

The Folio

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GREEK NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS IN CALIFORNIA

*Jeff Cate, Ph.D.
Professor of
Christian Studies
California Baptist
University
Riverside, CA*



Greek New Testament manuscripts themselves are the tangible relics upon which all New Testament studies are based. According to the Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung (INTF) in Münster, Germany, 329 of the 5,567 Greek New Testament manuscripts are located in the United States. California has eleven (1 papyrus, 9 minuscules, and 1 lectionary) and ranks eighth among the states with the most. This should not be too surprising since well-known New Testament textual critics such as Ernest Colwell, Eldon Epp, and Gordon Fee have taught and studied in our state; however, none of the manuscripts are housed at their institutions (Claremont, USC, or Vanguard). These eleven California manuscripts are the only known Greek New Testament manuscripts in the U.S. west of Texas, which means California can claim (tongue in cheek) to hold the authentic “western” text of the New Testament.¹

In 1962, the UC system acquired the personal collection of British statesman Isaac Foot (1880-1960), which happened to include five Greek New Testament manuscripts. The collection was disbursed to various UC schools so that three of the manuscripts are at UC-Davis (2641, 2642, and 11983), one at UC-Riverside (2643), and one at UC-Santa Barbara (2644).² Gregory-Aland (hence

forth GA) 2641 and 2642 are parchment manuscripts of the four Gospels from the fourteenth and eleventh centuries respectively, and 11983 is a fourteenth-century Gospel lectionary. One of the most interesting variant readings in these three manuscripts is Luke’s genealogy in 2642. The scribe evidently started recording the names horizontally across two columns, but then shifted to vertical listing, only to return to horizontal listing on the next page. GA 2644 at UC-Santa Barbara is a thirteenth-century parchment manuscript of the four Gospels with two large lacunae (John 6:30b-8:24a; 17:20b-end).

GA 2643 is the most curious of the five manuscripts from the Isaac Foot collection. This thirteenth-century manuscript is one of only ten known manuscripts to include just the Gospels and the Apocalypse. Furthermore, 2643 is extremely tiny, measuring only 6.7 x 9.3 cm, about the same size as a standard deck of cards. No other extant New Testament manuscript is quite this tiny, except GA 792 housed at the Greek National Library in Athens. 792 measures 7 x 9.5 cm, presumably the original size of 2643 before its edges were trimmed. 792 and 2643 seem to be the work of the same scribe since the manuscripts have identical odd contents (only four Gospels and the Apocalypse), the same miniature size, and matching handwriting and features.

At UCLA, but not part of the Isaac Foot collection, is GA 712, or at least most of it. UCLA has 240 of the leaves, but five from the middle of the manuscript, including the text of Jude 12b-25, are registered as GA 2164 and are housed at the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg. Manuscript 712 at UCLA is an eleventh-century parchment of the entire New Testament except the Apocalypse. The books are arranged in order as Gospels, Acts, Catholic Epistles, Pauline Epistles, and Hebrews. This manuscript is considered to be one of the “St. Catherine ‘Diaspora’ Manuscripts” since it originated from the famous monastery in the Sinai peninsula (home of Codex Sinaiticus). Despite its provenance from the same location as Tischendorf’s celebrated uncial, the text of 712 appears to follow the majority of Byzantine manuscripts. One of its past owners collated it against the

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The Folio

shedding light

The Newsletter of
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*Judaism and
Christianity*

General Editor Dr. Marvin A. Sweeney

Managing Editor Shelley L. Long

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Textus Receptus and wrote a lengthy description about certain variant readings inside the front cover.

Merely four miles from UCLA are three more Greek New Testament manuscripts housed at the Getty Museum. In 1983, the Getty acquired GA 679 and 2618 as the starting point for their medieval manuscript collection, and they later acquired GA 2894. 679 and 2894 are parchment manuscripts of the four Gospels from the thirteenth century, while 2618 is a twelfth-century vellum manuscript of the entire New Testament except for the Apocalypse. All three manuscripts are treasured for their full-page illuminations, of which manuscript 679 has nineteen. Unfortunately, because of the valuable artwork, one leaf of manuscript 2618 was removed and currently is held separately in Athens, Greece. This leaf is now registered as a distinct manuscript (GA 927) since it has text of the ending of John in addition to the excised artwork.

