

## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW IN A SIXTH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPT FAMILY

SCRIBAL HABITS IN THE PURPLE CODICES 022, 023 AND 042<sup>1</sup>

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The past fifty years have seen a number of studies devoted to scribal habits. This line of research begins with E. C. Colwell, who proposed a method to determine scribal habits in the 1960s in order to attempt to quantify the types of claims Westcott and Hort made about what scribes would have been more likely or less likely to do. James R. Royse refined the method in his 1981 dissertation on P<sup>45</sup>, P<sup>46</sup>, P<sup>47</sup>, P<sup>66</sup>, P<sup>72</sup>, and P<sup>75</sup>, finally published in 2008. A number of other studies in scribal habits have appeared along the way, mainly focused on manuscripts dated to the third, fourth, and fifth centuries.

At this point, the sixth-century Greek purple codices of the gospels become directly relevant for New Testament textual criticism. The purpose of my dissertation was to determine whether or not the *singular readings method* is able to determine reliably the scribal habits in Greek New Testament manuscripts by using the close relationship of three sixth-century codices of Matthew's Gospel. The three manuscripts are all luxury copies of the gospels – purple codices, so named because they are written in silver and gold ink on parchment that has been dyed purple. The manuscripts, Codex Purpureus Petropolitanus (N 022), Codex Sinopensis (O 023), and Codex Rossanensis (Σ 042), were all copied in the sixth century from a common exemplar. Although their common exemplar has not survived, its text can be reconstructed from its three direct copies. From the reconstructed exemplar one can know exactly what changes each of the

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<sup>1</sup> Elijah Hixson, 'The Gospel of Matthew in a Sixth-Century Manuscript Family: Scribal Habits in the Purple Codices 022, 023 and 042' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2018). Supervisors: Paul Foster (primary) and Larry W. Hurtado (secondary). Forthcoming as *Scribal Habits in Sixth-Century Greek Purple Codices* (NTTSD; Leiden: Brill).

three scribes introduced into his or her copy. If one knows what changes a scribe made, we can compare those changes to the unique readings as a way to test the singular reading method.

The singular reading method operates with two assumptions. 1) The unique readings in a manuscript – the places where that manuscript is the only known manuscript to have a particular reading – are for the most part changes introduced by the scribe who produced that manuscript. 2) Collectively, these ‘singular readings’ (readings found in a *single* manuscript) provide a picture of what kinds of changes the scribe made to the text. The problem with the *method* is that it relies on these two unproven assumptions. Without knowing the text that a scribe was looking at when he or she produced a copy, there is no way to know what changes he or she introduced into the copy. Without knowing these changes, there is no way to look for patterns among them in order to determine scribal habits. Without testing the singular readings method against a control of some kind, there is no way to know whether or not it really works.

Because of the close relationship of the purple codices, the singular readings method can be put to the test. I analyse each manuscript on the basis of its unique readings (i.e. singular readings as well as readings found in no other manuscript except these three copies of the same lost exemplar). Then, I analyse the manuscripts on the basis of the number of changes from the reconstructed exemplar. By comparing the two sets of results, we can assess the extent to which the singular readings method succeeds or fails at identifying scribal habits.

I begin by giving an introduction to the significance of purple manuscripts, a brief palaeographical and codicological description of 022, 023, and 042, and a brief history of research on scribal habits and singular readings. Although many scholars accept a Syrian provenance, I suggest that they were more likely produced in Constantinople during or shortly after the reign of Justinian (AD 482–565; reigned AD 527–565). Some of these manuscripts and other purple codices have been subjected to scientific testing, and I survey relevant scientific literature that sheds light on the inks and dyes used in their production.

First, I make a preliminary assessment of each scribe by comparing scribal features in the passages extant in all three manuscripts. This study gives a stronger basis for reconstructing the exemplar because it allows the reconstruction to begin with what can be known with the most certainty.

After making a preliminary assessment, I determine the scribal habits (both ‘actual’ and as perceived by the singular readings method) of 022, 023, and 042 respectively. Perceived scribal habits are measured by a modified singular readings method to replicate the situation for each manuscript if it had no extant close relatives – the situation for most early manuscripts. Actual scribal habits are then determined by the places the scribe changed the text of the exemplar.

Appendix One presents for the first time an edition of the reconstructed text of the exemplar of 022, 023, and 042, where at least two of the three manuscripts are extant. This edition also contains the Eusebian apparatus as well as unit delimitation likely deriving from the exemplar. A critical apparatus identifies all textual variation among the three codices except  $\alpha/\epsilon$  and  $\iota/\epsilon\iota$  variations. I provide a second apparatus for  $\alpha/\epsilon$  and  $\iota/\epsilon\iota$  variations and a third apparatus for variations in unit delimitation and in the Eusebian apparatus.

Appendices Two, Three, and Four are full transcriptions of the Gospel of Matthew in 022, 023, and 042, respectively. These transcriptions are presented with a close approximation of the layout of each manuscript to show line, column, and page breaks, and they include the marginal chapter headings as they appear in each of the codices. Appendix Five provides information on singular readings and corrections in 042 where it alone is extant of the three manuscripts. Appendix Six describes the codicological structures of the three manuscripts.

Appendix Seven is a transcription and brief discussion of 080, a fragmentary of a purple codex dating to the sixth century. This appendix was included because of the relative difficulty of assembling information on 080 as well as a need to establish whether it could be a fourth member of the 022–023–042 family. On the basis of the extant text that can be identified, it is highly unlikely that 080 was copied from the same exemplar as 022 and 042 (023 is not extant in Mark).

Finally, both 022 and 042 contain a series of secondary corrections made against a second exemplar, and Appendix Eight argues that the scribe of 042 was responsible for these corrections in both manuscripts.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix Eight will be published separately as ‘Two Codices with a Common Corrector: The Secondary Corrections in N022 and  $\Sigma$ 042’, *TC* 23 (2018).

The results of this research are perhaps significant – the singular readings method fails to determine the habits of these three scribes accurately. The unique readings depict tendencies to add to the text and to harmonise Matthew's Gospel to Lukan parallels, but both of these tendencies were already present in the exemplar. None of the scribes has a distinct tendency to add more than to omit or to harmonise to Lukan parallels. It seems that the scribe of 042 was the most well trained of the three and that the scribe of 022 was the least well trained, and it is possible that these two individuals had a master–apprentice relationship. However, it is not the struggling apprentice who is most prone to textual change, but the well-trained master, whose text differs most from the exemplar. The scribe of 023 was the most accurate, changing the text noticeably less frequently than either of the other two.

A word about terminology is appropriate for a conclusion: although this study suggests that singular readings might not always reveal the tendencies of *scribes*, singular readings certainly do reveal the tendencies in *manuscripts*.