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# Codex Sinaiticus as a Window into Early Christian Worship

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# Codex Sinaiticus as a Window into Early Christian Worship

## **Abstract**

*Codex Sinaiticus* is the oldest and most complete New Testament in Greek known to exist. Its two colophons at the end of 2 Esdras and Esther indicate a possible connection with Pamphilus' famous library at Caesarea in Palestine. Origen was head of a school for catechumens during his days in Alexandria in Egypt and later began a similar school in Caesarea. Pamphilus was Origen's star pupil and later directed his school in Caesarea. These colophons may connect *Sinaiticus* with an ancient tradition of early Christian worship and instruction of new converts, possibly exhibited in particular scribal features. These scribal features are primarily located at "two-ways" lists of "virtue and vice" in the New Testament, which were popular methods of instructing the essentials of the faith and are found throughout early Christian literature. These areas in the New Testament (and in the epistle of *Barnabas*) were emphasized through paragraph 'lists' by the scribes of *Sinaiticus*. These 'lists' were most likely recited by the ancient reader in a distinctive way for the audience. It is possible that the audience interacted with the reader as the text was recited.

This paper surveys the ancient practice of the public reading of scripture during Christian gatherings and the use of punctuation and lectional marking in manuscripts to aid readers in their task. A possible connection with earlier manuscripts is explored by a cursory examination of a similarity in formatting between *Sinaiticus* and P46, a second century copy of Paul's epistles. When taken collectively, though sparse and fragmentary, the evidence suggests that *Sinaiticus* preserves an ancient practice of Christian instruction located in the unique paragraph 'lists' of the "two-ways" theme.

## **Keywords**

Codex Sinaiticus, P46, Two-ways, Public reading, Punctuation, Didache, Barnabas

## **Cover Page Footnote**

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## INTRODUCTION

The fourth century *Codex Sinaiticus* is the oldest and most complete copy of the New Testament in Greek known to exist.<sup>1</sup> All twenty seven books of the Bible are represented including the epistle of *Barnabas* and part of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the concluding sections are lost with the final pages of the manuscript. Two colophons, one at the end of 2 Esdras and the other at the end of Esther mention that *Codex Sinaiticus* was “[c]ollated against an extremely old copy corrected in the hand of the holy martyr Pamphilus.”<sup>2</sup> These colophons most likely connect the manuscript to the library Pamphilus had assembled at Caesarea.<sup>3</sup> He was a star pupil of Origen and later became head of his school in Caesarea.<sup>4</sup> The famous church historian Eusebius was a “protégé” of Pamphilus and was the inventor of a system of cross references (Eusebian Canons) placed in the margins of *Codex Sinaiticus*, which appear to be roughly contemporary to the manuscript.<sup>5</sup> Taken collectively this evidence has lead scholars to place the most likely provenance of the codex at Caesarea in Palestine.<sup>6</sup> Sometime later the manuscript ended up at St Catherine’s Monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai in Egypt<sup>7</sup>, from which Constantine von Tischendorf brought it to western eyes for the first time in the 1800’s.<sup>8</sup> Ever since, *Codex Sinaiticus* has been heralded as one of the most important witnesses to the text of the New Testament.<sup>9</sup> Because of the antiquity of *Codex Sinaiticus*, any information that can be learned by thorough examination will be extremely valuable in understanding how the early Christians used and viewed the New Testament. Just as important as the *text* which the manuscript contains is the *manner* in which the text was copied. The scribal habits, line spacing, punctuation and other features of the codex give insight into the early Christians who used *Codex Sinaiticus*. This paper will focus on the use of specific paragraph markings as reading aids and how they may give a unique window into early Christian worship.

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Manning Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 62.

<sup>2</sup> D. C. Parker, *Codex Sinaiticus: The Story of the World's Oldest Bible* (London: British Library, 2010), 81.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> T. C. Skeat, “The Codex Sinaiticus, The Codex Vaticanus and Constantine,” in *The Collected Biblical Writings of T.C. Skeat* (ed. J. K. Elliott; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 193; D. C. Parker is much more reserved in his conclusions and gives the provenance as either Asia Minor, Caesarea or Egypt (*Codex Sinaiticus*, 7, 84-85).

<sup>7</sup> Parker, *Codex Sinaiticus*, 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>9</sup> Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 62.

## READING AIDS IN EARLY CHRISTIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Without a doubt, the act of reading an ancient manuscript was difficult for those who used them in antiquity.<sup>10</sup> Even modern scholars, with their knowledge of dead languages, can have difficulty navigating an ancient document.<sup>11</sup> Much of this was due to *scriptio continua*, that is, the ancient scribal convention of writing the text “without separation between words and sentences.”<sup>12</sup> In order to aid the ancient reader in their difficult task slight spacing or other markings were sometimes employed to indicate punctuation or signal a change in the narrative or sense.<sup>13</sup> Punctuation was used somewhat sporadically and was commonly added by the readers themselves.<sup>14</sup> In contrast to their Graeco-Roman counterparts, early Christian manuscripts reflect a high use of punctuation and other lectional markings, revealing “that most of these texts were intended for Church use, to be read in public.”<sup>15</sup>