Only 30 miles east of the Getty is GA 703 at the Huntington Library in San Marino. This is an eleventh-century parchment manuscript of the four Gospels in two volumes. The first volume has 199 leaves containing Matthew and Mark, while the second has 210 leaves with Luke and John. This manuscript is also commonly known as the “Bixby Gospels,” and Edgar J. Goodspeed published a detailed description and collation of it in 1915. One of the most curious features of 703 is the way that the *Pericope Adulterae* (John 7:53-8:11) was added a century or two after the manuscript was originally transcribed. In the 41st quire, the handwriting noticeably changes to a later hand as two leaves were replaced with three so that the quire oddly has nine leaves to allow space for the inclusion of the extra verses.

Last and certainly not least is the earliest and most significant Greek New Testament manuscript in California. P28 (P. Oxy. 1596)—held in the Badè Museum at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley—is a single papyrus fragment of John 6:8-12, 17-22. The fragment measures 5.2 x 10.7 cm with 11 lines extant on the recto and 12 on the verso. Reconstructions estimate that the original page would have been around 13 x 22-23 cm with about 25-26 lines of text on each side. The fragment was found at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt among third- and fourth-century documents and published by Grenfell and Hunt in 1919. The two British scholars dated it to the fourth century, but Eric Turner and the INTF date it to the third. Due to its evidence for two readings in John 6:11, P28 is the only California manuscript to be cited in the Nestle-

Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th edition). The Badè Museum holds eight papyrus fragments from Oxyrhynchus, but P. Oxy. 1596 is the only one with New Testament text.

Numbers in P28 are spelled out as in P66 rather than written as numerals as in P75. P28 uses *nomina sacra* to abbreviate the name Ιησους (Jesus) in verses 17 and 19, but not ανθρωπους (people) in verse 10.³ In places of difference among early papyri and uncials, P28 agrees most closely with Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus and Papyri 66 and 75. Unfortunately, the papyrus of P28 breaks off on the left edge of the recto in the midst of the word “-thousand” (John 6:10), otherwise the fragment could give important early evidence for or against an intriguing singular reading in Codex Sinaiticus in which Jesus feeds “three” thousand instead of five thousand.

Beyond these eleven Greek New Testament manuscripts currently in California, at least three others have been housed in the state. Goodspeed manuscript 277 (which has no assigned Gregory-Aland number), at the University of Chicago, is a single, sixteenth-century leaf containing Matthew 28:16-20. From 1927 to 1948, the parchment leaf was owned by the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles and displayed there. GA 2533 is a thirteenth-century parchment manuscript of the four Gospels, which used to be owned by St. John’s Seminary in Camarillo. In 1967, J. Neville Birdsall published a detailed study of it, and today high-resolution images of the entire manuscript are available online through the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (www.csntm.org). The Scriptorium in Orlando, FL owns the manuscript, even though the INTF currently has it listed as location unknown.

GA 670 is a single parchment leaf of Luke 8:3-24; 9:13-34 from the eleventh or twelfth century. In the 1930s, the leaf was owned by Rev. William Lane Hall Benton, the rector at St. Luke’s of-the-Mountains Episcopal Church in La Crescenta, but its location today is unknown. In his 1937 *Descriptive Catalogue of Greek New Testament Manuscripts in America*, Kenneth Clark mentions only this one manuscript (670) being owned by W. L. H. Benton but others being owned by the Benton family (outside California).⁴ Clark’s descriptive list is helpful because the current online edition of the *Kurzgefasste liste* by the INTF lists two other manuscripts (2438 and 11672) as being last owned by W. L. H. Benton in La Crescenta.⁵ Clark, however, indicates that in 1937 these were owned by Otto Ege in Cleveland, Ohio. Evidence

