Earth Accuses Earth: Tracing What Jesus Wrote on the Ground

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The story of the woman taken in adultery (John 7:53–8:11) has a long, complex history. Well-known in the Latin West, the story was neglected but not forgotten in the East. Incorporated within Late Antique and Early Medieval Gospel manuscripts, depicted in Christian art, East and West, and included within the developing liturgies of Rome and Constantinople, the passage has fascinated interpreters for centuries despite irregularities in its transmission.[1] Throughout this long history, one narrative detail has been of particular interest: the content and significance of Jesus' writing. Discussed in sermons, elaborated in manuscripts, and depicted in magnificent illuminations, Jesus' writing has inspired interpreters at least since the fourth century, when Ambrose of Milan first mentioned it. Offering his opinion on the propriety of capital punishment, the bishop turned to the pericope in order to argue that Christians do well to advocate on behalf of the condemned since, by doing so, they imitate the mercy of Christ. Nevertheless, he averred, the imposition of capital punishment remains an option for Christian rulers and judges. After all, God also judges and condemns, as Christ showed when, responding to the men questioning him and accusing the adulteress, he wrote twice on the ground. Demonstrating that "the Jews were condemned by both testaments," Christ bent over and wrote "with the finger with which he had written the law," or so the bishop

[1] In general there are relatively few examples of major redactional additions to the text of the New Testament. Besides the story of the woman taken in adultery, the other obvious example is the so-called Longer Ending of Mark (Mark 16:19–20). The unstable transmission history of both of these pericopes show that the transmission of the Gospels was not easily controlled by the church, even in Late Antiquity. See Frederik Wisse, "The Nature and Purpose of Redactional Changes in Early Christian Texts," in *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century: Origins, Recensions, Text, and Transmission* (ed. William L. Petersen; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989) 47–48.

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claimed.[2] Ambrose offered a further conjecture in a subsequent letter: Jesus wrote "earth, earth, write that these men have been disowned," a saying he attributes to Jeremiah (compare Jer 22:29),[3] . As Jeremiah also explains, "Those who have been disowned by their Father are written on the ground," but the names of Christians are written in heaven.[4]

With this supposition, Ambrose began a widespread fascination with what Jesus wrote. Explanations regarding Jesus' writing entered textual and interpretive traditions as diverse as the tenth-century Latin picture book Codex Egberti and the ninth-century Constantinopolitan Codex Nanianus of the Gospels (U 030), the first Byzantine manuscript to supply the detail "[he wrote] the sins of each one of them" (ενος εκαστου αυτων τας αμαρτιας).[5] Codex Egberti offers an alternative, depicting Jesus bending down and inscribing "earth accuses earth" (terra terram accusat) in the ground,[6] (fig. 1) a feature that also appears in the illuminated eleventh-century Gospel Book of Hitda of Maschede,[7] (fig. 2) and a ninth-century *glossa*, Codex Sangalensis 292.[8] Perhaps the compiler of the *glossa* and the illuminators of Egberti and the Gospel Book of Hitda were inspired by Ambrose's earlier view, or, perhaps they were paraphrasing a statement made by Augustine.[9] In either case,

[2] *Epistle* 68.14: "Scribebat autem in terra digito quo legem scripserat . . . Secundo autem scripsit, ut gemino testamento Iudaeos scias esse damnatos" (trans. Mary Melchior Beyenka; CSEL 82:175; FC 26:472).

[3] *Epistle* 50.4: "Quid scribebat nisi illud propheticum: *Terra terra scribe* hos *viros abdicatos*, quod de Iechonia lectum est in Hieremia propheta?" (trans. Beyenka; CSEL 82:57–58; FC 26:493; quotations of scripture are italicized in the critical editions).

[4] *Epistle* 50.5, 7: "Cum Iudaei interpellant, *in terra* scribuntur nomina Iudaeorum, cum adeunt Christiani, non scribuntur in terra fidelium nomina, sed *in caelo*. In terra autem scribuntur abdicati a patre proprio, qui patrem temptant et contumelius irrogant auctori salutis" (trans. Beyenka; CSEL 82:58; FC 26:493). Compare Jeremiah 17:13: "Omnes qui te dereliquerunt confundentur recedentes in terra scribentur."

[5] For further discussion of the forms of this variant in later MSS, see Tommy Wasserman, "The Patmos Family of New Testament MSS and Its Allies in the Pericope of the Adulteress and Beyond," *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 7 (2002). Online: http://purl.org/TC/vol07/Wasserman2002/Wasserman2002.html.

[6] Trier. Codex Egberti, Reichenau MS 24, fol. 46*v*.

[7] Darmstadt. Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, MS 1640, fol. 171*r*. For discussion and plates, see Jeremia Kraus, *Worauf gründet unser Glaube? Jesus von Nazaret im Spiegel des Hitda-Evangeliars* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2005).

[8] Sankt Gallen Stiftsbibliothek (SB) 292, fol. 135; see also Karlsruhe. BLB, St. Peter perg. 88 and 109. We would like to thank Anina Baumann for her assistance with Cod. Sang. 292.

[9] Preaching on Psalm 2:10, the bishop of Hippo also invoked Jesus' writing, this time to remind kings that, when they judge people of the earth, "earth itself is judging the earth" (quia terra iudicat terram). As mere mortals, kings too will be judged (*Serm*. 13.4–6; CCSL 41.11.1:179–80). Franz Ronig and Paul Bloch identify this sermon as the likely source of the gloss; Franz Ronig, *Codex Egberti. Das Perikopenbuch des Erzbischofs Egbert von Trier (977–993)* (Treveris Sacra 1; Trier: Spee-Verlag, 1977) 76 and Paul Bloch, "Ehebrecherin," *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie* (ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum et al.; 8 vols.; Freiberg im Breisgau: Herder, 1968–1976) 1:581–83. Bruce M. Metzger disagreed, however, noting that there is no word-for-word correspondence between Augustine's sermon and the phrase as found in Egberti and Hitda's Gospel Book. Review of *Lexikon*

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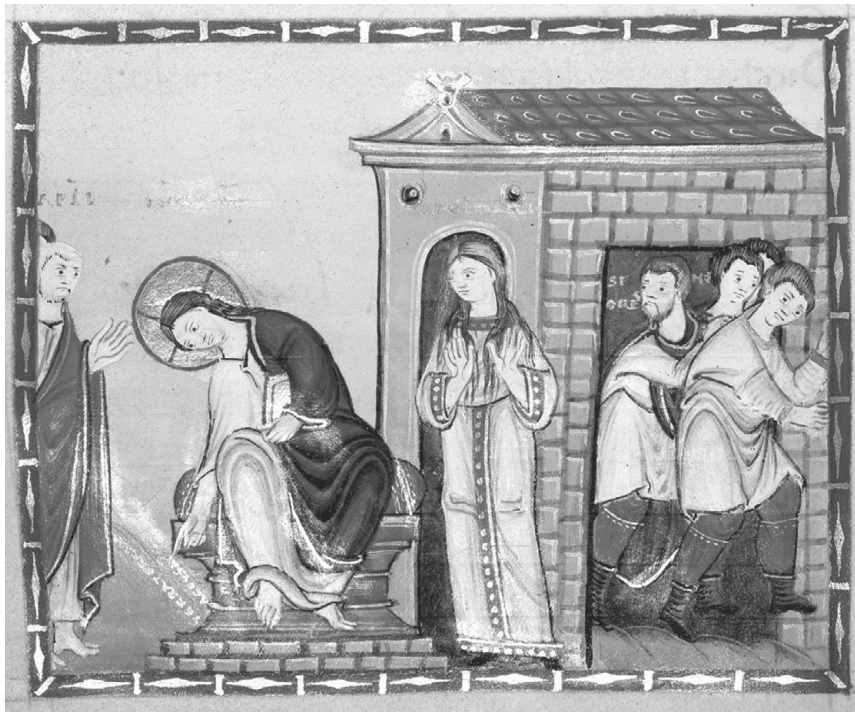


Fig. 1. Codex Egberti, Trier, ninth cent. Stadtbibliothek/Stadarchiv Trier, MS 24, fol. 46*v*.

they, like Codex Nanianus, took care to specify the content of Jesus' writing. As such, they added to a host of interpretive elaborations entered into textual witnesses, discussed in commentaries, invoked in sermons, and represented in images designed to accompany the Gospels, each offering a distinctive "paratext" specifying what Jesus wrote and why he wrote it.[10] By tracing these and other suggestions regarding this writing, this essay explores what can be learned about the transmission and reception of the *pericope adulterae* on the basis of claims about what Jesus wrote.

Recent Proposals

Contemporary scholars have also wanted to determine what Jesus wrote, or if he wrote at all. In 1964, J. Duncan Derrett put forward the highly speculative proposition that Jesus inscribed selections from Exodus 23. Accepting the historicity of the episode, Derrett envisioned Jesus seated on a low stool and therefore limited

der Christlichen Ikonographie in *Church History* 45 (1976) 5–15, at 8.

[10] This term is borrowed from Gérard Genette, who defines "paratext" as those elements that accompany and "presentify" texts, guiding readers to particular understandings of the text in question. Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (trans. Jane E. Lewin; Cambridge. U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1977). See also Graham Anderson, *Intertextuality* (The New Critical Idiom; New York: Routledge, 2000) 103–7.

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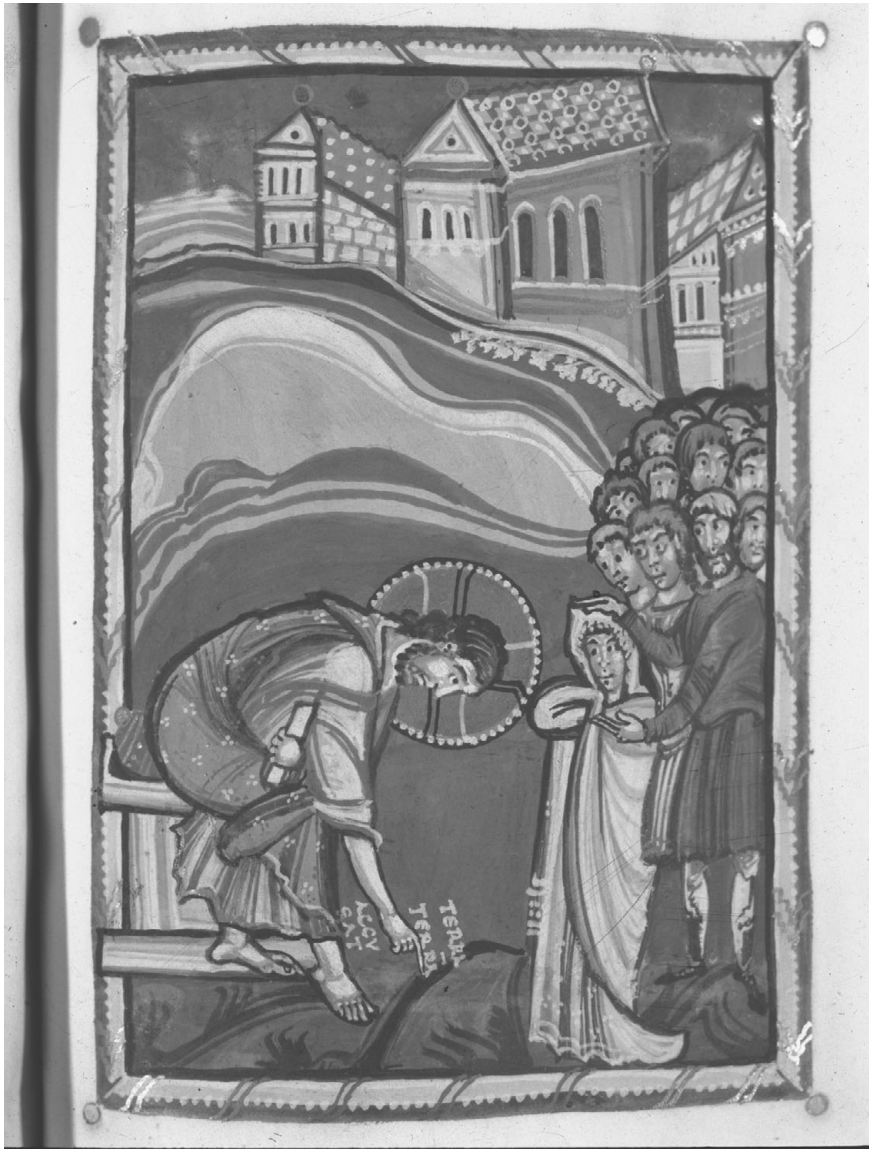


Fig. 2. Hitda Codex (Gospels), Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery. Cologne, ca. 1000. MS 1640 171*r*, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt.

in what he could have written. To inscribe more than sixteen characters of Hebrew text would have been physically awkward, if not impossible, Derrett suggests, and so Jesus probably traced out, "You shall not spread a false report" (Exodus 23:1b). This verse contains the right number of Hebrew letters, Derrett observes, and was widely discussed in rabbinic literature. Also, the saying fits both the controversy

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and Jesus' legal perspective, at least as Derrett reconstructs it.[11] Others remain unconvinced by this fanciful hypothesis, arguing instead that it is equally possible that Jesus wrote nothing at all. As Paul Foster observes, the term καταγράφω only rarely refers to writing an alphabetical script, more often denoting drawing or etching, especially outside a Septuagint context. Thus, Jesus could just as well have been tracing lines or doodling while mulling over his response,[12] a conclusion also suggested by Raymond Brown.[13] Brown notes, "One cannot help but feel that if the matter were of major importance, the content of the writing would have been reported."[14]

It is not only what Jesus wrote but also the manner in which he was described as writing that has prompted speculation from interpreters. By specifying that Jesus wrote with his finger, Harald Schöndorf points out, the author of the passage may be recalling Exodus 31:18, a verse that describes God inscribing covenant provisions with the divine finger. Linking divine law as given through Moses, on stone and with the divine finger, with divine writing inscribed on the ground and revealed by Christ, this detail implies that Jesus is equal or even superior to Moses, who simply receives rather than writes divine law.[15] A possible link with Exodus is also suggested by James Sanders, who wonders if Jesus did not write the Decalogue, inscribing the first five commandments before stating, "Whoever is without sin, throw the first stone at her," and then writing the remaining five after bending down once more.[16]

[11] J. Duncan Derrett, "Law in the New Testament: The Story of the Woman Taken in Adultery," *NTS* 19 (1963–1964) 1–26, at 9, 23. Exodus 23 continues to be cited in scholarly literature as probable, though, as also often noted, Derrett's reconstruction is pure conjecture. See, for example, Frances Taylor Gench, *Back to the Well: Women's Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2004) 138; J. Martin C. Scott, "On the Trail of a Good Story: John 7.53–8.11 in the Gospel Tradition," in *Ciphers in the Sand: Interpretations of the Woman Taken in Adultery* (ed. Larry J. Kreitzer and Deborah W. Rooke; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000) 63; Chris Keith, *The* Pericope Adulterae, *the Gospel of John, and the Literacy of Jesus* (New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 38; Leiden: Brill, 2009) 14.

[12] Paul Foster, "Educating Jesus: The Search for a Plausible Context," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 4 (2006) 7–33, at 20–21.

[13] Raymond Brown, *The Gospel according to John I–XII: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible 29; New York: Doubleday, 1966) 334.

[14] Brown, *Gospel according to John I–XII*, 334. O'Day adds: "[T]he shape of the story makes clear that Jesus' conversation partners, both the scribes and the Pharisees and the woman, respond to what they hear Jesus say, not what he writes. Attempts to find the interpretive key to John 7:53–8:11 in something outside the given story reveal a dissatisfaction with and distrust of the story as it is written." Gail O'Day, "John 5:53–8:11: A Study in Misreading," *JBL* 111 (1992) 631–40, at 636.