*Sinaiticus* contains many such reading aids, especially the use of *ekthesis*, the technique of beginning a new paragraph by extending the first letter of the new paragraph into the left hand margin.<sup>16</sup> The last word of the previous paragraph usually ended mid line, leaving a glaring blank space for the remainder of the line. Bodmer papyrus P75, a late second or early third century<sup>17</sup> codex containing the gospels of Luke and John, utilized *ekthesis*, punctuation points and blank spaces to indicate new paragraphs.<sup>18</sup> The Rylands papyrus P52 of John, dated to the early second century, though fragmentary, shows slight spaces between words that probably marked pauses for the reader.<sup>19</sup> The earliest collection of Paul’s epistles, papyrus P46, also shows signs of punctuation and breathing marks, especially the use of spaces to indicate “pauses in sense,” revealing that it was most likely used in public reading.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Valeriy A. Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries* (VCSup 102; eds. J. den Boeft et. al.; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 179.

<sup>11</sup> Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 178.

<sup>12</sup> Bruce Manning Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Palaeography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 31.

<sup>13</sup> Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society, and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), 21.

<sup>14</sup> William A Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 35.

<sup>15</sup> Roberts, *Manuscript*, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Dirk Jongkind, *Scribal habits of Codex Sinaiticus* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2007), 96.

<sup>17</sup> Philip Wesley Comfort and David P. Barrett, *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts* (Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale House, 2001), 501.

<sup>18</sup> Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 180, 236; see also James Ronald Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (eds. Bart D. Ehrman and Eldon J. Epp; NTTSD 36; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 616.

<sup>19</sup> Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 179.

<sup>20</sup> Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 207; Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 181 n89.

Henry Sanders noted that the scribe of *Codex Washingtonianus*, a four gospel codex in Greek from the fourth or fifth century,<sup>21</sup> used spaces for punctuation “frequently and regularly”<sup>22</sup> throughout and that the spaces “doubtless coincided with the sense divisions used in reading.”<sup>23</sup> Sanders surveyed the use of these spaces and compared them to *Codex Bezae*, a fifth century gospel codex,<sup>24</sup> and *Codex Sangallensis*, a ninth century gospel codex,<sup>25</sup> and found many agreements in punctuation and other sense unit markings.<sup>26</sup> The agreements between these manuscripts over such a broad stretch of time (somewhere around four hundred years) lead Sanders to conclude that there must have been “an ancient system of phrasing, used in reading the scriptures in Church service” and that their “origin must have been as early as the second century.”<sup>27</sup>

The scribal tendency to carry over the punctuation markings from the manuscript being copied can be seen in the contemporary book rolls of classical literature from Roman Oxyrhynchus. William Johnson in his extensive study of book rolls from Oxyrhynchus discovered “that the scribe attempted to copy the ‘original’ punctuation, that is, the sort of bare-bones punctuation existing before reader intervention; but also that the scribe did incorporate corrections or additions as he saw fit.”<sup>28</sup> A similar tendency of scribal transmission was discovered for breathing marks, lectional notations, and other symbols not directly related to punctuation.<sup>29</sup> Overall, Johnson concluded that the “use of adscript, punctuation, or division between lines” was considered part of the exemplar by scribes and was “considerably more consistent [throughout the ancient book rolls] than is commonly recognized.”<sup>30</sup>

In a similar way, the scribes of *Sinaiticus* employed a unique method of punctuation; the use of “lists” to single out key words and phrases in the text.<sup>31</sup> The *scriptio continua* is interrupted and only one key word or phrase is placed on a line at a time leaving a noticeable empty space on the right hand side of the column. These unique indented paragraphs would have been striking visual cues “with each item pronounced carefully and separately, [the reader] developing emphasis over the course of the lists.”<sup>32</sup> It is this particular feature of *Sinaiticus* that draws the interest of this author. Due to the scribal convention of copying punctuation and

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<sup>21</sup> Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 80.

<sup>22</sup> Henry A. Sanders, *The New Testament Manuscripts in the Freer Collection. Pt. I., The Washington Manuscript of the Four Gospels* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 12.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>24</sup> Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 70.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>26</sup> Sanders, *The New Testament Manuscripts*, 14.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Johnson, *Book Rolls and Scribes*, 58-59.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>31</sup> Peter M. Head, "The Gospel of Mark in Codex Sinaiticus: Textual and Reception-Historical Considerations," *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism*, Vol. 13 (2008), <http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/v13/Head2008.pdf>, (accessed May, 4, 2013), 10-11.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

lectionary markers from the exemplar, these “lists” in *Sinaiticus* may have been copied from a much older manuscript(s). Therefore, any insight they may give on early Christian belief or worship practice may actually date much earlier, possibly into the second century, as will be seen below.