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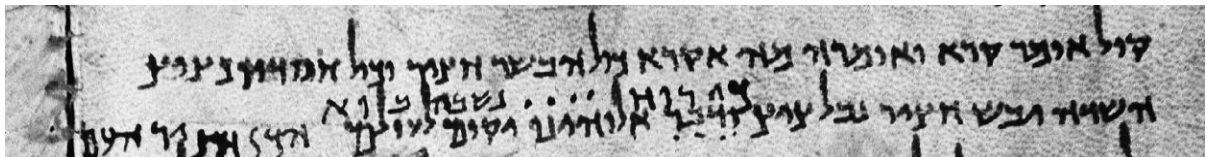
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Isaiah 40:6 from 1QIsa. Copyright John C. Trever, Ph.D.
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REREADING ISAIAH 40:1-11

Marvin A. Sweeney

CEO and Director

Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center

Professor of Hebrew Bible

Claremont Lincoln University and

Claremont School of Theology

I currently have the privilege of writing the commentary on Isaiah 40-66 for the Forms of the Old Testament Literature Commentary Series. This volume will follow upon and complete my earlier work, *Isaiah 1-39, with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1996).

As I am currently working on Isaiah 40, I came across an old reading on Isaiah 40:6, which reads, “A voice cries out! And he said (*wě’amar*), ‘What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all its endurance is like a flower of the field.’” Most interpreters follow Frank Cross, who correctly argues that Isaiah 40:1-11 is a portrayal of a prophetic commissioning that takes place in the heavenly council of YHWH (see Frank M. Cross, Jr., “The Council of YHWH in Second Isaiah,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 12 [1953]: 274-7). Because this passage is viewed as the prophetic commissioning of Second Isaiah, the anonymous prophet of the Babylonian Exile whose work appears in Isaiah 40-55, most scholars perceive a problem in reading *wě’amar* in v. 6 as a third person verb, “and he said.” Shouldn’t the verb read, “and I said”? After all, prophetic commissioning accounts are frequently written in the first person, like that of Isaiah ben Amoz in Isaiah 6. Indeed, the Great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran reads the verb as *w’wmrh*, “and I said,” (see facing page) and Codex Vaticanus, the primary scroll for reading the Greek Septuagint, reads the phrase as *kai ’eipa*, “and I said.”

Most scholars during the twentieth century viewed Isaiah as a collection of three different prophetic works, First Isaiah in Isaiah 1-39, Second Isaiah in Isaiah 40-55, and Third Isaiah in Isaiah 56-66. Although this historical or diachronic model for the composition of Isaiah is largely correct, scholars in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries began to study Isaiah as a synchronic or literary whole, i.e., how does one read Isaiah as a single book now that the three pieces are put together in the

present form of the book. Indeed, my own work on Isaiah has focused on both the diachronic and synchronic dimensions of the book of Isaiah.

Based upon such work, Christopher Seitz made an important observation about Isaiah 40:1-11 some twenty years ago, viz., within the synchronic literary form of the book of Isaiah, Isa 40:1-11 does not constitute the commission narrative of a new prophet; instead, it re-presents the commission narrative of Isaiah ben Amoz in Isaiah 6 (“The Divine Council,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109 [1990]: 229-247).

But if Isa 40:1-11 is a re-presentation of Isaiah’s commission to speak as YHWH’s prophet, it certainly presupposes a different setting and purpose. Isaiah 6 is set in the Jerusalem Temple in the late-eighth century B.C.E. and calls upon Isaiah to make sure that the people remain blind, deaf, and dumb so they will not repent and deny YHWH’s purpose to bring judgment against them. But Isa 40:1-11 is told from a different perspective for a different purpose, viz., it is set in the heavenly court or council much like the vision of Micaiah ben Imlah in 1 Kings 22:19-23, and Isaiah is now asked to proclaim comfort to Israel and a return to Jerusalem. But the narrative is not Isaiah’s recollection of his commissioning as a prophet; rather Isaiah 40:1-11—and indeed the entirety of Isaiah 40-55—is a presentation of YHWH’s instructions to the prophet for a later time. Within the context of the book of Isaiah as a whole, YHWH’s troubling commission to Isaiah in Isaiah 6 is not all that was said. The initial message of judgment in Isaiah 6 was followed by a message of comfort beginning in Isaiah 40. And so the Masoretic Text of Isaiah 40:6 is the correct reading; it is not Isaiah’s account of the commissioning—that appears in Isaiah 6 in first person form. Rather it is YHWH’s account of the commissioning, and it depicts the prophet in the third person.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Frank M. Cross, Jr., “The Council of YHWH in Second Isaiah,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 12 (1953): 274-7.

