν ἐρείσαι, κύματα κινυμένων περιάγνυται ἄσπετα δῆμων).

46 Lowden, “The Word Made Visible,” 22.

47 Image sourced from Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Codex_Washingtonensis_W_032.jpg). Public domain.

In illustration of the larger point, Lowden reminds us that the illuminated covers of the Freer Gospels were painted in the seventh century, when the milieu was increasingly Coptic, onto the binding of a fourth- or fifth-century gospel book inscribed in Greek. Eventually, the codex was chained shut. He thus proposes that

the images on the covers had a special function: they acted as a guide to, in effect as a substitute for, what was enclosed within. The very legible inscriptions (Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark) provided the information the viewer needed. I suggest that this was a book that, by the time the covers were painted, was intended primarily for display and for processional use, not to be routinely read from in the liturgy.⁴⁸

As Philip Rousseu puts it in the introduction to the volume in which Lowden's chapter appears, the bindings of Christian literary codices "offered a message additional to, perhaps even more forceful than, that imparted by the texts themselves."⁴⁹ He continues, "[S]o many of the volumes were clearly there to be *looked at*, placed within a visual field that was itself deliberately contrived."⁵⁰

In contrast with the illuminated and chained-shut seventh-century binding of the Freer Gospel Codex, evidence from the fourth and preceding centuries, although fragmentary and inferential, seems to suggest that the locus of reverence and mystery was in the open book—the words on the page and the reading or hearing of them. Armando Petrucci has observed that in the fourth century, depictions of Christian books in mosaics and sarcophagi are rather consistently

of an open book, in which one reads, writes, or can write and read. But in the sixth century, alongside this iconographic model there appears another that presents the book always as closed with a rich binding reproduced in minute detail, and always

⁴⁸ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁹ Philip Rousseu, "Introduction: From Binding to Burning," in *The Early Christian Book*, ed. Klinghim and Safran, 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 4 (emphasis original).

rigidly held close to the breast of the personage portrayed, as an object of particular respect and veneration.⁵¹

He concludes that this substitution in iconographic models suggests that “the book itself had gradually been transformed from an instrument of writing and reading, to be used and thus open, into an object of adoration and a jewel-box of mysteries, not to be used directly and thus closed.”⁵² It is not all that surprising, then, to find among the earliest surviving Christian book bindings—the eleven intact leather covers of the fourth-century Nag Hammadi codices—only one that preserves any significant decoration.⁵³ Nevertheless, Jerome’s complaint suggests that the trend towards opulently-embellished gospel codices was already underway in the latter part of the fourth century even if it had not yet achieved widespread validation, and Egeria’s account of the procession in Jerusalem confirms that the gospel book had already reached symbolic status by this time.⁵⁴

As Claudia Rapp argued in her widely-cited study “Holy Texts, Holy Men, and Holy Scribes,” by at least the fourth century the gospel codex seems to have begun to acquire a sense of a “tangible embodiment of the power of God.”⁵⁵ Epiphanius of Salamis thought that owning sacred books was an obligation for those who could

51 Armando Petrucci, *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy: Studies in the History of Written Culture*, ed. and trans. Charles M. Radding (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 27.

52 Ibid., 29.

53 The binding of Codex II (containing, among other texts, the Gospels of Thomas and Philip) was ornately embossed and colored with crosses and other geometric patterns. See Lowden, “The Word Made Visible,” 18-19; and Linda K. Ogden, “The Binding of Codex II,” in *Nag Hammadi Codex II*, 2–7, ed. Bentley Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 19-25. An image of the cover can be viewed at <http://ccdlib.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/ref/collection/nha/id/1393>.

54 Several essays in the outstanding recent volume *Iconic Books and Texts* cited above (note 39) speak of the gospel book as “iconic.” I avoid this term here in relation to the book itself since the scriptural codex, in the Peircean parlance, functions more as a compound of the categories of symbol and index rather than as an icon (which Peirce conceives as “a sign which stands for something merely because it resembles it” [Winfried Nöth, *Handbook of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 122]).

55 Claudia Rapp, “Holy Texts, Holy Men, and Holy Scribes: Aspects of Scriptural Holiness in Late Antiquity,” in *The Early Christian Book*, ed. Kingshirn and Safran, 194-222.

afford them, “for the mere sight of these books renders us less inclined towards sin and impels us to be more awakened towards righteousness.”⁵⁶ Chrysostom disapprovingly indicates that some Christians used gospel codices as props for the swearing of oaths, a practice that became standard under Justinian.⁵⁷ He also claims that the mere presence of gospels in one’s house can repel the devil⁵⁸ and denounces those who wear them as amulets.⁵⁹ Even earlier, the roots of the notion of the scriptural book as divine hypostasis can be detected in, for instance, the prologue to the Gospel of John and Revelation, where Jesus is presented as the embodied first and last Word of God (John 1; Rev 1:8; 21:6; 22:13). The second-century Gospel of Truth draws these ideas together more explicitly:

There was manifested in their heart the living book of the living—the one written in the thought and the mind [of the] Father, which from before the foundation of the totality was within his incomprehensibility—that (book) which no one was able to take, since it remains for the one who will take it to be slain. No one could have become manifest from among those who have believed in salvation unless that book had appeared. For this reason the merciful one, the faithful one, Jesus, was patient in accepting sufferings until he took that book, since he knows that his death is life for many. ... For this reason Jesus appeared; *he put on that book; he was nailed to a tree; he published the edict of the Father on the cross.*⁶⁰

We can conjecture that the emerging veneration of the scriptural book-as-object in the fourth century developed partly from such early notions of Jesus as the embodied Word, but also from reverential attitudes occasioned by witnessing the

56 *Apophth. Patr.*, Epiphanius 8 (Εἶπε πάλιν, ὅτι ἀναγκαῖα τῶν Χριστιανῶν βιβλίων ἡ κτήσις τοῖς ἔχουσι. Καὶ αὐτὴ γὰρ καθ’ ἑαυτὴν τῶν βιβλίων ἡ ὄψις, ὀκνηροτέρους ἡμᾶς πρὸς τὴν ἀμαρτίαν ἐργάζεται, καὶ πρὸς δικαιοσύνην μᾶλλον διανίστασθαι προτρέπεται).

57 Chrysostom, *Stat.* 15.5; Rapp, “Holy Texts,” 196-97; Caroline Humfress, “Judging by the Book: Christian Codices and Late Antique Legal Culture,” in *The Early Christian Book*, ed. Klingshirn and Safran, 141-58.

58 Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 32; idem, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 43.

59 Chrysostom, *Stat.* 19.14. We will examine one such amulet in section 6.2 of this study.

60 Gos. Truth 19.34–20.27. Translation from “The Gospel of Truth,” ed. and trans. Harold W. Attridge and George W. MacRae, in *The Coptic Gnostic Library*, ed. James M. Robinson (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 1:87 (emphasis added).

public reading of scripture. While not every Christian was able to decipher the semantic content of Christian texts, surely most Christians must have witnessed the reading of those texts in worship and studied them, in one way or another, in their catechetical training.⁶¹ Indeed, as Paul Bradshaw has shown, at least some Christian communities in the second and third centuries reserved the hearing of the gospel for those in the final stages of catechesis, since “Jesus’ own words were considered too sacred for the gospels to be read to any but the baptized and those who were about to be admitted into the fellowship of the faithful.”⁶² There was thus not only a sense of reverence for scriptural books as the essence of Christian worship and community, but also an aura of mystery and awe that surrounded them and the letters dispersed across their pages.

Despite the paucity of clear evidence that Christians were exposed to the pages of scriptural books at church, the reality that emerges from the broader body of materials is that ancient people from all spheres of social life—not only clergy and literati, and indeed not even only Christians⁶³—regularly came into contact with *nomina sacra* and used them as resources for making their own meanings. As we will

61 On catechesis, see further the discussion in section 4.4.2 and below. On the scale of public scriptural reading in Christian worship prior to the fourth century—which should be imagined as taking place in smallish gatherings in domestic or semi-public spaces, as described by Tertullian (*Apol.* 39.17-18) and Justin Martyr (*Mart. Just.* 2)—see Andrew B. McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 52-53 and 79, and discussion in section two of the following chapter of this study.

62 Paul F. Bradshaw, “The Gospel and the Catechumenate in the Third Century,” *JTS* 50 (1999): 143-52 (150). See further the discussion of Christian catechesis in section 4.4.2 of this study.

63 Surely not all professional scribes commissioned to copy manuscripts or to write dictated letters containing *nomina sacra* were Christians. As we will observe in Chapter Five, some teachers—apparently teaching in traditional primary educational settings—included Christian texts containing *nomina sacra* among the texts set for their students, and it seems unlikely that any such schools can be identified as “Christian” in late antiquity (see Edward Watts, “Education: Speaking, Thinking, and Socializing,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, ed. Scott Fitzgerald Johnson [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012], 474-77). A thorough investigation into the affiliation of such scribes is a desideratum of *nomina sacra* research that must be reserved for future studies.

see in the pages that follow, people employed *nomina sacra* in letters, learned them at school, and wore them on their bodies as amulets. Luijendijk has proposed—and I concur—that the scriptural study that took place during catechetical training may have involved an explanation of the *nomina sacra*.⁶⁴ Although Luijendijk presumes that this may have been restricted to “literate Christians-in-the-making,” I would suggest that the *nomina sacra* also would have provided an opportunity for illiterate initiands to gaze upon and contemplate these sacred word-images—icons in the Peircean sense⁶⁵—scattered across the pages of scripture.⁶⁶

As a final observation, it is interesting to note that at about the same time that scriptural bindings become increasingly elaborate and closed-book representations take over in iconography, the presence of *nomina sacra* in the greetings of letters virtually disappears.⁶⁷ While this correlation warrants further investigation that is beyond the scope of this study, it is difficult to ignore. I propose that prior to the rise of elaborately decorated scriptural bindings as the principal visual argument of scriptural symbolism, the *nomina sacra* were the most apt signifiers for this purpose.

64 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 69.

65 That is, “picture-like signs which either are or resemble what they signify, have the modality of direct perception, and hence are the most persuasive of signs” (Hodge and Kress, *Social Semiotics*, 26-27). Indeed, surely it is no coincidence that the *nomina sacra* themselves eventually came to appear on Byzantine icons (see Alan D. Pocaro, “Nomina Sacra: Byzantine Aesthetics and the Unity of Text and Image” [paper presented at the Mid America College Art Association Biennial Conference, October 27 2016], <http://www.alanpocaro.com/writing/2016/10/27/nomina-sacra-byzantine-aesthetics-and-the-unity-of-text-and-image>).

66 Note the similar argument made by Jane Heath, although she assumes here a literate context: “Again it is not the use of the *nomina sacra* in the individual sentences or their semantic role within a sentence that matters here, but their collective presence on the page, highlighting to the eye the focus of meditation for the *whole act of reading*, while the reader works through the individual sentences. This facilitates recitation of the divine name as a pattern of prayer that is continual” (“*Nomina Sacra* and *Sacra Memoria* Before the Monastic Age,” *JTS* 61 [2010]: 516-49 [538]).

67 Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 51.

1.6 | Summary

In this chapter, we have explored a multimodal approach to literacy and Christian literary culture that challenges the privileged position of written language over other modes of communication. In particular, we focused on some of the ways in which the material and sensory features of the early Christian book and book culture may have served the production and reception of meanings through the visual mode. We observed how the scriptural book, with its elaborately decorated bindings, became symbolic of the ritual power of the gospel and the embodied presence of God from the fourth century. Finally, it was proposed that evidence of contact with *nomina sacra* by people across the spectrum of social standing and literate ability suggest that the *nomina sacra* served as one of the principal visual arguments of scriptural symbolism.

CHAPTER TWO

Sacred Signs in Human Script(ure)s: *Nomina Sacra* in Christian Literary Papyri

Such practices bespeak a faith in visuality which escapes the need for textual reference: the image of the letter functions in its own right to communicate effectively.

—JOHANNA DRUCKER, *THE ALPHABETIC LABYRINTH*

3.1 | Introduction

In the previous chapter, we conceptualized participation in early Christian book culture as a multimodal and multisensory activity and considered how the *nomina sacra*, as one of its principal elements, might have been meaningful to ancient Christians across the social and literacy continua. We now turn to examine three particular early Christian literary manuscripts and their uses of *nomina sacra*: namely, the Chester Beatty Pauline Codex (P.Beatty 2 + P.Mich. 222 [P⁴⁶]), the Chester Beatty Numbers-Deuteronomy Codex (P.Beatty 6 + P.Mich. inv. 5554), and the Egerton Gospel (P.Egerton 2 + P.Köln 6.255). The aim of this chapter is not to conduct rigorous and exhaustive analyses of the scribal application of *nomina sacra* in these manuscripts;¹ rather, after assessing broader material and social

¹ In his recent PhD dissertation, Edgar Battad Ebojo has conducted an outstandingly thorough analysis of the *nomina sacra* in P.Beatty 2 + P.Mich. 222 (P⁴⁶) (“A Scribe and His Manuscript: An

considerations, I seek to draw some more generalized inferences about the meanings made of and with the *nomina sacra* by the scribes and communities associated with these early Christian books.

3.2 | P.Beatty 2 + P.Mich. 222 (P⁴⁶, TM no. 61855)

Among the lot of biblical papyrus manuscripts acquired in 1930 by the famous private collector Sir Arthur Chester Beatty is an important codex of the Pauline epistles and Hebrews, P.Beatty 2, otherwise known to New Testament scholars as P⁴⁶. The codex, which once contained at least nine epistles, and probably ten, is composed of a single quire; eighty-six leaves now survive, each measuring about 14 to 16 centimeters in width by 21.2 to 23 centimeters in height.² The extant leaves include, in the following unusual order: Romans, Hebrews, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, and 1 Thessalonians. These were almost certainly followed by 2 Thessalonians,³ none of which now survives, and possibly also some additional epistles, although the latter scenario remains contested.⁴

Investigation into the Scribal Habits of Papyrus 46 (P. Chester Beatty II – P. Mich. Inv. 6238” [Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 2014], 323–66). Such a study of the use of *nomina sacra* in the Numbers-Deuteronomy Codex remains a desideratum.

- 2 According to the most recent available measurements taken by the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, available at http://csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_P46_Mich.
- 3 So Frederic G. Kenyon, ed., *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri III: Pauline Epistles and Revelation, Text* (London: Emery Walker, 1934), viii–xii; Henry A. Sanders, ed., *A Third-Century Papyrus Codex of the Epistles of Paul* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1935), 10; Ebojo, “A Scribe and His Manuscript,” 227–28. A number of sheets are missing (evident from the extant pagination), which confirms the original presence of sheets at the end of the codex that must have contained further text.
- 4 Kenyon argued that there would not have been enough space following 2 Thessalonians to accommodate the Pastoral epistles, and thus the final leaves may have been left blank (*Pauline Epistles*, x–xi). Sanders proposed that the missing folia might have contained 2 Thessalonians and “an abbreviated form of the Pastoral Epistles” (*A Third-Century Papyrus Codex*, 12). More recently, Jeremy Duff has argued that the codex likely did—or at least was intended to—contain the Pastoral epistles (Jeremy Duff, “P⁴⁶ and the Pastorals: A Misleading Consensus?” *NTS* 44 [1998]: 578–90). However, in the most recent codicological reconstruction, Edgar Ebojo has

The text is inscribed in the flowing semiliterary hand of a trained scribe. Letters are upright and unimodular,⁵ evenly-spaced, and roughly bilinear, with serified vertical hastas. Kenyon, who originally dated the hand to the first half of the third century, described it as “calligraphic in character ... with some pretensions to style and elegance.”⁶ Although there have been some attempts to push the dating of the hand back into the second century,⁷ and even into the first,⁸ general consensus has consistently placed the manuscript sometime between the turn of the third century

persuasively argued that there are fewer sheets missing from the original codex than previously supposed (“A Scribe and His Manuscript,” 204-35). He concludes that “[t]he corresponding 12 pages at the back contained the text of 2Thess 1.9b-3.18 (occupying about four pages) and the last outer page served as back [sic] cover page. The remaining seven pages are not enough for the Pastorals and Philemon. If they have been left blank, it is not against the known scribal practice” (ibid., 235).

- 5 Pasquale Orsini and Willy Clarysse define “module” and “uni-/bimodular” scripts as follows: “The term ‘module’ refers to the shape and the relative dimensions of the letters. The shape is determined by the relationship between height and width of each individual letter, which can be linked to geometric figures. ... The script as a whole is unimodular when all letters are uniform in dimension and shape, and can be inscribed in a square (there is no unimodular script with all letters inscribed in a rectangle); the script is bimodular when there is a contrast between square and rectangular letters: this contrast is often determined by the narrow letters *epsilon*, *theta*, *omicron* and *sigma*, and the broad letters as *delta*, *eta*, *mu*, *nu*, *pi* and *omega*” (“Early New Testament Manuscripts and Their Dates: A Critique of Theological Palaeography,” *ETL* 88 [2012]: 443-74 [448-49 n. 25]).
- 6 Kenyon, *Pauline Epistles*, xiii.
- 7 Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett, eds., *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2001), 205-6.
- 8 Young Kyu Kim argued for a late first-century date, but this has been almost universally rejected (“Palaeographical Dating of P⁴⁶ to the Later First Century,” *Biblica* 69 [1988]: 248-57). As far as I am aware, the only scholar who has agreed with Kim’s conclusions is Karl Jaroš, who goes so far as to judge that certain features “schließen eine Entstehungszeit nach dem 1. Jh. geradezu aus!” (*Das Neue Testament nach den ältesten griechischen Handschriften* [Ruhpolding-Mainz: Rutzen, 2006] CD-ROM, 1102).

and the late third century.⁹ Recent scholarship supports the original date assigned by Kenyon in the first half of the third.¹⁰

When Kenyon announced Beatty's purchase in a November 1931 issue of *The Times* of London, it was already known that the manuscripts had been divided up by the merchants and that the University of Michigan had acquired some portions of the non-Pauline material.¹¹ Over the course of the next two years, thirty leaves of the Pauline codex were also added to the Michigan collection (now published as P.Mich. 222).¹² Finally, in 1936 it was announced that Beatty had acquired an additional forty-six leaves for his collection, leaving only an estimated eight leaves missing from the original complete codex.¹³

As is the case with many papyri acquired from Egypt in the early decades of the twentieth century, the dubious circumstances under which the acquisitions were made leave the provenance of the manuscripts unresolved. According to Kenyon, “[t]heir place of origin is unknown, since they reached him [i.e. Beatty] through the hands of natives and dealers, whose statements as to provenance are not always

9 Sanders, *A Third-Century Papyrus Codex*, 15-16 (second half of the 3rd cent.); Ulrich Wilcken, “The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyrus,” *APF* 11 (1935): 112-14 (ca. 200 CE); Turner, *Typology*, 148 (3rd cent.); Bruce W. Griffin, “The Paleographical Dating of P-46” (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the SBL, New Orleans, LA, November 2016), <http://www.biblical-data.org/P-46%20Oct%201997.pdf> (ca. 175-225); James R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (NTTSD 36; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 250 (ca. 200 CE). See also Stuart R. Pickering, “The Dating of the Chester Beatty-Michigan Codex of the Pauline Epistles (P⁴⁶),” in *Ancient History in a Modern University*, vol. 2: *Early Christianity, Antiquity and Beyond*, ed. T.W. Hillard, R.A. Kearsley, C.E.V. Nixon, and A.M. Nobbs (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 220, who suggests that “the evidence is stronger for placing it in the third than the second century.”

10 Orsini and Clarysse, “Early NT Manuscripts and Their Dates,” 461-62, 470; Don Barker, “The Dating of New Testament Papyri,” *NTS* 57 (2011): 571-82 (578-82).

11 Frederic Kenyon, “The Text of the Bible: A New Discovery, More Papyri from Egypt,” *The Times*, November 19, 1931: 13-14. For details and a timeline of the purchases, see the letters published in Brent Nongbri, “The Acquisition of the University of Michigan's Portion of the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri and a New Suggested Provenance,” *APF* 60 (2014): 93-116 (94-98).

12 Sanders, *A Third-Century Papyrus Codex*, 1; Kenyon, “The Text of the Bible,” 13; Frederic Kenyon, *The Story of the Bible: A Popular Account of How It Came to Us* (London: John Murray, 1936), 112.

13 Kenyon, *The Story of the Bible*, 112.

reliable,” but “they must have been discovered among the ruins of some early Christian church or monastery; and there is reason to believe that they come from the neighbourhood of the Fayum.”¹⁴

In the spring of 1930, the coptologist Carl Schmidt happened upon the manuscripts while visiting Egypt and was told by the merchant that they had been recovered from Aphroditopolis (modern Atfih). Schmidt speculated they had most likely been discarded near an ancient church or monastery there.¹⁵ Two years later, Schmidt again inquired as to their provenance and was given the same story, this time with some new information:

This spring I questioned the Fayumic merchant again and obtained the same information, according to which a village on the east bank of the Nile in the area of Atfih, the ancient Aphroditopolis, was to be regarded as the findspot. It would hardly have been possible for a dealer to come to this remote area unless the finder had not traveled from there to the Fayum. It is well known to me that the details of a Cairene middleman can be misleading. Incidentally, the trader noted that the papyrus manuscripts were found in a pot. This fully confirms my thesis that these finds are worn, defective codices that, as scriptures, could not be destroyed, but were surrendered to the earth in pots, just as important documents were kept in jars.¹⁶

Since the initial reports placed the findspot on the opposite side of the Nile in the Fayum, Kenyon expressed some reservations about Schmidt's account, but

14 Frederic G. Kenyon, ed., *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri I: General Introduction* (London: Emery Walker, 1933), 5.

15 Carl Schmidt, “Die neuen Bibelfunde aus Ägypten,” *ZNW* 30 (1931): 285-93.

16 “Noch in diesem Frühjahr habe ich den Fajûmer Händler von neuem ausgefragt und die gleiche Auskunft erhalten, derzufolge eine Ortschaft ‘Alâme auf dem Ostufer des Nils in der Gegend von Atfih, dem alten Aphroditopolis, als Fundort anzusehen ist. Auf diese entlegene Gegend wäre wohl schwerlich ein Händler gekommen, wenn der Finder nicht tatsächlich von dort nach dem Fajûm gereist wäre. Die mir wohlbekannten Angaben eines Kairener Zwischenhändlers sind irreführend. Beiläufig bemerkte der Händler, daß die Papyrusbücher in einem Topf aufgefunden wären. Darduch wird meine These vollauf bestätigt, daß es sich bei diesem Funde um abgenutzte, defekte Kodizes handelt, die als heilige Schriften nicht vernichtet werden durften, sondern der Erde in Töpfen übergeben wurden, wie man auch wichtige Dokumente in Krügen aufzubewahren pflegte” (Carl Schmidt, “Die Evangelienhandschrift der Chester Beatty-Sammlung,” *ZNW* 32 [1933]: 225-32 [225-26]).

ultimately accepted the story.¹⁷ However, Nongbri’s recent investigation into the provenance of these papyri reveal that “the assignment of provenance to the Fayum or Aphroditopolis is equally shaky,” demonstrating just how murky the issue is.¹⁸

Whatever part of Egypt the manuscripts may have come from, it appears most probable that they had belonged to some sort of ecclesiastical library before they were discarded. A number of lectional aids and corrections—some original and some by a second hand—are present in P.Beatty 2 + P.Mich. 222 and other manuscripts from the same find, which suggests a milieu of active reading and study in the community which held them.¹⁹ Edgar Ebojo has argued that these “reading marks” and other “visual features,” such as space intervals, were intended “to help read sacred manuscripts more meaningfully in public (liturgical) contexts.”²⁰ Dan Nässelqvist has recently challenged this supposition, however, arguing that such features are not used with enough consistency in P.Beatty 2 + P.Mich. 222 to offer much assistance in public reading.²¹ Instead, he proposes that lectional signs and other such features more likely facilitated private study and the preparation for public reading, and moreover, that Christian communities “likely resorted to trained lectors for the public reading of literary writings.”²²

I would support Nässelqvist’s contention that lectional aids may have been more beneficial to the preparation for public reading than to the event of public reading itself, especially when one considers that other features of Christian

17 Kenyon, *The Story of the Bible*, 112.

18 Nongbri, “Acquisition,” 111.

19 Many of the corrections were made by the initial hand, but some were also made by a second. See most recently Ebojo, “A Scribe and His Manuscript,” 290–322; also Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 235–40; G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum* (London: The British Academy, 1953), 252–62.

20 Edgar Battad Ebojo, “When Nonsense Makes Sense: Scribal Habits in the Space-intervals, Sense-pauses, and Other Visual Features in \mathfrak{P}^{46} ,” *TBT* 64 (2013): 128–50 [137]; idem, “A Scribe and His Manuscript,” 165–203.

21 Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 40–62.

22 Ibid., 55.

manuscripts likely introduced additional hinderances. For instance, most early Christian papyrus codices have a wide single-column layout with more letters per line than the narrow columns of bookrolls.²³ This single-column layout on a book with pages, as opposed to a continuous roll, also occasionally results in page-end word divisions (some of which, as it happens, are observable in the present manuscript). Additionally, the co-presence of *nomina sacra* and numerals, both of which Christian scribes preferred to write in abbreviated form, would surely introduce additional demands upon impromptu public reading.²⁴

These potential difficulties notwithstanding, known instances of “illiterate” scribes and lectors from antiquity should give us pause when considering the levels of literate expertise required for those engaged in such occupations.²⁵ Indeed, Bagnall postulates that “[a] lector probably cantillated the text from memory much of the time; with ancient standards of memorization and a limited body of scripture used liturgically, this is not an impossible feat.”²⁶ Around the turn of the third

23 See Turner, *Typology*, 86, and Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes*, 114-15.

24 Cole has recently argued that numerical abbreviations usually did not present any additional hindrances to the public reading of scripture (*Numerals in Early Greek NT Manuscripts*, 198-223), but I find difficult to imagine how the co-presence of two different types of abbreviations formed identically in Christian manuscripts would not present some degree of additional difficulty. At the very least, we can surely say that the co-presence of both types of abbreviation did not *aid* readers. In addition, Christopher Tuckett has argued that the *nomina sacra* were developed as a way “to enable the reader to get his/her bearings a little more easily when reading the text,” but once again abbreviations introduce additional demands upon readers that surely make deciphering the text *more* difficult, not *less* (“‘Nomina Sacra’: Yes and No?” in *The Biblical Canons*, ed. J.-M. Auwers and H.J. de Jonge [BETL 158; Leuven: Peeters, 2003], 456).

25 Note especially the cases of Ischyron, the late second-century village scribe denounced as “illiterate” (ἀγράμματος) but allowed to continue in his office because he could sign his name (P.Petaus 11), and of Ammonios, the church reader who “does not know letters” (μὴ εἰδὸτος γράμματα) in P.Oxy. 33.2673. See Thomas J. Kraus, *Ad Fontes: Original Manuscripts and Their Significance for Studying Early Christianity—Selected Essays* (TENTS 3; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 158; Malcolm Choat and Rachel Yuen-Collingridge, “A Church with No Books and a Reader Who Cannot Write: The Strange Case of P.Oxy. 33.2673,” *BASP* 46 (2009): 109-38 (especially 122-30).

26 Roger S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 256-57 n. 142.

century, as it happens, Tertullian seems to allude to the public cantillation of scripture by various members of the congregation in his defense of the Christian meal:

We do not recline to eat until we have first tasted of prayer to God. As much is eaten as satisfies hunger; only as much is drunk as is proper for the virtuous. They are satisfied as those who remember that they have to worship God even in the night; they talk as those who know that the Lord listens. After water for the hands, and lights, *each is invited to cantillate publicly to God as able, from the holy scriptures or from their own ability* [*ut quisque de scripturis sanctis vel de proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in medium deo canere*]; thus it is judged how each has drunk. Likewise, prayer closes the feast.²⁷

Although we should recognize Tertullian's apologetic aims and exercise appropriate caution, the implication of this description appears to be that the public recitation of scripture, at least in some instances, was a shared activity not necessarily dependent upon one's literate ability. As we will observe in Chapter 4, in the latter part of the third century we begin to find references to Christian catechetical training involving scriptural study, and there is no reason to assume that such training—which likely involved some memorization²⁸—was not extended to initiands who were weak readers. I would therefore venture to suggest that, with the assistance of memorization and basic ecclesiastical training combined with preparation aided by lectional aids such as those found in P.Beatty 2 + P.Mich. 222, readers of varying degrees of ability might have been able to participate in the public recitation of scripture. Thus, exposure to *nomina sacra* in Christian literary manuscripts may have been more widespread than some have supposed.²⁹

The presence of "unusual" *nomina sacra* in P.Beatty 2 + P.Mich. 222 has attracted frequent comment, which has ranged from such characterizations as "remarkable"³⁰

27 Tertullian, *Apol.* 39.17-18 (emphasis added).

28 See the discussion of Choat and Yuen-Collingridge, "A Church with No Books," 127-29.

29 Tuckett, "'Nomina Sacra': Yes and No?" 447.

30 Frederic G. Kenyon, "Nomina Sacra in the Chester Beatty Papyri," *Aegyptus* 13 (1933): 5-10 (8).

and “inconsistent”³¹ to somewhat harsher pronouncements. For instance, Royse remarks that “the scribe has difficulty understanding the abbreviations for *nomina sacra* that stood in his *Vorlage*, and accordingly often introduces an impossible form.”³² Later, he continues:

The scribe makes a number of errors that result in nonsense. ... Many of these seem to arise from his faulty understanding of what he is copying, resulting in a high density of nonsense in context readings. In particular, he rather often errs when he encounters abbreviations of *nomina sacra*.³³

While it is not my purpose here, as mentioned above, to offer a comprehensive analysis of the scribe’s application of *nomina sacra* in this manuscript,³⁴ some of the more frequently-cited examples of his presumed “faulty understanding” of the system merit a closer look.

Of the fifteen supposed “standard” *nomina sacra*, nine appear in the extant folia of this manuscript, all of which are abbreviated by various forms of contraction (none by suspension). Among these, five are treated with marked consistency: θεός, κύριος, Ἰησοῦς, Χριστός, and σταυρός/σταυρώ. The former four—“God,” “Lord,” “Jesus,” and “Christ”—are unsurprisingly contracted in one hundred percent of their extant sacral occurrences. The latter, “cross”/“crucify,” is also contracted at a strikingly high combined rate of ninety-five percent, with all ten extant noun forms and nine out of ten extant verb forms treated as *nomina sacra*.³⁵

31 Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 93.

32 Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 259.

33 Ibid., 358.

34 For which, see Ebojo, “A Scribe and His Manuscript,” 323-66.

35 Ebojo counts only nineteen total occurrences of σταυρός and σταυρώ (ibid., 344-46). I, however, count twenty: ten nouns (at 1 Cor 1:17, 1:18; Gal 5:11, 6:12, 6:14; Eph 2:16; Phil 2:8, 3:18; Col 1:20; Heb 12:2) and ten verbs (at Rom 6:6 [uncontracted]; 1 Cor 1:13, 1:23, 2:8; 2 Cor 13:4; Gal 2:19, 5:24, 6:14; Col 2:14; Heb 6:6). I assume the omission in Ebojo’s count is at 2 Cor 13:4, where all of the letters of the contraction have been lost to a break in the papyrus. With magnification, however, traces of the supralinear line above the contraction are clearly visible on the surviving fibers.

The curiously high rate of contraction of the words “cross” and “crucify” in this and other early New Testament manuscripts raises a number of tantalizing questions, which we will explore in the following chapter. Of immediate interest is the manner in which the scribe has carefully and consistently supralineated only the contracted root of compound forms of σταυρώ, leaving prefixed prepositions unaffected (e.g. $\overline{\text{συνεστραι}}$ for συνεσταύρωμαι [Gal 2:19], $\overline{\text{αναστρες}}$ for ανασταυροῦντες [Heb 6:6]). We will note below that the scribe of P.Egerton 2 + P.Köln 6.255—another target of occasional criticism for his supposed unconventional application of *nomina sacra*—treats his unique contraction of the verb ἐπροφήτευσεν in a similar way, marking the contracted root with the supralinear line but not the past time morpheme ε- (i.e. $\overline{\text{επροφσεν}}$). I would suggest that this “idiosyncrasy”³⁶ constitutes one of a number of indexes of principled activity by a scribe working within an understood system.

The scribe’s use of both the two-letter contraction and the three-letter suspension/contraction hybrid for Χριστός has also frequently been noted.³⁷ As Ebojo has shown, however, this variation is not wholly indiscriminate: when Χριστός appears in collocation with Ἰησοῦς, which is always contracted using the three-letter abbreviation ($\overline{\text{ιης}}$) in this manuscript, Χριστός is also abbreviated using the three-letter form ($\overline{\text{χρς}}$).³⁸ Another frequently-cited “idiosyncrasy” occurs at Hebrews 9:14, where a supralinear line is present above the word αἶμα, which is uncontracted. As it turns out, however, this putatively unique *nomen sacrum* is a consequence of a correction of the reading $\overline{\text{πνα}}$ τοῦ $\overline{\text{χρϋ}}$ by a second hand, which overwrote the letters

36 Ebojo, “A Scribe and His Manuscript,” 346.

37 Kenyon, “Nomina Sacra,” 8; Sanders, *A Third-Century Papyrus Codex*, 15-16; Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 180-83.

38 Ebojo puts it this way: “That is, when $\overline{\text{χρς}}$ precedes $\overline{\text{ιης}}$, the scribe preferred $\overline{\text{χρς}}$ in the 3-letter format 33 times out of 38 extant occurrences. Yet even when $\overline{\text{ιης}}$ comes first, the 3-letter format is still the preferred contraction form, 40 times out of 43” (“A Scribe and His Manuscript,” 343).

πν with the letters αμ, leaving behind the supralinear line. The original *nomen sacrum* was, in fact, entirely conventional both in its form and in its referent.

A final example occurs at 1 Corinthians 8:5, where the copyist has written out the plural forms “gods” (θεοί) and “lords” (κύριοι) in *scriptio plena* but in the following verse records the singular “God” and “Lord” as *nomina sacra* (ⲑⲥ καὶ ... ⲕⲥ). The interest that motivated this copyist’s selection of these forms becomes transparent when one considers the verbal content of the passage, in which the gods and lords of others are situated in contradistinction to the “one God ... and one Lord, Jesus Christ” (8:6). Hence, the copyist has selected the forms most apt to express his interest in this difference, forms which are themselves visually and orthographically different from the surrounding lines of continuous letters. Thus, the scribe’s selection of *nomina sacra* forms at 1 Corinthians 8:6, as opposed to the fully written out forms in the preceding clause, marks an identity distinction and asserts the superiority of Christian belief: “they with their many (false) gods” versus “us with our one (true) God.”

This sampling of oft-cited “idiosyncrasies,” I contend, portrays not an erratic and inconsistent scribe with little comprehension of the system of *nomina sacra* he was attempting to employ, but rather a trained and principled scribe operating on the basis of a clearly understood—if not always flawlessly executed—model. Indeed, it is rather more likely that it is we who do not fully comprehend the protocols and boundaries of the system within which this (or any) particular scribe operated at the time of the manuscript’s inscription.

3.3 | P.Beatty 6 + P.Mich. inv. 5554 (Numbers-Deuteronomy, TM no. 61934)

Another important manuscript from among of the 1930s find that found its way to the Chester Beatty and Michigan collections is the Numbers-Deuteronomy codex. P.Beatty 6 + P.Mich. inv. 5554 is a two-column codex consisting of fragments of fifty-five leaves (originally about 108) of the fourth and fifth books of the Pentateuch. The two-column layout is relatively unusual in papyrus codices and gives the impression

that the scribe either was accustomed to copying rolls or wanted to mimic the aesthetic effect of a literary roll.³⁹ Indeed, the wide margins (ca. 4.5 to 7.5 centimeters outer, ca. 2.5 inner), evenly spaced lines, careful left and right justification of the columns (ensured by unusual word divisions and line fillers⁴⁰), and tidy, continuous hand evince an effort to produce "a specimen of a high class of book production."⁴¹

Kenyon described the hand as "a fine example of calligraphy,"⁴² and indeed "calligraphically the finest" of all of the Chester Beatty biblical papyri.⁴³ The hand is clear and practiced: letters are upright and rounded, evenly-spaced, and roughly bilinear. However, there is some variation in modularity (sometimes, but not always, a result of widening final letters to fill the line), as well as a slight fluidity to the ductus that results in the tendency to elongate horizontal and oblique strokes, causing the occasional (pseudo-)ligation of certain letters. As Roberts observes, this type of hand "is found both in literary texts and in documents" and "is a good, workaday literary hand, if hardly 'a fine example of calligraphy' as Kenyon (p. ix) claimed."⁴⁴ Kenyon dated the hand perhaps to the late first century and not later than the middle of the second.⁴⁵ Sanders and Turner both proposed a somewhat later

39 Turner counts twenty-one literary papyrus codices with a two-column layout up to the seventh century; of those, fifteen are dated to the period of this study (i.e. through the fourth century), and eight of these fifteen contain Christian literature (Turner, *Typology*, 36). See more recently the discussion of Hurtado in *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 165-69.

40 Frederic G. Kenyon, *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri V: Numbers and Deuteronomy, Text* (London: Emery Walker, 1935), x.

41 Ibid., ix.

42 Ibid.

43 Kenyon, *General Introduction*, 13-14.

44 Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 79. Similarly, Turner lists P.Beatty 6 among manuscripts he considers to be "the work of practiced scribes writing in an ordinary type of hand, but writing it larger than usual" (*Typology*, 86).

45 Kenyon, *General Introduction*, 14; idem, *Numbers and Deuteronomy*, ix-x. Arthur Hunt apparently suggested a date in the third century (*apud* Kenyon, *Numbers and Deuteronomy*, ix).

second/third century date,⁴⁶ which Roberts countered with a lengthy argument for a date firmly in the second century.⁴⁷ Most recently, Clarysse and Orsini have suggested a date of 170-250 CE.⁴⁸

A few lectional signs and other indexes of reading and study are observable, though not as many as are present in the Pauline codex. Occasional corrections are made by supralinear insertion of omitted letters, marginal insertion of omitted lines (with *anchora*e indicating their proper place in the text), and supralinear dots and/or strikethrough lines to indicate cancellation. The words θεός, κύριος, Ἰησοῦς, πνεῦμα, ἄνθρωπος, πατήρ, and Ἰσραήλ are treated as *nomina sacra*, although the referents of πνεῦμα and Ἰησοῦς in Numbers and Deuteronomy are non-sacral.⁴⁹ Kenyon proposes that “the *nomen sacrum* Ἰησοῦς had become so well established that it was natural for the scribe to use it even when the name was not that of Jesus Christ but of Joshua. ... A similar extension of use occurs in connection with the word πνεῦμα.”⁵⁰

Interestingly, numerals are written in abbreviated form in the Numbers portion of the codex, including the rare abbreviation for the number one ($\bar{\alpha}$), but in Deuteronomy all extant numbers are written in full spelling even though both texts are copied by the same hand.⁵¹ I would suggest that this is no coincidence. As François Bovon has argued in his influential article “Names and Numbers in Early Christianity,” early Christians believed that “names and numbers are inextricably

46 Henry A. Sanders, “Some Fragments of the Oldest Beatty Papyrus in the Michigan Collection,” *APSP* 75 (1935): 313-24 (314); Turner, *Typology*, 36.

47 Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 78-81.

48 Willy Clarysse and Pasquale Orsini, “Christian Manuscripts from Egypt to the Times of Constantine,” *Das Neue Testament und sein Text in 2. Jahrhundert*, ed. J. Heilmann and M. Klinghardt (TANZ 61; Tübingen: Francke, 2018), 111.

49 The forms are as follows: $\bar{\theta}\varsigma$, $\bar{\theta}\nu$, $\bar{\theta}\upsilon$, and $\bar{\theta}\omega$ for θεός, -όν, -οῦ, -ῶ; $\bar{\kappa}\varsigma$, $\bar{\kappa}\nu$, $\bar{\kappa}\upsilon$, $\bar{\kappa}\omega$ for κύριος, -ον, -ου, -ω; $\bar{\iota}\varsigma$, $\bar{\iota}\nu$, $\bar{\iota}\upsilon$ and the three-letter forms $\bar{\iota}\eta\varsigma$ and $\bar{\iota}\eta\nu$ for Ἰησοῦς, -οῦν, -οῦ; $\bar{\pi}\nu\alpha$ for πνεῦμα and $\bar{\pi}\nu\alpha\tau\omega\nu$ for πνευμάτων; $\bar{\alpha}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ for ἄνθρωπος; $\bar{\pi}\rho$ for πατήρ and $\bar{\pi}\tau\varsigma$ for πατρός; and $\bar{\iota}\eta\lambda$ for Ἰσραήλ.

50 Kenyon, “Nomina Sacra,” 6.

51 Cole, *Numerals in Early Greek NT Manuscripts*, 157-58.

related” and they “used the categories of ‘name’ and ‘number’ as theological tools.”⁵² The author of the Epistle of Barnabas, for instance, interprets the report in Genesis 14:14 that Abraham had 318 men in his household as a veiled reference to Jesus and the cross,⁵³ and Clement of Alexandria interprets the passage similarly.⁵⁴ Certainly, then, the name given to the fourth book of the Pentateuch by the Greek translators, Ἀριθμοί, invites attention to and speculation about the many numbers contained within its narrative.

In light of this ancient speculation about the connectedness of numbers and names and our scribe’s selective practice of abbreviating numerals in the Book of Numbers but spelling them out in Deuteronomy, I would argue that what may at first sight seem like indiscriminacy in his use of *nomina sacra* is in fact principled. Hurtado has suggested that the treatment of “Joshua” (Ἰησοῦς) as a *nomen sacrum* in this manuscript should not immediately be dismissed as a consequence of carelessness or lack of skill, but rather should be understood in light of ancient christological readings of Jewish scriptures which interpret Joshua as a prefigure of Jesus.⁵⁵ If we accept that our scribe intentionally abbreviated the numerals in the Book of Numbers for theologically symbolic reasons (to such an extent that he even employed the rare abbreviation for “one”), Hurtado’s proposal seems strengthened.

It is not possible to draw firm conclusions regarding whether this manuscript was used for public reading in worship. The presence of lectional signs and

52 François Bovon, “Names and Numbers in Early Christianity,” *NTS* 47 (2001), 267. For a fuller summary of numerical speculation in Judaism and Christianity and its roots in Pythagorean tradition, see Adela Yarbro Collins, “Numerical Symbols in Jewish and Early Christian Literature,” *ANRW* 21.2:1221-87.

53 The author interprets the letters iota and eta (= 18) as an isopsephic representation of the name of Jesus and the letter tau (= 300) as a representation of the cross. See further in the following chapter.

54 Clement, *Strom.* 6.11.84-85.

55 Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 118 note 71, and 126 note 94. He points to Justin Martyr’s argument in *Dial.* 75, where Justin views Moses’ renaming of Hoshea as “Joshua/Jesus” (Ἰησοῦς) in Exod 23:20 as pointing ahead to Jesus. See Hurtado’s fuller discussion in idem, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 573-78.

corrections would certainly seem to indicate that it did serve a practical function of some kind, whether for public reading or for private study, but the profusion of numerical abbreviations together with the presence of *nomina sacra* surely would not facilitate public reading. I therefore propose that these visually prominent abbreviations for names and numbers, as they explode across the page, served to stimulate visual contemplation of the mystical and ontological truths about the meaningful patterns of God's work in history. This view aligns well with the Christian interpretation of Jewish scripture found in the Epistle of Barnabas, where an allegorical exegesis leads one to discover prefigurative references to Christ hidden in these otherwise enigmatic ancient revelations. Thus, the *nomina sacra* and numerical abbreviations together form a kind of mosaic on the page, organizing and highlighting the fundamental argument of the text visually as a kind of illumination of the semantic content of the written word.⁵⁶

3.4 | P.Egerton 2 + P.Köln 6.255 ("Unknown Gospel," TM no. 63527)

On January 23, 1935, H. Idris Bell broke the news in *The Times* of London that the British Museum had acquired some papyrus fragments from Egypt that "may fairly claim to be the earliest bit of Christian writing at present known to be extant."⁵⁷ What made the news particularly sensational was that, "though the new fragments certainly came from a Gospel, they formed no part of any of the canonical four."⁵⁸ These fragments have come to be known as Papyrus Egerton 2 (sometimes

⁵⁶ Cole explores the possibility of *numeri sacri* in the use of numeric abbreviations in Christian manuscripts (i.e. patterns of numeric abbreviations invested with theological significance) but finds no confirmable instances of such use (*Numerals in Early Greek NT Manuscripts*, 171-97). Cole's focus was on whether sustained patterns of significance can be detected in individual abbreviated forms. However, I would suggest that we may classify the numeric abbreviations of P.Beatty 6 + P.Mich. 5554 as *numeri sacri* in a broader sense insofar as they function together with the *nomina sacra* as a visual dialectic to communicate certain theological meanings.

⁵⁷ H. Idris Bell, "A New Gospel: British Museum Discovery, Fragments in Papyri from Egypt," *The Times*, January 23, 1935: 13.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

P.Lond.Christ. 1), and their contents as “The Unknown Gospel” or “The Egerton Gospel.” In 1987, about half a century after their initial publication, an additional fragment that joins with fragment 1 was identified in Cologne and published by Michael Gronewald in the sixth volume of the *Kölner Papyri*.⁵⁹

The fragments consist of portions of three leaves of a codex, only two of which (fragment 1 + P.Köln 6.255 and fragment 2) are large enough and well enough preserved to allow a sense of the text’s content.⁶⁰ The third fragment is too small to be made intelligible (6 by 2.3 centimeters), but does preserve a few isolated words or parts of identifiable words on both sides. Their provenance is unknown; in the *editio princeps*, Bell and Skeat suggested Oxyrhynchus as a possibility, although they themselves admit that “not much weight can really be attached” to this identification.⁶¹

The hand of P.Egerton 2 + P.Köln 6.255 is upright, round, unimodular, and roughly bilinear, with notably looped letters (especially alpha, mu, and omega) and a ductus that betrays “an informal air” with “distinct affinities to the cursive.”⁶² Bell and Skeat dated the hand “from a period not later than the middle of the second century A.D.”⁶³ an assessment with which following commentators largely agreed.⁶⁴

59 Michael Gronewald, “Unbekanntes Evangelium oder Evangelienharmonie (Fragment aus dem ‘Evangelium Egerton’),” in P.Köln 6, 136-45.

60 Fragment 1 measures 11.5 by 9.2 centimeters; P.Köln 6.255, which joins the bottom of fragment 1, measures 6.5 by 3 centimeters. Fragment 2, which is part of a different leaf, measures 11.8 by 9.7 centimeters.

61 H. Idris Bell and T.C. Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 7.

62 Bell and Skeat, *Fragments*, 7 and 6, respectively.

63 Bell, “A New Gospel,” 13; cf. Bell, “Fragments of an Unknown Gospel,” *BMQ* 9 (1935): 71-73 (“written in a hand which can hardly be dated later than about A.D. 150” [71]); Bell and Skeat, *Fragments*, 1 (“Middle of second century”).

64 See, for example, Goro Mayeda, *Das Leben-Jesu-Fragment Papyrus Egerton 2 und seine Stellung in der urchristlichen Literaturgeschichte* (Berne: Paul Haupt, 1946), who remarks that P.Egerton 2 “nicht als Gründe gegen die Ansetzung des Papyrus vor 150 gelten können” (14); and Ugo

However, in his publication of P.Köln 6.255, Gronewald noted that the presence of an apostrophe between consonants (ἀνεῖν'κον, line 45) may suggest a date around the turn of the third century.⁶⁵ Recently in a thorough palaeographical analysis of this papyrus, Peter Malik and Lorne Zelyck argue convincingly for “a broad spectrum of possible dates in the spectrum of 150-250 CE,”⁶⁶ which is affirmed by Clarysse and Orsini.⁶⁷

Beyond the date, which remains relatively early even after revision, these fragments are interesting for other reasons. Most of the extant content has close parallels with what would become the canonical gospels, and in particular, with the gospel attributed to John. Fragment 1 recto (plus the Cologne fragment) preserves the end of an episode concerning an attempt to arrest and stone Jesus and most of a scene involving the healing of a leper; the verso recounts part of a dispute between Jesus and Jewish leaders about Moses and the interpretation of the scriptures. Fragment 2 verso is poorly preserved but seems to recount a miracle story in which Jesus sows some kind of seed on the banks of the Jordan river that immediately bears

Gallizia, “Il P. Egerton 2,” *Aegyptus* 36 (1956): 29-72, who judges that “il termine *ante quem* sarebbe il 150” (46).

65 Gronewald, “Unbekanntes Evangelium,” 136-37. More recently, see Paul Foster, “Bold Claims, Wishful Thinking, and Lessons about Dating Manuscripts from Papyrus Egerton 2,” in *The World of Jesus and the Early Church*, ed. Craig A. Evans (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), 193-212, who concurs with Gronewald’s view. More recently, Stanly Porter has attempted to push back on these revisions, arguing for a date “firmly placed within the second century,” but his arguments have not won universal acceptance (Stanley E. Porter, “Recent Efforts to Reconstruct Early Christianity on the Basis of Its Papyrological Evidence,” in *Christian Origins and Graeco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts [TENTS 9; Leiden: Brill, 2013], 71-84 [83]; idem, *John, His Gospel, and Jesus: In Pursuit of the Johannine Voice* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015], 18-27).

66 Peter Malik and Lorne R. Zelyck, “Reconsidering the Date(s) of the *Egerton Gospel*,” *ZPE* 204 (2017): 55-71 (71).

67 Clarysse and Orsini, “Christian Manuscripts from Egypt,” 111.

fruit; the recto preserves part of a dispute (probably again with Jewish leaders) concerning the payment of tribute money.⁶⁸

It has been suggested that the group(s) associated with this gospel were “Jewish adherents of Jesus” due to the designation “teacher Jesus” (διδάσκαλε ιη, fr. 1→, line 36 and fr. 2→, line 52) and the portrayal of Jesus as a prophet who stands in continuity with Moses.⁶⁹ The latter observation, discussed at length by Jon Daniels in his PhD thesis,⁷⁰ may in fact go some way towards explaining the four words uniquely treated as *nomina sacra* in these fragments: “Moses” (μω; fr. 1↓, lines 13 and 15), “Isaiah” (perhaps η[ς] or η[σας]; fr. 2→, line 61), “prophets” (προφας; fr. 2→, line 54), and “prophecy” (επ[ρο]φσεν for ἐπροφήτευσεν [with epsilon left unsupralineated]; fr. 2→, line 62). Rare, but not otherwise unattested, is the abbreviation of βασιλεύς (βαλευσ[ιν] for βασιλεῦσιν; fr. 2→, line 55).⁷¹ Other *nomina sacra* are usual: θς for θεός

68 On the stories preserved here, their probable reconstructions, and their synoptic and Johannine parallels, see recently Tobias Nicklas, “Papyrus Egerton 2,” in *The Non-Canonical Gospels*, ed. Paul Foster (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2008), 139-49; idem, “The ‘Unknown Gospel’ on Papyrus Egerton 2 (+ Papyrus Cologne 225),” in *Gospel Fragments*, ed. Thomas J. Kraus, Michael Kruger, and Tobias Nicklas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9-120; Jon B. Daniels, “The Egerton Gospel: Its place in early Christianity” (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1990), 27-133.

69 The designation “Jewish adherents of Jesus” is applied by Daniels, “The Egerton Gospel,” 264. See also Nicklas, “Papyrus Egerton 2,” 148-49.

70 Daniels, “The Egerton Gospel,” 249-60, 264-66, and *passim*. To summarize Daniels’ discussion, “the compositional choice to portray Jesus in continuity with Moses hints that Egerton’s kind of characterization of Jesus and Moses could have been rejected by Paul in the mid-first century. Egerton’s characterization does not show a subordination of Moses to Jesus that is found in canonical texts that otherwise praise Moses. Therefore it is plausible that the text of the Egerton Gospel is the product of a group with some similarity not only to those who generated pre-canonical miracle chains, but perhaps also to those opposed so staunchly by Paul in 2 Corinthians” (ibid., 260).

71 The treatment of βασιλεύς as a *nomen sacrum* is also attested in P.Oxy. 76.5072 (2nd/3rd cent., βαλεια), P.Oxy. 17.2068 (4th cent., βς, twice), and in the added portion of the Freer Gospel (W) (7th/8th cent., βλευς and βλειαν). Traube also says that the abbreviation βασλς occurs in a Greek portion of Paris Copt. 129 (8) at fol. 150, but I have been unable to confirm this (*Nomina Sacra*, 127).

(fr. 1↓, line 16), $\overline{\kappa\varsigma}$ for κύριος (fr. 1→, line 40), $\overline{\iota\eta}$ for Ἰησοῦς (frs. 1↓, line 17; 1→, line 43; 2→, line 57; and 2↓, line 72), and $\overline{\pi\rho\alpha}$ for πατέρα (fr. 1↓, line 12).

As Daniels rightly observed, the regularity and frequency with which the *nomina sacra* are abbreviated in this manuscript suggest that “the scribe has been trained in a tradition which consistently used these particular forms.”⁷² It is interesting to note that the *nomina sacra* that are not unique to this manuscript are contracted, with the marked exception of Jesus’ name, which is abbreviated by the less common method of suspension to the first two letters. Moses’ name is also suspended in this way, as perhaps was “Isaiah,” though a lacuna ensures uncertainty in the latter case.⁷³ Furthermore, Bell and Skeat pointed out that $\overline{\pi\rho\phi\alpha\varsigma}$ and $\overline{\epsilon\pi\rho\phi\sigma\epsilon\nu}$ are also suspended, but with case and tense endings added for sense clarity, thus effectively creating hybridized suspended/contracted forms.⁷⁴ It would seem reasonable to suppose, then, that the scribe has specifically singled out words associated with prophets and prophetic tradition to treat in this way.

Roberts, who acknowledged the “connectedness” of the unusual abbreviations in this manuscript, nevertheless attributed them to “an experimental phase in the history of the system when its limits were not clearly established.”⁷⁵ Yet, the consistent and purposeful manner in which the *nomina sacra* are abbreviated suggests that the scribe was quite aware of what he was doing. I would suggest that a better way forward is to view such employment of (apparently) unique *nomina sacra* not as idiosyncratic deviations from conventionality, but as traces of the interests and agentive activity of the scribes who wrote them. When making signs, the features chosen for representation are those deemed as “criterial” for defining

72 Daniels, “The Egerton Gospel,” 6.

73 Bell and Skeat restored $\overline{\eta[\sigma\alpha\varsigma]}$ (*Fragments*, 2 and 4), but line length also permits the restoration $\overline{\eta[\varsigma]}$, which Gunnar Rudburg suggested as the preferable restoration due to the suspension of the other two proper names in the text (“De nominibus sacris adnotatiunculae,” *Eranos* 33 (1935): 146-51 [146-47]). Paap repeats the suggestion of Rudburg (*Nomina Sacra*, 113 n. 5).

74 Bell and Skeat, *Fragments*, 4.

75 Roberts, *Manuscript, Society, and Belief*, 39.

the idea one wants to communicate, in accordance with a particular purpose, and in a way that can be understood by the person for whom the sign is intended.⁷⁶ With this in mind, I would suggest that these unique *nomina sacra* betray a special place that these prophetic figures held for the scribe and/or the tradition in which he was formed. Precisely what significance they may have held is unclear; however, we must assume that these *nomina sacra* would have been intelligible and meaningful to the person(s) or group(s) for whom the manuscript was intended.

3.5 | Summary

Discussions about the ways in which *nomina sacra* are applied in early Christian manuscripts must consist of both broad, theoretical issues and of specific evidence. The aim of this brief chapter has not been to conduct a thorough analysis of the *nomina sacra* in these three manuscripts, but rather to demonstrate the usefulness of an approach which restores agency to the producers of *nomina sacra* by positing “mistakes,” irregularities, and deviations from perceived conventionality as traces of the interests of their producers rather than simply as the work of “amateur or careless scribe[s].”⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Gunther Kress, *Before Writing: Rethinking the Paths to Literacy* (London: Routledge, 1997), 10-13.

⁷⁷ Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 27.

CHAPTER THREE

Signed with an “X”:

Σταυρός and the Staurogram Among the *Nomina Sacra*

Ritual is a culturally constructed system of symbolic communication. It is constituted of patterned and ordered sequences of words and acts, often expressed in multiple media ... by which the participants experience the event intensively.

—STANLEY TAMBIAH, “A PERFORMATIVE APPROACH TO RITUAL”

4.1 | Introduction and Background

The contracted form of the Greek word for “cross,” σταυρός, is not usually included among the so-called “primary” group of *nomina sacra*, which includes the contracted forms of the four words θεός, κύριος, Ἰησοῦς (which also appears in suspended form) and Χριστός.¹ In the 65 New Testament manuscripts assigned dates in the Gregory-Aland registry between the second and third/fourth centuries (up to and including

¹ The classification of *nomina sacra* into three groups on the basis of frequency of contraction was first suggested by Roberts in *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 27, and was later taken up by Larry Hurtado in his article “Origin.” The primary group, according to Hurtado, is comprised of “the four earliest and most consistently rendered words”: θεός, κύριος, Ἰησοῦς, and Χριστός; the secondary group consists of “three additional terms, which appear to be slightly later and less uniformly treated”: πνεῦμα, σταυρός, and ἄνθρωπος; and the tertiary group consists of the remaining eight, “which are abbreviated less consistently and appear to have joined the list of sacred terms latest”: πατήρ, υἱός, σωτήρ, μήτηρ, οὐρανός, Ἰσραήλ, Δαβίδ, and Ἰερουσαλήμ (Hurtado, “Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*,” 655-56).

P.Oxy. 72.4934 or \mathfrak{P}^{125}),² these four divine epithets are treated as *nomina sacra* virtually one hundred percent of the time.³ Yet $\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ and $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$, which constitute two-thirds of the so-called “secondary” group, follow surprisingly closely behind: $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ is rendered as a *nomen sacrum* in a total of 210 out of 232 occurrences, or 90.5 percent of the time, while $\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ is contracted in eighteen out of nineteen occurrences, a rate of 94.7 percent.⁴ By way of comparison, these are followed by $\pi\alpha\tau\acute{\eta}\rho$ at a rate of 54.4 percent, and $\alpha\acute{\nu}\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$ at a mere 44.9 percent.⁵

-
- 2 Based on the most recent online edition of the *Kurzgefasste Liste* (<http://ntvmr.uni-meunster.de/liste>), as of 3 January 2018. This count includes the majuscules P.Oxy. 6.847 (0162), P.Berl. inv. 11765 (0189), P.Dura 10 (0212), and P.Schøyen 1.20 (0220). Papyri currently in the *Liste* with designations between \mathfrak{P}^{126} and \mathfrak{P}^{136} are excluded from this analysis as no transcriptions or photographs are yet available.
 - 3 When uncontracted occurrences which are plural or otherwise decidedly non-sacral are omitted, the following rates of contraction result: $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ is contracted 991 times out of 991 total occurrences (= 100%); $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ is contracted 499 times out of five hundred total occurrences (= 99.8%); $\text{I}\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ is contracted 805 times out of 805 total occurrences (= 100%); and $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ is contracted 463 times out of 463 total occurrences (= 100%). Note that these numbers include hits that occur within conjectural reconstructions, since in this case the bearing of conjectures on the resulting statistics is negligible or null. However, figures reported for all other *nomina sacra* in the following analysis omit hits that occur entirely within lacunae or for which the remaining traces are inconclusive.
 - 4 This datum does not include the verb $\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\acute{o}\omega$ since its treatment is inconsistent in comparison to the noun $\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$. The verb $\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\acute{o}\omega$ is contracted in twenty-three out of thirty occurrences (or 76.7%) in P.Beatty 1 (\mathfrak{P}^{45}), P.Beatty 2 + P.Mich. 222 (\mathfrak{P}^{46}), P.Beatty 3 (\mathfrak{P}^{47}), P.Bodm. 2 (\mathfrak{P}^{66}), P.Bodm. 14-15 (\mathfrak{P}^{75}), P.Oxy. 71.4805 (\mathfrak{P}^{121}), and P.Dura 10 (0212). This inconsistency likely results from the volatility of verb forms, compared to the relative stability of noun forms, making a standardized formation for verbal *nomina sacra* difficult. For example, in P.Beatty 2 + P.Mich. inv. 6238 (\mathfrak{P}^{46}), the verb $\sigma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omega\mu\alpha\iota$ (“crucified together with”) in Gal 2:19 and the participle $\alpha\acute{\nu}\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\omicron\upsilon\nu\tau\alpha\varsigma$ (“crucifying again”) in Heb 6:6 are contracted as $\sigma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\tau\rho\alpha\iota$ and $\alpha\acute{\nu}\alpha\sigma\tau\rho\epsilon\varsigma$ (sic), and in Gal 5:25, the aorist $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\alpha\acute{\upsilon}\rho\omega\sigma\alpha\nu$ is contracted as $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\alpha\nu$, omitting the rho.
 - 5 The foregoing data were derived by conducting a lemmatized search for these words using the Accordance electronic edition of Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett, *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), which includes papyri through P.Oxy. 71-4806 (\mathfrak{P}^{123}) and all majuscules dated up to the third/fourth century, with the exception of P.Dura 10 (0212). In some cases, errors in the transcription of the electronic edition were identified and taken into account. Photographs and transcriptions were then examined for the remaining two manuscripts dated in the Gregory-Aland registry up to the third/fourth century—namely, P.Oxy. 72.4934 (\mathfrak{P}^{125} , 3rd/4th cent.), and P.Dura 10 (0212, 3rd cent.). Totals were then collated, against which the number of occurrences treated as *nomina sacra* were finally

Complicating the picture somewhat are nouns which frequently occur with non-sacral referents. While every instance of the noun *σταυρός* has a rather clear sacral significance, *πνεῦμα*, *ἄνθρωπος*, and *πατήρ* all appear a number of times in decidedly non-sacral contexts. For instance, in P.Berl. inv. 11765 (0189), *ἀκαθάρτων πνευμάτων* (“unclean spirits”) is rendered in *scriptio plena* at Acts 5:16. Likewise, *ἄνθρωπος* in John 5:5—referring to a sick man healed by Jesus—appears in full spelling in P.Bodm. 2 (P⁶⁶). Hence, removing uncontracted forms which are either plural or which have decidedly non-sacral referents, the contraction rate for *πνεῦμα* is raised as high as 95.9 percent, *σταυρός* remains at 94.7 percent, *ἄνθρωπος* is raised significantly to 83.6 percent, and *πατήρ* is raised to 68.3 percent. Notwithstanding these adjustments, the divide remains remarkably persistent: while only about five percent of potential sacral occurrences of *σταυρός* and *πνεῦμα* are left uncontracted, with *ἄνθρωπος* the percentage of *plene* occurrences more than triples, and the contraction rate continues to decrease almost exponentially down the list.⁶

A chi-square analysis indicates that these figures have a high statistical significance at a level of 99 percent confidence (0.01 alpha level); that is, the distribution of contraction rates among the *nomina sacra* presented here has significantly less than a one percent chance of occurring randomly (*p*-value < 0.00001; see Table 4.1). The test also revealed that all of the *nomina sacra* in the primary group as well as *πνεῦμα* and *σταυρός* are contracted at a greater frequency than would have been expected proportional to the overall contraction rate, while all of the remaining *nomina sacra* are contracted at a lower frequency than expected (Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1). This draws an interesting statistical line between the two

calculated. A comparable method was applied by Tomas Bokedal in “Notes on the *Nomina Sacra* and Biblical Interpretation,” in *Beyond Biblical Theologies*, ed. Heinrich Assel, Stefan Beyerle, and Christfried Bötterich (WUNT 295; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 263–95. Although Bokedal includes manuscripts dated through the fourth century, the similarity of our results seems to be mutually corroborating.

6 Of the other seven *nomina sacra* not mentioned, two (*Δαυίδ* and *σωτήρ*) are never rendered as *nomina sacra* in these manuscripts. The other five are contracted at the following rates: *υἱός* (54.4%), *Ἱερουσαλήμ* (37.8%), *Ἰσραήλ* (35.1%), *οὐρανός* (5.2%), and *μήτηρ* (4.5%).

groups of *nomina sacra* in this set of New Testament manuscripts and further bears out the observations made in the preceding paragraphs.

Table 3.1 Frequency of contraction in second- through third/fourth-century NT manuscripts.

	<i>Contracted</i>		<i>Uncontracted</i>	
	Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected
θεός	991	891	0	100
κύριος	499	450	1	50
Ἰησοῦς	805	724	0	81
Χριστός	463	416	0	50
πνεῦμα	210	197	9	22
σταυρός	18	17	1	2
ἄνθρωπος	148	159	29	18
πατήρ	196	258	91	29
υἱός	92	152	77	17
Ἱερουσαλήμ	14	33	23	4
Ἰσραήλ	13	33	24	4
οὐρανός	6	104	110	11
μήτηρ	1	20	21	2

confidence level: 99% ($\alpha = 0.01$)

χ^2 critical value: 26.217

p -value: < 0.00001

χ^2 observed value = 2044.50

Note. Δαυίδ and σωτήρ are omitted from this analysis as they never appear rendered as *nomina sacra* in this set of New Testament manuscripts.

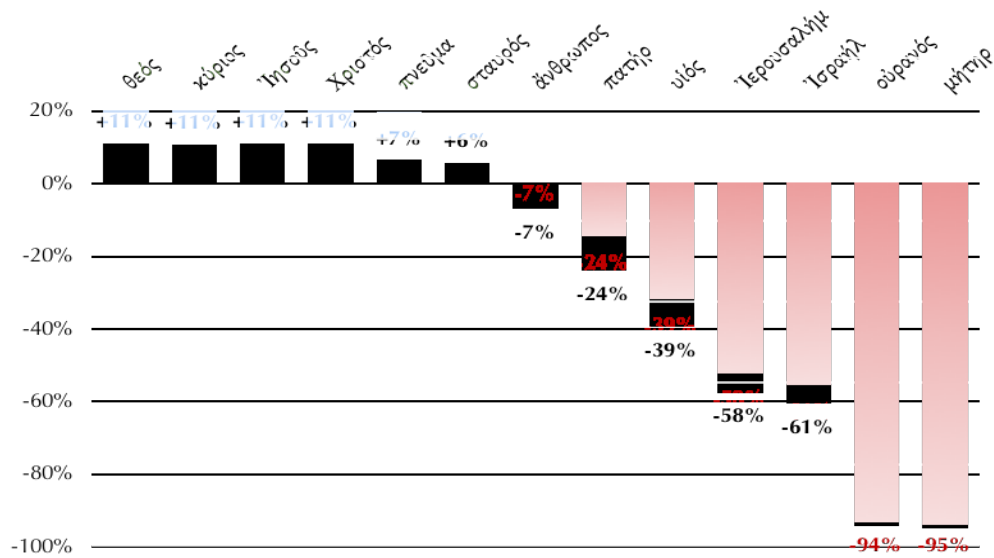


Figure 3.1 Percent difference from expected contraction rate.

As for dating, it is broadly recognized that the four primary *nomina sacra* must have come into use quite early.⁷ The earliest New Testament papyri containing extant *nomina sacra* are assigned dates in the Gregory-Aland registry to the second and third centuries, although a number of papyrologists have recently expressed reservations about the narrow dating spectra applied to New Testament manuscripts solely on the basis of palaeography.⁸ Be that as it may, the appearance of some of these *nomina sacra* in letters dated securely in the third century would

7 So Paap, *Nomina Sacra*, 124; Brown, "Origins"; Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 28; Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 77; Hurtado, "Origin," 655 and *passim*.