#### EARLY CHRISTIAN READING

William Harris, in his masterful study of ancient literacy levels, determined that during the height of the Empire only about 5-10% of the Roman west could read.<sup>33</sup> The Romans overcame this obstacle by regularly integrating the public reading of literature and official documents into their daily lives.<sup>34</sup> The early Church was no exception and would have reflected the contemporary culture’s low literacy levels.<sup>35</sup> Like the surrounding culture, the early Church made the public reading of scripture, that is, the Old Testament, and writings that would later form the New Testament, a central component of their worship gatherings.<sup>36</sup>

The New Testament is replete with references to public reading in Christian gatherings. Paul commanded Timothy to “devote” himself “to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching” (1 Tim 4:13, ESV).<sup>37</sup> He also wrote to the Colossians; “And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea” (Col 4:16, ESV).<sup>38</sup> He gave a similar command to the Thessalonians “to have this letter read to all the brothers” (1 Thess 5:27, ESV). The Jerusalem council had their letter publicly read to the Church at Antioch (Acts 15:31).<sup>39</sup> And in the Apocalypse, John “anticipated the public reading of his own book to Christian congregations when he pronounced a blessing upon “the one who reads ... and those who hear” (1:3).”<sup>40</sup> A few more examples from the New Testament could be given.<sup>41</sup>

The earliest extra-biblical account of the public reading of scripture in worship is found in Justin Martyr around the middle of the second century.

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<sup>33</sup> William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 272.

<sup>34</sup> See the discussion in Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 203-206; and in Alikin, *The Earliest History*, 147-150.

<sup>35</sup> Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 5.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 8-9; Alikin, *The Earliest History*, 160.

<sup>37</sup> Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 206. However, it must be mentioned that Gamble believed “Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, and Titus” were “pseudonymous” and not authored by Paul (98); see also Alikin, *The Earliest History*, 162.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Alikin, *The Earliest History*, 157.

<sup>40</sup> Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 206.

<sup>41</sup> Alikin, *The Earliest History*, wrote “As far as the reading of *Christian* texts is concerned, apostolic letters have probably been read in Sunday gatherings of Christians since the middle of the first century. This can be inferred from 1 Thessalonians 5:27, Acts 15:31, Colossians 4:16, Revelations 1:3 and 22:18 and possibly 2 Peter 3:14-16” (157).

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. (*1 Apol.* 67)<sup>42</sup>

The “memoirs of the apostles” mentioned here are most likely a reference to the four canonical gospels.<sup>43</sup> What is of special interest is the reading of the gospels alongside the “prophets,” probably a reference to the Old Testament writings which were accepted from the beginning by the early Christians as scripture.<sup>44</sup> Closely following the reading of scripture, the “president”<sup>45</sup> expanded on the text just publicly read by giving a homily taken from the day’s reading. There is also evidence to suggest that the audience interacted with the “president’s” preaching with traditional liturgical responses.<sup>46</sup> Justin also mentions that hymns were sung in the gathering, but it is not clear at what point during the service this took place.<sup>47</sup>

Even earlier than the time of Justin, Pliny the Younger, in his famous letter to Emperor Trajan, discussed the nature of the Christian gathering.

They affirmed, however, the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food—but food of an ordinary and innocent kind. (*Ep. Tra.* 10.96)<sup>48</sup>

Pliny does not reference the public reading of scripture, but he does mention the singing of a hymn and the taking of an oath in close association. Perhaps the oath was sung or chanted by the Christians.

Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and other Church fathers reveal the continued emphasis on the reading of scripture, singing, and prayer in the Church

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<sup>42</sup> *ANF* 1:186; c. f. Alikin, *The Earliest History*, 157; Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 205.

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Verheyden, “Justin’s Text of the Gospels: Another Look at the Citations in *1 Apol.* 15. 1-8,” in *The Early Text of the New Testament* (ed. Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 314-315.

<sup>44</sup> Alikin, *The Earliest History*, 155-156, 165.

<sup>45</sup> *1 Apol.* 67.

<sup>46</sup> Justin writes that after the ‘president’ was through preaching and distributing the bread, wine and water “the people assent, saying Amen” (*1 Apol.* 67, *ANF*, 1:186).

<sup>47</sup> Alikin, *The Earliest History*, 66; *1 Apol.* 13.

<sup>48</sup> Pliny the Younger, *Letters, Books 7-10*, (trans. William Melmoth, and W. M. L. Hutchinson; LCL; London: W. Heinemann, 1915), 403-405.

throughout the second and into the third centuries.<sup>49</sup> Tertullian gave an especially illuminating view into the reading of scripture in the early third century:

We assemble to read our sacred writings, if any peculiarity of the times makes either forewarning or reminiscence needful. However it be in that respect, with the sacred words we nourish our faith, we animate our hope, we make our confidence more stedfast [*sic*]; and no less by inculcations of God's precepts we confirm good habits. (*1 Apol.* 39)<sup>50</sup>

Tertullian may be referring to an early liturgical practice of reading in which the audience interacted with the reader in some way, perhaps repeating back the words that were recited in order to “confirm good habits.”<sup>51</sup> However, Tertullian could be referring to the habit of public reading rather than the practice of repeating back the recitation when he referred to the “inculcations of God's precepts.” In another place Tertullian mentioned the “chanting of Psalms” as part of the gathering along with the reading of scripture,<sup>52</sup> perhaps alluding to an interactive worship in which the Psalms were read and the audience chanted along with the reader.