[15] Harald Schöndorf, "Jesus schreibt mit dem Finger auf die Erde," *BZ* 49 (1996) 91–93, at 92. See also Zane C. Hodges, "The Woman Taken in Adultery (John 7:53–8:11): Exposition," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 137 (1980) 41–53, at 46, and Keith, *Pericope Adulterae*, 175–81, 189–90. Scott, "On the Trail," 63–64, is not persuaded by this argument.

[16] James Sanders, "'Nor Do I . . .': A Canonical Reading of the Challenge to Jesus in John 8," in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in John and Paul* (ed. Robert T. Fortna and Beverly R. Gaventa; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1990) 337–47. Interestingly, Bede made this same connection in the eighth century in *Homily on John* 1.75–80.

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The writing on the wall in Daniel (5:5, 24–28) also serves as a possible inter-text; here divinely-sent fingers write letters announcing judgment against Belshazzar, a foolish and idolatrous king, who died that very night. Similarly, Jesus announces the judgment of the scribes and Pharisees throughout the Gospels, warning that they too will receive their punishment.[17] A further connection with Daniel is also possible: Read in Rome on the third Saturday of Lent at the titular church of the Gai (Santa Susanna), the *pericope adulterae* was associated with the episode of Susanna and the elders at least from the fifth century on, an association that the author himself may have intended if, as Robert E. Osborne suggests, Jesus wrote words from Daniel 13.[18]

Recently, scholarly interest has turned away from the content of Jesus' writing to the fact that he is represented as writing at all. As George Aichele observes, the logocentrism of John's Gospel offers a particularly fitting context for a story involving Jesus, writing, and a set of missing words: In a manner similar to the Gospel itself, Jesus' words fail to signify, at least in an obvious way.[19] Considering the significance of writing in a recent study, Chris Keith argues that this portrayal of Jesus' writing may have served as a defensive maneuver designed to resist outsider critique. The writing on the ground demonstrates that Jesus was "grapho-literate"—that is, he had attained the highest level of literacy available in his day—a point so crucial that this pericope was added to the Gospel of John after initial publication, perhaps as a response to those who denigrated Jesus' lack of formal education. Jesus knew how to read and write, the *pericope adulterae* proclaims, an answer to the question raised in John 7:15: "How does this man know his letters, when he has not been taught?" (πῶς οὗτος γράμματα οἶδεν μὴ

[17] Scott suggests a connection with Daniel 5:5, 24–28. See also Keith, *Pericope Adulterae*, 176–77, who notes that both Exodus 31:18 and Deuteronomy 9:10 specify that God wrote the law with the divine finger. As we have already observed, Ambrose also made this connection, though he did not explicitly cite Exodus.

[18] Robert E. Osborne, "Pericope Adulterae," *CJT* 12 (1966) 281–83. Of course Jesus himself cannot have written Daniel (Theodotion) 13:5, "Iniquity came forth from Babylon, from elders who were judges, who were supposed to govern the people," since the story of Susanna survives only in Greek and is unlikely to have had a Hebrew original. On the place of the pericope in the Roman stational liturgy, see Walter H. Frere, *Studies in Early Roman Liturgy* (3 vols.; Alcuin Club Collections 30; London: Oxford University Press, 1934) 2:iii–iv, 8, 81; Theodoor Klauser, *Das Römische Capitulare Evangeliorum. Texte und Untersuchungen zu seiner Ältesten Geschichte* (Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 28; Münster: Aschendorff, 1972) xi–xxviii. On the possible association of this pericope and the story of Susanna, see also Scott, "On the Trail," 69–72; Jennifer Wright Knust, "Early Christian Re-Writing and the History of the *Pericope Adulterae*," *JECS* 14 (2006) 497. For a skeptical view, see J. Chris Keith, "Recent and Previous Research on the Pericope Adulterae (John 7.53–8.11)," *Currents in Biblical Research* 6 (2008) 377–404. A connection between the pericope and Susanna is also made in an illuminated medieval *Bible moralisée* (Austrian NB 11794, fol. 174) and in the Concordantia Caritatis; for discussion, see Alfred A. Schmid, "Concordantia caritatis," *Reallexikon zur deutsche Kunstgeschichte*, ed. Otto Schmitt (11 vols.; Stuttgart: Alfred Druckmüller, 1954) 3:833–53, at 842.

[19] George Aichele, "Reading Jesus Writing," *Biblical Interpretation* 12 (2004) 353–68, at 359.

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μεμαθηκώς;).[20] As Keith explains, what Jesus wrote was not the issue, but that he wrote and how he wrote.

This essay takes a different tack, however, asking not what Jesus wrote or why he was represented writing but what claims about Jesus' writing can reveal about the assumptions brought to bear on this passage and its text. Texts do not stand apart from those who produce, read, and interpret them. Rather, they are written, preserved and authorized within particular historical settings by human actors, who bring diverse assumptions to bear on the texts they interpret and transmit.[21] Viewed from this perspective, the unusual transmission history of the *pericope adulterae* bears witness not to the corruption of a pristine gospel text but to the promiscuity of text and meaning.[22] Assertions about what Jesus wrote do not solve the question of this writing; instead they offer competitively plausible explanations that fit within the interpretive rules they seek to apply.[23] Other explanations for Jesus' act are also possible, and, indeed, many more have been offered. The knotty transmission history of the pericope highlights the phenomenon further, with copyists and scholars from the fourth century onward taking care to signal the story's instability, sometimes including it and sometimes leaving it out, according to the dominant text-critical assumptions of their day.[24] Scribes, translators and scholars as diverse as Jerome,[25] an anonymous sixth-century Greek chronicler,[26] the twelfth-century patriarch of

[20] Keith, *Pericope Adulterae*, esp. 203–4, 223–32, 249–56; see also Edgar J. Goodspeed, *A History of Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942) 70, cited by Keith, *Pericope Adulterae*, 141–4ll.

[21] Jerome McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); idem, "Interpretation as a Game that Must Be Lost," in *The Scholars Art: Literary Studies in a Managed World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Michel Foucault, "Nietzche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (ed. D. F. Bonchard; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977) 51–52; Roger Chartier, *On the Edge of the Cliff: History, Language and Practices* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) 81–89; Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward a History of Aesthetic Reception* (trans. Timothy Bahti; Theory and History of Literature 2; Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1982) esp. 14–15, 20–32.

[22] For a study of textual criticism and reader reception theory, see Philip W. Comfort, "The Scribe as Interpreter: A New Look at New Testament Textual Criticism according to Reader Reception Theory," (Ph.D. diss., University of South Africa, 1996). Eldon J. Epp, "Anti-Judaic Tendencies in the D-Text of Acts: Forty Years of Conversation," in *The Book of Acts as Church History* (ed. Tobias Nicklas and Michael Tilly; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003) 144–46. Epp has proposed another approach, that of "narrative textual criticism." Here the focus is on the history of textual transmission, with textual variants in their multiplicity allowed to tell their own stories, alerting us to the concerns in the faith and practice of the church through history.

[23] Joan Wallach Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1991) 773–97. See also Scott, "Fantasy Echo: History and the Construction of Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 27 (2001) 284–304.

[24] For an overview of the problem, see Ulrich Becker, *Jesus und die Ehebrecherin. Untersuchungen zur Text- und Überlieferungsgeschichte von Joh. 7:53–8:11* (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1963) 8–43.

[25] In his work *Against the Pelagians*, Jerome observes that the story is found "in many of both the Greek as well as the Latin copies" (in multis et Graecis et Latinis codicibus) of the Gospel of John (*Pelag.* 2.17; CCSL 80:75–78; trans. John N. Hritzu: FC 53:321).

[26] [Zacharias Rhetor], *Chronicle* 8.7. Pseudo-Zacharias observed that the story could be found in only one MS, a personal copy of John possessed by Bishop Moro.

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Constantinople Euthymius Zigabenus,[27] and several anonymous scholiasts[28] noted the problems posed by this passage's presence or absence from the Gospels, a dilemma that made its way into the text in the form of text-critical marks, blank spaces in manuscripts, and diverse locations within the Gospels, despite its predominant placement in John 8.[29] Yet none of these diverse indicators of textual instability managed to push the story to the margins of Christian interpretation, and none have prevented readers from offering suggestions regarding what Jesus wrote, when they knew a version of the story that represented him as writing.

Notably, the earliest probable references to the *pericope adulterae* make no mention of writing. Papias of Hieropolis's story involving a woman "falsely accused of many sins" (ἐπὶ πολλαῖς ἁμαρτίαις διαβληθείσης) does not discuss the writing;[30] neither does a possible allusion in the *Proto-Gospel of James* 16.2, which focuses on a false charge of sexual sin.[31] The earliest certain reference, a citation in the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, includes the last line of the familiar Johannine text—"Go, neither do I condemn you"—but without any mention of Jesus' writing on the ground.[32] Origen's consideration of an adulteress facing the possibility of stoning invokes the Johannine title for Christ, "Logos," and notes that the adulteress was found in the act[33] but includes no discussion of writing.[34]

[27] In his *Commentary on John*, Euthymius Zigabenus states: "In the accurate manuscripts [the passage] is either not found or it is obelized" (ἀκριβέσιν ἀντιγράφοις ἢ οὐκ εὕρηται ἢ ὠβέλισται, translation our own; PG 129:1280d).

[28] For examples of anonymous scholia questioning the origin and integrity of the passage, see Becker, *Jesus und die Ehebrecherin*, 11.

[29] Becker, *Jesus und die Ehebrecherin,* 8–14; Maurice A. Robinson, "Preliminary Observations Regarding the *Pericope Adulterae* Based upon Fresh Collations of Nearly All Continuous-Text Manuscripts and All Lectionary Manuscripts Containing the Passage," *FilNeot* 13 (2000) 4–12.

[30] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.17; SC 31:157.

[31] Greek text edited by Émile de Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques. Recherches sur le papyrus Bodmer 5 avec une édition critique du texte grec et une traduction annotée* (Subsidia hagiographica 33; Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1961); English translation by James Keith Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation Based on M. R. James* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 48–67. On the date of the work, see Pieter A. van Stempvoort, "The Protevangelium Jacobi, the Sources of Its Theme and Style and Their Bearing on Its Date," in *Studia Evangelica Volumes II–III. Papers Presented to the Second International Conference on New Testament Studies Held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1961* (ed. Frank Leslie Cross; Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur 88; Berlin: Akademie, 1964) 3:410–26; Edouard Cothenet, "Le Protévangile de Jacques. Origine, genre et signification d'un premier midrash Chrétien sur la Nativité de Marie," *ANRW* 2.25:4252–69. On the *pericope adulterae*, the Gospel of John and the *Proto-Gospel of James*, see William L. Petersen, "ΟΥΔΕ ΕΓΩ ΣΕ [ΚΑΤΑ]ΚΡΙΝΩ: John 8:11, the *Protevangelium Iacobi*, and the History of the *Pericope Adulterae*," in *Sayings of Jesus: Canonical and Non-Canonical: Essays in Honor of Tjitze Baarda* (ed. William L. Petersen, Johan S. Vos, and Henk Jen de Jonge; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 191–221.

[32] *Didascalia Apostolorum* 7; CSCO 175:92–93; English translation CSCO 176:89.

[33] Compare U (030) 188 700 *pc*, which reads ταυτην ευρομεν at John 8:4.

[34] Origen, *Homilies on Jeremiah* 19.15: Μοιχὸς εἰ τότε γεγένηται ἢ μοιχαλίς, ἡ ἀπειλὴ οὐ γέεννα, οὐ πῦρ αἰώνιον, ἀλλά· λίθοις λιθοβοληθήσεται· <<Λιθοβολείτω αὐτὸν πᾶσα ἡ συναγωγή.>> Ἐρεῖ ἀπελθὼν ὁ ἐν τούτοις εὑρεθεὶς μοιχός, ἡ ἐν τούτοις εὑρεθεῖσα μοιχαλίς·

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Didymus the Blind's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* 223.7–13 is equally silent, emphasizing instead the universality of sin as a warning for those who make the mistake of judging too quickly.[35] Unlike these earlier authors, however, Didymus may have known the story from John, though his comment, "in certain gospels (ἔν τισιν εὐαγγελίοις) one finds [the following story]," leaves the question open.[36] The pseudo-Augustinian *Questiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* reads the story as a condemnation of the Jews, an interpretation that received further endorsement by Ambrose and later Latin fathers, but this work does not link their condemnation to Jesus' writing.[37] Pacian of Barcelona listed the adulteress as an example of Christ's exceptional mercy, placing the emphasis on Jesus' dealings with the woman rather than on his opponents and therefore failing to mention Jesus' written judgment against them.[38] Hilary of Poitiers alluded to the passage in his commentary on Psalm 118, citing the saying "whoever is without sin," but without mention of Jesus' writing.[39] A possible allusion in a fifth- or sixth-century Pachomian catechesis also stresses the comment, "whoever is without sin," raising Christ's mercy as a rationale for the decision to correct rather than expel wayward monks; once again, writing is overlooked.[40] When the writing is mentioned, however, an explanation for this narrative detail often accompanies the discussion.

εἴθε καὶ ἐπ᾽ ἐμοῦ ὁ λόγος ἐρεῖ, ὁ λαὸς λίθοις με ἔβαλλε και μὴ τετηρημένος ἤμην εἰς τὸ αἰώνιον πῦρ (SC 238:244). Though not widely accepted, Ulrich Becker suggested that Origen knew the *pericope adulterae* on the basis of this passage and also his comment that the law of Israel "cannot stone the adulteress" (nec adulteram lapidare) since the Roman authorities avenge themselves on these things (*Comm. Rom.* 6.7.11). See Becker, *Jesus und die Ehebrecherin,* 119–24.

[35] Edited with German translation in *Didymos der Blinde. Kommentar zum Ecclesiastes (Tura-Papyrus). Teil IV. Komm. Zu Eccl. Kap. 7–8,8* (ed. Johannes Kramer and Bärbel Krebber; Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 16; Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1972) 88 (fol. 223, lines 7–13). For further discussion of Didymus's interpretation, see Knust, "Early Christian Re-Writing," 499–502.

[36] Kramer and Krebber interpret Didymus's comment that the story is found "in certain gospels" (ἔν τισιν εὐαγγελίοις) as a reference to "certain manuscripts of John" (*Didymos der Blinde,* 89). Bart Ehrman, "Jesus and the Adulteress," *NTS* 34 (1988) 24–44, at 26–27, 30. Ehrman suggests that Didymus knew the story from John and from another, noncanonical gospel, probably the *Gospel of the Hebrews*. Dieter Lührmann, "Die Geschichte von einer Sünderin und andere apokryphe Jesusüberlieferungen bei Didymos von Alexandrien," *NovT* 34 (1990) 289–316, at 304–7. Lührmann, on the other hand, is convinced that Didymus did not know the Johannine version of the story; rather, Didymus is here citing a story known exclusively from an apocryphal gospel, probably the *Gospel of the Hebrews*.

[37] *Questiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* 127.12.1; CSEL 50:403–4. For further discussion of the history of this document, see Marie-Pierre Bussières, "Introduction to Ambrosiaster," in *Contre les Païens (Question sur l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament 114) et Sur le Destin (Question sur l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament 115)* (SC 512; Paris: Cerf, 2007) 31–40.

[38] Pacian of Barcelona, *Against the Novatians* 20.2 (*Letter* 3.2): "Nolite in Euangelio legere quod pepercerit Dominus etiam adulterae confitenti, quam nemo damnarat" (SC 410:254).

[39] Hilary of Poitiers, *Commentary on Psalm 118* 8.13–16; SC 341:269.

[40] Draguet Fragment 1, *Pachomian Koinonia* (ed. and trans. Armand Veilliux; 3 vols.; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1981) 2:111. For discussion of this source, see Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984) 37–38.

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Writing Latin in the Ground

Though absent from a majority of early Greek copies of the Gospels, the *pericope adulterae* does appear within the fifth-century Greek-Latin diglot Codex Bezae and, when it does, Jesus clearly writes. He "was writing with his finger in the ground" (τω δακτυλω κατεγραφεν εις την γην/digito suo scribebat in terram), the Bezan text reports, and, when the "priests" continued to press him, he wrote a second time, once again with his finger (τω δακτυλω κατεγραφεν εις την γην/digito suo scribebat in terram). Ambrose of Milan knew these same details in the 380s: Jesus/God "wrote on the ground with the finger with which He had written the law" (scribebat autem in terra digito, quo legem scripserat),[41] a narrative feature that Jerome also mentioned a few decades later.[42] Beyond noting the importance of Jesus' finger and the fact that he wrote, the Bezan text offers no further suggestion regarding the content and significance of Jesus' writing. Ambrose and Jerome, however, supply a series of interpretive expansions that link Jesus' action to God's judgment. According to Ambrose, Jesus wrote, "earth, earth, write that these men have been disowned" (terra terra scribe hos uiros abdicatos),[43] a passage that references Jeremiah 22:29–30.[44] Ambrose further suggests that "Jesus inclined his head to write in the ground" (Iesus *inclinato capite* scribebat in terra), turning his head away in response to insults thrown at him by the Jews.[45] "When the Jews demand payment," Ambrose continues, "their names are written in the ground." By contrast, "the names of Christians are written in heaven."[46] Jerome's comments are similar but more succinct: Jesus wrote, "they that depart from you shall be written on the earth" (reliquentes autem te, super terram scribantur), a paraphrase of Jeremiah 17:13.[47]

Peter Chrysologos, a fifth-century bishop of Ravenna, seems not to have been aware of these interpretive traditions, despite his geographical proximity to

[41] *Epistle* 68.14 (trans. Beyenka; CSEL 82:175; FC 26:472).

[42] "Bowing down, Jesus wrote with his finger" (at Iesus inclinus digito scribebat in terra; *Pelag*. 2.17.20; CCSL 80.3.2:76).

[43] *Epistle* 50.4.

[44] Ambrose appears to be paraphrasing. The Vulgate text reads: "Terra terra terra audi sermonem Domini haec dicit Dominus scribe virum istum sterilem virum qui in diebus suis non prosperabitur" (Earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord: Thus the Lord says, "Write this man sterile, a man who shall not prosper").

[45] *Epistle* 50.4–5.

[46] *Epistle* 50.5. "Cum Iudaei interpellant, *in terra* scribuntur nomina Iudaeorum, cum adeunt Christiani, non scribuntur in terra fidelium nomina, sed *in caelo*. In terra autem scribuntur abdicati a patre proprio, qui patrem temptant et contumelias irrogant auctori salutis. Cum interpellant Iudae, inclinat caput Iesus et quia *non habet ubi reclinet caput suum,* iterum erigit quasi diturus sententiam et ait: *Qui sine peccato est, prior lapidet eam*. *Et iterum* inclinato capite *scribebat in terra* (trans. Beyenka; CSEL 82:58; FC 26:493).

[47] At Iesus inclinus digito scribebat in terra: *eorum uidelicet qui accusabant, et omnium peccata mortalium, secundum quod scriptum est in Propheta*: Reliquentes autem te, super terram scribantur (CCSL 80.3.2:76).

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Ambrose. He also addresses Jesus' writing, making much of the posture the savior adopted while he wrote, but, according to Peter, the writing was directed at the woman rather than at the scribes and Pharisees. Offering an allegorical interpretation of the passage in the context of a sermon on Romans 7, the bishop imagines the adulteress as the sinful Synagogue, unrepentant in her fornication. Appalled by her sin, Jesus turns away, bows down to the earth, and averts his gaze from both her and her crimes. Peter explains, "[Jesus] preferred, brethren, to write forgiveness in the sand rather than to utter a condemnation about the flesh" (et maluit, fratres, in puluere scribere ueniam, ne daret in carne sententiam).[48] To this bishop, then, Jesus' writing represents not judgment but forbearance, a delay offered to the woman/Synagogue so that she might repent of her wicked ways, a point he links to Paul's injunction regarding the freedom from the law attained by a widow upon her husband's death (Romans 7:3). The faithful are no longer bound by the law, Peter argues, but urged instead to join in a pure union with Christ.[49]

As the combined witness of Codex Bezae and these Latin writers demonstrates, by the late fourth century Jesus' writing had become an established feature of Johannine versions of the pericope, particularly as it was preserved in Latin and probably in Greek as well.[50] The Latin fathers Ambrose and Pacian displayed a particular interest in Jesus' posture, an interest that may also be reflected in some Old Latin witnesses. Codices Colbertinus (*c*), Palatinus (*e*), and Codex Corbeiensis (*ff*^{2}) also add that Jesus "bowed his head,"[51] perhaps harmonizing the verse with a phrase from John 19:30, which reads "inclinato capite."[52] Here Jesus bows his head on the cross as he gives up his spirit; thus, by linking Jesus' posture on the cross with his posture when confronting the woman, Ambrose, Pacian and these Old Latin witnesses may seek to recall Jesus' attitude of mercy toward all sinners.[53] The Old Latin witness Codex Aureus (*aur*), the text of Codex Fuldensis,

[48] *Sermon* 115.3 (trans. Gnass; CCSL 24a:700; FC 102:191).

[49] *Sermon* 115.2, 4.

[50] With Bezae as our only witness, this conclusion cannot be certain when it comes to the Greek. For further discussion, see Lührmann, "Die Geschichte von einer Sünderin"; Ehrman, "Jesus and the Adulteress"; Petersen, "ΟΥΔΕ ΕΓΩ ΣΕ [ΚΑΤΑ]ΚΡΙΝΩ."

[51] *c*: Paris. Bibliothèque nationale lat. 254. Critical edition by Heinrich Josef Vogels, *Evangelium Colbertinum. Codex lat. 254 der Bibliothèque nationale zu Paris* (2 vols.; Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1953); for a full discussion of the *pericope adulterae* as it appears in this MS, see 2:32–34.

e: Trento, Museo Nazionale (Castello del Buon Consiglio s.n.).

ff^2: Paris. Bibliothèque nationale lat. 17225. Critical edition by Edgar S. Buchanan, *The Four Gospels from the Codex Corbeiensis Together with Fragments of the Catholic Epistles, of the Acts and of the Apocalypse from the Fleury Palimpsest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907) 30–31; with introduction by Edgar S. Buchanan, "The Codex Corbeiensis," *Journal of Theological Studies* 7 (1905–1906) 99–121.

[52] Hugh A. G. Houghton, *Augustine's Text of John: Patristic Citations and Latin Gospel Manuscripts* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 258–59, 346–47. We would like to offer our sincerest thanks to Hugh Houghton of the ITSEE for his valuable assistance with Augustine's citations of the passage and also with the Old Latin versions of John.

[53] As O'Loughlin observes: "Ambrose sees Jesus' action of inclining 'his head' (an implication

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and the majority of the Vulgate tradition, however, read "inclinans se deorsum," a translation that better reflects the Greek κατακύψας.[54] Codex Gatianus (Bt/gat), which presents a mixed Vulgate/Old Latin text, has the unique conflated reading "inclinate capite deorsom."[55] It should also be noted that Codex Palatinus translates ἀνέκυψεν/ἀνακύψας (v. 7, 10) as "adlebauit/adleuasset capud," which implies that the reference to the head in Latin may reflect translation technique rather than harmonization.

In the early fifth century, Augustine took the lead from Ambrose and Jerome by offering a number of diverse suggestions regarding Jesus' writing. In his commentary on Psalms, for example, he claimed that Jesus stooped, just as "God had stooped to man, who had been told: 'Earth thou art, and to earth thou shalt go'" (Ille autem inclinauerat se ad terram, id est, Deus ad hominem, cui dictum est: *Terra es et in terram ibis*).[56] In *Answer to an Enemy of the Law and the Prophets*, he suggested that the Lord's writing shows that "those who abandon him are written in the earth," an interpretation he supported on the basis of Jeremiah 17:13, "'Let all those who abandon you be confused; as they withdraw, let them be written upon the earth'" (Quis enim cogitat, quomodo ad memoriam dei scribantur in caelis sequentes dominum, derelinquentes autem dominum scribantur in terra, de quibus propheta Ieremias dicit: *Uniuersi qui derelinquunt te confundantur; recendentes super terram scribantur*).[57] Augustine also mentions Jesus' posture, noting that the Lord "inclined his head" in several of his writings.[58] Adding his own unique viewpoint on the matter, he observed, "the law was written by the finger of God; but because [the Jews] were hard men, it was written on stone." By contrast, Jesus wrote

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of his having to look up at the woman in v. 10) as sacramental of his attitude to sinners: 'when Jesus inclines his head he does so that he might raise up those who have been fallen' (*Epist*. 50.7)." See Thomas O'Loughlin, "A Woman's Plight and the Western Fathers," in *Ciphers in the Sand: Interpretations of the Woman Taken in Adultery (John 7.53–8.11)* (ed. Larry J. Kreitzer and Deborah W. Rooke; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000) 83–104, at 88. O'Loughlin, however, does not note the possible connection to John 19:30.

[54] Fulda. Landesbibliothek, MS Bonif. 1. Critical edition of Codex Fuldensis by Ernst Ranke, *Codex Fuldensis. Novum Temstamentum Latine Interprete Herironymo. Ex manuscripto Victoris Capuani* (Marburg: Sumtibus N. G. Elwerti Bibliopolae Academici, 1868) 25 [capitula], 107 [text]. On the lack of agreement between the *capitula* and the rest of the MS, see Theodore Zahn, *Tatian's Diatessaron* (FGNK 1; Erlangen, 1881) 300–3. For further discussion, see William Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron: Its Creation, Dissemination, Significance, and History in Scholarship* (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 25; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 85–86, 127–29.

[55] Bt/gat: Bonifatius Fischer's siglum Bt indicates that Codex Gatianus is not to be treated as an Old Latin witness. On the other hand, it appears in the Vetus Latina list with number 30 where it is described as "Mischtext, der irischen Familie DELQR gehört." Roger Gryson, *Altlateinische Handschriften* (Freiburg: Herder, 1999).

[56] *Enarrat. Ps*. 2.30.7; trans. Hebgin and Corrigan; CCSL 38.10.1:196; ACW 30:18.

[57] *Leg*. 1.20.44; CCSL 49.15.3:77.

[58] *Faust*. 22.25 "inclinate capite"; *Ennarat. Ps*. 30.2 "inclinato capite" and 102.11.42 "rursum inclinato capite"; *Serm*. 272b.5 "inclinauit caput et coepit digito scribere in terram."

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in the earth, to show that the Christians would bear fruit.[59] In a sermon preached on a verse from Psalm 2—"Be instructed, all you who judge the earth" (Erudimini omnes qui iudicatis terram)—he invoked Jesus' writing to remind kings that, when they judge people of the earth, "earth itself is judging the earth" (quia terra iudicat terram); in other words, mortals who judge mortals ought to remember that they are of the earth as well and, as such, will be judged by God.[60] Implicit throughout Augustine's exegesis of the passage is the view that, acting as God, Jesus inscribed judgment into the earth with his finger, a perspective Augustine shared with his teacher Ambrose and his contemporary Jerome.

Incorporated in the Roman liturgy from the earliest period, perhaps the fifth century but certainly before the institution of Lenten Thursdays in the eighth century, the *pericope adulterae* was read on the third Saturday of Lent, and therefore featured in the most important cycle of the liturgical year.[61] The liturgical prominence of the passage likely contributed to its popularity among preachers and commentators. The story was a particular favorite of Augustine's, who may have been influenced by its placement in the Latin lectionary when composing sermons that quote it at length.[62] Pope Leo the Great (d. 461) recalled the adulteress as an example of Christ's care for feeble souls in the context of a Palm Sunday sermon, a fitting choice since the pericope would have been read in Rome a few weeks earlier.[63] The fifth-century Latin poet Sedulius composed a Christian hexameter poem for the Easter season that labeled the woman as a "repulsive adulteress," set free by the gentle one, again an appropriate choice for a story read during the Lenten season.[64] The story was also cited outside of liturgical contexts. In a letter written in the 490s, Pope Gelasius (d. 496) reminded church leaders that all are sinners, citing the pericope.[65]

[59] *Tract. Ev. Jo.* 33.5.2; compare *Cons.* 4.10.17; trans. Rettig; CCSL 36.8:309; FC 78:55.

[60] *Serm.* 13.4–6; CCSL 41.11.1:178–89.

[61] Sible de Blaauw, *Cultus et Décor. Liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale. Basilica Salvatoris, Sanctae Mariae, Sancti Petri* (2 vols.; Studi e Testi 355; Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1994) 1:53–71; Henri Leclercq, "Stations Liturgiques," in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (ed. Henri Marrou; Paris: Librarie Letouzey et Ané, 1953) 15.2:1653–57; Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources* (rev. and trans. William G. Storey and Niels Krough Rasmussen, with the assistance of John K. Brooks-Leonard; Washington, D.C.: Pastoral, 1981) 310; John F. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 228; Rome: Pontificum Institutum Storiorum Orientalium, 1987) 153–55; Walter H. Frere, *Studies in Early Roman Liturgy* 2:8, 87–88.

[62] Marie-François Berrouard, *Oeuvres de saint Augustin 72. Homélies sur l'Évangile de Saint Jean XVII-XXXIII* (Sér. 9; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1977) 860. Berrouard treats Augustine's *Serm.* 13 as a lectionary sermon on John 7:53–8:11. Still, Houghton points out that "there is no explicit mention within the sermon of this passage as the lection in addition to Psalm 2:10." Hugh A. G. Houghton, "Augustine's Citations and Text of the Gospel according to John," (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 2006) 176; see also Houghton, *Augustine's Text of John*, 257–61.

[63] *Sermo* 62.4.

[64] *Carmen paschale* 4.233–42; CSEL 10:107–8.

[65] *Epistle* 100.5; SC 65:166.

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The sixth-century senator, orator and statesman Cassiodorus (d. ca. 580) invoked the passage in a series of essays on the Psalms, arguing that the Jews, who dared to test Jesus on a point of law, would be judged.[66]

Latin writers therefore attest to a continuing tradition of interpretation and preservation of what had become a familiar story,[67] an impression that is confirmed by the Latin manuscript tradition. Out of eighteen extant Old Latin manuscripts that could possibly contain the story (that is, they preserve complete or nearly complete copies of John), fourteen do, nine of which more or less attest to the Vulgate form of the text.[68] Vulgate gospels invariably include the passage.[69] Latin manuscripts that include *capitula* regularly list the pericope, usually at canon 86, though other numbering systems also appear.[70] Codex Fuldensis, which incorporates a *capitulum* taken from an exemplar that diverges from the copied text, nevertheless lists chapter

[66] *Expositio Psalmorum* 56.7; CCSL 47:510.

[67] These results argue against O'Loughlin's comment: "[T]he story hardly surfaces in the Latin Fathers. Indeed, in works by only four writers—Ambrose (ca. 339–397), Jerome (ca. 342–420), Augustine (354–430), and Cassiodorus (ca. 485–580)—does it receive more attention than an incidental reference or allusion." In fact, the story is mentioned, paraphrased, cited and employed by eleven fourth- and fifth-century Latin authors, often at great length. Those mentioning the story include Pseudo-Ambrose (Ambrosiaster), Ambrose, Augustine, Cassiodorus, Gelasius, Leo the Great, Hilary of Poitiers, Jerome, Pacian of Barcelona, Peter Chrysologus, and Sedulius, the fifth-century poet.