8 Brent Nongbri, "Reconsidering the Place of Papyrus Bodmer XIV-XV (P⁷⁵) in the Textual Criticism of the New Testament," *JBL* 135 (2016): 405-37; idem, "The Limits of Palaeographic Dating of Literary Papyri: Some Observations on the Date and Provenance of P. Bodmer II (P66)," *MH* 71 (2014): 71-35; Orsini and Clarysse, "Early NT Manuscripts and Their Dates"; Barker, "The Dating of NT Papyri;" Roger S. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1-24. Also important, although it focuses on a manuscript that does not contain extant *nomina sacra*, is Brent Nongbri, "The Use and Abuse of P⁵²: Papyrological Pitfalls in the Dating of the Fourth Gospel," *HTR* 98 (2005): 23-48.

seem to corroborate their existence in Christian literary manuscripts at least by this time, and almost certainly earlier.⁹

Once again, however, *σταυρός* and *πνεῦμα* are placed on near-equal footing with the primary four *nomina sacra*, appearing contracted in the earliest manuscripts in which the words are attested, all assigned to the third century.¹⁰ As it happens, the single instance of *σταυρός* written in *plene* in this group of manuscripts occurs in P.Oxy. 4.657 + PSI 12.1292 (P¹³), a copy of the letter to the Hebrews written on the back of a patched¹¹ roll containing a Latin epitome of Livy (= P.Oxy. 4.668 + PSI 12.1291) that gives the impression of a “non-professional” production.¹² The inferior quality of the copy and writing surface for this scriptural text suggests a copy

-
- 9 P.Bas. 16 (3rd cent. CE), almost certainly the earliest extant letter from an unambiguously Christian setting, contains a *nomen sacrum* in the closing farewell “in the Lord” (ἐν κυρίῳ). *Nomina sacra* forms for “Lord” and “God” are also attested in letters belonging to the dossier of Sotas, which can be fairly securely placed in the latter part of the third century when he was bishop of Oxyrhynchus (see the following chapter of this study). Cf. the recently published study by Clarysse and Orsini, in which they identify twenty-eight manuscripts that “may belong to the second century AD from a palaeographical point of view,” among which sixteen contain extant *nomina sacra*: PSI 11.1200 bis, P.Ant. 1.7, P.Oxy. 50.3523 (P⁹⁰), P.Iand. 1.4, P.Oxy. 50.3528, P.Monts.Roca 4.41, P.Beatty 7 (Isaiah), P.Oxy. 1.1 (Gospel of Thomas), P.Egerton 2 + P.Köln 6.255 (unknown gospel), P.Beatty 6 + P.Mich. inv. 5554 (Numbers/Deuteronomy), P.Schøyen 2.26 (Leviticus), P.Schøyen 1.23 (Joshua), P.Monts.Roca 4.48 (P⁶⁷, formerly P.Barc. inv. 1, which is presumably intended to include P.Magd.Gr. 17 = P⁶⁴), PSI 1.2 (0171), P.Oxy. 13.1598 (P³⁰), and P.Dura 10 (0212) (“Christian Manuscripts from Egypt,” 112).
- 10 Namely, P.Bodm. 1 (P⁴⁵), P.Beatty 2 + P.Mich. 222 (P⁴⁶), P.Bodm. 2 (P⁶⁶), and P.Bodm. 14-15 (P⁷⁵). In addition to these four manuscripts, *πνεῦμα* is rendered as a *nomen sacrum* in Suppl.Gr. 1120 (P⁴), P.Oxy. 2.208 + 15.1781 (P⁵), P.Oxy. 9.1171 (P²⁰), and P.Oxy. 10.1335 (P²⁷), which are also assigned dates in the third century. It also bears mentioning that the verb *σταυρόω* is treated as a *nomen sacrum* in all of the manuscripts mentioned above, as well as in the third-century manuscripts P.Beatty 3 (P⁴⁷) and P.Oxy. 71.4805 (P¹²¹), which do not preserve the cognate noun.
- 11 According to Grenfell and Hunt, “strips of cursive documents ... were used to patch and strengthen the papyrus before the verso was used” (P.Oxy. 4.657, 37).
- 12 In a study on the re-inking habits of this scribe, Peter M. Head and M. Warren judge that “various lines of evidence suggest that the scribe responsible for this manuscript should be classified as ‘non-professional’ on account of variations in column width and lines per column, the deterioration in the quality of the hand through the course of the manuscript, and errors in copying introduced when the scribe paused to re-ink his pen (“Re-Inking the Pen: Evidence from P.Oxy. 657 (P¹³) Concerning Unintentional Scribal Errors,” *NTS* 43 [1997]: 466-73 [469]).

produced in an uncontrolled setting, and perhaps intended for informal, private use.¹³ Additionally, the third/fourth century date assigned to this opisthograph is slightly later than the other manuscripts from this group in which *σταυρός* is attested (keeping in mind, of course, the provisional nature of these dates). If we allow for a tentative disqualification of P.Oxy. 4.657 + PSI 12.1292 (P³³) on these bases, the contraction rate for *σταυρός* is raised to one hundred percent in third century manuscripts, along with “God,” “Lord,” “Jesus,” and “Christ.”

One must surmise that such a high consistency of treatment as *nomina sacra* in what may be the earliest manuscripts preserving these words would suggest an already well-established convention. We are therefore left with a strikingly narrow dividing line between *σταυρός* and *πνεῦμα* on the one hand and the primary four *nomina sacra* on the other, both in terms of the frequency of their sacral treatment in this group of manuscripts, and in terms of the approximate dates at which their firm establishment as *nomina sacra* is attested in the material record. Even if the vagaries of palaeographical dating ultimately require an extended *terminus ante quem* for some of these manuscripts,¹⁴ the overriding point still stands: the strikingly high degree of consistency with which *σταυρός* is treated as a *nomen sacrum* in this group of early New Testament manuscripts requires an explanation.

13 In his recent study of P.Beatty 3, Peter Malik rightly cautions that “we ought to be wary of taking the manuscript’s physical details as straightforward evidence for its social setting” (*P.Beatty III* (P⁴⁷): *The Codex, Its Scribe, and Its Text* [NTTSD 52; Leiden: Brill, 2017], 222). This caution is noted; however, in this case I would suggest that the reuse of an old, patched literary roll amplifies the impression of “informality” and tips the balance of probability somewhat more in favor of private use. Luijendijk indicates that the roll, which was recovered from the rubbish heap at Oxyrhynchus, had been discarded as a whole rather than as leftover fragments from a repair, which may also hint at such a setting (AnneMarie Luijendijk, “Sacred Scriptures as Trash: Biblical Papyri from Oxyrhynchus,” *VC* 64 (2010): 217–54 [251–52]).

14 Of particular relevance here is Nongbri’s recent contention that the range of possible dates assigned to P.Bodm. 2 (P⁶⁶) should be broadened to include the fourth century (“Limits of Palaeographic Dating”). Nongbri concludes his argument with a brief appeal to the use of the staurogram in this manuscript as part of the *nomen sacrum* form for the words *σταυρός* and *σταυρώω*, which, he argues, is “less out of place in the fourth century than in the late second or early third century” (*ibid.*, 34).

3.2 | Problematizing “Cross” as a *Nomen Sacrum*

The foregoing analysis suggests that the scribal treatment of σταυρός and πνεῦμα as *nomina sacra* is more akin to the treatment of the primary group, styled by Schuyler Brown as *nomina divina*,¹⁵ than it is to other later and/or less frequently attested forms. If these primary four—God, Lord, Jesus and Christ—represent the earliest firmly established *nomina sacra*, then it is easy to see how “Spirit,” another sacred appellative, might have easily found its place among them. Σταυρός, on the other hand, is unique in that it is the only *nomen sacrum* that is not actually a *nomen* at all. Thus, how it came to be included among this core group with such sweeping consensus is much more puzzling. In addition, some contractions of σταυρός and its verbal cognate σταυρόω also employ the staurogram—a combination of the Greek letters tau and rho, formed on a single stem to resemble a cross—uniquely adding an iconic element to the contracted form (e.g. $\overline{\sigma \rho \varsigma}$).¹⁶ This is a point to which we will return below.

The common assumption has been that the cross was contextually associated with Jesus, which resulted in the treatment of σταυρός as a *nomen sacrum* by extension.¹⁷ Some early evidence for such an association may be inferred from the passage from Barnabas 9:7-9 cited in the previous chapter, in which the author interprets the number of the servants with Abraham when he rescued Lot—318,

¹⁵ Brown, “Origins,” 19.

¹⁶ No modern scholar has contributed more to the discussion of the staurogram than Larry Hurtado. See in particular Hurtado, “Earliest Evidence,” 271-88; idem, “The Staurogram,” 207-26; idem, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 135-54; and idem, “Earliest Christian Graphic Symbols,” 29-32.

¹⁷ See, for example, Scott D. Charlesworth, “Consensus Standardization in the Systematic Approach to *Nomina Sacra* in Second- and Third-Century Gospel Manuscripts,” *Aegyptus* 86 (2006): 37-68 (51); Kurt Aland, “Bemerkungen zum Alter und zur Entstehung des Christogrammes anhand von Beobachtungen bei $\overline{\rho}$ ⁶⁶ und $\overline{\rho}$ ⁷⁵,” in *Studien zur Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments und seines Texts* (ANTF 2; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967), 178.

represented by the letters τη—as a representation of the suspended *nomen sacrum* for Ἰησοῦς (ιη) plus the cross:¹⁸

Learn about the matter fully, then, children of love. For Abraham, the first to perform circumcision, was looking ahead in spirit to Jesus when he circumcised, receiving the doctrines of the three letters [τριῶν γραμμάτων δόγματα]. For it says, “Abraham circumcised eighteen and three hundred men from his household.” What knowledge, then, was given to him? Observe that it mentions the eighteen first, and then, after a pause, the three hundred. As for the eighteen, the ι is ten and the η is eight; thus you have “Jesus” [τὸ δεκαοκτὼ ἰώτα δέκα, ἦτα ὀκτώ· ἔχεις Ἰησοῦν]. And because the cross was about to have grace in the letter tau, it mentions also the three hundred [ὅτι δὲ ὁ σταυρὸς ἐν τῷ ταῦ ἡμελλεν ἔχειν τὴν χάριν, λέγει καὶ τοὺς τριακοσίους].

Yet, with all other *nomina sacra* in this set of early New Testament manuscripts referring either to a personal name, a title, or a place name (barring two possible anomalies¹⁹), surely a simple contextual explanation cannot be accepted as fully satisfactory. Indeed, if objects and concepts could be included among the *nomina sacra* simply on the basis of their association with Jesus, then there are a number of other words whose omission demands an explanation. As Roberts pondered, “Why should λόγος or even σοφία be excluded? More striking still is the omission of the eucharistic words αἶμα, ἄρτος, οἶνος, σάρξ, σῶμα.”²⁰

Surely the most economical explanation for the inclusion of “cross” among the most firmly established *nomina sacra* in these manuscripts is that, like the other words in the core group, σταυρός was somehow understood as a representation of a sacred name. In what follows, I propose what I believe is a plausible solution to this

18 The dating of the Epistle of Barnabas is contested, but is generally taken to be sometime between 70 and 135 CE. See Reidar Hvalvik, *The Struggle for Scripture and Covenant: The Purpose of the Epistle of Barnabas and Jewish-Christian Competition in the Second Century* (WUNT 82; Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 17–34.

19 To my knowledge, the only potential exceptions are $\overline{\chi\mu\omicron\upsilon}$ for κόσμου at 1 Cor 7:31 and 7:33 in P.Oxy. 7.1008 (P¹⁵), $\overline{\delta\upsilon\mu\iota}$ for δυνάμει at 1 Pet 1:5 in P.Bodm. 7-8 (P⁷²). It should be noted again that $\overline{\alpha\iota\mu\alpha}$ appears at Heb 9:14 in P.Beatty 2 + P.Mich 222 (P⁴⁶), but this is the result of a corrected reading in which the corrector did not erase the original supralinear line and thus is not a true exception (cf. the discussion on this manuscript in the previous chapter).

20 Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 40.

perceived incongruity—namely, that the treatment of “cross” and “crucify” as *nomina sacra* in early Christian literary manuscripts may derive from pre-Christian traditions associated with the paleo-Hebrew letter *tav*, an oblique (×) or upright (+) cross-shaped mark that is known to have been associated with the cross of Jesus by ancient Christians. While the material and general conclusions presented in the following synopsis are neither new nor controversial, I suggest that its heuristic potential in this regard has been overlooked and merits exploration.²¹

3.3 | The Cross and the Investiture of the Name

Before the *tav* was appropriated by Christians as a symbol for the cross, it was already a part of a robust tradition within Judaism that invested it with apotropaic power, eschatological significance, and of particular importance for our purposes here, the divine name.²² The tradition of the *tav* seems to derive from Ezekiel 9:4-6, where Yahweh sends an angel to place his mark on the foreheads of the faithful in Jerusalem; all those without the mark would be subject to destructive judgment.

21 The literature on this subject is abundant. The most recent general treatment, although problematic in places, is Bruce W. Longenecker, *The Cross Before Constantine: The Early Life of a Christian Symbol* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015). Also especially important to this subject is the work of Erich Dinkler, in particular, *Signum Crucis: Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament und zur Christlichen Archäologie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967). See also S. Heid, “Kreuz,” *RAC* 21:1099-148; Erika Dinkler-von Schubert, “ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ: Vom ‘Wort vom Kreuz’ (1 Cor. 1,18) zum Kreuz-Symbol,” in *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. Doula Mouriki, Christopher Moss, and Katherine Kiefer (Princeton: Department of Art and Archaeology, 1995), 29-39; Jack Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 339-89; Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009), 196 and *passim*; Jean Daniélou, *Primitive Christian Symbols*, trans. Donald Attwater (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1964), 136-45; Geoffrey W.H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit: A Study in the Doctrine of Baptism and Confirmation in the New Testament and The Fathers*, (London: SPCK, 1967), 261-96.

22 On the latter, see in particular Charles A. Gieschen, “The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology,” *VC* 57 (2003): 115-58, esp. 133-34; and idem, “Baptismal Praxis and Mystical Experience in the Book of Revelation,” in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism*, ed. April D. DeConick (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 341-54. See also Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 284-96.

Since the underlying Hebrew word for this mark, *tav* (ת), is also the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, there is some evidence that it could function as shorthand for the divine name, and thus as a mark of Yahweh's ownership.²³ A similar substitutive function for one's name may also be suggested elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, such as in Job's exclamation, "Here is my signature!"—literally, "Here is my *tav* [הֵן־תִּי]!" (Job 31:35).

Although the Hebrew script had changed, the memory of Ezekiel's *tav* was very much alive in Second Temple Jewish and early Christian thinking. According to the Damascus Document, the Jewish sectarians at Qumran believed that the scene from Ezekiel would be repeated in messianic times: only the so-called "poor of the flock" who bore the *tav* on their foreheads—that is, apparently, the Qumran community—would be saved (CD 19:10-14). This also appears to be the idea behind the "seal" (σφραγίς) placed on the foreheads of the faithful in Revelation:

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God [ἔχοντα σφραγίδα θεοῦ ζώντος]. And he cried out in a loud voice to the four angels to whom the destroying of the earth and the sea was appointed, saying "Do not destroy the earth or the sea or the trees until we seal the servants of our God on their foreheads [ἄχρη σφραγίσωμεν τοὺς δούλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν]." And I heard the number of those who were sealed [τῶν ἐσφραγισμένων]: one hundred and forty-four thousand from all the tribes of Israel.²⁴

The author is obviously drawing on the tradition of Ezekiel 9, but here the mark is called the "seal of God" (7:2; 9:4) and, significantly, is later explicitly identified with

23 In m. Gen. Rab. 81:2, the seal of God is said to consist of the first, middle, and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, forming the word אמת ("truth"). In b. Šabb. 55a, special importance is given to the letter *tav*: "And what is different about the letter *tav*, that it was inscribed on the foreheads of the righteous? ... And Reish Lakish said: The letter *tav* is the last letter of the seal of the Holy One, blessed be he, as Rabbi Ḥanina said: The seal of the Holy One, blessed be he, is 'truth' [אמת], which ends with the letter *tav*." Cf. the designation "alpha and omega," which corresponds to the Hebrew letters *aleph* and *tav*, applied to Jesus in Rev 1:8, 21:6, and 22:13. Other examples are given in Finegan, *Archaeology of the New Testament*, 345-46.

24 Rev 7:2-4.

the names of God (22:4) and the Lamb (14:1).²⁵ As it happens, a recently published amulet from Oxyrhynchus, P.Oxy. 82.5306, contains a lengthy patchwork of incantations that seems to incorporate part of a pre-baptismal exorcism liturgy which alludes to Revelation 7:2: “Each of them [i.e. the apostles] has the seal of the living God [σφραγίδα τοῦ θυ τοῦ ζῶντος], and, sealed on top (of the head) by the sign [ἐσφραγισμένοι ἐπάνω σημίου (sic)], they have remedies so that [the demons] do not draw near” (lines 20-22).²⁶ The “sign” (Syr. *’ātā*) worn by the faithful in Odes of Solomon also appears to function both as an apotropaion and as a designation for the name of God:

Raging rivers (are like) the power of the Lord, that turn head downward those who despise him and entangle their steps and destroy their fords and seize their bodies and ruin their souls, for they are more sudden than lightnings and faster. But those who traverse [*’bar*] them in faith shall not be disturbed, and those who walk in them without blemish will not be perturbed. For the sign [*’ātā*] on them is the Lord, and the sign [*’ātā*] is the way for those who traverse in the name of the Lord [*ba-šmeh d-māryā*]. Put on, therefore, the name [*šmā*] of the Most High and know him; then you shall traverse without danger, because rivers will be obedient to you.²⁷

The use of the term “seal” (σφραγίς) in Revelation—as opposed to “mark” (σημεῖον), which designates the Hebrew term *tav* in the LXX—may suggest a further important connection to the divine name. According to Exodus 28:36, the golden plate worn on the forehead of the high priest bore the inscription “holy to Yahweh”; however, according to Philo (*Mos.* 2.114) and Josephus (*Ant.* 3.178), the inscription only consisted of the four letters of the Tetragram. In any case, Exodus 28:36 says that

25 Likewise, the corresponding “mark” (χάραγμα) placed on the forehead of the unfaithful in Rev 13:17 is said to be “the name of the beast or the number of his name” (τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ).

26 This amulet and the two others known to have originated from the same scribe (P.Oxy. 6.924 and P.Oxy. 82.5607) end with an acclamation that consists of the expression “Power of Jesus Christ” (δύναμις ἰησοῦ χυ) and the designations “Father,” “Son,” “Mother,” “Holy Spirit,” “AQ,” and “Abraxas,” symmetrically arranged around a large cross. See chapter 6, section 4 of this study for a fuller discussion, with special attention to P.Oxy. 6.924.

27 Odes Sol. 39:1-9. Trans. modified from Michael Lattke, *Odes of Solomon: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 539.

the inscription is to be “like the inscription of a seal” (MT: ופתחת עליו פתוחי חתם; LXX: ἐκτυπώσεις ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτύπωμα σφραγίδος). It is therefore plausible to interpret the “seal” placed on the foreheads of the faithful in Revelation, which is said to be invested with the names of God and the Lamb, as an allusion to the inscription of the sacred name worn on the priestly headplate in the Jerusalem temple.²⁸

Another Christian apocalypse, the second-century *Shepherd of Hermas*, contains a lengthy discussion of baptism in the *Similitudes* and indicates that at the time of baptism, the baptizand received a “seal” (σφραγίς) which was identified with the name of God:

“It was necessary,” he said, “for them to rise up through the water in order to be made alive, for otherwise they could not enter into the kingdom of God, unless they laid aside the deadness of their former life. Therefore, even those who have fallen asleep received the seal of the Son of God [τὴν σφραγίδα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ] and entered into the kingdom of God. For before a person,” he said, “bears the name of God [φορέσαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ], he is dead. But whenever he receives the seal, he lays aside his deadness and receives life.”²⁹

This procedure of applying the divine name through the baptismal seal is also preserved in the Latin version of the second-century *Acts of Peter*, where, upon baptizing Theon, Peter prays: “God Jesus Christ, in your name he was just baptized and sealed with your holy sign.”³⁰ The third-century *Acts of Thomas* also confirms this practice and clarifies that the seal of the name applied at baptism is done so with oil poured over the head: “And the apostle, taking the oil and pouring it over their heads and anointing and chrisming [χρίσας] them, began to say: ‘... And seal them in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit [καὶ ἐπισφράγισον αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄνομα πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος].’”³¹

28 Revelation is famously permeated by allusions to Exodus and the Jerusalem temple cult. For a survey of the scholarship on temple themes in Revelation, see Gregory Stevenson, *Power and Place: Temple and Identity in the Book of Revelation* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 28-32.

29 Herm. Sim. 9.16.2-3.

30 *Deus iesu christe, in tuo nomine mox lautus et signatus est sancto tuo signo* (Acts Pet. 5).

31 Acts Thom. 27.

The rabbis mention a very similar practice in which the priests were anointed with oil in the shape of the Greek letter *chi*—a likely misidentification of the angled paleo-Hebrew *tav*, which in rabbinic times may have been more readily identifiable as the letter *chi*.³² Charles Gieschen, among others, has demonstrated persuasively that many of the features of early Christian baptism are rooted in the priestly traditions of the Jerusalem temple.³³ If this is the case, then the Christian seal of Revelation, Shepherd of Hermas, Acts of Peter, and Acts of Thomas seems to refer to this practice of anointing in the shape of the angled, cross-shaped *tav*.

The cross shape of the seal is further supported by Sibylline Oracles 8:244-250, an acrostic poem in which the first letter of each line spells out the word σταυρός. In the first line of the poem, the σταυρός is called a “mark [σήμα] for all mortals” and an “inscribed seal [σφρηγὶς ἐπίσημος]”—language which again seems to allude to the inscribed priestly headplate. Tertullian and Origen also confirm the shape of the seal, remarking on the resemblance of Ezekiel’s *tav* to the cross that Christians trace on their foreheads. Tertullian says that Christ signed the apostles with “the very seal of which Ezekiel spoke” and that it is in “the form of the cross [*species crucis*], which he predicted would be on our foreheads in the true and catholic Jerusalem.”³⁴ Origen offers a similar explanation, which he claims to have received from a Jewish Christian: “The *tav* in the ancient script resembles the cross [τῷ τοῦ σταυροῦ χαρακτῆρι] and predicts the mark [σημεῖον] that is placed on the foreheads of Christians.”³⁵

The *tav*, then, seems to have suited the purposes for Christian appropriation as the sign of the cross both in form and in function. Furthermore, as the baptismal

32 “And how does one anoint the priests? One smears oil in a shape like the Greek letter *chi*” (b. Hor. 12a).

33 Gieschen, “Baptismal Praxis and Mystical Experience,” 341-54. See also Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*; Margaret Barker, *The Great High Priest: Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London: T&T Clark, 2003).

34 Tertullian, *Marc.* 3.22.5-6.

35 Origen, *Sel. Ezech.* 9.

texts reveal, ancient Christians connected this tradition with the investiture of the divine name at baptism. It is within the context of this stream of tradition, I suggest, that we may begin to locate the motivation for the widespread early treatment of σταυρός as a *nomen sacrum*.

3.4 | The Staurogram and Multimodal Discourse

As we briefly observed above, several of the New Testament manuscripts that attest σταυρός as a *nomen sacrum* incorporate a cross-shaped compendium of the letters tau and rho (ⲧⲣ), called a staurogram, into the abbreviation. Larry Hurtado's important work on the staurogram and the *nomina sacra* has framed these scribal phenomena as material instantiations of an emerging "visual culture" within ancient Christianity.³⁶ He has plausibly argued, furthermore, that the staurogram represents the first Christian depiction of the crucifixion.³⁷ Given the web of associations traced above, however, it also seems possible that the staurogram served as a visual metonym within the *nomina sacra* forms of "cross" and "crucify," pointing intertextually and intersemiotically to the traditions surrounding the sacred name that was applied to the foreheads of Christian baptismal initiands in the form of a cross.³⁸

Multimodal semiotic theory recognizes that verbal modes of communication (speech and writing) are always accompanied, contextualized, and enhanced by visual and other modes (e.g. script or typography, layout, gesture, facial expression,

36 Hurtado, "The Staurogram," 207-26; idem, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 135-54; idem, "The Earliest Evidence," 271-88.

37 Ibid.

38 Many years ago, Matthew Black suggested that the designs of the staurogram and christogram might have been influenced by the traditions associated with the *tav*, but failed to connect this possibility with the earliest attested use of the staurogram within *nomina sacra* forms ("The Chi-Rho Sign—Christogram and/or Staurogram?" in *Apostolic History and the Gospels: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce on His 60th Birthday*, ed. W.W. Gasque and R.P. Martin [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970], 319-27).

inflection or tone of voice).³⁹ Thus, as we have seen in earlier chapters, Christian literary manuscripts combine writing with other visual signs—supralineation, spatial configuration, style of hand, or image (e.g. staurograms)—which creates an integrated whole that is rich with meaning potential beyond the semantic content of language alone. From this perspective, the staurogram, the *nomina sacra* in which it functions, and the linguistic content they conjointly encode are viewed as a dialectic that is both mutually constitutive and mutually informative, and thus must be “read” as a whole in order for the full communicative intent to be realized.

A useful concept in this regard is that of “provenance,” which refers to the importation of existing signs, together with their histories and associations and condensations of meaning from prior use, from one discourse into another. Kress and van Leeuwen describe the concept of provenance in this way:

The idea here is that we constantly “import” signs from other contexts (another era, social group, culture) into the context in which we are now making a new sign, in order to signify ideas and values which are associated with that other context by those who import the sign.⁴⁰

In the case of the staurogram, cruciform imagery is imported from ritual discourses, where it functions to represent the application of the divine name, into the discourses of Christian literary and scribal practices, where sacred appellatives are treated in a particular way. Hence, the embedded staurogram both necessitates and validates the designation of the terms “cross” and “crucify” as *nomina sacra*. Additionally, the visual and conceptual potency afforded by the multimodal constitution of the staurogram and the *nomina sacra*, as I have argued in the previous chapters, allows them to be visually dislocated from surrounding text and “read” as texts in their own right, making the dissemination and reception of meaning possible independently from the use of language.⁴¹

³⁹ Kress and van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse*, 1-23; Kress, *Multimodality*, 1-5.

⁴⁰ Kress and van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse*, 10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 56-63.

This suggestion is given additional weight when one considers the evolution of the staurogram from a ligature within the *nomina sacra* forms of σταυρός and σταυρώ in third century manuscripts to a freestanding symbol in manuscripts,⁴² documents,⁴³ letters,⁴⁴ and amulets⁴⁵ from the fourth century on. This evolution happens to coincide with a regression in the treatment of “cross” and “crucify” as *nomina sacra* in Christian literary manuscripts beginning in the fourth century,⁴⁶ which suggests that the trend towards independent use of the staurogram and away from its function as an element within these *nomina sacra* made their connection to the divine name less readily apparent.

While the association of σταυρός and σταυρώ with the divine name seems to have diminished once the staurogram began to function as a freestanding symbol, there is evidence to suggest that the interdiscursivities and intertextualities that

42 A freestanding staurogram appears as a terminus marker on both sides of P.Monts.Roca 4.51 (P⁸⁰, formerly P.Barc. inv. 83), a papyrus fragment containing a Johannine ἐρμηνεία, which is assigned to the third century in the Gregory-Aland catalogue, but was assigned to the third/fourth century by the *editio princeps*, and has recently been assigned to the sixth century by Orsini and Clarysse (“Early NT Manuscripts and Their Dates,” 459-60; *ed. pr.* Ramon Roca-Puig, “Papiro del evangelio de San Juan con ‘Hermeneia’: P.Barc. inv. 83—Jo. 3,34,” in *Atti dell’XI Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia, Milano 2-8 Settembre 1965* [Milan: Istituto Lombardo Di Scienze E’Lettere, 1966], 225-36). The sixth century date proposed by Orsini and Clarysse accords best with its identification as a Johannine ἐρμηνεία, all the rest of which are dated between the sixth and eighth centuries, and with its use of the freestanding staurogram, which is less out of place after the third century.

43 For a list of documents containing a staurogram or a simple cross, see Malcolm Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri* (StAA 1; Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 117 n. 529.

44 For staurograms in letters, see Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 117 n. 530; and Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 310.

45 On the staurogram in amulets, see Theodore de Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian: Artefacts, Scribes, and Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 62-64 and *passim*.

46 See the tables (which need updating) in Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri*, 6-75 and 98. In his discussion of the evidence, Paap notes: “It is noteworthy that in 254 [i.e. Codex Washingtonensis (W)] (4th-beg. 5th c. A.D.) neither the noun nor the verb is contracted, although the former occurs 14 times and the latter 29 times” (*ibid.*, 113). It merits mentioning that in the five occasions when σταυρός or σταυρώ is contracted in manuscripts from the fourth century on, according to Paap’s tables, all but one employ the staurogram (but three of the four, interestingly, without a supralinear line; see *ibid.*, 98).

engendered the metonymic relationship between the staurogram and sacred names were retained. A number of amulets, which tend to give special emphasis to the combination of visual devices and mystical names,⁴⁷ employ the freestanding staurogram in close or immediate proximity to *nomina sacra* or other powerful or esoteric names. For instance, a fourth century amulet against an ill-tempered man named Theodosios (P.Ross.Georg. 1.23) ends with a fourfold repetition of “amen,” followed by Ⲡ Ⲡ Ⲡ | ⲕⲱⲣⲓⲉ ⲕⲱⲣⲓⲉ ⲕⲱⲣⲓⲉ, centered near the bottom of the page and set off from the main text of the incantation.⁴⁸ Similarly, a sixth century amulet against fever (P.Batav. 20) opens with a series of seven creedal statements, each set on a separate line beginning with a staurogram followed by the *nomen sacrum* for “Christ” (Ⲡ ⲭⲥ ...).⁴⁹ In these examples, the staurograms and sacred names are afforded a sense of visual coherence through their proximity, layout, and visual salience,⁵⁰ which in turn links them conceptually.⁵¹

47 On which, see de Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 55-67.

48 Image available at <http://papyri.info/apis/hermitage.apis.21>. The bottom of the papyrus has broken away, but traces of further text are visible beneath the staurogram/ⲕⲱⲣⲓⲉ repetition.

49 Image available at <http://uliet.net/papyrology/LPI0514.jpg>. For other amulets containing staurograms and/or *nomina sacra*, see the tables in Theodore S. de Bruyn and Jitse H.F. Dijkstra, “Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements: A Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets,” *BASP* 48 (2011): 163-216. On the use of *nomina sacra* in amulets, see chapter seven of this study.

50 I use “salience” here to mean “the degree to which an element draws attention to itself, due to its size, its place in the foreground or its overlapping of other elements, its colour, its tonal values, its sharpness or definition, and other features” (Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, 2nd ed. [London: Routledge, 2006], 210). The visual salience of the *nomina sacra* is rightly recognized by Theodore de Bruyn in his recent study on papyrus amulets that incorporate Christian elements. De Bruyn includes *nomina sacra* within the category of “visual elements,” noting that the supralinear line “had the effect of distinguishing the abbreviation visually,” thus making it “part of the visual appearance of the text, which is why we treat it as a visual element in incantations and amulets” (*Making Amulets Christian*, 60).

51 Theo van Leeuwen, *Introducing Social Semiotics* (London: Routledge, 2005), 219-30; Kress, *Multimodality*, 119-20.

The significance of freestanding staurograms in letters, where they frequently precede the salutation or address, is more difficult to detect. However, during the period where their presence in letters overlaps with that of *nomina sacra*,⁵² they are often clustered near the beginning of the letter—where recipients are greeted “in the Lord” (ἐν $\overline{\chi\omega}$) or “in the Lord God” (ἐν $\overline{\chi\omega} \overline{\theta\omega}$)—thus creating a similar cohesion and coherence between the two items of information when they are co-present.⁵³ Eventually the use of staurograms in documents overtakes and replaces that of *nomina sacra*, in which case we can only surmise that they represent some kind of devotional or apotropaic function, but to what extent their writers continue to associate them with sacred names is unclear.

3.5 | Summary

The remarkable consistency with which $\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ was treated as a *nomen sacrum* in the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament, and the otherwise unprecedented inclusion of a pictographic element in its abbreviated form, is as fascinating as it is puzzling. This chapter has attempted to find a plausible solution to this puzzle. In the first section, we discovered that $\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ is situated more closely in terms of date and consistency of sacral treatment to the primary four so-called *nomina divina*—God, Lord, Jesus and Christ—than other later and/or less consistently rendered *nomina sacra* which follow it. Next, it was suggested that this peculiar phenomenon may derive from traditions connected to the *tav* of Ezekiel 9:4-6, which ancient

52 At Oxyrhynchus, Blumell observed that the staurogram does not appear in any letter before the mid-fourth century; however, the use of *nomina sacra* in letters begins to decrease already in the fifth century and virtually disappears by the sixth and seventh century (*Lettered Christians*, 45, 51).

53 Staurograms also sometimes appear before the address of letters, but the use of *nomina sacra* in addresses is rare. A particularly interesting example of the clustering of the two devices in an address is P.Oxy. 56.3862, where a staurogram appears in the middle of the address marking where the letter had been sealed. The letter is addressed “in the Lord God” (ἐν $\overline{\chi\omega} \overline{\theta\omega}$), using *nomina sacra*. A staurogram also appears together with *nomina sacra* in the address of P.Stras. 7.680 (ⲡ̅ ⲉⲡⲓⲛ(ⲟⲥ) ⲥⲟⲛ ⲛ̅ⲱ ⲧⲱ [...], “ⲡ̅ Deliver, with God’s help, to [...]”).

Christians associated with the divine name that was applied to baptismal initiands in the form of the sign of the cross. Finally, I briefly explored how the staurogram embedded in the *nomina sacra* for "cross" and "crucify" creates a potent visual metonym that points intersemiotically to this baptismal ritual, thus necessitating and validating the treatment of these words as *nomina sacra*. Future research could expand the scope of this brief inquiry to include a more comprehensive treatment of non-literary materials, such as letters and amulets, in which the staurogram is employed.

PART TWO

Nomina Sacra in “Everyday Writing”

CHAPTER FOUR

“Greetings in the L(or)d”: *Nomina Sacra* in Epistolary Correspondence*

Every sign, as we know, is a construct between socially organized persons in the process of their interaction. Therefore, the forms of signs are conditioned above all by the social organization of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interaction. When these forms change, so does the sign.

—VOLOŠINOV, *MARXISM AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE*

4.1 | Introduction

In Part One, we examined the scribal treatment of *nomina sacra* in Christian literary manuscripts. We situated the practice as a unique feature of early Christian literary culture and began to consider whether and how ordinary Christians with varying degrees of literate ability might be affected by the presence of *nomina sacra* in literary manuscripts. We now turn to examine more broadly how Christians across the spectrum of social strata used *nomina sacra* in their “everyday writing.”¹

* A slightly modified version of section 4.2 of this chapter is published as “Revisiting the Unknown Female Sender of P.Oxy. XII 1592: An Early Example of Female Asceticism?” *ZPE* 207 (2018): 199–205. I am grateful to the reviewers for their comments and suggestions, which resulted in considerable improvements both to the published article and to this chapter.

1 By “everyday writing,” I refer to the various kinds of informal writing not intended for public distribution or permanence. See Bagnall, *Everyday Writing*, 3–4.

Several recent monographs have treated the use of *nomina sacra* in early Christian letters, albeit only briefly.² Most consequential for the subject of this study is the chapter in AnneMarie Luijendijk's book *Greetings in the Lord*, entitled "What's in a *nomen*? Recognizing Christians through *nomina sacra*."³ Luijendijk, following the lead of Gamble and Hurtado,⁴ views the *nomina sacra* as "a visual expression of in-group language" that "constitute[s] a Christian sociolect."⁵ Furthermore, she prudently sidesteps the debate regarding the origins of the *nomina sacra* and argues that their presence in letters presupposes some sort of Christian education and a familiarity with Christian literary manuscripts.⁶ These tantalizing proposals offered in Luijendijk's brief study of *nomina sacra* in Christian letters from Oxyrhynchus provide an ideal point of departure.

For this chapter, I have selected six letters sent between Christians which employ *nomina sacra*, namely: (1) a letter from a woman to her spiritual "father" (P.Oxy. 12.1592); (2) an informal note requesting the exchange of scriptural books (P.Oxy. 63.4365); (3-5) three letters of recommendation from the dossier of Sotas, bishop of Oxyrhynchus (PSI 3.208, PSI 9.1041, and P.Alex. 29); and (6) a letter from a man to his wife describing how he evaded sacrifice at the beginning of the Diocletianic persecution (P.Oxy. 31.2601). While these six letters have already been the subject of considerable discussion, I believe that they warrant further scrutiny

2 In addition to the following, see Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 119-25; and Blumell, *Lettered Christians: Christians*, 49-51.

3 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 58-78.

4 Gamble first asserted that "the system of *nomina sacra* ... stands out as an in-group convention that expressed a community consciousness and presumed a particular readership" (*Books and Readers*, 78). Hurtado has since emphasized the material and visual characteristics of the *nomina sacra*, situating them within an emerging "visual culture" in ancient Christianity (e.g. "Earliest Evidence," 276-79).

5 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 61.

6 Ibid., 67-69 and *passim*.

through the lens of this study, and the various situational, personal, and social circumstances reflected within their contents lend them naturally to this purpose.⁷

Such situational circumstances and the nuances of meaning they entail have not always been appreciated when surveying the often-idiosyncratic application of *nomina sacra* in non-literary papyri.⁸ Commenting on such idiosyncrasies, for example, Roberts remarked:

[T]he contractions occur in documents as well as in literary manuscripts and where exceptions to the rule—rare even in documents—are listed they will be found on examination to occur in private letters or prayers or in e.g. magical texts, often the work of an amateur or careless scribe.⁹

As we will discover, however, early Christians who employed *nomina sacra* in their personal documents, like scribes who employed *nomina sacra* in their manuscripts, did not do so randomly or accidentally. Instead, I contend, “mistakes,” irregularities, and deviations from conventionality, whenever they occur, might be viewed more productively as traces of the writers’ interests and of their creative activity in the construction of their meanings.¹⁰ In order to situate our analyses of the *nomina sacra* in these “everyday writings,” therefore, the chapters in Part Two will proceed by discussing the material and situational details of each document before focus is

7 It should be noted again that I make no claims regarding the representative nature of this selection of texts; rather, my intention is simply to offer a situationally diverse sampling of letters in which *nomina sacra* are attested. For a full tabulation of pre-Constantinian letters from Oxyrhynchus containing *nomina sacra*, see Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 62-64; for letters from Oxyrhynchus containing *nomina sacra* through the early seventh century, see Table 6 in Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 311-12.

8 A recent exception, as mentioned above, is Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 58-78.

9 Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 27. See also, for example, the editorial comment on P.Oxy. 31.2601 (discussed below), in which “irregularities” in *nomina sacra* forms are ascribed to “inexperienced or unintelligent Christians” (170).

10 Note the similar view offered by Luijendijk: “I understand these forms as evidence of a lively practice and creative application of *nomina sacra* that was meaningful for these writers” (*Greetings in the Lord*, 66).

shifted to their employment of *nomina sacra*. Following these analyses, I will offer a brief synthesis and draw some concluding observations.

4.2 | An Unknown Woman to her Spiritual “Father” (P.Oxy. 12.1592)

TM no. 31771 5.0 cm (h) × 10.3 cm (w) 3rd/4th cent. CE
 Ghedini 14
 Naldini 31
 Bagnall-Cribiore 90
 Blumell-Wayment 137

Ed. pr.: B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XII* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1916), 285 (no. 1592).

→ [± 8 χαί]ρειν. αἰδε-
 ξά[μ]ην σου τὰ γράμμα-
 τα, κε μου πρ, καὶ πάνυ ἐ-
 μεγαλύνθην καὶ ἡγαλλεῖα-
 5 σα ὅτει τοιοῦτός μου πῆρ
 τὴν μνήμην ποιεῖται. αὐτὰ
 γὰρ δεξαμένη τὸ ἱερόν σου
 [πρόσωπον προσεκ]ύνησα¹¹

lines 1-2: ἐδεξάμην; line 7: pap. ἱερόν

Translation: [...] greetings. I received your letter, my Lord Father, and I was exceedingly exalted and I rejoiced that such a person as my Father remembers me. For when I received it, I worshipped your holy [countenance ...]

4.2.1 | Description

P.Oxy. 12.1592 is a late third/early fourth century papyrus fragment preserving part of a correspondence from an unidentified sender concerning the receipt of an earlier

¹¹ This collocation is attested in two other letters of similar date: P.Lund 2.4 (3rd cent., καὶ προσκυνήσω σοι τὸ καλόν σου πρόσωπον, “and I might worship your beautiful face”) and P.Lond. 3.1244 (4th cent., προσγυνήσαι [sic] σοι τὸ [ε]ὔμορφον καὶ ἱλαρὸν πρόσωπον, “to worship your attractive and cheerful face”). See Giuseppe Tibiletti, “Proposte di lettura,” *Aegyptus* 57 (1977): 164-65, and BL 7, 140.

letter from the addressee. The sender addresses the recipient as $\kappa(\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota)\acute{\epsilon}\mu\omicron\upsilon\pi(\acute{\alpha}\tau\epsilon)\rho$ and later, again, as $\pi(\alpha\tau)\acute{\eta}\rho$ using the *nomina sacra* forms for the words “Lord” and “Father.” Apart from part of the word $\chi\alpha\acute{\iota}\rho\epsilon\iota\nu$, the greeting and close of the letter are broken off, leaving only eight surviving lines of text on a relatively small papyrus scrap of 10.3 by 5 centimeters.¹² The names of the sender and addressee—if they had originally been present¹³—are therefore now lost. However, some clues about the identities of the correspondents are recoverable from the surviving contents of the letter. First, the use of the terms “Father”/“Lord Father”¹⁴ to address the recipient in combination with their respective *nomina sacra* forms has led most commentators to speculate whether he was a high-ranking ecclesiastical figure, perhaps a bishop.¹⁵ Second, the use of the feminine participle $\delta\epsilon\chi\alpha\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$ in line 7 reveals the unknown sender of the letter to be a woman.

Despite its fragmentation, certain features of the letter give the impression that its female sender had a close familiarity with Christian literary manuscripts, and perhaps had experience in copying them.¹⁶ First of all, the formal and elegantly

¹² A few illegible traces of ink are also visible on the back.

¹³ See, for example, P.Oxy. 63.4365 (discussed below), in which neither the sender nor the recipient is identified by name.

¹⁴ I capitalize these designations when they refer to the titles $\kappa(\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota)\acute{\epsilon}\mu\omicron\upsilon\pi(\acute{\alpha}\tau\epsilon)\rho$ and $\pi(\alpha\tau)\acute{\eta}\rho$ in the letter as a way of indicating in my translation that the letter writer has rendered them as *nomina sacra*.

¹⁵ See, for example, Mario Naldini, *Cristianesimo in Egitto: Lettere private nei papyri dei secoli II-IV* (STP 3; Florence: Le Monnier, 1968), 159 (“un vescovo o un monaco”); Giuseppe Ghedini, *Lettere cristiane: dai papyri greci del III e IV secolo* (Milan, 1923), 131 (“Il destinatario potrebbe essere un vescovo o un ecclesiastico di alta santità e riputazione”); Giuseppe Tibiletti, *Le lettere private nei papiri greci del III e IV secolo d.C.: Tra paganesimo e cristianesimo* (ScFL 15; Milan: Pubblicazioni della Università Cattolica, 1979), 116 (“una donna ad un vescovo (?)”); Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 76 (“The title ‘Father’ in combination with the *nomina sacra* implies that he had the status of a bishop or some other high-positioned clergyman”). Compare, however, the comments of Wipszycka, who argues that “le « père » est ici certainement une personne pieuse pour laquelle l’auteur de la lettre a un profond respect. Mais de cela il ne s’ensuit pas nécessairement qu’il est « un vescovo o un monaco di singolare dignità »” (“Remarques sur les lettres privées chrétiennes des IIe-IVe siècles (a propos d’un livre de M. Naldini),” *JJP* 18 [1974], 213).

¹⁶ This was first suggested by Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 77-78.

rounded hand is remarkably literary in character. The letters are well formed, individual, and bilinear; the script is continuous, written in straight lines, with generous and evenly distributed spaces between letters and words. Bagnall and Cribiore describe the hand as “more reminiscent of literary manuscripts than of letters.”¹⁷ If the sender wrote the letter herself, one is reminded of the passage from Eusebius in which “girls trained for beautiful writing” (κόραις ἐπὶ τὸ καλλιγραφεῖν ἡσκημέναις) are said to have been among the scribes employed by Origen.¹⁸ This is the scenario proposed by Luijendijk,¹⁹ but the quality of hand leads Bagnall and Cribiore to think that the letter was more likely dictated to a professional scribe.²⁰ Unfortunately, it is often impossible to ascertain whether a letter was written in the sender’s own hand or that of a scribe, and the fragmentary condition of this letter ensures no definitive conclusion can be drawn in either direction.²¹ However, if Eusebius’ description of Origen’s scribal resources can be trusted, we know that women were engaged in the copying of Christian literary manuscripts in Egypt

17 Roger S. Bagnall and Raffaella Cribiore, *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt, 300 BC-AD 800* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), ACLS Humanities E-Book ed., A14.13. In a more detailed description of the palaeography elsewhere in the volume, they comment: “More formal still is the hand of P.Oxy. 12.1592, in which each letter is crafted individually, and some strokes are thickened in the style characteristic of the best examples of Roman Uncial; phrasing and penning a highly polished text, this scribe maintained his customary style” (ibid., para. 208).

18 The full statement reads as follows: “For as [Origen] dictated, there were ready at hand more than seven shorthand writers, who relieved each other at fixed times, and as many copyists, as well as girls trained for beautiful writing” (ταχυγράφοι τε γὰρ αὐτῷ πλείους ἑπτὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸν παρήσαν ὑπαγορεύοντι, χρόνοις τεταγμένοις ἀλλήλους ἀμείβοντες, βιβλιογράφοι τε οὐχ ἥττους ἅμα καὶ κόραις ἐπὶ τὸ καλλιγραφεῖν ἡσκημέναις) (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.23). A detailed treatment of female scribes is contained in Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 41-52.

19 Luijendijk imagines that “the writer of this papyrus letter had experience with copying Christian literary texts” and pictures her “as a woman belonging to a scholarly milieu” (*Greetings in the Lord*, 77-78).

20 Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters*, ACLS ed., A14.13 and para. 312.

21 Herbert Youtie observes that, while legal and business documents usually identify a hypographeus in illiteracy formulae, “it was common practice for professional scribes to remain anonymous” (“ΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΕΥΣ: The Social Impact of Illiteracy in Graeco-Roman Egypt,” *ZPE* 17 [1975], 209).

sometime in the third century, before this letter was penned.²² With the rise of monasticism in the fourth century, references to learned female ascetics studying and copying literary manuscripts become increasingly frequent.²³ A scenario in which the sender of our letter was among these female scholar-copyists and wrote her letter herself therefore remains quite plausible. Other elements of the letter, I believe, lend additional weight to this hypothesis.

A second feature of this letter that hints at a learned milieu is the writer's rendering of πατήρ as a *nomen sacrum*, a treatment of this particular word that is very common in literary manuscripts but extremely uncommon in letters. In New Testament manuscripts assigned dates in the Gregory-Aland catalogue up to the third/fourth century, as many as two-thirds of sacral occurrences of πατήρ are treated as *nomina sacra*.²⁴ By way of comparison, a lemmatized search for πατήρ in the DDBDP yields only three other instances of "father" treated as a *nomen sacrum* in non-literary papyri, namely P.Lond. 6.1927 (4th cent.), SB 12.10773 (5th cent.), and P.Naqlun 2.34 (6th cent.). In the case of the first, the referent is divine.²⁵ However, in

22 Although it is not quite clear whether this passage describes Origen's situation at Alexandria or Caesarea, the sequence of the narrative suggests the former.

23 References, although mostly literary, are surprisingly numerous. For an overview, see Kim Haines-Eitzen, *The Gendered Palimpsest: Women, Writing, and Representation in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 23-38, 40-52; Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 48-52; Susanna Elm, *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 48-49; María Jesús Albarrán Martínez, "Women Reading Books in Egyptian Monastic Circles," in *Eastern Christians and their Written Heritage: Manuscripts, Scribes and Context*, ed. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, German Teule, and Sofia Torallas Tovar (ECS 14; Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 199-212. For non-literary references, see especially Chrysi Kotsifou, "Books and Book Production in the Monastic Communities of Byzantine Egypt," in *The Early Christian Book*, ed. Klinghohn and Safran, 58-59; and Susanna Elm, "An Alleged Book-Theft in Fourth-Century Egypt: P.Lips. 43," *StPatr* 18 (1983): 209-15.

24 See the previous chapter for details about how this datum was derived and additional discussion.

25 P.Lond. 6.1927 (mid-4th cent.) is a letter from a certain Dorotheos to Paphnutios, likely from Oxyrhynchus. In the greeting, Dorotheos entreats "God, the Father of our Savior, Jesus Christ" (τὸ(ν) θεὸν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) that Paphnutios will receive his letter. Thus, the "father" in this case is divine.

SB 12.10773, the sender, a certain Tatianos, addresses his recipient as “my most honored master and father, Cheremon” (τῷ δεσπότῃ μου τῷ τιμιωτάτῳ Χερήμονι τῷ πατρί), rendering “father” as a *nomen sacrum*. Similarly, P.Naqlun 2.34 is addressed to one “Lord Father Nikolaos, bishop [...]” (κῶ πατρί Νικολάῳ ἐπισκ[όπῳ]), using *nomina sacra* forms for “lord” and “father.”²⁶ Significantly, both of these letters can be securely linked to monastic settings.²⁷ Thus, πατήρ is treated as a *nomen sacrum* in a scant four extant letters, three of which—P.Oxy. 12.1592, SB 12.10773, and P.Naqlun 2.34—employ it with a human referent. Luijendijk has proposed that the epistolary use of *nomina sacra* may have arisen from letter writers’ contact with literary manuscripts.²⁸ Given this writer’s exceptional literary style of hand and the use of a *nomen sacrum* form uncommon outside of literary manuscripts, her proposal is compelling, but more evidence remains.

In addition to suggesting contact with literary manuscripts, these *nomina sacra* and the relational vocabulary they represent offer some clues about the identity of the addressee and his relationship to the sender. The use of the familial term “father” need not imply a biological relationship between the correspondents. As already indicated, the addressee has often been presumed to be a bishop or some other high status clergyman. In her 1929 doctoral dissertation on titles of address in Christian letters, Lucilla Dinneen observed that the title πατήρ is “used only for ecclesiastics,

26 Thanks are due to one of the reviewers of the article in *ZPE* that resulted from this chapter, who brought P.Naqlun 2.34 to my attention. P.Naqlun 2.34 was discovered at the monastic complex of Deir el Malak Ghubrail and is part of a dossier of letters belonging to Nikolaos (bishop of the Fayum?), which includes P.Naqlun 1.12 and P.Naqlun 2.32-34.

27 In lines 5-6 of the letter, Tatianos sends greetings to “all those of the two monasteries” (πολλὰ καὶ τῶν δύο μοναστηρίων). See Malcolm Choat, “Monastic Letters on Papyrus from Late Antique Egypt,” in *Writing and Communication in Early Christian Monasticism*, ed. Malcolm Choat and Maria Chiara Giorda (TSEC 9; Leiden: Brill, 2017), 40-41 and n. 135; and Naldini, “Dai papiri della raccolta fiorentina: Lettera di Tatianos al padre Chairemon,” *Atena e Roma* n.s. 12 (1967): 166-69. Naldini remarks that the *nomen sacrum* form is frequently employed for πατήρ when used to reference ecclesiastical superiors, particularly monks, but cites only SB 12.10773 and P.Oxy. 1592 as examples: “π(ατ)ρί: più frequentemente abbreviato come *nomen sacrum*, è titolo rivolto a religiosi, spesso a monaci rivestiti di autorità” (ibid., 168).

28 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 74.

generally the Pope, and bishops of Constantinople and especially Alexandria, and also for very aged and respected bishops,” but is rarely used in reference to other ecclesiastical figures.²⁹

The sender's fawning praise of the recipient indeed suggests that the term is to be understood in a metaphorical sense. In broader society, both *πάτερ* and *κύριε* served as common modes of polite address to elders or superiors, sometimes used with the aim of flattery or as a marker of deference.³⁰ Thus, while these are not exclusively Christian appellatives, in both registers they index a vertical social relationship between speaker/writer and addressee.³¹ The patently Christian elements of this letter strongly suggest that an ecclesiastical hierarchy is in view, and the cross-coupling of honorifics with *nomina sacra* forms serves further to reinforce the sender's expression of deference visually. Moreover, by drawing on and transforming the existing sacral meanings coded in these forms, this peculiar application of *nomina sacra* creates an additional metaphor of divine surrogacy—a role that was assumed by bishops as early as Ignatius. Elaine Pagels summarizes the position of Ignatius as follows:

For Ignatius ... the bishop “is a type of the Father” (*Trall.* 3.1); “he presides in the place of God” (*Magn.* 6.1). Christians are to express reverence “to the bishop as to God”

29 Lucilla Dinneen, *Titles of Address in Christian Greek Epistolography to 527 A.D.* (PatSt 18; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1929), 12-13.

30 See Eleanor Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address from Herodotus to Lucian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 78-81, 100-101, 106-7. See specifically 79 (*πάτερ*) and 100-101 (*κύριε*) on their use as a means of flattery. Although *κύριε*, as a polite form of address, can function as a deferential term, it is almost always less deferential than *δέσποτα* which is sometimes so deferential as to convey servility (see Eleanor Dickey, “KYPIE, ΔΕΣΠΟΤΑ, DOMINE: Greek Politeness in the Roman Empire,” *JHS* 121 [2001]: 1-11). On the use of these terms in documentary papyri, see Eleanor Dickey, “Literal and Extended Use of Kinship Terms in Documentary Papyri,” *Mnemosyne* 57 (2002): 131-76.

31 Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use* (SIS 4; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 179-80.

(*Magn.* 13.1-2), to honor him as they honor God, to respect his power “as the power of God the Father” (*Eph.* 5.3).³²

For Clement of Alexandria in the following century, the conviction was apparently similar. According to Pagels, Clement viewed the authorities in the local church community as “divinely ordained delegates, whose rule mirrors the divine reign of its creator, master and lord.”³³

A final feature of the letter that strongly suggests a bookish setting—and, I propose, perhaps also an early example of Marian piety—is found in the sender’s expression of gratitude to the addressee for receiving an earlier letter from him, in which she appropriates the uncommon verbs “exalt” (μεγαλύνω) and “rejoice” (ἀγαλλιάω) from the beginning of the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-47). The scriptural text echoed in the letter reads as follows:

καὶ εἶπεν Μαριάμ, Μεγαλύνει ἡ ψυχὴ μου τὸν κύριον, καὶ ἡγαλλίασεν τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ τῷ σωτῆρί μου, ὅτι ἐπέβλεψεν ἐπὶ τὴν ταπείνωσιν τῆς δούλης αὐτοῦ.

And Mary said, “My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my savior, because he has looked upon the lowliness of his servant.” (Luke 1:46-48)

Both of these verbs are otherwise unattested in documentary papyri (the usual verb for thanksgiving being εὐχαριστέω).³⁴ This use therefore seems to be a deliberate evocation of Mary’s song of praise in the beginning of Luke’s gospel.³⁵ As Luijendijk points out, this female sender represents one of a small number of ancient letter

32 Elaine Pagels, “The Demiurge and His Archons: A Gnostic View of the Bishop and Presbyters?” *HTR* 69 (1976), 307.

33 *Ibid.*, 306.

34 While ἀγαλλιάω is not otherwise explicitly attested, ἀγαλλώνται occurs once in P.Cair. Masp. 1.67003 (6th cent.), where it is not clear whether it is intended for ἀγαλλιώνται (from ἀγαλλιάω) or ἀγάλλονται (from ἀγάλλω) (πάντα τὰ εὐαγὴ μοναστήρια καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ πάνσεπτα εὐκτήρια ἐπὶ τῆς ὑμετέρας αἰσίας ἀγαλλώνται εὐαρχείας, “all the pure monasteries and the most holy churches of God rejoice under your auspicious good government”).

35 Choat considers this reference a “word or phrase in religious context” rather than a “quotation or clear allusion” (Malcolm Choat, “Echo and Quotation of the New Testament in Papyrus Letters to the End of the Fourth Century,” in *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World*, ed. Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas [TENTS 2; Leiden: Brill, 2006], 288).

writers who demonstrate “an active command of biblical or liturgical language.”³⁶ Naldini and Ghedini dismiss the allusion as a product of the “naïveté of a simple mind” and a “conscious exaltation of the female nature,” but such pejorative characterizations are unwarranted.³⁷ More likely, the sender’s evocation of Mary’s joy suggests that she identifies with Mary and “points to her appropriation of Mary’s experience as the framework within which to articulate her own.”³⁸

Around the time of this letter, as it happens, Mary begins to emerge in the literary material as the paragon of female asceticism.³⁹ Beginning with Athanasius in the first third of the fourth century, early church fathers increasingly called female virgins to imitate the model established by Mary.⁴⁰ Stephen Shoemaker, in his discussion of ascetic Marian piety, concludes that

36 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 76. Blumell also asserts that “the author is clearly well read as she makes a deliberate allusion to Luke 1:46-47” (*Lettered Christians*, 51 n. 114). While one should be cautious, as Epp points out, in assuming that familiarity with a literary text necessitates having read it, repetition of specific vocabulary does suggest a literate familiarity with the text, particularly when that vocabulary is not common vernacular (Epp, “The Oxyrhynchus NT Papyri,” 27 n. 69). For other examples of allusions and quotations of scripture in Christian letters, see Choat, “Echo and Quotation,” especially tables on pages 284-92.

37 Respectively, “ingenuità di mente semplice” (Naldini, *Cristianesimo in Egitto*, 159), and “esaltazione cosciente di animo femminile, suscettibile sempre, anche quando è appena sfiorato nella sua vanità” (Ghedini, *Lettere cristiane*, 131).

38 Erica A. Mathieson, *Christian Women in the Greek Papyri of Egypt to 400 CE* (StAA 6; Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 71.

39 Two prayers to Mary also possibly date to the 3rd or 4th centuries: P.Ryl. 3.470 and P.Bon. 1.9. The former has been dated variously between the 3rd and 9th centuries; the latter between the 3rd and 5th (see de Bruyn and Dijkstra, “Greek Amulets and Formularies”). For a possible 4th century hymn to the Virgin Mary and a list of known hymns or prayers to Mary on papyrus, see A.M. Emmett, “A Fourth-Century Hymn to the Virgin Mary?” *NewDocs* 2:141-46. On Marian piety, and in particular on Mary as a model for ascetic practice among early Christian women, see further Stephen J. Shoemaker, *Mary in Early Christian Faith and Devotion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 107-111; Vasiliki Limberis, *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople* (London: Routledge, 1994), 101-7; and Elm, *Virgins of God*, 336-37.

40 See especially Athanasius, *Ep. virg.* 1, and David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 52-53, 70-73, 276-79. In her comments on P.Bon. 1.9, Jane Rowlandson remarks: “The cult of Mary gained in general popularity after the christological controversies of the fifth century AD and after she was credited with saving Constantinople in the sixth century ..., but her cult began earlier in Egypt and flourished to some extent

devotion to the Virgin Mary was an important component of female monastic life in fourth-century Alexandria. Likewise, the same would presumably hold true for female monastics in northern Italy, Jerusalem, and elsewhere on the basis of Ambrose and Jerome's endorsement of Mary as the ideal model for female virginity. Accordingly, ... we can attach Marian devotion in the fourth century to communities of female ascetics in various locations throughout the empire.⁴¹

Later in fourth century Oxyrhynchus, monastic communities proliferated. The *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* offers a well known, though surely hyperbolic account of a visit to Oxyrhynchus in the autumn of 394 by a group of anonymous pilgrims. Although we cannot rely on its claims uncritically, the account describes a city with a thriving monastic community that comprised twice as many nuns as monks.⁴² In addition, Luijendijk has recently pointed out that the *libellus precum*, submitted to Theodosius in Constantinople by the Luciferian priests Faustinus and Marcellinus (ca. 383/384), also mentions "sacred virgins" at Oxyrhynchus during the episcopate of Theodorus, whose monasteries were venerated by its citizens.⁴³

independently of imperial developments" (*Women and Society in Greek and Roman Egypt: A Sourcebook* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 71).

41 Shoemaker, *Mary in Early Christian Faith*, 111.

42 The full account reads as follows: "The temples and capitols of the city were bursting with monks; every quarter of the city was inhabited by them. ... The monks were almost a majority over the secular inhabitants, since they reside everywhere right up to the entrances, and even in the gate towers. In fact there are said to be five thousand monks within the walls and as many again outside How can one convey an adequate idea of the throngs of monks and nuns past counting? However, as far as we could ascertain from the holy bishop of that place, we would say that he had under his jurisdiction ten thousand monks and twenty thousand nuns" (*Hist. mon.* 5.1-6). The quoted translation is from *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: The Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*, trans. Norman Russell (Oxford: Mowbray, 1981), 67. On the historicity of the account, see Andrew Cain, *The Greek Historia Monachorum in Aegypto: Monastic Hagiography in the Late Fourth Century* (OECs; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 125-45.

43 The relevant passage reads: "And it would take a long time to report the things he worked against the modesty and intention of the sacred virgins, whose monasteries the city itself [i.e. Oxyrhynchus] venerated for the worth of their sanctity" (*et longum est referri, quae contra pudorem propositumue sacrarum uirginum molitus est, quarum monasteria pro merito sanctimoniae earum ciuitas ipsa ueneratur*) (Faustinus and Marcellinus, *Lib. prec.* 99). This reference is mentioned by AnneMarie Luijendijk, "Twenty Thousand Nuns': The Domestic Virgins of Oxyrhynchus," in *Christianity and Monasticism in Middle Egypt: Al-Minya and Asyut*, ed. Gawdat Gabra and Hany N. Takla (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2015), 57.

While Wipszycka has appropriately cautioned against searching for monastic settings in letters dated to the third/fourth century,⁴⁴ it is still possible to observe, as Choat does, “the drift towards ascetic communities” in such letters.⁴⁵ Considered against the backdrop of nascent Marian piety in the early decades of the fourth century and the flourishing of Oxyrhynchite monastic communities in the latter half of that century, I suggest that this allusive Marian language may constitute an example of such a “drift.”⁴⁶ This hypothesis resonates with the elegant literary hand, reminiscent of Origen’s female calligraphers, and the striking use of *nomina sacra*. As we have seen, P.Oxy. 12.1592 represents one of only three extant letters in which *πατήρ* is treated as a *nomen sacrum* when signifying a human referent; the other two, SB 12.10773 and P.Naqlun 2.34, also address ecclesiastical superiors, and as it turns out, are located securely within monastic milieux.

4.2.2 | *Nomina Sacra in P.Oxy. 12.1592*

While the use of *nomina sacra* with human referents is not unprecedented in personal letters, it is highly unusual.⁴⁷ Following the suggestion of Luijendijk, I have attempted to demonstrate that the sender of this letter—who I believe is also its scribe—derived her treatment of *πατήρ* as a *nomen sacrum* from her experience in reading and perhaps copying Christian literary manuscripts. Her selection of the

44 Wipszycka, “Remarques sur les lettres,” 209-13.

45 Choat, “Monastic Letters,” 21.

46 Elm muses in passing whether “P. Oxy. xxii. 1592 ... might refer to the special relationship between virgins and their priest” (*Virgins of God*, 241 n. 47).

47 See Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 121, who lists four other letters in addition to the three discussed above that employ *nomina sacra* in reference to a human figure: SB 14.11532 (4th cent., ἀδελφὸν κ(ύριό)ν μου Ἰουλ[ι]ανόν, “my lord brother Julian”), P.Genova 1.26 (4th cent., εἰς τὸν κ(ύριο)ν ἡμῶν, “to our lord”), P.Stras. 1.35 (4th/5th cent., ἐπίδ(ος) σὺν θ(ε)ῷ τῷ κ(υρί)ῳ, “deliver, with God’s [help], to my lord”), and P.KellisCopt. 11 (ca. 350-380; κυρίῳ μου υἱῷ Πσεναμουῖ X Τσεμνούθης ἡ μή(τη)ρ [or μ(ή)τηρ] σου, “to my lord son Psenamounis, your mother Tsemnouthes” [address on the verso and opening greeting on the recto written in Greek]). Choat also points out that Manichaean letter writers sometimes treated *πνεῦμα* as a *nomen sacrum* when referring to their own or the addressee’s spirit (ibid., 121-22). See also Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 496.

nomina sacra forms $\overline{\kappa\epsilon} \overline{\pi\rho}/\overline{\pi\eta\rho}$ as signifiers for the semantic content “(lord) father” represents her situationally motivated interest in the reverential qualities of the recipient, which is reinforced by her elaborate compliments. This clearly functions as a type of polite speech analogous to the V or formal “you” form in the so-called “T/V” pronoun distinction, whereby the speaker expresses inferior status in relation to the addressee.⁴⁸ As we have seen, the designations κύριε πάτερ/πατήρ represented by the *nomina sacra* forms in P.Oxy. 12.1592 likely reflect a metaphorical rather than a natural kinship between the sender and the recipient. These are already value-laden appellatives in that they presume a certain underlying social structure; thus, the metaphor is a deferential one.

This metaphor is complexified by an additional metaphor embodied in the use of *nomina sacra* forms as vehicles for these meanings, which are co-deployed alongside language appropriated from the *Magnificat*, constituting a type of scriptural or liturgical register.⁴⁹ This strongly suggests that her use of *nomina sacra* was deliberate. In other words, the sender of the letter employs semantic and semiotic resources that she perceives to be appropriate to the “situation type,”⁵⁰ namely forms and language that in their usual liturgical contexts refer to the divine Father,⁵¹ but are used here in reference to the sender’s human, spiritual “father” to

48 In sociolinguistics, a T/V distinction is a differentiation in various forms of address in a given language by which a speaker may signify informality, solidarity, or intimacy (e.g. French *tu*, German *du*) versus formality, deference, or social distance (e.g. French *vous*, German *Sie*). The classic study on T/V pronoun distinction is Roger Brown and Albert Gilman, “Pronouns of Power and Solidarity,” in *Style in Language*, ed. T.A. Sebeok (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960), 253-76. This phenomenon has since been recognized in numerous unrelated languages around the world and in various forms of discourse. See also, in particular, Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 198-204. Further, see Hodge and Kress, *Social Semiotics*, 40-46; and Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (Edinburgh: Longman Group, 1989), 70-71.

49 Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 110-11.

50 Ibid., 27-35.

51 Cf., for example, the rendering of Luke 1:46-47 in Codex Vaticanus, where *nomina sacra* appear together with the verbs in question: “Μεγαλύνει ἡ ψυχὴ μου τὸν $\overline{\kappa\upsilon}$, καὶ ἡγαλλίασε(ν) τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπὶ τῷ $\overline{\theta\omega}$ τῷ σωτήρί μου.”

whom the letter is addressed. Thus, just as Mary “exalts” (μεγαλύνω) and “rejoices” (ἀγαλλιάω) upon receiving a message from God in Luke 1:46-47, so does the sender of this letter “exalt” and “rejoice” upon receiving an earlier message from her πατήρ. The *nomina sacra* and this potentially allusive language, used together, frame the relationship between the sender and her addressee in human-divine relational terms and suggest that the sender views the addressee as a surrogate for God.

Was the unknown female sender of this letter an ascetic? Although the scanty nature of the evidence will not permit a firm conclusion, I believe it presents a mutually reinforcing web of clues that gestures towards such a scenario. Given the monastic settings of SB 12.10773 and P.Naqlun 2.34, where the authors also address their recipients with the *nomen sacrum* form for πατήρ, it is tempting to speculate whether using *nomina sacra* was a common way of addressing ecclesiastical superiors in monastic circles. Naldini claimed that this was the case, but with only three examples—and only two securely linked to monastic milieux—more evidence is needed.⁵² At the least, the evidence and arguments adduced above add additional weight to previous inferences about the identities of the correspondents. We seem to be dealing with a learned woman who has an intimate familiarity with Christian literary texts containing *nomina sacra*. Her familiarity with Christian literature made available to her both the *nomen sacrum* form for “father” and the uncommon verbs appropriated from the *Magnificat* as apt signifiers for constructing her metaphor for her deferential relationship to the recipient, who was likely an ecclesiastical superior.

4.3 | A Request for the Exchange of Scriptural Books (P.Oxy. 63.4365)

TM no. 33683

9.0 cm (h) × 11.5 cm (w)

4th cent. CE

Blumell-Wayment 141

Ed. pr.: J.R. Rea, ed., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri LXIII* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1996), 44-45 (no. 4365).

⁵² Naldini, “Lettera di Tatianos,” 168. See above, note 26.

back → τῇ κυρίᾳ μου φιλτάτῃ ἀδελ-
 φῇ ἐν κ̅ω χαίρειν.
 χρῆσον τὸν Ὑ̅Εσδραν,
 ἐπεὶ ἔχρησά σοι τὴν
 5 Λεπτὴν Γένεσιν.
 ἔρρωσο ἡμεῖν ἐν θ̅ω̅.

 line 6: ἡμῖν

Translation: "To my dearest lady sister, greetings in the Lord. Lend the Ezra, since I lent you the Little Genesis. Farewell from us in God."

(front = P.Oxy. 63.4364)
 → [± 18]ω, ἀξιούσα κελευσέσαι ᾧ ἐάν
 [σοὶ δοκῇ γενέσθαι πρὸς τὴν ἀπαίτησιν τ[ῶ]ν
 [± 18]μοὶ ἀποδιχθέντων, ἀχολῶ-
 [θως τῇ προσφωνήσει τῶν] τὴν μέτρησιν ποιησαμένων
 5 [± 18]εξω διὰ παντὸς τῇ τύχῃ σου
 [χάριτας ὁμολογήσω. (2nd hand) Αὐρ]ηλία Σώτειρα ἢ καὶ Ἡσύχιον
 [διεπεμψάμην πρὸς ἐπί]δοσιν.
 [(3rd hand) -ca. 16 letters- συ]ναγωνιεῖται σοὶ πρὸς τὰ
 [± 17 σ]τρατηγος. κολ(λημάτων) σλγ, τὸμ(ου).-.

 line 1: κελευσαί σε; line 3: ἀποδειχθέντων; line 6: Σώτειρα

Translation: ..., requesting that you order whoever [seems best to you] for the claiming of payment of ... which have been designated to me, in accordance with [the report (?) of those who] made the measurement ... (?) [I may acknowledge gratitude] continually to your *fortuna*.

(2nd hand) [I, Aur]elia Soteira, also called Hesychium, [sent (this document) for] submission.

(3rd hand) ... will assist you with the ... *strategos* Sheet 233, roll 1 (?).

4.3.1 | Description

P.Oxy. 63.4365 presents another example of correspondents who had contact with literary manuscripts and used *nomina sacra* in their letters. This brief note of only six short lines records a request for the exchange of scriptural books and uses *nomina sacra* forms in the greeting "in the Lord" (ἐν κ̅ω, line 2) and the farewell "in God" (ἐν θ̅ω̅, line 6). The letter is written on the back of a petition (= P.Oxy. 63.4364), which was cut down to a small sheet of 11.5 by 9 centimeters; only the right half of the

petition survives. The original editor, J.R. Rea, dated the petition on the front to the late third or early fourth century on the basis of the (largely reconstructed) formulaic phrase διεπεπψάμην πρὸς ἐπί]δοσιν (line 7), which has parallels in mid- to late third century documents.⁵³ He thus proposed an early fourth century date for the letter on the back.⁵⁴ The formula τῇ κυρίᾳ μου φιλτάτῃ ἀδελφῇ in the greeting of the letter may provide further evidence for a fourth century date, as Nikolaos Gonis has demonstrated.⁵⁵ The letter is written with a thin pen in fairly large letters along the fibers, perpendicular to the text of the petition on the front. The hand is clear and proficient, though not exceptionally skilled. Unusually, neither the sender nor the recipient of the letter is identified by name: it is addressed simply “to my dearest lady sister” (τῇ κυρίᾳ μου φιλτάτῃ ἀδελφῇ). Thus, the recipient was a woman. No similar clues are provided in the letter as to whether its author was also a woman, although this has frequently been the assumption.⁵⁶

Fortunately, the surviving portion of the petition on the front of the papyrus contains the petitioner's subscription in her own hand—an otherwise unknown woman who identifies herself as “Aurelia Soteira, also called Hesychium” (line 6). Might this Aurelia Soteira also be the author of the letter on the back? Based on some

53 Parallel documents listed by Rea are SB 16.12994.24 (241 CE), P.Oxy. 7.1467 (263 CE?) and 1469 (298 CE), and P.Oxy. 34.2713 (c. 297 CE). See the note on line 7 in P.Oxy. 63.4365, 43.

54 Ibid., 43.

55 Nikolaos Gonis, “Notes on Two Epistolary Conventions,” *ZPE* 119 (1997), 148–52.

56 Rea suggested that the sender of the letter might be Aurelia Soteira, the signatory to the petition on the front (P.Oxy. 63.4365, 44). Epp adopted this suggestion and further concluded that both the sender and the recipient were female leaders in the Oxyrhynchite church (“Oxyrhynchus NT Papyri,” 28–29). In two earlier publications, Blumell appears to take for granted that both correspondents were women (“Christians on the Move in Late Antique Oxyrhynchus,” in *Travel and Religion in Antiquity*, ed. Philip A. Harland [SCJ 21; Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011], 245; *Lettered Christians*, 169). However, he has more recently approached this question more cautiously: “Though some have suspected that the sender was also a woman, this cannot be confirmed via the extant remains of the letter” (Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 51).

perceived similarities in the handwriting, Rea speculated that this may be the case.⁵⁷ However, this suggestion has recently been cast into doubt, first by Luijendijk and then by Blumell and Wayment, both of whom have argued that the hand of the petition subscription and that of the letter are too dissimilar to have originated from the same writer.⁵⁸ My own inspection of this papyrus in the Sackler Library at Oxford leads me also to lean in the direction of skepticism in this regard. On the one hand, there are notable similarities in certain individual letter forms,⁵⁹ and it is possible that the stark contrast in pen thickness amplifies impressions of dissimilarity. On the other hand, the writer of the letter on the back is more rapid, finishing decenders with half-serifs, and has a ductus that is generally much freer than the rigid hand that signed the petition.⁶⁰ In my opinion, the assessments of Luijendijk and Blumell are correct that the petition signature and letter were composed by two different hands.⁶¹ The identity of the letter writer therefore remains obscure.

Be that as it may, the absence of any clear identification of the sender or the recipient is striking. Rea postulated that the names were deliberately omitted to

57 Rea, P.Oxy. 63.4365, 44. Epp also concludes, without any discussion, that “the woman named Aurelia also wrote the letter about books So writer and recipient doubtless were both women” (Epp, “Oxyrhynchus NT Papyri,” 29).

58 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 71 (n. 47); Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 510. Blumell and Wayment point out that the petition is written in a thicker hand. However, this cannot necessarily be taken as evidence that the petition and the letter originate from different hands, only that a different pen was used. On this point, I believe Luijendijk is correct: “It is not so much the thickness of the pen that makes the two different, but the letter forms and the small serifs on the letters of the verso” (*Greetings in the Lord*, 71 [n. 47]).

59 For instance, both hands form small sigmas with flat caps in two distinct strokes; kappas are made in two strokes, with a single downward vertical and upward oblique, followed by a second downward oblique stroke; and iotas often extend variably below or above the lines.

60 In addition to the overall ductus, the writer of the letter forms several letters differently: the alpha is formed with a wider upper loop; the nu is made with curved vertical and oblique strokes (whereas the nu in the petition subscription is formed with rigid, straight lines); and the omega is formed with a wider right half that slants slightly to the left (whereas the omega in the petition subscription has a slightly wider left half and slants to the right).

61 Thanks are due to Don Barker, who offered his expertise and was of the same opinion, for the reasons set out above.

maintain a “degree of discretion” and that this “favors an early date, before 325, when Constantine’s acquisition of Egypt finally made it safe to profess Christianity there.”⁶² However, this hypothesis has rightly been rejected by most later commentators.⁶³ Given the letter’s brevity, it is more likely that the absence of names suggests a context in which the correspondents were local and familiar. The explanation offered by Blumell and Wayment therefore seems plausible:

This “letter” reads more like a quick note to a friend than a formal request and was probably so terse because there was already in place a mutually understood context, so there was no need to include every detail in the request.⁶⁴

The unidentified sender asks the recipient, identified only as “my dearest lady sister in the Lord,” to lend a copy of Ezra, “since I lent you the Little Genesis.” As with the use of *πατήρ* in P.Oxy. 12.1592, the kinship terminology employed in the greeting is most likely metaphorical, since in Christian contexts *ἀδελφός/ἀδελφή* is usually an expression of Christian fellowship.⁶⁵ Thus, by combining a visually salient marker of Christian provenance with a metaphor of siblingship in the opening of the letter, the sender immediately negotiates solidarity and in-group status with the recipient.⁶⁶

62 Rea, P.Oxy. 63.4365, 44. See also the comments of Thomas J. Kraus: “The absence of names may be determined by the fact that in the time Christianity was not officially recognized, so that this implies experiences with secrecy and persecution on the sender’s and the female addressee’s side” (*Ad Fontes*, 195).

63 See Epp, “Oxyrhynchus NT Papyri,” 29, and Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 510–11. In the final letter discussed in this chapter, which was sent during the Diocletianic persecution, the author openly recounts his evasion of the required sacrifice and makes no effort to avoid mentioning names.

64 Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 510.

65 See Peter Arzt-Grabner, “‘Brothers’ and ‘Sisters’ in Documentary Papyri and Early Christianity,” *RivB* 50 (2002): 185–204; Reidar Aasgaard, “Brothers and Sisters in the Faith: Christian Siblingship as Ecclesiological Mirror in the First Two Centuries,” in *The Formation of the Early Church*, ed. Jostein Ådna [WUNT 183; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005], 185–216; Paul Trebilco, *Self-designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 16–67. On the figurative use of sibling terminology in broader society, see Dicky, “Literal and Extended Use,” 154–61.

66 According to Brown and Levinson, kinship address forms often correspond to the T/V systems of address: “In many languages the use of a T (singular non-honorific pronoun) to a non-familiar

The “Ezra” being requested seems most likely to refer to one of the numerous pseudepigraphical works circulating under that name—perhaps 4 Ezra—rather than the book of Ezra from the Jewish Bible.⁶⁷ Likewise, “Little Genesis” almost certainly refers to the book of Jubilees, and not the biblical book of Genesis.⁶⁸ Why these two deuterocanonical Jewish books rather than one of the many Christian

alter can claim solidarity. Other address forms used to convey such in-group membership include generic names and terms of address like ... *brother, sister*” (*Politeness*, 107).

- 67 Rea references P.Leid. Inst. 13, a seventh/eighth century inventory of church property in which Ezra appears in a list of books (P.Oxy. 64.4364, 44). The Ezra mentioned here apparently refers to the pseudepigraphical 4 Ezra (see F.A.J. Hoogendijk and P. van Minnen, eds., *Papyri, Ostraca, Parchments and Waxed Tablets in the Leiden Papyrological Institute* [P.L.Bat. 25; Leiden: Brill, 1991], 70). Epp notes that a leaf from a fourth-century manuscript containing part of 6 Ezra (now constituting 4 Ezra 14-15) was found at Oxyrhynchus (P.Oxy. 7.1010), “though only the wildest speculation would identify that with the ‘Ezra’ of our letter” (“Oxyrhynchus NT Papyri,” 29).
- 68 Rea seemed to be of the opinion that the “Little Genesis” mentioned in our letter referred to the biblical book of Genesis, pointing to another fourth century letter discovered at Oxyrhynchus (P.Oxy. 36.2785) that mentions a man “who is being instructed in Genesis” (P.Oxy. 63.4354, 44). However, he offered no comment on how the adjective *λεπτός* is to be understood. Deiter Hagedorn was quick to point out that “Little Genesis” is, in fact, another name for the book of Jubilees, designated as such by Epiphanius (*Pan.* 39.6.1) around the same time period as the letter (“Die ‘Kleine Genesis’ in P.Oxy. LXIII 4365,” *ZPE* 116 [1997]: 147-48). According to Emil Schürer, “In its essentials, Jubilees follows the canonical Genesis, and for that reason it is also called ‘Little Genesis’, not because it is shorter (on the contrary, it is longer), but because it does not enjoy the same authority as the canonical book” (*The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Christ*, rev. ed., ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Martin Goodman [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986], 3:309). Simon Franklin also argues that “Little Genesis (‘ἡ λεπτή Γένεσις’) is neither little nor Genesis. ‘λεπτή’ here means ‘detailed’, rather the opposite of little. And the phrase as a whole refers not to the canonical book but to the pseudepigraphical Book of Jubilees” (“Note on the Pseudepigraphical Allusion in Oxyrhynchus Papyrus No. 4365,” *VT* 48 [1998]: 95-96). Rosa Oranto disagreed, arguing that “Little Genesis” referred not to the book of Jubilees but to a miniature codex of the biblical Genesis (“Alia tempora, alii libri: Notizie ed elenchi di libri cristiani su papiro,” *Aegyptus* 77 [1997]: 101-24). However, A. Hilhorst’s assessment of Oranto’s proposal is probably correct: “Diese Argumente genügen meines Erachtens nicht, die Deutung von Hagedorn zu erschüttern. Wenn nämlich im vierten Jahrhundert die Kodizes normalerweise klein sind, erübrigt es sich, diese Eigenschaft überhaupt zu erwähnen” (“Erwähnt P.Oxy. LXIII 4365 das Jubiläenbuch?,” *ZPE* 130 [2000], 192). See also Epp, “Oxyrhynchus NT Papyri,” 29-30.

It is interesting, however, that Genesis is referenced in another letter from Oxyrhynchus, P.Oxy. 36.2785. This is a letter of recommendation from the elders at Heracleopolis to Sotas, bishop of Oxyrhynchus, which mentions one “Anos, a catechumen in Genesis” (Ἄνον, κατηχούμενον ἐν τῇ Γενέσει, lines 7-8). See further below, section 5.4.2.

works that circulated in Oxyrhynchus? As Robert Kraft has shown, these and other “originally Jewish” pseudepigrapha have a complex history of transmission that is no less Christian than Jewish.⁶⁹ Surviving “scriptural” codices from Oxyrhynchus do indeed suggest that Oxyrhynchite Christians read widely and eclectically. In addition to Christian copies of books from what would come to be called the Old Testament⁷⁰ are codices containing 2 Baruch (P.Oxy. 3.403, 4th/5th cent.), 6 Ezra (P.Oxy. 7.1010, 4th cent.), and perhaps a codex fragment of 1 Enoch (P.Oxy. 17.2069, 4th cent.), although this is disputed.⁷¹ Richard Bauckham avers:

Probably most Christians who have valued such works in some way have not regarded them in the same way as they did the canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament This means that Christian readers of these works could have been interested in them without approving of or agreeing with everything in them. In many cases it may be that the stories rather than the teaching were what attracted them. This would have been true at a popular level, but we should also not forget that from as early as Julius Africanus in the third century there were Christian scholars with antiquarian interests, especially in the kind of ancient history about which such works as *Jubilees* and Enoch literature could inform them.⁷²

69 Robert A. Kraft, “The Pseudepigrapha in Christianity,” in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves (EJL 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 55–86 (75).

70 Luijendijk (*Greetings in the Lord*, 20 n. 95) identifies the following manuscripts as probably copied by Christian scribes: Genesis (P.Oxy. 9.1166, 3rd cent.), Exodus (P.Oxy. 8.1074, 3rd cent.; P.Oxy. 8.1075, 3rd cent.; P.Oxy. 65.4442, 3rd cent.), Leviticus (P.Oxy. 11.1351, 3rd/4th cent.), Judges (PSI 2.127, 3rd/4th cent.), Esther (P.Oxy. 65.4443, 1st/2nd cent.), and Psalms (P.Oxy. 15.1779, 3rd cent.; P.Oxy. 10.1226, 3rd/4th cent.). In addition to these, there are also codices containing Tobit (P.Oxy. 13.1594, 3rd/4th cent.; P.Oxy. 8.1076, 6th cent.), Judith (P.Oxy. 75.5020, 4th cent.), Wisdom of Solomon (P.Oxy. 65.4444, 4th cent.), and Sirach (P.Oxy. 13.1595, 6th cent.).

71 See J.T. Milik, “Fragments grecs du livre d'Hénoch (P. Oxy. XVII 2069),” *Chronique d'Égypte* 92 (1971): 321–43; and Erik W. Larson, “On the Identification of Two Greek Texts of 1 Enoch,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at 60: Scholarly Contributions of New York University Faculty and Alumni*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and Shani Tzoref (STDJ 89; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 158–68.

72 Richard J. Bauckham, “The Continuing Quest for the Provenance of Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,” in *The Pseudepigrapha and Christian Origins: Essays for the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas*, ed. Gerbern S. Oegema and James H. Charlesworth (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 25–26.

With regard to “extracanonical” Christian literature in Oxyrhynchus, the Shepherd of Hermas was especially popular,⁷³ as was the Gospel of Thomas,⁷⁴ but a wide variety of other such literature also survives from Oxyrhynchus.⁷⁵

The letter does not mention the purpose for the exchange. Although it is only possible to speculate, private study immediately presents itself as a possible motivation,⁷⁶ as does drawing up copies. Cicero frequently borrowed books—either from friends, or through their assistance—in order to make private copies of them.⁷⁷ In another letter from Oxyrhynchus (P.Oxy. 18.2192, 2nd cent.), a request is made for copies of books 6 and 7 of Hypisikrates’ *Topics in Comedy*, then another hand adds: “If you find any [books] beyond what I already own, make copies and send them to

73 The Shepherd of Hermas survives in some ten copies from Oxyrhynchus up to the 4th century: P.Oxy. 69.4706 (2nd/3rd cent.), P.Oxy. 50.3528 (2nd/3rd cent.), P.Oxy. 69.4707 (3rd cent.), P.Oxy. 69.4705 (3rd cent.), P.Oxy. 15.1828 (3rd cent.), P.Oxy. 50.3527 (3rd cent.), P.Oxy. 3.404 (3rd/4th cent.), P.Oxy. 9.1172 (4th cent.), P.Oxy. 13.1599 (4th cent.), P.Oxy. 15.1783 (4th cent.). See Malcolm Choat and Rachael Yuen-Collingridge, “The Egyptian Hermes: The Shepherd in Egypt Before Constantine,” in *Early Christian Manuscripts*, ed. Kraus and Nicklas, 191–212.

74 Copies of the Gospel of Thomas from Oxyrhynchus include: P.Oxy. 1.1 (2nd/3rd cent.), 4.654 (3rd cent.), P.Oxy. 4.655 (3rd cent.), and perhaps also the brief logion written on a burial shroud from Oxyrhynchus that resembles the last line of logion 5 of the Gospel of Thomas. On the latter, see AnneMarie Luijendijk, “Jesus says: ‘There Is Nothing Buried That Will Not Be Raised’? A Late-Antique Shroud with Gospel of Thomas Logion 5 in Context,” *ZAC* 15 (2011): 389–410.

75 Others include: Didache (P.Oxy. 15.1782, 4th cent.), Sophia of Jesus Christ (?) (P.Oxy. 8.1081, 4th cent.), Gospel of Peter (P.Oxy. 60.4009, 2nd cent.; P.Oxy. 41.2949, 2nd/3rd cent.), Gospel of Mary (P.Oxy. 50.3525, 3rd cent.; P.Ryl.Gr. 3.463, 3rd cent.), Acts of Paul and Thecla (P.Oxy. 1.6, 5th cent.), Acts of Paul (13.1602, 4th/5th cent.), Acts of Peter (P.Oxy. 6.849, 4th cent.), Acts of John (P.Oxy. 6.850, 4th cent.), and several unidentified gospels (P.Oxy. 2.210, 3rd cent.; P.Oxy. 10.1224, 4th cent.; P.Oxy. 5.840, 4th/5th cent.).

76 Harry Gamble, observing that many “extracanonical” fragments were contained in miniature codices, asserts that this points to private consumption of such literature (*Books and Readers*, 236). While this is an interesting speculation, the link between miniature codices and private study is not borne out by evidence.

77 *Ad. Att.* 2.20.6: “I have received the books from Vibius. He is an inept poet, yet he is not without some knowledge, nor is he useless. I will copy the book and send it back” (*A Vibio libros accepi. Poeta ineptus et tamen scit nihil, sed est non inutilis. Describo et remitto.*).

me.”⁷⁸ In the last quarter of the fourth century, Jerome confirms the practice of lending and borrowing books in order to make copies within Christian circles.⁷⁹ Hence, as Haines-Eitzen observes, “classical and Christian literature appear to have circulated by the agency of social networks.”⁸⁰ As it happens, two third/fourth century letters of recommendation from Oxyrhynchus, PSI 3.208 and PSI 9.1041, were written on parchment offcuts and may offer some clue as to the production and consumption of Christian literature in the city.⁸¹

Whatever the precise purpose of the exchange, the possession of books and the ability to read them imply a certain level of status.⁸² One must, first of all, have been educated in the skill of reading literary texts, which presumes the means to have received such an education; and secondly, if copies are to be made, one must have the resources either to purchase the materials necessary to copy the text themselves or to engage a scribe to do so. Thus, the correspondents of our letter likely enjoyed some level of affluence and might be situated among the more socially elevated.⁸³

78 For a fuller discussion, see, in addition to the *editio princeps*, E.G. Turner, “Roman Oxyrhynchus,” *JEA* 38 (1952), 91-92; Kraus, *Ad Fontes*, 191; Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 175-78.

79 Jerome, *Epist.* 5.2: “I have a letter from a certain Paul, an aged compatriot of the aforesaid Rufinus, stating that he has his manuscript of Tertullian, and he urgently asks for its return. And next I request that you have a copyist transcribe on papyrus the books which the enclosed list will indicate that I do not have. I pray you also to have sent to me St. Hilary’s commentary on the Psalms of David and his very comprehensive book on synods, which works I copied for him with my own hand at Treves” (*Scripsit mihi et quidam de patria supra dicti fratris Rufini Paulus senex Tertulliani suum codicem apud eum esse, quem vehementer repoposcit. Et ex hoc quaeso, ut eos libros, quos non habere me brevis subditus edocebit, librarii manu in charta scribi iubeas. Interpretationem quoque psalmorum Daviticorum et prolixum valde de synodis librum sancti Hilarii, quae ei apud Treveris manu mea ipse descripseram, aequae ut mihi transferas peto.*) Trans. modified from *The Letters of St. Jerome: Volume 1, Letters 1-22*, trans. Charles Christopher Mierow (New York: Newman Press, 1963), 37-38.

80 Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 78. On the production and dissemination of Christian texts, see further *ibid.*, 77-104.

81 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 144-51. See below for full discussion of these letters.

82 Kraus, *Ad Fontes*, 190-91.

83 Bagnall asks: “How many of them [i.e. individual Christians], few as they were until well into the third century, were wealthy enough to buy books? Unless the early Christians were drawn disproportionately from the uppermost stratum of society, the answer must be that very few

Epp muses whether “Christian women in these classes might have assumed leadership positions in the churches.”⁸⁴ While this is a reasonable speculation about the female correspondent (correspondents?) of our letter involved in the exchange and study of scriptural books, it cannot be verified.

The note ends with a simple “farewell from us in God” (ἔρρωσο ἡμεῖν ἐν θεῷ, line 6). One wonders whether the plural pronoun may hint at an ecclesiastical setting, but this cannot be deduced with any degree of certainty owing to the scant contents of the letter. No greetings are exchanged between ecclesiastical communities as one finds, for example, in the letters of recommendation from the dossier of Sotas (see below).

4.3.2 | Nomina Sacra in P.Oxy. 63.4365

Unlike the *nomina sacra* employed in the previous letter, those used in the initial greeting and farewell in P.Oxy. 63.4365 are rather unremarkable in terms of the words represented, their location in the letter, and their referents—all of which conform to common use in personal letters between Christians.⁸⁵ However, the semiotic interrelation of these seemingly ordinary *nomina sacra* with the other unique elements of the letter permits a more complex understanding of their role in the correspondents’ engagement with their social and semiotic landscape.

The visual salience of the *nomina sacra* afforded by their supralineation makes them especially well suited the purpose of quick identification at the beginning and end of letters, where they often appear. In this particular letter, where neither the sender nor the recipient is identified explicitly, the *nomina sacra* and other contextual markers carry the principal semiotic burden in establishing identity and

were” (Roger S. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009], 65). On the costs involved in producing books, see especially his chapter “The Economics of Book Production,” in *ibid.*, 50-69.

84 Epp, “Oxyrhynchus NT Papyri,” 34.

85 See, for example, the greeting formulae in the letters of Sotas, discussed below.

negotiating social relationships between the correspondents. The omission of names or other clear identification in the salutation and address together with the terseness of the letter suggest a casual interaction, which is reinforced through the metaphor of siblingship. Furthermore, the use of *nomina sacra* in a letter concerning the exchange of Christian literature may have an intercontextual and interdiscursive effect, framing the interaction in terms of fellowship both in spiritual/ecclesiastical affiliation, as well in “Christian bookishness”—that is, the correspondents are not only siblings “in the Lord” but also siblings “in the book(s).”

The dialectic in which the *nomina sacra* function in this letter—one composed of various interconnected messages of solidarity and social symmetry—contrasts significantly with P.Oxy. 12.1592, where the sender signals her inferiority to the recipient by magnifying him with lengthy and elaborate compliments. Although in both cases *nomina sacra* are employed, their effects are rather different in some subtle and not-so-subtle ways because they bear traces of the interests of those who employed them.

4.4 | Three Letters of Recommendation from Sotas, Bishop of Oxyrhynchus (PSI 3.208, PSI 9.1041, and P.Alex. 29)

4.4.1 | Introduction

Five papyrus letters from Egypt datable to the late third/early fourth centuries refer to a high profile Christian figure named Sotas. Although the name Sotas is relatively common in antiquity,⁸⁶ there is good evidence that these five letters refer to the same

86 Alanna Nobbs counts ten examples of the name Sotas from Oxyrhynchus in addition to the five considered to refer to Sotas, bishop of Oxyrhynchus (“Some Duties and Responsibilities of a Bishop(?) in Late Antique Egypt,” in *Religion and Retributive Logic: Essays in Honour of Professor Gary W. Trompf*, ed. Carole Cusack and Christopher Hartney [Leiden: Brill, 2010], 159 n. 1). The original editor of SB 12.10772, a personal letter mentioning “Sotas the Christian” (line 10), cautiously points out that “Σώτας, Σώτης sind in den Papyri gut belegt, auch aus Oxyrhynchus und aus dieser Zeit” (Heikki Kiskienniemi, “Fünf griechische Papyrusbriefe aus Florentiner Sammlungen,” *Aegyptus* 33 [1953]: 315–30 [324]). Luijendijk has argued that the Sotas mentioned in SB 12.10772 may be the same as the Sotas of the other letters (*Greetings in the Lord*, 81–144). While she creates a compelling case, I have excluded it here since the evidence is circumstantial.

Sotas and should be considered as a dossier.⁸⁷ The letters generally agreed to form the dossier of Sotas are:

1. Sotas to Peter (PSI 3.208)
2. Sotas to Paul (PSI 9.1041)
3. Sotas to Maximus (P.Alex. 29)
4. The Presbyters of Heracleopolis to Sotas (P.Oxy. 36.2785)
5. Sotas to Demetrianos (P.Oxy. 12.1492)

Because the constraints of this study will not permit an examination of all five letters, only the first three will be examined here. These three letters are all letters of recommendation issued by Sotas, and thus lend themselves to examination together as a cohesive body of work by a single author in the same genre. Although the fourth letter is also a letter of recommendation, it differs from the former three in that it was issued by the Heracleopolite elders to Sotas and therefore will be excluded.⁸⁸ The

87 Although it is beyond the purview of this study to fully explicate the similarities that have led scholars to associate these five letters, evidence linking them includes: dating, distinctive greeting formulae, marked similarities in wording, and the fact that two of the letters from Sotas are written on parchment. See Nobbs, "Duties and Responsibilities," 159-60; and Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 81-151 *passim*, who, however, includes SB 12.10772 but considers P.Alex. 29 uncertain. Both John Winter (*Life and Letters in the Papyri* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1933], 149) and Koskiennemi (*Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des Griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.* [Helsinki: Akateeminen Kirjakauppa, 1956], 165) consider PSI 9.1041, PSI 3.208 and P.Oxy. 12.1492 to belong together. Grenfell and Hunt, in P.Oxy. 12.1492, also suggest that PSI 3.208 "was possibly written by the same person" on the basis of similar wording. See also Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 463-87 (esp. 465).

88 It is worth pointing out, however, that this letter has previously been thought to contain an unusual *nomen sacrum*. In line 7 of the letter, the elders introduce one Ἄνον καθιχούμενον ἐν τῇ Γενέσει. Although Ἄνον is not supralineated, the *editio princeps* interpreted it as a *nomen sacrum* standing for ἄνθρωπον. Tibiletti followed this interpretation in his reproduction, commenting that the catechumen is "indicato senza nome come ἄν(θρωπ)ον a mo' di *nomen sacrum*" (*Lettera private*, 191). The confusion arose partly from two factors. First, there is extra space before and after the name, which is apparently a result of a blank space left to insert the name later as it was unknown at the time that the letter was drawn up. The practice of preparing such letters in advance and leaving space open for later insertion of a name is attested in SB 10.10255, on which Treu comments that "der Name in eine freigelassene Stelle eingesetzt, das Formular was also schon vorbereitet" ("Christliche Empfehlungs-Schemabriefe auf Papyrus," in *Zetesis: Album amicorum door vrienden en collega's aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. E. de Strycker ter gelegenheid van zijn 65e verjaardag*, ed. Th. Lefevre [Antwerp: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1973], 633). Second, the name Ἄνος is otherwise unattested. However, similar known names such as Ἄνος

fifth letter is a business letter requesting a donation of land, presumably for the church.⁸⁹ While this letter provides an interesting glimpse into church business and fundraising at Oxyrhynchus, it does not fit into the specific genre of letters of recommendation, and also does not contain abbreviated *nomina sacra*.⁹⁰ Therefore, this letter will also be excluded.

Letters of recommendation, as their name suggests, were letters carried by travelers commending them to the recipient and supplying endorsements for the traveler's character or credentials.⁹¹ The expectation was that the recipient, upon reading the letter, would hospitably welcome the recommended stranger.⁹² While

(with a double nu), Ἀνοῦ, and Ἀνοῦς make the speculation of the *editio princeps* unlikely. In this case, the simplest interpretation—namely, that Ἀνον was the name of the chatecumen—is the preferable one. See Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 122; Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 86 n. 10.

89 Sotas makes a request to Demetrianos to donate land “to the place” (τῷ τόπῳ, line 10). Τόπος was often used in reference to churches at this time. See Giuseppe Ghedini, “O ΤΟΠΙΟΣ nel POxy. 1492,” *Aegyptus* 2 (1921): 337-38; and Etienne Bernand, “Τόπος dans les inscriptions grecques d’Egypte,” *ZPE* 98 (1993): 103-110. Judge also concludes that “the topoi may simply be the churches themselves” (E.A. Judge, “The Earliest Use of Monachos for ‘Monk’ (P.Coll.Youtie 77) and the Origins of Monasticism,” in *Jerusalem and Athens: Cultural Transformation in Late Antiquity*, ed. Alanna Nobbs [WUNT 265; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010], 168; repr. from *JAC* 20 [1977]). Luijendijk takes for granted that τόπος refers to the church in this letter (*Greetings in the Lord*, 125-36). Blumell and Wayment come to this conclusion after brief discussion (*Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 483). Wipszycka is of the view that the land was intended for cultivation (“Remarques sur les lettres privées chrétiennes des IIe-IVe siècles: a propos d’un livre de M. Naldini,” *JJP* 18 [1974], 212-13).

90 It merits mentioning, however, that Sotas renders τῷ θεῷ in *plene* in this letter's closing prayer “to God” for Demetrianos' health. Considering that *nomina sacra* appear in both the greeting and the closing prayer for health in all four other letters belonging to the dossier of Sotas, one must assume there was a motivation not to use *nomina sacra* in this instance—perhaps genre, as Luijendijk has suggested (*Greetings in the Lord*, 125-36).

91 Ghedini offers the somewhat amusingly formulated assessment that such letters came to be required in order to ensure that “lazy” and “parasitic” people could not abuse the generosity of Christian communities (*Lettere cristiane*, 129).

92 On letters of recommendation (also called letters of introduction), see: Clinton W. Keyes, “The Greek Letter of Introduction,” *AJP* 56 (1935): 28-44; Chan-Hie Kim, *Form and Structure of the Familiar Greek Letter of Recommendation* (SBLDS 4; Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature Seminar on Paul, 1972); Kurt Treu, “Christliche Empfehlungs-Schemabriefe,” 629-36; S.R. Llewelyn, “Christian Letters of Recommendation,” *NewDocs* 8:169-72; Stanley K. Stowers, “Letters of Mediation,” in *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (LEC; Philadelphia: The

such letters were used widely in secular Graeco-Roman society, the importance of travel and hospitality in early Christianity seems to have resulted in the practice finding an especially useful place among itinerant members of the Christian community. Already, for instance, one begins to find the Christian practice of epistolary recommendation in the letters of Paul, as in Romans 16:1-2, where Paul introduces and recommends Phoebe, a deaconess from the church in Cenchrea.⁹³

Although letters of recommendation are by no means exclusively Christian, the Christian letters developed a unique model. As Luijendijk points out, their specific form and other identifiably Christian features, such as *nomina sacra* and isopsephisms, make Christian letters of recommendation “a subgroup within the genre.”⁹⁴ Tibiletti similarly remarks that “letters of introduction and recommendation are divided into two groups: one exclusively Christian, with a fixed form, and a second that allows for variation on the basis of different situations.”⁹⁵ There are nine Christian letters of recommendation identified by Treu and Sirivianou, all of which follow the same pattern:⁹⁶

Westminster Press, 1986), 153-65; Timothy M. Teeter, “Christian Letters of Recommendation in the Papyrus Record,” *PBR* 9 (1990): 59-69; idem, “Letters of Recommendation or Letters of Peace?,” in *Akten des 21. internationalen Papyrologenkongresses, Berlin 1995*, ed. Bärbel Kramer et al. [APF Beiheft 3; Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1997], 954-60.

93 Llewelyn notes that chapter 16 may have originally been a separate letter of recommendation to the church at Ephesus that was ultimately joined to the end of Paul’s letter to the Romans (“Christian Letters of Recommendation,” 171). For a survey of scholarly discussion surrounding this proposal, see Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 8-9. Other New Testament examples of recommendation include Phil 2:25-30 and 2 Cor 3:1-4. See Llewelyn, “Christian Letters of Recommendation,” 171.

94 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 107. On some of the epistolary “formulae of belief” employed here, see also Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 101-104.

95 “Le lettere di presentazione e di raccomandazione si dividono in due gruppi: uno esclusivamente Cristiano, con formulario fisso, un secondo che lascia spazio a variant sulla base di situazioni diverse” (Tibiletti, *Lettere private*, 102).

96 These nine letters include the first four mentioning Sotas listed above (PSI 3.208, PSI 9.1041, P.Alex. 29, and P.Oxy. 36.2785) as well as SB 10.10255, SB 3.7269, P.Oxy. 8.1162, SB 16.12304, and P.Oxy. 56.3857. Treu published the first seven in “Christliche Empfehlungs-Schemabriefe,” then published the eighth in “P.Berol. 8508: Christliches Empfehlungsschreiben aus dem Einband

1. Initial greeting in the Lord (χαίρει ἐν κ̄ω or ἐν κ̄ω χαίρειν) with a *nomen sacrum* and the names of the sender and recipient;⁹⁷
2. Introduction of the letter bearer(s), stating name(s) and ecclesiastical position(s) (e.g. “brother,” “sister,” or “catechumen”);⁹⁸
3. Request for the recipient to receive the letter bearer(s) (προσ-, παρα-, or συνδέχομαι) in a particular manner (“in peace,” ἐν εἰρήνῃ; “according to custom,” κατὰ τὸ ἔθος; “as is proper,” ὡς καθήκει);
4. “Through whom” (δι’ οὗ/ῆς/ῶν) the two communities exchange greetings (“I and those with me greet you and those with you,” σε καὶ τοὺς παρὰ σοὶ ἐγὼ καὶ οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ προσαγορεύομεν);
5. Final salutatory prayer for the health of the recipient with a *nomen sacrum* and/or isopsephism.

The degree of formulaic similarity led Kim to believe that Christians may have had their own epistolary manual.⁹⁹ However, it may be more likely that a “standard form” (borrowing Teeter’s expression) developed more organically as such letters circulated among networked congregations.¹⁰⁰

des koptisch-gnostischen Kodex P.8502,” *APF* 28 (1982): 53-54. Sirivianou later published the ninth in the 56th volume of P.Oxy. On the formulaic pattern of these letters, see also Teeter, “Christian Letters of Recommendation,” 62; Llewelyn, “Christian Letters of Recommendation,” 170-71; and Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 109-10.

97 As Llewelyn points out, four of the letters have the imperative χαίρει ἐν κ̄ω, and the other four with complete prescripts have the usual ἐν κ̄ω χαίρειν (“Christian Letters of Recommendation,” 170). P.Oxy. 56.3857 is damaged at the top, making it uncertain whether it contained a similar opening formula.

98 According to Treu, explicitly naming the letter bearer was absolutely necessary (“unumgänglich”), and the title ἀδελφός/ἀδελφή distinguishes baptized church members from κατηχούμενοι (“Christliche Empfehlungs-Schemabriefe,” 633).

99 Kim, *Form and Structure*, 117-18.

100 Teeter rightly points out that “a manual ... implies a number of models, and I know of no other type of letter between Christians or Christian congregations that is stereotyped to this degree. These letters do indicate that a ‘standard form’ was current, at least in Egypt, for over a hundred years” (“Christian Letters of Recommendation,” 63). Llewelyn is similarly cautious in his remark that “although their form is not attested in the handbooks, it is evident that the writers have followed an exemplum” (“Christian Letters of Recommendation,” 170). Luijendijk proposes that the letter writers copied from and imitated each other’s letters, which seems plausible given that, as she points out, the letters are themselves evidence of networking among the communities (*Greetings in the Lord*, 110).

Of these nine Christian letters of recommendation, four come from the dossier of Sotas and share a unique greeting formula.¹⁰¹ Three of these are issued by Sotas himself and will be analyzed below, namely PSI 3.208, PSI 9.1041, and P.Alex. 29. The fourth, P.Oxy. 36.2785, is from presbyters in Sotas' region, and the similarities between their letter and those of Sotas may be due to local custom. All five letters from the dossier of Sotas listed above (including P.Oxy. 12.1492, which is not a letter of recommendation) begin with the imperative χαίρε rather than the usual χαίρειν. In the four letters of recommendation, the greeting is followed by the common Christian expression "in the Lord," which is reinforced by the use of a *nomen sacrum*.¹⁰² The name of the recipient follows in the vocative case with an ecclesiastical epithet (e.g. "brother," "papa," "son"), which is then followed by the sender's name in the nominative case and προσαγορεύω ("I/we greet"). A synopsis of the greeting formulae in the five letters of the Sotas dossier follows:

PSI 3.208	χαίρε ἐν κ̅ω, ἀγαπητὲ ἀδελφε Πέτρε, Σώτας σε προσαγορεύω.
PSI 9.1041	" " " " " Παύλε, " " "
P.Alex. 29	" " " " " Μάξιμε, " " "
P.Oxy. 36.2785	" " " " πάπα Σώτα, πρεσβ(ύτεροι) Ἡρακλέους πολλά σε προσαγορεύομεν.
P.Oxy. 12.1492	" " " " " ἱερὲ υἱὲ Δημητριάδῃ, " " "

In addition to the unique greeting formula, the two letters of recommendation to Peter and to Paul (PSI 3.208 and PSI 9.1041) are written on parchment, an exceptionally rare writing material for letters. As Blumell has observed, there are in total only four letters on parchment out of roughly 7,500 published letters from Egypt between the third century BCE and the seventh century CE, and out of those

¹⁰¹ See Nobbs, "Duties and Responsibilities," 160 and *passim*, who rightly recognises that the unique greeting formula shared by these five letters provides another strong reason to associate them with the same Sotas. See also Llewelyn, "Christian Letters of Recommendation," 170.

¹⁰² The letter from Sotas to Demetrianos requesting a donation of land omits the expression "in the Lord" but includes a prayer "to God" for health in the close, although without using a *nomen sacrum*. As this letter is not a letter of recommendation, however, there is no reason to assume it should follow an identical pattern.

provenanced to Oxyrhynchus, these are the only two.¹⁰³ Other parchment remains from Egypt contain literary texts, and their number begins to increase in the third century and increases sharply in the fourth, around the time that these letters were written.¹⁰⁴ Also, not insignificantly, parchment codices containing specifically Christian literary texts begin to appear at Oxyrhynchus during the same time.¹⁰⁵ The implication for these two parchment letters to Peter and Paul, as compellingly proposed by Luijendijk, is that already in the late third century when Sotas penned these letters, Christians at Oxyrhynchus were producing their own parchment manuscripts, and these letters were composed on leftover scraps.¹⁰⁶ This suggests that Sotas was not only involved in facilitating travel, but also in the production of books. Furthermore, Sotas' letter to Demetrianos (P.Oxy. 12.1492) suggests that he was engaged in church business and fundraising. As we will see below, his letter to Paul (PSI 9.1041) also indicates that he had a role in catechetical instruction.¹⁰⁷

It is evident that Sotas was a prominent ecclesiastical figure at Oxyrhynchus. In their letter to Sotas, the Heracleopolite elders refer to him as "beloved papa"

¹⁰³ Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 178-79; cf. Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 469.

¹⁰⁴ Turner observes that "it is not till the fourth century that the parchment codex begins to be at all common in Egypt" (Turner, *Typology*, 37). A search in the LDAB for literature from Egypt on parchment yields the following results: 1st cent. 3; 2nd cent. 14; 3rd cent. 66; 4th cent. 269; 5th cent. 603; 6th cent. 901; 7th cent. 672.

¹⁰⁵ Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 180. Blumell cites the following texts: P.Oxy. 15.1828 (Shepherd of Hermas, 3rd cent.); P.Oxy. 6.847 (John 2:11-22, 3rd/4th cent.); P.Oxy. 15.1783 (Shepherd of Hermas, 3rd/4th cent.); P.Oxy. 66.4500 (Rev 11:15-18, 3rd/4th cent.); PSI 1.5 (Jas 1:25-27, 4th cent.); P.Oxy. 8.1080 (Rev 3:19-4:3, 4th cent.).

¹⁰⁶ Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 148-50. Luijendijk goes so far as to "behold the contours of a Christian scriptorium at Oxyrhynchus" (ibid., 151). On the use of scrap parchment for writing letters, Luijendijk draws attention to two letters from the Pachomian archive written on such scraps (ibid., 148-49). James Robinson explains that one of these letters "was written ... on a long thin irregular skin, obviously the leg of an animal that could not be used to produce leaves for a codex," and the other letter, he says, "makes a similar impression" ("The Pachomian Monastic Library at the Chester Beatty Library and the Bibliothèque Bodmer," *Occasional Papers of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity* 19 [1990], 5).

¹⁰⁷ The Heracleopolite letter to Sotas (P.Oxy. 36.2785) also concerns chatechumens, but is not included in the group of letters under analysis here.

(ἀγαπητὲ πάπα; P.Oxy.36.2785, line 1), a title that has until recently been understood to refer to a priest.¹⁰⁸ However, Luijendijk has created a strong case that the term *πάπας* was generally a designation for Christian bishops, and that Sotas was most likely the bishop of Oxyrhynchus during the latter part of the third century.¹⁰⁹ As it turns out, her proposal seems to have been confirmed by a recently discovered Ethiopic manuscript containing a collection of texts dating to the late fifth to early sixth century.¹¹⁰ One of the texts contained in the manuscript, known as the *History of the Alexandrian Patriarchate*, provides a list of Egyptian bishops ordained by the various early Alexandrian patriarchs. Incredibly, among them is mentioned a man by the name of Sotas, who was appointed as bishop of Oxyrhynchus by Maximus, patriarch of Alexandria ca. 264-282.¹¹¹ There is therefore now little doubt that the the

¹⁰⁸ This interpretation has been based largely on a misreading of the opening greeting of P.Oxy. 36.2785 due to the fact that the title “presbyter” is abbreviated (πρεσβ, line 2), making it not immediately clear whether it stands in apposition to the vocative addressee Σώτα or whether it is the nominative plural subject of the verb προσαγορεύομεν (line 3). The *editio princeps* interpreted it according to the former option, to read: “Greetings in the Lord, beloved papa Sotas, presbyter of Heracleopolis, we greet you much” (P.Oxy. 36.2785, 83). Two widely cited treatments of the word *πάπας* followed, arguing, based on this reading, that the title “papa” here refers to a priest: Annick Martin, “Aux origines de l’église copte: l’implantation et le développement du christianisme en Égypte (I^{er}-IV^e siècles),” *REA* 83 (1981): 35-56; and Tomasz Derda and Ewa Wipszycka, “L’emploi des titres Abba, Apa et Papas dans l’Égypte Byzantine,” *JJP* 24 (1994) 23-56 (treatment of the title “papa” does not appear until pp. 54-56). While Derda and Wipszycka acknowledge that the title usually refers to a bishop, they present P.Oxy. 36.2785 as evidence that it may also refer to other clergy: “Les presbyters aussi ont droit à ce titre. Dans une lettre de recommandation, P. Oxy. XXXVI 2785 [IV^e], nous trouvons la phrase: χαίρε ἐν κυρίῳ ἀγαπητὲ παπα Σώτα πρεσβ(ύτερε) Ἡρακλέους πολλά σε προσαγορεύομεν” (ibid., 54). However, Treu’s analysis of the formulaic patterns of Christian letters of recommendation led him to resolve the abbreviation as the plural subject of the verb προσαγορεύομεν, thus reading: “Greetings in the Lord, beloved papa Sotas, we, presbyters of Heracleopolis, greet you” (“Christliche Empfehlungs-Schemabriefe,” 634-35). This resolution indeed fits more appropriately into the greeting formula stereotype for these letters and renders the previous interpretations of the title “papa” in this letter unlikely.

¹⁰⁹ Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 81-124.

¹¹⁰ Alessandro Bausi and Alberto Camplani, “New Ethiopic Documents for the History of Christian Egypt,” *ZAC* 17 (2013): 215-47.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 240-47. Bausi and Camplani disclose few details about the names in the list of ordained bishops; however, they specifically reference the mention of Sotas’ ordination by Maximus in

five (possibly six)¹¹² letters comprising the dossier of Sotas belonged to none other than one of the earliest bishops of Oxyrhynchus.

We now turn to three of these letters, which are recommendations issued by Sotas and addressed to men by the names of Peter, Paul, and Maximus. Although the use of *nomina sacra* in these letters is relatively unremarkable in terms of the forms employed and their function in the opening and closing greeting formulae, the letters themselves are remarkable in that they were issued by a single, identifiable, high profile individual. We are therefore privy to an unusual abundance of details about Sotas and the social, historical, and personal circumstances under which the *nomina sacra* in these letters were produced and interpreted. We will proceed first by examining the details of each of these three letters individually, followed by a synthetic discussion focused on these circumstances and the situational information coded in Sotas' use of *nomina sacra* in these letters.

4.4.2 | Sotas to Peter (PSI 3.208)

TM no. 33228 11.8 cm (h) × 5.3 cm (w) Late 3rd/early 4th cent. CE
 Ghedini 13
 Naldini 28
 Blumell-Wayment 131

Ed. pr.: G. Vitelli, ed., *Papiri greci e latini*, vol. 3 (Pubblicazioni della Società italiana per la ricerca dei papyri greci e latini in Egitto; Florence: Ariani, 1914), 69 (no. 208).

χαῖρε ἐν κ̅ω, ἀγαπητὲ
 [ἀδ]ελφε Πέτρε, Σώτα[ς]
 [σ]ε προσαγορεύω.
 τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν
 5 Ἡρακλῆν παρὰδεξαι

the final paragraph of the conclusion on page 247. See also Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 114-15, who personally received this information from the authors before their article was published.

¹¹² SB 12.10772 may refer to the same Sotas, but I do not include it here, as Sotas is not an uncommon name in the papyri from Oxyrhynchus, and evidence connecting the Sotas mentioned in this letter to the bishop of Oxyrhynchus is circumstantial. See note 85 above.

[κ]ατ[ά] τὸ ἔθος, δι' οὗ σέ
καὶ τοὺς σὺν σοὶ πάγ-
τας ἀδελφοὺς ἐγὼ
καὶ οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ
10 προσαγορεύομε(ν).

ἐρρώσθαί σε
ἐν ᾧ εὐχόμαι.

line 10: pap. προσαγορεύομε

Translation: Greetings in the Lord, beloved brother Peter. I, Sotas, greet you. Receive our brother Heracles according to custom, through whom I and those with me greet you and all the brothers with you. I pray that you are well in God.

PSI 3.208 preserves a letter recommending “our brother Heracles” (lines 4-5), issued by Sotas to another Christian named Peter. As mentioned above, the letter (as well as that to Paul, discussed below) is unusually written on parchment and is likely an offcut left over from the production of parchment codices. The surviving edges of the parchment reveal an irregular shape, which lends additional support to this scenario. The narrow scrap measures 5.3 by 11.8 centimeters, and the letter has been penned on the smoother flesh side of the skin. Although there is some minor damage to the left- and righthand sides of the parchment, the text remains largely intact. The letter appears hastily written, in an “angular and pointy” hand that tends toward cursive and employs a number of ligatures.¹¹³ Although most of the lefthand edge of the parchment is broken off, there appears to have been very little margin. On the righthand side no margin is spared at all, which results in the writer having to truncate the final nu of προσαγορεύομε(ν) (line 10) as it approaches the edge of the page, which is indicated by a short supralineation above the final epsilon. The

¹¹³ Comparing PSI 3.208 to PSI 9.1041, examined below, Luijendijk describes the letters as “more angular and pointy” and lacking “the elegance of the hand that wrote the letter to Paul” (*Greetings in the Lord*, 84). Blumell and Wayment describe the hand similarly, as “rather angular and sharp with a subtle rightward slant” (*Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 471).

closing prayer for health is preceded by a blank space and is slightly indented, setting it off from the body of the letter.

In terms of content, this letter and the following two letters to Paul and Maximus are nearly word for word, differentiated only by minor details. The letter begins with a greeting “in the Lord” following the rather unusual imperative formula characteristic of the Sotas dossier delineated above. Neither the addressee nor the recommended person named in the letter can be identified with any known figures from antiquity. It is at least possible, however, to deduce that Peter and Heracles are fellow Christians: Peter’s name itself suggests this,¹¹⁴ as do the designations “brother”/“beloved brother” attached to both names.¹¹⁵ Wherever Heracles was travelling—the letter, although discovered at Oxyrhynchus, does not indicate his destination—Peter was presumably an important figure in the Christian community there.¹¹⁶ According to Sozomen, local bishops issued such letters to travellers

114 The name Πέτρος is virtually unattested before the rise of Christianity in Egypt. A search in the DDbDP yields 227 results for the name Πέτρος in documents from Egypt, all but one dating from the latter half of the third century on. The single exception is a tax receipt from Elephantine dated to the fourth year of the reign of Trajan (ca. 101 CE) confirming payment of the *λαογραφία* by a man named Νεμονᾶς Πέτρος (SB 5.7591). Dionysius of Alexandria, commenting on the naming of boys born to Christian parents, mentions that Peter was a preferred name (*apud* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.25.14). See also Roger S. Bagnall, “Religious Conversion and Onomastic Change in Early Byzantine Egypt,” *BASP* 19 (1982): 105–24.

115 The phrase ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφός occurs frequently in the letters of Paul and other New Testament letters, but does not begin to appear in papyrus letters until the latter half of the third century, most notably in letters of recommendation. In virtually every case, letters in which ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφός appears can safely be identified as Christian on other grounds and therefore seems to be a distinctively Christian form of address. See Alanna Nobbs, “‘Beloved Brothers’ in the New Testament and Early Christianity,” in *The New Testament in its First Century Setting: Essays on Context and Background in Honour of B.W. Winter on His 65th Birthday*, ed. P.J. Williams et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 143–50; and G.H.R. Horsley, “Beloved Brothers,” *NewDocs* 4:250–55. The adjective ἀγαπητός is also applied to the title πάπας in the Heracleopolite letter to Sotas (P.Oxy. 36.2785).

116 In the *editio princeps*, Teresa Lodi assumes (probably rightly) that both correspondents are heads of their respective communities: “Sotas che sembra fosse a capo di una comunità cristiana, ... a Pietro che era a capo di un'altra comunità” (PSI 3.208, 69). Naldini similarly refers to the addressees of PSI 3.208 and PSI 9.1041 as “superiori di comunità” (*Cristianesimo in Egitto*,

commending them to the bishop at their destination.¹¹⁷ The fact that Sotas, the bishop of Oxyrhynchus, has addressed this letter recommending Heracles to Peter therefore suggests that Peter was also a bishop.¹¹⁸

Although other letters of recommendation in the Sotas dossier indicate that the travelers were receiving catechetical instruction—as, for example, in the following letter in which Sotas commends to Paul a group of catechumens—this is likely not the case here.¹¹⁹ Treu has observed that familial designations such as “brother” or “sister” are typically applied to baptized Christians who are full members of the congregation as distinct from catechumens.¹²⁰ Thus, Heracles was likely a baptized Christian rather than a catechumen and presumably would have been received into full fellowship with Peter’s community. The request specifies that Heracles should be received “according to custom” (κατὰ τὸ ἔθος), perhaps an indication that this is the expected practice between Christians.¹²¹ The letter ends with an exchange of greetings between the communities, followed by the commonplace prayer for health.

Nomina sacra in this letter are standard. They appear only in the opening greeting “in the Lord” and the closing prayer for health “in God” in conventional contracted forms (ἐν $\overline{\kappa\omega}$ and ἐν $\overline{\theta\omega}$), framing the body of the letter. The *nomen sacrum*

151). Winter likewise imagines Sotas “writing in the capacity of head of a Christian community” (*Life and Letters in the Papyri*, 149).

117 Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.

118 This, however, cannot be securely established. In P.Oxy. 36.2785, it is not the bishop of Heracleopolis, but the elders who send the letter of recommendation to Sotas.

119 Sotas’ letter to Paul (PSI 9.1041, discussed below) recommends “our brothers Heron, Horion, Philadelphos, Pekusis and Naarous, catechumens of the congregation” and also “Leon, catechumen in the beginning of the gospel” (lines 4-11). Likewise, the Heracleopolite elders recommend to Sotas an “Anos, catechumen in Genesis” (P.Oxy. 36.2785, lines 7-8). On the various reasons for Christian travel in the Oxyrhynchus papyri, see see Blumell, “Christians on the Move,” and specifically pages 243-45 for a discussion of letters of recommendation.

120 Treu, “Christliche Empfehlungs-Schemabriefe,” 634-35.

121 In his letter to Demetrianos (P.Oxy. 12.1492), Sotas requests a donation of land to the τόπος “according to the ancient custom” (κατὰ τὸ παλαιὸν ἔθος, lines 9-10).

$\overline{\kappa\omega}$ in the first line of the greeting offers an immediate visual identification of the sender of the letter as a Christian, perhaps even before the recipient has had the opportunity to gather any other information, such as the sender's name, from the contents of the letter. The visual frame that the *nomina sacra* create around the letter's contents is augmented by the indentation of the postscript and the preceding blank space, setting it apart from the body. This framing function involving indenting or otherwise setting off the pre- and postscript greetings containing *nomina sacra* is a characteristic feature of the letters of recommendation in Sotas' dossier and will be discussed further in the synthesis below.

4.4.2 | Sotas to Paul (PSI 9.1041)

TM no. 30662

15.0 cm (h) × 6.3 cm (w)

Late 3rd/early 4th cent. CE

Naldini 29

Blumell-Wayment 132

Ed. pr.: G. Vitelli, ed., *Papiri greci e latini*, vol. 9 (Pubblicazioni della Società italiana per la ricerca dei papyri greci e latini in Egitto; Florence: Ariani, 1929), 74-75 (no. 1041).

χαῖρε ἐν $\overline{\kappa\omega}$, ἀγαπητὲ
 ἄδελφε Παύλε,
 Σώτας σε προσαγορ(εύω).
 τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ἡμῶν
 5 Ἦρωνα καὶ Ὀρίωνα
 καὶ Φιλάδελφον καὶ Πέ-
 κῦσιν καὶ Νααρωοῦν
 καθηχουμένους τῶν
 συναγομένων καὶ
 10 Λέωνα καθηχούμενον
 ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου
 πρόσδεξαι ὡς καθήκει[ι].
 δι' ὧν σὲ καὶ τοὺς σὺν σοὶ
 ἐγὼ καὶ οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ προσα-
 15 γορεύω. ἐρρώσθαί σε εὖ-
 χομαι ἐν $\overline{\kappa\omega}$
 ἀγαπητὲ ἄδελ(φε).

line 3: pap. προσαγορ'; line 8: κατηχουμένους; line 10: κατηχούμενον; line 11: pap. εὐαγ'γελίου

Translation: Greetings in the Lord, beloved brother Paul. I, Sotas, greet you. As is fitting, receive our brothers Heron, Horion, Philadelphos, Pekusis and Naarous, catachumens of the congregation, and Leon, catechumen in the beginning of the gospel, through whom I and those with me greet you and those with you. I pray that you are well in the Lord, beloved brother.

PSI 9.1041 also contains a letter of recommendation from Sotas very similar to the letter he wrote to Peter, but addressed to a “beloved brother Paul.” Also like the previous letter, it was written on a narrow piece of scrap parchment. The strip measures 6.3 by 15 centimeters, and the letter has been penned on the rougher hair side of the skin (whereas PSI 3.208 was written on the flesh side). Traces of writing are visible on the flesh side, but are too faint to be legible. In this instance, one immediately thinks of an address.¹²² However, it is clear that the writing is part of a larger text, likely an old literary manuscript,¹²³ with the narrow strip for the letter having been cut from the edge. Additionally, Luijendijk observes that the writing appears to be in a different hand than that of the letter.¹²⁴ Thus, unlike the previous letter from Sotas inscribed on a fresh parchment offcut, this letter appears to have been written on a recycled portion of an old parchment literary manuscript.

¹²² This is suggested in uncertain terms in Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 475. Luijendijk, however, states matter of factly that “it is not an address,” but provides no further detail (*Greetings in the Lord*, 82 n. 3). Llewelyn observes that all of the nine formulaic Christian letters of recommendation lack addresses, as the letters would have been delivered by the recommended person, therefore making addresses unnecessary (“Christian Letters of Recommendation,” 171).

¹²³ It is, of course, impossible to be certain of the genre of the original text since the traces of writing left behind are too faint and incomplete to be legible. However, the fact that the original text was written on parchment makes the likelihood that it was a literary text relatively high. See the discussion in the introduction to this section.

¹²⁴ Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 82 n. 3.

Although this letter was also sent by Sotas, the hand is different from his letter to Peter, most likely due to the use of a scribe or secretary.¹²⁵ The hand is generally practiced and legible, but rapid at times, employing occasional cursive forms and ligatures. In lines 8 and 10, the writer spells the word “catechumen” with a theta, a spelling also attested in the Heracleopolite letter to Sotas (P.Oxy. 36.2785) and thus probably reflects a regional pronunciation.¹²⁶ The text of the letter is again written all the way to the righthand edge of the page, resulting in the abbreviation of the words προσαγορεύω (pap. προσαγορ') and ἄδελ(φε) in lines 3 and 17 due to lack of space. The lefthand margin is wider than that of the previous letter, perhaps owing partially to the ekthesis visually marking off the beginning of the opening greeting in line 1 and the beginning of the body in line 4. Indeed, readability seems to have been a matter of importance to the scribe (whether Sotas himself or a scribe in his employ) since the closing prayer for health is also marked off, as in the previous letter, by eisthesis.

This letter is longer than the letter of recommendation addressed to Peter since it recommends six individuals, but the content is otherwise very similar in terms of structure and phraseology. Again, the letter opens with the imperative greeting “in the Lord” and employs a *nomen sacrum* (ἐν κυ̅), visually identifying the sender as a fellow Christian. Those recommended, all mentioned by name, include a group of five men who are “catechumens of the congregation” (καθηχουμένους τῶν συναγομένων, lines 8-9) and one other, named Leon, who is a “catechumen in the beginning of the gospel” (καθηχούμενον ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, lines 10-11). The distinction seems to imply different levels of catechesis, which brings to mind the

125 According to Naldini, PSI 3.208 and PSI 9.1041 are likely in the same hand (*Cristianesimo in Egitto*, 151 and 153). Koskienniemi is of the same opinion (*Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie*, 165). However, more recent assessments conclude that they are not. See Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 84, and Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 473.

126 According to Gignac, the interchange of voiceless stops (such as τ) and aspirated stops (such as θ) indicates such characteristics in the speech of the writer (Gignac, *Grammar of the Greek Papyri*, 1:90-91). On the interchange of tau and theta specifically, see *ibid.*, 87 and 92.

oft-cited passage in *Contra Celsum* 3.51, where Origen describes the stages of initiation into the fellowship of Christians:

For philosophers who converse in public do not select their hearers, but anyone interested stops to listen. But as far as they can, Christians previously examine the souls of those who want to hear them, and test them individually beforehand; when before entering the community the hearers seem to have devoted themselves sufficiently to the desire to live a good life, then they introduce them. They appoint one group separately consisting of those who have recently begun and are being introduced and have not yet received the symbol of having been purified [ἰδίᾳ μὲν ποιήσαντες τάγμα τῶν ἄρτι ἀρχομένων καὶ εἰσαγομένων καὶ οὐδέπω τὸ σύμβολον τοῦ ἀποκεκαθάρθαι ἀνεληφότων], and another group of those who, as far as they are able, make it their set purpose to desire nothing other than those things of which Christians approve [ἕτερον δὲ τὸ τῶν κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν παραστησάντων ἑαυτῶν τὴν προαίρεσιν οὐκ ἄλλο τι βούλεσθαι ἢ τὰ Χριστιανοῖς δοκοῦντα]. Among the latter group some are appointed to inquire into the lives and conduct of those who want to join the community in order that they may prevent those who indulge in trickery from coming to their common gathering; those who do not do this they wholeheartedly receive, and make them better every day.¹²⁷

Luijendijk has suggested that the “beginners” described by Origen appear to correspond to the catechumen whom Sotas describes as being “in the beginning of the gospel”; likewise, she proposes, the “catechumens of the congregation” correspond to the second group in Origen’s description.¹²⁸

A problem with this interpretation arises, however, when one considers Origen’s remark that the first group “have not yet received the symbol of having been purified” (οὐδέπω τὸ σύμβολον τοῦ ἀποκεκαθάρθαι ἀνεληφότων); that is, they have not

¹²⁷ Translation modified from *Origen: Contra Celsum*, ed. and trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 163. Greek text from *Origenes: Contra Celsum, Libri VIII*, ed. M. Marcovich (VCSup 54; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 193.

¹²⁸ Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 116–17 (presumably following the suggestion of the *editio princeps*: “Forse anche, e sia detto con ogni riserva, quando Origene c. Cels. 3, 51 distingue due categorie di catechumeni e caratterizza la prima come τάγμα τῶν ἀρχομένων κτλ., vuole indicare appunto coloro che qui sono detti ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου” [Coppola, PSI 9.1041, 74]). Blumell and Wayment repeat this suggestion (*Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 476). Both also present the possibility that the phrase ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is a reference to the incipit of the Gospel of Mark (“the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ,” ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Mark 1:1), but reject this interpretation in favor of the more straightforward understanding of the phrase to mean that Leon was in the first stages of his Christian education, beginning the study of the gospels.

yet been baptized.¹²⁹ Baptism is the final step in the initiative process separating catechumens from full membership of the congregation,¹³⁰ so it is difficult to see why Origen would single out the first group as being unbaptized if the same were also true of the second group. The most straightforward reading seems to be that Origen is drawing a distinction between catechumens in general on the one hand, who are unbaptized and are “being introduced” (εἰσαγομένων),¹³¹ and the fully initiated members of the congregation on the other.¹³²

A perhaps closer, yet still obscure, parallel to Sotas’ distinction between the “catechumens of the congregation” and the “catechumen in the beginning of the

129 The verb ἀποκαθαρίζω refers to the ritual of baptism (cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 1.6.36.3; Cyril of Alexandria, *Comm. Luc.* 83). The “symbol” (σύμβολον) mentioned may refer to the postbaptismal chrismation of the forehead in the shape of the cross (cf. Herm. Sim. 9.16.2-3; *Acts Thom.* 27 and the previous chapter of this study). More likely, however, σύμβολον refers to the interrogatory baptismal confession commonly called the *symbolum* by later Latin writers (cf. Cyprian, *Epist.* 75.7). See also Stefan Norgaard, “Body, Sin, and Society in Origen of Alexandria,” *ST* 66 (2012), 28-30; and Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 332, 352, 782-83 and *passim*.

130 See, for example, Augustine, *Tract. Ev. Jo.* 44.2: “Ask a man, ‘Are you a Christian?’ He replies to you, ‘I am not’ if he is a pagan or a Jew. But if he says, ‘I am’, ask of him again, ‘Are you a catechumen or a believer?’ If he replies, ‘A catechumen’, he has been anointed but not yet baptized” (*Interroga hominem: Christianus es? Respondet tibi: Non sum, si Paganus est aut Iudaeus. Si autem dixerit: Sum; adhuc quaeris ab eo: Catechumenus, an fidelis? Si responderit: Catechumenus; inunctus est, nondum lotus*). For an earlier example, Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 1.6.36: “For he called those who have already believed in the Holy Spirit spiritual, but those newly instructed and not yet purified he called carnal” (πνευματικούς μὲν γὰρ τοὺς πεπιστευκότας ἤδη τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι προσείπεν, σαρκικούς δὲ τοὺς νεοκατηχήτους καὶ μηδέπω κεκαθαρμένους).

131 According to Lampe, s.v. εἰσάγω, “ὁ εἰσαγόμενος, *catechumen*.” Lampe cites two examples for this use, the first from an earlier passage in Origen, *Cels.* 3.15: “We clearly show the sacred character of our origin, and do not conceal it, as Celcus thinks, since even in people only just converted [εἰσαγομένοις] we inculcate a scorn of idols and all images” (trans. Chadwick). The second passage is from Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 3.66: “The presidents of churches made careful distinction between these persons: those who tried to join on fictitious grounds they warded off from the flock of God as wolves hiding in sheep’s fleeces; those who did so with a pure heart they tested over a period and after sufficient trial included them among the number of those allowed entry [μετὰ τὴν αὐτάρκη διάπειραν τῷ πλήθει τῶν εἰσαγομένων κατέλεγον]” (trans. from *Eusebius: Life of Constantine*, ed. and trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999], 153).

132 See Norgaard, “Body, Sin, and Society,” 28-30.

gospel” might be found in a passage from the composite work known as the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus.¹³³ It appears to envisage a situation in which baptismal candidates were examined for their conduct while they were catechumens, only after which they would be allowed to “hear the gospel”:

And when those appointed to receive baptism are chosen, their life having been examined (if they lived virtuously while they were catechumens, and if they honored the widows, and if they visited those who are sick, and if they fulfilled every good work), and when those who brought them in testify in his behalf that he acted thus, then let them hear the gospel.¹³⁴

What exactly is meant by the phrase “let them hear the gospel” has been a point of contention, but it would appear in any case that some sort of instruction in the gospel took place as an initiation to baptism.¹³⁵

Two late fourth-century works seem to reflect situations similar to that described in *Apostolic Tradition*, in which advanced catechumens preparing for baptism undertook a two-part syllabus of scriptural instruction. In *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.39, baptismal candidates are first instructed in the nature of God and the eschatological history of the Old Testament, and then in the gospel stories of

¹³³ Paul Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson, and L. Edward Phillips describe the work as “an aggregation of different sources, quite possibly arising from different geographical regions and probably from different historical periods, from perhaps as early as the mid-second century to as late as the mid-fourth century” (*The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002], 14).

¹³⁴ *Trad. ap.* 20.1-2 (Sahidic version), trans. *ibid.*, 104.

¹³⁵ See William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 43 n. 20 for an overview of scholarly speculation on this statement. Paul F. Bradshaw points out an interesting directive from canon 18 of the First Council of Orange (441 CE) that appears to confirm the idea that, at least in some churches, catechumens had previously not been allowed to hear the reading of the gospel: “*That catechumens are to hear the reading of the Gospel.* It was agreed that the Gospels shall be read to catechumens in all churches in our provinces” (*italics original*). Bradshaw observes that this directive “strongly implies that previously the opposite custom had prevailed, at least in some churches in the region, and that catechumens had been regularly dismissed at the Sunday liturgy before the Gospel was read” (*Reconstructing Early Christian Worship* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010], 63).

Jesus' incarnation, passion, resurrection, and assumption.¹³⁶ The following chapter refers to this group of advanced catechumens as οἱ φωτιζόμενοι ("the enlightened ones") and distinguishes them from ordinary catechumens (8.8.2; 8.35.2).¹³⁷ A similar pattern is attested in late fourth-century Jerusalem by the Christian pilgrim Egeria, who states that catechumens preparing for baptism are taught an intensive, five week long survey of the entire Bible, beginning with Genesis, followed by two weeks of instruction in the creed.¹³⁸

While these accounts are sketchy and minor details vary somewhat, they suggest a tradition in which catechumens enrolled for baptism were set apart from ordinary catechumens and instructed in a comprehensive scriptural syllabus from Genesis to the gospels. It is therefore interesting that Sotas distinguishes Leon, a "catechumen in the beginning of the gospel," from the "catechumens of the

¹³⁶ "Let him be instructed why the world was made, and why man was appointed to be a citizen therein; let him also know his own nature, of what sort it is; let him be taught how God punished the wicked with water and fire, and did glorify the saints in every generation—I mean Seth, and Enos, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham and his posterity, and Melchizedek, and Job, and Moses, and Joshua, and Caleb, and Phineas the priest, and those that were holy in every generation; and how God still took care of and did not reject mankind, but called them from their error and vanity to the acknowledgement of the truth at various seasons Let him that offers himself to baptism learn these and the like things during the time that he is a catechumen. ... And after this thanksgiving, let him instruct him in the doctrines concerning our Lord's incarnation, and in those concerning his passion, and resurrection from the dead, and assumption" (*Apos. Con.* 7.39; trans. from *ANF* 7:475-76).

¹³⁷ A special vocabulary arose in the fourth and fifth century patristic writings to distinguish those in final preparation for baptism from ordinary catechumens, which may be reflective of earlier traditions. Greek writers refer to these more advanced baptismal candidates as οἱ φωτιζόμενοι, whereas most Latin writers call them *competentes* ("candidates"). Thus, for example, Cyril of Jerusalem addresses his Catechetical Lectures to the φωτιζόμενοι (*Procat.* 1), "who are converting out of the class of catechumens" (ὁ ἐκ κατηχομένων μεταβαλλόμενος, *Cat.* 6.29) and "who are about to be baptized" (ὁ βαπτιζόμενος) (*Cat.* 16.26). Augustine consistently distinguished between ordinary catechumens and *competentes*. In *Faith and Works* 6.9, for instance, he argues that if it is deemed important to provide instruction to the *catechumeni*, then it is all more more important to instruct the *competentes* who "have already submitted their names in order to receive baptism" ("ad percipiendum Baptismum sua nomina iam dederunt"). See Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 473-88, 778-89; Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 62-63, 244-96.

¹³⁸ *Itin. Eger.* 46.2-3.

congregation” in his letter to Peter. As it turns out, this is not the only letter in Sotas’ dossier that recommends a catechumen studying a specific biblical curriculum. In P.Oxy. 36.2785, the Heracleopolite elders recommend to Sotas one “Anos, catechumen in Genesis” (lines 7-8). I suggest that these references to catechumens “in Genesis” and “in the beginning of the gospel” among Sotas’ letters correspond to the advanced catechumens under pre-baptismal scriptural instruction described in the passages from *Apostolic Tradition*, *Apostolic Constitutions*, and Egeria’s *Itinerary*. Sotas therefore singles out Leon from the group of “catechumens of the congregation”—that is, ordinary catechumens—because he is studying a particular pre-baptismal curriculum in the gospels and requires a reception in accordance with his level of catechesis.

Sotas requests that the recommended catechumens be received in an appropriate manner, as he does in his letter to Peter, but this time he appeals to what is “fitting” (ὡς καθήκει) rather than to what is customary. The phrase ὡς καθήκει appears in other documents, most notably in notices of birth and death, requesting that persons be registered according to age and status, “as is fitting.”¹³⁹ Sotas’ use of this expression may add further support to the proposal that the catechumens being recommended to Paul’s community were of different classes and needed to be received in accordance with their catechetical status.

The letter ends with the formulaic prayer for health using a *nomen sacrum*, but this time the prayer is made “in the Lord” (ἐν κυρίῳ) rather than “in God” (ἐν θεῷ) as in the letter to Peter. Again, the *nomina sacra* are co-deployed with ek-/eisthesis in the

139 From Oxyrhynchus at around the same time, see for example P.Oxy. 74.4996, 4997, and 4998 (all mid-third century), all of which request registration of a deceased person or persons “in the list of those of a similar category, as is fitting” (ἐν τῇ τῶν ὁμοίων τάξει ὡς καθήκει). P.Oxy. 74.4999, a late third century registration of a child from Oxyrhynchus requests that a boy be enrolled “in the category of his age group, as is fitting” (εἰς τὴν τῶν ὁμηλικῶν τάξιν ὡς καθήκει). Also of relevance are two mid-first century apprentice registrations from Oxyrhynchus: P.Mich. 3.170 and PSI 8.871. In the former, a father requests that his son Ammonios be registered as a weaver’s apprentice “among the apprentices of the same year, as is appropriate” (ἐν τοῖς τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἔτους μαθηταῖς ὡς καθήκει). The latter requests that the apprentice be registered “in the list of those of a similar category, as is fitting” (ἐν τῇ τῶν ὁμοίων τάξει ὡς καθήκει), following the familiar formula.

pre- and postscript formulae, framing the body of the letter and providing its recipient with an immediate visual indication of Christian provenance. This cross-coupling of the *nomina sacra* with sectional divisions also lends itself to readability, adding further weight to the inferences made in the previous chapters regarding the accessibility that the *nomina sacra* may have provided to observers of written texts by way of their iconic quality. Moreover, the fact that letters of recommendation were delivered by the recommended persons themselves presents the possibility that their carriers would have had the opportunity to observe these visually salient renderings of the *nomina sacra* as they were on the way to their destination.¹⁴⁰

The fact that the bearers of this particular letter were catechumens draws our attention to an interesting intersection between the *nomina sacra* and Christian education, a link that we will explore more fully in the following chapter. As Luijendijk points out, “literate Christians-in-the-making will have learned of the practice of *nomina sacra* in the period of their catechumenate through the study of Christian manuscripts.”¹⁴¹ As we will see, familiarity with *nomina sacra* was indeed a matter of focus in some early Christian writing exercises.¹⁴² However, given their multimodal affordances, I would argue that the *nomina sacra* also provided to illiterate catechumens the ability to participate—visually if not textually—in such an introduction to Christian literary manuscripts. We learn from this letter that Leon was an advanced catechumen studying the gospels, most likely in preparation for baptism, and one might easily imagine an explanation of the *nomina sacra* forming a part of such a curriculum.

¹⁴⁰ It is worth mentioning that neither of the letters of recommendation from the dossier of Sotas written on parchment appear to have been folded, although it is possible that they were rolled. However, the letter on papyrus, P.Alex. 29, was folded. See further discussion below.

¹⁴¹ Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 69. Roberts similarly comments: “At the same time their [i.e. the *nomina sacra*] full meaning was only apparent to the faithful to whose attention it was brought whenever the sacred books, whether of the Old Testament or of those that later became the New, were read” (*Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 48).

¹⁴² See especially the discussion P.Oxy. 2.209 in the following chapter.

4.4.3 | *Sotas to Maximus (P.Alex. 29)*

TM no. 30466

15.5 cm (h) × 6.5 cm (w)

Late 3rd/early 4th cent. CE

Naldini 19

Blumell-Wayment 130

Ed. pr.: A. Świderek and M. Vandoni, eds., *Papyrus grecs du musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie* (Travaux du centre d'archéologie méditerranéenne de l'Académie polonaise des sciences 2; Warsaw: 1929), 73-74 (no. 29).

[χ]αῖρε ἐ[ν κ̄ω]
 [ἀγα]πητὲ ἀδελφε
 [] Μάξιμε,
 [Σώ(?)]τας σὲ προσαγορεύω.
 5 [τ]ὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶ[ν]
 Δ[ίφ]ιλον ἐρχόμενον
 π[ρὸς] σὲ προσθ[έξ]αι
 ἐν [ε]ἰρήνῃ δι' [οὖ] σὲ
 κ[αὶ] τοὺς σὺν σοὶ
 10 ἐγ[ώ] καὶ οἱ σὺν ἐμοῖ
 προσαγορεύομεν.

ἐρρώσθαί σε
 εὐχομαι,
 ἀγαπητὲ
 15 ἀδελφε ἐν κ̄ω

line 4: προσαγορεύω

Translation: Greetings in [the Lord], beloved brother [] Maximus. I, [So?]tas, greet you. Receive in peace our brother Diphilos who is coming to you, through [whom] I and those with me greet you and those with you. I pray that you are well, beloved brother in the Lord.

The final extant letter of recommendation issued by Sotas, P.Alex. 29, commends a man named Diphilos to a certain individual identified as the “beloved brother Maximus” (ἀγαπητὲ ἀδελφε [] Μάξιμε, lines 2-3). Naldini speculated that this may

have been the same Maximus who was the patriarch of Alexandria from 264-282.¹⁴³ While this is indeed possible, especially given that the *History of the Alexandrian Patriarchate* now confirms that Maximus appointed Sotas as bishop of Oxyrhynchus, the identity of the Maximus to whom the letter is addressed cannot be discerned from its contents.¹⁴⁴ In any case, Sotas, Peter, Paul, and Maximus were all probably bishops.

Unlike the previous two letters issued by Sotas, this letter is written on papyrus rather than parchment. It survives in two fragments that make up a narrow strip of 6.5 by 15.5 centimeters and has been folded into four vertical segments, resulting in some minor lacunae along the fold lines of the larger second fragment. The hand, again different from that of either of the previous two letters, appears fairly regular and practiced and employs a few ligatures. No abbreviations are employed due to a lack of space in this letter, although the wider left- and righthand margins allow only enough space for an average of 2.6 words per line. The closing prayer for health is preceded by a blank space, and as in the letters to Peter and Paul, is also set off by eisthesis.

The name of the sender in line 4 is partially lost due to a break at the top left corner of the papyrus, which has led to some doubt as to whether it should be identified with Sotas. Luijendijk, following the *editio princeps*, presents only the last two letters of the name in her transcription (i.e.]ας), and points out that other names could just as easily be reconstructed here, such as Θωμᾶς or Θεονᾶς, both of whom also wrote letters of recommendation around the same time as Sotas (P.Col. 11.298 and SB 10.10255, respectively).¹⁴⁵ In the most recent edition, however, Blumell and

143 “È il caso di ricordare l'omonimo vescovo di Alessandria ... ma sarà una semplice coincidenza” (Naldini, *Cristianesimo in Egitto*, 127 n. 1).

144 Luijendijk also points out that this is chronologically possible since the dates of Maximus' episcopate roughly correspond to the date of the letter (*Greetings in the Lord*, 113 n. 123).

145 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 87.

Wayment see remnants of a third letter at the break and offer the reading]τας.¹⁴⁶ This reading is confirmed by the plate in the *editio princeps*, in which there are clear remnants of a letter resembling a tau preceding the alpha and sigma, thus rendering the proposed reconstruction [Σώ]τας more plausible.

Although the letter to Maximus is unprovenanced, Luijendijk points out that other papyri from the collection at the Graeco-Roman Museum of Alexandria come from Oxyrhynchus, making an Oxyrhynchite provenance possible also for this letter.¹⁴⁷ While this evidence is circumstantial, it does offer another subtle clue pointing towards Sotas as the issuer of the letter. The most decisive evidence linking this letter to Sotas, however, is in its use of the same imperative greeting formula χαίρε ἐν κ̄ω that is employed in the previous two letters, an unusual variation that otherwise appears only in the letters of the Sotas correspondence. Hence, Blumell and Wayment conclude that it is “virtually certain” that this letter was issued by the same individual as the previous two letters and belongs to the Sotas dossier.¹⁴⁸

Whereas in the letter to Paul Sotas specifies that the recommended persons are catechumens, here he refers to Diphilos as “our brother” (τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν, line 5), a designation he also applies to Heracles in his letter to Peter. Treu has argued that familial designations such as “brother” or “sister” typically denote baptized Christians who are full members of the congregation as distinct from catechumens.¹⁴⁹ This indeed seems to be the case here, as Sotas requests that Diphilos be received “in peace” (ἐν εἰρήνῃ, line 8), a likely reference to the ritual kiss of peace that was exchanged among fully initiated Christians at the eucharistic celebration.¹⁵⁰ According to the *Apostolic Tradition*, this ritual served in part to

¹⁴⁶ Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 465.

¹⁴⁷ Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 87.

¹⁴⁸ Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 465.

¹⁴⁹ Treu, “Christliche Empfehlungs-Schemabriefe,” 634-35.

¹⁵⁰ Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 123-24, citing Michael Philip Penn, *Kissing Christians: Ritual and Community in the Late Ancient Church* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press,

distinguish catechumens from baptized Christians: “And when [the catechumens] finish praying, they do not give the peace [εἰρήνη], for their kiss is not yet pure.”¹⁵¹ Hence, in his *Prescription against Heretics*, Tertullian complains that among heretical Christians “it is uncertain who is a catechumen and who is a believer: they all have access equally, they listen equally, they pray equally. ... They also mingle the kiss of peace with all who come [*pacem quoque passim cum omnibus miscent*].”¹⁵²

The kinship designation “brother” works together with the concrete gesture of ritual kissing to construct a conceptual and kinetic metaphor of the community of initiated Christians as a family. In his study on ritual kissing in early Christianity, Michael Philip Penn comments:

Early Christians constructed the ritual kiss not only as a means to “talk” about being a family, but also as a way to act it out. The adoption and modification of a typical familial gesture into a decidedly Christian ritual helped early Christians redefine the concept of family. With the kiss’s assistance, Christian communities became families united by faith.¹⁵³

Sotas’ request that “our brother” Diphilos be received “in peace” thus indicates that Diphilos was a baptized, fully initiated member of the congregation. The expectation, presumably, was that Diphilos would not be received as a stranger, but embraced as family and allowed to participate in full fellowship with Maximus’ community, including partaking of the eucharist.

As in the other letters of recommendation issued by Sotas, the letter to Maximus ends with an exchange of greetings between the two communities and a closing prayer for health “in the Lord,” which employs a *nomen sacrum* (ἐν κυρίῳ).

2005), 44-45. On the exclusivity of the kiss as a reminder of the liminality of catechumens and the in-group status of baptized Christians, see Penn, *Kissing Christians*, 70-75.

¹⁵¹ *Trad. ap.* 18.3 (Sahidic version), trans. Bradshaw et al. (*Apostolic Tradition*, 100).

¹⁵² Tertullin, *Praescr.* 41, trans. Pagels (“The Demiurge and His Archons,” 318).

¹⁵³ Penn, *Kissing Christians*, 31.

4.4.4 | Nomina Sacra in Sotas' Letters of Recommendation

Several observations can be drawn about the use of *nomina sacra* in the letters of recommendation issued by Sotas, bishop of Oxyrhynchus. The most salient components in all three letters are the pre- and postscript greeting formulae, and this is for two reasons: first, they are set off by ek-/eisthesis to distinguish them from the body of the letter, and second, they contain *nomina sacra* which are visually distinguished from their surrounding text by supralineation. This results in a type of framing, which “separates that part of the text from the other parts, signifies it as different in some way.”¹⁵⁴ The implications of this framing are both visual and social.¹⁵⁵ The identifying elements of the text are made prominent at the top and bottom of the page and provide preliminary information about what is “inside.” Yet those elements will also frame the social negotiation that will take place between the sender, bearer, and recipient in a certain way. The genre of these letters implies that their bearers will have been strangers to the recipients and their communities. The *nomina sacra* situated in the greetings thus serve not only as markers of in-group identity for these travelling Christians, but their visibility also connects with the immediately succeeding culturally constructed metaphors of family through kinship designations and ritual kissing to appeal further to shared group identity (e.g. χαίρει ἐν κω ἀγαπητὲ ἀδελφε ... τὸν ἀδελφὸν/τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ἡμῶν προσ-/παράδεξαι ἐν εἰρήνῃ).

154 Van Leeuwen, *Introducing Social Semiotics*, 9. Van Leeuwen defines framing as follows: “Framing ... creates a sense of disconnection or separateness between the elements of the composition, for instance by means of frame-lines, empty space, or discontinuities of various kinds. ... The significance of this is that the disconnected elements will be understood as in some sense separate and independent, perhaps even contrasting, while connected elements will be understood as in some sense belonging together” (ibid., 277). Gunther Kress adds to this notion: “Framing marks off, but in doing so it establishes, at the same time, the elements which may be joined” (*Literacy in the New Media Age*, 122).

155 According to Kress, “Frames can be concrete, material, such as a full stop or a semicolon, the space around a paragraph, or the space that frames a finished text. Frames can also be intangible; many or most social and cultural frames are of this kind—they hold us invisibly and inescapably in a place” (*Literacy in the New Media Age*, 121).

As these letters were carried by the recommended persons themselves, it seems rather likely that, in at least some cases, their carriers would have inspected the contents during the course of their journey. Although P.Alex. 29 was folded, the two letters written on parchment, PSI 3.208 and PSI 9.1041, show no signs of folding, though it is possible that they were rolled. In any case, rolling or folding could be done without sealing simply for the purpose of portability, and thus does not preclude the possibility (in my opinion, a rather likely one considering the nature of human curiosity) that such letters were occasionally inspected by their carriers. This offers an additional challenge to the contention that the *nomina sacra* would have had a “somewhat limited influence,” only affecting “the scribe writing the manuscript” and “those who actually read the manuscript.”¹⁵⁶

In the previous chapters, I argued that the *nomina sacra* constitute a type of iconization of important sacred names and titles that allows them to convey meaning through the visual mode independent of one's ability to decipher written language. I believe that this dossier of letters of recommendation issued by Sotas lends further weight to this thesis, since the complementarity of the *nomina sacra* and ek-/eisthesis creates a layout that amplifies the prominence of the *nomina sacra* on the page. Furthermore, in Sotas' letter to Paul, we encountered a group of travelling catechumens, one of whom was being instructed in the gospels and may have learned about the *nomina sacra* in his study. This possibility, although admittedly conjectural, may be corroborated by the learning exercises examined in the following chapter, in which we will observe early Christians learning how to read and write *nomina sacra* in more formal educational settings.

4.5 | Copres to Sarapias (P.Oxy. 31.2601)

TM no. 32660

26.6 cm (h) × 7.0 cm (w)

Early 4th cent. CE

Naldini 35

(after February 23, 303)

Blumell-Wayment 139

¹⁵⁶ Tuckett, “Nomina Sacra: Yes and No?” 447.

Ed. pr.: J.W.B. Barns, P. Parsons, J. Rea, and E.G. Turner, eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XXXI* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1966), 167-71 (no. 2601).

- Κοπρῆς Σαραπιάδι ἀδελ-
φῇ πλείστα χαίρειν.
πρὸ μὲν πάντων
εὐχομε ὑμᾶς ὀλοκλη-
5 ρῖν παρὰ τῷ κυρί(ω) θ[ῷ.]
γινώσκιν σε θέλω
ὅτι τῇ ἰα εἰσήλθαμεν
καὶ ἐγνώσθη ἡμῖν
ὅτι οἱ προσερχόμενοι
10 ἀναγκάζονται θύ-
ειν καὶ ἀποσυστατῖ-
κὸν ἐποίησα τῷ ἀ-
δελφῷ μου καὶ μέ-
χρι τούτου οὐδὲν
15 ἐπράξαμεν ἐκατη-
χίσσαμεν δὲ ῥήτορα
τῇ ἰβ ἵνα τῇ ἰδ εἰ-
σαχθῇ τὸ πρᾶγμα
περὶ τῶν ἀρουρῶ(ν).
(strip of papyrus torn off)
20 εἴ τι δὲ ἐὰν πράξω-
μεν γράφω σοι. οὐ-
δὲν δε σοι ἔπεμψα
ἐπιδὴ εὖρον αὐτὸν
Θεόδωρον ἐξερχόμε-
25 νον. ἀποστέλλω σοι
δὲ αὐτὰ διὰ ἄλλου τα-
χέως. γράφε δὲ ἡμῖν
περὶ τῆς ὀλοκληρίας
ὑμῶν πάντων καὶ
30 πῶς ἔσχεν Μαξιμίνα
(written down the left margin)
καὶ Ἀσενά. καὶ εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν ἐρχέσθω μετὰ τῆς μητρός σου

verso → ἵνα θεραπευθῇ τὸ λευχωμάτιον. ἐγὼ γὰρ (vac.) εἶδον ἄλλους
θεραπευθέντας. ἐρρώσθαι σε εὐχομε. ἀσπάζομαι πάντας τοὺς ἡμῶν κατ'
ὄνομα.

(rotated 180 degrees)

× ×
 ἀπ(όδοος) τῇ ἀδελφῇ × × π(αρά) Κοπρήτ(ος). ρθ
 × ×

(written up the left margin)

35 [illegible traces of letters] ρθ

line 4: εὐχομαι; line 10: pap. ἀναγ'καζονται; line 13: μου corr. from σοου; line 17: ῑδ corr. from ῑα (?); line 19: pap. αρουρω; line 33: εὐχομαι; line 34: pap. απ', pap. π' κοπη^τ

Translation: Copres, to his sister Sarapias, very many greetings. Before all else, I pray that you are well before the Lord God. I want you to know that we arrived on the 11th and it became known to us that those presenting themselves (in court) were being made to sacrifice and I made a power of attorney for my brother, and so far we have accomplished nothing, but we informed an attorney on the 12th so that the matter concerning the *arourae* could be brought forward on the 14th (?). If we accomplish anything, I will write to you. I sent you nothing after I discovered Theodoros himself departing. I am sending it (i.e. the letter) to you through another person without delay. Write to us about the health of all of you and how Maximina has been (down the left margin) and Asena. And if it is possible, let him (her?) come with your mother (verso) so that his (her?) leukoma may be healed, for I myself have seen others healed. I pray that you are well. I greet all of ours (i.e. our loved ones) by name. (rotated 180 degrees) Deliver to my sister, from Copres. 99 (Amen). (up the lefthand margin) [traces of letters] 99 (Amen).

4.5.1 | Description

In an early fourth century letter sent during the Diocletianic measures against Christians, we encounter *nomina sacra* co-deployed with other salient markers of Christian identity. P.Oxy. 31.2601 preserves a fascinating glimpse into the experience of an Oxyrhynchite man by the name of Copres, who was surprised to learn, upon arriving at court (in Alexandria?¹⁵⁷), that he was expected to offer a sacrifice in the presence of the judge before the trial.

The letter is written on both sides of a narrow sheet measuring 26.6 by 7 centimeters. The text fills the entire front side of the papyrus, then continues down the lefthand margin and onto the back, then up the lefthand margin on the verso. A

¹⁵⁷ Luijendijk comments: “Copres does not mention his whereabouts, but most likely he wrote from Alexandria” (*Greetings in the Lord*, 218). Blumell also considers the letter to have been “almost certainly sent from Alexandria to Oxyrhynchus” (“Christians on the Move,” 243). See especially Blumell’s discussion in *Lettered Christians*, 133–36.

horizontal strip of papyrus is missing on the recto between lines 19 and 20, leaving the vertical strips exposed. However, the text appears to be complete, continuing directly from line 19 to line 20. Furthermore, the first rho of ἀρουρῶν descends down onto the exposed vertical fibers. The sheet therefore must have already been damaged when the letter was penned.¹⁵⁸

The letter is written in a single hand, a “competent sloping semicursive”¹⁵⁹ that is affected by occasional itacisms and employs diacritics to mark initial iotas and upsilons. The *editio princeps* suggests that Copres penned the letter himself.¹⁶⁰ As Luijendijk points out, this would indicate that he had received an education and “fits well with the overall impression of his social status.”¹⁶¹ At the end of line 19, ἀρουρῶ(ν) is abbreviated with a supralinear stroke above the omega (line 19). Supralinear strokes also appear above the numbers ἱᾱ (line 7), ἱβ̄ and ἱδ̄ (both in line 17), above the *nomen sacrum* θ[ω̄] in the opening health wish (line 5), and above the isopsephism ρθ̄ following the address on the verso (line 34). The supralineation appears to be absent above the second ρθ̄ following the illegible line of writing up the lefthand margin on the verso (line 35). The address is written upside down relative to the main text and is divided after ἀδελαφῆ with a double saltire-like pattern

¹⁵⁸ P.W. Pestman notes: “Plates of the recto and part of the verso are given in the edition, pl. V and IV (no. 2601). The text is complete and the papyrus is not broken in two parts, as plate V incorrectly suggests” (*The New Papyrological Primer*, 2nd ed. [Leiden: Brill, 1994], 256). Parsons observes in the *editio princeps*, however, that “presumably the papyrus was already damaged when the letter was written” (P.Oxy. 31.2601, 170).

¹⁵⁹ P.Oxy. 31.2601, 105.

¹⁶⁰ P.Oxy. 31.2601, 167. The errors and sloppy layout may lend support to this hypothesis. E.A. Judge and S.R. Pickering also suggest that Copres “is perhaps not used to writing his letters in his own hand, as appears to be the case here” (“Papyrus Documentation of Church and Community in Egypt to the Mid-Fourth Century,” *JAC* 20 [1977], 53).

¹⁶¹ Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 219. Compare, however, the less positive assessment of Parsons: “[H]e was a man of average education; a zealous but not very intelligent Christian” (P.Oxy. 31.2601, 168). For further discussion about Copres’ possible social status, see below.

between the names of the recipient and the sender, marking where the letter had been sealed to preserve its confidentiality.¹⁶²

As many other commentators have pointed out, the situation Copres encountered when he arrived at court recalls Lactantius' description of the "sacrifice test" enforced under the edicts of Diocletian:

The next day an edict was posted in which it was decreed that those who adhered to this religion (i.e. Christianity) would be devoid of all public honor and office [*honore ac dignitate*], ... that every indictment against them would be valid, but they themselves would not be able to bring charges for injustice, for adultery, or for theft; thus, they would have neither freedom nor voice. ... The persecution oppressed the rest of the population with equal violence, for judges throughout all the temples compelled everyone to offer sacrifices. The prisons were full; unheard-of kinds of torture were devised; *and so that justice would not easily be pronounced to anyone, altars were placed in the council chambers and before the tribunals, so that litigants could first offer a sacrifice and then they could plead their cases*; thus one would approach the judges in the same way as gods.¹⁶³

Based on Lactantius' account and Copres' surprise at the requirement, most commentators have assumed that Copres must have written his letter shortly after 23 February 303, when the Diocletianic "Great Persecution" against Christians was initiated.¹⁶⁴ However, the edict issued on that date was only the first of four, and while Lactantius does not clearly distinguish between them, it is fairly clear that the initial edict sought only to exclude Christians from the civil society of the empire;¹⁶⁵

162 Parsons noted the "double row of crosses" in the *editio princeps* (P.Oxy. 31.2601, 171). These quite clearly served to prevent undetected opening of the letter and should not be interpreted as Christian crosses. There appears to be a break in the pattern, likely where the letter had been sealed before it was opened. On the sealing of letters with crosses, see Katelijn Vandorpe, *Breaking the Seal of Secrecy: Sealing Practices in Greco-Roman and Byzantine Egypt Based on Greek, Demotic and Latin Papyrological Evidence* (Leiden: Papyrologisch instituut, 1995); and Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters*, 33.

163 Lactantius, *Mort.* 13.1, 15.4-5 (emphasis added).

164 Parsons, P.Oxy. 31.2601, 167-68; Judge and Pickering, "Papyrus Documentation," 53; Epp, "Oxyrhynchus NT Papyri," 50; Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 222; and Blumell *Lettered Christians*, 135.

165 Lactantius, *Mort.*, 13.1. Following edicts—although the account is somewhat muddled—appear to target Christians on an increasingly broader scale. See Lactantius, *Mort.* 14.1-15.3, omitted

the mention of obligatory sacrifice by litigants in court is mentioned near the end of the account. Since Copres indicates that he had gone to court to settle a matter regarding land when he was unexpectedly confronted with the sacrificial requirement, his experience seems to fit more closely with one of the later edicts.¹⁶⁶

Eusebius may provide some clarity in this regard. According to *The Martyrs of Palestine*, it was not until the fourth edict was issued in 304 that all inhabitants of the empire were required to perform sacrifice.¹⁶⁷ G.E.M. de Ste. Croix clarifies: “Only upon the issue of E 4 did Diocletian and his colleagues abandon the principle,

above. For a clearer reconstruction of the individual edicts and their approximate dates, see G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, “Aspects of the ‘Great’ Persecution,” *HTR* 47 (1954): 75-113.

166 There is no indication in the letter that Copres had been charged with being a Christian or that his faith had become known after his arrival in Alexandria. His name would not have given him away. Κοπρῆς and related names derived from the Greek word for “dung” (κόπρος) were not uncommon, and certainly were not of Christian origin. Iiro Kajanto considers the name to be an “uncomplimentary cognomen” but concludes that it and related names “cannot be considered as ‘Christian names of humility’” (“On the problem of ‘Names of Humility’ in Early Christian Epigraphy,” *Arctos* 3 [1962], 51-52). Deborah Hobson has suggested that these names (known as “copronyms”) were used in order to protect the bearer from the evil eye based on a contemporary practice in a Palestinian village in which the Arabic word for dung is found used as a name for that reason (“Towards a Broader Context of the Study of Greco-Roman Egypt,” *EMC* 32 [1988], 361). It has also been suggested that copronyms may be associated with people who had been exposed on dung heaps as infants, but this seems less likely. See, for example, Sarah B. Pomeroy, “Copronyms and the Exposure of Infants in Egypt,” in *Studies in Roman Law: In Memory of A. Arthur Schiller*, ed. Roger S. Bagnall and William V. Harris (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 147-62, who concludes that “copronyms cannot be adduced as evidence for exposure of infants in Egypt” and muses whether “the earliest bearers of such names were in fact abandoned as infants, but ... for later generations a copronym was simply a name” (161). Kajanto also concludes that “Κοπρεύς and similar names may well have been borne by humble people, but they certainly did not denote the origin of the persons ἀπὸ κοπρίας” (“Names of Humility,” 49). See also Pestman, *New Papyrological Primer*, 257: “Κοπρῆς: this name and others connected with κόπρος ... were used in order to protect the bearer from the evil eye. Copronyms do not have the connotation of ‘persons found on a rubbish-heap’ (οἱ ἀπὸ κοπρίας).”

167 Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 3.1: “Through the course of the second year, the persecution increased against us greatly. And at that time, Urbanus being governor of the province, imperial edicts were first issued to him, commanding by a general decree that all the people should sacrifice at once in the different cities and offer libations to the idols” (Δευτέρου δ’ ἔτους διαλαβόντος καὶ δὴ σφοδρότερον ἐπιταθέντος τοῦ καθ’ ἡμῶν πολέμου, τῆς ἐπαρχίας ἡγουμένου τῆνικαδε Οὐρβανοῦ, γραμμάτων τοῦτο πρῶτον βασιλικῶν πεφοιτηκότων, ἐν οἷς καθολικῶ προστάγματι πάντας πανδημει τοὺς κατὰ πόλιν θύειν τε καὶ σπένδειν τοῖς εἰδώλοις ἐκελεύετο).

conquirendi non sunt, and in effect provide, by the universal imposition of the sacrifice test, for the public exposure of all Christians.”¹⁶⁸ In this case, the reference in Lactantius’ account to a sacrificial requirement preceding all court cases probably refers to the fourth edict. The letter from Copres, therefore, is probably best dated about one year later than has generally been proposed, shortly after February or March of 304, when the fourth edict had reached Africa and the requirement for general sacrifice was in effect.¹⁶⁹

Copres relates to his wife Sarapias,¹⁷⁰ the recipient of the letter, how he evaded the obligatory sacrifice by arranging a power of attorney for his “brother” to appear in court in his place. As we have seen, kinship terms in papyrus letters do not always refer to actual relatives, so it is possible that this “brother” was simply a friend. In any case, it is probably safe to assume that he was not a Christian.¹⁷¹ In 306, shortly after

168 De Ste. Croix, “Aspects,” 80. See also the very helpful commentary of Bill Leadbetter, *Galerius and the Will of Diocletian* (London: Routledge, 2009), 132–34. J.L. Creed comments that Lactantius “seems to be doing some violence to chronology by his reference to it [i.e. the general sacrifice enacted in the fourth edict] here” (*De mortibus persecutorum*, ed. and trans. J.L. Creed [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984], 95). He adds: “The ‘sacrifice test’ ... was applied in the execution both of the third edict—by which those imprisoned under the terms of the second were required to do sacrifice and if they did so were released—and of the fourth edict. The reference to the prisons being full may suggest the third (it seems that to clear the prisons many clergy were physically compelled to go through the motions of sacrifice ...), but the natural way of reading the passage is surely in relation to the fourth” (ibid.).

169 According to de Ste. Croix, “E 4 cannot be dated exactly, but it was probably issued in January or February, 304, for it had apparently not reached the proconsul of Africa by February 12th, but was being enforced in the Balkans by March” (“Aspects,” 77).

170 Although Copres addresses Sarapias as “sister” (ἀδελφή, lines 1–2 and 34), she is most likely his wife, as Copres refers to “your mother” (τῆς μητρὸς σου, line 31) rather than “our mother.” Dickey notes: “Both ἀδελφός and ἀδελφή are also used for spouses. Understanding this usage is complicated, because the writers of our letters are known to have practiced sibling marriage on occasion, and in sibling marriages the use of ἀδελφός or ἀδελφή for a spouse would be literal. ... Mention of an actual parent or sibling with the possessive ἡμῶν is an indication of sibling relationship, and conversely mention of such a relative with possessives such as μου or σου is an indication of lack of blood relationship” (“Literal and Extended Use,” 156).

171 For Wipszycka, Copres’ brother “was obviously a pagan” (“évidemment était païen”) (“Un lecture qui ne sait pas écrire ou un chrétien qui ne veut pas se souiller? [P.Oxy. XXXIII 2673],” in *Études sur le christianisme dans l’Égypte de l’antiquité tardive* [SEAug 52; Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1996], 419). Naldini draws a similar conclusion: “ἀδελφῶν indica

Copres wrote his letter, Peter bishop of Alexandria issued his *Canonical Epistle*, in which he criticizes Christians for sending pagans to sacrifice in their place:

And there are those who have not openly registered a denial (of their faith), but rather they elude/mock [διαπαίζω] the schemes of their enemies with great difficulty, like sensible and deliberate children among senseless children: they have either passed by the altars, or have made a written declaration, *or have sent pagans in their place* [ἤτοι ὡς ἀνθ' ἐαυτῶν βαλόντες ἐθνικούς].¹⁷²

This, as Luijendijk points out, sounds much like the arrangement that Copres had made with his “brother” to circumvent his difficulty.¹⁷³ Although he seems to relate the matter to Sarapias “calmly, as of a minor nuisance,”¹⁷⁴ his immediate mention of it after the greeting and his hurry to send the letter (cf. lines 25-27: ἀποστέλλω σοι δὲ αὐτὰ διὰ ἄλλου ταχέως) suggest that he considered it important to disclose the situation to her as soon as possible.

The purpose of Copres' journey to the Alexandrian court was to settle a land dispute (τὸ πρᾶγμα περὶ τῶν ἀρουρῶ(ν), lines 17-19). Presumably he owned the land, although his letter does not clarify how much he owned or for what purpose it was

probabilmente un amico di Kopres forse di diversa fede religiosa” (*Cristianesimo in Egitto*, 172). Choat raises the alternative possibility that his brother may have been “simply one of the many Christians who were prepared to ‘lapse’” (*Belief and Cult*, 92 n. 397).

172 Peter of Alexandria, *Can. ep.* 5 (emphasis added).

173 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 224.

174 Parsons, P.Oxy. 31.2601, 168. See also the comments of Wipszycka: “sans aucune émotion” (“Un lecture,” 419); Epp: “casual treatment” (“Oxyrhynchus NT Papyri,” 50); and Judge and Pickering: “he does not seem unduly put out” (“Papyrus Documentation,” 53).

used.¹⁷⁵ In any case, he seems to have had some capital at his disposal, since he was able to travel to Alexandria and hire a lawyer to litigate the matter on his behalf.¹⁷⁶

Copres ends his letter by inquiring about the health of his family and asking his wife to send one of their family members to him along with her mother so that an eye ailment may be healed.¹⁷⁷ Copres states emphatically that he has seen others healed (ἐγὼ γὰρ εἶδον ἄλλους θεραπευθέντας, lines 32-33). It is possible that he is referring to miraculous healings that he had witnessed.¹⁷⁸ Such a healing is reported, for example, in the *Historia Monachorum*, where John of Lycopolis is said to have miraculously healed a local senator's wife of leucoma by anointing her eyes with oil

175 According to Bagnall, "The urban landowning class was not an undifferentiated entity. Its lowest reaches consisted of city residents with small holdings, those unlikely to be supported by the income from their land. ... A broad middle group was better able to live off its rents. This category ... cannot be described as rich, but they almost certainly took in sufficient income from their land to be independent of the need for an occupation" (Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 68-69). Larger landholders with more than 100 *arourae* who were capable of being supported entirely by "a heavily concentrated surplus from the land" would not have exceeded 10 percent of the population (*ibid.*, 69-71 [71]). Copres does not seem to fit into the the first category, since he owned multiple units of land (τῶν ἀρουρῶν), line 19—although the plural gives no indication of how many) and had the means to travel and hire an attorney. It is probably not possible, however, to speculate further than this.

176 Bagnall observes: "Local officials were the natural court of first resort for most people in most instances. ... To pursue matters further at a high level, then, one would probably need to travel to the governor's seat and perhaps hire a lawyer. Governors were busy men, and getting their attention took time and persistence. Lawyers and stays away from home were expensive, and only the urban elite could afford such direct access" (*Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 64). Judge and Pickering also speculate that a situation involving "wealth, the means to travel, and, in general, the kind of stake in life that calls for documentation ... may be assumed for Copres" ("Papyrus Documentation," 69). See also Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 219.

177 The syntax is ambiguous with regard to who is suffering from the eye ailment. Pestman takes it to be Maximina (*New Papyrological Primer*, 255), while Naldini understands it to be Asena (*Cristianesimo in Egitto*, 169). Luijendijk points out that it could also be Copres' mother-in-law (*Greetings in the Lord*, 218). Maximina and Asena are probably the children of Copres and Sarapias.

178 See, for example, R.J.S. Barrett-Lennard, "Request for Prayer for Healing," *NewDocs* 4:249: "P.Oxy. 31. 2601.32-33 (early IV), ἐγὼ γὰρ (vac.) εἶδον ἄλλους θεραπευθέντας, 'I myself have seen others cured'. It is possible but not certain that this refers to religious healing."

three times.¹⁷⁹ It is probably more likely, however, that Copres has a medical procedure in mind. In her study on healing in Roman Egypt, Jane Louise Draycott observes, regarding the treatment of eye ailments, that

there are more references to a medical recourse to healing through eye salves than there are to magical or religious modes of healing in the documentary and literary papyri. These numerous references to salves, not only in private letters, but also in extracts from medical treatises, are supplemented by some evidence for surgical procedures. What this evidence implies is that when the inhabitants of Roman Egypt suffered problems with their eyes, they tended to treat them pharmacologically, using a salve that could be applied directly to the afflicted area. However, it is clear that such salves could be obtained from a variety of sources (physicians, apothecaries, temples, family members and friends), or even made at home Surgery was also a possibility if one could find and/or afford to hire someone with the necessary ophthalmological expertise, but this might have necessitated a trip to Alexandria or one of the metropoleis.¹⁸⁰

Considering the apparent preference for medicinal modes of healing over magical or religious, the cheapness and ready availability of eye salves throughout Egypt, and the usual need to travel to Alexandria for surgery, it seems a likely supposition that Copres intended to have his family member treated surgically by an Alexandrian specialist.¹⁸¹ If this is the case, it may again provide some insight into Copres' social and economic position.

Besides his indication that he evaded the required sacrifice, other features of the letter confirm Copres' Christian identity. In the initial health wish "before the Lord God" (παρὰ κυρί(ω) ᾠ[ᾠ]), he attempts a *nomen sacrum*. The partial abbreviation of κυρί(ω) and its lack of a supralinear stroke, however, gives the

¹⁷⁹ *Hist. mon.* 1.12.

¹⁸⁰ Jane Louise Draycott, "Approaches to Healing in Roman Egypt" (Ph.D. diss., University of Nottingham, 2011), 200-201.

¹⁸¹ Naldini notes that "per la difficile cura del leucoma erano rinomati, fra gli altri, gli oculisti della scuola alessandrina" (*Cristianesimo in Egitto*, 172).

impression that the treatment was an afterthought.¹⁸² Perhaps this was a result of Copres' haste to send the letter (cf. lines 25-27: ἀποστέλλω σοι δὲ αὐτὰ διὰ ἄλλου ταχέως). Although the initial theta is the only letter that is extant from the *nomen sacrum* $\overline{\theta}[\overline{\omega}]$,¹⁸³ the supralinear stroke is clearly visible and extends well beyond the theta towards the righthand edge of the papyrus, suggesting that another letter was originally present but rubbed off.¹⁸⁴

In addition to *nomina sacra*, the address ends with the isopsephism $\overline{\rho\theta}$ (=99), a Christian cryptogram representing the word ἀμήν ($\alpha=1 + \mu=40 + \eta=8 + \nu=50$). As noted above, a second $\rho\theta$ (apparently without supralineation) appears following the illegible line of writing going up the left margin on the verso. While isopsephy is not an exclusively Christian practice,¹⁸⁵ the presence of certain isopsephisms in letters—

182 Parsons remarks: “A *nomen sacrum* was intended ... [b]ut the writer seems not to have thought of it until he had written κυρι in full—he then hastened to abbreviate by omitting the omega” (P.Oxy. 31.2601, 170).

183 Presumably the *nomen sacrum* was contracted. Parsons notes that “after the theta there is space for two letters” (P.Oxy. 31.2601, 170), but assumes that it was contracted. The abrupt suspension of κυρι(ω) and the presence of a supralinear stroke strongly suggest this.

184 The wide space after the theta also suggests this; otherwise, the writing generally goes all the way to the righthand edge. According to the *editio princeps*, “the suprascript stroke extends from above iota to the right edge of the sheet” (ibid.). Luijendijk also considers the stroke to have extended over the iota of κυρι(ω): “In line 5, Copres wrote παρὰ τῷ κυρι $\overline{\theta}$ ” (*Greetings in the Lord*, 219). Blumell and Wayment indicate that the stroke extends as far as the rho: “the abbreviation κυρι is unusual” (*Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 502). While the beginning of the stroke does narrowly extend above the iota of κυρι(ω), it extends equally in the other direction beyond the space for the omega of $\overline{\theta}[\overline{\omega}]$ and seems more likely to be overhang rather than an intentional supralineation of the end of κυρι(ω). Pestman’s transcription, which gives “κυρι(ω) $\overline{\theta}[(\epsilon)\overline{\omega}]$,” suggests that he agrees (*New Papyrological Primer*, 255). As far as I am aware, the abbreviation of θεός to the initial theta with supralineation is attested only in P.Oxy. 6.903, line 37 (4th cent. CE): “God knows these things” (ταῦτα δὲ οἶδεν ὁ $\overline{\theta}$). It is not clear, however, whether this abbreviation is intended as a *nomen sacrum*.

185 See Rodney Ast and Julia Lougovaya, “The Art of Isopsephism in the Greco-Roman World,” in *Ägyptische Magie und ihre Umwelt*, ed. Andrea Jördens (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015), 82-98; Bagnall, *Everyday Writing*, 14-15; T.C. Skeat, “A Table of Isopsephisms (P. Oxy. XLV. 3239),” *ZPE* 31 (1978): 45-54.

most commonly ϕθ and χμγ (if the latter is indeed an isopsephism)¹⁸⁶—is generally taken as a definitive indication of Christian authorship.¹⁸⁷ The isopsephic representation of “amen” as ϕθ appears in five other Christian letters from the fourth century, namely P.Oxy. 8.1162, P.Oxy. 56.3857, P.Oxy. 56.3862, PSI 13.1342, and SB 16.12304. The letter from Copres, having likely been composed at the very beginning of that century, is of course one of the earliest. All five of these other letters also contain *nomina sacra* or other markers of Christian identity.¹⁸⁸

4.3.2 | Nomina Sacra in P.Oxy. 63.4365

In our discussion of the Chester Beatty Numbers-Deuteronomy manuscript in Chapter Two, we observed how early Christians used names and numbers—embodied in the forms of *nomina sacra* and numerical abbreviations—to create signs dense with meaning due to the “functional plurality” and visual potency of their

¹⁸⁶ The symbol χμγ has frustrated attempts at interpretation. S.R. Llewelyn has shown convincingly that it can be resolved as an isopsephism for θεὸς βροτῶς (“The Christian Symbol XMF,” *NewDocs* 8:156-68), but evidence nevertheless exists that it was sometimes understood as an acrostic for χ(ριστὸν) μ(αρτά) γ(εννη) (e.g. in P.Grenf. 2.112a; see Tomasz Derda, “Some Remarks on the Christian Symbol XMF,” *JJP* 22 [1992]: 21-27 and Brent Nongbri, “The Lord’s Prayer and XMF: Two Christian Papyrus Amulets,” *HTR* 104 [2010]: 59-68).

¹⁸⁷ Judge and Pickering describe this isopsephism as “exclusive to Christians” (“Papyrus Documentation,” 69). However, as Choat prudently points out, “ϕθ may be taken as a secure indication of a Christian milieu, although how closely delimited this should be might be debated: not only Christians used the word ἀμήν” (*Belief and Cult*, 114). For literature on the Christian use of isopsephy in general, see Henri Leclercq, “Isopséphie,” *DACL* 7.2:1603-6; Franz Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1925), 98-118, 181-84; Ladislav Vidman, “Koppa Theta = Amen in Athen,” *ZPE* 16 (1975): 215-16; S.R. Llewelyn, “ΣΔ, A Christian Isopsephism?” *ZPE* 109 (1995): 125-27; Llewelyn, “The Christian Symbol XMF”; Llewelyn, “Christian Letters of Recommendation,” 171-72; Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 114-16; Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 46-48.

¹⁸⁸ All contain *nomina sacra* except for PSI 13.1342, which does, however, begin with the Christian symbol χμγ. P.Oxy. 56.3862 also contains a χμγ as well as *nomina sacra* and the isopsephism ϕθ. Notably, the exceedingly rare *nomen sacrum* rendering of Emmanuel also appears in SB 16.12304 (μνηλ ϕθ), P.Oxy. 56.3857 (Ἐμλ ϕθ), and P.Oxy. 8.1162 (which also treats μάρτυς as a *nomen sacrum* in the phrase Ἐμμλ μάρτ ϕθ, “Emmanuel is my witness, amen”).

forms.¹⁸⁹ It is interesting, then, that *nomina sacra* appear together with isopsephisms in this and other letters where isopsephy is employed, thus linking them not only conceptually but also visually, as both *nomina sacra* and isopsephisms are typically set off by supralineation.¹⁹⁰ This visual relation may not have originated intentionally: isopsephisms are after all numbers, and as we have seen, mundane numbers also employ supralineation. Even so, the visual association of certain sacred names and numbers marked off in this way is inescapable. Thus, for instance, the writers of P.Oxy. 56.3857 and SB 16.12304 end their letters with $\overline{\epsilon\mu\lambda} \overline{\varphi\theta}$ and $\overline{\mu\nu\eta\lambda} \overline{\varphi\theta}$ (“Emmanuel, amen”). Likewise, the writer of P.Oxy. 8.1162 ends his letter with a prayer for health “in the Lord God” ($\epsilon\nu \overline{\kappa\omega} \overline{\theta\varphi}$) followed by “Emmanuel is my witness, amen” ($\overline{\epsilon\mu\mu\lambda} \overline{\mu\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau} \overline{\varphi\theta}$).¹⁹¹

Copres indicates that he was in a hurry to send his letter to Sarapias, and its haphazard layout on the damaged papyrus sheet seems to indicate his haste. This, as I have already suggested, may also be reflected in his abrupt suspension of $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota(\omega)$ by attempting to correct his missed opportunity to render it as a *nomen sacrum*. The irregular treatment of the *nomina sacra* in his letter led Parsons to the uncomplimentary conclusion that Copres was “a zealous but not very intelligent Christian.”¹⁹² A social semiotic perspective, however, contests that all sign making is motivated, whether conscious or intuitive; thus, “errors” and “corrections” are

189 “Functional plurality” is the Hallidayan notion that any utterance represents “simultaneous configurations of meanings of different kinds” (Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic*, 136).

190 It is not always the case that isopsephisms are supralineated. For instance, in addition to the one instance in which $\varphi\theta$ appears not to be supralineated in P.Oxy. 31.2601, supralineation is also absent in P.Oxy. 56.3862 and PSI 13.1342. It may be worth pointing out that in both of the latter cases, $\varphi\theta$ stands at the top of the page immediately preceded by the symbol $\chi\mu\gamma$ (i.e. $\chi\mu\gamma\varphi\theta$). Be that as it may, even in cases where supralineation is absent above isopsephisms, in every case I have observed they are always otherwise set off by isolation from surrounding text. Thus, their salience still creates a visual link with *nomina sacra* when the two phenomena are co-present.

191 It is also interesting that all three of these letters treat Emmanuel as a *nomen sacrum*, but further discussion of this curious application of this practice will have to await future study.

192 Parsons, P.Oxy. 31.2601, 168.

understood as situated activities, encoding traces of the dynamic lived landscapes of their agents.¹⁹³

The sudden suspension of $\kappa\rho\iota(\omega)$ indicates that Copres noticed his slip and attempted to correct it. He nevertheless leaves the unconventionally suspended $\kappa\rho\iota$ without supralineation, presumably because of its aberrant abbreviation, but proceeds to supralineate the following *nomen sacrum* $\overline{\theta[\tilde{\omega}]}$, which he contracted correctly. His attempted correction and decision not to supralineate the misabbreviated word show that he proceeded on the basis of a clearly understood model (*contra* Parsons' assertion), thus suggesting not that he was careless or unintelligent, but indeed that he was motivated by a desire to produce the forms as accurately as possible. This explanation harmonizes well with his use of the isopsephic "amen," which Luijendijk takes as evidence of his family's piety.¹⁹⁴ Also, given that Copres was educated, his knowledge about producing *nomina sacra* fits well with the existence of learning exercises from Roman Egypt which appear to have emphasized the conventions of writing and reading *nomina sacra*.¹⁹⁵

4.6 | Summary

In this chapter, we have seen *nomina sacra* used in a wide variety of personal correspondences, from a quick, informal note between neighbors to official letters of recommendation between church bishops. In each instance, we have observed how the *nomina sacra* "mean" differently according to the interests of their producers.

In the first letter, we saw a learned Christian woman, possibly an ascetic, employ *nomina sacra* in a letter to her spiritual "father" as a way of signifying both her great

193 Kress stresses: "Above all, we should use these [i.e. 'errors'] as important evidence of intelligent, active, creative minds at work, rather than as evidence of insufficiency or even stupidity" (Gunther Kress, *Learning to Write*, 2nd ed. [London: Routledge, 2005], 141).

194 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 221.

195 See the following chapter.

reverence for him and his position to her as a divine surrogate. Next, we encountered another learned woman who was the recipient of a casual note from an unnamed sender in which the *nomina sacra* code meanings of shared group identity, social symmetry, and solidarity. While both of these letters emanate from a “bookish” ambience where their writers would have had experience with *nomina sacra* through their contact with Christian literature, we observed that the interests that motivated each writer’s independent use of *nomina sacra* in their letters contrasted markedly.

Third, we examined the use of *nomina sacra* in three letters of recommendation issued by Sotas, bishop of Oxyrhynchus. In all three letters, the *nomina sacra* coordinate with features of layout in the pre- and postscript formulae serving to frame the body of the letter and provide the recipient with a salient and efficient identification of the letter’s sender/bearer and a preface to the letter’s contents. Furthermore, we observed that the salience of the *nomina sacra* in the pre- and postscripts would have made them stand out also to the recommended persons who bore the letters in the likely instance that curious recommendees sometimes inspected their contents. If this conjectural scenario is tenable, this would suggest that ordinary travelling Christians occasionally had opportunities to interact with the *nomina sacra*, perhaps even if they weren’t able to decipher the semantic content of the letters themselves.

Finally, we witnessed the use of *nomina sacra* together with isopsephy in a letter sent by a man named Copres during the Diocletianic persecution. Although the letter reveals that Copres was wary to identify himself as a Christian in court, he used these symbols to mark his Christian identity in his letter to his wife. We observed that his attempt to correct his missed opportunity to abbreviate $\chi\rho\iota\varsigma$ as a *nomen sacrum* and his ultimate decision not to supralineate it does not imply that he was “a not very intelligent Christian,”¹⁹⁶ but rather that he understood the conventions of

196 Parsons, P.Oxy. 31.2601, 168.

treating *nomina sacra* and preferred to do so with as much accuracy as possible. In addition, I argued that the co-deployment of *nomina sacra* and isopsephy in letters links the two Christian symbols both conceptually and visually.

Above in my discussion of Sotas' letter to Paul (PSI 9.1041), I reiterated Luijendijk's proposal that an explanation of *nomina sacra* may have formed a part of the introduction to Christian manuscripts for catechumens preparing for baptism, especially for Christians who did not have literate access to scripture. In the following chapter, we will explore more fully the role *nomina sacra* played in the education of ancient Christians.

CHAPTER FIVE

“For I Could Not Identify the Syllables”: *Nomina Sacra* in Learning Exercises

When I arose from prayer I saw across from me the elderly woman I had seen the year before, walking and reading a little book. And she said to me, “Can you announce these things to the ones chosen by God?” I said to her, “Lady, I cannot remember so many things. Give me the book to make a copy.” “Take it,” she said, “and then return it to me.” I took it and went away to another part of the field, where I copied the whole thing, letter by letter, for I could not distinguish between the syllables.¹

—HERM. VIS. 2.1.3-4

5.1 | Introduction

The opening of the second vision of the Shepherd of Hermas, written in Rome sometime in the second century CE,² offers a fascinating glimpse into the bewilderment a novice reader might experience when looking at a text written in a

1 μετὰ δὲ τὸ ἐγερθῆναι με ἀπὸ τῆς προσευχῆς βλέπω ἀπέναντί μου τὴν πρεσβυτέραν ἣν καὶ πέρυσιν ἐωράκειν, περιπατοῦσαν καὶ ἀναγινώσκουσαν βιβλαρίδιον. καὶ λέγει μοι· δύνῃ ταῦτα τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναγγεῖλαι; λέγω αὐτῇ· κυρία, τοσαῦτα μνημονεύσαι οὐ δύναμαι· δὸς δὲ μοι τὸ βιβλίδιον ἵνα μεταγράψωμαι αὐτό. λάβε, φησὶν, καὶ ἀποδώσεις μοι. ἔλαβον ἐγώ, καὶ εἷς τινα τόπον τοῦ ἀγροῦ ἀναχωρήσας μετεγραψάμην πάντα πρὸς γράμμα· οὐχ ἠῦρισκον φάρ τὰς συλλαβάς. The quoted translation is modified from *The Apostolic Fathers, Volume II: Epistle of Barnabas, Papias and Quadratus, Epistle to Diognetus, the Shepherd of Hermas*, ed. and trans. Bart D. Ehrman (LCL 25; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 185-87.

2 Carolyn Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 18-20.

continuous mass of indistinguishable letters. When commanded to copy a “little book” (βιβλαρίδιον), Hermas claims that he could not identify the syllables (τὰς συλλαβάς), and so he resorts to mechanically reproducing the lettershapes one by one (πρὸς γράμμα). One wonders: Might Hermas have encountered *nomina sacra* during the course of his letter-by-letter replication? If he did, would he have recognized them? Can we detect agency at work in texts containing *nomina sacra* that were copied in this way—or is agency, in fact, severed in copying?

A social semiotic view holds that all signs are agentively made. Copying—even the mechanical, letter-by-letter copying taken up by Hermas—cannot take place without the making of meanings, both internally as the exemplar is viewed and interpreted by the copyist, and externally as the new text is produced:

Copying is a relational process where an existing material entity is interpreted and then remade as a different material entity. As both text interpreter and text producer, the ‘copier’ handles form and meaning in two sites. The source text consists of a collection of signifiers. These become signs in the act of interpretation as meanings are connected with the forms that are given. Making the copy is also a process of sign making. The ‘copier’ connects form and meaning in the production of the copy.³

In the learning exercises examined in this chapter, we encounter students in fourth century Egypt who were undergoing the same tedious processes as Hermas, copying and deciphering texts syllable by syllable and letter by letter. Among their schooltexts—perhaps like the “little book” that Hermas toiled to reproduce—was Christian literature containing *nomina sacra*. As we will discover, these exercises are not products of mere mindless replication, but of agentive and purposeful activity, preserving traces of meaningful engagement in the copying and reading of Christian literary texts and their *nomina sacra*.

3 Diane Mavers, *Children’s Drawing and Writing: The Remarkable in the Unremarkable* (London: Routledge, 2011), 15.

5.2 | A Writing Exercise Containing Romans 1:1-7 (P.Oxy. 2.209)

TM no. 61868

25.1 cm (h) × 19.9 cm (w)

4th cent. CE (ca. 316)Gregory-Aland P³⁰

van Haelst 490

Cribiore 302

Blumell-Wayment 51

Ed. pr.: B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri II* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1899), 8-9 (no. 209).

→	α	
	Παῦλος· δοῦλος <u>χρυ</u> <u>ιηυ</u> κλητὸς ἀπόστολος· [ἀφ]ωρισ-	Rom 1:1
	μένος εἰς εὐαγ'γέλιον <u>θυ</u> δ [π]ρο[ε]πηγ'γείλατο διὰ τ[ὼ]ν πρω-	2
	φητῶ(ν) αὐτοῦ ἐν γρ[α]φαῖς ἀγ' {ε}ίαις περὶ τοῦ <u>υυ</u> αὐτοῦ τοῦ	3
5	γενομένου ἐκ' σπ[έ]ρματος Δαυδ' κατὰ σάρκα τοῦ ὀρισθέν·	4
	τος <u>υυ</u> <u>θυ</u> ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ <u>πνα</u> ἀγιω{σ}σύνης ἐξ ἀνασ-	
	τάσεως νεκρῶν <u>ιηυ</u> <u>χρυ</u> τοῦ <u>κυ</u> ἡμῶν δι' οὗ ἐ[λάβο-]	5
	μεν χάριν καὶ ἀ[π]όστολων εἰς ὑπακωὸν π[ί]στεως ἐν	
	πάσι(ν) τοῖς ἔθνεσ[ι](ν) ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος <u>ιηυ</u> <u>χρυ</u> πάσιν	6-7
10	τοὺς οὖσιν ἐν [P]ώμῃ ἀγαπητοῖς <u>θυ</u> κλητοῖς [ἀγ]ίοις	
	χάρις ἡμῖν καὶ ε[ιρ]ήνῃ ἀπὸ <u>θυ</u> <u>προς</u> ἡμῶν καὶ <u>κυ</u> <u>χρυ</u>	
	<u>ιηυ</u>	
	(vac.)	
	Second hand in cursive script:	
	Αὐρήλιος Παῦλο[ς . .] νυνισίου τῶν παρὰ γενήματος	
	περὶ τῶν γενημάτων [. . .] ου ἐπὶ τοῦ λογεῖας . . [.] των	
	(vac.)	
15	χιτ	

back → (traces of ink)
 ³π[. . .] ση ἀπόστολος
 (rotated 180 degrees)
 | α |
 (traces of ink)

lines 3-4: προφητῶν; line 8: ἀ[π]όστολῃν, ὑπακοήν; line 9: the words αὐτοῦ ἐν οἷς ἐστε καὶ ὑμεῖς κλητοί are omitted before ιηυ χρυ (likely in error); line 10: τοῖς; lines 11-12: singular reading χρυ ιηυ reverses the expected order ιηυ χρυ (perhaps in error)

Translation: Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures concerning his son, who was born from the seed of David according to the flesh, who was appointed as Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the nations on behalf of his name, [words omitted] Jesus Christ: to all those in Rome beloved of God, called as saints: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Christ Jesus.

(2nd hand) Aurelios Paulos, son of [...]nunis, of the things from the product (sg.) concerning the products (pl.) [...] for the collection [...] of.

(back, along the fibers) [...] apostle

(rotated 180 degrees) | A |

5.2.1 | Description

P.Oxy. 2.209 (Gregory-Aland \mathfrak{P}^{10}) consists of a single papyrus sheet of 25.1 by 19.9 centimeters, containing the first seven verses of Paul's letter to the Romans in Greek followed by two unintelligible lines of writing in a second hand on the front, and a few obscure scribbles on the back. The sheet has been folded into six vertical segments, which has left some damage along the fold lines. There are also a number of holes created by insects, which are distributed symmetrically across the folded segments.

The hand that copied the Pauline passage on the front is untrained and the appearance is rather sloppy: the large letters have been described as “clumsy,”⁴ “crude and irregular,”⁵ “unpracticed,”⁶ and “evolving.”⁷ The passage is written in a single column of 12 lines and is immediately preceded by the pagination α , which is centered in the top margin. Beneath the Romans excerpt is a wide space, followed

4 “Große, ungelenke Unziale” (Kurt Aland, *Repertorium der griechischen christlichen Papyri, I: Biblische Papyri, Altes Testament, Neues Testament, Varia, Apokryphen* [PTS 18; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976], 357).

5 Guglielmo Cavallo and Herwig Maehler, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period. A.D. 300-800* (Bulletin Supplement 47; London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), 8 (no. 1a).

6 “Ungefüge und sehr ungleichmäßige Buchunziale von ungeübter Hand” (K. Junack et al., eds., *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus, 2.1: Die paulinischen Briefe: Röm., 1. Kor., 2. Kor.* [ANTF 12; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989], xxii).

7 Raffaella Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (ASP 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 247 (no. 302).

by two lines of apparently unrelated writing in “a fluid and practiced cursive.”⁸ The lines are ungrammatical and lack sense, but the words “produce” (γενήματος, line 13; γενημάτων, line 14) and “collection” (λογείας, line 14) are mentioned, as is the name Aurelios Paulos, although it is not clear to whom this name belonged.⁹ The entire bottom half has been left blank.

The copyist of the Romans passage commits a number of spelling errors (mainly itacisms) and omits the words αὐτοῦ ἐν οἷς ἐστε καὶ ὑμεῖς κλητοὶ in verse six, probably as a result of overlooking a line of text in his *Vorlage*.¹⁰ A redundant apostrophe has been inserted after the single gamma in ἀγείας (line 4) and a medial dot divides the word ὀρισθέντος at the break at the end of line five. Dots also follow the name Παῦλος and the title ἀπόστολος (both in line 2), conceivably a reverential treatment of some kind, although surely better understood as lectional or divisional marks.¹¹ Other apostrophes appear with the gamma nasals εὐαγγέλιον and προεπηγγείλατο (both in line 3), at the end of the indeclinable Hebrew name Δαυδ' (line 5) and after ἐκ' (line 5).¹² In addition to these punctuational markings, the cap of the final sigma of [ἀγ]ίους

8 Cavallo and Maehler, *Greek Bookhands*, 8 (no. 1a).

9 The name Aurelios Paulos does not match any of the other persons named in the archive to which this papyrus belongs. See AnneMarie Luijendijk, “A New Testament Papyrus and Its Documentary Context: An Early Christian Writing Exercise from the Archive of Leonides (*P.Oxy.* II 209/Ṗ¹⁰),” *JBL* 129 (2010): 575–96,” and further discussion below.

10 Romans 1:5–6 reads: δι' οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολὴν εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πάνσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ ἐν οἷς ἐστε καὶ ὑμεῖς κλητοὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; however, the omission of the words αὐτοῦ ἐν οἷς ἐστε καὶ ὑμεῖς κλητοὶ by the copyist still results in a fully sensible reading.

11 On punctuation, lectional aids and divisional signs in school texts, see Criboire, *Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 81–88.

12 The apostrophe marking the gamma nasal in εὐαγγέλιον (line 5) appears to be a medial dot, but upon my own inspection of the papyrus at Harvard, I note a small abrasion on the papyrus where the lower part of the apostrophe must have originally been. On the use of apostrophes in the papyri, Edward Maunde Thompson notes that the apostrophe “was very generally placed in early MSS after a foreign name, or a name not having a Greek termination, as, for example, Ἀβρααμ’, and after a word ending in a hard consonant, as κ, χ, ξ, ψ, and also in ρ. When a double consonant occurred in the middle of a word, an apostrophe was placed above the first or between the two letters” (*An Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013], 62). That apostrophes were

is elongated at the end of line 10 in a way which appears more like a labored imitation than the effect of a natural ductus. Given the cumbersome syntax of the passage, this may have served as a sense unit marker that was present in the exemplar and was replicated by the copyist.

A few words are also written along the fibers on the back of the sheet in a cursive hand. The phrase is not entirely legible due to a lacuna, but a mark resembling an antisigma is visible preceding the first letter; following the lacuna, the phrase ends with the word “apostle” in the nominative case (line 17).¹³ Turning the papyrus 180 degrees, written along the fibers opposite to the “apostle” phrase in the same hand is a large alpha centered between two vertical lines. Blumell and Wayment have pointed out that the text on the back appears to be written along the folded segments in a way similar to the address of a letter.¹⁴ Indeed, the jottings do appear to have been made after the sheet had been folded, since the two lines of writing were produced in opposite directions on either side of the center fold line. Given the content of the text on the front, it seems most straightforward to take the designation “apostle” and the letter alpha as a label for the contents of the papyrus after it had been folded up, referring to the apostle Paul and the pagination above the Pauline text.¹⁵ However, this proposal may be frustrated by the nominative

sometimes used after velar (and certain other) consonants explains its presence after *ἐκ* (line 5), which at first seems unusual. See also E.G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*, 2nd ed. (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), 11.

- 13 The critical sign is transcribed but not commented on in the original edition. However, it is not present in the transcription of the most recent edition by Blumell and Wayment, but its presence was confirmed by my own autopsy of this papyrus at Harvard. For critical signs in school texts, see Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 86 and nos. 250, 264, and 393. On the function of the antisigma, see Kathleen McNamee, *Sigla and Select Marginalia in Greek Literary Papyri* (Pap.Bru. 26; Brussels: Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1992), 11-15 and notes 26-34.
- 14 Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 195. The letter was folded into vertical segments, but was not folded horizontally.
- 15 Ellwood Mearle Schofield went so far as to propose the reconstruction “P[aulo]s Apostolos”—a reasonable suggestion given the contents of the text on the front (“The Papyrus Fragments of the Greek New Testament” [Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1936], 137).

ἀπόστολος, which would more likely be expressed by the genitive ἀποστόλου if the phrase served as a label for the contents on the front.¹⁶ Another possibility, consistent with the copied text on the front, is that this brief scribble is a relic of a practicing writer who reproduced an isolated nominative phrase from an exemplar, complete with its preceding critical siglum.

In the *editio princeps*, Grenfell and Hunt remarked in characteristically vague terms that the piece was found as part of an archive, “tied up with a contract dated in 316 A.D., and other documents of the same period.”¹⁷ As their primary aim was to harvest papyri, preserving the archaeological context of their finds was not of great interest.¹⁸ Consequently, the archive to which this piece belonged remained elusive for more than a century. Thanks to skillful detective work by Luijendijk, however, the owner of the archive has recently been identified as one Aurelios Leonides, son of Theon.¹⁹

The archive of Leonides consists of thirteen texts that span almost two decades (315-334 CE), all of which, apart from P.Oxy. 2.209, are documents detailing his business affairs.²⁰ The majority of documents among Leonides' papers are leases of

However, the letter (which appears to be an eta) following the sigma after the lacuna would seem to rule out this reconstruction.

16 This would in any case be an unusual way to title the passage. As Luijendijk points out, we should rather expect to find πρὸς Ῥωμαίους or similar (“A NT Papyrus,” 591-92). On the other hand, if the sheet was folded up and labelled well after it had been copied, it is possible that the owner might have produced a label *ad hoc* if he did not have a literary copy of Romans to hand for copying an “official” title.

17 Grenfell and Hunt, P.Oxy. 2.209, 8.

18 For a summary of these early practices and the problems that result from the loss of archaeological context, see the excellent discussion of Traianos Gagos, Jennifer Gates, and Andrew Wilburn, “Material Culture and Texts of Graeco-Roman Egypt: Creating Context, Debating Meaning,” *BASP* 42 (2005): 171-88.

19 Luijendijk, “A NT Papyrus.”

20 The archive of Leonides comprises the following papyri: P.Oxy. 45.3264 (sale of flax crop, 312-315 CE), P.Oxy. 31.2585 (lease of land, 315 CE), P.Oxy. 45.3255 (lease of land, 315 CE), P.Oxy. 1.103 (lease of land, 316 CE), P.Oxy. 45.3256 (lease of land, 317 CE), P.Oxy. 45.3257 (lease of land, 318 CE), P.Oxy. 45.3258 (lease of land, 319 CE), P.Oxy. 45.3259 (lease of land, 319 CE), P.Oxy. 45.3260 (lease of land,

land for the cultivation of flax, an important industrial crop in Egypt.²¹ One document records the purchase of an already harvested flax crop (P.Oxy. 45.3254). Another, P.Oxy. 1.103, gives Leonides and his occasional business partner Dioscoros the title *στιπποτιμητ(αί)*, “valuers of tow,”²² the course outer fibers of flax that are processed for the production of rope, nets, lamp wicks, and lesser quality clothing.²³ Several of the leases also mention the various aspects of flax processing, such as the collection of seeds from harvested and dried flax stalks and the water-retting process that softens the stalks so that the inner fibers (linen) can be separated from the outer (tow).²⁴ We thus learn that Leonides dealt not only in the buying and selling of flax, but apparently in all aspects of its cultivation, processing, and distribution.