The *manner* in which the texts were read was very important for projection and clarity in order to insure the audience properly understood the text.<sup>53</sup> In the mid second century, Lucian attacked an “uneducated” Syrian who did not “know how to read the texts so as to bring out their meaning.”<sup>54</sup> This was very important in the “intellectual circles” of the Roman era where “the ability to read performatively, with detailed, deep knowledge of the meaning, style, structure and conventions,” was a crucial component in obtaining social status.<sup>55</sup>

The Talmud records Rabbi Johanan as saying that “anyone who reads the scripture without melody or recites the mishnah without a tune, to him applies the scriptural verse, 'And I also gave them statutes that were not good' [Ezek. 20:25]” (*b. Meg. 32a*).<sup>56</sup> In a similar fashion, during Christian gatherings, scripture would not have been read in a “speaking voice but was intoned, that is, chanted to a simple inflection.”<sup>57</sup> Chanting was used during reading because of its musical quality which gave a sense of “soberness” to the scriptures being recited and was “more effective than ordinary speech in impressing what [was] read upon the

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<sup>49</sup> Alikin, *The Earliest History*, 65-67.

<sup>50</sup> *ANF*3:47; see also Alikin, *The Earliest History*, 174-175.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *An.* 9; *ANF*3:189.

<sup>53</sup> Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 226.

<sup>54</sup> William A. Johnson, “The Ancient Book,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (ed. Roger S. Bagnall; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 276.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 226.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 225. In the following short discussion on the manner of reading the text, this author will be mainly summarizing the views set out by Gamble in his *Books and Readers*, 224-231. It is apparent that Christian reading styles derived from Jewish Synagogue practice of reciting the Law (*ibid.*, 226).



memory.”<sup>58</sup> Cantillated reading, in contrast to normal reading, “with its intonations, pauses, and rhythms[,] provided a way to orally parse the text for the hearers.”<sup>59</sup> Irenaeus stressed the importance of the proper reading of the text, probably in a cantillated manner, for correctly understanding 2 Thess. 2:8.<sup>60</sup>

If, then, one does not attend to the [proper] reading [of the passage], and if he do not exhibit the intervals of breathing as they occur, there shall be not only incongruities, but also, when reading, he will utter blasphemy, as if the advent of the Lord could take place according to the working of Satan. So therefore, in such passages, the *hyperbaton* must be exhibited by the reading, and the apostle’s meaning following on, preserved. (*Haer.* 3.7.2)<sup>61</sup>

The role of the reader in interpreting the text is especially apparent in the way Irenaeus included the re-ordering of the sentences by the reader in order that the meaning could be properly understood by the listeners.<sup>62</sup> To guarantee the reader not “utter blasphemy” and misunderstand or misrepresent the scriptures while reading, many manuscripts were transcribed with the sense units written individually on a line. This “arrangement and measurement of a manuscript in terms of sense-lines or space lines is called colometry.”<sup>63</sup> *Codex Bezae*, mentioned above, is an example that has “each page written in thirty-three colometric lines.”<sup>64</sup> There are several other Greek-Latin bilingual manuscripts that exhibit a similar layout as *Bezae*, revealing an established system of punctuation and reader aids dating back to an earlier archetype.<sup>65</sup>

The Psalms and other poetical books of *Sinaiticus* are the only places where the standard four columns of the rest of the manuscript are abandoned. It appears that the scribes wanted to retain the parallelism of the Hebrew poetry and placed each sentence on its own line.<sup>66</sup> In a strikingly similar manner, the “metrical

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 225-226.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>61</sup> *ANF* 1:421.

<sup>62</sup> In the previous section, Irenaeus explained the *true* ordering, and thus the meaning of 2 Thess 2:8: “Now in these [sentences] the order of the words is this; ‘And then shall be revealed that wicked, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the presence of His coming.’ For he does not mean that the coming of the Lord is after the working of Satan; but the coming of the wicked one, whom we also call Antichrist” (*Haer.* 3.7.2). It is apparent that Irenaeus intended the beginning of verse 9, “whose coming is by the working of Satan,” to be read back somehow with the phrase in verse 8, “and then the lawless one will be revealed,” in order to prevent the confusion of the listeners into thinking that the coming of the Lord, the last part of verse 8, was according to the “working of Satan.”

<sup>63</sup> Jack Finegan, *Encountering New Testament Manuscripts: A Working Introduction to Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 40.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 40-41; Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 230.

<sup>66</sup> Parker, *Codex Sinaiticus*, 100.

quality” of select areas in the New Testament were set out with key words and phrases on separate lines.<sup>67</sup> These textual features obviously signaled for “the reader exactly what the sense units were and proscribed the spaces or breaths between.”<sup>68</sup> In a uniquely different yet similar way to the colometric spacing of the poetic books, these “lists” usually break up sentences by placing single words, a word and an article or a short phrase separately on a line. The rarity of this feature when contrasted with the consistent surrounding *scriptio continua* of the columns gives the ‘lists’ a visually striking appearance. At the very least they provide emphasis and highlight the text in a unique way for the reader and for the audience to distinguish a change in the manner of recitation.<sup>69</sup>

#### PARAGRAPH MARKERS AS AIDS IN WORSHIP

A common feature of early Christian literature was the use of “virtue and vice lists,” as well as a “theme of the two ways.”<sup>70</sup> Both describe, through lists, the virtues of walking with God and the results of following the sinful desires of the “flesh.”<sup>71</sup> Two second century writings in particular used the “two ways” theme, the *Didache* and the epistle of *Barnabas*.<sup>72</sup> Nearly half of the former is taken up by the theme “as a summary of basic instruction about the Christian life to be taught to those who were preparing for baptism and Church membership.”<sup>73</sup> *Barnabas* drew on the ‘two-ways’ in so similar a manner as the *Didache* that most suppose a common source.<sup>74</sup>