[68] The following MSS include the story: Codex Aureus (VL 15, *aur*), seventh cent.; Codex Veronensis (VL 04, *b*, the folia containing the pericope have been lost, but, as Buchanan notes, it was once there), fifth cent.; Codex Colbertinus (VL 6, *c*), twelfth/thirteenth cent.; Codex Bezae (VL 05, *d*), fifth cent.; Codex Palatinus (VL 02, *e*), fifth cent.; Codex Corbeiensis (VL 8, ff^2), fifth cent.; Codex Sarzanensis (VL 22, *j* or *z*, vv. 6–7 only), sixth cent; Codex Moliensis/Book of Mulling (VL 35, μ), fifth cent.; Codex Usserianus Primus (VL 14, r^1), eighth cent.; Codex Sangermanensis secundus (VL 29, g^2), tenth cent.; Codex Gatianus (VL 30, Bt/gat), ca. 800; Codex Sangallensis 60 (VL 47), ca. 800; Codex Fossatensis, eigthth cent. (VL 9A); and the ninth-century MS Würzburg Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f67 (VL 11A, Bw). On the reclassifications of Codex Fossatensis and the Würzburg MS as Old Latin, see Hugh A. G. Houghton, "The St Petersburg Insular Gospels: Another Old Latin Witness," *JTS* 61(2010) 110–27 and "A Newly Identified Old Latin Gospel Manuscript: Würzburg Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f67," *JTS* 60 (2009) 1–21. It should be noted that, apart from *c*, *d*, *e*, ff^2, and *j*/*z*, all these Old Latin witnesses (where extant) attest to the Vulgate form of the pericope.

The following MSS exclude the story: Codex Vercellensis (VL 03, *a*), fourth cent.; Codex Brixianus (VL 10, *f*), sixth cent.; Codex Monacensis (VL 13, *q*), sixth or seventh cent. Codex Rehdigeranus (VL 11, *l*) excluded the passage initially, but it was added to the margins in the ninth cent., copied out on another piece of parchment and sewn in at the appropriate section of John.

[69] See Bonifatius Fischer, *Varianten zu Johannes* (vol. 4 of *Die lateinischen Evangelien bis zum 10. Jahrhundert*; Vetus Latina. Aus der Geschichte lateinischen Bibel 18; Freiburg: Herder, 1991) 242–78.

[70] For example, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Cod. Pal. Lat. 46 (ca. 800): "Feria VII ad scam Susannam secundum Iohn. Capt. Lxxxvi perexit Iesus in montem oliuti usque uade et amplius noli peccare." Interestingly, Biblioteca Apostlica Vaticana Cod. Vat. Lat 8523 (ninth cent.), includes a capitulum listing the pericope as chapter sixteen, as does the Old Latin Codex Corbeiensis and the Du Fay Gospels (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale lat. 9385). The capitulum reads: xvi "et adducunt ad Iesum mulierem depraehensam in moechationem ut eam iudicaret," a reading shared with Corbeiensis as well. Hugh Houghton, "Chapter Divisions, *capitula* lists and the Old Latin Versions of John," *Revue Bénédictine* 121 (2011), forthcoming. As Houghton has recently noted,

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Fig. 3. Ivory pyxis, Russia, fifth-sixth cent. The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Inv. no. W-5.

70 as "de muliere a iudaeis in adulterio deprehensam." In other words, though the text of the pericope remained somewhat fluid, and its placement in textual apparatuses like the *capitula* shifted, the story was well-known, highly regarded and proclaimed in Latin liturgical contexts from the fourth century onwards. Moreover, the Old Latin text of the *pericope adulterae* (not that of the aberrant d) is closely related to the Greek text of f^1, which is nearest to the "initial text" as reconstructed by the editors of the Nestle-Aland, 27th edition. Significantly, this means that the Old Latin witnesses, normally not considered among primary witnesses to the initial text, are in effect the earliest witnesses to this particular passage.[71] Moreover, though absent from Eastern witnesses to Tatian's Gospel harmony, the Diatessaron, the

those MSS which include *capitulum* sixteen and the rare Greek loan word "moechatio" appear to preserve an Old Latin text originating in the third century,

[71] Jonathan C. Borland, "The Old Latin Tradition of John 7:53–8:11" (Masters thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009) 91. According to a recent investigation of the Old Latin evidence for the pericope, Borland concludes that Codex Palatinus (e) in particular enjoys a very high level of agreement with Nestle-Aland 27 (88%). As such, from the perspective of modern critical eclecticism, the high quality of its text is clear.

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Fig. 4. Ivory pyxis, Paris, fifth-sixth cent. Musée national du Moyen Âge–Thermes de Cluny, numéro d'inventaire: cl. 444 (D.S. 1033). Photo: Réunion des Musés Nationaux/ Art Resource, N.Y.

passage is found in all Western Diatessaron witnesses, albeit in different locations.[72] The passage was therefore probably added to the Latin textual tradition very early, though all the extant Latin Diatessaron witnesses reproduce the Vulgate textform. The transmission of this story in the East, however, is much less clear.

Tracing Eastern Witnesses

The *pericope adulterae* gained a secure place in Latin versions of John more quickly than in other traditions, yet we can detect traces of its presence, and of an interest in Jesus' writing, elsewhere as well. Two surviving pyxides depict the adulteress with Jesus, who, placed in a prophetic role, is shown holding a scroll, teaching in the temple and encountering the woman, who gestures with shame or surprise[73] (figs. 3–4). The sixth-century mosaics of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna may also

[72] For a treatment of the *pericope adulterae* in the Western textual tradition of the Diatessaron, see Becker, *Jesus und die Ehebrecherin*, 33–37.

[73] St. Petersburg: The State Hermitage Museum, Basilewsky No. 30; Paris: Musée de Cluny, Inv. Nr. 1033. For discussion, see Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Kataloge vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Altertümer 7; 3d ed.; Mainz am Rhein: Von Zabern, 1976) 112–13. On the significance of the woman's gesture, see Gertrude Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art* (trans. Janet Seligman; 2 vols.; Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1971–1972) 1:160.

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depict the scene,[74] perhaps suggesting that the story was known not only in Ravenna but in Constantinople as well since Sant'Apollinare Nuovo was commissioned by the Ostrogothic king Theodoric following his appointment by the Emperor Anastasius (491–518 C.E.). Raised in the Constantinopolitan court as a hostage in the imperial palace, Theodoric was also a close associate of Cassiodorus, the Roman statesman, client of Constantinople and Theodoric's Latin secretary,[75] and, as we have already noted, Cassiodorus certainly did know the pericope.[76] The ciborium columns of San Marco in Venice may provide further evidence of knowledge of the story in sixth-century Constantinople. Brought to Venice in the thirteenth century, these columns are much older, offering an extraordinary example of Byzantine figurative sculpture. Among the many scenes of Jesus' life rendered, there is an illustration of his encounter with a woman that may depict the pericope.[77] Given the Lukan theme of most of these illustrations, a recent analysis of the columns identifies this woman as either one of the women listed in Luke 8:2–3 (Mary Magdalene, Joanna, wife of Chuza, and Susanna) or as either Mary or Martha of Bethany.[78] By contrast, the Medieval Latin epigrapher who inserted the running inscriptions identifies the woman as the adulteress.[79]

[74] This woman has been variously identified as the adulteress, the woman with a flow of blood (Mark 5:25–34), and the Canaanite woman (Matt 15:21–28). For further discussion, see Karl Künstle, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst* (2 vols.; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1927–1928) 1:394; Walter Lowrie, *Art in the Early Church* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1947) 172; Carl-Otto Nordström, *Ravennastudien. Ideengeschichtliche und iconographische Untersuchungen über die Mosaiken von Ravenna* (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksells Boktyckeri, 1953) 59–80; Paul Bloch, "Ehebrecherin," in *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie* (ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum et al.; 8 vols.; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1968–1976) 1:581–83; Schiller, *Iconography*, 1:160–63, 1:178–79.

[75] See Mark Johnson, "Towards a History of Theodoric's Building Program," *DOP* 42 (1988) 73–96; Otto G. von Simson, *Sacred Fortress: Byzantine Art and Statecraft in Ravenna* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948); John Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (London: Phaidon, 1997) 118–24.

[76] Still, as Nordström points out, the selected scenes more likely reflect the north Italian context of Ravenna. Earlier attempts to associate the iconographic scheme of these mosaics with the Eastern liturgy cannot, in the end, be substantiated (*Ravennastudien*, 78–79).

[77] Ciborium of San Marco, column C, zone 9. On the dating of these columns, see Edmund Weigand, "Zur Datierung der Ciboriumsäulen von S. Marco in Venedig," *Studi bizantini e neoellenici* 6 (1940) 440–55; Jacqueline Lafontaine, "Iconographie de la Colonne A du Ciborium de Saint-Marc à Venise," *Actes du XIIe Congrès International d' études Byzantines d'Ochride 10–16 septembre 1961* (3 vols.; Belgrade: Naucno delo, 1963–1964) 3:213–19. For further bibliography, see Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'empire byzantine et en Occident* (2 vols.; Académie royale de Belgique, Mémoires de la classe des beaux-arts, Series 2.11.3; Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1964–1965) 1:35 n. 2; Harold L. Willoughby, "Representational Biblical Cycles: Antiochian and Constantinopolitan," *JBL* 69 (1950) 129–36, esp. 133–34. The Berwardsäule bronze column in Hildesheim (ca. 1000) seems to be dependent on the San Marco columns.

[78] Thomas Weigel, *Die Reliefsäulen des Hauptaltarciboriums von San Marco in Venedig* (Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Renaissance 5; Münster: Rhema-Verlag, 1997) 276–78.

[79] The inscription on column C, zone 9 reads, LEP(RO)S(VS) CVRATVR{ATVR} XRS MARIA (ET) M<A>RTHA EXIT DEMON DE ADVLTERA. On the date of these inscriptions, see Weigel,

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There is no direct manuscript evidence for the pericope between its first appearance in Bezae and its re-appearance in the eighth-century Codex E of the Gospels (07). Still, the story could be found in some copies, as the surviving canon tables of a seventh-century *tetra-evangelion* belonging to Epiphanius of Thebes suggest. The canons and Eusebius's letter to Carpianus are all that remains of this codex, but in John the section numbers were advanced by one numeral somewhere between numbers 70 and 91, likely because of the presence of the pericope, which has been given its own section.[80] We cannot know what text of John was here preserved, but presumably the pericope appeared in some form similar to what is found in later Greek manuscripts. A fragment of the story may survive on a Coptic ostrakon dated to the seventh or eighth centuries. If so, this ostrakon offers additional evidence of the presence of the story in Egypt at this same time.[81] Marginal notes in much later (twelfth- and thirteenth-century) Coptic manuscripts confirm the impression of the story's marginality but abiding presence. Colophons were included explaining that the story was added on the basis of Greek copies, on the basis of the Syriac, or on the basis of an Arabic translation.[82]

An anonymous sixth-century chronicle, written in Greek but preserved in Syriac, adopts an attitude similar to these twelfth-century Coptic copyists. When the chronicler was made aware of the passage as it appeared in a personal *tetra-evangelion* owned by Bishop Moro of Amida, he took care to copy it out.[83] Noting

Die Reliefsäulen, 92–97; transcription of the inscriptions by Weigel on page 291.

[80] *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes* (ed. and trans. Walter E. Crum and H. G. Evelyn White; 2 vols.; New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1926; repr., Arno, 1973) 2:302–3; Carl Nordenfalk, "Canon Tables on Papyrus," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 36 (1982) 29–38, at 33. White suggests that the story has been omitted, despite the adjustment of the canon numerals. Nordenfalk suggests instead that the numerals have been specially adjusted in light of the story's inclusion.

[81] Hall remarks that the ostrakon was "carefully written: probably a monk's copy." Harry R. Hall, *Coptic and Greek Texts of the Christian Period from Ostraka, Stelae, etc. in the British Museum* (London: Printed by the order of the Trustees, 1905) 27 (no. 21424). A recent analysis of the same ostrakon by Christian Askeland, however, calls Hall's confident assessment into question (personal communication 2 June 2009). As Askeland notes, this fragmentary ostrakon does include terms associated with the pericope (priest, woman, and the phrase "he said"), but these are common words also found in personal letters. We would like to thank Mr. Askeland for sharing his transcription of ostrakon 21424 and for discussing the problem with us.

[82] Horner lists several glosses, including: "This chapter is not in the Coptic, nor in some of the Greek copies, it was translated from the Arabic" (MS E_1, 1208 C.E.); "and from here is read the section of the adulteress, and it is not found in copies of the Coptic, but in some of the Greek and some of the Syriac" (MS F_2); "From the beginning of this section and to this point is not found in the Coptic; though it is found in most of the Arabic copies. . . . I found it in one Coptic copy. . . . We mentioned this section to the priest, Abu 'l Fadl, the Melkite in Cairo, being of those who are acquainted with the Greek language; so he wrote it on paper in Greek, and gave it us, and said, 'I have transcribed it from a copy which I had from Constantinople'" (MS Bodleian Hunt 118 and British Museum Or. 3382, 1264 C.E.). George William Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Northern Dialect, Otherwise Called Memphtic and Boharic: with Introduction, Critical Apparatus, and Literal English Translation* (4 vols.; London: Clarendon Press, 1898–1905; repr. Osnabrück: O. Zeller, 1969) 2:428–31.

[83] On the importance of Amida as a center for the production and preservation of biblical and

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that this passage, "not found in other manuscripts," could be found in the eighty-ninth canon of the bishop's copy of John, he wrote out the story but in a particularly unusual form. According to the chronicler, or perhaps according to Bishop Moro's Gospels, Jesus writes after the woman's accusers leave the scene:

> And when they had gone, Jesus looked upon the ground and, writing in the dust there, said to the woman, "They who brought thee here and wished to bear witness against thee, having understood what I said to them, which thou also hast heard, have left thee and departed. Do thou also, therefore, go thy way, and commit not this sin again" (*Chronicle of Zachariah of Mitylene* 8).[84]

Thus, neither the action of writing nor the writing itself was directed at the woman's accusers, who had already departed.

The faint traces of this pericope—and of Jesus' writing—confirm its relative marginality in non-Latin contexts. Excluded from the principal feasts of the developing Greek lectionary system, the story was neglected by the Constantinopolitan liturgy, which read John 7:37–52 and 8:12 on the feast of Pentecost. Perhaps the pericope was not present in the copies of John from which the moveable lections from Easter to Pentecost were drawn.[85] Alternatively, perhaps John 8:12 was appended as a fitting ending to 7:37–52 with full knowledge that an intervening episode had been overlooked. Without it, the reading would conclude, "A prophet will not arise from Galilee" (ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας προφήτης οὐκ ἐγείρεται), hardly a satisfactory ending on a feast day designed to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, who then prayed and prophesied in Christ's name.[86] The *pericope adulterae* therefore found its way into the Byzantine liturgy rather late, perhaps at some point in the sixth

other Christian MSS, see M. Mundell Mango, "Patrons and Scribes Indicated in Syriac Manuscripts, 411 to 800 AD," *Jahrbuch der österreichische Byzantinistik* 32 (1982) 3–12, at 4–5, 7.

[84] For a critical edition of the Syriac, see *Historia Ecclesiastica Zachariae Rhetori* (ed. Ernest W. Brooks; CSCO 83–84, 87–88 Scriptores Syri 3.5–6; Leuven: Typographeo I.-B. Istas, 1924); see also *The Syriac Chronicle Known as that of Zachariah of Mitylene* (trans. Frederick John Hamilton and Ernest W. Brooks; London: Methuen & Co., 1899) 216–17.

[85] Yvonne Burns, "The Historical Events that Occasioned the Inception of the Gospel Lectionary," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32.11.4 (1982) 119–27. Burns has argued that set readings were confirmed during the reign of the Emperor Justinian (527–565), but unfortunately no sixth-century copies of the lectionary survive. Literary evidence suggests that liturgical processions on important feast days of the church year were taking place in Constantinople from the end of the fourth century. The readings associated with these feasts, however, are not indicated. For further discussion, see Baldovin, *Urban Character of Christian Worship*, 167–226. On the Feast of Pentecost, see Elena Velkova Velkovska, "The Liturgical Year in the East," in *Liturgical Time and Space* (Handbook for Liturgical Studies 5; Collegeville, Mich.: Liturgical, 1997) 157–63, at 62–63. The earliest MS evidence for the cycle of moveable feasts in Constantinople is from the tenth century; see Juan Mateos, *Le Typicon de la Grande Église. Ms. Sainte-Croix no. 40, Xe siècle* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 165; 2 vols.; Rome: Pontifical Institute, 1962) 2:136–39, the Pentecost readings.

[86] Robinson, "Preliminary Observations," 42–47. See also Ernest Cadman Colwell, "The Contents of the Gospel Lectionary," and "Method in the Study of the Text of the Gospel Lectionary," in *Prolegomena to the Study of the Lectionary Text of the Gospels* (ed. Ernest Cadman Colwell and Donald W. Riddle; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933) 1–5, at 2–3; 13–20.

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century,[87] when it was chosen as the appropriate lection for the feast days of Pelagia of Antioch, Mary of Egypt, Theodora, or Euphemia, depending on the cycle of saints honored by the particular Menologion.[88] Often, the lection included only 8:3–11, beginning with the phrase, "The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery," a lectionary decision that impacted the story's incorporation in some Johannine Gospel witnesses. As Robinson points out, the abridged Menologion version appears in ten of the twenty-eight continuous-text manuscripts that treat the pericope as a preface or appendix to the Gospel.[89]

The story was also overlooked in the developing liturgy of Jerusalem, a decision which would go on to impact the Syriac and Armenian lectionaries. According to the medieval Armenian manuscripts that preserve the Jerusalem liturgical cycle, John 16:5–15 was the Pentecost lection, read during the stational feast at the Mount of Olives, as the fourth-century *Itinerarium Egeriae* also suggests.[90] Not surprisingly, then, the pericope was irregularly included in the Syriac Palestinian lectionary, appearing in only one of three medieval manuscripts compared by Agnes Smith Lewis and Margaret Dunlop Gibson in 1899.[91] Nevertheless, the passage seems to

[87] Dating the Byzantine lectionary system is complex. The earliest MS evidence comes from the eighth century, though literary evidence implies that some form of stational liturgy was in place in Constantinople as early as the fourth century. Yvonne Burns, "The Lectionary of the Patriarch of Constantinople," *Studia Patristica* 15.1 (1984) 515–20. Burns suggests that the lectionary developed in stages, with the Easter to Pentecost cycle established first, followed by additions to a Menologion that marked key festivals in the church year and in the life of the city of Constantinople. For example, 25 September marked the deliverance from an earthquake that struck the city during the reign of Theodosius the Great, a feast that was commemorated with a procession to the Campus, probably from the fifth century onward. In a separate essay, she suggests that the main cycle of Gospel lections for the various feasts was established during the reign of the Emperor Justinian, as an accompaniment to his extensive church building projects across the Eastern Empire, which would have necessitated the copying of several new Bibles (Burns, "Historical Events," 119–27).

[88] Most often, the story was read to commemorate St. Pelagia (October 8), or so surviving medieval menologia suggest. The *Life of St. Pelagia of Antioch* was composed in Greek during the fifth century; thus, the *pericope adulterae* cannot have been incorporated in the liturgy until after that time. On the date of composition, see Bernard Flusin, "Les texts grecs," in *Pélagie la Pénitente: Métamporphoses d'une légende* (ed. Pierre Petitmengin; 2 vols.; Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1981) 1:39–76. For further discussion of the lectionary text of the *pericope adulterae*, see Allen Paul Wikgren, "The Lectionary Text of the Pericope, John 8:1–11," *JBL* 53 (1934) 188–98. Wikgren compared thirty-seven lectionaries, dating from the ninth to the seventeenth centuries, confirming the association of the story with Pelagia and, secondarily, with Theodora.

[89] Robinson, "Preliminary Observations," 44–45 and 44 n. 22.

[90] *Itinerarium Egeriae* 43.5–9. Athanase Renoux, *Le Codex Arménien Jérusalem 121* (2 vols.; Patrologia Orientalis 35.163; Brepols: Turnhout, 1969) 2:19–25, 28–32, 54–55, 193–95; Baldovin, *The Urban Character*, 64–72.

[91] Agnes Smith Lewis and Margaret Dunlop Gibson, *The Palestinian Syriac Lectionary of the Gospels, Re-Edited from Two Sinai MSS and from P. de la Garde's Edition of the "Evangeliarium Hierosolymitanum"* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1899; repr., Jerusalem: Raritas, 1971) xv, lv, 59–60, 242–43. François Nau's analysis of twelve medieval Syriac Menologia suggests that Pelagia was introduced to the Syriac festal calendar by the seventh century, though none of these MSS specify the lections to be read on her feast day, which was, in all but one case, designated for 8 October.

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have been appended to the end of the exemplars from which these manuscripts were produced, for all three include a colophon after John 8:2: "The Gospel of John has been finished by the Greeks in Ephesus [as follows]," or "The Gospel of John has been finished with the assistance of Christ [as follows]."[92] Thus, read only rarely, on the feast day of a saint rather than as part of a major stational feast at either Constantinople or Jerusalem, the pericope faded into relative oblivion, whether or not texts of John preserving the story were available to readers and scribes.

Beginning in the eighth century, the fortunes of the *pericope adulterae* began to shift in Greek, at least in terms of manuscript witnesses. Omitted from the two third-century papyri that could have contained it (𝔓[66] and 𝔓[75]),[93] and excluded from all but one (D 05) of the six fourth- through eighth-century majuscule witnesses to John,[94] the story reappears in three eighth-century majuscules, but in one of them, Codex Basiliensis (E 07), it is obelized, either as an indication of its disputed status, along the lines of Alexandrian text-critical marks, or as a visual aid to the reader, who would know to skip from 7:52 to 8:12 when reading the Pentecost lection.[95] Limiting the discussion to eighth- through tenth-century majuscule witnesses, we detect the following results:

Manuscript	Date	Omit	Omit with blank space	Include Obelized	Include
019 L	eighth cent.		x		
07 E	eighth cent.			x	
047	eighth cent.				x (8:3–11)
0233	eighth cent.				x (7:53–8:9)
09 F	ninth cent.				x

Un martyrologe et douze ménologes syriaques (ed. and trans. François Nau; Patrologia Orientalis 10.1; Martyrologes et ménologes orientaux 1–13; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1915) 21, 34, 47, 77, 113.

[92] In the Greek, retranslated from the Syriac by Lewis and Gibson, MSS A and B read: Ἐτελειώθη τὸ εὐαγγέλιον Ἰωάννου ἑλληνιστὶ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ. MS C reads: Ἐτελειώσθη τὸ εὐαγγέλιον Ἰωάννου βοηθείᾳ τοῦ χριστοῦ (Lewis and Gibson, *Palestinian Syriac Lectionary,* lv). They explain that the *pericope adulterae* "was at one time appended to St. John's Gospel after the final colophon," and "in the Greek or Syriac MS from which the lessons of the Palestinian Lectionary were taken, the section was removed to the place (between chapter vii and viii) which it now usually occupies." These scribes, however, "not highly endowed with intelligence," transported the colophon with the story (ibid., xv).

[93] Maurice Robinson assumes that it is likely missing from another fragmentary papyri as well (𝔓[39]). Once a complete copy of John, only John 8:14–22 survives, but the numeration, together with an estimate of the possible lines per leaf, indicates that John 8:1–11 was excluded. See Robinson, "Preliminary Observations," 39 n. 13. Robinson's calculation, however, remains an educated guess.

[94] It is explicitly omitted by Codex Sinaiticus (ℵ 01), fourth cent.; Codex Vaticanus (B 03), fourth cent.; 032, fourth cent.; 029, fifth cent.; and 022, sixth cent.

[95] Robinson has suggested the latter option, though text critics more often conclude that these marks were adopted from Alexandrian text-critical practice. See David C. Parker, *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 192.

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Manuscript	Date	Omit	Omit with blank space	Include Obelized	Include
011 G	ninth cent.				x
013 H	ninth cent.				x
017 K	ninth cent.				x
021 M	ninth cent.				x
030 U	ninth cent.				x
034 Y	ninth cent.	x			
037 Δ	ninth cent.		x		
038 Θ	ninth cent.	x			
039 Λ	ninth cent.			x	
041 Π	ninth cent.			x	
044 Ψ	ninth cent.	x			
045 Ω	ninth cent.			x	
0211	ninth cent.	x			
028 S	tenth cent.			x	
033 X	tenth cent.	x			
036 Γ	tenth cent.				x
Total		5	2	5	9

This sample of surviving manuscripts may or may not be representative of the larger textual tradition. Nevertheless, the results are striking: of twenty-one extant majuscule manuscripts from this period, sixteen show some knowledge of the pericope and place it in its traditional place in John, while five omit it outright. Of the sixteen showing some knowledge of the pericope, two leave a blank space where it could be added later, five mark it with obeli, and nine include it within an unmarked, continuous text of John. The story may have been excluded from Alexandrian witnesses and ignored by Byzantine exegetes and homilists,[96] but it remained part of the Greek textual tradition and was therefore ready to be applied to the feast days of various female saints both before and after the tenth-century liturgical reforms of Symeon Metaphrastes.[97]

Embedded within these Byzantine manuscripts are two interpretive traditions regarding what Jesus wrote: According to the witnesses E (07), G (011), H (013) and K (017), Jesus wrote "taking no notice [of them]" (κατεγραφεν εις την γην μη προσποιουμενος) when writing the first time;[98] the text of Codex Nanianus (U 030) informs the reader that Jesus wrote "the sins of each of them" (εγραφεν

[96] For example, Photios, the ninth-century patriarch of Constantinople, neglects the passage in his extant sermons.

[97] On the reforms of Symeon Metaphrastes and the Menologion he produced, see Christian Høgel, "The Redaction of Symeon Metaphrastes: Literary Aspects of the Metaphrastic Martyria," and Stephanos Efthymiadis, "The Byzantine Hagiographer and His Audience in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries," in *Metaphrasis: Redactions and Audiences in Middle Byzantine Hagiography* (ed. Christian Høgel; KULTs skriftserie 59; Oslo: The Research Council of Norway, 1996) 7–21, 60–80.

[98] According to Wikgren, this reading was also found in two of the lectionary MSS he surveyed: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale gr. 315 (sixteenth or fifteenth cent.) and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon gr. 119 (fifteenth or sixteenth cent.).

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εις την γην ενος εκαστου αυτων τας αμαρτιας) when writing a second time. The first expansion—Jesus took no notice of them—finds no parallel in the exegesis encountered thus far but, like additions to the Latin that emphasize Jesus' posture, explains Jesus' affect while writing: He pretended not to notice (προσποιέω) their illegitimate question, answering them only when they continued to press him. The second—Jesus wrote the sins of each of them—is quite similar to what has already been encountered in late antique Latin exegesis: those who are condemned, Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine agreed, are written in the earth. This coincidence, together with the more prominent role of the *pericope adulterae* in Latin exegesis, may suggest that this particular expansion first entered John under the influence of Latin texts and exegesis.[99] Regular interchange between Greek and Latin churches throughout late antiquity and the early medieval period increases this possibility. Compilations of orthodox patristic exegesis and commentary were available from the late fifth century onward, including works of Latin fathers, translated into Greek for the benefit of Greek participants in ecumenical councils.[100] Southern Italy was especially influenced by Byzantine practices and texts,[101] and Greek Bibles and books were always available in Rome.[102] With consistent interactions between Greek- and Latin-speaking Christians throughout this period, despite the upheaval of Arab and Lombard invasions,[103] a relationship between Latin Bibles and patristic exegesis and these Byzantine copies of John cannot be ruled out. Nevertheless, these particular expansions are not found in the Latin textual tradition. Moreover, traditions linking condemnation with divine writing, particularly writing in the

[99] Lührmann, "Die Geschichte von einer Süderin," esp. 298, 303–4.

[100] Alexander Alexakis, *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and Its Archetype* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1996) 1–42. On the particular importance of *florilegia* to the Byzantine church, see Guy Lobrichon, "Making Sense of the Bible," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity* (ed. Thomas F. X. Noble and Julia M. H. Smith; 9 vols.; Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 3:543.

[101] For example, Family 13 of the Gospels, the family that places the *pericope adulterae* after Luke 21:38, may have been produced there, on the basis of an eighth-century continuous text version of the Gospels that could have been produced in Sicily. On the Sicilian origin of Family 13, see Bernard Botte, "Ferrar (groupe de manuscrits)," in *Supplément au dictionnaire de la Bible* (ed. Louis Pirot; 14 vols.; Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1938) 3:272–74. For an edited text of the *pericope adulterae* as it appears in this family, see Jacob Geerlings, *Family 13—The Ferrar Group* (Studies and Documents 20; Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1961) 128–30. According to Jac Perrin, Family 13 currently consists of the following members: Greg.-Aland 13, 69, 124, 174, 230, 346, 543, 788, 826, 983, 1689, 1709, and recently rediscovered ANA 4, National Archive, Tirana, not yet associated with a Greg.-Aland number. Jac Perrin, "Family 13 in the Gospel of John," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, 15 November 2007).

[102] Jean-Marie Sansterre, *Les moines grecs et orientaux à Rome aux époques byzantine et carolingienne. Milieu du VIe s-fin du IXe siècle* (Mémoires de la Classe des lettres 2.66; Brussels: Palais des académies, 1933) 65–76, 174–206.

[103] On the impact of various political upheavals on interchanges between the Constantinopolitan and Roman churches, see Tia M. Kolbaba, "Latin and Greek Christians," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity* (ed. Thomas F. X. Noble and Julia M. H. Smith; 9 vols.; Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 3:213–29.

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earth, are much older than what is found among the Latin fathers. The view that Jesus wrote "the sins of each one of them" may therefore have entered the text of John independently of any Latin influence. Indeed, it is also possible that Jerome first associated the pericope with Jeremiah and divine judgment on the basis of Greek exegetical traditions, which were simply carried forward in Greek textual witnesses.[104]

As Derek Krueger has noted, ancient and medieval Christian authors regularly figured the history of salvation "as a series of scribal acts."[105] This tradition began early, and appears in writings as diverse as the Apocalypse of John, the letter to the Colossians and the *Gospel of Truth*.[106] Already in the second century, Clement of Alexandria recalled Jeremiah 22 to argue that God writes the faithless into the earth and the faithful into heaven:

> For the one in a state of ignorance, who is sinful, is also earth and ashes, but the one who rests in a state of knowledge, having become assimilated to God as far as possible, is able to become spiritual already, and for this reason elect. That the scripture calls the senseless and disobedient "earth," will be made clear. Jeremiah the prophet, in reference to Joachim and his brothers, says, "Earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord: write this man, a person banished" (*Stromateis* 4.26.168.2–6).[107]

Clement clarifies Jeremiah's statement with a saying attributed to Abraham, conflated with a Johannine saying of Jesus. Referring to Jesus' judgment, Clement explains, Abraham said, "'O Lord, the one who judges the earth,'" since "the faithless one, according to a saying of the savior, is condemned already" (κύριε, ὁ κρίνων τὴν γῆν, ἐπεὶ, ὁ απιστήσας, κατὰ τὴν σωτήριον φωνὴν ἤδη κέκριται).[108] The condemned are to be judged with the earth and as earth, Clement asserts, a claim

[104] Dean Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* (London: George Bell and Sons; Cambridge, U.K.: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1896) 249. Burgon assumed that Jerome had access to MSS with the expansion in question.