Christopher R. Seitz, “The Divine Council,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109 (1990): 229-247.

Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39, with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1996).

PUBLICATIONS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



Marvin A. Sweeney

CEO, ABMC
Professor of
Hebrew Bible,
Claremont Lincoln
University

Publications

“Foundations for a Jewish Theology of the Bible: Prophets in Dialogue.” Pages 161-186 in *Jewish Biblical Theology: Perspectives and Case Studies*. Edited by I. Kalimi; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012.

Tanak: A Theological and Critical Introduction to the Jewish Bible. Minneapolis: Fortress, December 1, 2011.

“Samuel’s Institutional Identity in the Deuteronomistic History.” Pages 165-174 in *Constructs of Prophets in the Former and Latter Prophets and Other Texts*. Edited by L. Grabbe and M. Nissinen; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.

“The Question of Theodicy in the Historical Books: Contrasting Views Concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem According to the DtrH and ChrH” (English with Korean Translation). *Journal of the Institute of Biblical Studies* 5 (2011): 7-37.

“Zephaniah.” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Edited by M. Coogan 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2011): 2: 471-474.

“Ezekiel, Leviticus, Numbers.” *Cambridge Dictionary of Judaism*. Edited by J. Baskin et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2011): 168-9, 368-9, 460-1.

Lectures, Courses, and Presentations

“Tanak: The Uniquely Jewish Form of the Bible.” Shabbat Lecture, Congregation Ohr HaTorah, Los Angeles, CA. February 4, 2012.

“D’var Torah, Parshat Mishpatim.” Congregation Ohr Ha-Torah, Los Angeles, CA. February 4, 2012.

“Jewish Biblical Theology.” Taus Lecture Series. Temple Beth El, San Pedro, CA. February 13, 2012.

“Jewish Biblical Theology.” Har El Institute Shabbat Series. Palm Desert, CA. February 24, 2012.

“The Dead Sea Scrolls.” Temple Akiba, Culver City, CA. February 28, 2012.

“Moses Encounter with G-d and G-d’s Encounter with Moses. A Reading of the Moses Narratives in Conversation with Emmanuel Levinas.” Keynote Address, Corcoran Conference on Levinas and Biblical Studies, Boston College, Boston, MA. March 18-19, 2012.

“The Task of Jewish Biblical Theology.” Boston University School of Theology, Boston, MA. March 20, 2012.

“Habakkuk’s Disappointed Expectations.” Seminar Presentation, Boston College, Boston, MA, March 21, 2012.

“Kings, Queens, and Prophets in the Book of Kings.” Mini-course, Har El Institute Lecture Series, Palm Desert, CA. March 28, April 4, 11, 2012.

“Seventh Century Judean Historiography.” Invited Keynote Address. Writing in the 7th Century Levant. Brigham Young University, Provo Utah. August 31, 2012.

Carleen Mandolfo

*Associate Professor
of Hebrew Bible,
Claremont Lincoln
University*



Publications

“Feminist Inquiry into the Psalms and Book of Lamentations” in *A Retrospective of Feminist Hebrew Bible Exegesis: Histories of Interpretation, Vol. 1*. Edited by Susanne Sholz; Sheffield: Phoenix Publishing, forthcoming.

Lectures, Courses, and Presentations

“Inaugural Lectures.” Rockhill Institute class at Rockhill Farm, Bakersfield, CA. February 2012.

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James A. Sanders

*Professor Emeritus,
Claremont School of
Theology/Claremont
Graduate University*

Publications

Review of Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. Third Revised Edition. *Biblical Archaeology Review* 83/3 (2012): forthcoming.

“The Book of Job and the Origins of Judaism.” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 39/2 (2012): 60-70.

“Credo in Unum Deum: A Challenge” with Paul E. Capetz. *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 39/4 (2012): 204-213.

“Why Are the Hebrew Bible and the Old Testament So similar Yet So Different?” Biblical Archaeology Society Acclaimed Video Lectures on DVD.

“Biblia Hebraica Quinta.” Pages 177-186 in *The World of Jesus and the Early Church*. Edited by Craig Evans; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Press, 2011.

Lectures, Courses, and Presentations

“The Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls on Biblical Studies.” Pasadena United Methodist Church Adult Forum. September 2011.

“Biblical Transformations.” Discussion Group for William McGibbon Conference sponsored by Progressive Christians United. October 2011.

“Introduction to the First Testament.” Episcopal Theological School at Claremont/Bloy House. Claremont, CA. Fall 2011-Spring 2012.



Shelley Long

*Research Associate
for Scholarly
Services,
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Lectures, Courses, and Presentations

“Introduction to Biblical Literature: Exodus-Deuteronomy.” Azusa Pacific University, Azusa CA. Spring 2012.

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is lacking that either of these manuscripts (2438 or 11672) ever resided in the state of California, and their current location is unknown.⁶ 2438 is a single, thirteenth-century leaf of Matthew 4:25-5:22 while 11672 is a single lectionary leaf of John 12:36-47 and Luke 24:36-46 from the twelfth century. The last trace of either was when 2438 was sold in a 1985 Sotheby's sale to a British book dealer which is now out of business.

In conclusion, California is currently home to eleven Greek New Testament manuscripts across a wide spectrum of centuries: third/fourth (P28), eleventh (703, 712, 2642), twelfth (2618), thirteenth (679, 2643, 2644, 2894), and fourteenth (2641, 11983). All 27 books of the New Testament are represented in these 11 manuscripts: 9 copies of the four Gospels (679, 703, 712, 2618, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, and 2894), 2 copies of Acts, Catholic Epistles, and Pauline Epistles (712, 2618), and 1 copy of the Apocalypse (2643). The manuscripts are held at seven different institutions in five different counties (Alameda, Los Angeles, Riverside, Santa Barbara, and Yolo), and no single institution holds more than three (UC-Davis and the Getty Museum).

If anyone has further information about Greek New Testament manuscripts in California, especially regarding the ones that are missing, please contact the author at jcate@calbaptist.edu.

Endnotes

¹ Until recently, two manuscripts (2878 and 12434) owned by Donald W. Brake (Dean Emeritus at Multnomah Seminary in Portland) were in Oregon, but those two are now on permanent display at Houston Baptist University in Texas.

² The INTF incorrectly lists 2641 and 2642 as being at UC-Berkeley, not UC-Davis, and the INTF incorrectly lists 2644 as being at UCLA, not UC-Santa Barbara.

³ The reason the term *ανθρωπος* (man) was a *nomina sacra* was because of its use in the title "son of man." Later, this spread to all other uses of the Greek word even when it just referred to people in general as it does here.

⁴ William Lane Hall Benton's grandfather was George Benton (d. 1862) who had served as an Episcopalian missionary. In 1844, George Benton brought several Greek New Testament manuscripts (669, 670, 1302, 11372, 11373, and Goodspeed manuscript 277) to America from Canea, Crete. These were passed down to George Benton's children, grandchildren, and various Episcopalian schools.

⁵ <http://intf.uni-muenster.de/vmr/NTVMR/ListeHandschriften.php>. Curiously, in the 1963 and 1994 print editions of the *Kurzgefasste liste*, 2438 and 11672 are listed as being owned by Otto Ege, not W. L. H. Benton.

⁶ Otto Ege's role with these manuscripts complicates matters further. In the 1940s, Ege famously excised pages from fifty of his own medieval manuscripts and then sold them as 40 boxed sets of 50 leaves each to various institutions and individuals across the country. The location of many sets, or even their separate leaves, is still unknown.

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