Several writings of the New Testament also exhibit the “two-ways” or “virtue and vice” lists. The most notable is found in Galatians chapter five.<sup>75</sup> Paul concluded his exhortation to the Galatian Christians to live true to the gospel message which he had preached to them by listing “the works of the flesh” (5:19-21) followed by the “fruit of the Spirit” (5:22-23).<sup>76</sup> Paul used this type of language throughout his epistles, introducing “virtue and vice” or “two ways” lists with words like “works of darkness,”<sup>77</sup> or the ways of the “unrighteous.”<sup>78</sup> In other places he simply used them in his exhortations as he delivered “various rhetorical appeals to

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 100, 112.

<sup>68</sup> Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 229-230.

<sup>69</sup> Head, “The Gospel of Mark,” 13.

<sup>70</sup> Clayton N. Jefford, *The Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006), 80, 88.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>73</sup> Michael W. Holmes, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek texts and English translations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 246.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 247; Jefford, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 90; see also Robert E. Aldridge, “Peter and the ‘Two Ways,’” *Vigiliae Christianae* 53, no. 3 (January 1, 1999), 233-234.

<sup>75</sup> Jefford, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 89.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Rom 13:12.

<sup>78</sup> 1 Cor 6:9.

his readers.”<sup>79</sup> The same language can be seen in other writers of the New Testament, such as in Matt 7:13-14<sup>80</sup>, and Peter shows familiarity with the ‘two ways’ theme throughout both of his letters.<sup>81</sup>

The paragraph ‘lists’ in *Sinaiticus* are mostly located at areas where these “virtue and vice” or “two ways” lists are used in the New Testament.<sup>82</sup> The “works of the flesh” and the “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians five are set out in this way. On Q84-f4r<sup>83</sup> at the right hand bottom of the page an *ekthesis* marks the beginning of Gal 5:19:<sup>84</sup>

ΦΑΝΕΡΩΔΕΕΣΤΙΝ  
ΤΑ ΕΡΓΑ ΤΗΣ ΣΑΡΚΟΣ  
ΑΤΙΝΑ ΕΣΤΙΝ  
ΠΟΡΝΙΑ  
ΑΚΑΘΑΡΣΙΑ  
ΑΣΕΛΓΙΑ  
ΕΙΔΩΛΟΛΑΤΡΕΙΑ

The unique paragraph formatting continues onto Q84-f4v:

ΦΑΡΜΑΚΙΑ  
ΕΧΘΡΑΙ  
ΕΡΙΣ  
ΖΗΛΟΙ  
ΘΥΜΟΙ  
ΕΡΙΘΕΙΑΙ  
ΔΙΧΟΣΤΑΣΙΑΙ  
ΑΙΡΕΣΙΣ  
ΦΘΟΝΟΙ  
ΜΕΘΑΙ  
ΚΩΜΑΙ

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<sup>79</sup> Jefford, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 81.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>81</sup> Aldridge, "Peter and the "Two ways," 255-257.

<sup>82</sup> In the order as they are found in *Sinaiticus*, this author discovered ‘lists’ at: Matt 15:30 (Q75-f1v); Mark 3:16 (Q76-f3v), 7:21-22 (Q76-f6v), 10:19, 29 (Q76-f8v); Luke 3:23-38, the genealogy of Jesus, (Q77-f7v), 6:14-16 (Q78-f1r), 8:51 (Q78-f3v), 14:13, 21 (Q78-f8v); John 5:3 (Q80-f3r); 8:35, 38 (Q82-f4r), 38-39 (Q82-f4v), 13:7, 9, 13 (Q82-f6r); 1 Cor 3:22-23 and 4:11-13 (Q82-f8v), 6:9-10 (Q83-f1r), 12:13 (Q83-f3v), 12:28-29 and 13:4-7 (Q83-f4r), 15:39 (Q83-f5v); 2 Cor 6:4-7 (Q83-f7v) and 6:7-10 (Q83-f8r), 11:26 (Q84-f1v); Gal 5:19 (Q84-f4r) 5:19-21, 22-23 (Q84-f4v); 2 Tim 3:2-4 (Q86-f4r); Titus 1:7-8 (Q86-f5r), Acts 1:13 (Q86-f7r), 6:5 (Q87-f2r); 1 Pet 3:8 (Q89-f4r), 4:3 (Q89-f4v); 2 Pet 1:5-7 (Q89-f5r); Rev 18:13 (Q90-f8r); *Barn.* 19.4, 20.1 (Q92-f2r through Q92-f2v).

<sup>83</sup> For an introduction to the quire numbering system of the Codex Sinaiticus see Parker, *Codex Sinaiticus*, 9-10.

<sup>84</sup> The reader may view online images of *Codex Sinaiticus* at <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org>.

The “works of the flesh” are ended with a raised dot after ΚΩΜΑΙ to signal the reader the end of the sentence. The raised dot was commonly used in punctuating sentence stops.<sup>85</sup> After the concluding remarks at the end of verse 21, the scribe signaled the beginning of the ‘fruits of the Spirit’ at verse 22 with an *ekthesis*:

ΟΔΕΚΑΡΠΙΟΣΤΟΥ  
 ΠΙΝΣΕΣΤΙΝ  
 ΑΓΑΠΗ  
 ΧΑΡΑ  
 ΕΙΡΗΝΗ  
 ΜΑΚΡΟΘΥΜΙΑ  
 ΧΡΗΣΤΟΤΗΣ  
 ΑΓΑΘΩΣΥΝΗ  
 ΠΙΣΤΙΣ  
 ΠΡΑΥΤΗΣ  
 ΕΓΚΡΑΤΕΙΑ

As before, the “fruits of the Spirit” list of virtues are ended at ΕΓΚΡΑΤΕΙΑ with a raised dot to signal the sentence stop. At first glance, it may appear that this paragraphing technique was merely stylistic, especially when considering that a similar list can be found in the genealogy of Luke 3 on Q77-f7v. However, the scribes could have had both a stylistic and practical application in mind when they copied the genealogy in Luke, the names would be much easier to pronounce and announce clearly if each was placed on its own line. Allowing the reader to more easily recognize the name and recite it distinctively.

In a similar way to the genealogy in Luke, the names of the apostles, in some places, have been set into lists as well. Starting at Mark 3:16 on Q76-f3v, the story of Jesus calling the apostles is signaled with an *ekthesis* and the names of the twelve are placed on their own line.<sup>86</sup> Each name would have been easier to recognize and pronounce for the reader, emphasizing them for the benefit of the audience.

Another curious place the scribes chose to use this technique was for the sick and lame who approached Jesus in Matt 15:30 on Q75-f1v. The context of the narrative chosen by the scribes appears to be whenever the diseased and poor approached Jesus for healing or where the mentioning of the sick are contained in a parable Jesus was teaching, such as in Luke 14 on Q78-f8v.<sup>87</sup>

Some have suggested that these highlighted passages in the New Testament were intended to be sung or chanted as hymns, considering how they appear to have a “hymn-like quality” and are formatted for easier pronunciation.<sup>88</sup> However, many

<sup>85</sup> See the discussion in Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 31-32; Parker, *Codex Sinaiticus*, 71.

<sup>86</sup> The apostle’s names are listed out this way at Luke 6:14-16 (Q78-f1r) and 8:51 (Q78-f3v).

<sup>87</sup> See also John 5:3 (Q80-f3r).

<sup>88</sup> It appears Parker alludes to this in *Codex Sinaiticus*, 100, 112.

of the verses which scholars have long regarded as ancient Christian hymns, such as at Phil 2 or 1 Cor 15, are not formatted in this way.<sup>89</sup>

Another possibility, and the one which this author views as most likely, is that these sections of scripture were used for teaching in a distinctive way. It has already been stated above that the “two-ways” material in the *Didache* was used to teach new converts before baptism.<sup>90</sup> Perhaps there were occasions during reading or even during the singing of hymns in which the reader would chant these portions of the New Testament to the audience, who either repeated back what was being read, or answered with some type of “responsory” phrase.<sup>91</sup> The rhythmical way in which the lists are structured in *Sinaiticus* suggest that they were used in this way. Tertullian, in the early third century, wrote that “[t]he more diligent in prayer are wont to subjoin in their prayers the ‘Hallelujah,’ and such kind of psalms, in the closes of which the company respond” (*Or.* 27).<sup>92</sup> An ancient Christian hymn in Latin, dating to third or fourth century on papyrus, preserves “a life of Jesus harmonized from canonical and non-canonical traditions.”<sup>93</sup> This hymn was ‘chanted’ by the reader and the audience would answer by singing the “refrain of four lines.”<sup>94</sup> Cyprian, in the third century, wrote:

Moreover, when we stand praying, beloved brethren, we ought to be watchful and earnest with our whole heart, intent on our prayers. Let all carnal and worldly thoughts pass away, nor let the soul at that time think on anything but the object only of its prayer. For this reason also the priest, by way of preface before his prayer, prepares the minds of the brethren by saying, “Lift up your hearts,” that so upon the people’s response, “We lift them up unto the Lord,” he may be reminded that he himself ought to think of nothing but the Lord. (*Dom. Or.* 31)<sup>95</sup>

It seems possible to this author that the “two-ways” sections which are signaled by lists in *Sinaiticus* were used to instruct in some type of metrical, “responsory” format. Pliny, in his famous letter to Trajan (discussed above), mentioned that in the context of worship the Christians “bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up.”<sup>96</sup> It is difficult to discern exactly to what Pliny is referring here, but it is possible that the Christians were chanting or reciting a form of the

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<sup>89</sup> Ernest Best, “The Use of Credal and Liturgical Material in Ephesians,” in *Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Ralph P. Martin* (ed. Michael J. Wilkins and Terence Paige; JSNTSup 87, ed. Stanley E. Porter; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 53-56.

<sup>90</sup> Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 246; Jefford, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 83.

<sup>91</sup> Alikin, *The Earliest History*, 219.

<sup>92</sup> *AFN* 3:690; c. f. Alikin, *The Earliest History*, 219.

<sup>93</sup> Alikin, *The Earliest History*, 220.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *ANF* 5:456.

<sup>96</sup> *Ep. Tra.* 10.96.

“virtue and vice,” “two-ways” lists, or some other “general list” of “ethical teaching.”<sup>97</sup> If this is true, then it appears that *Sinaiticus* may be a witness to this type of instructional practice, one that may date back to the time of Pliny in the early second century.

#### AN EXPLORATORY COMPARISON

If this unique paragraph formatting can be traced back into the second century, then *Sinaiticus* may provide us with a window into early Christian worship. That is, the use of “virtue and vice” lists as well as the “two-ways” teaching to instruct (maybe new converts) during the reading of scripture. It has already been mentioned above that punctuation, lectional markings, and reader’s aids were often copied from the exemplar.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to conclude that *all* of the formatting features were taken from the manuscript being copied. Dirk Jongkind, in his magisterial study of the scribal habits of *Sinaiticus*, noted that “[t]he fluctuation in paragraphing within a single book, such as the gospel of Luke, is easier to explain by swings in the scribe’s attitude than by fluctuation within a tradition.”<sup>99</sup> Johnson noted that scribes exercised some freedom in choosing which punctuation and other formatting to be transcribed from the manuscript being copied.<sup>100</sup> Overall, despite this variation, Jongkind concluded “that some influence from outside the scribe is present and that it is reasonable to assume that the exemplar, or exemplars, played a role.”<sup>101</sup> The tradition associated with punctuation and lectional markings in ancient manuscripts, and the apparent age of the “two-ways” theme and its use in instruction, have led this author to explore a connection between *Sinaiticus* and papyrus P46, a second century copy of Paul’s epistles.

This author examined the images available on the Advanced Papyrological Information System (hereafter APIS) for P46, leaf 167 verso, which contains Gal 5:20-23.<sup>102</sup> The leaf is fragmentary near the bottom and verse 19, the beginning of the “the works of the flesh,” is lost, so we must begin our examination at the top of leaf 167 verso, Gal 5:20. At the top of the page EPIΘEIAI is found with a noticeable space between the next word ΔΙΧΟΣΤΑΣΙΑΙ [space] ΑΙΠΕΣΕΙΣ [space] ΦΘΟΝΟΙ. The next line begins with ΜΕΘΑΙ [space] ΚΩΜΟΙ [space], ΚΑΙ . . . , and then the line continues to the end with the normal *scriptio continua*. The spaces here are

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<sup>97</sup> Graham Stanton, “Aspects of Early Christian and Jewish Worship: Pliny and the *Kerygma Petrou*,” in *Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Ralph P. Martin*, 93.

<sup>98</sup> Johnson, *Book Rolls and Scribes*, 24.

<sup>99</sup> Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*, 109.

<sup>100</sup> Johnson, *Book Rolls and Scribes*, 58-59.

<sup>101</sup> Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*, 109.

<sup>102</sup> Columbia University Libraries, “APIS record: michigan.apis.3620,” Advanced Papyrological Information System, <http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/apis/item?mode=item&key=michigan.apis.3620> (accessed May 15, 2013).

obviously meant to isolate the words in some meaningful way, possibly in order that the reader may be able to sound out each word individually with emphasis in comparison to the rest of the text. On the fifth line of P46, leaf 167 verso, verse 22 commences with a noticeable space where the *ekthesis* begins in *Sinaiticus* at ΟΔΕΚΑΡΠΙΟΣΤΟΥΙΠΙΝΣ, “the fruits of the Spirit.” But the ‘fruits’ are not listed out with the same noticeable spaces between the individual words as above in the “works of the flesh.” The spaces that are present between some of the phrases do not correspond to the paragraph ‘list’ in *Sinaiticus* in the same location.

Another similarity at 2 Cor 11:26 occurs between *Sinaiticus* on Q84-f1v and P46 on leaf 141 verso.<sup>103</sup> Paul is recounting the hazards he had encountered during his missionary journeys while bringing the Christian message of the gospel to the gentiles. At 2 Cor 11:26 he described the many “dangers” he had endured during his various travels. In *Sinaiticus* the “dangers” are placed individually on their own lines, with ΚΙΝΔΥΝΟΙΣ . . . beginning each line. On leaf 141 verso near the center of the page, P46 has a noticeable space between each occurrence of ΚΙΝΔΥΝΟΙΣ. Though this formatting is most likely due to style (as in the genealogy at Luke 3) rather than for highlighting specific instruction as in Gal 5:20.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, the correlation in punctuation between P46 and *Sinaiticus* at 2 Cor 11:26 does appear to lend credence to the suggestion that the paragraph ‘lists’ in *Sinaiticus* are derived from much older exemplars.

It is difficult to understand if there is any true correlation between the spacing in P46 at 2 Cor 11:26 and Gal 5:20 and the paragraph features of *Sinaiticus* at the same locations. Especially considering the small sample examined in P46. It is possible that only the “works of the flesh” are separated in P46 because it was only the ‘do not’s’ that were used in early Christian instruction and worship in the second century. This appears to be the case when considering Pliny’s account of the Christian “oaths” which were primarily a list of ‘do not’s.’<sup>105</sup> There are some remarkable similarities when comparing the spacing in POxy 1786, an early Christian hymn from the late third century,<sup>106</sup> with the spacing at Gal 5:20 in P46. The early Christian hymn shows a full character space between each word, as P46 does at Gal 5:20.<sup>107</sup> The spacing in both would indicate that the reader was to emphasize the words, possibly with a cantillated chant in P46<sup>108</sup> and a musical

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<sup>103</sup> Columbia University Libraries, “APIS record: michigan.apis.3590,” Advanced Papyrological Information System, <http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/apis/item?mode=item&key=michigan.apis.3590> (accessed May 15, 2013).

<sup>104</sup> Jongkind noted that scribe B of *Sinaiticus* used paragraph markers at certain “signal-words” (*Scribal Habits*, 102).

<sup>105</sup> *Ep. Tra.* 10.96.

<sup>106</sup> Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (vol. 15; London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1922), 21.

<sup>107</sup> Image of POxy 1786 was located at “Oxyrhynchus Online,” <http://163.1.169.40/cgi-bin/library?e=q-000-00--0POxy--00-0-0--0prompt-10---4----ded--0-11--1-en-50---20-about-P.+Oxy.+1786--00031-001-1-OutfZz-8-00&a=d&c=POxy&cl=search&d=HASH011f50b846c78b83819959d1> (accessed May 15, 2013).

<sup>108</sup> Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 225.

singing voice in POxy 1786.<sup>109</sup> It may be tentatively concluded that the paragraph ‘lists’ in *Sinaiticus* can be traced to earlier exemplars, of which P46 *may* be an example of what that exemplar could have looked like, at least at 2 Cor 11:26 and Gal 5:20.

## CONCLUSION

It is impossible to derive any hard and fast conclusions with such a brief survey of the material. This is an exploratory paper to present a *possible* scenario that may have lead the scribes of *Sinaiticus* to highlight certain portions of the text in such a unique manner. The two examples from P46 at 2 Cor 11:26 and Gal 5:20 are hardly representative enough to show that *Sinaiticus*’ paragraph lists derive from much older exemplars.<sup>110</sup> A more thorough examination of the papyri is needed and may show more connections between *Sinaiticus* and Christian worship in the earlier centuries. Even with scanty evidence from the papyri it has already been noted that scribes tended to copy punctuation and reading aids from the exemplar. This tendency, by itself, may be enough to show that *Sinaiticus*’ paragraph lists date at least into the third century from much older exemplars, perhaps ones that may have been part of Pamphilus’ library, judging by the colophons.

The school that Origen supervised in Alexandria catered to new converts, catechumens, who wished to learn the rudiments of the Christian faith before being baptized and entering into the full fellowship of the Church.<sup>111</sup> Origen fled Alexandria to escape the intense persecution and moved to Caesarea in Palestine where he began a school.<sup>112</sup> Pamphilus, his pupil, later became head of the school and prided himself in building a large library containing a variety of Christian and classical literary texts.<sup>113</sup> Many of the works he copied himself and willingly provided manuscripts from his library to scholars in need.<sup>114</sup> If *Sinaiticus* was copied from manuscripts in the library at Caesarea, then many of those documents may have been formatted for instruction in the essentials of the faith, the “two-ways” lists being a fundamental part of that instruction.<sup>115</sup> It is impossible to know for sure, but perhaps *Sinaiticus*’ paragraph lists of the “two-ways” descends from this heritage of early Christian instruction.

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<sup>109</sup> Alikin, *Earliest History*, 218.

<sup>110</sup> P46 could provide further connections. The ones discussed in this paper, located on APIS, were the only sections available to this author for examination at the time of writing. The Chester Beatty portions of P46 are now available online for viewing at [http://www.csntm.org/manuscript/zoomify/GA\\_P46](http://www.csntm.org/manuscript/zoomify/GA_P46).

<sup>111</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.3.3

<sup>112</sup> Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 155.

<sup>113</sup> For an excellent discussion of the library at Caesarea, see Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 155-158.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>115</sup> If *Sinaiticus* was copied from manuscripts used to instruct new converts, this fact may also explain some of the other ‘listed’ sections of the New Testament, such as the names of the apostles, as this formatting would help those new to Christianity learn the apostle’s names.



Another piece in the puzzle may come from the writings that were used in the making of *Sinaiticus*. The epistle of *Barnabas* and the *Shepard of Hermas* were placed at the end of the New Testament, possibly revealing their less-than canonical status. Both of these writings were highly valued by early Christians for instructing new converts, especially the *Shepard of Hermas*.<sup>116</sup> For the same reason, the epistle of *Barnabas* was highly esteemed by both Clement of Alexandria and Origen.<sup>117</sup> And it has already been mentioned above that *Barnabas* contained the “two-ways” theme which was an integral part of early Christian instruction.<sup>118</sup>

When taken collectively: the evidence of punctuation, ancient sources revealing the early Christian practice of cantillated reading, the respository nature of the hymns, and the reading of scripture, along with the unique paragraph ‘lists’ in *Codex Sinaiticus*, reveal a lively Christian community concerned with effectively teaching its new converts and establishing the faithful in the teaching of the Church.

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<sup>116</sup> Roberts, *Manuscript*, 22.

<sup>117</sup> Bruce Manning Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 56.

<sup>118</sup> The “two-ways” teaching at *Barn.* 19.1 and 20.1 (Q92-f2r through Q92-f2v) is emphasized by the same paragraph ‘lists’ as in Gal 5:19-23 (Q84-f4r through Q84-f4v).

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