[105] Derek Krueger, *Writing and Holiness: The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) 7, 133–57.

[106] In John's Apocalypse, divine wrath is unleashed when the Lamb opens a scroll with seven seals (Rev 5:1–6:14). The faithful are preserved on the basis of their inscription in the book of life (Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12). According to the author of Colossians, Christ's forgiveness erases (ἐξαλείφω) the handwritten decree (χειρόγραφον) against the believers, nailing it to the cross (Col 2:14). For further discussion, see Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (trans. William R. Poehlmann and Robert J. Karris; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 108–9. As Krueger notes, the *Gospel of Truth* imagines Jesus' incarnation as "a materialization of God's speech analogous to committing words to parchment or papyrus" (Krueger, *Writing and Holiness,* 7).

[107] ὁ γὰρ ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ ὢν ἁμαρτητικός τέ ἐστι καὶ γῆ καὶ σποδός, ὁ δ᾽ἐν γνώσει καθεστώς, ἐξομοιούμενος θεῷ εἰς ὅσον δύναται, ἤδη πνευματικὸς καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐκλεκτός. ὅτι δὲ τοὺς ἀνοήτους καὶ ἀπειθεῖς γῆν καλεῖ ἡ γραφή, σαφὲς ποήσει Ἱερεμίας ὁ προφήτης κατὰ Ἰωακεὶμ καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ λέγων· ‹‹γῆ γῆ ἄκουε λόγον κυρίου· γράψον τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον ἐκκήρυκτον ἄνθρωπον.›› Clement of Alexandria, *Clemens Alexandrinus* (ed. Otto Stählin; 4 vols.; Deutsche Akademie der Wissenshaften zu Berlin; Berlin: Akademie, 1960) 2:323.

[108] *Stromateis* 4.26.169.4–6; cf. Genesis 18:25, John 3:18. Stählin, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, 2:323.

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that Ambrose will associate with the *pericope adulterae* some two centuries later. Origen made a similar point in the context of a homily on Jeremiah 17, a passage that would also be associated with the pericope in Latin exegesis:

> "Let them be dishonored," [Jeremiah says], "when they have separated, let them be written on the earth" (Jer 17:13). For also "with the measure that you measure you will be measured" (Matt 7:2). Each person is responsible for himself for what is written. If you seek what is on earth, you do not seek what is in heaven. (*Hom. Jer.* 17.4)[109]

Those who are separated from God, Origen suggests, are written on the earth since they have been measured and judged.

The view that Jesus "wrote the sins of each one [of them]" therefore fits within a wider, shared interpretive tradition, a tradition that also made its way into the specific context of Codex Nanianus (U 030), a ninth-century text from Constantinople.[110] In the sixth century, Constantinopolitan poet and deacon Romanos the Melodist popularized the image of Christ literally inscribing salvation with his incarnation, death and resurrection. Repeatedly invoking Jesus' writing in a series of liturgical hymns tied to the festivals of the church year, he does not mention the *perciope adulterae*, but he does describe Jesus as writing, and in contexts when writing is not obviously present.[111] For example, imagining the repentant thief of Luke's passion narrative, Romanos suggests that Jesus wrote a notice (πρόγραμμα) for the thief in his blood, which was then presented to the angels as a divine letter of recommendation: "The cherubim, receiving it, recognized the letters, shining out with the grace of the purple of blood, and they delighted in how beautifully it had been dictated."[112]

In this retelling, Christ's blood becomes the ink and the wood of the cross the parchment upon which a written decree is inscribed. A similar perspective is adopted in another holy week hymn:

[109] ‹‹Καταισχυνθήτωσαν›› γάρ φησιν ‹‹ἀφεστηκότες, ἐπι τῆς γῆς γραφήτωσαν››· καὶ γὰρ ‹‹ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν››. Αἴτιος ἕκαστος ἑαυτῷ ἐστι τοῦ γραφῆναι. Εἰ <τὰ> ἐπὶ γῆς ζητεῖς, οὐ ζητεῖς τὰ οὐράνια· (SC 238:168–70; FC 97:184–85 [trans. Smith]).

[110] On the date and place of origin of Codex U, see Biblioteca nazionale marciana, *Bibliothecae Divi Marci Venetiarum codices graeci manuscripti* (7 vols.; Rome: Istituto Poligrafico Dello Stato, 1967) 1:13; Robert S. Nelson, "The Later Impact of a Group of Twelfth-Century Manuscripts," *Byzantine Studies Conference* 3 (1977) 60–61; and Marino Zorzi, *Collezioni Veneziane de Codici Greci dale raccolte della Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana* (Venice: il Cardo, 1993) 100 (no. 72). The MS was copied in the ninth century, and then evangelist portraits were added much later, probably in the fourteenth century; at this same time, the scribe Joasaph added liturgical notations (Nelson, "Later Impact," 60; Zorzi, *Collezioni Veneziane*, 100).

[111] This reading of Romanos is heavily indebted to Derek Krueger, *Writing and Holiness*, 159–88. Also see Herbert Hunger, "Romanos Melodos, Dicther, Prediger, Rhetor—und sein Publikum," *Jahrbuch der österreichishen Byzantinistik* 34 (1984) 39–42.

[112] χερουβὶμ δὲ ὑποδεξάμενα ἐγνώριζε τὰ γράμματα ἐκλάμποντα χάριτι πορφυρίδος τοῦ αἵματος· ἐτέρπετο δὲ πῶς ὑπηγορεύθη καλῶς (*Hymn* 39.10; SC 128:338). For discussion see Krueger, *Writing and Holiness,* 164–65.

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> [H]aving taken in [my hand] a reed, I am starting to write a pardon for all Adam's descendants. My flesh, which you see, becomes for me like parchment and my blood like ink, where I dip my pen and write.[113]

Romanos's songs remained popular in Constantinople for centuries; a feast day (October 1) was dedicated to him and at least four different *Lives* were composed in his honor.[114] Thus, it may have seemed especially appropriate for a scribe to add that Jesus wrote "the sins of each one" when drawing with his finger on the ground, the oldest witness to the expansion being the ninth-century Codex Nanianus (U 030).[115] But if Jesus literally wrote the sins of each, the context apparently demanded an additional change; hence, some later manuscripts with this expansion further replace the "hearing" (ἀκούσαντες) in verse 9 of what Jesus had just said, with "reading" (ἀναγινώσκοντες) of what Jesus has written: that is, the sins.[116]

"Earth Accuses Earth": The Pericope in Early Medieval Latin

Early medieval Latin manuscripts do not supply information regarding Jesus' writing in their texts of the pericope, but they do include information nonetheless,

[113] ταύτῃ γὰρ κάλαμον λαβών, ἄρχομαι γράφειν συγχώρησιν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐκ τοῦ Ἀδάμ. ἡ σάρξ μου, ἣν ὁρᾷς, ὥσπερ χάρτης γίνεταί μοι, καὶ τὸ αἷμά μου μέλαν ὅθεν βάπτω καὶ γράφω, δωρεὰν νέμων ἀδιάδοχον τοῖς κράζουσι· (*Hymn* 34.7; SC 128:121). Romanos the Melodist, *On the Life of Christ: Kontakia* (trans. Ephrem Lash; San Francisco, Calif.: Harper Collins, 1995) 129–38. For discussion see Krueger, *Writing and Holiness,* 160–62.

[114] On the continuing importance of Romanos to the Byzantine church, see R. J. Schork, *Sacred Song from the Byzantine Pulpit: Romanos the Melodist* (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1933) 3–6; William L. Petersen, *The Diatessaron and Ephrem Syrus as Sources of Romanos the Melodist* (CSCO 475, Subsidia 74; Louvain: Peeters, 1985) 1–3; and Krueger, *Writing and Holiness,* 159, 191. The beautiful, illuminated Menologion of Basil II (ca. 1000) includes an illumination of St. Romanos followed by a brief *Vita* (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vaticanus graecus 1613, fol. 78; see Krueger, *Writing and Holiness,* fig. 11, 190).

[115] Robinson, who has collated the pericope in all continuous-text MSS, reports in personal correspondence that this addition is attested by 68 other witnesses in the tenth through fifteenth centuries.

[116] See Wasserman, "Patmos Family." More recently, one additional MS with this variant reading has been identified, ANA 4, Tirana. A similar expansion is found in the tenth-century Armenian Edschmiadzin Gospels. In this unusual version of the story, Jesus, "bowing his head, was writing with his finger on the earth to declare their sins." Frederick C. Conybeare, trans., "On the Last Twelve Verses of St. Mark's Gospel," *Expositor* 5.2 (1895) 406; repr., David C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 99; and Vrej Nersessian, *The Bible in the Armenian Tradition* (London: The British Library, 2001) 20. This MS then adds, "and they were seeing their several sins on the stones," which, though unique, finds an interesting possible parallel in a ninth-century Jesus hadith collected by Ahmad ibn Hanbal. The hadith is as follows: "A man who had committed adultery was brought to Jesus, who ordered them to stone him. Jesus said, 'But no one should stone him who has committed what he has committed.' They let the stones fall from their hands, all except John son of Zachariah." The translator notes: "This is a version of the Gospel story describing the stoning of an adulterous woman, transformed here into a man." Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature* (ed. and trans. Tarif Khalidi; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) 82–83. We are grateful to Ibrahim Khalin for calling our attention to this Jesus hadith and to Kecia Ali for elucidating its context.

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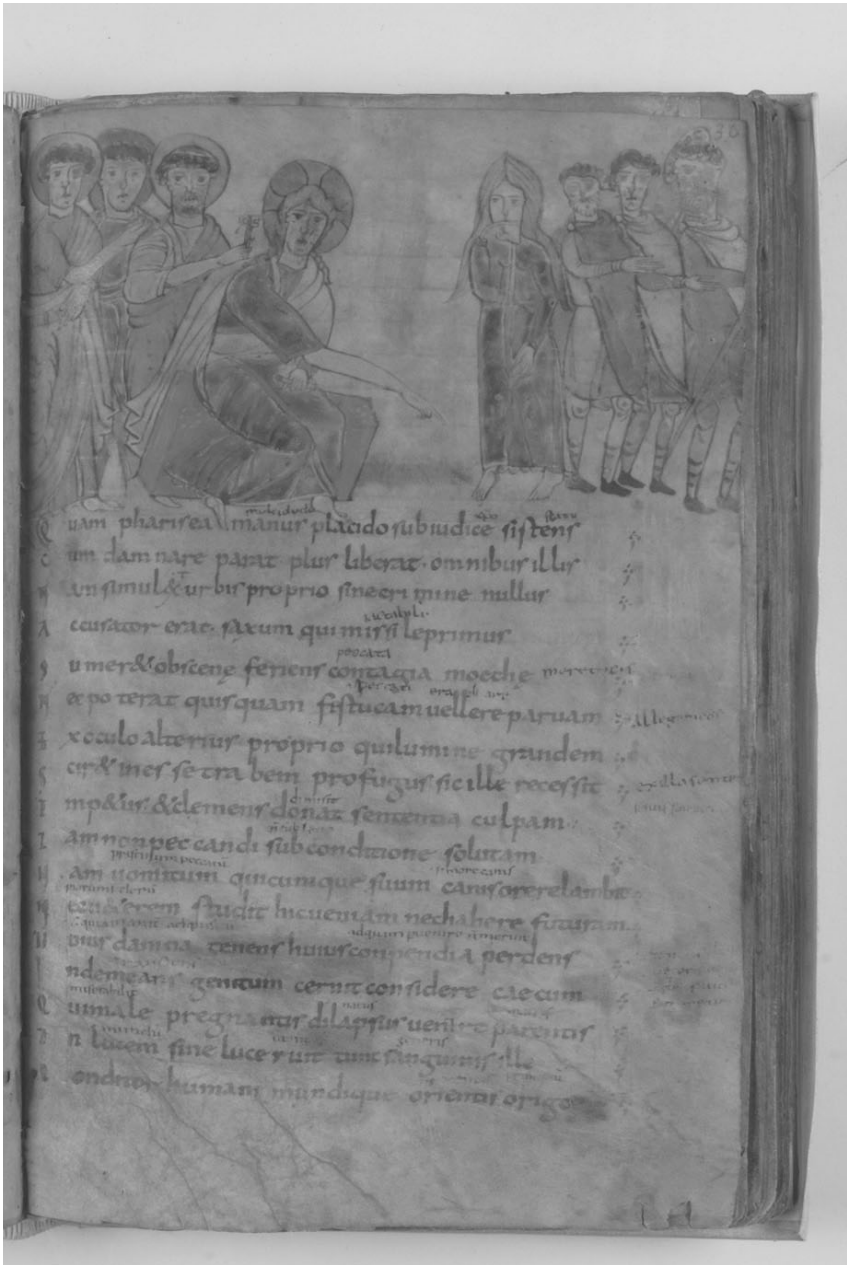


Fig. 5. Sedulius *Carmen paschale*, Antwerp, ninth cent. Museum Plantin-Moretus/ Prentenkabinet, Antwerp–UNESCO World Heritage. Inv. no. M 17.4, fol. 30*r*. Photo: Peter Maes

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and not only in separate commentaries, homilies, and books. Northumbrian and Carolingian editors were quite familiar with the passage and went to considerable lengths to make sure it was included in their Gospels. Thus, the sixth-century insular Old Latin manuscript Usserianus Primus (r^1) includes the passage, but from a Vulgate translation, suggesting that the scribe added the passage from a separate exemplar.[117] By contrast, the eighth-century northern Italian Old Latin Codex Rehdigeranus (*l*) omitted the pericope, at least initially, but then, in the ninth century, the passage was added, sewn into the margin by a later scribe.[118] A ninth-century edition of Sedulius's *Carmen paschale*, likely copied from a manuscript owned by Cuthwine, an early eighth-century bishop of the East Angles known to Bede,[119] incorporates an image of the pericope at the appropriate place in the poem, but highlights aspects of the story that are not present in Sedulius's text: Christ is depicted seated upon a stool and reaching down toward the earth (fig. 5). The adulteress gestures in shame while her accusers surreptitiously depart and the disciples look on.[120] By contrast, Sedulius makes no mention of Jesus' writing, envisions the woman pressed on all sides by a crowd, and emphasizes the stones that would be used to crush her.[121] As such, these images were likely drawn not from an earlier illuminated Sedulius but from a now-lost illuminated Gospel book.[122]

In Jarrow in the early eighth century, Bede (ca. 673–735) preached a Lenten homily that demonstrated interest in Jesus' writing as well. According to Bede,

[117] Thomas K. Abbott suggests this in his critical edition of the MS: *Evangeliorum versio antehieronymiana. Ex Codex Userianus (Dublinensi), adjecta collatione Codicis Usseriani alterius accedit versio Vulgata sec. Cod. Amiatinum, cum varietate Cod. Kenanensis (Book of Kellas) et Cod. Durmachensis (Book of Durrow)* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, et Soc., 1884) vii.

[118] Stadtbibliothek Breslau, R. 169, fol. 273*v*. Heinrich Joseph Vogels, *Codex Rehdigeranus* (Collectanea Biblica Latina 2; Rome: Pustet, 1913) 277 and plate.

[119] See Henry Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination: An Historical Study* (2 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1991) 1:72–73.

[120] Antwerp. Plantin-Moretus Museum. MS M.17.4. Sedulius, *Carmen paschale*, Liège, C9, fol. 30*r*.

[121] Sedulius, *Carmen paschale* 4.233–242: "Dumque sui media residens testitudine templi/ Ore tonans patrio directi ad peruia callis/ Errantem populum monitis conuertit amicis:/ Ecce trahebatur magna stipante caterua/ Turpis adulterii mulier lapidanda reatu,/ Quam Pharisaea manus placido sub iudice sistens/ Cum damnare parat, plus liberat; omnibus illis/ Nam simul e turbis proprie sine crimine nullus/ Accusator erat, saxum qui missile primus/ Sumeret obscenae feriens contagia moechae" (CSEL 10a:107–8).

[122] Carol Lewine, *The Miniatures of the Antwerp Sedulius Manuscript: The Early Christian Models and Their Transformations* (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1970) 1–2, 6–20. C. Caesar, "Die Antwerpener Handschrift des Sedulius," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* n.s. 61 (1901) 263. The Antwerp Sedulius offers further evidence of Kurt Weitzmann's theory that the earliest illuminated Gospels employed extensive picture cycles, arranged in a frieze-like fashion that could be read, as he puts it, "in a cinematographic fashion." These images were then gradually reduced, applied to passages with greater liturgical significance. Kurt Weitzmann, *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (ed. Herbert L. Kessler; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971) 250–54. Removed from its context, elaborated and enlarged, the one sequential image of the *pericope adulterae* was then re-applied to Sedulius's poem, though it did not quite fit the context of the work.

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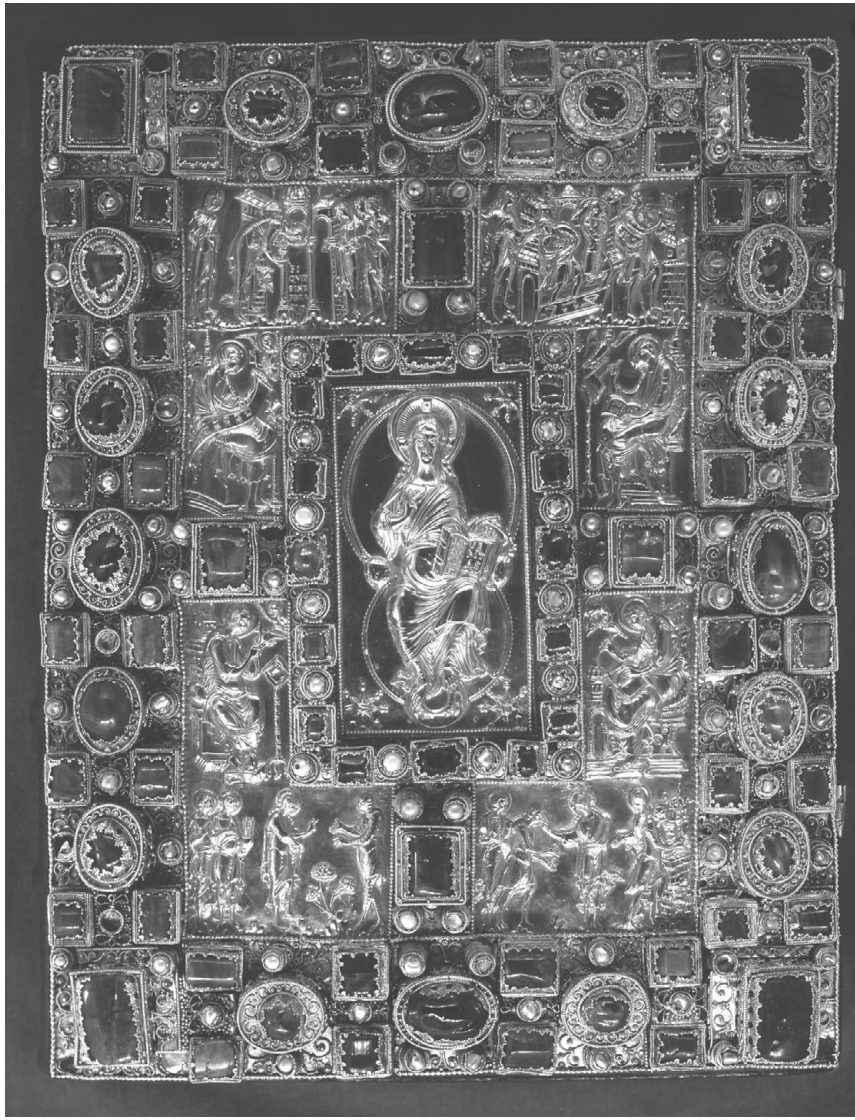


Fig. 6. Cover of Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram (Golden Gopels of Charles the Bald), 870. München SB: Clm 1400.

Jesus represented his humility by bowing down, and, by writing in the ground, he showed that our deeds are written on our hearts.[123] Bede is remarkable not only

[123] Bede, *Homilarium Homeliarum evangelii libri II*. CCCM 122:179–80, Homily 25. English translation by Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst in *Advent to Lent* (vol. 1 of *Bede the Venerable. Homilies on the Gospels*; Cistercian Studies 110; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1991) 247–48. The *Corpus Christianorum* edition of Bede must be employed with caution; see B. Löfstedt,

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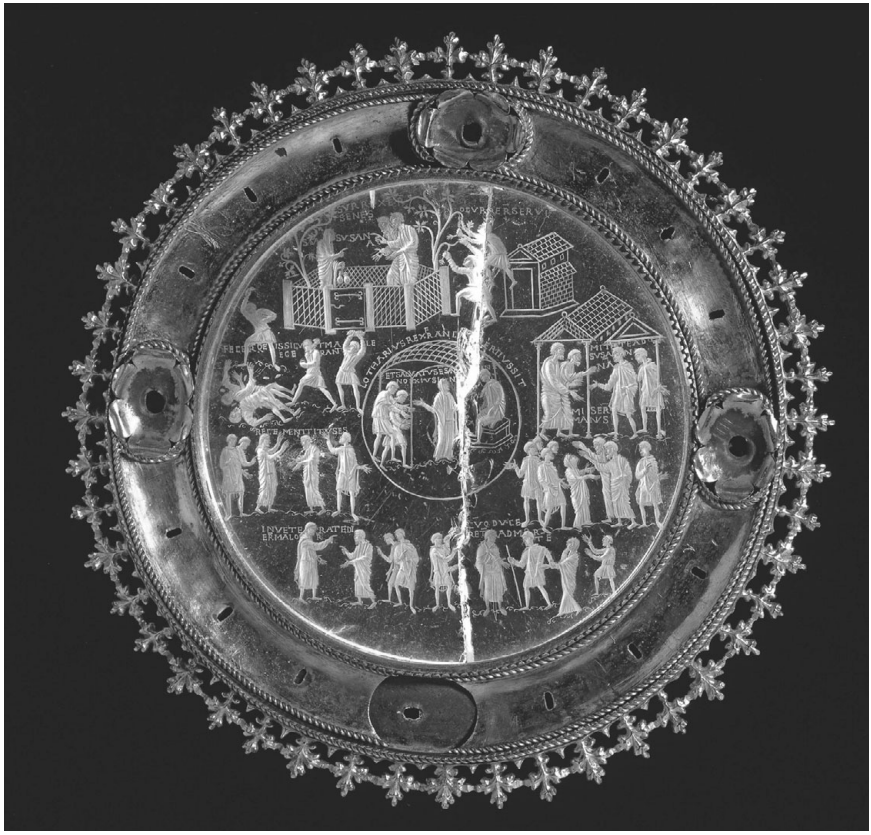


Fig. 7. Lothair Crystal, London, ca. 855–886. British Museum, Department of Medieval and Later Antiqities. Inv. no. M&LA 55,12-1,5.

for his well-crafted sermons on this pericope and other passages, his knowledge of Greek,[124] and his well-known *Ecclesiastical History*, but also for his active involvement in the preservation and copying of Northumbrian Bibles. It is Bede who tells us that Ceolfrith, prior of Wearmouth, brought back from Italy a large pandect Bible that had once belonged to Cassiodorus. Apparently, this pandect went on to serve as the model for Codex Amiatinus, a massive illuminated pandect presented as a gift to Pope Gregory II (715–731). When edited, various changes

"Zu Bedas Evangelien Kommentaren," *Arctos* 21 (1987) 61–72; idem, "Zu Bedas Predigten," *Arctos* 22 (1988) 95–98. Löfstedt provides a number of textual corrections and identifications of sources

[124] See Cyril Mango, "La culture grecque et l'occident au VIIIe siècle," in *I problemi dell'occidente nel secolo VIII* (Settimane di studio 20.2, Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo; Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1973) 683–721, at 689–90, plates 1–3.

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were made, including the replacement of an older Latin translation with Jerome's *noua translatio*, that is, with the Vulgate text.[125]

Northumbrian Bible production went on to influence the Carolingian reform, with Alcuin of York serving as a key figure in Charlemagne's educational program, further guaranteeing the presence of the passage both in Gospel books and in early medieval exegesis.[126] Carolingian preachers paid regular attention to the story.[127] The pericope was also chosen as a subject for the golden cover of Codex Aureus of Emmerman, a version of the Gospels copied in 870 for Charles the Bald[128] (fig. 6). This jewel encrusted golden cover includes scenes from Jesus' life, all drawn from the Gospel of John, and evangelist portraits around an enthroned Christ. The *pericope adulterae* is depicted on the upper left, across from an image of the cleansing of the temple. In this scene, Jesus is writing "si quis sine pecato" (if anyone is without sin), a paraphrase of the Vulgate, "qui sine peccato est vestrum primus in illam lapidem mittat" (whoever of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw the stone at her). Interestingly, a comparable set of biblical paraphrases may be found on the contemporary Lothair Crystal, a finely wrought depiction of the story of Susanna engraved on a lens-shaped rock crystal, probably for King Lothair II of the Franks, who reigned in Lothairingia from 855 until 869 (fig. 7).[129] Phrases from the Vulgate translation of Daniel 13 are inscribed adjacent to the appropriate scenes, sometimes literally and sometimes in paraphrase, in ways that further add to the story.[130] The

[125] Paul Meyvaert, "Bede, Cassiodorus, and the Codex Amiatinus," *Speculum* 71 (1996) 827–83 at 836–39.

[126] Donald A. Bullough, "Albinus deliciosus Karoli Regis: Alcuin of York and the Shaping of the Early Carolingian Court," in *Institutionen, Kultur and Gesellschaft im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Josef Fleckenstein zu seinem 65. Geburgstag* (ed. Lutz Fenske, Werner Rösener and Thomas Sotz; Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1984) 73–92; Luitpold Wallach, *Alcuin and Charlemagne: Studies in Carolingian History and Literature* (Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 32; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1959); and Wihelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949).

[127] For example, a collection of ninth-century homilies attributed to Paul the Deacon (ca. 720–ca. 800) includes a sermon on the passage, likely given on the designated third Saturday in Lent (PL 95:1279–81). Alcuin may have depended upon this homiliary when he composed his own a short time later. See Valerie I. J. Flint, "Susanna and the Lothair Crystal: A Liturgical Perspective," *Early Medieval Europe* 4 (1995) 61–86, at 71–72.

[128] Rosamond McKitterick, "Charles the Bald (823–877) and His Library: The Patronage of Learning," *The English Historical Review* 95 (1980) 28–47, at 38–40.

[129] British Museum, Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, Inventory no. M&LA 55, 12–1,5. We would like to thank Professor Fiona Griffiths for calling our attention to the Lothair Crystal.

[130] The inscriptions are as follows: Susanna is assaulted by the elders, SVRREXER/SENSE (Daniel 13:19: "Surrexerunt duo sense" [the two elders arose]). SCA SVSAN/A (*Sancta Susanna*). The servants rush in, OCVRRERSERVI (probably a paraphrase of Daniel 13:26–27). The elders send for Susanna, MITITEAD/SVSA N/NA (Daniel 13:29: "Mittite ad Susannam" [send to Susanna]). The elders accuse Susanna, MI SER/MA NVS (probably a paraphrase of Daniel 13:34: "Posuerunt manus" [they laid their hands on her head]). Convicted of adultery, Susanna is led before Daniel, CVQ.DVCE/RET ADMOR/TE (Daniel 13:45: "Cumque duceretur ad mortem" [And when she was led away to be put to death]). Daniel accuses the elders, INVETE RATEDI/ERMALO R (Daniel 13:52: "Inveterate dierum malorum" [O you who are grown old in evil days]). The elders give conflicting

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images also extend the narrative, depicting, for example, the stoning of the elders, a detail that is not specified in the Vulgate text.[131]

An analysis of this crystal by Valerie Flint suggests further, possibly explicit, connections between the cover of Codex Aureus and the Lothair Crystal. As Flint points out, the story of Daniel and the story of the adulteress were read in tandem on the third Saturday of Lent, a connection that Carolingian-sponsored liturgical reforms formalized. The very early Roman lectionary, the *Comes* of Würzburg (ca. 700), links the two passages, as do two other eighth- and ninth-century lectionary manuscripts.[132] Thus, when the Lothair Crystal labels Susanna as Sancta Susanna, it may well suggest not the Susanna who was a victim of the elders in Daniel 13 but Saint Susanna, the legendary martyred niece of Diocletian and patron saint of the Roman stational church of the Gai, renamed by Pope Gregory the Great in the late sixth century.[133] The two Susannas were conflated, possibly with the adulteress of John 8 as well. Flint concludes:

> [T]he veiled and standing woman [of the Lothair Crystal] may also represent Susanna's liturgical companion, the unnamed adulterous woman of the gospel. The two standing figures . . . would then be the Scribes of the gospel—and the seated figure representative of Christ himself, sitting canopied in judgment in the Temple.[134]

Whether or not the Lothair Crystal conflates the Susannas and the adulteress, the crystal and the golden cover of Charles the Bald's Gospels do present a series of intriguing coincidences: both were likely designed for the personal collections of Carolingian kings, both paraphrase passages from their chosen stories, and both

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evidence and are condemned, RECTE MENTITITVSES (Daniel 13:55 or 59, "Recte mentitus es" or "Recte mentitus es" [Well, you have lied *or* Well, you have also lied]). The elders are executed, FECE RQE ISSICV TMA LE/EGE RANT (Daniel 13:61: "Feceruntque eis sicuti male egerant" [And they did to them as they had maliciously dealt (against her)]. Susanna is declared innocent and gives thanks, ETSALVATVSESANG…IN/NOXIVSI ND.../…A (Daniel 13:62: "Et salvatus est sanguis innoxius in die illa" [And innocent blood was saved that day]). This reconstruction is dependent upon that of Genevra Kornbluth, "The Susanna Crystal of Lothair II: Chastity, the Church, and Royal Justice," *Gesta* 31 (1992) 25–39, appendix 1, 37–38.

[131] The exact purpose and message of the Lothair Crystal has been a subject of considerable debate, though scholars agree that an emphasis is placed upon just judgment. See Kornbluth, "The Susanna Crystal," esp. 27–34 and Flint, "Susanna," 61–86.

[132] The *Comes* of Würzburg (Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.p.th.f. 62), the *Comes* of Mürbach (Besancon, Bibl. Mun. 184) and a lectionary from either St. Amand or Marchiennes (Douai, Bibliotheque Municipale, Codex 12). See Flint, "Susanna," 71. On the *Comes* of Würzburg, also see Hans Thurn, *Comes Romanus Wirziburgensis. Facsimileausgabe des Codex M.p.th.f. 62 der Universitäts-Bibliothek Würzburg* (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1968).

[133] Pietri, *Roma christiana. Récherches sur l'Église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311–440)* (Bibliothèque des ecoles français d'Athènes et de Rome 224; Rome: École française de Rome, 1976) 1:498–501; and Antoine Chavasse, "Les plus anciens types du lectionnaire et de l'Antiphonaire romains de la Messe. Rapports et Date," *RB* 62 (1952) 3–94, esp. 4, 72–74.

[134] Flint, "Susanna," 76.

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were produced in the mid-ninth century, within a span of five years. The Lothair Crystal seems to have served as some sort of gift or talisman, perhaps given to Queen Theutberga upon her reconciliation with her husband King Lothair II.[135] The luxury Codex Aureus of Saint Emmerman adorned Charles the Bald's personal library, along with a Sacramentary, a prayer book, Psalter, and Antiphony, each richly decorated.[136] In addition to the episodes from John chosen to adorn its covers, the manuscript also includes a dedicatory, Byzantine-style image of Charles the Bald, signaling the importance of lavish, illuminated books in the context of ninth-century Carolingian–Byzantine exchange.[137] In other words, both the golden Gospels cover and the crystal fit within the activities and concerns of Carolingian court circles, and both address themes of divinely-ordained justice.

The particular popularity of the *pericope adulterae* in Carolingian contexts is further evinced by early *Glossa* designed to accompany and clarify biblical texts, commentaries and commentary collections, and also by the Miscellanies produced by court scholars like Sedulius Scottus.[138] This Sedulius, not to be confused with the sixth century Sedulius who composed the *Carmen paschale*, was an Irish poet and scholar likely invited to the royal court at Liège by Charles the Bald, serving as a tutor to the future King Lothair II.[139] He included a saying from John 8 in his collection of biblical, patristic, and classical excerpts, many of which also appear in his later work, *De rectoribus christianis* (written ca. 855–859). He listed, "Whoever is without sin, let him throw the first stone at her," among a series of selections from "the doctors" of the church, including excerpts from the writings of Jerome, Gregory the Great, Isaiah and Isidore.[140] As we have seen, the goldsmith who

[135] This is Flint's perspective. Kornbluth, by contrast, views the crystal as a propaganda piece, designed to associate Lothair II with *Justitia*.

[136] McKitterick, "Charles the Bald," 38–40.

[137] München, Clm 14000, fol. 5*v*. On books as forms of elite exchange, see Leslie Brubaker, "The Elephant and the Ark: Cultural and Material Interchange across the Mediterranean in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries," *DOP* 58 (2004) 175–95, at 182–85. On the Byzantine style of this portrait, see Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, 1:61–62.

[138] The *Expositio Quatuor Euangeliorum*, a seventh- or eighth-century work attributed to Jerome likely composed in Ireland, discusses the passage, as do several anonymous commentary collections preserving excerpts from Augustine's *Tractatus in Iohannis Euangelium*, the *Expositio* and other works. For example, see Denis Brearley, "The *Expositio Iohannis* in Angers BM 275: A Commentary on the Gospel of St. John showing Irish Influence," *Recherches augustiniennes* 22 (1987) 151–221, at 179; and Joseph F. Kelly's edition of Cod. Vind. Lat. 997, *CC* 108C:118–19. On the *Expositio*, see Bernhard Bischoff, "Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese in Frühmittelalter," *Sacris Erudiri* 6.2 (1954) 189–281, at 198–99. Brearley suggests that Angers BM 275 and the *Expositio* may well draw on earlier and yet still unidentified *collectanea* (157 n. 43).

[139] Introduction to *On Christian Rulers* and *The Poems* by Sedulius Scottus (trans. Edward Gerard Doyle; Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 17; Binghamton, N.Y.: State University of New York, 1983) 9–48; and *Sedulii Scotti. Collectaneum Miscellaneum* (ed. Dean Simpson; CCCM 67; Turnhout: Brepols, 1988) ix–xxxii.

[140] *Collecaneum Miscellaneum* 13.2.14: *Christus:* "Qui uestrum sine peccato est, mittat in eam lapidem." The subject of Book 13.2 is "from the doctors [of the church]" (*de doctoribus*) (CCCM 67:53–56, at 54).

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manufactured the golden cover of Codex Aureus of Emmerman, also for Charles the Bald, paraphrased this same verse a few decades later.

A surviving ninth-century *glossa*, Codex Sangallensis 292, comments upon the *pericope adulterae*: after the scriptural tagline "digito scribebat in terra," this *glossa* indicates that Jesus wrote "terra terram accusat," that is, "earth accuses earth."[141] No further context or information regarding the phrase is offered. As we noted earlier, Ambrose did link sayings of the prophet Jeremiah with the pericope, suggesting that Jesus wrote, "earth, earth, write that these men have been disowned" (terra, terra, scribe hos uiros abdicatos; *Ep*. 50.4).[142] The phrase "terra terram accusat" may therefore be a convenient paraphrase of Ambrose's point of view. A sermon preached by Augustine on Psalm 2 offers another, even more plausible source for the *glossa*. In this sermon, the bishop reminded North African rulers that, when judging, they are merely "earth itself judging the earth" (terra iudicat terram), "a human judging a human, a mortal judging a mortal, a sinner judging a sinner" (porro autem si reges iudicant terram . . . homo hominem, mortalis mortalem, peccator peccatorem; *Sermo* 13.4).[143] He then invoked the *pericope adulterae*, observing that, when the Lord Jesus wrote with his finger, he judged the earth, even as he displayed pity for the woman (*Sermo* 13.5).[144] Augustine's emphasis on pity, missing from Ambrose's *Epistles*, is also present in the St. Gall *glossa*, which depicts the woman "standing in the middle, that is, between death and life, judgment and pity."[145] Moreover, Augustine's message—kings will also be judged—fits well with advice given to Carolingian rulers by ecclesiastical authorities of all sorts.[146]

Whatever its source, the phrase "terra terram accusat" went on to enjoy a long history, reappearing in the pages of Codex Egberti (Trier, Stadtbibliothek, MS 24),

[141] Sankt Gallen Stiftsbibliothek (SB) 292, fol. 135; also see Karlsruhe. BLB, St. Peter perg. 88 and 109. On these MSS, see Eberhard G. Graff, *Diutiska: Denkmäler deutscher Sprache und Literatur, aus alten Handschriften* (Stuttgart: Druckerei Anton Hain, 1827; repr., Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1970) 2:167–88; Rolf Bergmann, *Verzeichnis der Althochdeutschen und Altsächsischen Glossenhandschriften* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973) 29, no. 221. According to Elias Steinmeyer, this gloss is unusual, found in only this MS. See Elias Steinmeyer and Eduard Sievers, *Ergänzungen und Untersuchungen* (vol. 5 of *Die Althochdeutschen Glossen*; ed. Elias Steinmeyer; Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1922).

[142] CSEL 82:57–58.

[143] CCSL 41:179.

[144] CCSL 41:180: "Illos a uindicta repressit conscientia, me ad subueniendum inclinat misericordia" (Conscience inhibited the others from vengeance; pity persuades me to come to your help).

[145] The full gloss of John 8:1–11 is as follows: "Digito scribebat in terra terra terram accusatur. Et mulier in medio stans id est inter mortem et vitam et inter iudicium et misericordis" (With his finger he wrote on the ground "earth accuses earth." And the woman stood in the middle, that is, between death and life, judgment and pity). We would like to thank Professors Christopher Celenza, Deeana Klepper, and Fiona Griffiths for their invaluable assistance with this MS.

[146] Sedulius Scottus, for example, advised Carolingian princes to remember that "there is no authority unless it be from God" and thus "the more pious rulers subject themselves humbly to the King of Kings, the more they ascend on high to the summit of glorious distinction" (*De rectoribus christianis* 1; trans. Doyle, 53). Augustine links the pity shown to the adulteress to the pity expected from pious rulers on numerous occasions. Also see *Epistle* 153.4; *De adult. coniug*. 2.7; *Io. Ev. tr*. 33.5.1, 3–6.1.

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a tenth-century pericope book commissioned by Archbishop Egbert of Trier (977–993) during the reign of Otto II, son of the Saxon king Otto I and husband of the Byzantine princess Theophanu.[147] In this manuscript, Christ quite literally inscribes terra terram accusat into the ground while the woman, her accusers, and two disciples look on.[148] The eleventh-century Gospels of the Abbess Hitda of Meschede (ca. 1000–1020) reproduces this same image: once again, Jesus inscribes "terra terram accusat."[149] Thus, by the Ottonian period, a Christ-centered royal theology fully incorporated the phrase featuring Psalters and Evangeliaries, elaborate ruler portraits, and the enthroned Christ.[150] The declaration, then, that "earth accuses earth," can perhaps be read as a reminder that, as Augustine proclaimed, human rulers and human judges are just that—human—and, like the adulteress, they too will be subject to divine judgment.

Jesus' Writing Illuminated: The Pericope Adulterae *in Medieval Greek*

Although it was marginal among Greek-speaking Christians, the *pericope adulterae* was preserved by a majority of Byzantine majuscule witnesses nonetheless, most often without critical marks, and included in various Menologia, perhaps from the sixth or seventh centuries. The relegation of the pericope to Menologia did not fully impede its telling, however, as art historical and later manuscript evidence both suggest. Chosen for illustration on two ivory pyxides, as we have seen, and carved, perhaps, on a sixth-century Byzantine ciborium, the iconographic record points to a continuing tradition of illustration and remembrance in Greek and Latin both, an impression further confirmed by the series of miniatures that accompany the passage in an eleventh-century Byzantine Gospels (Florence: Laurenziana cod. Plut. VI, 23; fig. 8).[151] This extraordinary manuscript depicts nearly every Gospel scene in magnificent detail, including the pericope, and does so in a manner similar to what must have been common in much earlier illuminated Gospels. Like the sixth-century

[147] For the general history of this period, see Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, 1:57–68; Franz Ronig, *Codex Egberti. Das Perikopenbuch des Erzbischofs Egbert von Trier (977–993)* (Treveris Sacra 1; Trier: Spee-Verlag, 1977) 5–13; Ekkehard Eickhoff, *Theophanu und der König. Otto III und seine Welt* (Stuttgart: Keitt-Cotta, 1996).

[148] Trier, Stadtbibliothek, MS24, fol. 46*v*. Ronig associates the phrase "terra terram accusat" with Augustine's thirteenth sermon on Psalm 2:10 (Ronig, *Codex Egberti*, 76).

[149] Darmstadt. Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, MS 1640, fol. 171*r*.

[150] Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, 1:57–117.

[151] For further discussion of this MS, see Gabriel Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'evangile aux XIVe, XVe and XVIe siècles, d'après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédoine et du Mont-Athos* (Bibliothèque des écoles français d'Athènes et de Rome 109; Paris: Fontemoing, 1916); Shigebumi Tsuji, "The Study of Byzantine Gospel Illustration in Florence, Laur. Plut. VI, 23 and Paris, Bibl. Nat. cod. gr. 74" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1967); Tania Velmans, *Le Tétraèvangile de la Laurentienne, Florence, Plut. VI, 23* (Bibliothèque des cahiers archéologiques 6; Paris: Klincksieck, 1971).

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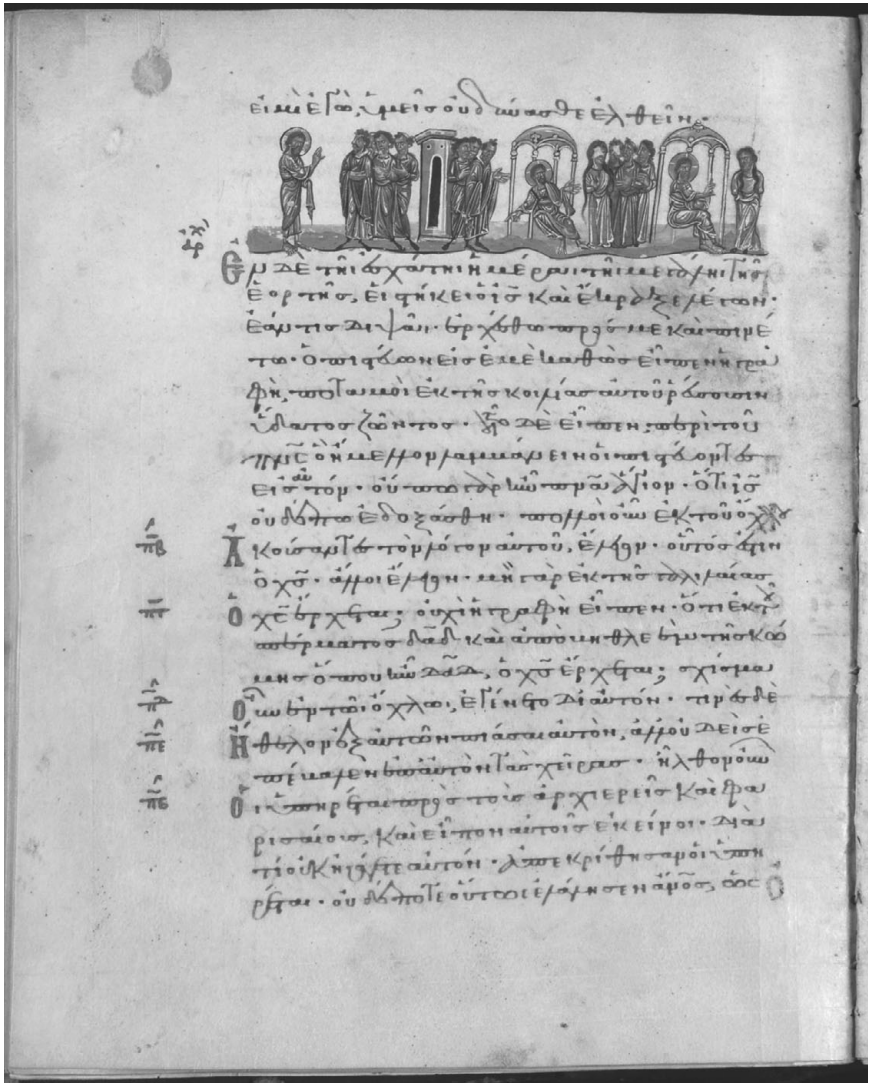


Fig. 8. Illuminated Gospels, ca. 1000. Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 6.23, c. 184*v*. Su concessione del Ministerio per i Beni e le Atività Culturali. E' vietata ogni ulteriore riproduzione con qualsiasi mezzo.

Vienna Genesis, the Rossano Gospels and the Sinope Gospels, this *tetra-evangelion* presents a coherent visual narrative in sequential, "cinematographic" scenes.[152]

[152] See Kurt Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex: A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration* (Studies in Manuscript Illumination 2; Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947) 128–29; idem, "Narrative and Liturgical Gospel Illustrations," in *Studies in Classical and*

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Unfortunately, no surviving pre-iconoclastic manuscript has preserved the relevant section of John, and so none can verify the pericope's inclusion within a more ancient iconographic schema.[153] It is likely, however, that the Florence Gospels faithfully reproduced by-then conventional iconographic formulae, harkening back to earlier models.[154] As such, this manuscript may point to the incorporation of the *pericope adulterae* not only within pre-iconoclastic Gospel texts but also within pre-iconoclastic Byzantine illuminations.[155] Similarities between the imagery in the Florence Gospels and other Christian art confirm the impression: as in the ninth-century illuminated Sedulius, Jesus is portrayed sitting, pointing to the ground; as in Codex Egberti, the woman stands by, first with her accusers and then with Jesus;[156] and, as in the Lothair Crystal, Jesus is portrayed seated under a canopy. Tracing late antique Greek exemplars, now lost, through to Carolingian and Ottonian

Byzantine Manuscript Illumination (ed. Herbert Kessler; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971) 250; idem, "The Selection of Texts for Cyclic Illustration in Byzantine Manuscripts," in *Byzantine Books and Bookmen* (Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium 1971; Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1975) 75–76; Robert Deshman, "The Illustrated Gospels," in *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections: An Exhibition in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann* (ed. Gary Vikan; Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973) 40–43; