

Codex Sinaiticus:
New Perspectives on the Ancient Biblical Manuscript



CODEX SINAITICUS:
NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE
ANCIENT BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPT

Edited by
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NOTE TO THE READER

The formatting of Greek text in this volume is as follows. Greek quoted from a standard critical edition (e.g. Nestle-Aland 28) is presented as usual, i.e. in minuscule script with accentuation. Greek quoted from a manuscript (including Codex Sinaiticus) is presented in unaccented majuscule. Quotations from the *transcription* of Codex Sinaiticus are presented in unaccented minuscule. Exceptions to this practice are noted in individual contributions.

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The style guide used is that of the Modern Humanities Research Association, Second Edition, with some modifications. Bibliographies are provided at the end of each article. A list of short-form abbreviations will be found on pp. ix–x, and these frequently-cited works are not included in article bibliographies.

Full details of manuscripts and papyri discussed, including shelfmarks and dates, will be found in the list of manuscripts at the end of the volume. (The contributions of Frame, Böttrich, Fyssas, and Fr Justin also include lists of manuscripts in their bibliographies.)

With very few exceptions, contributions do not take into account publications after 2010. This is owing to the delay in publishing this volume, which is the fault of the editors alone and not of the contributors.

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PREFACE

The launch of the digital Codex Sinaiticus, on 6 July 2009, was a significant moment in the history of research, access to resources and the preservation of our written heritage. It was also a memorable event in the lives of those of us who had been part of the project since its inception in 2001. It brought to a conclusion eight intense years of a journey in which, disparate as a group though we were in many ways, we successfully worked together towards an ambitious series of goals. The launch in 2009 was accompanied by a major international conference and seminar on Codex Sinaiticus, held at the British Library on 6–8 July.¹ In planning the conference and seminar, we had wished to bring together a variety of speakers, some by invitation and others in response to a call for papers, who not only could make the first steps towards using and interpreting the data which we had produced, but also would celebrate Codex Sinaiticus itself, the remarkable early Christian Bible which by the end of the project we were often referring to simply as ‘Codex’. The result was a vibrant mixture of papers, most of which are now made available in the present volume and build on the key goals of our project.²

Essential to the Codex Sinaiticus project was a reappraisal of the history of the manuscript, in particular of the complex sequence of events which led to its being dispersed across four libraries. It is well known that there were differing accounts of these events, and differing opinions about their correct interpretation. Detailed research into the documentation of the events of 1859–69 was conducted in Russia and Sinai, and further studies shed light on other aspects of the story. Long, detailed and honest discussions led to a statement between the four institutions which may be read on the website, to several other publications recording the research, and an account in Parker’s book which, while his own in all respects, reflected comments and suggestions by the partners. The fact that those involved were able to find a shared way of describing the history was the most rewarding of experiences. In this volume, the modern history of Codex Sinaiticus, and its travels from Mount Sinai to Germany, Russia, and England, is the topic of articles by Böttrich, Fyssas, and Frame, all of whom make use of newly-found archival material to present three aspects of the history of the manuscript. The story is not quite finished: the New Finds of 1975 unearthed additional leaves and fragments of Codex Sinaiticus at Mount Sinai, and these discoveries are the subject of articles by Nikolopoulos and Father Justin and Sarris.

The project was first and foremost about a manuscript that is the best part of sixteen hundred years old, and the first priority was its long term preservation. Conservation was carried out according to agreed standards between the four libraries and with extensive collaboration between the experts. The documentation which accompanied the conservation set new standards in the field. The fruits of this exhaustive work can best be seen on the Codex Sinaiticus website, where both a detailed conservation report and meticulous descriptions of each individual folio can be found. In this volume, discussion of conservation work can be found in the articles of the British Library conservation team, Kevern, and Father Justin and Sarris.

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After conservation came imaging, again a highly specialist process carried out according to agreed standards, meeting the challenging demands of working in four different environments in four countries. It was not possible to include a detailed account of this process in the volume, but the articles of Kevern and Father Justin and Sarris give some indication of the work that was done.

When the imaging was finished, the transcription of the manuscript was carried out, and this essential task of representation is more obviously present, not only with accounts of the methods used in the articles by Kevern, Brown, Myshrall, and Parker, but also in the use of the results made by contributors.

Finally, the creation of the website itself was a process carried out after a detailed preparation. Robinson's article outlines the development of the electronic edition of Codex Sinaiticus. Such projects are much more common today, with the arrival of Digital Humanities as a major aspect of scholarly life, but five years ago, as short a time as that may seem, the scale of detail of the Codex Sinaiticus project was unprecedented.

The circumstances relating to the production of Codex Sinaiticus will never be known in their entirety. Here, Gamble outlines what is known, and suggests a new solution to the question of why the Codex was produced. The several scribes of Codex Sinaiticus are treated by Head and Myshrall, the latter of whom presents for the first time the case for distinguishing two hands in the work hitherto assigned to Scribe B. The many corrections in Codex Sinaiticus are discussed in particular by Wachtel, Hernández, and Head, but inevitably almost all contributors have engaged with at least a few of the thousands of changes made to this most annotated of manuscripts.

Codex Sinaiticus's importance for the text of the Bible was recognized almost immediately, as Epp and Trobisch emphasize in their contributions. Detailed analysis of the importance of the manuscript for the text of the New Testament is presented by Trobisch, Wachtel, and Hernández, while the text of the now apocryphal Shepherd of Hermas, included in Codex Sinaiticus, is the subject of Batovici's article. Yet the significance of Codex Sinaiticus as a witness to the text of the Septuagint should not be overlooked, as the articles by Tov, Kevern, and Pietersma make clear.

The formation of the Christian canon in antiquity is still the topic of much debate. Here, articles by Gamble, Tov, Trobisch, Hernández, and Archbishop Damianos show how Codex Sinaiticus can illuminate some aspects of this scholarly problem. Archbishop Damianos also provides us with a sensitive account of why, ultimately, the Shepherd of Hermas cannot be considered part of the Biblical canon, while retaining an important theological message for modern readers. His article is complemented by that of Walton, who stresses the relevance of Codex Sinaiticus for contemporary Christianity.

As with all other parts of the Codex Sinaiticus Project, so with this publication collaboration and good will have been fundamental. On behalf of the project partners we wish to thank most warmly all those who have made this volume possible. First and foremost, we thank our contributors not only for their splendid articles, but also for their considerable patience over the five years this volume has been in production. Next, we must acknowledge again the generosity and vision of those who funded the various strands of the project: the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Stavros S. Niarchos Foundation, Leventis Foundation, Mariposa Foundation, J. F. Costopoulos Foundation, Hellenic Foundation, American Friends of Saint Catherine's Monastery and American Trust for the British Library. For their invaluable assistance in bringing this volume to publication we are greatly indebted to our co-editors Amy Myshrall and Cillian O'Hogan. We are also grateful to Kathleen

Preface

Doyle and Antony Makrinos for their contributions to the task of editing, to David Way, former Head of British Library Publishing, for his consistent commitment to both the Codex Sinaiticus Project and this publication and to Rob Davies, Managing Editor at British Library Publishing, for helping bring the volume to completion.

The final word will never be said about Codex Sinaiticus. Its riches have now been made accessible to scholars and to the public on the Codex Sinaiticus website. Beyond the manuscript itself, the ongoing appearance of new papyrological evidence, along with the promise of undiscovered treasures lying dormant in libraries across the world, mean that we shall be refining and revising our perspectives of Codex Sinaiticus, and of the history of the Bible and Christianity more broadly, for generations to come. We hope that this volume, together with the Codex Sinaiticus website, will provide a suitable starting point for those new to the world of late antique Christianity or Biblical textual criticism, a worthy resource for scholars already working in the field, and an illuminating guide for the general reader.

Scot McKendrick
David Parker

NOTES

¹ Another conference linked to the project was held at the National Library of Russia, St Petersburg, on 12–13 November 2009. See E. V. Krushelnitskaia and Z. L. Levshina, eds, *Синайский кодекс и памятники древней христианской письменности: традиции и инновации в современных исследованиях*, *Proceedings of the International Research Conference ‘Синайский кодекс. Рукопись в современном информационном пространстве’ (Fifth Zagrebin Readings)*, Saint Petersburg, November 12–13, 2009 (Saint Petersburg, 2012).

² The conference also included presentations by Christopher Clarkson, Juan Garcés, Jan Krans, Ekaterina Krushelnitskaia, René Larsen, Ulrich Schmid, Ulrich Schneider, Helen Shenton, Kristin de Troyer, and Joseph Verheyden. The article by the British Library conservation team is the result of four different presentations given at the Conservation of the Codex Sinaiticus Seminar on 8 July 2009.