Two documents in his archive reveal that Leonides was also a member of the tow-workers’ association and served as its monthly president (*μηνιάρχης*) on at least two occasions.²⁵ Susan Stephens, the original editor of the archive, suggests on this

323 CE), P.Oxy. 45.3261 (contract concerning recruits, 324 CE), P.Oxy. 45.3262 (letter from Leonides confirming receipt of a loan repayment, 328 CE), PSI 5.469 (lease of land, 334 CE), P.Oxy. 2.209 (school exercises containing Rom 1:1-7). On the archive of Leonides, see Susan A. Stephens, “Documents from the Archive of Leonides,” in P.Oxy. 45, 129-43.

21 In all, land leases account for nine out of the thirteen documents preserved in the archive. On the importance of flax as an agricultural export in Egypt, see Philip Mayerson, “The Role of Flax in Roman and Fatimid Egypt,” *JNES* 56 (1997): 201-7.

22 LSJ, s.v. *στιπποτιμητής*, “tow-valuer.”

23 On the use of tow for making clothing, note SB 14.11881 (4th cent. CE), a letter from a lady by the name of Allous to another lady called Faustina. In the letter, Allous complains that she, “being a woman,” is having difficulty providing for her brother’s orphaned children and requests Faustina to send two pounds of tow so that she can spin it and make clothing for them. Allous and Faustina must have been Christians, since the letter opens with a greeting “in the Lord” using a *nomen sacrum* (ἐν κυρίῳ χαίρειν, line 3). See Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women’s Letters*, ACLS ed., B6.6 and para. 353.

24 Both the collection of seeds and the retting process is mentioned in three documents: P.Oxy. 1.103, P.Oxy. 45.3255, and P.Oxy. 45.3256. Also, both P.Oxy. 1.103 and PSI 5.469 stipulate that Leonides is to pay his rent in tow processed from the flax crop grown on the rented land. On the techniques involved in processing flax, see Stephens, “Documents from the Archive of Leonides,” 130.

25 P.Oxy. 45.3261 indicates that he functioned as *meniarch* in the year 324, and according to P.Oxy. 45.3262, he did so again in 328.

basis that Leonides may have been a man of some means, “if guild officials were selected like other officials at this time on their ability to assume financial burdens.”²⁶ Some level of affluence is also suggested by the indications in some of Leonides’ documents that he paid large sums of money for rent and had business relationships with council members.²⁷ In his recent study on trade guilds in Roman Egypt, Philip Venticinque observes that Leonides’ “eventual appearance as one of the leading officials of his association a decade after the first lease in his archive implies that he met with more success than failure.”²⁸

The contents of P.Oxy. 2.209 would seem to afford some clue that Leonides was a Christian, but none of the associated documents preserved in his archive offer any other direct indications of Christian affiliation.²⁹ However, some of Leonides’ business partners were Christians, which suggests that he operated within Christian circles. As Luijendijk has pointed out, Leonides’ occasional partner Dioscoros was the son of one of Leonides’ other business partners, Ammonios son of Copres, with whom Leonides co-leased five *arourae* of land for cultivating flax near the upper Oxyrhynchite village of Ision Panga in November of 318.³⁰ This is almost certainly the same Ammonios who is the subject of P.Oxy. 33.2673, a declaration of church property during the “Great Persecution” in the fourth century made by one “Aurelios

26 Stephens, “Documents from the Archive of Leonides,” 129.

27 In 316, Leonides and Dioscoros co-leased one *aroura* of land in Ision Panga owned by a former gymnasiarch and prytanis (P.Oxy. 45.3255). For an excellent summary of Leonides’ entrepreneurial endeavors as detailed in his archive, see Philip F. Venticinque, *Honor Among Thieves: Craftsmen, Merchants, and Associations in Roman and Late Roman Egypt* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 85-90.

28 Venticinque, *Honor Among Thieves*, 90.

29 The only letter preserved in the archive, P.Oxy. 45.3262, contains none of the markers one expects to find in letters sent by or between Christians, such as a greeting ἐν χϙ, a prayer for health ἐν θϙ, or isopsephy. On the other hand, it is possible that we should not expect to find markers of Christian identity in a letter of this kind—that is, an official business letter confirming the receipt of a loan repayment—particularly if the recipient was not a fellow Christian.

30 P.Oxy. 45.3257. See Luijendijk, “A NT Papyrus,” 586-88.

Ammonios son of Copres, reader of the former church of the village of Chysis.”³¹ Another document in Leonides’ archive, P.Oxy. 45.3254, records his purchase of a flax crop from one Aurelios Evangelos who, judging by his name, was probably also a Christian. Thus, both through the Pauline excerpt that he kept among his papers and through his business relationships with a church lector and a flax merchant named Evangelos, we can reasonably detect a Christian setting.

Luijendijk avers that the identification of P.Oxy. 2.209 with Aurelios Leonides makes it “the first and only instance where we can get to know the ancient owner of a New Testament papyrus.”³² Yet, despite its classification as New Testament Papyrus 10 (P¹⁰) under the Gregory-Aland scheme, the non-continuity of this brief passage disqualifies it as a New Testament manuscript by the standards of most textual critics.³³ Indeed, Aland and Aland themselves confess that P.Oxy. 2.209 (P¹⁰) and similar non-continuous papyri listed in the register of New Testament manuscripts should not have been admitted:

31 On which, see Choat and Yuen-Collingridge, “A Church with No Books,” and Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 191-210.

32 Luijendijk, “A NT Papyrus,” 582.

33 Generally, Greek manuscripts must be continuous in order to qualify, i.e. “MSS containing (originally) at least one New Testament writing in continuous fashion from beginning-to end” (Eldon Jay Epp, “The Papyrus Manuscripts of the New Testament,” in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes, 2nd ed. [NTTSD 42; Leiden: Brill, 2013], 6). See also the critique of Stanley Porter, who proposes a two-tier categorization of witnesses to the text of the New Testament into continuous and non-continuous manuscripts (“Textual Criticism in the Light of Diverse Textual Evidence for the Greek New Testament: An Expanded Proposal,” in *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World*, ed. Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas [TENTS 2; Leiden: Brill, 2006], 305-37). Stuart Pickering also makes a case for a separate collection of non-continuous witnesses: “[A] manuscript is of text-critical value not only in the individual words which it contains, but in the evidence it provides for the scribal approaches which influenced the wording. In this respect, an alleged weakness of non-continuous texts—the likely extent of scribal interference—turns out to be one of their great strengths for New Testament text-critical purposes” (“The Significance of Non-Continuous New Testament Textual Materials in Papyri,” in *Studies in the Early Text of the Gospels and Acts: The Papers of the First Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, ed. David G.K. Taylor [TS 3.1; Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 1999; repr., Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2013], 125).

Among the ninety-six [now 135³⁴] items which now comprise the official list of New Testament papyri there are several which by strict definition do not belong there, such as talismans (P⁵⁰, P⁷⁸), lectionaries (P², P³, P⁴⁴), various selections (P⁴³, P⁶²), songs (P⁴²), texts with commentary (P⁵⁵, P⁵⁹, P⁶⁰, P⁶³, P⁸⁰), and even writing exercises (P¹⁰) and occasional notes (P¹²).³⁵

It is beyond the purview of this study—though a worthy endeavor—to determine the extent to which non-continuous witnesses have value for New Testament textual criticism.³⁶ However, the above observation raises another question which is of relevance, namely: For what purpose was this brief Pauline excerpt copied, if not for use as a literary manuscript?

The lack of skill in handwriting led Grenfell and Hunt to propose that the passage was probably a writing exercise, and most later commentators have agreed.³⁷ Given the folds in the papyrus, Deissmann proposed that the text served as an amulet for the Aurelios Paulos named in the lines of cursive beneath the Romans passage.³⁸ However, as Luijendijk has noted, Deissmann drew his conclusions on the

34 According to the most recent online edition of the *Kurzgefasste Liste* (<http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/liste>), as of 8 August 2017.

35 Aland and Aland, *The Text of the NT*, 85.

36 On which, see the recent study by Brice C. Jones, who examines New Testament texts on Greek amulets (*New Testament Texts on Greek Amulets from Late Antiquity* [LNTS 554; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016]).

37 Grenfell and Hunt, P.Oxy. 2.209, 8: “no doubt a schoolboy’s exercise”. Note also the assessments of Aland: “es handelt sich diesem fol mit größter Wahrscheinlichkeit um eine Schreibübung” (*Repertorium*, 357); Roberts: “perhaps a school exercise” (*Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 6); Cavallo and Maehler: “a schoolboy’s exercise?” (*Greek Bookhands*, 8); Junack et al.: “Am wahrscheinlichsten ist, was *ed. pr.* meint: no doubt a schoolboy’s exercise, besonders auch wegen der Orthographie” (*Neue Testament auf Papyrus* 2.1, xxi); Jaroš: “Die Deutung der Editio princeps als Schuliübung scheint nach wie vor plausibel zu sein. ... Die Schrift ist eine unbeholfene Unziale und weist auf einen Lernenden, einen »Langsam-schreiber« hin” (*Das Neue Testament*, 4943); Luijendijk: “a school exercise” (*Greetings in the Lord*, 68); Blumell: “That this text appears to have been a school exercise may be evidenced from the way it was written” (*Lettered Christians*, 193-94); Blumell and Wayment: “the suggestions that it is a school exercise seems reasonable” (*Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 195).

38 Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), 232 and note 1.

basis of the incomplete image in the *editio princeps*, which had been cropped to remove the blank lower half of the papyrus.³⁹ The full sheet would make for an inordinately large amulet that would surely be cumbersome to wear on the body. Furthermore, Theodore de Bruyn indicates that scribes were usually careful to prevent papyrus wastage when producing amulets, either by selecting a sheet of papyrus of an appropriate size for the incantation to be written, by adapting the length of the incantation to fit the papyrus, or by cutting off the unused portion of a larger papyrus sheet after writing the text.⁴⁰ However, these criteria do not fit with the dissipative use of papyrus by the scribe of P.Oxy. 2.209. Moreover, as Luijendijk has pointed out, while one might expect to find a Christian visual device at the head of an amulet (e.g. a series of crosses, a monogram, or an isopsephism), a page number would surely be a peculiar amuletic element.⁴¹ Deissmann's proposal has thus largely been rejected.⁴²

Alternatively, G.H.R. Horsley proposed that P.Oxy. 2.209 may be a failed copy of a "codex beginning with Romans, given the page number, but which was then

39 Luijendijk, "A NT Papyrus," 589-90. See P.Oxy. 2.209, plate 2, which Deissmann reproduced in his own book (*Light from the Ancient East*, 232).

40 De Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 49-50. Elsewhere, he sets out the criteria that indicate whether an item may have been worn as an amulet as follows: "Characteristics that indicate that the item was or could have been worn or affixed include the small size of the item (e.g., fragments of papyrus, small codex sheets); evidence, in the case of larger sheets of papyrus or parchment, that the item was folded or rolled into a size small enough to be worn; the presence of holes indicating that the item could have been strung with a cord; and traces that the item was in fact strung with a cord" ("Papyri, Parchments, Ostraca, and Tablets," 150).

41 Luijendijk, "A NT Papyrus," 590. On the various types and combinations of visual elements appearing on amulets, see de Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 56-67.

42 Junack et al., *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus*, 2.1:xxi; Luijendijk, "A NT Papyrus and its Documentary Context," 589-90; Theodore de Bruyn, "Papyri, Parchments, Ostraca, and Tablets Written with Biblical Texts in Greek and Used as Amulets: A Preliminary List," in *Early Christian Manuscripts: Examples of Applied Method and Approach*, ed. Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas (TENTS 5; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 158.

discarded and reused" secondarily as an amulet.⁴³ Although the clumsy hand seems more suggestive of an exercise in penmanship than the beginnings of a continuous manuscript,⁴⁴ there is some merit to Horsley's contention that the creation of a text for a particular use does not preclude it from other later uses. As de Bruyn points out, it is always possible that "a school exercise ... might have had a secondary use as an amulet."⁴⁵ Such a scenario might also provide some justification for the unusually large dimensions of P.Oxy. 2.209, since use as an amulet would not have been the original purpose for which the text was copied.

Tantalizing as this line of thinking may be, however, the statement by Grenfell and Hunt that this papyrus "was found tied up with a contract ... and other documents" is a compelling testimony against the necessity of an amuletic hypothesis in order to account for the folds.⁴⁶ Papyri deposited in archives were generally not stored flat, but rolled or folded up and then either "bound together into packets with strips or ... wrapped in cloth."⁴⁷ As it happens, all of the papyri from the archive of Leonides show clear signs of folding, and several appear to have been folded in the same or a very similar way to P.Oxy. 2.209. Figure 6.1 below shows the crease patterns on four papyri from the archive of Leonides, including P.Oxy. 2.209

43 G.H.R. Horsley, "Reconstructing a Biblical Codex: The Prehistory of M^{PER} n.s. XVII. 10 (P. Vindob. G 29 831)," in *Akten des 21. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses. Berlin, 1995*, ed. Bärbel Kramer et al. (APF Beiheft 3; Stuttgart: Teubner, 1997), 1:481.

44 Cribiore classifies the hand of P.Oxy. 2.209 as "evolving," which she defines thusly: "This is the hand of a pupil who uses it every day and does a conspicuous amount of writing with it. The clumsy and uneven look and the difficulty in maintaining an alignment are still present, but the hand can be moderately fluent and proceeds at a good pace. I also consider as belonging in this category the group of hands writing in formal style. They have a rather unformed look and some multistroke letters, but they attempt to draw each letter in elaborate ways and they can write long passages" (*Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 112; on her classification of P.Oxy. 2.209, see *ibid.*, 246-47). See also her description in "Education in the Papyri," in *Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, 324: "[T]he 'evolving hand' does a good amount of writing and is moderately fluent but still displays a coarse and uneven look."

45 de Bruyn, "Papyri, Parchments, Ostraca, and Tablets," 164.

46 Grenfell and Hunt, P.Oxy. 2.209, 8.

47 Katelijin Vandorpe, "Archives and Dossiers," in *Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, 220.

(all illustrated to scale).⁴⁸ All four sheets were folded into five to seven vertical segments, without a subsequent horizontal fold.

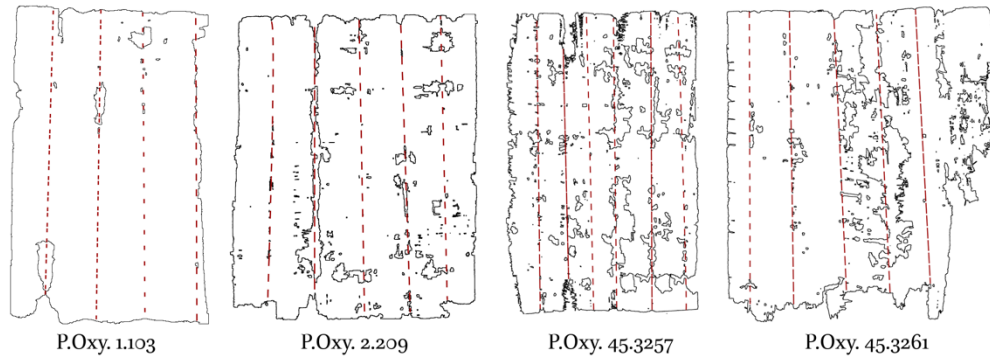


Figure 5.1 Crease patterns on papyri from the archive of Leonides.

In view of their similarity in size and fold patterns, one wonders whether some of these documents were tied up together in the same bundle with P.Oxy. 2.209.⁴⁹ In any case, these observations seem to clarify that the creases evident on our papyrus were created when it was folded up for storage along with the other papers in the archive and should not be taken as an indication that it was ever used as an amulet.

It is not uncommon, in fact, to find school models and exercises preserved among the documents of personal archives.⁵⁰ As it happens, the large blank space

48 Some of the documents in the archive are too fragmentary to distinguish the fold patterns, while a few others evidence a subsequent horizontal fold. I am grateful to Willy Clarysse for providing me with a photograph of P.Oxy. 1.103, which enabled me to confirm the traces of fold lines on this document.

49 The statement made by Grenfell and Hunt is not clear in regard to whether the documents were tied up in a single bundle or multiple bundles. However, the presence of an additional medial horizontal fold on some of the documents may suggest that they belonged to a separate “package” within the archive.

50 See Willy Clarysse, “Literary Papyri in Documentary ‘Archives,’” in *Egypt and the Hellenistic World: Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Leuven – 24-26 May 1982*, ed. E. Van’t Dack, P. Van Dessel, and W. Van Gucht (StHel 27; Leuven: Orientaliste, 1983), 43-61; and José-Antonio Fernández-Delgado and Francisca Pordomingo, “Topics and Models of School Exercises on Papyri and Ostraca from the Hellenistic Period: P.Berol. inv. 12318,” in *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth International Congress of Papyrology: Ann Arbor, July 29-August 4, 2007*, ed. Traianos Gagos (ASP; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 227-38.

below the Romans passage, while not characteristic of an amulet, is a common feature of school papyri. Cribiore notes that blank spaces are “a conspicuous characteristic of school exercises on papyri” due to “inexperienced writers who were not adept at estimating how much space their writing would take.”⁵¹ It would seem most economical, then, to judge the blank space and the large, evolving hand that copied the Romans excerpt complete with reading aids and out of place pagination as indices of an educational setting.

These conclusions notwithstanding, it is still unclear who copied the Romans passage and who penned the lines of cursive beneath and on the back. We know that Leonides was able to write since he signed one of the documents in his archive in his own hand.⁵² However, his cursive subscription is not comparable with the clumsy majuscule of the Romans passage and does not match the cursive lines beneath it. On this matter, then, inferences elude us. Whoever copied the passage, it must have held some importance for Leonides since he stored it among his business papers in his archive.

5.2.2 | Nomina Sacra in P.Oxy. 2.209

The profusion of *nomina sacra* in this brief passage—as many as eighteen contractions for seven different words—has led Luijendijk to propose that the text may have served not only as a writing exercise, but specifically as an exercise in writing *nomina sacra*.⁵³ Considering the untrained hand that copied the Romans passage, the *nomina sacra* are indeed treated with remarkable attentiveness. Forms are conventional and consistent and appear to have been reproduced from the

⁵¹ Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 60.

⁵² P.Oxy. 45.3262, line 7: ὁ αὐτὸς Λεωνίδης [σε]ση(με(ωμαι) (“I, the same Leonides, have signed”).

⁵³ Luijendijk, “A NT Papyrus,” 588-93. She hinted at this idea in her earlier book on the Christian papyri from Oxyrhynchus. After a brief discussion of the *nomina sacra* in learning exercises (including P.Oxy. 2.209), she writes: “These examples thus demonstrate that at the end of the third and beginning of the fourth century *nomina sacra* formed part of the curriculum of (at least some) Christian educational settings” (*Greetings in the Lord*, 69).

model accurately despite other errors in the copy.⁵⁴ The supralinear lines are drawn with marked diligence: lines are steady and care is taken to avoid overhang into surrounding space and overlap with the lines of adjacent *nomina sacra*.⁵⁵ Other eye-catching features of the *Vorlage* also appear to have been faithfully reproduced, such as the pagination, punctuation, and (perhaps) the awkwardly-elongated cap of the sigma.

While the copyist's interests in reproduction clearly lie in the visual constitution of the text, the reading that results from his lapse in line 9—assuming the omission was not present in the exemplar⁵⁶—indicates that he was not merely engaged in “mindless” replication, but agentive and principled semiotic work which enabled the production of a sensible reading. Significantly, when the copyist's eye returns to the text after writing τοῦ ὀνόματος, it is drawn to the grammatically compatible *nomina sacra* $\overline{\eta\upsilon}$ $\overline{\chi\rho\upsilon}$, which become appositive in the new reading. Thus it would appear that this student-copyist possessed both the skills necessary for literate engagement with his exemplar as he copied it,⁵⁷ and also the ability to “read” the *nomina sacra* (i.e. to expand them mentally to their full, inflected spellings), making possible his grammatically and semantically coherent slip.

54 $\overline{\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma}$, $\overline{\iota\eta\sigma\sigma\acute{o}\upsilon\varsigma}$, and $\overline{\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha}$ are abbreviated using hybrid suspended/contracted forms (e.g. $\overline{\chi\rho\varsigma}$, $\overline{\eta\varsigma}$, $\overline{\pi\nu\alpha}$); $\overline{\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma}$, $\overline{\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma}$, and $\overline{\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma}$ are contracted to their first and last letters (e.g. $\overline{\theta\varsigma}$, $\overline{\kappa\varsigma}$, $\overline{\nu\varsigma}$); and the genitive $\overline{\pi\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omicron\varsigma}$ is contracted with the inclusion of medial letters ($\overline{\pi\rho\omicron\varsigma}$).

55 Note, for instance, the elongated supralinear lines drawn by the copyist of the next exercise, which result in additional space surrounding the *nomina sacra*. The same phenomenon is also observable in P.Beatty 2 + P.Mich. 222 (P⁴⁶).

56 We must admit to the possibility that this reading was present in the pupil's *Vorlage*. However, the pagination strongly suggests that the exercise was copied directly from a codex rather than a teacher's model, and according to Cribiore teachers rarely employed full codices “provided with page numbers” as models (*Gymnastics of the Mind*, 133). If the pupil did copy his text directly from a full copy of Romans that contained this error, this omission would be a singular reading. Thus, I would argue that this is a less plausible scenario.

57 It was not unusual in the early stages of education for writing in the form of copying to precede reading, though in ecclesiastical contexts reading was prioritized for obvious reasons. It is interesting that one of Leonides' close partners was a church lector, but was apparently unable to write (see discussion below). See Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 172–78.

The apparent ability to read (and to decipher *nomina sacra*) but lack of skill in writing recalls the curious case documented in P.Oxy. 33.2673, where the church lector Ammonios (who, by pure coincidence, was also a friend of Leonides⁵⁸) was unable to subscribe his name to a document because “he does not know letters” (μὴ εἰ(δότος) γρά(μματα)). Undoubtedly, Ammonios must have possessed some ability to decipher Christian literary texts and their constituent *nomina sacra* in order to fulfill his duties as church lector, despite his professed inability to sign his own name.⁵⁹ As we have observed in earlier chapters, catechetical instruction and perhaps other forms of specialized ecclesiastical training involved the study (and likely some memorization) of Christian scripture, and plausibly also some kind of orientation to the *nomina sacra*. Although it is not possible to identify with any precision the type of pedagogical setting from which P.Oxy. 2.209 derives, it is reasonable to infer that its novice copyist had a Christian formation and prior experience with *nomina sacra*, whether that occurred in the same setting as this exercise or elsewhere.

A final matter worth pondering is why Leonides might have kept this exercise among his papers in his archive. On the survival of literary texts in personal archives, Willy Clarysse observes:

Quite often ... the survival of individual literary texts among the documents is not a matter of mere chance: the texts which survived in this way were not the most interesting ones from a literary point of view, but were often those the owners wanted to keep close to hand: texts of practical importance, as for instance model letters or conjugation tables, and texts to which they were personally committed (the autographs of Dioskoros and Ammon; the poems in the archive of Zenon and Apollonios; old school exercises once filed and never thrown away).⁶⁰

Certainly a portion of scripture—especially, perhaps, one copied by oneself or a family member as a learning exercise—would fit the category of “texts to which one

58 See Luijendijk, “A NT Papyrus,” 587–88, and above.

59 See the very plausible scenario proposed by Choat and Yuen-Collingridge, “A Church with No Books,” 122–30.

60 Clarysse, “Literary Papyri in Documentary ‘Archives,’” 61.

was personally committed” if Leonides were a Christian, as we have good reason to suspect. As one archival theorist has put it, “we generally keep what we are, what we are most comfortable with, what we know, what our social and educational backgrounds made us who we are.”⁶¹ But I would suggest further that a text such as this one, a brief passage scattered with seven of the most common *nomina sacra*, carefully and correctly executed, might also have significant practical value. As I attempt to demonstrate throughout this study, the *nomina sacra* were not, as has sometimes been assumed, limited to the perception and comprehension of scribes and clergy, but rather were observed and employed by a much wider Christian demographic under various circumstances and for different reasons. Although we cannot deduce Leonides’ intentions with finality, I propose that keeping an exercise in writing *nomina sacra* among other papers preserved for practical reference—contracts, leases, receipts, and the like—suggests that it was kept for the same purpose.

5.3 | A Notebook Belonging to Papnouthion (T.Louvre MND 552 L, K, I, H)

TM no. 31771	18.0 cm (h) × 13.5 cm (w)	4 th cent. CE
van Haelst 239		
Cribiore 396		
Rahlfs 2175		

Ed. pr.: Henri Weil, “Nouvelles tablettes grecques provenant d’Égypte,” in *Mélanges Perrot: Recueil de mémoires concernant l’archéologie classique, la littérature et l’histoire anciens, dédié à Georges Perrot* (Paris: A. Fontemoing, 1902), 331-32 (MND 552 L face 2 [*partim*]); B. Boyaval, “Tablettes mathématiques du Musée du Louvre,” *RAr* 2 (1973): 243-60 (257-60) (MND 552 K and 552 I face 1); B. Boyaval, “La tablette scolaire Pack² 1619,” *ZPE* 14 (1974): 241-47 (MND 552 L face 2); B. Boyaval, “Le cahier scolaire d’Aurélios Papnouthion,” *ZPE* 17 (1975): 225-35 (MND 552, 552 L face 1, 552 I face 2, and 552 H); B. Boyaval, “Le cahier de Papnouthion et les autres cahiers scolaires grecs,” *RAr* 2 (1977): 215-30 (complete edition).

61 Terry Cook, “We Are What We Keep; We Keep What We Are’: Archival Appraisal Past, Present, and Future,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 32 (2011): 173-89 (174-75).

MND 552 I face 2:

	[Αἰνεῖτε τὸν] κν̄ ὅτι ἀγαθὸν ψαλμόν =	LXX Ps 146:1
	[τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν] γ̄ ἡδυνατ(ε)ῖ η̄νεσις = ἡνκο-	
	[δομῶν Ἱερ]ουσαλὴν ὁ κύριος =	2
	[καὶ τὰς διασπορ]ὰς τοῦ Εἰσδραῆλ ἐπισινάξ(ε)ι	
5	[= ὁ ἰώμενος το]ῦς συντετριμμένους	3
	[τὴν καρδία]ν = κέ δισμεύον τας τας	
	[συντρίμματα αὐ]τῶν = ὁ ἀριθμὸν πλήθι	4
	[ἄστρον = καὶ π]ᾶσιν αὐτῷ ὀνόματα καλῶ-	
	[ν = μέγας ὁ κς] ἡμῶν κέ μεγάλη εἰσχύς	5
10	[αὐτοῦ = καὶ τῆς] σπνέσεος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔσ-	
	[τιν ἀριθμ]ὸς ἀναλαβάνο πρα-	6
	[εἰς ὁ κς = ταπε]ιγῶν [δ]ὲ ἀμαρτωροὺς	
	[ἕως τῆς γῆς =] ἑξά[ρξ]ατε τὸ κῶ	7
	[ἐν ἐξομ]ολογῆς(ε)ι = ψάλλετε	
15	[τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν] ἐν κιθάρα = τὸ περιπ-	
	[ἄλλονται τὸ]ν οὐρανὸν ἐν νεφέραις =	8
	[τῷ ἐτοιμάζο]ντι τὴν γῆ ὑετός = τῷ	
	[ἐξανατέλλο]ντι ἐν ὄραισι χόρτον =	
	[διδόν]τι κτήνεσι τροφήν	9
20	[αὐτῶν = καὶ τοῖς ν]ερόσφοις {ου} τὸν κοράκον	
	[τοῖς ἐπικαλ]ομένους αὐτὸν =	
	[οὐκ ἐν τῇ δυναστείᾳ το]ῦ Ἰηπου θελήσ(ε)ι =	10

MND 552 H:

	οὐδὲ ἐν κνήμεις τοῦ ἀνδρός	
	εὐδοκ(ε)ῖ = εὐδοκ(ε)ῖ κς ἐν τῷ φοβου-	11
25	μένους αὐτόν = κέ ἐπὶ τῷ ἐλπίζου-	
	σι(ν) ἐπὶ τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ = ἀλληλογούια	
	Ἀγγέου κέ Σαχαρίαν	
	(vac.)	
	(rotated 180 degrees)	
	ποτισ[.] .. φορσι ἐν κο	iambic trimeter
	μοα = πολλοί σε μίσισουσιν	Menander, <i>Sent.</i> 678
30	[ἄν] στυτὸς φίλῃ = ῥάθυμος οὐδ(ε)λ[ς]	iambic trimeters
	ἀγαθὸς ὑκοδεσπότης = ῥάθυ-	
	μος οὐδ(ε)λς φένετε σόφρον = . .	
	τορ . ς προῖουσιν οἱ τρόποι κο	
1	[]ι = πολλάχις ἀδελφοῖς	
35	[]νε . . . φίλον ———	
	[]δια	

line 2: αἴνεςις; lines 2-3: οἰκοδομῶν; line 3: Ἱερουσαλὴμ; line 4: Ἰσραήλ, ἐπισυνάξει; line 5: συντετριμμένους; line 6: καὶ δεσμεύων τὰ; line 7: αὐτῶν, ἀριθμῶν πλήθη; line 8: αὐτοῖς; line 9: ἡμῶν, καὶ, ἰσχὺς; line 10: συνέσεως; line 11: ἀναλαμβάνων; line 12: ταπεινῶν, ἀμαρτωλοῦς; line 13: τῷ; line 15: τῷ; line 16: νεφέλαις; line 17: τῇ γῇ ὑετόν; line 18: ὄρεσι; line 20: τῶν κοράκων; line 21: ἐπικαλουμένοις; line 23: κνήμαις; line 25: τοῖς; line 27: Ἀγγαίου καὶ Ζαχαρίου; line 28: ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ (?); line 29: μισήσουσιν; line 30: σαυτὸν φιλήσ; line 31: οἰκοδεσπότης; line 32: φαίνεται σώφρων; line 34: πολλάκις.

5.3.1 | Description

T.Louvre MND 552 L, K, I, H is an early fourth century wax-wooden tablet codex containing the school exercises of one Aurelios Papnouthion, in which we find excerpts from the Psalms, complete with *nomina sacra*, used as part of an educational curriculum.⁶² Each tablet measures 18 by 13.5 centimeters, including an edge of roughly 2 centimeters surrounding the waxed writing surface. Binding holes indicate that the tablets had once been joined together with cords to form a codex, although it is now incomplete: only five tablets survive from what was most likely a six-tablet notebook.⁶³ The first and last tablets (tablets MND and H, respectively) are

62 Henri Weil dated the pupil's hand on tablet L face 2—the only part of the codex that he published—to “l'époque de Dioclétien ou de Constantin” (“Nouvelles tablettes grecques,” 331). Boyaval later concurs: “Bien qu'il ne soit problemement pas de bonne méthode d'essayer de dater un texte trace au stylet dans la cire en s'aidant de papyrus, un rapprochement peut être fait entre cette main et celle qui a tracé BGU 94 = W. Schubart Gr. Pal. Abb. 53 p. 84, à la différence que l'auteur de notre tablette écrivait droit et celui de BGU 94, penché. Ce dernier date de Dioclétien. Il ne paraît donc pas impossible d'attribuer la tablette Weil aux dernières années du troisième siècle après Jésus-Christ ou aux premières du quatrième” (“La tablette scolaire Pack² 1619,” 242). In a publication the following year, Boyaval adds: “La main 2 (ZPE 14/3 p. 242) évoque les écritures du début du IV^e, date probable de tout le cahier” (“Le cahier scolaire,” 227).

63 Tablet L face 2 contains ten distichs in iambic trimeters proceeding in an acrostic pattern according to the letters of the alphabet. One assumes, then, that there would have been a total of 24 distichs to complete the alphabet, and that 14 are now missing. According to Boyaval, “une tablette aujourd'hui perdue ... aurait porté la suite de l'acrostiche sur une face et sa fin sur l'autre; il y aurait donc eu 6 et non 5 feuillets dans le cahier primitif” (“Le cahier scolaire,” 226). Curiously, Alan Mugridge claims in two different publications that the original codex contained eight tablets, but it is unclear to me how this number is derived. See Mugridge, “Learning and Faith,” 13; Alan Mugridge, *Copying Early Christian Texts: A Study of Scribal Practice* (WUNT 362; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 410 (no. 547).

waxed only on their internal faces, with the smooth external faces serving as a cover for the notebook. Tablets K and I have split in two; part of tablet I, which contains the psalm text, is now lost. According to Henri Weil, the first scholar to publish a partial edition, the notebook was “probably” discovered in the necropolis of Saqqara at Memphis.⁶⁴ However, further investigation by its later editor, Bernard Boyaval, suggested an Antinoite provenance, leading him to “think it prudent to add a question mark to the reference to Saqqara.”⁶⁵

In addition to the the biblical text, which covers all of Psalm 146 followed by the psalm’s inscription,⁶⁶ the notebook contains a variety of other school exercises in Greek, including a teacher’s model and Papnouthion’s copy of five verses by the dramatist Menander (some of which are metrically defective⁶⁷) and some

64 “Le cahier provident probablement de la nécropole de Memphis et fut envoyé à Paris par Mariette, en 1856” (Weil, “Nouvelles tablettes grecques,” 331).

65 The detailed account as related by Boyaval is as follows: “Weil déclarait en 1903 qu’elle provenait ‘probablement de la nécropole de Memphis’ et aurait été envoyée au Louvre par Mariette en 1856, sans préciser d’où il tenait cette information. Mariette travaillait à cette date à Saqqarah, il y a donc quelques chances pour que notre tablette ait une origine Memphite. Malheureusement les cahiers d’inventaire de l’époque, au Louvre, n’apportent aucune confirmation à cette assertion de Weil. Mais les archives du Louvre (cf. *Revue Archéologique* 1971/1 p. 57) révèlent que le sigle MND désigne des tablettes venues du Musée Guimet en 1949 (cession G. Bénédict) et les archives du Musée Guimet indiquent que ces tablettes avaient été découvertes à Antinoé par A. Gayet, cela sans précision de date. Or on sait que Gayet a dirigé de nombreuses campagnes archéologiques à Antinoé avant la première guerre mondiale. Si, comme l’affirmait Weil, la tablette vient de Saqqarah, il faut admettre que, lors de son enregistrement sur le cahier d’inventaire du Louvre en 1969 (elle était alors dans les réserves, sans numéro) le sigle MND, caractéristique des documents antinoïtes du Musée Guimet, lui a été attribué par erreur. Je crois donc prudent d’ajouter un point d’interrogation à la mention ‘Saqqarah’, présentée ensuite comme certaine par les auteurs de catalogues scolaires” (“La tablette scolaire Pack² 1619,” 246).

66 Mugridge lists the contents of the tablets as Psalm 146:1-147:1, but this is incorrect. It appears he has understood the inscription following the final verse of Psalm 146 to signal the beginning of Psalm 147, which bears the same inscription. However, since no inscription is present at the beginning of Psalm 146, it appears that the inscription has simply been placed at the end of the psalm rather than at the beginning. See Mugridge, “Learning and Faith,” 13; and Mugridge, *Copying Early Christian Texts*, 409-10.

67 In addition to these, one of the verses of iambic trimeter on tablet H can be identified as Menander, *Sent.* 678 (See *Menandri sententiae: comparatio Menandri et Philistionis*, ed. Siegfried

metrological signs, ten distichs on historical and mythological figures proceeding in alphabetic acrostic (probably continued on a lost tablet), mathematical exercises (some in a third hand), and some iambic trimeters following the continuation of Psalm 146 on the final tablet. The axes along which the exercises are inscribed vary throughout the notebook. Three of the tablets are signed by Papnouthion (L face 1, K face 1, and I face 1), and two of these are also dated 1 and 21 Mechir (K face 1 and I face 1, respectively). Only tablet I face 2 and tablet H, containing Psalm 146 and the iambic trimeters, have been reproduced above. The layout of the entire notebook is illustrated below in Figure 6.2.

Jaekel [BSGRT; Leipzig: Teubner, 1964], 72). Regarding metrical defects and other inaccuracies in teachers' models and students' copies, Cribiore comments: "Certainly teachers, who had to trust their memory most of the time, were rarely accurate and were bound to make mistakes and misquotations. But the mistakes or variants showing up in teachers' models and students' copy [*sic*] do not appear particularly clever. Especially when teaching in the primary school, moreover, they do not seem to have been keen on metre or to have cared or been able to give their students correct verses to copy for practice" (Raffaella Cribiore, "A Schooltablet from the Hearst Museum," *ZPE* 107 (1995): 263-70 [268]).

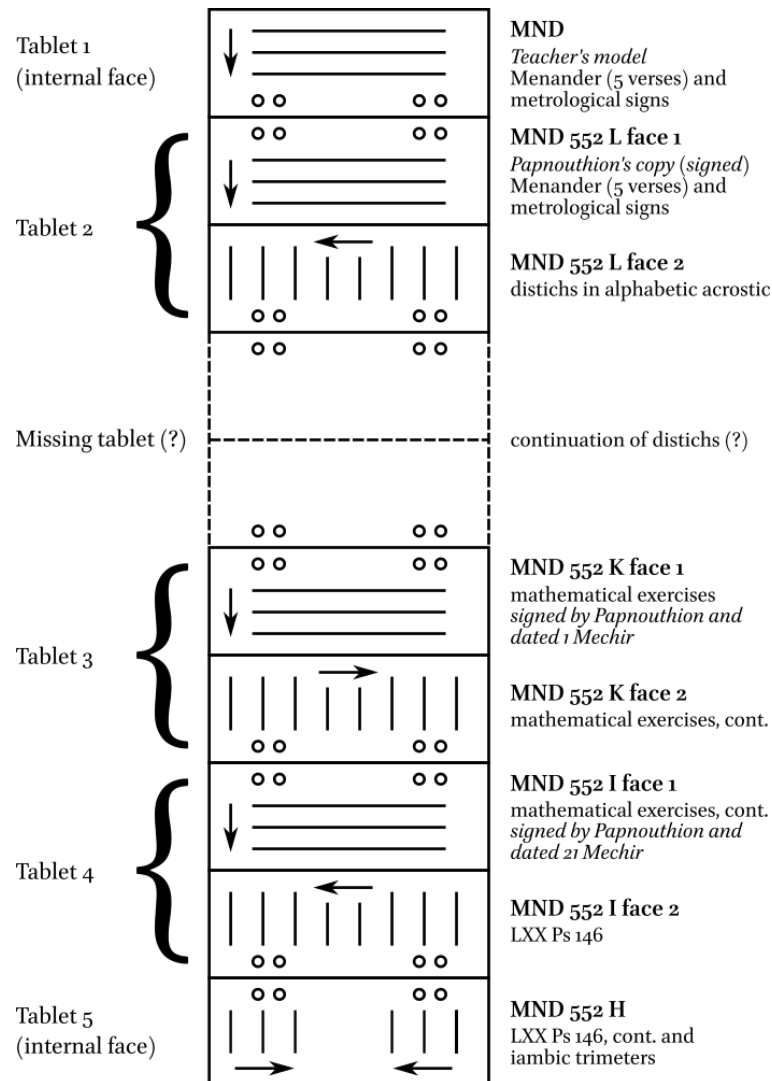


Figure 5.2 Layout of tablet codex MND 552 L, K, I, H.

Three hands are in evidence. The hand of the teacher, who wrote the model on tablet MND, is reminiscent of the penmanship of a modern primary school teacher, neatly rendered with large, somewhat vertically elongated, and carefully distinguished letters.⁶⁸ In his copy of the teacher's model, Papnouthion attempts to imitate his teacher's style, but elsewhere his letters are rounder and less separated.⁶⁹

68 Cribiore describes the hand of the teacher as "simple and elegant" (*Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 278) and as having "a strict set of conventions that aimed at regularity and pleasing appearance" (*ibid.*, 7).

69 Boyaval describes the hands of the teacher and Papnouthion as follows: "La main professorale qui a tracé MND ne manqué pas d'élégance. Elle procédait par lettres non ligatures, hautes et étroites, ayant une tendance à l'allongement vertical comme dans les écritures de chancellerie

A third hand is co-present with the hand of Papnouthion in some of the mathematical exercises on tablets K and I, likely that of a classmate with whom Papnouthion shared his notebook.⁷⁰

Papnouthion's hand, which produced the psalm text, is informal and uneven ("evolving"⁷¹) with some tendency towards cursive, "clearly ... that of an unpracticed student learning to write."⁷² The text of the psalm is continuous and verses are divided by parallel horizontal strokes. *Nomina sacra* are conventionally abbreviated with one exception (κύριος is written *plene* in line 3), but their supralinear lines are sloppily drawn. The transcription is rife with misspellings: itacism prevails, long and short vowels are regularly interchanged, and certain consonants are often added, omitted, or swapped, mirroring the phonetic patterns of speech. It is presumably these errors which led Boyaval to propose a possible dictational context⁷³ and Criore to wonder whether "the *Psalm* perhaps was written from memory."⁷⁴ The questions then arise: If Papnouthion produced the text by dictation or memory, did he then already know how to write *nomina sacra*? Or did he instead copy the text,

du III-IV^e, très légèrement penchées à droite et séparées par des intervalles réguliers. Avant d'écrire, elle a tracé 7 lignes horizontales qu'on discerne encore, en particulier à l'extrémité droite de la l. 1 et aux l. 5-7. Elle n'a rédigé qu'ensuite, prenant soin d'aligner toutes ses lettres sur ces horizontales. Du toute évidence, elle a voulu réaliser une 'belle page'. La main d'A. Papnouthion est beaucoup plus cursive et négligée. Surtout, elle manifeste une grande inexpérience de la phonétique et de la morphologie du grec" ("Le cahier scolaire," 229).

70 The third hand is more rapid and cursive than the hand of Papnouthion. See plates 5 and 6 in Boyaval, "Tablettes mathématiques," 258 and 260, where both hands are evident. Criore believes that tablet notebooks were usually owned by a teacher or school rather than by individual students and that "the tablets were passed around in class and different students were able to use them" (*Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 55). It may be, then, that the notebook belonged to Papnouthion's teacher and was shared between Papnouthion and another classmate.

71 Criore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 278.

72 Mugridge, *Copying Early Christian Texts*, 410.

73 Boyaval, "Le cahier de Papnouthion," 216. Boyaval suggested dictation as one option: "Dictée ou exercice de copie (?)" (ibid.).

74 Criore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 277-78.

complete with *nomina sacra*, from a *Vorlage*? A closer look at the types of orthographic error present in Papnouthion's exercises may offer some assistance in searching for an answer to these questions.

With one exception (discussed below), the orthographic errors in the psalm exercise fall into the following categories:

- a. *Vowel confusion*: Itacism is more common than not. There is also general confusion between αι and ε, and long and short /o/.⁷⁵ These are common errors caused by phonological influence.
- b. *Addition, omission, or interchange of final -ν and -ς*: Final -ν and -ς are sometimes added erroneously.⁷⁶ Twice, final -ς is omitted.⁷⁷ Occasionally, final -ν and final -ς are interchanged.⁷⁸ According to Gignac, the phonemes /n/ and /s/ were generally unpronounced in the final position, which often led to their erroneous insertion, omission, or interchange in writing.⁷⁹
- c. *Confusion of liquids*: Twice, ρ is exchanged for λ.⁸⁰

75 Line 2: ἐνεσις for αἴνεσις; line 6: κέ διςμεύον for καὶ δεσμεύων (κέ for καί also in lines 9, 25, and 27); line 7: αὐτόν for αὐτῶν, ὁ ἀριθμον for ὁ ἀριθμῶν; line 9: ἡμον for ἡμῶν; line 10: συνέσεος for συνέσεως; line 12: ταπεινον for ταπεινῶν; lines 13 and 15: το for τῷ; line 18: ὁρασι for ὁρεσι; line 20: τον κοράχον for τῶν κοράχων; line 23: κνήμες for κνήμαις; line 27: Ἀγγέου for Ἀγγαίου.

76 In line 17 he writes τήν for τῇ, and in line 6 he seems to have trouble discerning which case of article to use, writing τας twice in a row for τὰ. In the latter case, the following noun begins with a sigma, which likely added to the confusion.

77 Line 8: αὐτο for αὐτοῖς; line 30 φῖλη for φιλῆς. This probably indicates "that final /s/ was dropped in the speech of many writers" (Gignac, *Grammar*, 1126).

78 Line 5: συντετριμμένουν for συντετριμμένους; line 17: ὑετός for ὑετόν; line 30: σαυτός for σαυτόν. Gignac comments: "Final -ς and -ν sometimes interchange. ... [T]here is a possibility that these instances represented the interchangeability of 'silent' letters" (ibid., 131).

79 See ibid., 113, 124-32.

80 In line 12, Papnouthion writes ἀμαρτωρούς for ἀμαρτωλούς, and in line 16, he writes νεφέραις for νεφέλαις. On this type of confusion, Gignac comments: "The frequent interchange of λ and ρ indicates that there was only one liquid phoneme /l/ in the speech of many writers in the Roman and Byzantine periods. ... [I]n the Egyptian sound systems, the Fayumic dialect had only one liquid phoneme /l/, with which the /r/ of other dialects merged. There is also evidence from Coptic documents of a fluctuation between λ and ρ in other dialect areas. In the Greek papyri, most of the interchanges of λ and ρ are found in documents from the Fayum, especially in those showing other evidence of bilingual interference" (Gignac, *Grammar*, 1106-7).

- d. *Exchange of sibilants*: Papnouthion writes Σαχαρίαν for Ζαχαρίου (line 27).⁸¹
- e. *Nasal sound confusion*: In one instance, a medial nasal is completely assimilated to the following consonant (ἀναλαββάνο for ἀναλαμβάνων, line 11; note also the omission of final -ν), and once an unassimilated medial nasal is erroneously inserted before a velar stop (ἡνκοδομῶν for οἰκοδομῶν, lines 2-3).⁸² The insertion of -ν in line 17 (την γῆ for τῇ γῇ) may also be a result of nasal sound confusion since the following word begins with a nasal.⁸³ In addition, μ is once exchanged for ν (Ἱερουσαλήν for Ἱερουσαλήμ, line 3).

As all of the above errors can be attributed to mistaken hearing or regional pronunciation, one might be tempted immediately to identify them as by-products of dictation. However, Cribiore rightly warns against rushing to judgment:

It is important ... to take into account the fact that a student reproducing a text from a model read it either aloud or silently to himself. He therefore dictated to himself, and in doing so, made errors of pronunciation. When visual mistakes (slips of the pen) and audible errors (phonetic mistakes) occur, it is difficult to be sure what kind of copying caused them: both kinds of copying—from external dictation and from self-dictation—were liable to both kinds of mistakes.⁸⁴

81 Gignac notes: “The interchange of σ and ζ in positions other than before a voiced consonant indicates an identification of the phonemes /s/ and /z/ in the speech of individual writers. ... In Egypt, it reflects underdifferentiation of voiced and voiceless sibilants in Greek through bilingual interference. In Coptic, there was only a voiceless sibilant /s/, parallel to the voiceless stop phonemes without voiced counterparts” (ibid., 124).

82 According to Gignac, “the frequent assimilation of nasals in writing indicates that at some stage there must have been actual assimilation in speech.” (ibid., 172).

83 Final -ν is sometimes inserted before words beginning with a nasal. See ibid., 113.

84 Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 93. T.C. Skeat earlier made the same observation: “It might be thought from the foregoing that the two systems, visual copying and dictation, being so fundamentally different in character, would produce two readily separable types of error, so that we could tell after a very short examination the method by which a particular manuscript had been reproduced. But this is not the case. The scribe copying visually may commit visual errors through misreading the exemplar, or audible errors through self-dictation. The scribe copying from dictation may reproduce visual errors of the dictator, or himself commit phonetic errors through faulty hearing. In short, both types of copying are liable to both species of error” (“The Use of Dictation in Ancient Book-Production,” in *The Collected Biblical Writings of T.C. Skeat*, ed. J.K. Elliott [NovTSup 113; Leiden: Brill, 2004]; repr. from *Proceedings of the British Academy* 42 [1956]).

As it happens, some of the other exercises in Papnouthion's notebook provide an ideal case in point. As Yuen-Collingridge and Choat observe, the side-by-side survival of the teacher's model of the Menandrine verses and Papnouthion's copy "shows that visual copying did not eliminate the intrusion of non-standard orthography in the copying process."⁸⁵ On five occasions, Papnouthion's orthography deviates from the model provided by his teacher: twice he confuses long and short /o/, twice he interchanges the diphthong αι with ε, and once he metathesizes the letters of the second person pronoun.⁸⁶ Yet, it is clear that Papnouthion's rendering is the product of subvocalization rather than external dictation—that is, of "mishearing his own words"⁸⁷ as he sounded out the verses of his *Vorlage*—since he also duplicated the teacher's spelling mistakes and even attempted to imitate his teacher's hand.⁸⁸

The same types of phonetic error also affect Papnouthion's rendering of the acrostic distichs on tablet L face 2. Besides his predisposition to itacism, he confuses

85 Rachel Yuen-Collingridge and Malcolm Choat, "The Copyist at Work: Scribal Practice in Duplicate Documents," in *Actes du 26^e Congrès international de papyrologie, Genève, 16-21 août 2010*, ed. Paul Schubert (Recherches et Recontres: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Genève 30; Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2012), 830.

86 Papnouthion writes τᾶνο for τᾶνω, ζητον for ζητῶν, δίκειον for δίκαιον, ἐτέρου for ἐταίρου, and ες for σε. See the editions by Boyaval, "Le cahier scolaire," 229-30, and "Le cahier de Papnouthion," 216-17. The transposition of letters in the second person pronoun seems more likely a visual error and may add weight to the assertion that both phonetic and visual errors can appear in visually copied texts.

87 Yuen-Collingridge and Choat, "The Copyist at Work," 829.

88 For instance, alphas are angular in Papnouthion's copy of Menander and his letters are somewhat more vertically elongated; elsewhere, his letters are more round. In addition, the teacher makes a number of phonetic errors in her model, which Papnouthion has copied: δῖ for δεῖ, ἐπιτρέπειν for ἐπιτρέπιν, δίκαιον for δικαίως, ἐταίρου for ἐτέρου, and προπάσχι for προπάσχει (see Boyaval, "Le cahier scolaire," 229-30, and Boyaval, "Le cahier de Papnouthion," 216-17). Interestingly, in sounding out ἐταίρου in the teacher's model, Papnouthion confuses the diphthong αι with ε and writes ἐτέρου, resulting in an accidental correction of the teacher's misspelling.

long and short /o/ on seven occasions,⁸⁹ twice he confuses the diphthong αι with ε,⁹⁰ and on numerous occasions he struggles with final -ν and -ς, either adding, omitting, or interchanging the letters erroneously.⁹¹ Noting the loss of final letters in some of these verses, Yuen-Collingridge and Choat propose the use of “a *Vorlage* with a damaged right hand side,” since “dictation of such a model would have surely ameliorated these disturbances.”⁹² However, in every case where the reading is certain, the lost letter is final -ς, a phonetically indistinct letter with which Papnouthion shows considerable difficulty throughout the codex. The single possible exception is πένης, which is written to the edge of the tablet with the three letters πεν certain, followed by an indistinguishable fourth character—conceivably an eta, with the final sigma dropped.⁹³ Thus, in all likelihood, all of these omissions are the result of phonetic error.

In spite of this, there again remains strong evidence of visual copying. In several cases, erroneous spellings that cannot easily be accounted for by phonetic/phonological factors seem best explained as transcriptional errors caused by the misreading of similarly shaped letters.⁹⁴ Particularly revealing is the

89 See the editions by Boyaval, MND 552 L face 2: ός for ώς (line 18), τον άχιλλέος ώπλων for τών άχιλλέως όπλων (line 19), καταπεσόν for καταπεσών (lines 25-26), τόν σόφων σοφώτατων for τών σόφων σοφώτατος (line 32).

90 See *ibid.*: έας for Αίας (line 18), γυνεκός for γυναικός (line 21).

91 See *ibid.*: ξίφιν for ξίφει (line 18), έλαβεν for έλαβε (line 19), λόγυσιν for λόγοισι (twice, in line 20 and line 35), έπεσεν for έπεσε (line 21), πόλι for πόλις (line 22), διώλεσας for διώλεσαν (line 29), θρασύ for θρασύς (line 30), σοφώτατων for σοφώτατος (line 32).

92 Yuen-Collingridge and Choat, “The Copyist at Work,” 830.

93 See the editions of Boyaval, MND 552 L face 2, line 33 (Boyaval gives the reading πεν.), and the plate in Boyaval, “La tablette scolaire.” Since this is the last word in the distich, it is also possible that the mark is the remnant of a double horizontal line, but given Papnouthion’s habit of dropping final sigmas it seems reasonable to assume the mark to be an eta.

94 Yuen-Collingridge and Choat, “The Copyist at Work,” 830. The authors make reference to ή παρθένοι for ή παρθένος and λεύτρα for λέκτρα (both in line 24). I add to these λίαν for βίαν (line 19). On the latter, Boyaval remarks: “Weil a lu λίαν qui s’impose. Mais le vers impair du second distique devrait commencer par un β que, manifestement, l’écolier n’a pas tracé ici (il suffit pour

misspelling of ὁ τλήμων as ἐθλήμων at the beginning of the second distich, where two small oblique strokes mark the epsilon as an error.⁹⁵ Given that the following word (ἐλαβεν) begins with epsilon, the error seems most likely due to parablepsis—a type of error which, of course, entails visual copying.⁹⁶ Papnouthion then apparently proceeds to write θλήμον, which he erroneously aspirates (probably due to phonological influence⁹⁷), thus producing in a single word both an audible error and an obvious visual error. The co-presence of both types of error tips the evidence decisively in favor of subvocalized visual copying, as distinctively visual errors would seem to rule out the possibility of external dictation.⁹⁸

As we have seen, the types of phonetic error that are routinely committed in Papnouthion's visually copied exercises are precisely the same types of error that proliferate in the psalm text. Given the foregoing evidence, it would therefore seem just as likely that the psalm was copied from an exemplar as that it was produced by dictation or from memory, and I find no reason to favor either of the latter scenarios over the former. As it happens, there may be in the psalm text, as in other exercises in the notebook, some subtle evidence to suggest visual copying. While the confusion of sibilants in Papnouthion's mistaken spelling of Σαχαρίαν for Ζαχαρίου (line 27) is easily explained phonetically, the confusion of case endings is not. The latter error is perhaps explainable as another misidentification of resemblant letters,

s'en convaincre de comparer avec le β d'ἐλαβεν, ligne 2, et Φοίβου, ligne 7). Αίαν doit être maintenu mais considéré comme une faute pour βίαν" ("La tablette scolaire," 243).

95 See the plate in Boyaval, "La tablette scolaire," 248.

96 Boyaval proposes that "le rédacteur a tracé un epsilon, voulant problemament écrire ἐλαβεν; puis il l'a biffé de deux petites diagonales descendantes et a 'enchaîné' avec θλήμον" ("La tablette scolaire," 243).

97 On the interchange of voiceless and aspirated stops, see Gignac, *Grammar*, 1:86-96. He notes that "the unconditioned interchange of aspirated and voiceless stops is caused by bilingual interference. Only in the Bohairic dialect of Coptic, spoken in the Delta area, were there aspirated stop phonemes. Even in this dialect the opposition between voiceless and aspirate occurred only in accented syllables" (ibid., 95).

98 Yuen-Collingridge and Choat, "The Copyist at Work," 830.

but it is probably best understood as a morphological error that was present in the *Vorlage*. Although this explanation does not completely rule out the possibility that the error was reproduced vocally by an external dictator, one must expect, with Yuen-Collingridge and Choat, that “an obvious visual error producing a nonsense reading in a *Vorlage* would attract attention and resolution in a subsequent dictation.”⁹⁹ I would therefore argue that the available evidence favors a setting in which the psalm was copied—visually and audibly through subvocalization—from a *Vorlage*. We will examine the possible implications of this conclusion on Papnouthion’s handling of the *nomina sacra* below.

The inclusion of a psalm passage with *nomina sacra* among the texts set for copying suggests a Christian milieu, but its juxtaposition with texts containing classical and mythological material as well as metrical and mathematical exercises would seem to point to a traditional literary educational setting under a γραμματικός rather than a specialized ecclesiastical setting.¹⁰⁰ Mugridge asserts that “if this codex may be taken as testimony to anyone’s religious convictions, it would be the teacher’s rather than the student’s.”¹⁰¹ It is indeed true that one should be cautious when drawing conclusions about the personal affiliations of students on the basis of the contents of exercises set by their teachers. In this case, however, the notebook preserves several other indicators of Papnouthion’s Christian identity. The name Papnouthion, for one, provides some clue that he came from a Christian family.

99 Yuen-Collingridge and Choat, “The Copyist at Work,” 830.

100 Alberto Nodar notes: “If it is true that (some) Christians accepted the teaching of pagan literature through the *technē* of the γραμματική as a reluctant compromise, they also took care to introduce Christian elements in the early exercises which might prompt comments or telling stories of religious character either in place of or in addition to mythological themes. This is especially visible in the passages proposed for copying” (“Christianity at School: Early Christian Schooltexts on Papyri,” in *Eastern Christians and their Written Heritage: Manuscripts, Scribes and Context*, ed. J.P. Monferrer-Sala, H. Teule, and S. Torallas [Leuven: Peeters, 2012], 197). On the differences between traditional literary schooling and more specialized Christian training focused on reading scripture, see Choat and Yuen-Collingridge, “A Church with No Books,” 122–30, and Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 177–78.

101 Mugridge, “Learning and Faith,” 13.

According to Bagnall, names derived from the Egyptian word for god, *ntr* (Copt. *noute*) can be classified as Christian, since “pagan theophoric names in Egyptian used the name or epithet of a specific god or cluster of gods, not the general or abstract word for god. Papnouthios (and its variants) and Pinoution both belong in this class.”¹⁰² Second, Papnouthion marks the head of some of his exercises with crosses.¹⁰³ In his study of early Christian schooltexts on papyri, Nodar considers “a symbol, such as a cross or chrism” to be one of the “indicators of a Christian environment in a school document.”¹⁰⁴ In letters and documents, Choat also considers the use of crosses, “where found at the head or before the first line in documents, or before the greeting or address in letters ... as an indicator of Christianity in the fourth century.”¹⁰⁵ Boyaval’s assertion that “the presence of a psalm (VII-VIII) and of crosses (IV 1, VI 1) proves the Christian origin of the notebook,” therefore seems a reasonable supposition.¹⁰⁶

102 Roger S. Bagnall, “Religious Conversion and Onomastic Change in Early Byzantine Egypt,” *BASP* 19 (1982): 105-24 [110]. In their recent adapted version of Bagnall’s study, Mark Depauw and Willy Clarysse retain Bagnall’s category of “monotheistic names like Theodoros, Theodosios, Timotheos, Paphouthios” among their set of Christian names (“How Christian was Fourth Century Egypt? Onomastic Perspectives on Conversion,” *VC* 67 [2013]: 407-35 [420]). See also Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 52-54. See, however, the caution against too hastily detecting religious convictions on the basis of names in Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 51-56.

103 Crosses appear at the head of the exercises on tablets K face 1, K face 2, and I face 1. See the transcriptions in Boyaval, “Le cahier de Papnouthion,” 217-18, and the plates of tablets K face 1 and I face 1 in Boyaval, “Tablettes mathématiques,” 258 and 260 (plates 5 and 6).

104 Nodar, “Christianity at School,” 187. See also Nodar Domínguez, “Pagan literature in Christian school texts,” 42-43.

105 Choat, *Belief and Cult*, 116-17. Although Choat’s study does not consider learning exercises, the same criteria surely apply.

106 “La présence d’un psaume (VII-VIII) et de chrismes (IV 1, VI 1) prouve l’origine chrétienne du cahier” (Boyaval, “Le cahier scolaire,” 227). Curiously, Muiridge makes mention both of the crosses and of Boyaval’s comment, but still maintains that the codex can only be taken as suggestive of the teacher’s personal affiliations. He does not explain why the pupil would have marked his exercises with crosses if he were not also a Christian (“Learning and Faith,” 13).

5.3.2 | Nomina Sacra in *T.Louvre MND 552 L, K, I, H*

Nomina sacra in Papnouthion's psalm exercise are contracted conventionally, but only κύριος is treated as such ($\overline{\kappa\nu}$, line 1; $\overline{\kappa\omega}$, line 13; and $\overline{\kappa\varsigma}$, line 14). Twice, $\overline{\kappa\varsigma}$ has been restored by the editor (line 9 and 12), and once κύριος is written in *plene* (line 3). Ἱερουσαλήμ (pap. Ἱερουσαλήν, line 3), Ἰσραήλ (pap. Εἰσδράήλ, line 4), and οὐρανός (line 16) are all uncontracted.

The noun θεός occurs twice in the passage (lines 2 and 15), but both instances happen to fall on the lost portion of tablet I and have been restored in *plene* by the editor. The restoration τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν in line 2 consists of eight letters, for which there is sufficient space in the lacuna: the corresponding lacunae in the preceding and following lines each also held eight letters, assuming that the confusion of vowel sounds that is ubiquitous throughout the notebook also affected Papnouthion's spelling of Αἰνεῖτε in line 1 (i.e. reducing it to Ἐνιτε). Similarly, the restoration τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν in line 15 consists of nine letters, which is not inconsistent with the restorations in the preceding and following lines of seven and nine letters, respectively.

A closer look at the extant *nomina sacra* in the exercise, however, makes these readings less certain. In each of the three surviving instances of *nomina sacra*, Papnouthion produces an elongated supralinear line that extends well into the space on one or both sides of the contracted form, resulting in surrounding empty gaps roughly equivalent to the width of one or two letters in total (Figure 6.3). Letters are otherwise written continuously throughout the exercise without any spaces dividing words.



Figure 5.3 *Nomina sacra* in the notebook of Papnouthion.

This suggests to me that a restoration of $\overline{\theta\omega}$ in both instances is equally plausible to the editor's restoration of $\theta\epsilon\omega$ in full spelling, since the additional space surrounding

the contracted form would result in approximately the same letter count. Be that as it may, Don Barker has demonstrated persuasively that in another learning exercise, P.Lond.Lit. 207 (discussed below), the original hand consistently contracted κύριος but always wrote out θεός in full.¹⁰⁷ It is therefore not possible, in my opinion, to determine whether the two instances of θεός in this exercise were written in full form or as *nomina sacra*.

The matter raised above regarding subvocalization while copying visually raises the question as to whether Papnouthion knew how to expand the *nomina sacra* to their full forms as he sounded out the verses of the psalm, since *nomina sacra* cannot be pronounced as written. In line 3, he writes out ὁ κύριος in *scriptio plena*, which could signal a *Vorlage* with a *plene* spelling, but it could also have resulted from Papnouthion's full pronunciation of a *nomen sacrum* in his *Vorlage* and consequent writing of the word in *plene*. His characteristic vowel confusion elsewhere in the exercise may, however, rule out the latter hypothesis.

In line 13, Papnouthion writes τὸ $\overline{\kappa\omega}$, confusing long and short /o/ in the article but not in the contracted *nomen sacrum*, creating a disagreement in case and gender. This error seems to suggest that the *nomen sacrum*, unlike the preceding article, was not perceived as alphabetic writing that could be sounded out as he copied, but rather as a distinct visual entity. This is further borne out by the elongated supralinear lines and adjacent vacant space padding the *nomina sacra* in the copied text, which clearly indicate that the *nomina sacra* were not copied as part of a line of continuous letters, to which he returned afterwards to add a supralinear line, but were treated independently of the alphabetic writing in the act of copying.

Thus, while it is not clear from his exercise precisely what the *nomina sacra* represented for Papnouthion, his treatment indicates that he perceived them as distinct entities which were processed visually rather than aurally. In other words, they were not "pictures of sounds" like the surrounding letters, which could be (and

¹⁰⁷ See Don C. Barker, "P.Lond.Lit. 207 and the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*: A Tentative Proposal," *SHT* 8.A.2 (2007): 1-14, and further in my discussion of P.Lond.Lit. 207 below.

were) intoned as he copied. Rather, they were “pictures of ideas”¹⁰⁸—that is, in the Peircean parlance, a type of icon.¹⁰⁹

5.4 | A Reading Exercise of LXX Psalms 11:7–14:4 (P.Lond.Lit. 207)

TM no. 62310 25.7 cm (h) × 24.5 cm (w) 3rd/4th cent. CE
van Haelst 109
Cribiore 297 (recto = 298)
Rahlfs 2019

Ed. pr.: “An Early Papyrus Fragment of the Greek Psalter,” *The Athenaeum*, September 8, 1894: 319–21.

col. i

→	[τὰ] λόγια κυ λόγ{ε}ία ἀγνά [ἀργ]ύριον πεπυρωμένον δοκίμ(ι)ον τῇ γῇ [κ]εκάθαρισμένον ἐπταπλάσιον [σ]ύ κε φυλάξις ἡμᾶς	LXX Ps 11:7 8
5	[καὶ δια]τήρη[ς] ἐν ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς γενέας ταύτης εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. [κύκλω οἱ] ἄσβεβ(ε)ῖς περιπατοῦσιν [κατὰ] τὸ ὑψόσ[σ]ου ἐπὶ οὐρανῶν {ν} σφας τοῦς [υ]ἱοῦς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.	 9
10	[εἰς] τὸ τέλος ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυεὶτ [IB ἔω]ς πότε· κε ἐπιλήσι μου εἰς τέλος [ἔως πότ]ε ἀποστρέψ(ε)ις τὸ πρόσωπόν [σου ἀ]π' ἐμοῦ	12:1 2
15	[ἔω]ς τίνος θήσομε τὰς βουλάς ἐν ψυ[χῇ] μου [ἐπ]ὶ βλ[εψ]ον <ε>ἰσάκου[σ]όν μου κε ὁ θε[ός] μου	3

108 Gunther Kress, *Before Writing: Rethinking the Paths to Literacy* (London: Routledge, 1997), 79.

109 In Peirce's classification of signs, icons are “picture-like signs which either are or resemble what they signify, have the modality of direct perception, and hence are the most persuasive of signs” (Hodge and Kress, *Social Semiotics*, 26–27).

- [ὀδύνας] ἐν καρδία μου ἡμέρες
 [ἔω]ς πρότε ὑψώθησέτε ὁ ἐχφρ[ός μο]υ [ἐπ' ἐμ]έ
 [φώτιχο]ν τοῦς ἀδελφούς μου μ[ή ποτ]ε 4
 20 [ύ]πνω[σῶσι]ν εἰς θάνα[τον] ^(?)
 [μή ποτε εἴ]π[η] ὁ ἐ[χθρ]ός [μο]υ Ἰσχυ[σα] 5
 [πρὸς αὐτόν·] οἱ [θ]λ[ίβοντες] με ^(?)
 [ἀγαλλ]ιάσονται [ἐάν] σαλευτῶ
 ἐ[γώ] θὲ ἐπὶ τῷ ἐλαίει σου ἡλπισα ^(?) 6
 25 ἀγαλλιᾷσθετε [ἡ κα]ρδία μου ἐπὶ τῷ [σω]τ[η]ρί[ω σ]οῦ
 ἄσω τῷ κῶ τῷ εὐεργετήσαντί με
 καὶ ψ[αλ]ῶ τῷ ὀνόματι κυ[ρίου] ὑ[ψίστου]
- (ε)ἰς τὸ τέλος τῷ Δαυεὶδ 131
 ψαλμός
- 30 [II] εἶπεν ἄφρων ἐν καρδία αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν θεός
 [δι]έφθάρ[σα] ἦσαν καὶ ἐβδελύσθησαν ἐν ἐπιτηδεύμασιν
 [ο]ὐκ ἔστιν ποιῶν χρηστότητα οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἐνός
 [κς] ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν διέκυψεν ἐπὶ τοῦς 2
 υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων
- 35 [τ]οῦ ἰδ(ε)ῖν εἰ ἔστιν συν[ε]ῖων ἐκζ[ητῶν τ]ὸν ~~αὐτὸν~~ θν
 [πά]ντες ἐξέκλιναν ἅμα ἡχρ[εώθησα]ν 3
 [οὐ]κ ἔστιν ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα [α] οὐκ ἔστιν ~~αὐτὸν~~ ἕως ἐνός

col. ii

- τάφος ἀγεωγμένος ὁ λάρυ(γ)ξ αὐ[τῶν]
 τες γλώσσεσ ἀυτῶν ἐδολιοῦσ[αν]
 40 {ε}ἰδὲς ἀσπίδων ὑπὸ τὰ χ(ε)ἰλῇ αὐ[τῶν]
 ὦν τὸ στόμα' ἄρας καὶ πικρ{ε}ίας [γέμει]
 ὁξ(ε)ῖς οἱ πόδες αὐτῶν ἐχχ[ε]αί ^(?) αἶμα
 σὺντριμ' μα καὶ τάλεπῶρ{ε}[ἰα ἐν τες]
 ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν
 45 καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσ[αν]
 οὐκ ἔστιν φόβος θεοῦ ἀπέναν[τι]
 τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτ[ῶν]

	οὐχὶ γινώσκοντες πάντες οἱ ἐργ[αζόμε-]	4
	νοὶ τὴν ἀνομ[ε]ῖαν	
50	οἱ κατέσθ(ι)όντες τὸν λαόν μου β[ρώσει]	
	ἄρτου	
	τὸν κν οὐκ ἐπεκάλεσαγ[το]	
	ἐκεῖ ἐδειλιάσαν φόβω οὐ []	5
	δικάζ(ε)ι ἐν γένεα· δικ[αία]	
55	βούλην πρωχοῦ κατήσχη[ύνατε]	6
	ὅτι κς ἐλπίζ αὐτοῦ ἐστιν	
	τί[ς δ]ώσ(ε)ι ἐ[κ Σι]ωὴ τὸ σωτήρ-	7
	ιον [Ισ]ραηλ	
	ἐ[ν τ]ῷ ἐπιστρέψε κν τὴν	
60	[αἰχμαλωσ][αγ [τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ]	
	ἀγαλ'λιάσθω Ιακωβ' καὶ εὐ[φραν-]	
	θήτω Ἰσραηλ·	
	ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυειδ	14:1
	ἸΔ· κε τίς παροικῆσ(ε)ι ἐν τῷ σκη[νώματί σου]	
65	καὶ τίς κατασκηνώσει ἐν ὄρ(ε)ι ἀγίω σ[ου]	
	πορευόμενος ἄμωμος καὶ ἐργα[ζόμενος]	2
	δικαιοσύνην	
	λαλῶν ἀλήθ(ε)ιαν ἐν καρδί[α] [αὐτοῦ]	
	ὃς οὐκ ἐδόλωσεν ἐν γλώσ[σῃ αὐτοῦ]	3
70	οὐδὲ ' ἐποίησεν τῷ πλησίον [αὐτοῦ κακὸν]	
	καὶ ὄν(ε)ιδισμὸν οὐκ ἔλαβεν ἐπ[ὶ τοὺς]	
	ἐνγιστα αὐτοῦ	
	ἐξου[δ]ένητε ἐνωπ[ίον αὐτοῦ πονηρευόμενος]	4
	τοὺς [δὲ] φοβ[ομένους κύριον δοξάζει]	

line 1: pap. λογία; line 3: ἐπταπλασίως (pap. edited from ἐπταπλασίον to ἐπταπλασίων); line 11: Δαυειδ; line 12: ἐπιλήσῃ; line 15: θήσομαι; line 16: pap. ἱσχακου[σ]ον; line 17: ἡμέρας; line 18: ὑψωθήσεται; line 19: ἀδελφούς for ὀφθαλμούς; line 21: pap. ἵσχυ[σα]; line 24: ἐλέει; line 25: ἀγαλλιάσεται; line 31: ἐβδελύχθησαν; line 34: pap. υἱους; line 35: pap. ἴδιν; line 37: pap. ποίωγ; line 39: ταῖς γλώσσαις; line 40: pap. εἶος; line 42: ἐκχέαι; line 43: ταλαιπωρία, ταῖς; line 48: γινώσκονται; line 54: δικάζ(ε)ι for ὁ θεὸς (a variant reading?); line 59: ἐπιστρέψαι; line 61: pap. ἱακωβ; line 62: pap. ἱσραηλ; line 67: δικαιοσύνην; line 72: ἐγγιστα; line 73: ἐξουδένωται.

5.4.1 | Description

P.Lond.Lit. 207 consists of a large fragment of a roll carrying LXX Psalms 11:7–14:4, written stichometrically in two columns of 37 lines each. The sheet, which measures 24.5 by 25.7 centimeters, was probably cut from a larger roll containing the psalter;¹¹⁰ the back was then reused to write Isocrates' *Ad Demonicum* 26–28 across the fibers by another hand of the same general date (= P.Lond.Lit 255).¹¹¹ Some damage has been sustained near the center of the sheet and also along the *kollesis*, which runs vertically down the lefthand edge, resulting in the loss of initial letters in most of the lines of the first column.

The psalms are written in black ink in an upright, rounded, and bimodular hand with markedly looped letters and cursive features, usually described as influenced

110 That the sheet was cut from a larger roll is suggested by the columnar layout with a wide intercolumnar margin but narrow outer margins, and by the abrupt beginning of Psalm 11 at verse 7 and ending of Psalm 14 partway through verse 4. One must surmise that the psalms began in a previous column and continued into the following column of the roll. Cribiore suggests that “a teacher may have been the writer” of the roll (*Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 245). This seems a reasonable supposition, given the presence of reading aids such as punctuation and enlarged initial letters, which are seldom found in true literary rolls (on which see *ibid.*, 81–88 and 99, and below).

111 After acknowledging that “the papyrus was originally not inscribed on the back,” so “it would naturally be inferred that it formed part of a roll,” the anonymous author of the *editio princeps* nevertheless concludes that the presence of another learning exercise on the back “seems to prove pretty conclusively that the papyrus is the leaf of a book” (“An Early Papyrus Fragment,” 319 and 321, respectively). Subsequent commentary has largely agreed that the fragment is from a roll. See Frederic G. Kenyon, *Facsimiles of Biblical Manuscripts in the British Museum* [London: Oxford University Press, 1900], pl. I (“from a roll”); Joseph van Haelst, *Catalogue des Papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens* (Université de Paris IV Paris-Sorbonne, Série “Papyrologie” 1; Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976), 60 (“Fragment d’un volumen”); Turner, *Typology*, 171 (“Roll”); Barker, “P.Lond.Lit. 207 and the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*,” 2 (“a portion of papyrus that has broken off from a roll”); Mugridge, “Learning and Faith,” 18 (“a fragment of a roll”) and Mugridge, *Copying Early Christian Texts*, 188 (“probably from a roll”). Compare, however, the less confident judgments of H.J.M. Milne, ed., *Catalogue of the Literary Papyri in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1927), 173 (“It is uncertain whether the fragment is from a roll or a codex”); and Aland, *Repertorium*, 117 (“est ist nicht sicher zu entscheiden, ob fr aus Rolle o cod stammt”).

by the chancery style.¹¹² Letters tend to vary in size, especially as the text progresses into the second column where the ductus becomes much more fluid and appears somewhat hurried. Lines in the first column are straight, but begin to slope and curve in the second column. Initial letters are often enlarged (evident mainly in the second column due to damage in the first), probably as an aid to reading.¹¹³ Other such aids are also present: diaeresis marks initial iotas, apostrophes divide double letters both within and between words, and sense units are occasionally punctuated by dots.

A second hand has made some corrections. At the end of line 3, the omicron in ἐπταπλάσιον has been blotted out and a small omega has been written above the line; however, the emendation does not fully correct the misspelling, which should read ἐπταπλασίως.¹¹⁴ Another correction is present at line 50, where a tau has been shoddily scrawled between the alpha and epsilon in κατεσθ(ι)οντες. In addition, the *nomen sacrum* ἄν(θρω)π(ο)ν was mistakenly written for θ(εό)ν in line 35—perhaps a dittographic error¹¹⁵—but has been crossed out and corrected by the second hand. The letters ων, forming the termination of a word partially lost due to a break in the papyrus, are likewise crossed out in line 37 before the text continues with ἕως ἐνός in the original hand. Supralinear dots were later added to the letters in a lighter ink up to the end of Psalm 13.¹¹⁶

112 So Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 245; Barker, “P.Lond.Lit. 207 and the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*,” 2; Murgridge, *Copying Early Christian Texts*, 188.

113 According to Cribiore, “Enlargement of initial letters ... is seldom found in literary papyri, but is quite common in documentary texts and in Christian papyri. Where it appears, it makes models even more conspicuous and draws attention to each line” (*Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 99).

114 The correction was definitely made by a different hand than the one that produced the psalm text. See Barker, “P.Lond.Lit. 207 and the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*,” 3.

115 The previous line ends with τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Barker offers the following explanation: “The inconsistency and the incorrect insertion in the text of the *nomen sacrum*, ἄνπν, may perhaps be explained by a mental distraction on the part of the scribe who mistakenly inserted ἄνθρωπον instead of θεόν because ἄνθρωπον appears at the end of the line above and, being accustomed in other contexts to write ἄνθρωπον as a *nomen sacrum*, did so here” (*ibid.*, 7).

116 The use of lighter ink and a thicker pen for the supralinear dots suggests that they were a later addition to the text. See Barker, “P.Lond.Lit. 207 and the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*,” 3.

Although it has generally been assumed that the supralinear dots served as syllable dividers to aid in reading, Denise Jourdan-Hemmerdinger has proposed an alternative explanation for the dots as a type of rudimentary musical notation, pointing out the variation in the intervals at which the dots rest above the line.¹¹⁷ However, this suggestion has not taken hold. Don Barker has cautioned that the “rise” and “fall” of the dots seem to correlate with the arbitrary rise and fall of the uneven lines of writing and of individual letters, and therefore should not be invested with too much significance.¹¹⁸ Following Cribiore, he reiterates the theory that the dots served to divide syllables for the purpose of reading.¹¹⁹ The use of medial dots to divide syllables in the passage from *Ad Demonicum* on the verso—which, according to Cribiore, was produced by the hand of a teacher¹²⁰—lends considerable weight to this hypothesis and points to an educational setting. Whether the syllabic dots marking the psalm text were produced by the teacher as a model or by a student as an exercise in syllable division is irrecoverable. Whatever the case may be in this regard, the hand responsible seems to have taken care to avoid marking the *nomina sacra*, knowing that they cannot be pronounced as written. This observation has interesting implications, which will be explored below.

Virtually nothing is known about the archaeological or situational context of this papyrus. According to the *editio princeps*, the piece was “picked up in the Fayyūm,” without further particulars.¹²¹ A later elaboration by Kenyon is not of much further assistance: “Purchased by the British Museum in 1893, with a number of other

¹¹⁷ Denise Jourdan-Hemmerdinger, “Nouveaux fragments musicaux sur papyrus (une notation antique par points),” *Studies in Eastern Chant* 4 [1979]: 81–111. Kenyon similarly suggested that the dots might have served as a rhythmic aid to singing (*Facsimiles*, pl. I).

¹¹⁸ Barker, “P.Lond.Lit. 207 and the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*,” 3–4.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4; cf. Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 126 and 245.

¹²⁰ Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 245. On the characteristics of a typical teacher’s hand, see *ibid.*, 97–102.

¹²¹ “An Early Papyrus Fragment,” 319

papyri from the district of Fayum.”¹²² As Peter van Minnen has shown, literary education and enjoyment in the towns and villages of the Fayum were much more comprehensive than one might guess.¹²³ Texts recovered from the Fayumic villages are associated with veterans and officials, schools, and temple archives serving bicultural priestly families, and encompass a broad range of literary interests, including Greek literary classics such as Homer and Menander as well as Egyptian, Christian, and Manichaean religious texts written in Greek, Coptic, Demotic, Hieratic and Hieroglyphs.¹²⁴ It is not particularly surprising, then, to find a learning exercise from the region containing both Christian and classical texts.

Despite the presence of classical literature on the verso, the psalm passage together with its *nomina sacra* likely points to the Christian affiliation of the teacher, the student(s), or both. As Alberto Nodar Domínguez points out, the contents of *Ad Demonium* “have a clearly moralising nature, highly compatible with Christian teachings” that would be tolerable to Christian teachers and students.¹²⁵ In any case, the most likely setting for such an exercise, like that of Papnouthion, is in the context of the traditional Graeco-Roman educational paradigm, which might have occurred either privately or in an integrated public setting.

5.4.2 | Nomina Sacra in *P.Lond.Lit. 207*

Only κύριος is treated consistently as a *nomen sacrum* in this text, although the original hand also wrote ~~αυτην~~ in line 35, which has been crossed out and corrected

¹²² Kenyon, *Facsimiles*, pl. I.

¹²³ Peter van Minnen, “Boorish or Bookish? Literature in Egyptian Villages in the Fayum in the Graeco-Roman Period,” *JJP* 28 (1998): 99-184.

¹²⁴ See the catalogues in *ibid.*

¹²⁵ Alberto Nodar Domínguez, “Pagan Literature in Christian School Texts,” in *Cultures in Contact: Transfer of Knowledge in the Mediterranean Context. Selected Papers*, ed. Sofia Torallas Tovar and Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala (SSA 1; Cordoba and Beirut: Oriens Academic, 2015), 46.

to $\overline{\theta\nu}$ by a second hand.¹²⁶ The variant appears at the end of the line and can perhaps be explained as a visual slip, since the preceding line ends with $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omega\nu$ (in *plene*), although it is difficult to explain how the slip would have resulted in a *nomen sacrum*. It is worth noting that in the LXX the object of the preceding verb, $\epsilon\kappa\zeta\eta\tau\acute{\epsilon}\omega$, is usually $\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu \kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\nu$, $\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$, $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\nu \tau\acute{\omicron}\nu \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$, or a similar variation;¹²⁷ thus, it does not seem unreasonable to surmise that the copyist may have treated his slip in this way knowing that a *nomen sacrum* form is usually appended to the verb in question. Of course, it is also possible that this reading represents a true variant copied directly from the *Vorlage*, but its lack of sense suggests otherwise.

Besides the correction by the second hand, the only other surviving instance of $\theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ is written in *plene*. Although the other two occurrences in the passage are lost due to breaks in the papyrus, they were almost certainly also written in full spelling.¹²⁸ Both $\Delta\alpha\upsilon\epsilon\iota\delta$ ($\Delta\alpha\upsilon\epsilon\iota\tau$ in line 11; $\Delta\alpha\upsilon\epsilon\iota\delta$ in lines 28, and 63) and Ισραηλ (lines 58 and 62) are also written out in *scriptio plena*.

Unlike the previous texts, both of which were exercises in writing, the syllable divisions and other reading aids present in P.Lond.Lit. 207 seem to indicate that this particular text was used for exercises related to reading.¹²⁹ The progressive

¹²⁶ Barker has argued that the habits of this manuscript's copyist may suggest that the practice of abbreviating words as *nomina sacra* originated with $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$. It is not my purpose here, however, to examine the complicated question of origins. See Barker, "P.Lond.Lit. 207 and the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*."

¹²⁷ A cursory search in Accordance with the parameters " $\epsilon\kappa\zeta\eta\tau\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ <followed by> ($\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ <or> $\theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ <or> $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$)" reveals that "the Lord" ($\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu \kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\nu$) is the most frequent object of the verb $\epsilon\kappa\zeta\eta\tau\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ in the LXX, with 12 occurrences. This is followed by both "God" ($\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$) and "the Lord God" ($\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\nu \tau\acute{\omicron}\nu \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$ and variations), each with 5 occurrences. Other results include seeking "God's will" ($\epsilon\kappa\zeta\eta\tau\acute{\eta}\sigma\alpha\iota \kappa\rho\iota\sigma\iota\nu \pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha} \tau\omicron\upsilon \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$, Ex 18:15); seeking "the gods" ($\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$) of others (Deut 12:30; 2 Chr 25:20, 28:23); and seeking "the face of the Lord Almighty" ($\epsilon\kappa\zeta\eta\tau\acute{\eta}\sigma\alpha\iota \tau\omicron \pi\rho\acute{\omicron}\sigma\omega\pi\omicron\nu \kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\upsilon \pi\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\kappa\rho\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\rho\omicron\varsigma$, Zech 8:21 [two occurrences]) and "the face of the Lord God" ($\epsilon\kappa\zeta\eta\tau\acute{\eta}\sigma\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu \tau\omicron \pi\rho\acute{\omicron}\sigma\omega\pi\omicron\nu \kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\upsilon \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$, Dan 9:13).

¹²⁸ See Barker, "P.Lond.Lit. 207 and the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*," 6-7.

¹²⁹ According to Cribiore, longer literary passages marked by word and syllable divisions are usually intended for reading practice rather than copying: "[I]n most of the models preserving long passages the syllables are distinguished by spaces, dots, or bars, or the words are separated by spaces or oblique strokes, or both. Passages presenting word divisions were infrequently written

deterioration of the hand also suggests this, since models produced for copying were usually rendered much more carefully, with “all the constituent strokes of each letter ... shown both to the learning novice and to the student who was trying to improve his calligraphy.”¹³⁰

The contrast between copying and reading has crucial implications. Because speech and writing are modally and mechanically distinct semiotic activities, readers of written texts must translate (or “transduce”¹³¹) semiotic resources from one mode of representation (written language) into another (speech). The *nomina sacra* constitute a set of resources unique to the written/visual mode with no directly equivalent spoken form—that is, their transduction into speech requires the additional semiotic step of identifying its fully-spelled signified, thus requiring additional semiotic effort on the part of the reader. As we observed in the previous exercise, it is possible to reproduce *nomina sacra* graphically without any prior knowledge of their intended meanings. Reading, on the other hand, necessarily entails the ability to connect the form with the intended signified concept. In other

by students. It seems likely that models in which the syllables or the words are separated fulfilled the function of books for readers in need of assistance: such models were extremely convenient when students practiced reading” (*Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 126).

130 Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 99–100. Cribiore points to another exercise from the Fayum—T. Phoebe Hearst Museum 6-21412, a second/third century tablet discovered at the Roman cemetery in Tebtunis—that illustrates well the desire for consistency and alignment from students who were copying teachers’ models. At the top of the tablet, the teacher had written the hexameter line, “Begin, good hand, beautiful letters, and a straight line,” followed by the exhortation, “Now, you imitate it!” See the *editio princeps*: Raffaella Cribiore, “A Schooltablet from the Hearst Museum,” *ZPE* 107 (1995): 263–70; and Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students*, 205–6 (no. 136).

131 Kress defines “transduction” as “the process of moving meaning-material from one mode to another—from *speech* to *image*; from *writing* to *film*. As each *mode* has its specific *materiality*—sound, movement, graphic ‘stuff’, stone—and has a different history of social uses, it also has different *entities*. *Speech*, for instance, has words, *image* does not. That process entails a (usually total) re-articulation of meaning from the entities of one mode into the entities of the new mode” (*Multimodality*, 125 [emphasis original]). Elsewhere, he specifically relates the process to reading: “[R]eading is a process—I call it transduction—which moves writing back from its visual/graphic form into a spoken form, from letters to sounds” (idem, *Literacy in the New Media Age*, 149).

words, unless the reader has had some previous orientation to handling *nomina sacra*, the production of a sensible pronunciation will not be possible. The careful placement of the syllabic dots in P.Lond.Lit. 207, which are notably absent from the *nomina sacra*, illustrate this fundamental difference between the two representational systems: one orients the reader towards sound, the other towards meaning.¹³²

The upshot of these considerations, one must surmise, is either: (1) that an explanation of the *nomina sacra* and how to decipher them constituted part of the curriculum in primary educational settings where Christian literature was used as material for reading practice; (2) that students in such educational environments were assumed already to possess this skill; or (3) that the *nomina sacra* were simply ignored and passed over. The last scenario seems to me the least plausible of the three. I would therefore suggest that the balance of probability favors a setting in which late antique Egyptian students occasionally learned not only how to write *nomina sacra* in their copying exercises, but also how to recognize and decipher them in their reading exercises. This hypothesis raises further intriguing possibilities regarding whether “pagan” students, in educational settings that were rarely theologically homogeneous,¹³³ were also engaged in the reading and copying of texts containing *nomina sacra* under teachers who incorporated Christian literature into the curriculum. A full exploration of these questions cannot be undertaken here, but the reality of religious experimentation and occasional conversion in school settings does suggest that such a scenario is not far-fetched.¹³⁴

5.5 | Summary

In this chapter, we have scrutinized the presence of *nomina sacra* in three school exercises from fourth-century Egypt. In our examination of P.Oxy. 2.209, a copying

¹³² Kress, *Before Writing*, 78; Kress, *Literacy in the New Media Age*, 140.

¹³³ Watts, “Speaking, Thinking, and Socializing,” 474-77.

¹³⁴ See *ibid.*, 475-76.

exercise of the beginning of Paul's letter to the Romans with an unusually high number of *nomina sacra*, we noted that a parableptic omission and resulting sensible reading reveals a high degree of principled semiotic work involving literate engagement with the text being copied and with the *nomina sacra*. The abundance of *nomina sacra* in this brief passage and the great care with which they were rendered open up the possibilities that the exercise was produced in order to practice writing *nomina sacra* and that it may have been kept in Leonides' archive for later reference.

Although the precise pedagogical setting of P.Oxy. 2.209 is not quite clear, the next two exercises examined in this chapter, T.Louvre MND 552 L, K, I, H and P.Lond.Lit. 207, can safely be identified with traditional school settings on the basis of the presence of teachers' hands and material from classical tradition.¹³⁵ This demonstrates that learning about the *nomina sacra* was not limited to catechetical, scribal, or other specialized ecclesiastical training, but rather that some students learned how to compose and decipher *nomina sacra* in the course of their primary education in reading and writing. It seems likely that this would have also included students who did not have a Christian formation, a possibility that invites future investigation.

¹³⁵ See discussion in the respective sections above, and footnote 100.

CHAPTER SIX

“Not by Incantations, but by the Name of Jesus”: *Nomina Sacra* in Textual Amulets

According to the conception of primitive men a name is an essential part of a personality; if therefore you know the name of a person or a spirit you have acquired a certain power over its bearer.

—SIGMUND FREUD, *TOTEM AND TABOO*

6.1 | Introduction

As Christianity began to penetrate into the ritual world of late antique Egypt, the longstanding tradition of using amulets and other efficacious objects for protection and healing continued to thrive despite frequent ecclesiastical stricture. Indeed, by the fourth century, textual amulets had rapidly begun to absorb the idiom and imagery of Christian scribal and liturgical culture, including the use of *nomina sacra*—a perhaps inevitable consequence of the power with which names were invested in both Egyptian and Christian ritual tradition.¹

¹ Apparently still today, names are sometimes believed to hold preternatural power in Egyptian folk belief. According to Reem Bassiouney, “In Egyptian culture names hold power, especially the first name of a mother. The power I am referring to here is not just linguistic in nature but in fact magical. Although religion in the Arab world is taken seriously by members of all religious communities, Egyptians—whether Christians or Muslims—still tend to believe in magic and supernatural forces. For example, in rural areas specifically, women may resort to magic, usually performed by an older person who is reputed to be in touch with jinn (spirits), to solve marriage problems, to cause harm to enemies, to make a man impotent, to bear children, to make a

In this final chapter of our survey of *nomina sacra* in everyday writing, we will begin to probe the use of this Christian scribal practice as an element of late antique Egyptian popular ritual. The use of *nomina sacra* in amulets is a fascinating subject that deserves a much more comprehensive study than can be undertaken here. For the purposes of this chapter, I limit my analysis to three textual amulets dating roughly to the fourth century² drawn from the various forms, functions, and contents of amulets employing *nomina sacra* from this general period.³ Following the same method as the previous chapters in this section, I examine the material and situational details of each amulet before attempting to draw specific inferences about the meanings, values, and identities coded in their uses of *nomina sacra*.

6.2 | An Amulet Containing Jude 4–5, 7–8 (P.Oxy. 34.2684)

TM no. 61695 2.9 cm (h) × 10.6 cm (w) 4th or 5th cent. CE
 Gregory-Aland P⁷⁸
 van Haelst 558
 Blumell-Wayment 35
 de Bruyn-Dijkstra 121

Ed. pr.: L. Ingrams et al., eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XXXIV* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1968), 4-6 (no. 2684).

fol. 1		fol. 2
→ γ(ε)ιαν και τον μόνον	Jude 4	↓ αἰωνίου δίκην Jude 7

married couple get divorced and so on and so forth. Magic can be used to inflict harm or solve problems. However, to use magic on someone, especially in a harmful way, this person's mother's first name is needed. A mother's name is more like an Achilles heel, a vulnerability, and over time it has also become something both shameful and yet sacred" (*Arabic Sociolinguistics* [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009], 148).

- 2 I include in the analysis one amulet (P.Oxy. 34.2684) which has recently been assigned a revised date possibly in the fifth century, although the possibility of a fourth-century date remains open. Previous consensus placed this amulet in the third or fourth century. See further below.
- 3 In their catalogue, De Bruyn and Dijkstra list only twelve amulets or probable amulets containing *nomina sacra* dating up to and including the fourth century. In the fifth and sixth centuries, amulets containing Christian elements increase significantly ("Greek Amulets and Formularies," 184-203).

	νον δεσπότην		ἐπέχουσαι ὁμοίως	8
3	κν̄ ἡμῶν ἱην̄ χρν̄		μέντοι καὶ αὐτοὶ	
			ἐνυπν{ε}ιαδόμε-	
↓	ἀρνούμενοι· ὑπο-	5	5	νοί·
	μνήσαι δὲ ὑμᾶς			
6	βούλομε ἀδελφ[οί]		→ σάρκα μὲν μι-	
			αίνουσιν κυρ{ε}ι-	
			ότητα δὲ ἀθετοῦ-	
			9 σιν δόξαν δὲ [..]	

fol. 1, line 4: pap. ὑπο, line 5: pap. ὑμας, line 6: βούλομαι; fol. 2, lines 4-5: ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι (pap. ἐνῦπνειαδομενοι).

Translation: (Jude 4-5) [... licenti]ousness and deny the only master, our Lord Jesus Christ. But I want to remind you, brother[s ...] (7-8) [...] staying in the punishment of eternal [fire]. Yet in the same way these dreamers also defile the flesh, reject authority, and [revile] the glory [...]

6.2.1 | Description

P.Oxy. 34.2684 consists of a single bifolium from a papyrus codex containing the end of Jude 4 through the beginning of Jude 5 on the first leaf, and the end of Jude 7 through the beginning of Jude 8 on the second. A vertical fold line is present between the two leaves, along which are two small binding holes approximately 7 and 9 millimeters from the upper edge.⁴ The proportions are compact and remarkably oblong, measuring 5.3 centimeters in width by 2.9 centimeters in height per leaf, thus classing P.Oxy. 34.2684 as a miniature codex according to the groupings set (somewhat arbitrarily) by Turner.⁵ The small size and unusual proportions of the

4 See the plate in the back matter of this study and the description of Parsons in the *editio princeps* (P.J. Parsons, "New Testament: Jude 4-5, 7-8," in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XXXIV* [London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1968], 4). The corresponding area at the bottom of the fold is broken away, but it is reasonable to assume that the leaves were bound symmetrically at the top and bottom.

5 Turner, *Typology*, 22, listing P.Oxy. 34.2684 among the examples in his Group 11 ("miniature") category. As Jones has rightly pointed out, however, "Turner's 'less than 10 cm' rule has little heuristic value, because the ancients had no concept of this hypothetical measurement" (*NT Texts on Greek Amulets*, 176 n. 352). Instead, Jones proposes that we understand "miniature" in terms of books designed to fit in the palm of one's hand (*ibid.*). Kraus also questions the usefulness of Turner's classification in *Ad Fontes*, 57-58.

codex has prompted some debate regarding its original function, but general consensus has held that it was most probably an amulet.⁶ Hence, despite its admission to the list of New Testament manuscripts under the siglum \mathfrak{P}^{78} , I consider P.Oxy. 34.2684 to fit more naturally into the category of “everyday writing” than among literary manuscripts intended for public reading and dissemination.⁷

The text is written in a non-literary hand that has been described as “a leisurely half-cursive,”⁸ “semi-uncial with cursive elements,”⁹ and “a hastily written semicursive.”¹⁰ The scribe seems to attempt to keep letters separated, but occasionally slips into cursive.¹¹ The original editor, Peter Parsons, assigned the hand to the third or early fourth century, which was later reinforced by Grunewald.¹² More recently, Orsini and Clarysse have proposed a date in the fifth century,¹³ and Jones

6 According to Parsons in the *editio princeps*, “Most probably we have to do with an amulet” (P.Oxy. 34.2684, 5). Following commentators have largely agreed: “Probablement une amulette” (van Haelst, *Catalogue*, 196); “[Der Codex] diene vermutlich als Amulett” (Aland, *Repertorium*, 314); “Man könnte mit den Herausgebern an den Gebrauch als Amulett denken” (M. Mees, “ \mathfrak{P}^{78} : Ein neuer Textzeuge für den Judasbrief,” *Orient-Press* 1 [1970], 7). More recently, see the especially persuasive assessment of Tommy Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission* (ConBNT 43; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006), 51–72, an earlier version of which was published as “ \mathfrak{P}^{78} (P.Oxy. XXXIV 2684): The Epistle of Jude on an Amulet?” in *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World*, ed. Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas (TENTS 2; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 137–60. Also recently, see Jones, *NT Texts on Greek Amulets*, 175–80; de Bruyn and Dijkstra, “Greek Amulets and Formularies,” 200–201 (no. 121).

7 As Jones points out, Aland and Aland later confess that this papyrus should not have been included in the catalogue of New Testament manuscripts (*NT Texts on Greek Amulets*, 176 n. 348; cf. Aland and Aland, *Text of the NT*, 85, and the citation in the previous chapter of this study, section 5.2.1).

8 Parsons, P.Oxy. 34.2684, 4.

9 “Es handelt sich um eine Semiunziale mit kursiven Elementen” (K. Junack and W. Grunewald, *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus*, 1: *Die Katholischen Briefe* [ANTF 6; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986], 29).

10 Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxhyrhynchus*, 139.

11 Note, for example, the second epsilon of ἐπέχουσαι in fol. 2, line 2.

12 See Parsons, P.Oxy. 34.2684, 4, and Junack and Grunewald, *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus*, 29.

13 Orsini and Clarysse, “Early NT Manuscripts and Their Dates,” 459, citing P.Laur. 4.141 and PSI inv. 535.

has suggested either the fourth or fifth century.¹⁴ Blumell and Wayment, however, maintain a fourth/fifth-century date.¹⁵ As the matter is not yet settled, I include the text here, while recognizing that it may ultimately prove to fall outside the temporal scope of the study.

The copyist seems to have been somewhat restricted by his writing material, which offers support to the supposition that the original codex was comprised of a single quire (see below). Folio 1 preserves three lines of writing on the recto and verso, while fol. 2 preserves five lines on the verso and four lines on the recto. The fifth line of fol. 2↓ contains only the last three letters of ἐνὺπνεῖαδόμενοι, which have been squeezed into the bottom margin. The copyist similarly squeezes the last two letters of ὁμοίως into the righthand margin of fol. 2↓ (line 2) by writing the omega and sigma slightly smaller than the preceding letters.

In terms of orthography and punctuation, diaeresis marks initial upsilon (and, in one instance, medial upsilon [ἐνὺπνεῖαδόμενοι, fol. 2, lines 4-5]), and sense units are sometimes punctuated by dots. Besides the occasional confusion of long and short vowels, the copyist also confuses δ and ζ at fol. 2, lines 4-5.¹⁶ Only three *nomina sacra* are present (all at fol. 1, line 3) and are abbreviated conventionally, either by contraction (κν) or by a hybrid of suspension and contraction (την χρν). As we will see below, the copyist most likely copied the text from a full manuscript, and probably did so in a setting in which he would have had experience in handling *nomina sacra*.

The discontinuity of the text between fol. 1↓ and fol. 2↓ and the abrupt start and break of verses mid-word and mid-sentence indicate that the bifolium was once part of a larger codex, although the precise composition and content of the original codex

14 Jones, *NT Texts on Greek Amulets*, 177, citing P.Mich. inv. 427 as a fourth-century comparandum. The date has been updated in Trismegistos to reflect Jones' dating ("AD 375 – 475").

15 Blumell and Wayment, *Christian Oxyrhynchus*, 138.

16 On which, see Gignac, *Grammar*, 1:75-76.

has been a matter of some disagreement.¹⁷ Parsons concluded that “it was not part of a single quire containing the whole of Jude and nothing else,” since the extant text does not appear to be placed symmetrically in relation to the estimated codicological layout of the full epistle.¹⁸ Kurt Treu claimed that a single quire codex could not have accommodated the full epistle, but noted that only part of the text might have been necessary if the codex were manufactured for amuletic use.¹⁹ Despite these earlier assessments, Aland assumed that it was “probably a single quire codex,” and furthermore, “probably served as an amulet, but probably contained the whole of the Epistle of Jude.”²⁰ In the most recent codicological analysis, Tommy Wasserman has persuasively argued that the original codex was likely made up of a single quire that “once contained a larger portion of Jude, arguably vv. 1-13, and that it was produced, not reused, for the purpose of an amulet.”²¹

It is known from patristic sources that Christians sometimes carried miniature scriptural codices as amulets. Jerome, for instance, reprimands “superstitious little women” who go around with “little gospels” or the purported wood of the cross affixed to their bodies.²² John Chrysostom likewise complains that “women and little children suspend gospels from their necks as a powerful amulet and carry them about in all places wherever they go.”²³ As these passages suggest, selections from the

17 Roberts, however, curiously asserted, *contra* the *editio princeps*, that the papyrus “formed a small single folded sheet rather than part of a miniature codex” (*Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 82).

18 Parsons, P.Oxy. 34.2684, 4.

19 “... Brief zu lang für Ein-Lagen-Kodex. Hrsg. vermutet Amulett, dafür wäre vollständiger Text nicht notwendig” (Kurt Treu, “Christliche Papyri IV,” *APF* 22 [1973], 373).

20 “[V]ermutlich Einlagenkodex ... codiente vermutlich als Amulett, umfaßte aber wohl den ganzen Judasbrief” (Aland, *Repertorium*, 314).

21 Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude*, 70; idem, “The Epistle of Jude on an Amulet,” 158.

22 “Among us there are superstitious little women who keep doing this up to the present day with little gospels and with the wood of the cross and with things of this sort” (*Hoc apud nos superstitiosae mulierculae, in parvulis Evangeliiis, et in crucis ligno, et istiusmodi rebus*) (*Comm. Matt.* 4.186).

23 *Stat.* 19.14 (αἱ γυναῖκες καὶ τὰ μικρὰ παιδία ἀντὶ φυλακῆς μεγάλῃς Εὐαγγέλια ἐξαρτῶσι τοῦ τραχήλου, καὶ πανταχοῦ περιφέρουσιν, ὅπου περ ἂν ἀπίωσιν).

gospels were especially popular for such use, as were the psalms.²⁴ Jude, on the other hand, seems at first thought a less likely candidate for an amulet.²⁵ However, as Wasserman has demonstrated, the portion of Jude that likely made up the original codex contains a number of references to divine figures and acts of judgment against evil forces, and thus has a potential apotropaic value.²⁶ In Jude 6, for example, the author recalls the lively tradition of the fallen angels (called “watchers” in 1 Enoch) whom Jesus “has kept in eternal chains in darkness for the judgment of the great day” (εἰς κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας δεσμοῖς αἰδίοις ὑπὸ ζόφον τετήρηκεν). Similarly, Jude 9 refers to a dispute between the archangel Michael and Satan, whom Michael silences with the admonition, “The Lord rebuke you!” (ἐπιτιμήσαι σοι κύριος).²⁷ Wasserman classifies these episodes, the former of which has parallels in other amulets, as “judgmental *historiolae*.”²⁸

In further support of his thesis, Wasserman notes the textual variants in P.Oxy. 34.2684, several of which he suggests may enhance the apotropaic value of the text. The variant readings, which deviate from the text of NA²⁸ in five places, are as follows:

Jude 4: δεσπότην καὶ κύριον NA²⁸ | δεσπότην κύριον P.Oxy. 34.2684 co

Jude 5: βούλομαι NA²⁸ | + ἀδελφ[οί] P.Oxy. 34.2684

Jude 7: ὑπέχουσιν NA²⁸ | ἐπέχουσιν P.Oxy. 34.2684 1611 (sa^{ms})

Jude 8: οὗτοι NA²⁸ | αὐτοί P.Oxy. 34.2684 1735

δόξας NA²⁸ | δόξαν P.Oxy. 34.2684 5 vg^{cl, ww} sy^{ph}; Cl^{lat}

24 See de Bruyn and Dijkstra, “Greek Amulets and Formularies,” 176 n. 62 and relevant entries in the catalogue.

25 Hence the remark by Parsons in the *editio princeps*: “Miniature Gospels were certainly carried as amulets ...; Jude seems an odder choice, though brevity might commend it” (P.Oxy. 34.2684, 5).

26 Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude*, 64-70.

27 This command echoes Zech 3:2, but the broader tradition behind the story is more complex. See Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (London: T&T Clark, 1990), 270-75.

28 Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude*, 64-69.

Reiterating the earlier suggestion of Mees, Wasserman interprets two of the variant readings of P.Oxy. 34.2684 as “accentuated expressions of the divinity and glory of Jesus Christ, perhaps occasioned by a magical purpose.”²⁹ In verse 4, he attributes the omission of the conjunction καί in the phrase τὸν μόνον δεσπότην καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν to the copyist’s desire to clarify that both titles are associated with Jesus.³⁰ Likewise, he suggests that the reading δόξαν in verse 8 may be “interpreted as a Christological reference, ‘they set aside the majesty of the Lord [or simply ‘they set aside the Lord’], they blaspheme his glory.’”³¹ In my opinion, these emendations may just as plausibly be understood as scribal attempts to generate clarity where the text is ambiguous, and need not necessarily be attributed to “a magical purpose.” Even so, Wasserman’s suggestion is plausible, and the dimensions, composition, and contents of this miniature copy of the beginning of Jude remain conspicuously well suited to amuletic use.

In spite of the five variant readings in this brief stretch of text, Jones has recently argued for its reclassification as “normal” rather than as a “free” or “eccentric” text.³² Importantly, he points out that “we are not dealing with a short, isolated citation such as the Lord’s Prayer: this amulet’s text was most likely copied from an actual

29 Ibid., 66. See also Mees, “P78,” 8-10.

30 Ibid., 66. See also Mees, “P78,” 8: “Der Papyrus streicht das « kai » und kommt so zu einer eindeutigen christologischen Aussage, von dem « Alleinherrscher, dem Herrn Jesus Christus ». Dies könnte man auf den oben vermuteten Gebrauch als wirksames Amulett zurückführen.” The reading is ambiguous as it stands in NA²⁸. Other witnesses append θεόν to the title δεσπότην in order to clarify that it refers to God. According to the critical apparatus of the NA²⁸, the reading δεσπότην θεόν καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν is supported by two majuscules (P^{vid} and Ψ), seven minuscules (5, 88 [omits ἡμῶν], 1175, 1448, 1611, 1735, and 2492), the Byzantine text, and the Syriac versions.

31 Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude*, 66. Again, Wasserman echoes the earlier assertion of Mees, “P78,” 10: “Der Papyrus verwendet nämlich den Singular, « doxan », womit er wiederum wie schon in Vers 4 eine eindeutige christologische Aussage erhält: « Sie leugnen seine Herrschermacht und schmähen seine Herrlichkeit ».”

32 Jones, *NT Texts on Greek Amulets*, 175-79. On its classification as a “free text,” see Aland and Aland, *Text of the NT*, 101. Parsons refers to the text as “eccentric” in P.Oxy. 34.2684, 5.

manuscript.”³³ This observation raises questions as to the circumstances surrounding its production: Who copied this amulet? And who possessed the New Testament manuscript from which this apotropaic excerpt was copied? As Bagnall has shown, “we have little evidence for the private lay ownership of biblical texts at any early date, and even later, ownership of Christian books by individuals may not have been extensive.”³⁴ Rather, he argues, scriptural manuscripts were most likely owned by clergy and the institutions where they worked: churches and monasteries.³⁵

David Frankfurter has compellingly argued for the continuous role of clergy in popular ritual, as Egyptian priests joined the Christian clerical community and brought their practices with them.³⁶ Indeed, there is good evidence, as Frankfurter demonstrates, that “monks and priests could apply their scribal learning, their training in efficacious words and chants, their memorized prayers to folk life.”³⁷ Canon 36 of the fourth century Synod of Laodicea, for instance, admonishes both the wearers of amulets and the Christian clergy who produce them:

Priests and clergy must not be sorcerers or enchanters [ὅτι οὐ δεῖ ἱερατικούς ἢ κληρικούς μάγους ἢ ἐπασιδοὺς εἶναι] or numerologists or astrologers, or make so-called amulets [ἢ

33 Jones, *NT Texts on Greek Amulets*, 179.

34 Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt*, 21.

35 Ibid., 21 and 60. As Eldon Epp has shown, many of the New Testament manuscripts with a known provenance were discovered at or near churches and monasteries (“New Testament Papyri and the Transmission of the New Testament,” in *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts*, ed. A.K. Bowman, R.A. Coles, N. Gonis, D. Obbink, and P.J. Parsons [Graeco-Roman Memoirs 93; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2007], 315–31 [see esp. 322–24]).

36 David Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt: Syncretism and the Local Worlds of Late Antiquity* (Martin Classical Lectures; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 67–103; idem, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 198–237; idem, “Ritual Expertise in Roman Egypt and the Problem of the Category of ‘Magician,’” in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*, ed. Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg (SHR 75; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 115–35, especially 125–30.

37 Ibid., 129.

ποιεῖν τὰ λεγόμενα φυλακτήρια], which are prisons for their souls. Those who wear [them], we command to be cast out of the church.³⁸

The need for such an admonition is a strong indication that clergy were indeed involved in the dissemination of popular ritual. This scriptural amulet, then, was probably manufactured in an ecclesiastical setting, and was quite likely copied from a church-owned manuscript containing the full Epistle of Jude. As we will discover in the succeeding analyses, clergy almost certainly did not limit their amuletic production to miniature copies of scripture; however, their experience in the reading and copying of Christian texts often intrudes in other ways onto their production of more traditional amulets.

6.2.2 | Nomina Sacra in P.Oxy. 34.2684

Both in form and in content, P.Oxy. 34.2684 distinguishes itself from customary textual amulets, which were typically inscribed with incantations on a single rectangular sheet of papyrus and then folded or rolled up into a small parcel. Regarding the use of miniature codices as amulets, such as the one presently under discussion, de Bruyn observes:

It is noteworthy that papyrus codex sheets (sheets of papyrus folded in half to form two leaves) were not normally used for customary incantations. Amulets in this format consist almost exclusively of scriptural passages or incantations incorporating a scriptural passage.³⁹

This fascinating observation merits further scrutiny. Why would some scriptural amulets, such as P.Oxy. 34.2684, warrant a different format from customary

38 For further examples, see *ibid.*, 125–30. That the clerical dissemination of textual amulets continued throughout the Middle Ages (despite continuous ecclesiastical proscriptions) suggests the continuation of an established practice (see Don C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* [University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006], 47–58).

39 De Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 49. Note also the comment by de Bruyn and Dijkstra in “Greek Amulets and Formularies,” 176: “The use or re-use of a small codex—or, more accurately, small codex sheets—as an amulet is associated with biblical passages rather than with traditional charms or spells.”

amulets—specifically, the use of a codex format? One possibility, of course, is that they were reused from miniature scriptural codices originally manufactured for purposes other than amuletic use, but this does not appear to be the case here. A second possibility is that longer passages, such as that assumed to have originally been contained in P.Oxy. 34.2684, required more writing surface and were thus made into miniature codices. However, de Bruyn notes that for longer texts, scribes generally used either a larger sheet of papyrus which was then folded into more segments, or a long oblong piece of papyrus that could easily be rolled or folded in one direction.⁴⁰ I would suggest, then, that the best answer may be the obvious one: namely, to draw a material analogical link between scriptural *amulets* and scriptural *books*.

In a recent study, Joseph Sanzo draws on theories of metonymy to argue that “snippets” of scripture used in amulets, such as gospel *incipits*, usually have a *pars pro parte/partibus* (“part for part/parts”) metonymic transfer, invoking their target texts as paradigmatic collections of efficacious sayings and narratives appropriate to specific ritual needs.⁴¹ In this vein, Sanzo suggests that the amuletic use of codices may have worked on a kind of inverted pattern of metonymic association, “*totum pro partibus* (‘whole for parts’),” with ritual users invoking the precedent of the applicable passages assumed to be inscribed on the pages within the codex.⁴² In other words, the codex functions not to signify the abstract power associated with scripture as a whole, but rather to signify the scriptural book as a physical repository of efficacious passages. He concedes, however, that in some accounts the physical artifact itself appears to have facilitated miraculous events, in which case the “biblical ‘precedents’ worked in conjunction with the transmission history of the

40 De Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 49.

41 Joseph E. Sanzo, *Scriptural Incipits on Amulets from Late Antique Egypt: Text, Typology, and Theory* (STAC 84; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

42 *Ibid.*, 165.

artifact itself (e.g., the holiness of its scribe or previous owner) to attain ritual power.”⁴³

In cases where an entire gospel or other scriptural book is used apotropaically, Sanzo’s proposal is compelling. However, as Sanzo himself acknowledges, scriptural codices created for amuletic use and intended to be carried on the body usually only contained scriptural excerpts, as with P.Oxy. 34.2684, rather than the entire contents of a scriptural book.⁴⁴ In such cases Sanzo’s proposal is frustrated, as the targeted passage is the *only* passage contained within the codex.

Here again the notion of semiotic provenance—the importation and recontextualization of a semiotic resource from one discourse into another⁴⁵—may be useful. As Zeev Elitzur has noted, “[t]he phenomenon of books being conceptually identified with their content rather than their material manifestation is ultimately reducible to the fact that” nowadays, far more often than in antiquity, “they are read rather than looked at.”⁴⁶ Yet, if as I argued in chapter one, the scriptural codex and *nomina sacra* served as visual arguments for the embodiment of the power of God, then it is difficult to deny the profoundly evocative aesthetic of a miniature scriptural book complete with *nomina sacra* suspended from one’s neck.

I would like to suggest that the importation of the codex with *nomina sacra* from ecclesiastical discourse into apotropaic discourse serves two functions: first, to legitimize the popular ritual act of wearing amulets, and second, to invest both the inscribed text (by means of *nomina sacra*) and the material object itself (by means of the codex format) with the visual power associated with scripture, thus compounding the potency of the written word and the efficacious narratives and

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 161–64. None of the amulets containing scripture listed in de Bruyn and Dijkstra’s catalogue which are on codices or portions of codices contain an entire book (“Greek Amulets and Formularies,” 184–215).

45 Kress and van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse*, 10.

46 Zeev Elitzur, “Between the Textual and the Visual: Borderlines of Late Antique Book Iconicity,” in *Iconic Books and Texts*, ed. Watts, 136.

traditions it is imagined to represent. In other words, just as public rituals of the gospel codex brought legitimacy and sacred power to worship services and legal hearings, so did its visual iconization legitimize and potentiate private ritual settings.

6.3 | A Phylacterion Formulary Against Demons and Epilepsy (P.Yale 2.130)

TM no. 64257

12.8 cm (h) × 7.0 cm (w)

3rd/4th cent. CE

PGM 114

de Bruyn-Dijkstra 81

Ed. pr.: Pierre Proulx and José O'Callaghan, "Papiro magi cristiano," *SPap* 13 (1974): 83-88.

→ [(δια)φύλα]ξον⁴⁷ τῇ[ν δε]ῖνα κε [ἀπὸ πάντων]
 [πον]ήρων πραγμάτω[ν καὶ ἀπὸ παν-]
 [τὸ]ς συναντήματος καὶ παντὸς φάσμα-]
 [το]ς Ἑκ(α)τησίου καὶ ἀπ[ὸ πάσης φαν-]
 5 [τασ]μοῦ πτώσε[ως] π[±8-15]
 [πτ]ώσεως ὑπνοῦ[ικῶν πνευμάτ-]
 [ων ἧ] κωφῶν δεμόν[ων καὶ ἀπὸ πά-]
 [σης] ἐπιλή[μ]ψεως [καὶ ἀπὸ παν-]
 [τὸς σ]εληγισμοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ πάσης νό-]
 10 [σου σώ]ματος καὶ ἀ[πὸ ±7-15]
 [... ἐ]πιπ[ο]μπῆς . [±8-15]
 [±8-15] . ατ . [±10-18]
 [±8-15] . σε[±10-18]
 [±8-15] δυν[±10-18]

line 7: δαιμόν[ων].

Translation: Guard the woman so-and-so, Lord, [from all] evil acts [and from every] visitation (of a demon) and [every apparition] of Hecate and from [every] attack of a phantom [...] attack [of

47 In their edition of this papyrus, Robert W. Daniel and Franco Maltomini choose to restore [φύλα]ξον on the basis of letter count, but do not rule out [διαφύλα]ξον ("guard against") or [ἀπάλλα]ξον ("deliver from") as possibilities (*Suppl.Mag.* 2:84; see also Maltomini in *Pap.Flor.* 7, 173). In the most recent re-edition, Magali de Haro Sanchez points to SB18.13603 (Getty Museum acc. no. 80.AI.53), another φυλακτήριον against epilepsy which uses the verb διαφυλάσσω, and advocates for the reconstruction [διαφύλα]ξον "dans une formule visiblement destinée à protéger quelqu'un de l'épilepsie" ("Le vocabulaire de la pathologie et de la thérapeutique dans les papyrus iatromagiques grecs Fièvres, traumatismes et «épilepsie»,” *BASP* 47 [2010]: 131-53 [147 n. 62]).

spirits] appearing in sleep [or] mute demons [and from every] epileptic fit [and from all] moonsickness and [from every disease] of the body and from [...] enchantment [...].

6.3.1 | Description

P.Yale 2.130 preserves a fragment of a iatromagical formulary designed to protect “the woman so-and-so” (τῆ[ν δε]ῖνα) from various evils.⁴⁸ The piece was purchased in Paris from the Cairo-based dealer Maurice Nahman in 1931, who claimed it was recovered from Aboutig; however, it may in fact originate from Oxyrhynchus.⁴⁹ Little of the papyrus has survived. A very small portion of the upper margin remains, but all other edges are lost, making it impossible to ascertain the full contents or length of the formula with certainty.

Proulx and O’Callaghan, who originally edited this papyrus, concluded on the basis of a number of misidentified letters that the text was most likely a Christian prayer.⁵⁰ However, in a re-edition soon after its initial publication, Robert Daniel argued persuasively that the extant text conforms to the pattern of a φυλακτήριον, “a charm which is characterized by a command to a god to protect a person from

48 This was the only instance known to Maltomini of the feminine ἡ δεῖνα in a φυλακτήριον formulary, but he consented that the surviving letter traces do not permit the reconstruction ὁ δεῖνα (Pap.Flor. 7, 173). P.Coll.Youtie 2.91 and P.Rein. 2.89 both have ἡ δεῖνα restored in lacunae by their editors.

49 See Klass A. Worp, “A Note on the Provenances of Some Greek Literary Papyri,” *JJP* 28 (1998): 203-18. On the papyri from the Yale collection assumed to have come from Aboutig, Worp comments: “The only information about the provenance of these fragments ... stems from the seller of these papyri, Maurice Nahman from Cairo/Paris. The link, however, between P.Yale II 99 and a papyrus excavated at Oxyrhynchus (P.Oxy. LVII 3901) exposes the unreliability of this information. Therefore, one should reckon with the distinct possibility that all Yale texts reportedly stemming from Aboutig came in fact from Oxyrhynchus. It does not seem likely that the texts other than P.Yale II 99 came in fact from an accidental find really made at Aboutig” (207-208).

50 Proulx and O’Callaghan, “Papiro magi Cristiano,” 84: “No se puede dudar que se trata de un papiro mágico cristiano, probablemente de una plegaria, en la que parece descubrirse una formulación en consonancia con los prototipos eucológicos de aquellos tiempos.” For their reconstruction, see *ibid.*, 84-88.

named or unnamed evils.”⁵¹ Misidentified letters notwithstanding, the latter identification need not preclude the former, since what we denote as an amulet often shades into other ritual categories (e.g. liturgy, prayers, and scripture).⁵² The reconstruction presented above is based on that of Daniel, with some minor adjustments to readings that do not appear to agree with the surviving letter traces.⁵³

The fourteen surviving lines of text are written in black ink along the fibers in a tidy literary hand. Letters are upright, unimodular, roughly bilinear, and generally well-separated. The back of the papyrus is blank. Proulx and O’Callaghan likened the hand to the third and fourth century literary hands of P.Berl. inv. 9968 and P.Amh. 2.84, and subsequent scholarship has largely concurred.⁵⁴ In line 1, κύριε is abbreviated as a *nomen sacrum* (ⲕⲉ), which may be suggestive of a Christian milieu, although not indisputably so since Graeco-Egyptian and Christian elements are often juxtaposed in amulets.⁵⁵ As we will see below, however, other elements of the charm may provide some further clues that its scribe worked in a Christian setting.

51 Robert W. Daniel, “Some Φυλακτήρια,” *ZPE* 25 (1977): 145-54 [145].

52 Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt*, 201. Cf. de Bruyn and Dijkstra: “The boundary between an apotropaic practice and a devotional practice cannot always be clearly drawn” (“Greek Amulets and Formularies,” 180).

53 For example, the reading ⲕ[αὶ ἀπὸ πάσης] in line 5 is rejected here and revised to π[.]. Likewise in line 6, the reconstruction ὑπνοφ[ανῶν] does not seem to be supported by the tiny trace of ink at the break, which appears much more likely to be the beginning of the horizontal stroke of a tau, or possibly the left oblique stroke of an upsilon: ὑπνοτ[ικῶν] seems a more plausible fit and retains the meaning and letter count of Daniel’s reconstruction. Also, a mu has been added in ἐπιλή[μ]ψεως (line 8), which is clearly present on the papyrus but was omitted both in Daniel’s edition and in the later edition by Susan Stephens (P.Yale 2.130, 138-39).

54 Proulx and O’Callaghan, “Papiro magi cristiano,” 83. Cf. Daniel, “Some Φυλακτήρια,” 145; *Suppl.Mag.* 2:84. Only Stephens assigns the hand to the third century, offering P.Berl. inv. 9968 as the single comparandum, but with no explanation as to her omission of the other comparandum suggested by the original editors (P.Yale 2.130, 138).

55 See Theodore de Bruyn, “What did Ancient Christians Say when they Cast out Demons? Inferences from Spells and Amulets,” in *Christians Shaping Identity from the Roman Empire to Byzantium: Studies Inspired by Pauline Allen*, ed. Geoffrey D. Dunn and Wendy Mayer (VCSup 132; Leiden: Brill, 2015), 70-71. Daniel is rightly cautious about inferring a Christian classification from the *nomen sacrum* alone, as “the Christian abbreviations for κύριος and θεός ... and other Christian elements are frequently incorporated in pagan texts of syncretistic magic” (“Some

The hypothetical female adjurer seeks protection “from all evil acts” (ἀπὸ πάντων πον[ήρων πραγμάτων, lines 1-2), specifically those perpetrated by malevolent spiritual forces. Hecate is mentioned, but not invoked;⁵⁶ rather, as one of “the rulers of evil demons” (τοὺς ἄρχοντας τῶν πονηρῶν δαιμόνων) and the equivalent of Satan, according to the characterization of Eusebius,⁵⁷ she is the source of the hostile spirits and the personification of the ailments against whom “the Lord” (ἡ) is invoked for protection.

In addition to her dominion over spirits and demons, Hecate is associated with the moon and illnesses thought to be related to its phases, such as epilepsy;⁵⁸ hence,

Φυλακτήρια,” 146). However, the absence of any non-Christian divine invocations in this piece—at least in the surviving and reconstructed portions—increases the likelihood of a Christian setting. For another charm from Oxyrhynchus produced for a woman, likely in a Christian (perhaps ecclesiastical) setting, see AnneMarie Luijendijk, “A Gospel Amulet for Joannia (P.Oxy. VIII 1151),” in *Daughters of Hecate: Women and Magic in the Ancient World*, ed. Kimberly B. Stratton and Dayna S. Kalleres (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 418-43.

56 The papyrus reads]σεκτηίου, making the reading]σε κτησίου (“domestic”) also possible here. While this reading may be sensible in the context of “domestic demons” or the like, the resulting termination]σε for the preceding word is difficult to make sense of. Furthermore, a reference to Hecate is well suited to the context, which seems to concern an onslaught of demons, epilepsy, and lunar-related illness. Therefore, Daniel’s reconstruction]ς Ἐκ(α)τησίου is accepted (see Daniel, “Some Φυλακτερία,” 147; cf. Proulx and O’Callaghan, “Papiro magico Cristiano,” 86, and de Haro Sanchez, “Le vocabulaire de la pathologie,” 147-48).

57 Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 4.22. Hecate appears a number of times in early Christian writings as a figure associated with demonic forces, mostly in the polemical pronouncements of the early Church Fathers. In *Pistis Sophia* 4.140, an early Christian work usually characterized as “gnostic,” Hecate is named as one of the five demonic rulers who torments the souls of the unfaithful after their death (see Carl Schmidt, ed., *Pistis Sophia*, trans. Violet Macdermot [NHS 9; Leiden: Brill, 1978], 636-64). For other ancient Christian and Graeco-Roman portrayals of Hecate, see Alois Kehl, “Hekate,” *RAC* 14:310-38. As E.A. Judge observes, “What made the engagement between the church and magic so close and desperate was the fact that neither side doubted the reality of the forces to which the other appealed” (“The Magical Use of Scripture in the Papyri,” in *Jerusalem and Athens: Cultural Transformation in Late Antiquity*, ed. Alanna Nobbs [WUNT 265; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010], 198; repr. from *Perspectives on Language and Text*, ed. E.W. Conrad and E.G. Newing [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987], 339-50).

58 Ibid.; E. Lesky and J.H. Waszink, “Epilepsie,” *RAC* 4:821; Owsei Temkin, *The Falling Sickness: A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginnings of Modern Neurology*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), 15-16.

the charm elicits protection “from every epileptic fit and from all moonsickness” (ἀπὸ πάσης] ἐπιλή[μ]ψεως [καὶ ἀπὸ παντὸς σ]εληνιασμοῦ, lines 8-9).⁵⁹ The verb σεληνιάζομαι (LSJ, s.v., “to be moonstruck, i.e. epileptic”) appears twice in the gospel attributed to Matthew, which seems to be the earliest attestation of this term (or its nominal cognate σεληνιασμός) as a designation for epilepsy or a person afflicted by the disease.⁶⁰

Other vocabulary in the formulary may also suggest influence from Matthew or parallel traditions. As de Bruyn has shown, the Matthean statement that Jesus went about healing “every disease and every sickness” (πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν, Matt 4:23, 9:35, and 10:31) became a sort of amuletic stock phrase in the fifth and sixth centuries.⁶¹ If the reconstructed portion of text in the present formulary is correct, we find among the list of adjurations addressed to “the Lord” a request for protection “from every disease of the body” (ἀπὸ πάσης νόσου σώ]ματος, lines 9-10), which may be an allusion to this Matthean phrase. The request continues in line 10, “and from ...” (καὶ ἄ[πὸ, line 10) before the papyrus breaks off: one wonders whether the phrase might have been completed, “... and from every illness” (καὶ ἄ[πὸ πάσης μαλακίας). A third possible allusion to Matthew—or indeed to the synoptic tradition in general—

59 On the relation (and distinction) between the two terms, de Haro Sanchez notes: “L'épilepsie serait donc indentifiée dans les papyrus iatromagiques grecs de trois manières différentes: la première désignant la maladie chronique (ἐπιληψις, ἐπιληψία), la deuxième qualifiant la crise d'épilepsie par le biais de l'un de ses symptômes (πτωματισμός) et la troisième, par le biais de l'astrologie qui lie la maladie au cycle lunaire (σεληνιασμός, σεληνιάζομαι)” (“Le vocabulaire de la pathologie,” 152).

60 Cf. Matt 4:24 and 17:15. A search in the *TLG* reveals that these terms are used overwhelmingly by Christian authors in the literary material; otherwise, they appear in a few astrological treatises that post-date Matthew (e.g. Vettius Valens, *Anth.* 2.37, 41). According to de Haro Sanchez, the terms appear in the iatromagical papyri only in P.Yale 2.130 and P.Ant. 3.140 (“Le vocabulaire de la pathologie,” 152).

61 Theodore de Bruyn, “Appeals to Jesus as the One ‘Who Heals Every Illness and Every Infirmity’ (Matt 4:23, 9:35) in Amulets in Late Antiquity,” in *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity: Proceedings of the Montréal Colloquium in Honour of Charles Kannengiesser, 11-13 October 2006*, ed. Lorenzo DiTomasso and Lucian Turcescu (BibAC 6; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 65-81. He designates this phrase as a “clausal *historiola*” (ibid., 67), terminology appropriated from Frankfurter, “Narrating Power,” 469.

may exist in the reference to “mute demons” (χωφῶν δειμόν[ων, line 7), a common trope in the gospel healing narratives.⁶²

6.3.2 | Nomina Sacra in *P.Yale 2.130*

These reminiscences and allusions increase the likelihood that the formulary originates from a Christian setting. The literary quality of the hand and the proper execution of the *nomen sacrum*, furthermore, suggest the possibility that the scribe was accustomed to copying Christian literary manuscripts. Should this be the case, then we may appropriately imagine the production of applied copies for individual clients, together with accompanying rituals, as taking place in an ecclesiastical setting such as a church or shrine.

As de Bruyn observes, the preparation and application of amulets was very much like that of oil, another product offered by clergy for efficacious intervention:

The preparation and use of amulets was similar to the preparation and use of oil. ... [A]s with the oil, amulets were rendered powerful by ritual actions: by the actions of writing, reciting, and wearing the inscription. And finally, once prepared by a cleric or monk or another ritual specialist, amulets, like the oil, could be taken away and applied by oneself.⁶³

Unlike oil, however, the manner and extent of the “re-application” of a textual amulet by its user would presumably have some degree of dependence on her or his literate ability. As I have argued throughout this study, the *nomina sacra* are profoundly visual in their constitution; thus they are well suited for employment in amulets as visual *aides-mémoire* to provide an ancillary path to stimulating such ritual repetition for the wearer in the same way that the presence of crosses in amulets might occasionally prompt the associated devotional gesture.

62 Cf. Matt 9:32, 11:5, 12:22, 15:30–31; Mark 7:32–37, 9:35; Luke 1:22, 7:22, 11:14. See also Acts Phil. 1:1.

63 De Bruyn, “Appeals to Jesus,” 79. See also Roy Kotansky, “Incantations and Prayers for Salvation on Inscribed Greek Amulets,” in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 110.

For Origen, the repetition of the name of Jesus was a more powerful efficacious activity than reciting incantations:

For it is not by incantations [κατακλήσεις] that [Christians] seem to prevail [over demons], but by the name of Jesus [ἀλλὰ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ], along with the report of the accounts about him. For the repetition of these things [ταῦτα γὰρ λεγόμενα πολλάκις] has caused demons to depart from people, especially whenever those who say them do so with a sound and genuinely believing disposition.⁶⁴

It seems appropriate, then, that the single *nomen sacrum* observable in this formulary happens to appear in the vocative case in the opening invocation: “Guard the woman so-and-so, Lord” ([(δ)ιαφύλαξον τῇ [ν δε]ῖνα κε, line 1). The co-incidence of the vocative supplication (“O Lord!”) and the *nomen sacrum* form renders the address both linguistically salient (to the addressee)⁶⁵ and visually salient (to the client/supplicant),⁶⁶ thus creating an effective element for the stimulation of occasional “re-application” by repetition of this supplicatory address. The importance of such visually potent forms of invoked names will become more evident in our analysis of the next amulet.

6.4 | A Fever Phylacteron for Aria (P.Oxy. 6.924)

TM no. 64394

9.0 cm (h) × 7.6 cm (w)

4th cent. CE

van Haelst 953

Blumell-Wayment 94

PGM P5a

de Bruyn-Dijkstra 20

64 Origen, *Cels.* 1.6.

65 The vocative functions pragmatically to draw attention to itself by means of syntactic and/or intonational detachment, thereby “enacting the participation of the addressee or addressees in the exchange” (M.A.K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 4th ed., rev. by Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen [London: Routledge, 2014], 159). It gives the addressee “no ‘out’, nails him with a [Face Threatening Act]” (Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, 204).

66 In his study on the notion of salience in sociolinguistics and related disciplines, Péter Rácz notes that “visual and linguistic salience work similarly. They assign a property to a visual/linguistic unit that renders it perceptually more prominent in an array of competing units, which is crucial in cases where selective attention is useful or necessary” (*Salience in Sociolinguistics: A Quantitative Approach* [Topics in English Linguistics 84; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013], 23).

line 1: συμφυλάξῃτε; line 2: Ἀρίαν; lines 2-3: τοῦ ἐφημερινοῦ (scribe corr. ἐπιημερινός to ἐπιημερινου); lines 5-6: λεπτοριγοπυρετίου; line 16: ἄγιον.

Translation: Guard and protect⁷⁰ Aria from ephemeral shivering, and from daily shivering, and from shivering at night, and from mild fever with chills, [and do not] allow these things [to draw near to] Aria at all,⁷¹ according to your will first of all, and then according to her faith, because she is a slave of the living God, and so that your name may be glorified forever. [Power] of Jesus Christ! Father, Son, Mother, Alpha and Omega, Holy Spirit, Abrasax. A E Ê I O U Ô. (back) For Aria.

6.4.1 | Description

P.Oxy. 6.924 preserves a charm produced for a certain Aria to ward off fever. Two other amulets, published by Franco Maltomini in the most recent volume of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, can be identified with the same scribe: P.Oxy. 82.5306 and 5307. All three amulets are written in the same hurried, slightly rightward-sloping, semicursive hand. Grenfell and Hunt assigned the hand to the fourth century, which is accepted by Maltomini.⁷² The papyrus has been folded six times vertically and four times horizontally, creating a small package of about 2.25 by 1.27 centimeters.

Although surely coincidental, all three amulets were composed for women: Aria (P.Oxy. 6.924), Eulogia (P.Oxy. 82.5306), and Bassa (P.Oxy. 82.5307). All three amulets also contain incantations against various types of fever, although P.Oxy. 82.5306—composed of a patchwork of materials that makes for a considerably longer formulation than the other two amulets—also petitions for protection against various other ailments and demons. In terms of length, content, and phrasing patterns, P.Oxy. 6.294 and P.Oxy. 82.5307 are especially similar.

All three amulets end with a distinctive, visually-oriented scheme of heavenly names, which opens with the acclamation “Power of Jesus Christ” (δύναμις ἰϰ̅ χ̅υ̅),

70 I take this use of ἴνα, with Maltomini (P.Oxy. 82.5306, 79), to be imperatival. On the imperatival use of ἴνα, see G.H.R. Horsley, “The Syntax Volume of Moulton’s *Grammar*,” in *NewDocs* 5:57.

71 On the likely sense of εἰσόλως (or possibly εἰς ὅλον, if a misspelling) as “(not) at all,” for which there seem to be no parallels beyond the three amulets from this scribe, see the comments of Maltomini in P.Oxy. 82.5306, 86.

72 See P.Oxy. 6.924, 289, and P.Oxy. 82.5306, 76.

with “Jesus” and “Christ” written as *nomina sacra* in large letters flanking a cross at the center of the arrangement. Surrounding the cross in a symmetrical pattern are the designations “Father,” “Son,” and “Mother” across the upper half, and “Holy Spirit” (with “Spirit” written as the *nomen sacrum* $\overline{\pi\nu\alpha}$), Alpha and Omega, and the name “Abraxas” across the lower half. A series of six dots, the purpose for which is not quite clear, roughly encircle the names surrounding the cross.⁷³ Written vertically along the sides of the display are the seven vowels, with $\alpha \epsilon \eta \iota$ on the lefthand side, and $\omicron \upsilon \omega$ on the right.⁷⁴ The display is framed at the bottom by a broken line border with right-angled ends.

The tradition(s) upon which the scribe or his models may have drawn are difficult to pinpoint, but can safely be identified as Christian in some variety. As we briefly observed in chapter three, the longer amulet of the three may incorporate material from pre-baptismal exorcistic liturgy and appears to allude to Revelation 7:2-4 with the phrase $\sigma\phi\rho\alpha\gamma\iota\delta\alpha \tau\omicron\upsilon \overline{\theta\upsilon} \tau\omicron\upsilon \zeta\omega\gamma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ (P.Oxy. 82.5306, lines 20-21).⁷⁵ It is also possible, given the heading “Prayer of Adam” ($\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\epsilon\upsilon\chi\eta \text{ } \overline{\Lambda\delta[\acute{\alpha}] \mu\omicron\upsilon}$, line 16) that

73 Six dots are visible in P.Oxy. 6.924, but only five are preserved in P.Oxy. 82.5306, and only two in P.Oxy. 82.5307. Presumably all six dots were originally present in the latter two amulets also. Maltomini suggests that the dots may have been “used in the exemplar of the amulets to mark the places where staurograms (or similar) were to be placed, but the staurograms themselves were never inserted; copies such as these amulets took over the dots instead” (P.Oxy. 82.5306, 89). This, of course, is speculation, and one could imagine a number of other possible functions, one of which I offer below.

74 Due to a slight abrasion at the lefthand margin, only a tiny trace of ink is preserved from one of the horizontal strokes of the epsilon in P.Oxy. 6.924, which is observable in the image when magnified. Grenfell and Hunt commented: “The use of the vowels is very common in magical formulae, but it is curious that here they are six, not seven in number, ϵ being omitted, unless indeed it was written to the left of α or η , where the edge of the papyrus is damaged” (P.Oxy. 6.924, 290). In Maltomini’s recent re-edition, however, he notes that “la vocale *epsilon* non è stata omessa: sotto ingrandimento è apprezzabile l’estremità destra del tratto mediano; come avevano sospettato i primi editori, il corpo della lettera era stato effettivamente scritto più a sinistra di α ed η ed è scomparso quasi totalmente in una sciupatura del bordo del papiro” (“PGM P 5a revisitato,” 233-34).

75 That this section of the amulet draws on exorcistic liturgy for catechumens in preparation for baptism is the suggestion of Roy Kotansky, *apud* Maltomini, P.Oxy. 82.5306, 84. The vocabulary employed at the beginning of this section, in my view, makes this hypothesis attractive.

opens the second section of the amulet, that material is incorporated from a lost pseudepigraphon.⁷⁶ The appeal to God's will and the suppliant's faith in the formulaic rationale, present (with minor variations⁷⁷) in all three amulets, also has close scriptural parallels, especially among the synoptic gospels.⁷⁸

Echoes from the Book of Daniel are also discernable in the rationale:

P.Oxy. 6.924: "because she is a slave of the living God ..."

ὅτι δούλη ἐστὶν τοῦ θ̅υ τοῦ ζώντος (lines 10-11)

Thod. Dan 6:21: "O Daniel, slave of the living God, has your God whom you continually serve been able to deliver you from the mouth of the lions?"

Δανιήλ ὁ δούλος τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζώντος, ὁ θεός σου, ᾧ σὺ λατρεύεις ἐνδελεχῶς, εἰ ἡδυνήθη ἐξελεῖσθαι σε ἐκ στόματος τῶν λεόντων;

P.Oxy. 6.924: "... and in order that your name may be glorified forever."

καὶ ἵνα τὸ ὄνομά σου {ῆ} διὰ παντός ᾗ δεδοξασμένον (lines 11-13)

LXX Dan 3:26: "Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our ancestors, and praiseworthy and glorified is your name forever."

εὐλογητός εἶ, κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν, καὶ αἰνετὸν καὶ δεδοξασμένον τὸ ὄνομά σου εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.

LXX Dan 3:43: "And deliver us in accordance with your marvelous works, and bring glory to your name, O Lord."

καὶ ἐξελοῦ ἡμᾶς κατὰ τὰ θαυμάσιά σου καὶ δὸς δόξαν τῷ ὀνόματί σου, κύριε.

These Danielic echoes are drawn from the book's two most famous episodes of divine deliverance, both common tropes in ancient apotropaic tradition: the three young men who survived Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace (Dan 3:19-30) and Daniel

⁷⁶ See again the comments in the *editio princeps* (P.Oxy. 82.5306, 82-83).

⁷⁷ P.Oxy. 82.5306 adds to the formula: "because she is a slave of the living God *and of (?) his holy angels, iō nīpalnneōth*, in order that your name may be glorified forever" (ὅτι δούλη ἐστὶν τοῦ θ̅υ τοῦ ζώντος καὶ μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ ἵω νιπαλαμνεωθ, ἵνα τὸ ὄνομά σου {ῆ} διὰ παντός ᾗ δεδοξασμένον, lines 39-42). Both P.Oxy. 82.5306 and 5307 omit καὶ at the beginning of the second clause.

⁷⁸ Cf. Matt 6:10, 9:29; Mark 9:23; Luke 7:50, 18:42; Rom 8:27; 1 Pet 3:17. See Maltomini, P.Oxy. 82.5306, 88; Matheison, *Christian Women in the Greek Papyri*, 270.

in the lion's den (Dan 6:10-28). The former allusion seems a particularly apt reference for amulets eliciting protection from fever.⁷⁹ Another fever amulet, P.Heid. inv. Copt. 564, makes a more explicit analogical link between this episode and the "fiery heat" of fever:

Ananias [As]arias Misael, Se[d]rak Misak Abdenago, Thalal M[ou]lal B[. . . : I] adjure you by your names and your powers, that as you extinguished the fiery furnace(s) of Nebuchadnezzar, you may extinguish [every fever] and every [. . .] and every chill and every malady that is in the body of Patrikou child of [. . .]akou, child of Zoe, child of Adam, yea, yea, at once, at once!⁸⁰

Although the allusions in the rationale of the present amulets are less explicit, they have clearly been selected on the basis of their relevance to the concerns of the clients. Thus, these allusions may best be understood as what Frankfurter calls "clausal *historiolae*," which function "as a subsidiary invocation"⁸¹ to "tie the mythic event to the present need: 'just as then you did such-and-such, so now do such-and-such.'"⁸²

Clearly the scribe or his model drew on a repertoire of Christian liturgy and scripture. The most interesting clues to the devotional milieu in which these amulets were produced, however, are found in their elaborate acclamational scheme. The presence of μήτηρ among the sacred epithets surrounding the cross—curiously positioned in the triad "Father, Son, Mother"—may represent the Holy Spirit⁸³ or

79 The scribe of our amulet employs the diminutive form of the usual word for fever, πυρετός (LSJ, s.v., "fiery heat"), in the highly unusual compound λεπτοριγοπυρέτιον, "mild fever with chills" (lines 5-6 in P.Oxy. 6.924).

80 Translation from Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994), 100 (no. 53).

81 Frankfurter, "Narrating Power," 469.

82 De Bruyn, "Appeals to Jesus," 67 note 6.

83 See Roberta Mazza, "P.Oxy. XI, 1384: Medicina, rituali di guarigione e cristianesimi nell'Egitto tardoantico," *ASE* 24 (2007): 437-62 (449-50); Elaine H. Pagels, "What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity," *Signs* 2 (1976): 293-303 (repr. in idem, *The Gnostic Gospels* [New York: Vintage Books, 1989], 48-69). Cf. P.Bodm. 12 (4th cent.), a fragment of a hymn which enjoins the faithful to "sing of the Father ... praise the Mother ... for you have found your bridegroom, Christ" (ὕμνησατε τὸν πατέρα ... ᾄσατε τῇ μητρὶ ... ὅτι ὑψάσατε τὸν

perhaps one of the feminine hypostatizations deriving from Sethian tradition.⁸⁴ The latter suggestion harmonizes well with the inclusion of Abrasax among the lower triad of mystical epithets and the columns of vowels flanking the arrangement,⁸⁵ but these elements could be drawn from other traditions also.⁸⁶ Be that as it may, the consortium of powerful names invoked in the acclamation, although curiously comprehensive, does not exceed the nebulous boundaries of formative Christianity.⁸⁷ The fact that these epithets encircle a cross and are framed by the phrase δύναμις ιϗ χϗ, with the *nomina sacra* “Jesus Christ” in large letters, suggests that the powers named are understood to be allied with (and subordinate to) Christ. It is possible that this alliance is the reason for the use of the unusual verb

νυμφίον ὑμῶν χρν, lines 1-2, 5), and the arguments that the “mother” represents the Holy Spirit in Thomas Scott Caulley, “A Fragment of an Early Christian Hymn (Papyrus Bodmer 12): Some Observations,” *ZAC* 13 (2009): 403-14 (409-13). However, it seems odd that the Holy Spirit would be named explicitly in the next line if we accept this explanation.

84 Theodore de Bruyn, “Historians, Bishops, Amulets, Scribes, and Rites: Interpreting a Christian Practice,” in *Papers Presented at the Seventeenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2015*, ed. Markus Vinzent (StPatr 75; Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 317-38; idem, *Making Amulets Christian*, 224-25. See John D. Turner, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (BCNH Études 6, Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval; Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 284-92 and *passim*.

85 De Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 224-25.

86 According to Dornseiff, the seven vowels are often associated with the Tetragram, which is rendered Ιαω in Greek—made up not only of the middle, first, and last letters of the Greek alphabet, but also the middle, first, and last of the seven vowels. For this reason, the letters alpha and omega also serve as a metonymic representation of the seven vowels, and in turn, of God (*Das Alphabet*, 39-41). The seven vowels are also associated with Abrasax, since his name consists of seven letters (ibid., 42-43; Henri Leclercq, “Abrasax,” *DACL* 1.1:33-34). The seven vowels, alpha and omega, and Abrasax are all widely attested in Jewish and Christian traditions, but also in broader Graeco-Egyptian and Mesopotamian traditions. See further Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet*, 35-60; Henri Leclercq, “Alphabet vocalique des Gnostiques,” *DACL* 1.1:268-88; Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 264-65; G.H.R. Horsley, “‘The Beginning and the End’ (Rev. 22.13),” *NewDocs* 1:66-67; William M. Brashear, “The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey, Annotated Bibliography (1928-1994),” *ANRW* 2.18.5:3430-31, 3577; David G. Martinez, *P.Mich.* 29, 47-48 note 103.

87 Indeed, as Mazza remarks, “E come se il redattore dell'amuleto avesse voluto raccogliere insieme alcune delle principali voci sacre e simbologie magiche cristiane, o comunque utilizzate anche dai cristiani” (Mazza, “*P.Oxy.* XI, 1384,” 448).

συμφυλάσσω, “guard along with (others),” in the opening adjuration. To what extent these traditions represent the scribe’s own affiliation is difficult to discern. However, his employment of the distinctive acclamational scheme “Power of Jesus Christ! Father, Son, Mother, Alpha and Omega, Holy Spirit, Abrasax” as a kind of “talismanic signature”⁸⁸ on all three amulets suggests that it held some significance for him.

As little as we are able glean about the ritual specialist whom Aria employed to make her amulet, even less can be inferred about its owner. The folds in the papyrus indicate that it was bound up into a small package that Aria could have easily carried around with her or worn on her body. No holes for a suspension cord are observed on the papyrus itself, which may indicate that Aria carried the charm in an amulet bag or capsule. The verbs employed in the opening adjuration (συνφυλάξης καὶ συντηρήσης, “guard and protect”) indicate that the charm was preventative rather than curative.⁸⁹ One can imagine that Aria may have found herself at imminent risk of contracting fever, caused most probably by malaria,⁹⁰ and felt it necessary to commission an amulet for protection.

88 De Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 225.

89 See de Haro Sanchez, “Le vocabulaire de la pathologie,” on the various adjuratory verbs employed in iatromagical amulets.

90 The abundance of amulets that refer to various types of intermittent fevers bear witness to the endemicity of the disease in late antique Egypt, which has repeatedly been confirmed by modern biomolecular testing. A 1994 study detected the presence of the malaria-causing *P. falciparum* antigen in the tissues of six out of seven naturally desiccated mummies from Egypt dating from between about 3200 to 700 BCE (R.L. Miller et al., “Diagnosis of *Plasmodium falciparum* infections in mummies using the rapid manual ParaSight™-F test,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 88 [1994]: 31-32). See more recently Emma Rabino Massa, Nicoletta Cerutti, and A. Marin D. Savoia, “Malaria in Ancient Egypt: Paleoimmunological Investigation on Predynastic Mummified Remains,” *Revista de antropologia chilena* 32 (2000): 7-9; Robert Sallares and Susan Gomzi, “Biomolecular Archaeology of Malaria,” *Ancient Biomolecules* 3 (2001): 195-213; Andreas G. Nerlich et al., “*Plasmodium falciparum* in Ancient Egypt,” *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 14 (2008): 1317-19. For an exposition of another fever amulet from Oxyrhynchus, see Luijendijk, “A Gospel Amulet for Joannia.”

6.4.2 | Nomina Sacra in *P.Oxy. 6.924*

In our analysis of the previous formulary, I suggested that the single extant *nomen sacrum* might provide a visual path to stimulating the repetition of the vocative address “O Lord!” as a way for the user to re-apply the amulet’s ritual power periodically. In this applied fever amulet for Aria, we observe a much more elaborate visual scheme involving a number of *nomina sacra* and other Christian elements. The scheme is clearly designed for visual assimilation and in this sense stands quite independently from the text of the incantation. I would argue that this is no mere coincidence, as the ability to assimilate the important elements of amulets visually would enable users in a semi-literate society such as late antique Egypt “to visualize powerful textual elements and thus facilitate memory.”⁹¹

Three elements of the scheme are most salient due to their size and positioning—the two large *nomina sacra* $\overline{\text{IY}}$ (on the left) and $\overline{\text{XY}}$ (on the right), and the cross in the center. The salience and symmetry of the three items relate them to one another spatially and conceptually (perhaps providing additional supporting evidence for the thesis of chapter three).⁹² The cross sits at the center of the entire scheme as “the nucleus of the information to which all the other elements are in some sense subservient.”⁹³

The renowned art theorist and perceptual psychologist Rudolf Arnheim speaks of “the power of the center” as the crucial element of visual composition. He notes:

Through the ages and in most cultures, the central position is used to give visual expression to the divine or some other exalted power. The god, the saint, the monarch, dwells above the pushes and pulls of the milling throng. He is outside the dimension of time, immobile, unshakable. One senses intuitively in looking at such a spatial

91 Skemer, *Binding Words*, 151. In his now classic study on *historiolae*, Frankfurter observes: “One must remember that in a semi- or non-literate society written words are usually not sacred semantically but rather visually—as concrete symbols” (“Narrating Power,” 463).

92 Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 194-201; Rudolf Arnheim, *The Power of the Center: A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts*, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 73.

93 Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, 196.

arrangement that the central position is the only one at rest, whereas everything else must strain in some specific direction. In the Byzantine churches the dominant image of the divine ruler holds the center of the apse. In portrait painting, a pope or emperor is often presented in a central position.⁹⁴

In our amulet, the cross and the large *nomina sacra* for “Jesus” and “Christ” flanking the scheme constitute the center of visual mass and thus assert themselves as the most powerful forces in the arrangement of heavenly entities.

The visual subordination of the other entities in the scheme is compounded by their *plene* spelling (with the exception of the single *nomen sacrum* form $\overline{\pi\nu\alpha}$), which may reflect something about the scribal and devotional milieu from which this amulet emanates. Indeed, the only words treated as *nomina sacra* in this amulet are “Christ,” “Jesus,” “Spirit,” and “God” (the latter occurring within the text of the incantation). With such an eclectic array of heavenly figures represented in the acclamational display, one wonders why only these receive such treatment. By the fourth century, $\mu\eta\tau\eta\rho$ was already beginning to appear as a *nomen sacrum* in some literary manuscripts, and contraction had begun to be applied to $\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$ and $\pi\alpha\tau\eta\rho$ much earlier. Indeed, even $\delta\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$ is contracted as a *nomen sacrum* at 1 Peter 1:5 in P.Bodm. 7-8 (P⁷²). To attempt to detect a particular theological inclination from the scribe’s application of *nomina sacra* would, however, be perilous. In any case, the contraction of these four *nomina sacra* suggests that the scribe or his *Vorlage*—he was clearly dependent on a model⁹⁵—was trained in a tradition in which these four forms were used and not the others.

The visual syntax of the arrangement of names harmonizes with the linguistic syntax of the acclamation, which clarifies that it is Jesus Christ (in the genitive case) to whom the $\delta\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$ belongs, while the other entities surrounding the cross, rendered in the nominative case, are syntactically detached from the statement. If

94 Arnheim, *The Power of the Center*, 73.

95 The dependence on a model is indicated by his consistent insertion of a superfluous η in the rationale and the disagreement of noun and adjective cases in “Holy Spirit” in the acclamational scheme in all three amulets.

we enter imaginatively into the ritual that likely accompanied the production of this amulet, we might envision Aria, prompted by the cross and the large *nomina sacra*, crossing herself as she recites the acclamation: “Power of Jesus Christ!”

The six curious dots encircling the cross along with the other six heavenly designations call to mind the syllabic dots present in the reading exercise discussed in the previous chapter. In this case, however, the dots do not appear to mark syllables: some multisyllabic names have one dot, ὁῖος has two, the *nomen sacrum* πνα has one, and Alpha and Omega and Abrasax have no dots. I would venture to suggest that these dots may have served as another type of cognitive aid, not for reading, but rather—in accordance with Origen’s assertion regarding the power of repeating Jesus’ name—to stimulate the memory and recitation of the six corresponding names. As an analogical example, one might consider the use of a string of beads as a memory aid in the recitation of prayers. Although conjectural by necessity, this interpretation of the dots supports the contention that visual means to facilitate the recitation of powerful names was considered an important element of amulets. The *nomina sacra* naturally lent themselves to this purpose.

6.5 | Summary

Throughout this study, we have observed how *nomina sacra* were able to function as a resource for conveying meaning not only semantically, but also iconically by means of their visual salience. This chapter has sought to situate the *nomina sacra* within the popular ritual culture of late antique Egypt as visually-oriented sources of ritual efficacy whose power derived from their association with Christian scripture.

In P.Oxy. 34.2684, the *nomina sacra* appear within a selection from the Epistle of Jude inscribed on the leaves of a miniature codex for apotropaic use. I argued that the *nomina sacra*, the codex format, and the scriptural passage function dialectically as a multimodal ensemble, both targeting a specific ritual need with the excerpted text, and investing power into the material itself with a more abstract evocation of the scriptural codex as a ritual object.

Next, we observed a formulary fragment for a phylacterion against demons and epilepsy. Although only one *nomen sacrum* is preserved in this fragment, the vocative $\chi(\psi\rho\iota)\epsilon$, I suggested that its visual salience is well suited to serve as an *aide-mémoire* to stimulate occasional repetition of the supplicatory address “O Lord!” This suggestion was developed further in our discussion of the next amulet, a fever phylacterion for Aria, which employs an elaborate scheme of heavenly names and dots arranged around a cross beneath the incantation. I proposed that the cross, the *nomina sacra*, and the dots may have provided a visual path to prompt Aria periodically to appeal to the entities invoked in the amulet while performing the ritual gesture of the sign of the cross.

All three of the amulets examined in this chapter point to a Christian milieu. The first two, P.Oxy. 34.2684 and P.Yale 2.130, suggest that they were produced in ecclesiastical settings. Although we cannot be as confident about the setting in which P.Oxy. 6.924 was manufactured, the scribe (or his *Vorlage*) demonstrates a familiarity with Christian literature, liturgy, and *nomina sacra*, and the existence of two other similar amulets from his hand indicate that he catered to a sizeable clientele in fourth-century Oxyrhynchus.

CONCLUSION

We began this study by asking the question, with reference to the *nomina sacra*, “What’s in a name?” Rather than attempting to answer this question, as many previous studies have done, by developing a heuristic model to explain the various forms and uses of *nomina sacra*, this study has approached this question inductively by exploring how each use of *nomina sacra* has the potential to act simultaneously as part of a broader social and scribal system and as a particularized instantiation of that system created out of the unique interests and lived experiences of its producers. My hope is that this examination has added new understandings and deeper appreciations for the *nomina sacra* as material traces of the various meanings, histories, identities, and values of the ancient Christians who wrote and read them.

In Chapter One, I problematized the view of literacy as the ability to read and compose written language and proposed a multimodal approach to discussions about early Christian literary culture that appreciates the multifaceted ways by which humans communicate meanings. I then turned to focus on some of the ways in which the material and sensory aspects of early Christian book culture may have served the production and reception of meanings through modes and media other than writing, with particular focus on the visual power of the scriptural book-as-object in Christian liturgical settings. I proposed that, prior to shift of emphasis from the open scriptural book read during worship to the closed book with elaborately

decorated covers after the fourth century, the *nomina sacra* served as one of the principal “visual arguments” of scriptural symbolism.

In Chapter Two, we briefly examined the scribal application of *nomina sacra* in three specific early Christian literary manuscripts: the Chester Beatty Pauline Codex (P.Beatty 2 + P.Mich. 222 [P⁴⁶]), the Chester Beatty Numbers-Deuteronomy Codex (P.Beatty 6 + P.Mich. inv. 5554), and the Egerton Gospel (P.Egerton 2 + P.Köln 6.255). In contrast to frequent charges of scribal carelessness or ineptitude with regard to the treatment of *nomina sacra* in these manuscripts, I argued that perceived irregularities and deviations from conventionality are more productively viewed as traces of the socially and culturally situated interests of their producers.

In Chapter Three, we took up questions raised by an observation made in the previous chapter: namely, How did the words for “cross” and “crucify” come to be included so widely and so early among the *nomina sacra*, a practice reserved almost exclusively for names, titles, and placenames? Furthermore, why did this particular *nomen sacrum* sometimes incorporate a pictographic element, the staurogram, into its abbreviated form? I proposed that this curious treatment may derive from traditions connected with the *tav* of Ezekiel 9:4-6, a mark understood to stand for the divine name which ancient Christians appropriated as the baptismal seal because of its resemblance to the sign of the cross. Furthermore, I suggested that this treatment was likely necessitated and validated by the embedding of the staurogram into some of the earliest instances of “cross” and “crucify” as *nomina sacra*, which created a visual metonym pointing intersemiotically to this ritual mark.

In Chapter Four, we examined six letters which employ *nomina sacra* that represented a variety of personal correspondences, from a possible female ascetic addressing her ecclesiastical superior, to a quick note between neighbors, to official letters of recommendation between church bishops, and finally to a hurried letter sent by a man to his wife during the Diocletianic persecution. In each instance, we observed how the *nomina sacra* “mean” differently according to the interests of their producers. We also encountered Christians bearing letters of recommendation as

they travelled between their communities for scriptural edification. Following on the suggestion of Luijendijk, I proposed that such Christians may have encountered *nomina sacra* not only in these letters, but also in the scriptural manuscripts they studied in their training. I argued that the *nomina sacra* likely provided an opportunity for illiterate Christians to participate visually and contemplatively in such scriptural study.

In Chapter Five, we encountered three students in fourth-century Egypt who were undergoing education in reading and writing and who used *nomina sacra* in their exercises. One of these exercises, P.Oxy. 2.209, may in fact have been an exercise in writing *nomina sacra* and kept in a personal archive for future reference. We noted that an omission in the copy and resulting sensible reading suggests both literate engagement with the *Vorlage* and with the *nomina sacra*. The other two exercises in writing and reading, both containing scriptural texts with *nomina sacra*, are juxtaposed with classical material, pointing to a traditional educational settings under *grammatici* rather than an ecclesiastical setting. This observation opens up the tantalizing possibility that some students, including those without a Christian formation, learned how to compose and decipher *nomina sacra* during the course of their primary education, a possibility that invites future investigation.

Finally, in Chapter Six we turned our focus to the use of *nomina sacra* in amulets. All three of the amulets examined in this chapter seem to suggest that they were produced in Christian milieux, and at least two of these were likely produced in ecclesiastical settings such as churches or shrines. In all three amulets, I argued that the *nomina sacra* provide a visual path to stimulate memory and recitation of the sacred names invoked for protection and healing.

In his article “Nomina Sacra: Yes and No?” Christopher Tuckett asked the question: “At any one time, *who* would have seen any significance in the use of *nomina sacra*?”¹ Tuckett’s own answer is not optimistic: engagement with *nomina*

1 Tuckett, “Nomina Sacra: Yes and No?” 447 (emphasis original).

sacra must have been limited to the scribes who copied Christian manuscripts and the very few Christians who read them.² The picture that has emerged from this study, however, is one in which ancient Christians from all spheres of social life and with varying degrees of literate ability—and indeed in some cases probably non-Christians, too—regularly came into contact with *nomina sacra* and used them as resources for making their own meanings.

The examination undertaken here has only skimmed the surface of the potential that this kind of study holds for understanding how humans interface with language and material objects—not only *nomina sacra*—to create meaning. The corpus of literary, subliterary, and non-literary materials in which the *nomina sacra* are employed is very broad, and my analyses have considered only a very small fraction of the evidence. It is, of course, far beyond the scope of any single study to examine all of the evidence, and thus it is my hope that the work undertaken here has justified the value of this kind of approach for future research.

² Ibid.

Plates*

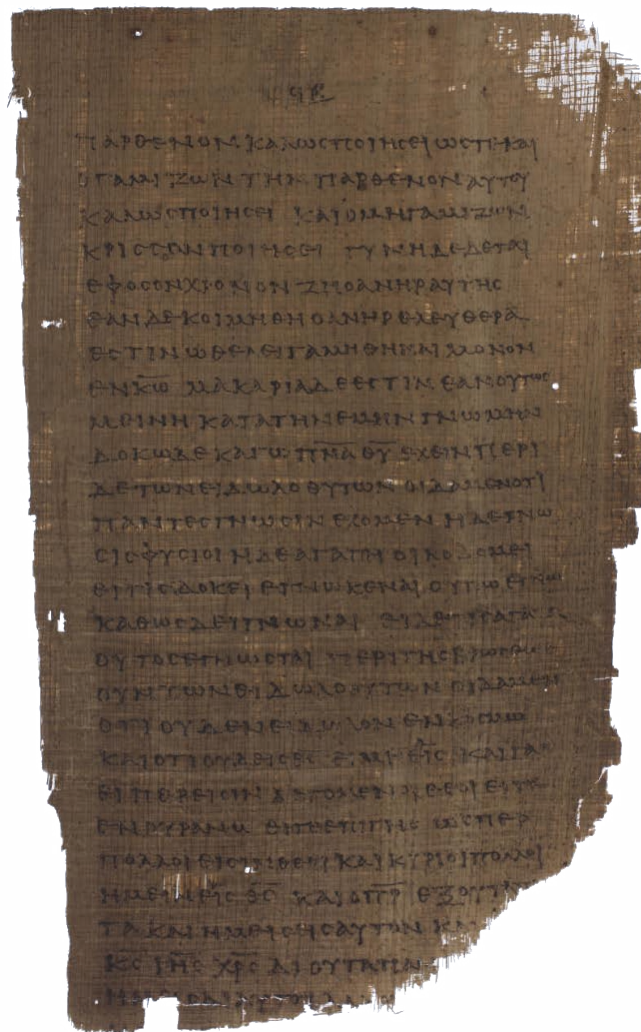


Plate 1

P.Beatty 2 (1 Cor 7:37–8:7)

Digitized by The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts at The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.
© The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. Reproduced with permission.

* All images not in the public domain are reproduced with the permission of the copyright holder and/or institution of ownership.

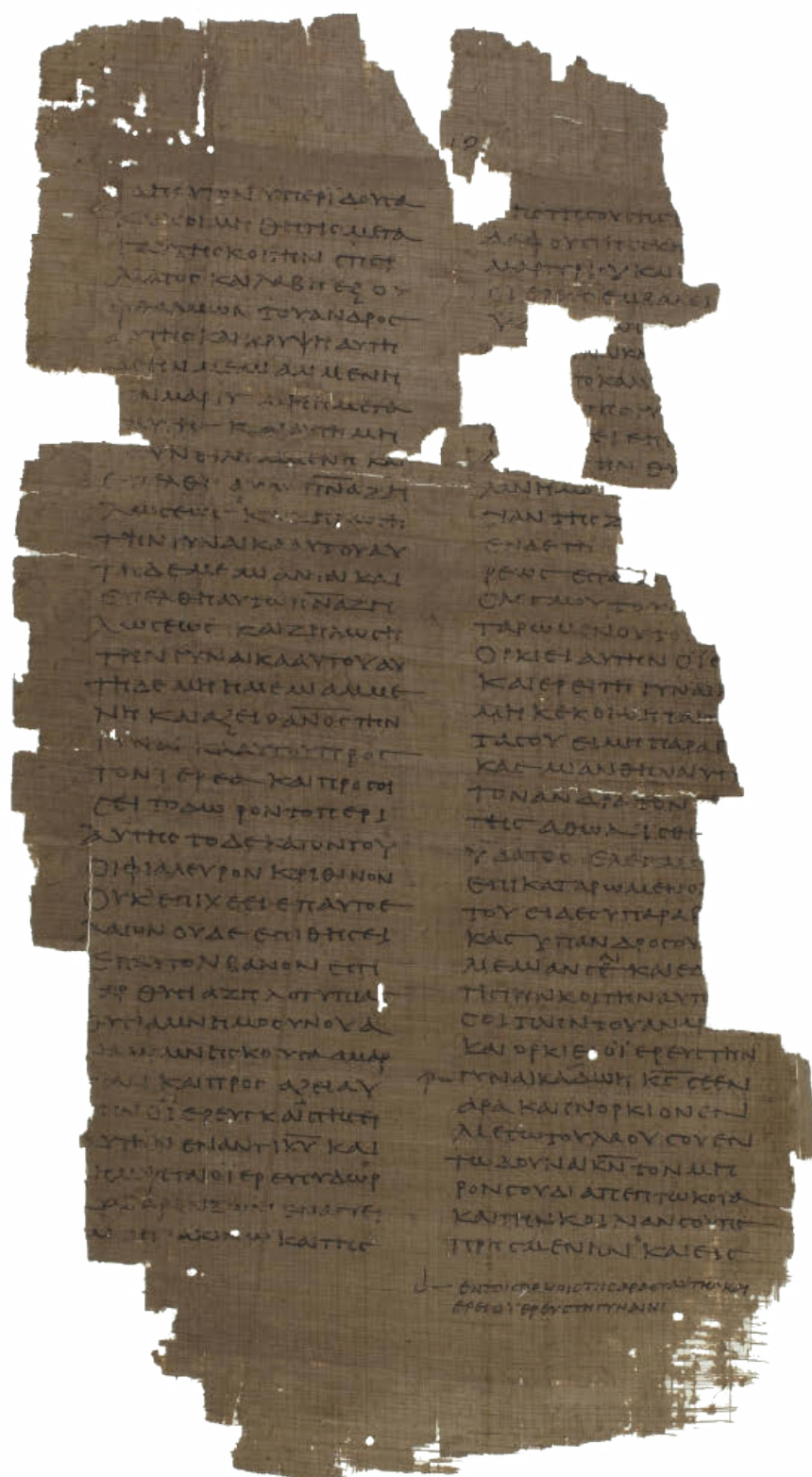


Plate 2

P.Beatty 6 (Num 5:12-22)

Digitized by The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts at The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

© The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. Reproduced with permission.

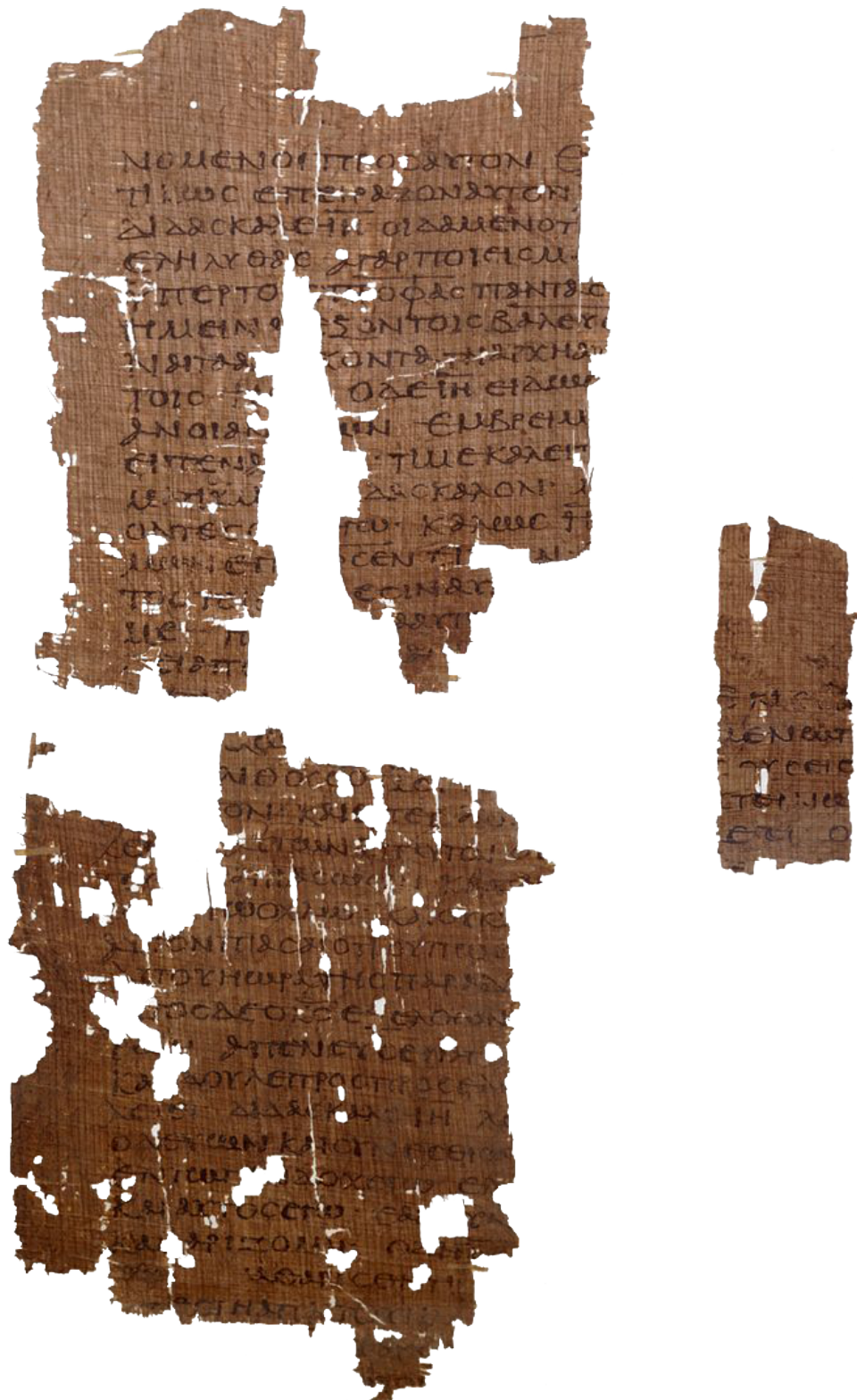


Plate 3
P.Egerton 2

Sourced from Wikimedia Commons. Public domain.



Plate 4a

P.Oxy. 12.1592 (recto)

Courtesy of Ambrose Swasey Library and the American Theological Library Association.



Plate 4b

P.Oxy. 12.1592 (verso)

Courtesy of Ambrose Swasey Library and the American Theological Library Association.

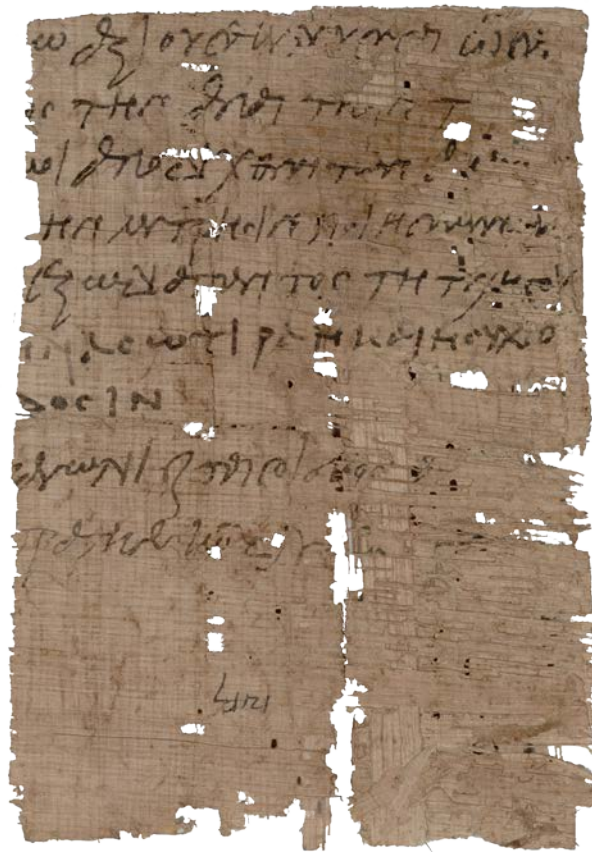


Plate 5a

P.Oxy. 63.4364 (recto of P.Oxy. 63.4365)

Courtesy of The Egypt Exploration Society and the University of Oxford Imaging Papyri Project.

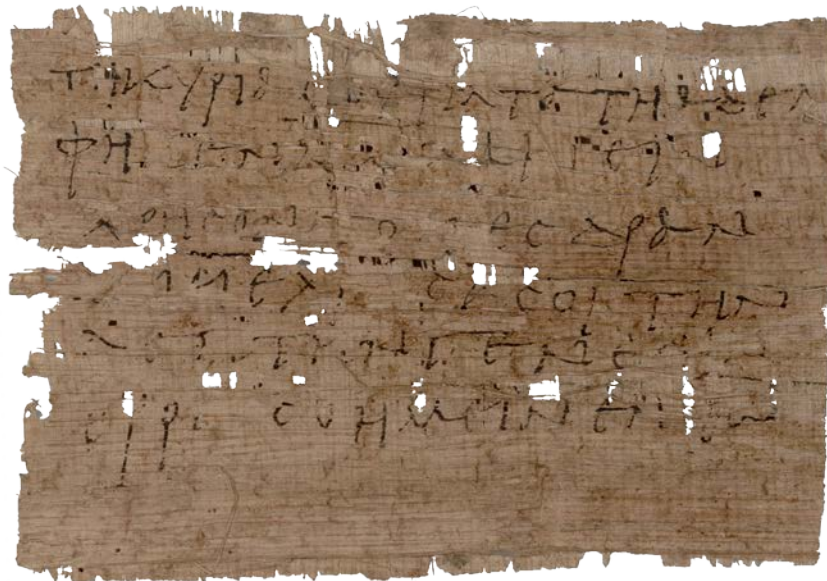


Plate 5b

P.Oxy. 63.4365 (verso)

Courtesy of The Egypt Exploration Society and the University of Oxford Imaging Papyri Project.

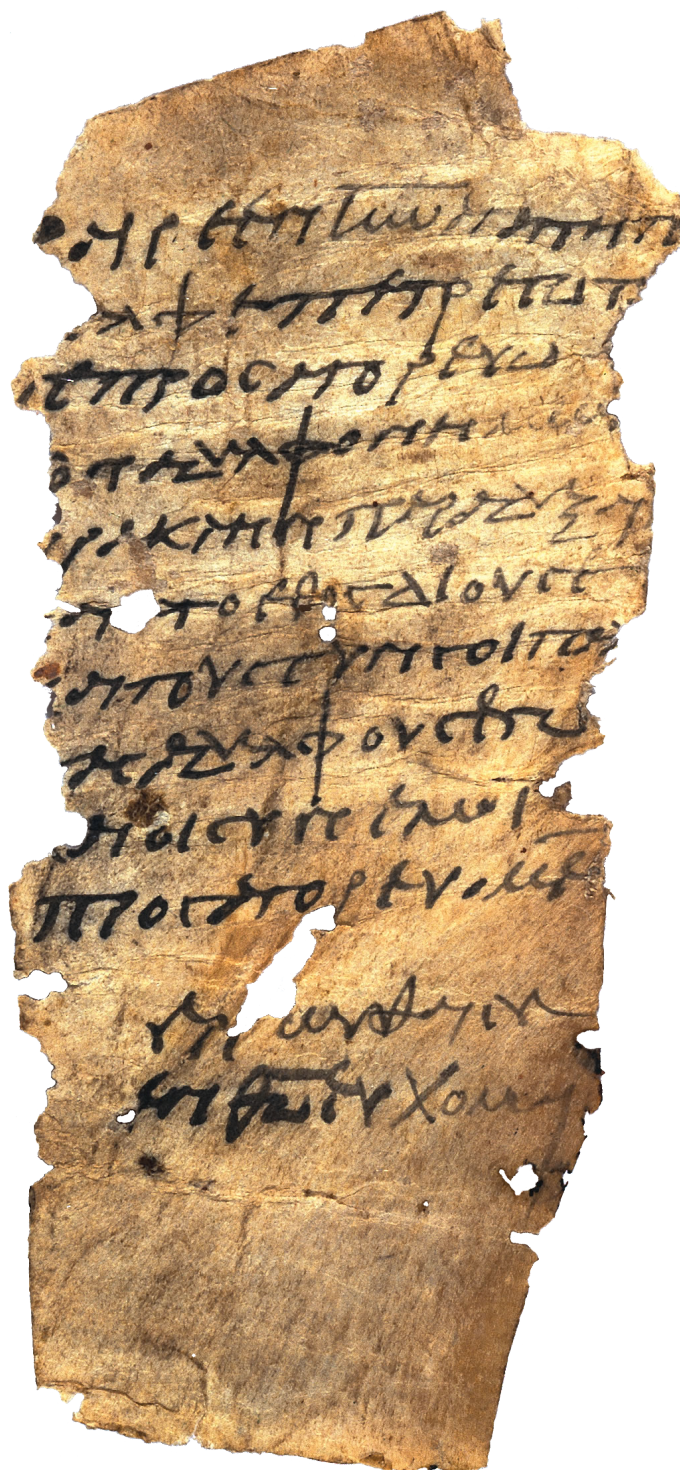


Plate 6

PSI 3.208

Courtesy of the Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Florence. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali. Any further reproduction, by any means, is prohibited.

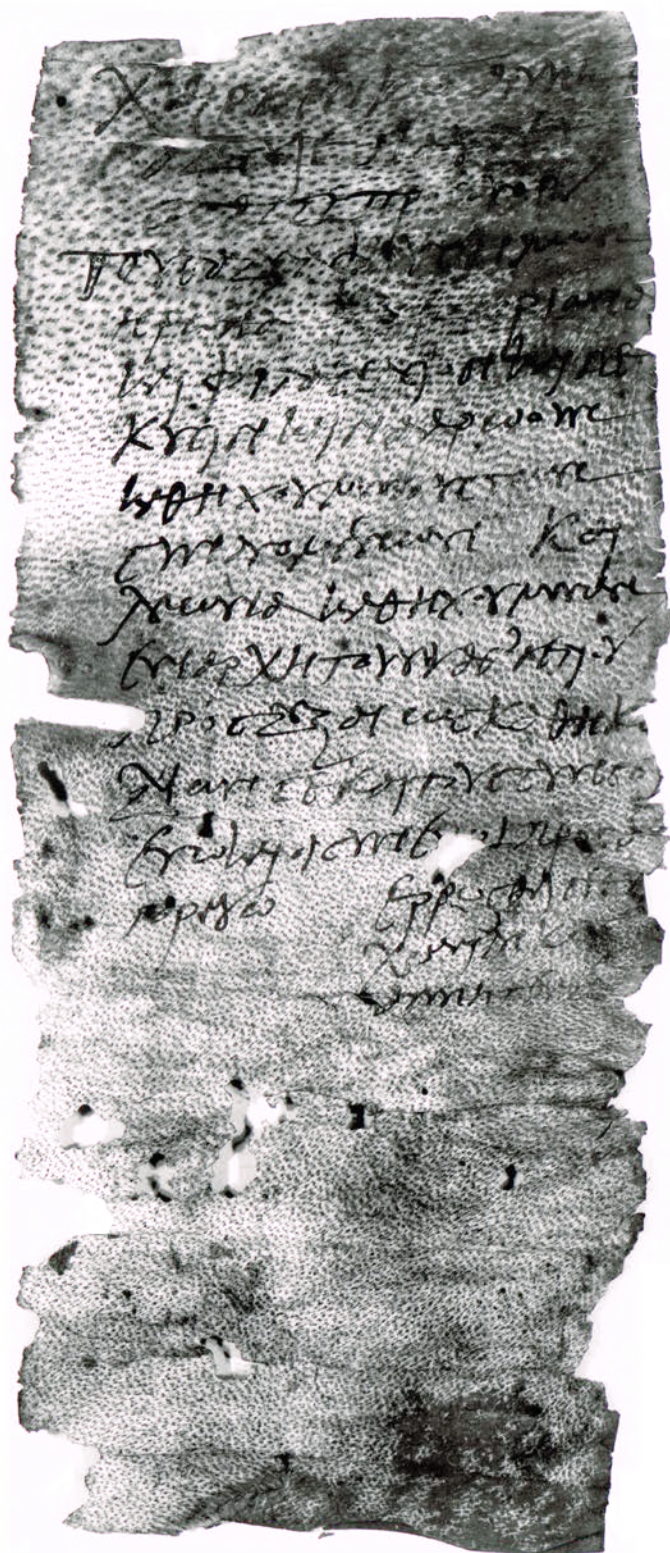


Plate 7a

PSI 9.1041 (recto)

Courtesy of the Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Florence. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali. Any further reproduction, by any means, is prohibited.

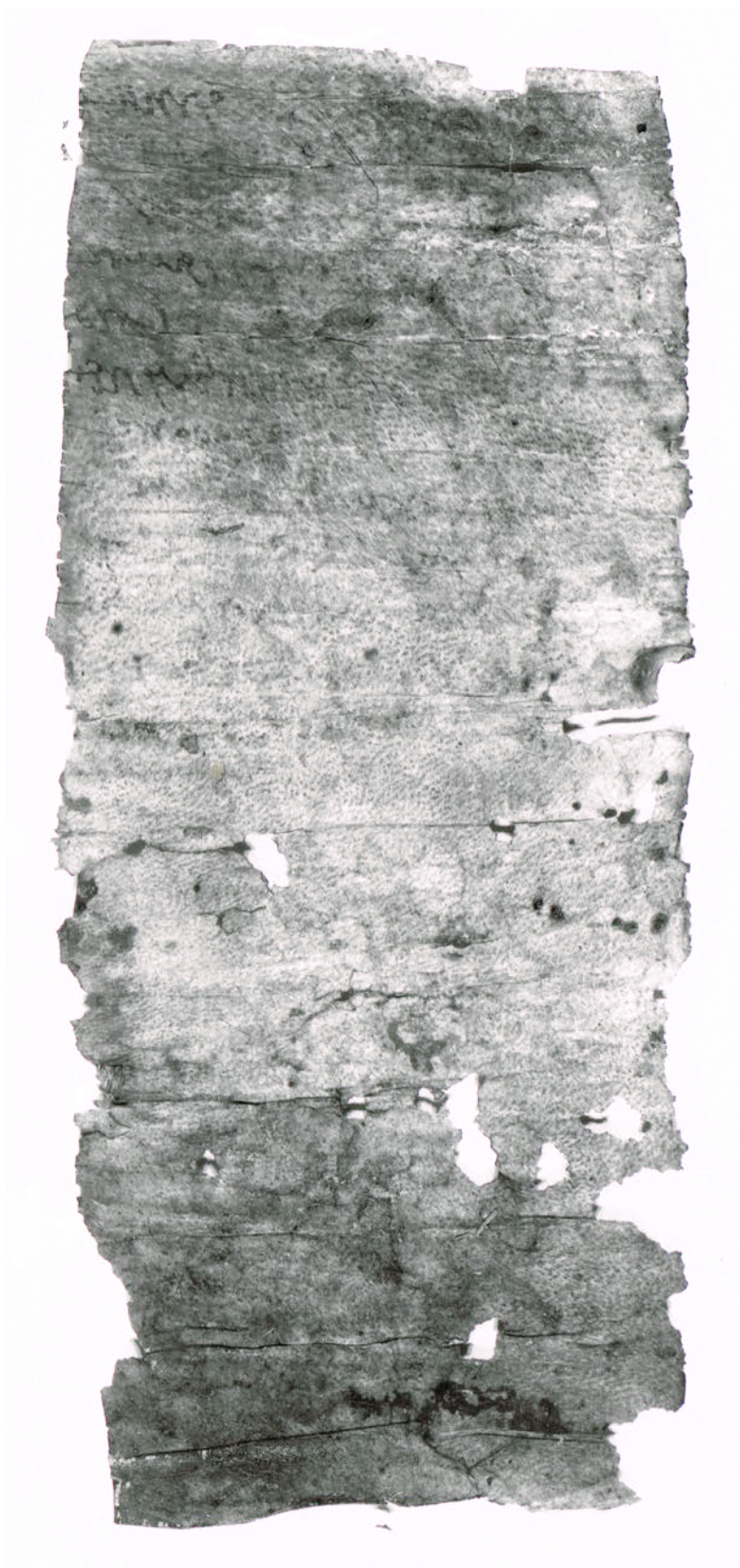


Plate 7b

PSI 9.1041 (verso)

Courtesy of the Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Florence. Reproduced by permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali. Any further reproduction, by any means, is prohibited.

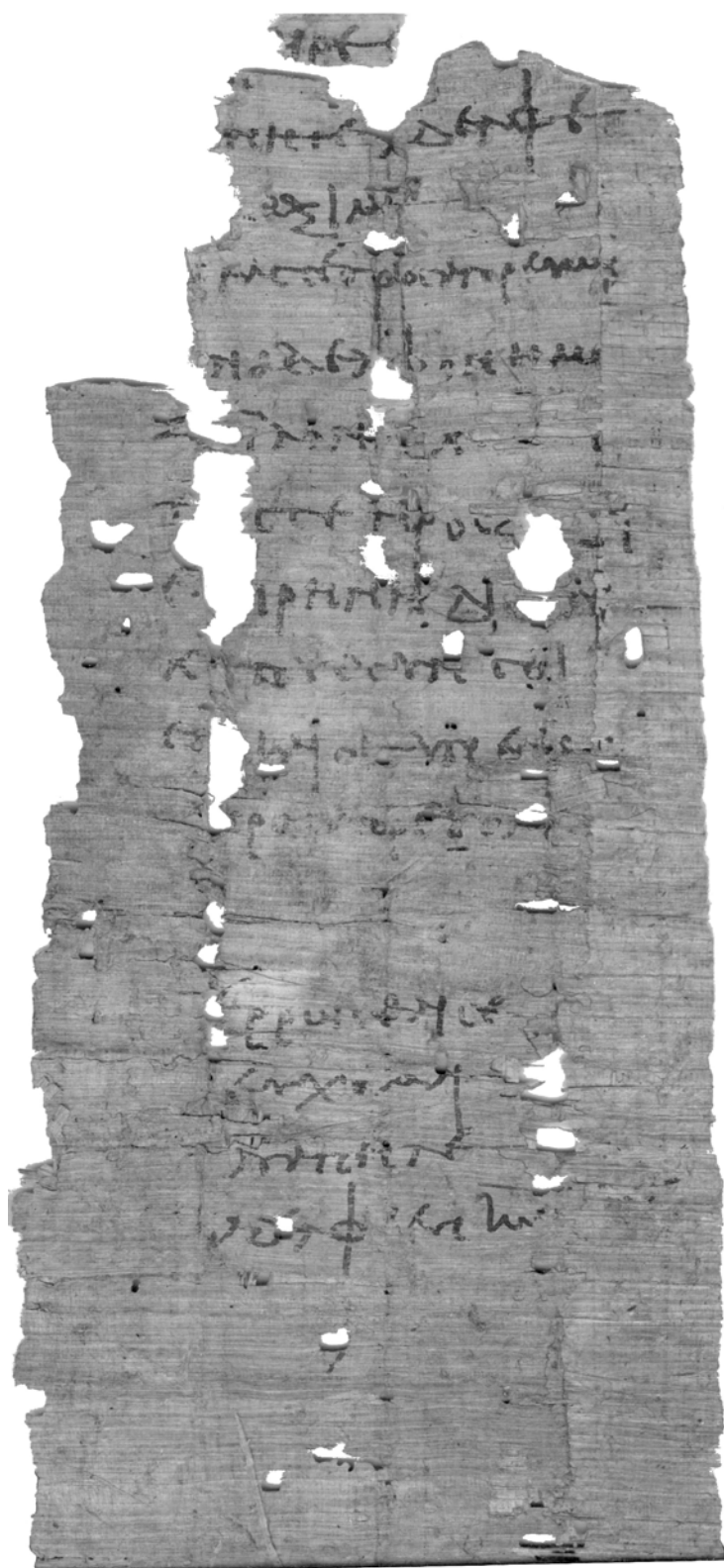


Plate 8

P.Alex. 29

Courtesy of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities and the Graeco-Roman Museum, Alexandria.

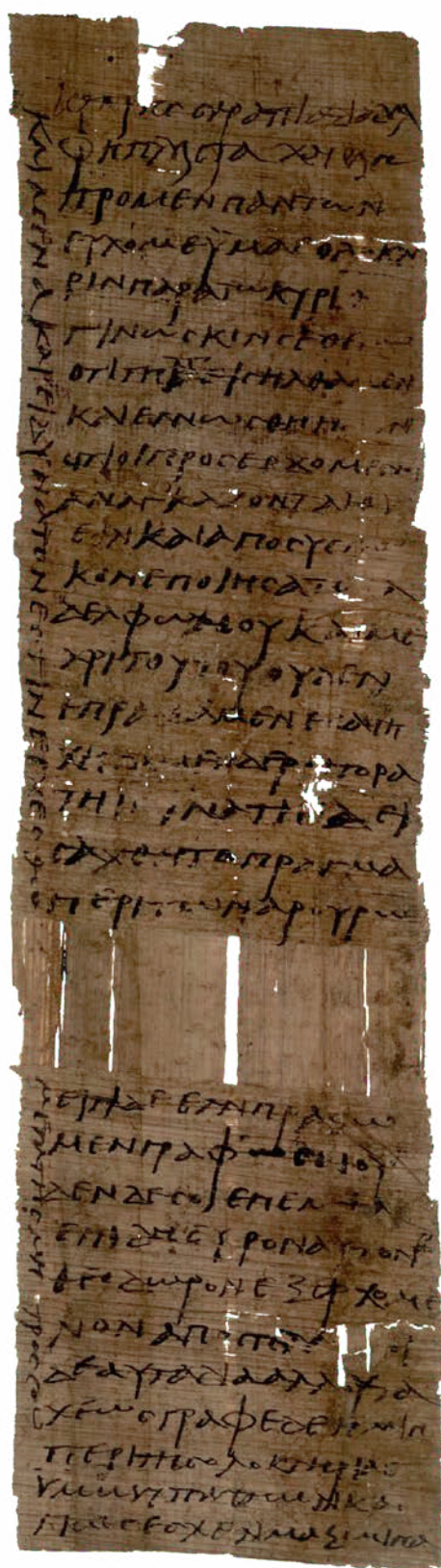


Plate 9a

P.Oxy. 31.2601 (recto)

Courtesy of The Egypt Exploration Society and the University of Oxford Imaging Papyri Project.



Plate 9b

P.Oxy. 31.2601 (verso)

Courtesy of The Egypt Exploration Society and the University of Oxford Imaging Papyri Project.

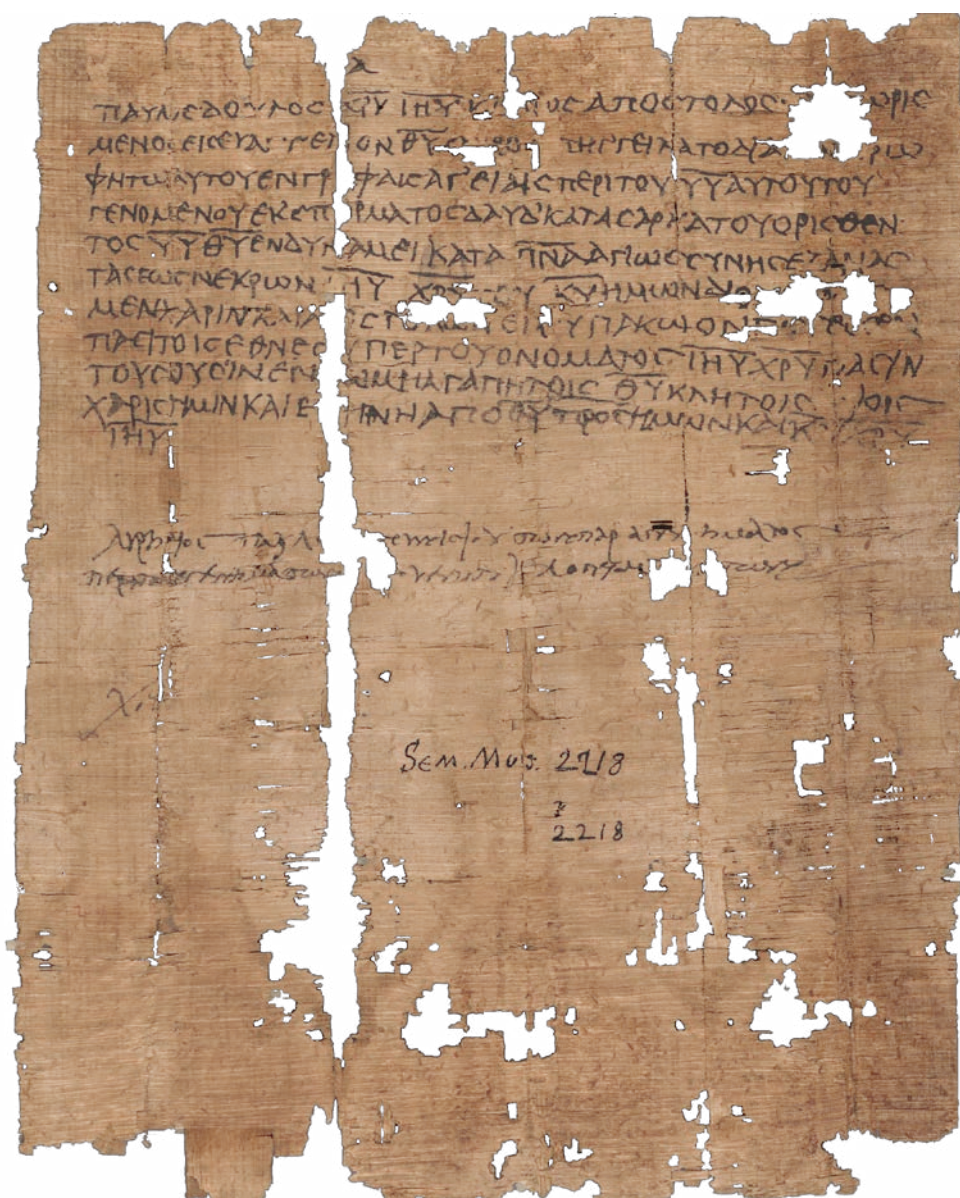


Plate 10a

P.Oxy. 2.209 (recto)

Courtesy of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.



Plate 10b

P.Oxy. 2.209 (verso)

Courtesy of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

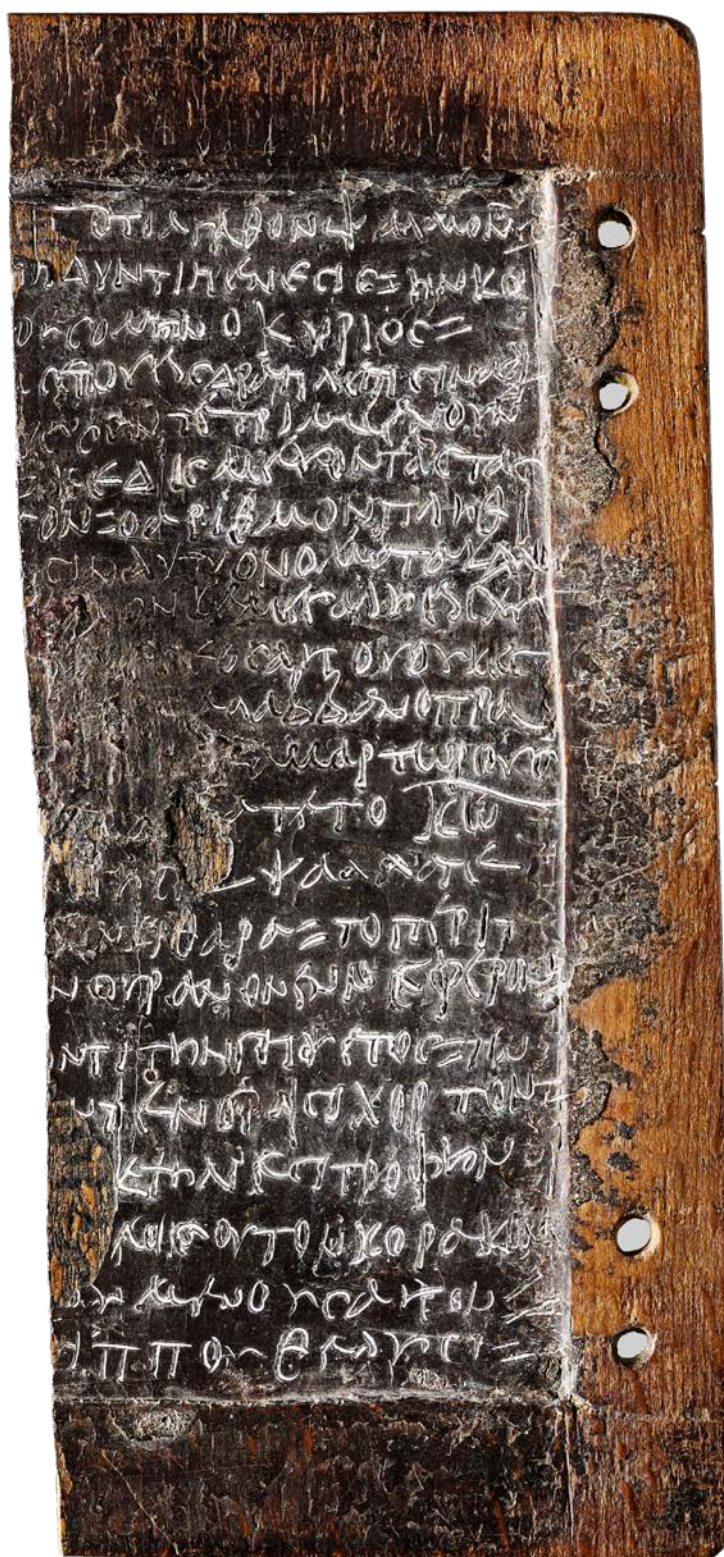


Plate na

T.Louvre MND 552 I face 2

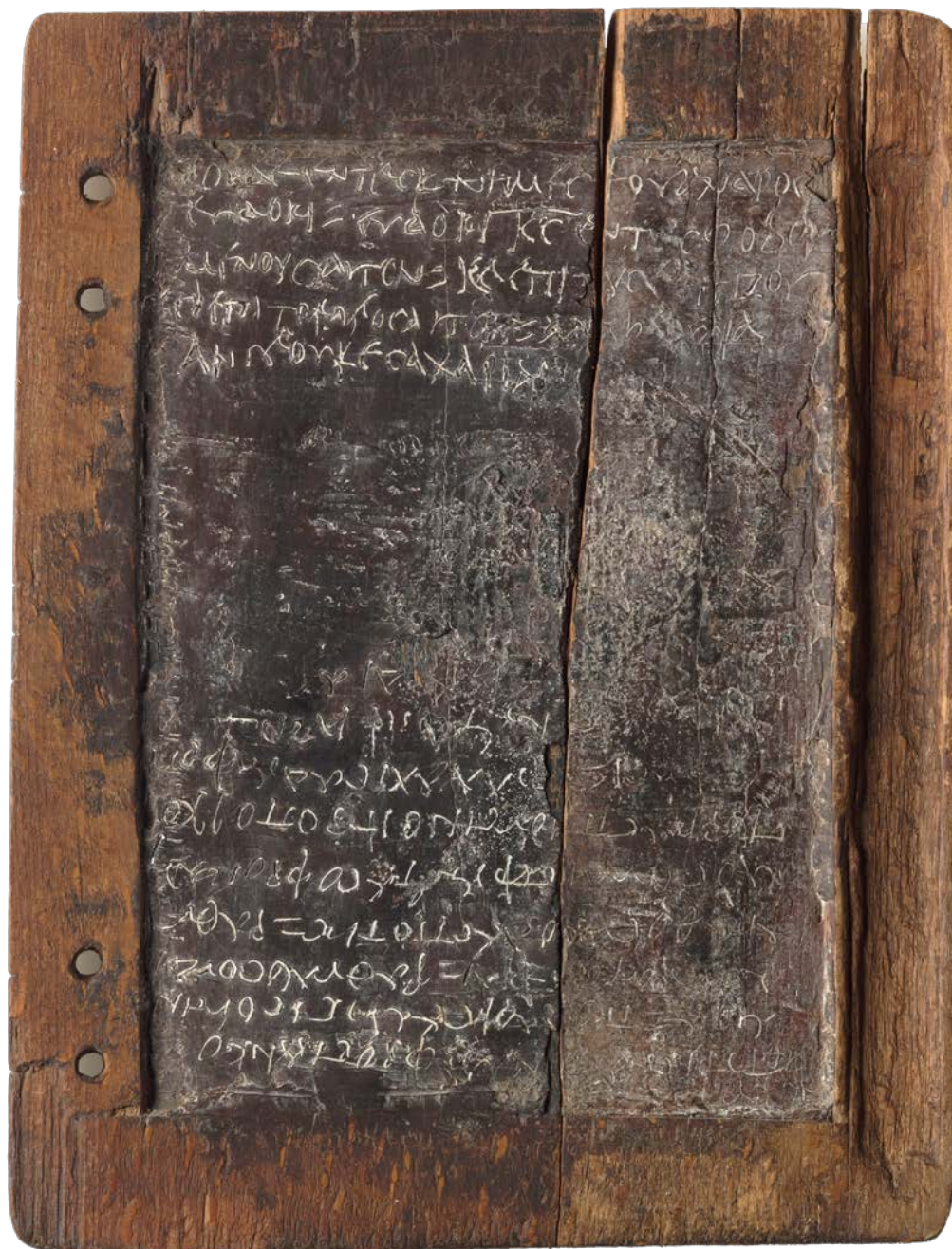


Plate nb

T.Louvre MND 552 H

© RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Art Resource, NY. Reproduced with permission.



Plate 12

P.Lond.Lit. 207

Reproduced by permission of the British Library (BL Pap. 230). © The British Library Board.

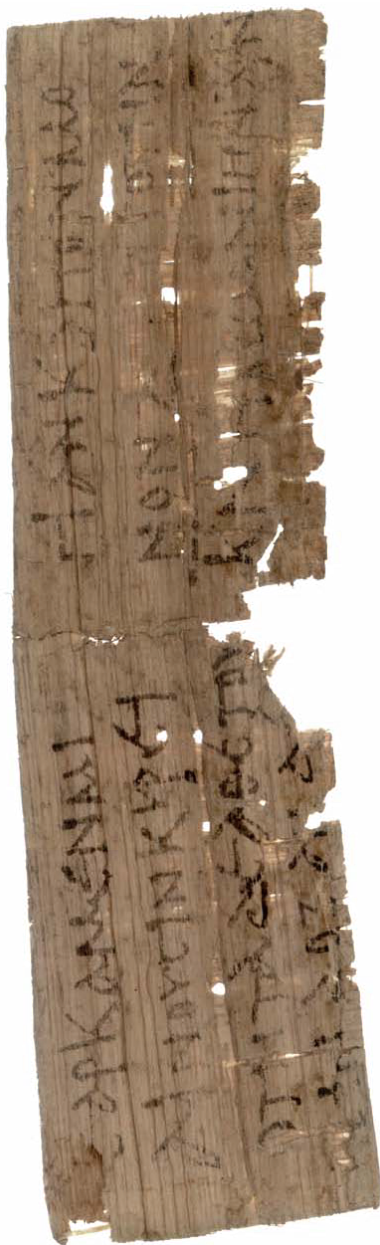


Plate 13a

P.Oxy. 34.2684 (recto = fol. 1a and 2b)

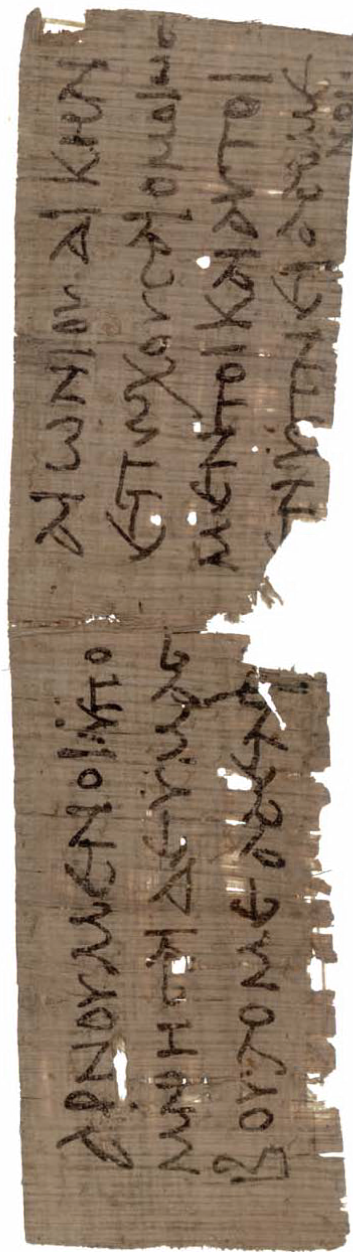


Plate 13b

P.Oxy. 34.2684 (verso = fol. 2a and 1b)

Courtesy of The Egypt Exploration Society and the University of Oxford Imaging Papyri Project.

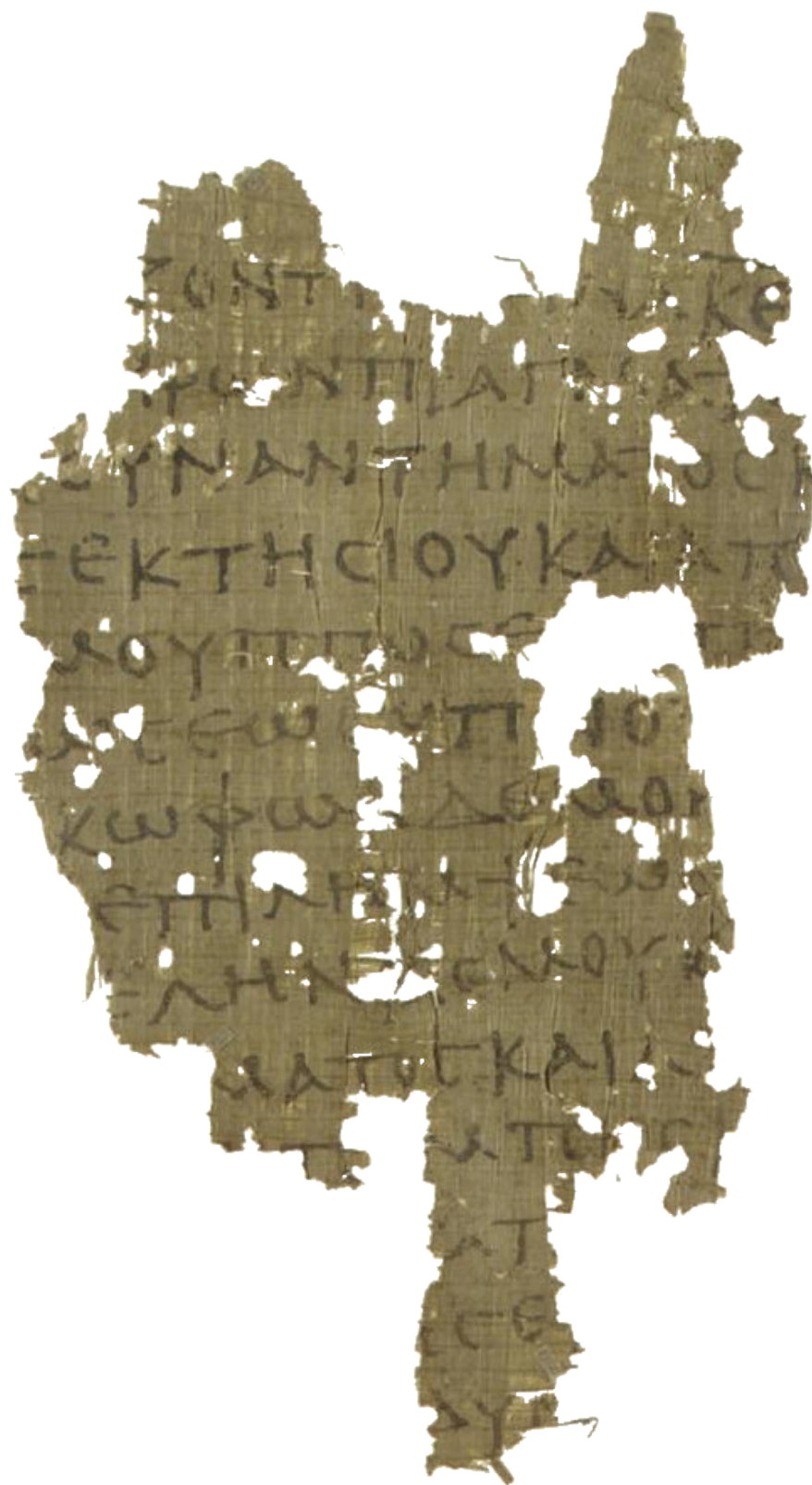


Plate 14

P.Yale 2.130

Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

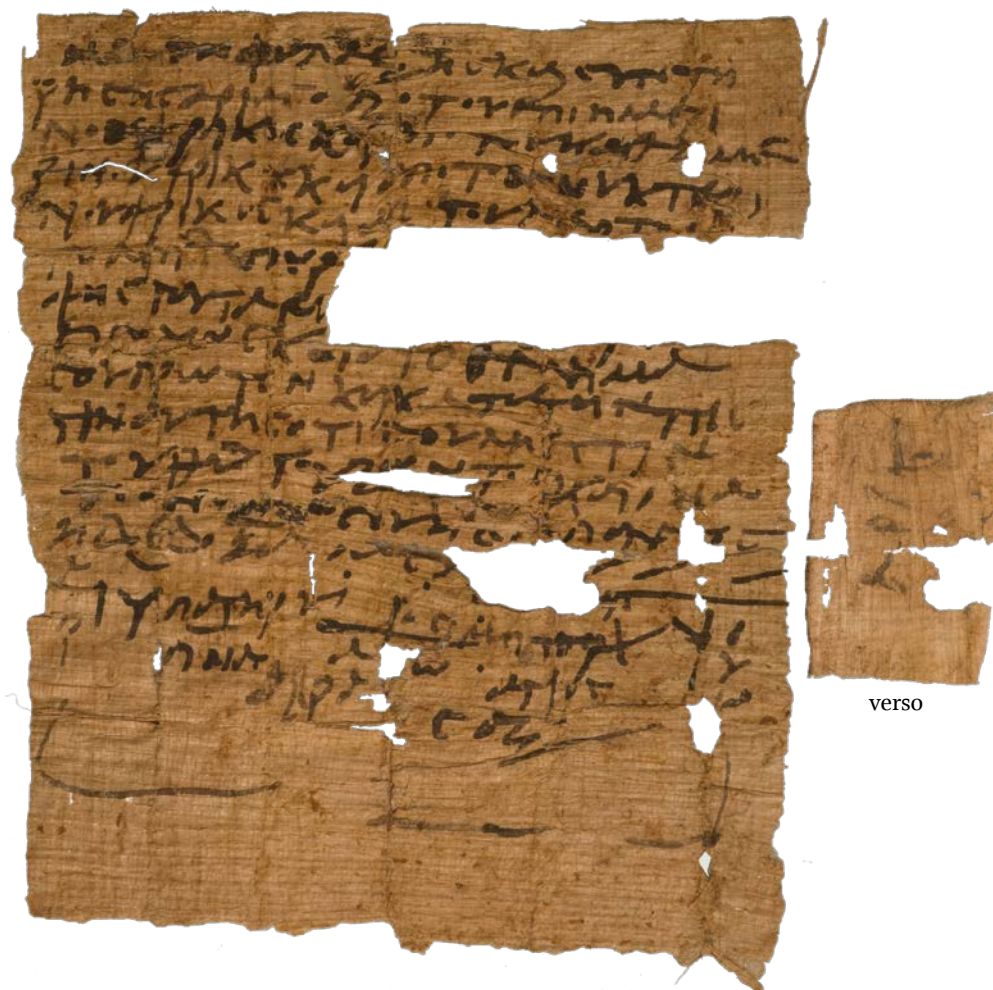


Plate 15

P.Oxy. 6.924 (recto and verso)

Courtesy of the Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Aland, Barbara, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, eds. *Novum Testamentum Graece*. 28th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012.

Alexandre, Charles. *Oracula Sibyllina*. 2 vols. Paris: Didot, 1841-1856.

The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 1885-1887. 10 vols. Repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.

The Apostolic Fathers, Volume II: Epistle of Barnabas, Papias and Quadratus, Epistle to Diognetus, the Shepherd of Hermas. Edited and translated by Bart D. Ehrman. Loeb Classical Library 25. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Cicero. *Letters to Atticus*. Translated by D.R. Shackleton Bailey. 4 vols. LCL. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Döhler, Marietheres, ed. *Acta Petri: Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den Actus Vercellenses*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018.

Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage. Translated by George E. Gringas. Ancient Christian Writers 38. New York: Paulist Press, 1970.

Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History, Books 6-10*. Translated by J.E.L. Oulton. Loeb Classical Library 265. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932.

———. *Eusebius: Life of Constantine*. Edited and translated by Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

- Faustinus and Marcellinus. *Supplique aux empererus: Libellus Precum et Lex Augusta*. Edited by Aline Canellis. Sources chrétiennes 504. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2006.
- Freedman, Harry, and Isidore Epstein, eds. *The Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud*. 36 vols. London: Soncino, 1960-1990.
- Freedman, Harry, and Maurice Simon, eds. *Midrash Rabbah Genesis*. 3rd ed. 2 vols. London: Soncino, 1983.
- "The Gospel of Truth." Edited and translated by Harold W. Attridge and George W. MacRae. Pages 55-122 in vol. 1 of *The Coptic Gnostic Library*. Edited by James M. Robinson. Leiden: Brill, 1985.
- Jerome. *The Letters of St. Jerome: Volume 1, Letters 1-22*. Translated by Charles Christopher Mierow. New York: Newman Press, 1963.
- Lactantius. *De mortibus persecutorum*. Edited and translated by J.L. Creed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Lipsius, Richard Albert, and Maximilian Bonnet, eds. *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*. 2 vols. Leipzig: Hermann Mendelssohn, 1891-1903.
- Menander. *Menandri sententiae: comparatio Menandri et Philistionis*. Edited by Siegfried Jaekel. Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Leipzig: Teubner, 1964.
- Origen. *Origen: Contra Celsum*. Edited and translated by Henry Chadwick. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.
- . *Origenes: Contra Celsum, Libri VIII*. Edited by M. Marcovich. Vigiliae Christianae Supplements 54. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Patrologia Graeca. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857-1886.
- Patrologia Latina. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 217 vols. Paris, 1844-1864.
- Paulus Silentarius. *Descriptio Sanctae Sophiae, Descriptio Ambonis*. Edited by Claudio de Stefani. Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011.
- Roberts, Alexander, and James Donaldson, eds. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*. Volume 7: *Lactantius, Vanantius, Asterius, Victorinus, Dionysius, Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions, Homily, and Liturgies*. Buffalo: The Christian Literature Company, 1886.

Russell, Norman, ed. *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: The Historia Monachorum in Aegypto*. Oxford: Mowbray, 1981.

Schmidt, Carl, ed. *Pistis Sophia*. Translated by Violet Macdermot. Nag Hammadi Studies 9. Leiden: Brill, 1978.

Silviae vel potius Aetheriae peregrination ad loca sancta. Edited by Wilhelm Heraeus. Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1908.

Theodore, Julius, and Chanoch Albeck, eds. *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah*. 3 vols. Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1965.

Secondary Sources

Aasgaard, Reidar. "Brothers and Sisters in the Faith: Christian Siblingship as Ecclesiological Mirror in the First Two Centuries." Pages 185-216 in *The Formation of the Early Church*, ed. Jostein Ådna. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 183. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.

Adams, Edward. "The Ancient Church at Megiddo: The Discovery and an Assessment of its Significance." *Expository Times* 120 (2008): 62-69.

Aland, Kurt. "Bemerkungen zum Alter und zur Entstehung des Christogrammes anhand von Beobachtungen bei P⁶⁶ und P⁷⁵." Pages 173-79 in *Studien zur Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments und seines Texts*. Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung 2. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967.

———. "Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus." Pages 90-136 in *Studien zur Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments und seines Textes*. Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung 2. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967.

———, ed. *Repertorium der griechischen christlichen Papyri, I: Biblische Papyri, Altes Testament, Neues Testament, Varia, Apokryphen*. Patristische Texte und Studien 18. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976.

Aland, Kurt, and Barbara Aland. *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*. 2nd ed. Translated by Erroll F. Rhodes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

Albarrán Martínez, María Jesús. "Women Reading Books in Egyptian Monastic Circles." Pages 199-212 in *Eastern Christians and their Written Heritage: Manuscripts, Scribes and Context*. Edited by Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala,

- German Teule, and Sofia Torallas Tovar. *Eastern Christian Studies* 14. Leuven: Peeters, 2012.
- Arnheim, Rudolf. *The Power of the Center: A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts*. Rev. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
- Arzt-Grabner, Peter. "‘Brothers’ and ‘Sisters’ in Documentary Papyri and Early Christianity." *Rivista Biblica* 50 (2002): 185-204.
- Ast, Rodney, and Julia Lougovaya. "The Art of Isopsephism in the Greco-Roman World." Pages 82-98 in *Ägyptische Magie und ihre Umwelt*. Edited by Andrea Jördens. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015.
- The Athenaeum*. "An Early Papyrus Fragment of the Greek Psalter." September 8, 1894: 319-21.
- Bagnall, Roger S. *Early Christian Books in Egypt*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- . *Egypt in Late Antiquity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- . *Everyday Writing in the Graeco-Roman East*. Sather Classical Lectures 69. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.
- . "Religious Conversion and Onomastic Change in Early Byzantine Egypt." *BASP* 19 (1982): 105-24.
- Bagnall, Roger S., and Raffaella Cribiore. *Women’s Letters from Ancient Egypt, 300 BC – AD 800*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006.
- . *Women’s Letters from Ancient Egypt, 300 BC – AD 800*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008. ACLS Humanities E-Book edition.
- Barker, Don. "The Dating of New Testament Papyri." *New Testament Studies* 57 (2011): 571-82.
- . "P.Lond.Lit. 207 and the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*: A Tentative Proposal." *Studia Humaniora Tartuensia* 8.A.2 (2007): 1-14.
- Barker, Margaret. *The Great High Priest: Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy*. London: T&T Clark, 2003.
- Barns, J.W.B, P. Parsons, J. Rea, and E.G. Turner, eds. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XXXI*. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1966.
- Barrett-Lennard, R.J.S. "Request for Prayer for Healing." *NewDocs* 4:245-50.

- Bassiouny, Reem. *Arabic Sociolinguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009.
- Bauckham, Richard J. "The Continuing Quest for the Provenance of Old Testament Pseudepigrapha." Pages 9-29 in *The Pseudepigrapha and Christian Origins: Essays for the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas*. Edited by Gerbern S. Oegema and James H. Charlesworth. New York: T&T Clark, 2008.
- . *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church*. London: T&T Clark, 1990.
- Bausi, Alessandro, and Alberto Camplani. "New Ethiopic Documents for the History of Christian Egypt." *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 17 (2013): 215-47.
- Bell, H. Idris. "Fragments of an Unknown Gospel." *British Museum Quarterly* 9 (1935): 71-73.
- . "A New Gospel: British Museum Discovery, Fragments in Papyri from Egypt." *The Times*. January 23, 1935: 13.
- Bell, H. Idris, and T.C. Skeat. *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri*. London: Oxford University Press, 1935.
- Bernand, Etienne. "Τόπος dans les inscriptions grecques d'Egypte." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 98 (1993): 103-110.
- Berger, Peter L., and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966.
- Bezemer, Jeff, and Gunther Kress. *Multimodality, Learning and Communication: A Social Semiotic Frame*. London: Routledge, 2016.
- Black, Matthew. "The Chi-Rho Sign—Christogram and/or Staurogram?" Pages 319-27 in *Apostolic History and the Gospels: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F.F. Bruce on His 60th Birthday*. Edited by W.W. Gasque and R.P. Martin. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.
- Blumell, Lincoln H. "Christians on the Move in Late Antique Oxyrhynchus." Pages 235-54 in *Travel and Religion in Antiquity*. Edited by Philip A. Harland. Studies in Christianity and Judaism 21. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011.
- . *Lettered Christians: Christians, Letters, and Late Antique Oxyrhynchus*. New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 39. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

- Blumell, Lincoln H., and Thomas A. Wayment, eds. *Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, Documents, and Sources*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2015.
- Bohak, Gideon. *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Bokedal, Tomas. "Notes on the *Nomina Sacra* and Biblical Interpretation." Pages 264-95 in *Beyond Biblical Theologies*. Edited by Heinrich Assel, Stefan Beyerle, and Christfried Bötterich. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 295. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012.
- . *The Scriptures and the Lord: Formation and Significance of the Christian Biblical Canon*. Lund: Lund University Press, 2005.
- Botha, Pieter J. J. *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012.
- Bovon, François. "Names and Numbers in Early Christianity." *New Testament Studies* 47 (2001): 267-88.
- Bowman, Alan K. "Literacy in the Roman Empire: Mass and Mode." Pages 119-31 in *Literacy in the Roman World*. Edited by J.H. Humphrey. Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement Series 3. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991.
- Boyaval, B. "La tablette scolaire Pack² 1619." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 14 (1974): 241-47.
- . "Le cahier de Papnouthion et les autres cahiers scolaires grecs." *Revue Archéologique* 2 (1977): 215-30.
- . "Le cahier scolaire d'Aurélios Papnouthion." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 17 (1975): 225-35.
- . "Tablettes mathématiques du Musée du Louvre." *Revue Archéologique* 2 (1973): 243-60.
- Bradshaw, Paul F. "The Gospel and the Catechumenate in the Third Century." *Journal of Theological Studies* 50 (1999): 143-52.
- . *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010.
- Bradshaw, Paul, Maxwell E. Johnson, and L. Edward Phillips. *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.

- Brakke, David. *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Brashear, William M. "The Greek Magical Papyri: An Introduction and Survey, Annotated Bibliography (1928-1994)." *ANRW* 18.5:3380-3684. Part 2, *Principat*, 18.5. Edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995.
- Brown, Penelope, and Stephen C. Levinson. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use*. Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics 4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Brown, Roger, and Albert Gilman. "Pronouns of Power and Solidarity." Pages 253-76 in *Style in Language*, ed. T.A. Sebeok. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960.
- Brown, Schuyler. "Concerning the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*." *Studia Papyrologica* 9 (1970): 7-19.
- Bruyn, Theodore de. "Appeals to Jesus as the One 'Who Heals Every Illness and Every Infirmary' (Matt 4:23, 9:35) in Amulets in Late Antiquity." Pages 65-81 in *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity: Proceedings of the Montréal Colloquium in Honour of Charles Kannengiesser, 11-13 October 2006*. Edited by Lorenzo DiTomasso and Lucian Turcescu. Bible in Ancient Christianity 6. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- . "Historians, Bishops, Amulets, Scribes, and Rites: Interpreting a Christian Practice." Pages 317-38 in *Papers Presented at the Seventeenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2015*. Edited by Markus Vinzent. *Studia Patristica* 75. Leuven: Peeters, 2017.
- . *Making Amulets Christian: Artefacts, Scribes, and Contexts*. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- . "Papyri, Parchments, Ostraca, and Tablets Written with Biblical Texts in Greek and Used as Amulets: A Preliminary List." Pages 145-89 in *Early Christian Manuscripts: Examples of Applied Method and Approach*. Edited by Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas. Texts and Editions for New Testament Study 5. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- . "What did Ancient Christians Say when they Cast out Demons? Inferences from Spells and Amulets." Pages 64-82 in *Christians Shaping Identity from the Roman Empire to Byzantium: Studies Inspired by Pauline Allen*. Edited by Geoffrey D. Dunn and Wendy Mayer. Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 132. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

- Bruyn, Theodore de, and Jitse Dijkstra. "Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements: A Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets." *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 48 (2011): 163-216.
- Carlig, Nathan, and Magali de Haro Sanchez. "Amulettes ou exercices scolaires: sur les difficultés de la catégorisation des papyrus chrétiens." Pages 69-84 in *Écrire la magie dans l'antiquité: Actes du colloque international (Liège, 13-15 octobre 2011)*. Edited by Magali de Haro Sanchez. Papyrologica Leodiensia 5. Liège: University of Liège Press, 2015.
- Caulley, Timothy Scott. "A Fragment of an Early Christian Hymn (Papyrus Bodmer 12): Some Observations." *Zeitschrift für Antikes und Christentum* 13 (2009): 403-14.
- Cavallo, Guglielmo, and Herwig Maehler. *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period. A.D. 300-800*. Bulletin Supplement 47. London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1987.
- . *Hellenistic Bookhands*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008.
- Charlesworth, Scott D. "Consensus Standardization in the Systematic Approach to *Nomina Sacra* in Second- and Third-Century Gospel Manuscripts." *Aegyptus* 86 (2006): 37-68.
- Choat, Malcolm. *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri*. Studia Antiqua Australiensia 1. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006.
- . "Echo and Quotation of the New Testament in Papyrus Letters to the End of the Fourth Century." Pages 267-92 in *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World*. Edited by Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas. Text and Editions for New Testament Study 2. Leiden: Brill, 2006.
- . "Monastic Letters on Papyrus from Late Antique Egypt." Pages 17-72 in *Writing and Communication in Early Christian Monasticism*. Edited by Malcolm Choat and Maria Chiara Giorda. Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity 9. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
- Choat, Malcolm, and Rachel Yuen-Collingridge. "A Church with No Books and a Reader Who Cannot Write: The Strange Case of *P.Oxy.* 33.2673." *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 46 (2009): 109-38.
- . "The Egyptian Hermes: The Shepherd in Egypt Before Constantine." Pages 191-212 in *Early Christian Manuscripts: Examples of Applied Method and Approach*. Edited by T.J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas. Texts and Editions for New Testament Study 5. Leiden: Brill, 2010, 191-212.

- Clarysse, Willy. "Literary Papyri in Documentary 'Archives'." Pages 43-61 in *Egypt and the Hellenistic World: Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Leuven – 24-26 May 1982*. Edited by E. Van't Dack, P. Van Dessel, and W. Van Gucht. *Studia Hellenica* 27. Leuven: Orientaliste, 1983.
- Clarysse, Willy, and Pasquale Orsini. "Christian Manuscripts from Egypt to the Times of Constantine." Pages 107-14 in *Das Neue Testament und sein Text im 2. Jahrhundert*. Edited by J. Heilmann and M. Klinghardt. *Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* 61. Tübingen: Francke, 2018.
- Cole, Zachary J. *Numerals in Early Greek New Testament Manuscripts: Text-Critical, Scribal, and Theological Studies*. New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 53. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
- Collins, Adela Yarbro. "Numerical Symbolism in Jewish and Early Christian Apocalyptic Literature." *ANRW* 21.2:1221-87. Part 2, *Principat*, 21.2. Edited by Wolfgang Haase. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984.
- Comfort, Philip W., and David P. Barrett, eds. *The Text of the New Testament Greek Manuscripts*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001. Accordance electronic edition.
- Cook, John Granger. "P⁵⁰ (*P.Yale* I 3) and the Question of Its Function." Pages 115-28 in *Early Christian Manuscripts: Examples of Applied Method and Approach*. Edited by Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas. *Texts and Editions for New Testament Study* 5. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Cook, Terry. "'We Are What We Keep; We Keep What We Are': Archival Appraisal Past, Present, and Future." *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 32 (2011): 173-89.
- Cribiore, Raffaella. "Education in the Papyri." Pages 320-37 in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*. Edited by Roger S. Bagnall. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- . *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- . "A Schooltablet from the Hearst Museum." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 107 (1995): 263-70.
- . *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt*. American Studies in Papyrology 36. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996.
- Croix, G.E.M. de Ste. "Aspects of the 'Great' Persecution." *Harvard Theological Review* 47 (1954): 75-113.

- Daniel, Robert W. "Some Φυλακτήρια." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 25 (1977): 145-54.
- Daniel, Robert W., and Franco Maltomini, eds. *Supplementum Magicum*. 2 vols. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1991-1992.
- Deissmann, Adolf. *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*. Translated by Lionel R. M. Strachan. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910.
- Depauw, Mark, and Willy Clarysse. "How Christian was Fourth Century Egypt? Onomastic Perspectives on Conversion." *Vigiliae Christianae* 67 (2013): 407-35.
- Derda, Tomasz. "Some Remarks on the Christian Symbol ΧΜΓ." *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 22 (1992): 21-27.
- Derda, Tomasz, and Ewa Wipszycka. "L'emploi des titres *Abba*, *Apa* et *Papas* dans l'Égypte Byzantine." *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 24 (1994): 23-56.
- Dickey, Eleanor. *Greek Forms of Address from Herodotus to Lucian*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- . "ΚΥΠΙΕ, ΔΕΣΠΟΤΑ, DOMINE: Greek Politeness in the Roman Empire." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 121 (2001): 1-11.
- . "Literal and Extended Use of Kinship Terms in Documentary Papyri." *Mnemosyne* 57 (2004): 131-76.
- . "The Ancient Greek Address System and Some Proposed Sociolinguistic Universals." *Language in Society* 26 (1997): 1-13.
- Dinkler, Erich. *Signum Crucis: Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament und zur Christlichen Archäologie*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967.
- Dinneen, Lucilla. *Titles of Address in Christian Greek Epistolography to A.D. 527*. Patristic Studies 18. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1929.
- Dobschütz, Ernst von. "Zur Liste der NTlichen Handschriften." *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der ältern Kirche* 32 (1933): 185-206.
- Dornseiff, Franz. *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie*. 2nd ed. Leipzig: Teubner, 1925.
- Draycott, Jane Louise. "Approaches to Healing in Roman Egypt." Ph.D. diss., University of Nottingham, 2011.

- Duff, Jeremy. "P⁴⁶ and the Pastorals: A Misleading Consensus?" *New Testament Studies* 44 [1998]: 578-90.
- Ebojo, Edgar Battad. "A Scribe and His Manuscript: An Investigation into the Scribal Habits of Papyrus 46 (P. Chester Beatty II – P. Mich. Inv. 6238)." Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 2014.
- . "When Nonsense Makes Sense: Scribal Habits in the Space-intervals, Sense-pauses, and Other Visual Features in P⁴⁶." *The Bible Translator* 64 (2013): 128-50.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Name of the Rose*. Translated by William Weaver. San Diego: Harcourt, 1984.
- Elitzur, Zeev. "Between the Textual and the Visual: Borderlines of Late Antique Book Iconicity." Pages 135-50 in *Iconic Books and Texts*. Edited by James W. Watts. Sheffield: Equinox, 2013.
- Elm, Susanna. "An Alleged Book-Theft in Fourth-Century Egypt: P.Lips. 43." *Studia Patristica* 18 (1983): 209-15.
- . *"Virgins of God": The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Emmett, A.M. "A Fourth-Century Hymn to the Virgin Mary?" *NewDocs* 2:141-46.
- Epp, Eldon. "New Testament Papyri and the Transmission of the New Testament." Pages 315-31 in *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts*. Edited by A.K. Bowman, R.A. Coles, N. Gonis, D. Obbink, and P.J. Parsons. Graeco-Roman Memoirs 93. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2007.
- . "The Oxyrhynchus New Testament Papyri: 'Not Without Honor Except in Their Own Hometown'?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123 (2004): 5-55.
- . "The Papyrus Manuscripts of the New Testament." Pages 1-39 in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*. 2nd ed. Edited by Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes. New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 42. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- Fairclough, Norman. *Language and Power*. Edinburgh: Longman Group, 1989.
- Ferguson, Everett. *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Fernández-Delgado, José-Antonio, and Francisca Pordomingo. "Topics and Models of School Exercises on Papyri and Ostraca from the Hellenistic Period:

- P.Berol. inv. 12318." Pages 227-38 in *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth International Congress of Papyrology: Ann Arbor, July 29-August 4, 2007*. Edited by Traianos Gagos. American Studies in Papyrology. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010.
- Finegan, Jack. *The Archeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church*. Rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Foster, Paul. "Bold Claims, Wishful Thinking, and Lessons about Dating Manuscripts from Papyrus Egerton 2." Pages 193-212 in *The World of Jesus and the Early Church*. Edited by Craig A. Evans. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011.
- Frankfurter, David. *Christianizing Egypt: Syncretism and the Local Worlds of Late Antiquity*. Martin Classical Lectures. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018.
- . "Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of the Magical *Historiola* in Ritual Spells." Pages 457-76 in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*. Edited by Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- . *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.
- . "Ritual Expertise in Roman Egypt and the Problem of the Category of 'Magician.'" Pages 115-35 in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*. Edited by Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg. Studies in the History of Religions 75. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Franklin, Simon. "Note on the Pseudepigraphical Allusion in Oxyrhynchus Papyrus No. 4365." *Vetus Testamentum* 48 (1998): 95-96.
- Gagos, Traianos, Jennifer Gates, and Andrew Wilburn. "Material Culture and Texts of Graeco-Roman Egypt: Creating Context, Debating Meaning." *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 42 (2005): 171-88.
- Gallizia, Ugo. "Il P. Egerton 2." *Aegyptus* 36 (1956): 29-72.
- Gamble, Harry Y. *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- . "Book Trade in the Roman Empire." Pages 23-36 in *The Early Text of the New Testament*. Edited by Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

- . “Codex Sinaiticus in its Fourth Century Setting.” Pages 3-18 in *Codex Sinaiticus: New Perspectives on the Ancient Biblical Manuscript*. Edited by Scot McKendrick, David Parker, Amy Myshrall, and Cillian O’Hogan. London: The British Library; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2015.
- . “Literacy, Liturgy, and the Shaping of the New Testament Canon.” Pages 27-39 in *The Earliest Gospels: The Origins and Transmission of the Earliest Christian Gospels – The Contribution of the Chester Beatty Gospel Codex P⁴⁵*. Edited by Charles Horton. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 258. London: T&T Clark, 2004.
- Ghedini, Giuseppe. *Lettere cristiane: Dai papiri greci del III e IV secolo*. Milan, 1923.
- . “O ΤΟΠΙΟΣ nel POxy. 1492.” *Aegyptus* 2 (1921): 337-38.
- Gieschen, Charles A. “Baptismal Praxis and Mystical Experience in the Book of Revelation.” Pages 341-54 in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism*. Edited by April D. DeConick. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.
- . “The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology.” *Vigiliae Christianae* 57 (2003): 115-58.
- Gignac, Francis Thomas. *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*. Vol. 1, *Phonology*. Milan: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino-La Goliardica, 1976.
- Gonis, Nikolaos. “Notes on Two Epistolary Conventions.” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 119 (1997): 148-52.
- Gonis, N., F. Maltomini, W.B. Henry, and S. Slattery, eds. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri LXXXII*. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2016.
- Grenfell, B.P., and A.S. Hunt, eds. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri II*. London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1899.
- , eds. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri IV*. London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1904.
- , eds. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri VI*. London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1908.
- , eds. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XII*. London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1916.
- Griffin, Bruce W. “The Paleographical Dating of P-46.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. New Orleans, LA, November 2016. <http://www.biblical-data.org/P-46%20Oct%201997.pdf>.

- Gronewald, Michael. "Unbekanntes Evangelium oder Evangelienharmonie (Fragment aus dem 'Evangelium Egerton')." Pages 136-45 in vol. 6 of *Kölner Papyri (P.Köln)*. Edited by Michael Gronewald, Bärbel Kramer, Klaus Maresch, Maryline Parca, and Cornelia Römer. *Papyrologica Coloniensia* 7. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1987.
- Haelst, Joseph van. *Catalogue des Papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens*. Université de Paris IV Paris-Sorbonne, Série "Papyrologie" 1. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976.
- Hagedorn, Deiter. "Die 'Kleine Genesis' in P.Oxy. LXIII 4365." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 116 (1997): 147-48.
- Haines-Eitzen, Kim. "'Girls Trained in Beautiful Writing': Female Scribes in Roman Antiquity and Early Christianity." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6 (1998): 629-46.
- . *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- . *The Gendered Palimpsest: Women, Writing, and Representation in Early Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- . "The Social History of Early Christian Scribes." Pages 479-95 in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*. 2nd ed. Edited by Bart D. Ehrman and Michael Holmes. *New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents* 42. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- Halliday, M.A.K. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. 4th ed. Revised by Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen. London: Routledge, 2014.
- . *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*. London: Edward Arnold, 1978.
- . "Systemic Background." Pages 185-98 in *On Language and Linguistics*. Edited by Jonathan Webster. Vol. 3 of *Collected Works of M.A.K. Halliday*. London: Continuum, 2003.
- Hanna, Patrizia Noel Azia, and Barbara Sonnenhauser. "Vocatives as Functional Performance Structures." Pages 283-303 in *Vocative! Addressing Between System and Performance*. Edited by Barbara Sonnenhauser and Patrizia Noel Azia Hanna. *Trends in Linguistics* 61. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013.
- Harmless, William. *Augustine and the Catechuminate*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995.

Haro Sanchez, Magali de. "Le vocabulaire de la pathologie et de la thérapeutique dans les papyrus iatromagiques grecs Fièvres, traumatismes et «épilepsie»." *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 47 (2010): 131-53.

Harris, William V. *Ancient Literacy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Head, Peter M. "Additional Greek Witnesses to the New Testament (Ostraca, Amulets, Inscriptions, and Other Sources)." Pages 429-60 in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*. 2nd ed. Edited by Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes. New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 42. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Head, Peter M., and M. Warren. "Re-Inking the Pen: Evidence from P.Oxy. 657 (P¹³) Concerning Unintentional Scribal Errors." *New Testament Studies* 43 (1997): 466-73.

Hearon, Holly E. "A Social Semiotic Multi-Modal Approach to Communication Practices in Early Christianity." *Journal of Early Christian History* 4 (2014): 44-67.

Heath, Jane. "Nomina Sacra and Sacra Memoria Before the Monastic Age." *Journal of Theological Studies* 61 (2010): 516-49.

Heid, S. "Kreuz." *RAC* 21:1099-148.

Hilhorst, A. "Erwähnt P.Oxy. LXIII 4365 das Jubiläenbuch?" *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 130 (2000): 192.

Hobson, Deborah. "Towards a Broader Context of the Study of Greco-Roman Egypt." *Echos du Monde Classique/Classical Views* 32 (1988): 353-63.

Hodge, Robert, and Gunther Kress. *Language as Ideology*. London: Routledge, 1979.

———. *Social Semiotics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988.

Hoogendijk, F.A.J., and P. van Minnen, eds. *Papyri, Ostraca, Parchments and Waxed Tablets in the Leiden Papyrological Institute*. Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava 25. Leiden: Brill, 1991.

Horsley, G.H.R. "'The Beginning and the End' (Rev. 22.13)." *NewDocs* 1:66-67.

———. "Beloved Brothers." *NewDocs* 4:250-55.

———. "Nomina Sacra in Synagogue Inscriptions." *NewDocs* 11:107-12.

———. "Reconstructing a Biblical Codex: The Prehistory of M^{PER} n.s. XVII. 10 (P.Vindob. G 29 831)." Pages 473-81 in vol. 1 of *Akten des 21. Internationalen*

- Papyrologenkongresses. Berlin, 1995.* Edited by Bärbel Kramer, Wolfgang Luppe, Herwig Maehler, and Günter Poethke. Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete, Beiheft 3. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1997.
- . "The Syntax Volume of Moulton's *Grammar*." *NewDocs* 5:49-65.
- Houghton, Hugh A.G. *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to its Early History, Texts, and Manuscripts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Howard, George. "The Tetragram and the New Testament." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (1977): 63-83.
- Humfress, Caroline. "Judging by the Book: Christian Codices and Late Antique Legal Culture." Pages 141-58 in *The Early Christian Book*. Edited by William E. Kingshirn and Linda Safran. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007.
- Humphrey, J.H., ed. *Literacy in the Roman World*. Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement Series 3. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991.
- Hurtado, Larry W. *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- . "Earliest Christian Graphic Symbols: Examples and References from the Second/Third Centuries." Pages 25-44 in *Graphic Signs of Identity, Faith, and Power in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. Edited by Ildar Garipzanov, Caroline Goodson, and Henry Maguire. Turnhout: Brepols, 2017.
- . "The Earliest Evidence of an Emerging Christian Material and Visual Culture: The Codex, the Nomina Sacra and the Staurogram." Pages 271-88 in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson*. Edited by Stephen G. Wilson and Michel Desjardins. Studies in Christianity and Judaism 9. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000.
- . "Early Christian Manuscripts as Artifacts." Pages 66-81 in *Jewish and Christian Scripture as Artifact and Canon*. Edited by Craig A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias. Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity 13. London: T&T Clark, 2009.
- . *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

- . "Manuscripts and the Sociology of Early Christian Reading." Pages 49-62 in *The Early Text of the New Testament*. Edited by Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- . "The 'Meta-Data' of Earliest Christian Manuscripts." Pages 149-63 in *Identity and Interaction in the Ancient Mediterranean: Jews, Christians and Others. Essays in Honour of Stephen G. Wilson*. Edited by Zeba A. Crook and Philip A. Harland. New Testament Monographs 18. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007.
- . "The Origin of the Nomina Sacra: A Proposal." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 (1998): 655-73.
- . "P⁵² (P. Rylands Gk. 457) and the Nomina Sacra: Method and Probability." *Tyndale Bulletin* 54 (2003): 1-14.
- . "The Staurogram: Earliest Depiction of Jesus' Crucifixion." *Biblical Archaeology Review* 39.2 (2013): 49-52.
- . "The Staurogram in Early Christian Manuscripts: The Earliest Visual Reference to the Crucified Jesus?" Pages 207-26 in *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World*. Edited by Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas. Texts and Editions for New Testament Study 2. Leiden: Brill, 2006.
- . "What Do the Earliest Christian Manuscripts Tell Us About Their Readers?" Pages 179-92 in *The World of Jesus and the Early Church: Identity and Interpretation in Early Communities of Faith*. Edited by Craig A. Evans. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011.
- Hvalvik, Reidar. *The Struggle for Scripture and Covenant: The Purpose of the Epistle of Barnabas and Jewish-Christian Competition in the Second Century*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 82. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996.
- Ingrams, L., P. Kingston, P. Parsons, and J. Rea, eds. *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XXXIV*. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1968.
- Jaroš, Karl, ed. *Das Neue Testament nach den ältesten griechischen Handschriften*. Rühpolding-Mainz: Rutzen, 2006. CD-ROM.
- Jewett, Robert. *Romans: A Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.
- Jewitt, Carey. "Multimodal Discourses across the Curriculum." Pages 1-11 in *Discourse and Education*. Edited by Marilyn Martin-Jones, Anne-Marie de

- Mejía, and Nancy H. Hornberger. Vol. 3 of *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*. 2nd ed. Edited by Nancy H. Hornberger. Berlin: Springer, 2010.
- . "Multimodality and Literacy in School Classrooms." *Review of Research in Education* 32 (2008): 241-67.
- Johnson, William A. "The Ancient Book." Pages 256-81 in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*. Edited by Roger S. Bagnall. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- . *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
- . *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- . "Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity." *American Journal of Philology* 121 (2000): 593-627.
- Johnson, William A., and Holt N. Parker, eds. *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Jones, Brice C. *New Testament Texts on Greek Amulets from Late Antiquity*. Library of New Testament Studies 554. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016.
- Jourdan-Hemmerdinger, Denise. "Nouveaux fragments musicaux sur papyrus (une notation antique par points)." *Studies in Eastern Chant* 4 (1979): 81-111.
- Judge, E.A. "The Conversion of Rome: Ancient Sources of Modern Social Tensions." Pages 211-31 in *Jerusalem and Athens: Cultural Transformation in Late Antiquity*. Edited by Alanna Nobbs. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 265. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010. Repr. from North Ryde: Macquarie Ancient History Association, 1980.
- . "The Earliest Use of *Monachos* for 'Monk' (P.Coll.Youtie 77) and the Origins of Monasticism." Pages 156-77 in *Jerusalem and Athens: Cultural Transformation in Late Antiquity*. Edited by Alanna Nobbs. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 265. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010. Repr. from *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 20 (1977): 72-89.
- . "The Magical Use of Scripture in the Papyri." Pages 198-208 in *Jerusalem and Athens: Cultural Transformation in Late Antiquity*. Edited by Alanna Nobbs. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 265. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010. Repr. from *Perspectives on Language and*

Text. Edited by E.W. Conrad and E.G. Newing. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987.

Judge, E.A., and S.R. Pickering. "Papyrus Documentation of Church and Community in Egypt to the Mid-Fourth Century." *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 20 (1977): 47-71.

Junack, K., and W. Grunewald, eds. *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus*, 1: *Die Katholischen Briefe*. Arbeiten zur Neutestamentlichen Textforschung 6. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986.

Junack, K., E. Güting, U. Nimtz, and K. Witte, eds. *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus*, 2.1: *Die paulinischen Briefe: Röm., 1. Kor., 2. Kor.* Arbeiten zur Neutestamentlichen Textforschung 12. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989.

Kajanto, Iiro. "On the problem of 'Names of Humility' in Early Christian Epigraphy." *Arctos* 3 (1962): 45-53.

Kehl, Alois. "Hekate." *RAC* 14:315.

Keith, Chris. *The Pericope Adulterae, the Gospel of John, and the Literacy of Jesus*. New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 38. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Kelly, John N.D. *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies*. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.

Kenyon, Frederic G., ed. *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri I: General Introduction*. London: Emery Walker, 1933.

———, ed. *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri III: Pauline Epistles and Revelation, Text*. London: Emery Walker, 1934.

———, ed. *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri V: Numbers and Deuteronomy, Text*. London: Emery Walker, 1935.

———, ed. *Facsimiles of Biblical Manuscripts in the British Museum*. London: Oxford University Press, 1900.

———. "Nomina Sacra in the Chester Beatty Papyri." *Aegyptus* 13 (1933): 5-10.

———. *The Story of the Bible: A Popular Account of How It Came to Us*. London: John Murray, 1936.

———. "The Text of the Bible: A New Discovery, More Papyri from Egypt." *The Times*. November 19, 1931: 13-14.

- Keyes, Clinton W. "The Greek Letter of Introduction," *American Journal of Philology* 56 (1935): 28-44.
- Kim, Chan-Hie. *Form and Structure of the Familiar Greek Letter of Recommendation*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 4. Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature Seminar on Paul, 1972.
- Kim, Young Kyu. "Palaeographical Dating of P⁴⁶ to the Later First Century." *Biblica* 69 (1988): 248-57.
- Kloppenborg, John S. "Literate Media in Early Christ Groups: The Creation of a Christian Book Culture." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22 (2014): 21-59.
- Koskiennemi, Heikki. "Fünf griechische Papyrusbrieife aus Florentiner Sammlungen." *Aegyptus* 33 (1953): 315-30.
- . *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des Griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.* Helsinki: Akateeminen Kirjakauppa, 1956.
- Kotansky, Roy. "Incantations and Prayers for Salvation on Inscribed Greek Amulets." Pages 107-37 in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*. Edited by Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Kotsifou, Chrysi. "Books and Book Production in the Monastic Communities of Byzantine Egypt." Pages 48-66 in *The Early Christian Book*. Edited by William E. Klinghohn and Linda Safran. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007.
- Kraeling, Carl H. "P 50. Two Selections from Acts." Pages 163-72 in *Quantulacumque: Studies Presented to Kirsopp Lake by Pupils, Colleagues and Friends*, ed. Robert P. Casey, Silva Lake, and Agnes K. Lake. London: Christophers, 1937.
- Kraft, Robert A. "The Pseudepigrapha in Christianity." Pages 55-86 in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*. Edited by John C. Reeves. Early Judaism and its Literature 6. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994.
- Kraus, Thomas J. *Ad Fontes: Original Manuscripts and Their Significance for Studying Early Christianity—Selected Essays*. Texts and Editions for New Testament Study 3. Leiden: Brill, 2007.
- Kress, Gunther. "Against Arbitrariness: The Social Production of the Sign as a Foundational Issue in Critical Discourse Analysis." *Discourse & Society* 4 (1993): 169-91.
- . *Before Writing: Rethinking the Paths to Literacy*. London: Routledge, 1997.

- . *Learning to Write*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2005.
- . *Literacy in the New Media Age*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- . *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. London: Routledge, 2010.
- . "Sociolinguistics and Social Semiotics." Pages 66-82 in *The Routledge Companion to Semiotics and Linguistics*. Edited by Paul Cobley. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Kress, Gunther, and Carey Jewitt. "Introduction." Pages 1-18 in *Multimodal Literacy*. Edited by Carey Jewitt and Gunther Kress. New York: Peter Lang, 2003.
- Kress, Gunther, and Theo van Leeuwen. *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. London: Arnold, 2001.
- . *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Lampe, G.W.H., ed. *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- . *The Seal of the Spirit: A Study in the Doctrine of Baptism and Confirmation in the New Testament and the Fathers*. London: SPCK, 1967.
- Larson, Erik W. "On the Identification of Two Greek Texts of *1 Enoch*." Pages 157-78 in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at 60: Scholarly Contributions of New York University Faculty and Alumni*. Edited by Lawrence H. Schiffman and Shani Tzoref. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 89. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Lattke, Michael. *Odes of Solomon: A Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.
- Leadbetter, Bill. *Galerius and the Will of Diocletian*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Leclercq, Henri. "Abraxas." *DACL* 1.1:133-34.
- . "Alphabet vocalique des Gnostiques." *DACL* 1.1:268-88.
- . "Isopsépie." *DACL* 7.2:1603-6.
- Leeuwen, Theo van. *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*. Oxford Studies in Sociolinguistics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- . *Introducing Social Semiotics*. London: Routledge, 2005.

- Lefebvre, M. Gustave. "Fragments grecs des Évangiles sur Ostraca." *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 4 (1904): 1-15.
- Lesky, E., and J.H. Waszink. "Epilepsie." *RAC* 4:819-31.
- Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Limberis, Vasiliki. *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Llewelyn, S.R. "Christian Letters of Recommendation." *NewDocs* 8:169-72.
- . "ΣΔ, A Christian Isopsephism?" *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 109 (1995): 125-27.
- . "The Christian Symbol ΧΜΓ." *NewDocs* 8:156-68.
- Longenecker, Bruce W. *The Cross Before Constantine: The Early Life of a Christian Symbol*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015.
- Lowden, John. "The Word Made Visible: The Exterior of the Early Christian Book as Visual Argument." Pages 13-47 in *The Early Christian Book*. Edited by William E. Kingshirn and Linda Safran. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007.
- Luijendijk, AnneMarie. "A Gospel Amulet for Joannia (P.Oxy. VIII 1151)." Pages 418-43 in *Daughters of Hecate: Women and Magic in the Ancient World*. Edited by Kimberly B. Stratton and Dayna S. Kalleres. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- . *Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. Harvard Theological Studies 60. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- . "Jesus says: 'There Is Nothing Buried That Will Not Be Raised.' A Late-Antique Shroud with Gospel of Thomas Logion 5 in Context." *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 15 (2011): 389-410.
- . "A New Testament Papyrus and Its Documentary Context: An Early Christian Writing Exercise from the Archive of Leonides (P.Oxy. II 209/Ṗ¹⁰)." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129 (2010): 575-96.
- . "Sacred Scriptures as Trash: Biblical Papyri from Oxyrhynchus." *Vigiliae Christianae* 64 (2010): 217-54.

- . “‘Twenty Thousand Nuns’: The Domestic Virgins of Oxyrhynchus.” Pages 57-67 in *Christianity and Monasticism in Middle Egypt: Al-Minya and Asyut*. Edited by Gawdat Gabra and Hany N. Takla. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2015.
- Malik, Peter. *P.Beatty III (P⁴⁷): The Codex, Its Scribe, and Its Text*. New Testament Tool, Studies and Documents 52. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
- Maltomini, Franco. “PGM P 5a revisitato.” *Galenos* 9 (2015): 229-34.
- Martin, Annick. “Aux origines de l’église copte: l’implantation et le développement du christianisme en Égypte (I^{er}-IV^e siècles).” *Revue des Études Anciennes* 83 (1981): 35-56.
- Martinez, David G., ed. *P. Michigan XIX. Baptized for Our Sakes: A Leather Trisagion from Egypt (P. Mich. 799)*. Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 120. Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1999.
- Massa, Emma Rabino, Nicoletta Cerutti, and A. Marin D. Savoia. “Malaria in Ancient Egypt: Paleoimmunological Investigation on Predynastic Mummified Remains.” *Revista de antropologia chilena* 32 (2000): 7-9.
- Mathieson, Erica A. *Christian Women in the Greek Papyri of Egypt to 400 CE*. Studia Antiqua Australiensia 6. Turnhout: Brepols, 2014.
- Matthiessen, Christian M. I. M. “The Multimodal Page: A Systemic Functional Exploration.” Pages 1-62 in *New Directions in the Analysis of Multimodal Discourse*. Edited by Terry D. Royce and Wendy L. Bowcher. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2007.
- Mavers, Diane. *Children's Drawing and Writing: The Remarkable in the Unremarkable*. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Mayeda, Goro. *Das Leben-Jesu-Fragment Papyrus Egerton 2 und seine Stellung in der urchristlichen Literaturgeschichte*. Berne: Paul Haupt, 1946.
- Mayerson, Philip. “The Role of Flax in Roman and Fatimid Egypt.” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 56 (1997): 201-7.
- Mazza, Roberta. “P.Oxy. XI, 1384: Medicina, rituali di guarigione e cristianesimi nell’Egitto tardoantico.” *Annali di Storia dell’Esegesi* 24 (2007): 437-62.
- McGowan, Andrew B. *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014.

- McNamee, Kathleen. *Sigla and Select Marginalia in Greek Literary Papyri*. Papyrologica Bruxellensia 26. Brussels: Fondation égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1992.
- Mees, M. "P⁷⁸: Ein neuer Textzeuge für den Judasbrief." *Orient-Press* 1 (1970): 5-10.
- Meyer, Marvin, and Richard Smith, eds. *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994.
- Milik, J.T. "Fragments grecs du livre d'Hénoch (P. Oxy. XVII 2069)." *Chronique d'Égypte* 92 (1971): 321-43.
- Millard, Alan. "Ancient Abbreviations and the *Nomina Sacra*." Pages 221-26 in *The Unbroken Reed: Studies in the Culture and Heritage of Ancient Egypt*. Edited by Christopher Eyre, Anthony Leahy, and Lisa Montagno Leahy. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1994.
- . *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000.
- Miller, Patricia Cox. *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.
- Miller, R.L., S. Ikram, G.J. Armelagos, R. Walker, W.B. Harer, C.J. Shiff, D. Baggett, M. Carrigan, and S.M. Maret. "Diagnosis of *Plasmodium falciparum* infections in mummies using the rapid manual ParaSight™-F test." *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 88 (1994): 31-32.
- Milne, H.J.M., ed. *Catalogue of the Literary Papyri in the British Museum*. London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1927.
- Minnen, Peter van. "Boorish or Bookish? Literature in Egyptian Villages in the Fayum in the Graeco-Roman Period." *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 28 (1998): 99-184.
- Mugridge, Alan. *Copying Early Christian Texts: A Study of Scribal Practice*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 362. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016.
- . "Learning and Faith: On calling papyri 'school texts' and 'Christian.'" *Buried History* 48 (2012): 11-26.
- Naldini, Mario. "Dai papiri della raccolta fiorentina: Lettera di Tatianos al padre Chairemon." *Atena e Roma* n.s. 12 (1967): 167-68.

———. *Il Cristianesimo in Egitto: Lettere private nei papiri dei secoli II-IV*. Studi e testi di papirologia 3. Florence: Le Monnier, 1968.

Nässelqvist, Dan. *Public Reading in Early Christianity: Lectors, Manuscripts, and Sound in the Oral Delivery of John 1-4*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 163. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Nerlich, Andreas G., Bettina Schraut, Sabine Dittrich, Thomas Jelinek, and Albert R. Zink. "Plasmodium falciparum in Ancient Egypt." *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 14 (2008): 1317-19.

The New London Group. "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures." *Harvard Educational Review* 66 (1996): 60-92.

Nicklas, Tobias. "Papyrus Egerton 2." Pages 139-49 in *The Non-Canonical Gospels*. Edited by Paul Foster. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2008.

———. "The 'Unknown Gospel' on Papyrus Egerton 2 (+ Papyrus Cologne 225)." Pages 9-120 in *Gospel Fragments*. Edited by Thomas J. Kraus, Michael Kruger, and Tobias Nicklas. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Nobbs, Alanna. "Beloved Brothers' in the New Testament and Early Christianity." Pages 143-50 in *The New Testament in its First Century Setting: Essays on Context and Background in Honour of B.W. Winter on His 65th Birthday*. Edited by P.J. Williams, Andrew D. Clarke, Peter M. Head, and David Instone-Brewer. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

———. "Some Duties and Responsibilities of a Bishop(?) in Late Antique Egypt." Pages 159-65 in *Religion and Retributive Logic: Essays in Honour of Professor Gary W. Trompf*. Edited by Carole Cusack and Christopher Hartney. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Nodar, Alberto. "Christianity at School: Early Christian Schooltexts on Papyri." Pages 183-98 in *Eastern Christians and their Written Heritage: Manuscripts, Scribes and Context*. Edited by J.P. Monferrer-Sala, H. Teule, and S. Torallas. Leuven: Peeters, 2012.

Nodar Domínguez, Alberto. "Pagan Literature in Christian School Texts." Pages 41-49 in *Cultures in Contact: Transfer of Knowledge in the Mediterranean Context. Selected Papers*. Edited by Sofía Torallas Tovar and Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala. Series Syro-Arabica 1. Cordoba and Beirut: Oriens Academic, 2015.

Nongbri, Brent. "The Acquisition of the University of Michigan's Portion of the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri and a New Suggested Provenance." *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 60 (2014): 93-116.

- . "The Limits of Palaeographic Dating of Literary Papyri: Some Observations on the Date and Provenance of P.Bodmer II (P66)." *Museum Helvetica* 71 (2014): 1-35.
- . "The Lord's Prayer and XMF: Two Christian Papyrus Amulets." *Harvard Theological Review* 104 (2010): 59-68.
- . "Reconsidering the Place of Papyrus Bodmer XIV-XV (P⁷⁵) in the Textual Criticism of the New Testament." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 135 (2016): 405-37.
- . "The Use and Abuse of P⁵²: Papyrological Pitfalls in the Dating of the Fourth Gospel." *Harvard Theological Review* 98 (2005): 23-48.
- Norgaard, Stefan. "Body, Sin, and Society in Origen of Alexandria." *Studia Theologica* 66 (2012): 20-40.
- Nöth, Winfried. *Handbook of Semiotics*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1995.
- O'Callaghan, José. «*Nomina Sacra*» in *Papyrus Graecis Saeculi III Neotestamentariis*. *Analecta Biblica* 46. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970.
- Ogden, Linda K. "The Binding of Codex II." Pages 19-25 in *Nag Hammadi Codex II*, 2-7. Edited by Bentley Layton. Leiden: Brill, 1989.
- Oranto, Rosa. "Alia tempora, alii libri: Notizie ed elenchi di libri cristiani su papiro." *Aegyptus* 77 (1997): 101-24.
- Orsini, Pasquale, and Willy Clarysse. "Early New Testament Manuscripts and Their Dates." *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 88 (2012): 443-74.
- Osiek, Carolyn. *Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999.
- Overcash, Benjamin R. "Revisiting the Unknown Female Sender of P.Oxy. XII 1592: An Early Example of Female Asceticism?" *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 207 (2018): 199-205.
- Paap, A.H.R.E. *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries A.D.: The Sources and Some Deductions*. *Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava* 8. Leiden: Brill, 1959.
- Pagels, Elaine H. "The Demiurge and His Archons': A Gnostic View of the Bishop and Presbyters?" *Harvard Theological Review* 69 (1976): 301-24.

- . *The Gnostic Gospels*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.
- . "What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity." *Signs* 2 (1976): 293-303.
- Parsons, Peter. *City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish: Greek Papyri Beneath the Egyptian Sand Reveal a Long-Lost World*. London: Pheonix, 2007.
- . "New Testament: Jude 4-5, 7-8." Pages 4-6 in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XXXIV*. Edited by L. Ingrams, P. Kingston, P. Parsons, and J. Read. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1968.
- Penn, Michael Philip. *Kissing Christians: Ritual and Community in the Late Ancient Church*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.
- Pestman, E.W. *The New Papyrological Primer*. 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- Petrucchi, Armando. *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy: Studies in the History of Written Culture*. Edited and translated by Charles M. Radding. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Pickering, Stuart R. "The Dating of the Chester Beatty-Michigan Codex of the Pauline Epistles (P⁴⁶)." Pages 216-27 in *Ancient History in a Modern University*, vol. 2: *Early Christianity, Antiquity and Beyond*. Edited by T.W. Hillard, R.A. Kearsley, C.E.V. Nixon, and A.M. Nobbs. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- . "The Significance of Non-Continuous New Testament Textual Materials in Papyri." Pages 121-41 in *Studies in the Early Text of the Gospels and Acts: The Papers of the First Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. Edited by David G.K. Taylor. Texts and Studies 3.1. Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 1999. Repr., Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2013.
- Pintaudi, Rosario, ed. *Miscellanea Papyrologica*. Vol. 7 of *Papyrologica Florentina*. Edited by Rosario Pintaudi. Florence: Gonnelli, 1980.
- Pocaro, Alan D. "Nomina Sacra: Byzantine Aesthetics and the Unity of Text and Image." Paper presented at the Mid America College Art Association Biennial Conference. October 27 2016. <http://www.alanpocaro.com/writing/2016/10/27/nomina-sacra-byzantine-aesthetics-and-the-unity-of-text-and-image>.
- Pomeroy, Sarah B. "Copronyms and the Exposure of Infants in Egypt." Pages 147-62 in *Studies in Roman Law: In Memory of A. Arthur Schiller*. Edited by Roger S. Bagnall and William V. Harris. Leiden: Brill, 1986.

- Porter, Stanley E. *John, His Gospel, and Jesus: In Pursuit of the Johannine Voice*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.
- . "Recent Efforts to Reconstruct Early Christianity on the Basis of Its Papyrological Evidence." Pages 71-84 in *Christian Origins and Graeco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts. Text and Editions for New Testament Study 9. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- . "Textual Criticism in the Light of Diverse Textual Evidence for the Greek New Testament: An Expanded Proposal." Pages 305-37 in *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World*. Edited by Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas. Texts and Editions for New Testament Study 2. Leiden: Brill, 2006.
- Proulx, Pierre, and José O'Callaghan. "Papiro magi cristiano." *Studia Papyrologica* 13 (1974): 83-88.
- Rahlfs, Alfred. *Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum. Supplementum. Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments*. Rev. ed. by Detlef Fraenkel. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004.
- Rácz, Péter. *Salience in Sociolinguistics: A Quantitative Approach*. Topics in English Linguistics 84. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013.
- Rapp, Claudia. "Holy Texts, Holy Men, and Holy Scribes: Aspects of Scriptural Holiness in Late Antiquity." Pages 194-22 in *The Early Christian Book*. Edited by William E. Kingshirn and Linda Safran. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007.
- Rea, John R., ed. "Fragment of Petition." Pages 42-43 in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri LXIII*. Edited London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1996.
- . "Letter about Christian Books." Pages 44-45 in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri LXIII*. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1996.
- Roberts, Colin H. *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt: The Schweich Lectures 1977*. London: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Roberts, Colin H., and T.C. Skeat. *The Birth of the Codex*. London: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Robinson, James M. "The Pachomian Monastic Library at the Chester Beatty Library and the Bibliothèque Bodmer." *Occasional Papers of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity* 19 (1990): 1-21.

- Roca-Puig, Ramon. "Papiro del evangelio de San Juan con 'Hermeneia': P.Bar. inv. 83—Jo. 3,34." Pages 225-36 in *Atti dell' XI Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia, Milano 2-8 Settembre 1965*. Milan: Instituto Lombardo Di Scienze E'Lettere, 1966.
- Römer, Cornelia Eva. "Ostraka mit christlichen Texten aus der Sammlung Flinders Petrie." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 145 (2003): 183-201.
- Rousseau, Philip. "Introduction: From Binding to Burning." Pages 1-9 in *The Early Christian Book*. Edited by William E. Kingshirn and Linda Safran. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007.
- Rowlandson, Jane. *Women and Society in Greek and Roman Egypt: A Sourcebook*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Royse, James R. *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri*. New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 36. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Rudburg, Gunnar. "De nominibus sacris adnotatiunculae." *Eranos* 33 (1935): 146-51.
- Rudy, Kathryn M. "Dirty Books: Quantifying Patters of Use in Medieval Manuscripts Using a Densitometer." *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 2 (2010): 1-44.
- . "Kissing Images, Unfurling Rolls, Measuring Wounds, Sewing Badges and Carrying Talismans: Considering Some Harley Manuscripts through the Physical Rituals they Reveal." *The Electronic British Library Journal* (2011): article 5.
- . "Touching the Book Again: The Passional of Abbess Kunigunde of Bohemia." Pages 247-326 in *Codex und Material*. Edited by Patrizia Carmassi and Gia Toussaint. Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien 34. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018.
- Sallares, Robert, and Susan Gomzi. "Biomolecular Archaeology of Malaria." *Ancient Biomolecules* 3 (2001): 195-213.
- Sanders, Henry A. "Some Fragments of the Oldest Beatty Papyrus in the Michigan Collection." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 75 (1935): 313-24.
- , ed. *A Third-Century Papyrus Codex of the Epistles of Paul*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1935.
- Sanzo, Joseph E. *Scriptural Incipits on Amulets from Late Antique Egypt*. Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 84. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014.

- Schmidt, Carl. "Die Evangelienhandschrift der Chester Beatty-Sammlung." *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 32 (1933): 225-32.
- . "Die neuen Bibelfunde aus Ägypten." *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 30 (1931): 285-93.
- Schubert, Erika Dinkler-von. "ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ: Vom 'Wort vom Kreuz' (1 Cor. 1,18) zum Kreuz-Symbol." Pages 29-39 in *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*. Edited by Doula Mouriki, Christopher Moss, and Katherine Kiefer. Princeton: Department of Art and Archaeology, 1995.
- Schürer, Emil. *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Christ*. 3 vols. Rev. ed. Edited by Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Martin Goodman. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986.
- Shoemaker, Stephen J. *Mary in Early Christian Faith and Devotion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016.
- Sirivianou, G. "Christian Letter of Recommendation." Pages 111-16 in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri LVI*. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1989.
- Skeat, T.C. "A Table of Isopsephisms (P. Oxy. XLV. 3239)." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 31 (1978): 45-54.
- . "The Use of Dictation in Ancient Book-Production." Pages 3-32 in *The Collected Biblical Writings of T.C. Skeat*. Edited by J.K. Elliott. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 113. Leiden: Brill, 2004. Repr. from *Proceedings of the British Academy* 42 (1956): 179-208.
- Skemer, Don C. *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006.
- Stephens, Susan A. "Documents from the Archive of Leonides." Pages 129-43 in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri XLV*. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1977.
- , ed. *Yale Papyri in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library II*. American Studies in Papyrology 24. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985.
- Stevenson, Gregory. *Power and Place: Temple and Identity in the Book of Revelation*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001.
- Stowers, Stanley K. "Letters of Mediation." Pages 153-65 in *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*. Library of Early Christianity. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986.

- Świderek, A., and M. Vandoni, eds. *Papyrus grecs du musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie*. Travaux du centre d'archéologie méditerranéenne de l'Académie polonaise des sciences 2. Warsaw: 1929.
- Teeter, Timothy M. "Christian Letters of Recommendation in the Papyrus Record." *Patristic and Byzantine Review* 9 (1990): 59-69.
- . "Letters of Recommendation or Letters of Peace?" Pages 954-60 in *Akten des 21. internationalen Papyrologenkongresses, Berlin 1995*. Edited by Bärbel Kramer, Wolfgang Luppe, Herwig Maehler, and Günter Poethke. Archive für Papyrusforschung Beiheft 3. Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1997.
- Temkin, Owsei. *The Falling Sickness: A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginnings of Modern Neurology*. 2nd ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971.
- Thibault, Paul J. *Brain, Mind and the Signifying Body: An Ecosocial Semiotic Theory*. London: Continuum, 2004.
- . "Writing, Graphology, and Visual Semiosis." Pages 111-45 in *New Directions in the Analysis of Multimodal Discourse*. Edited by Terry D. Royce and Wendy L. Bowcher. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2007.
- Tibiletti, Giuseppe. *Le lettere private nei papiri greci del III e IV secolo d.C.: Tra paganesimo e cristianesimo*. Scienze filologiche e letteratura 15. Milan: Pubblicazioni della Università Cattolica, 1979.
- Thompson, Edward Maunde. *An Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912. Repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Trebilco, Paul. *Self-designations and Group Identity in the New Testament*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Traube, Ludwig. *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzung*. Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters 2. Munich: Beck, 1907.
- Treu, Kurt. "Christliche Empfehlungs-Schemabriefe auf Papyrus." Pages 629-36 in *Zetesis: Album amicorum door vrienden en collega's aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. E. de Strycker ter gelegenheid van zijn 65e verjaardag*. Edited by Th. Lefevre. Antwerp: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1973.
- . "Christliche Papyri IV." *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 22 (1973): 367-95.

- . "Die bedeutung des Griechischen für die Juden im Römischen Reich." *Kairos* 15 (1973): 123-44.
- . "P.Berol. 8508: Christliches Empfehlungsschreiben aus dem Einband des koptisch-gnostischen Kodex P.8502." *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 28 (1982): 53-54.
- Tuckett, Christopher M. "Nomina Sacra: Yes and No?" Pages 431-58 in *The Biblical Canons*. Edited by J.-M. Auwers and H.J. de Jonge. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologiarum Lovaniensium 158. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003.
- . "P⁵² and the *Nomina Sacra*." *New Testament Studies* 47 (2001): 544-48.
- Turner, Eric G. *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*. 2nd ed. London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1987.
- . *The Typology of the Early Codex*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977.
- Turner, John D. *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition*. Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, «Études» 6. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval; Leuven: Peeters, 2001.
- Vandorpe, Katelijn. "Archives and Dossiers." Pages 216-55 in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*. Edited by Roger S. Bagnall. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- . *Breaking the Seal of Secrecy: Sealing Practices in Greco-Roman and Byzantine Egypt Based on Greek, Demotic and Latin Papyrological Evidence*. Leiden: Papyrologisch instituut, 1995.
- Venticinque, Philip F. *Honor Among Thieves: Craftsmen, Merchants, and Associations in Roman and Late Roman Egypt*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016.
- Vidman, Ladislav. "Koppa Theta = Amen in Athen." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 16 (1975): 215-16.
- Vitelli, G., ed. *Papiri greci e latini*. Vol. 3. Pubblicazioni della Società italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto. Florence: Ariani, 1914.
- . *Papiri greci e latini*. Vol. 9. Pubblicazioni della Società italiana per la ricerca dei papiri greci e latini in Egitto. Florence: Ariani, 1929.

- Vološinov, V.N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik. Studies in Language 1. New York: Seminar Press, 1973.
- Wasserman, Tommy. *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission*. Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series 43. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006.
- . “P⁷⁸ (P.Oxy. XXXIV 2684): The Epistle of Jude on an Amulet?” Pages 137-60 in *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World*. Edited by Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas. Texts and Editions for New Testament Study 2. Leiden: Brill, 2006.
- Watts, Edward. “Education: Speaking, Thinking, and Socializing.” Pages 467-86 in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*. Edited by Scott Fitzgerald Johnson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Watts, James W., ed. *Iconic Books and Texts*. Sheffield: Equinox, 2013.
- Weil, Henri. “Nouvelles tablettes grecques provenant d’Égypte.” Pages 331-32 in *Mélanges Perrot: Recueil de mémoires concernant l’archéologie classique, la littérature et l’histoire anciens, dédié à Georges Perrot* (Paris: A. Fontemoing, 1902).
- Weitzmann, Kurt, ed. *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979.
- Wessely, Carl. “Les Plus anciens Monuments du Christianisme écrits sur papyrus.” *Patrologia Orientalis* 4.2 (1908): 99-200.
- Wicker, James R. “Pre-Constantinian *Nomina Sacra* in a Mosaic and Church Graffiti.” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 52 (2009): 52-72.
- Wilcken, Ulrich. “The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyrus.” *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 11 (1935): 112-14.
- Winter, John. *Life and Letters in the Papyri*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1933.
- Wipszycka, Ewa. “Remarques sur les lettres privées chrétiennes des IIe-IVe siècles (a propos d’un livre de M. Naldini).” *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 18 (1974): 203-21.
- . “Un lecture qui ne sait pas écrire ou un chrétien qui ne veut pas se souiller? [P.Oxy. XXXIII 2673].” Pages 415-20 in *Études sur le christianisme dans l’Égypte de l’antiquité tardive*. Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 52. Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1996.

Woolf, Greg. "Literacy or Literacies in Rome?" Pages 46-68 in *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*. Edited by William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Worp, Klaas A. "A Note on the Provenances of Some Greek Literary Papyri." *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 28 (1998): 203-18.

Youtie, Herbert C. "ΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΕΥΣ: The Social Impact of Illiteracy in Graeco-Roman Egypt." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 17 (1975): 201-21.

Yuen-Collingridge, Rachel, and Malcolm Choat. "The Copyist at Work: Scribal Practice in Duplicate Documents." Pages 827-34 in *Actes du 26^e Congrès international de papyrologie, Genève, 16-21 août 2010*. Edited by Paul Schubert. Recherches et Recontres: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Genève 30. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2012.

Zuntz, G. *The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum*. London: The British Academy, 1953.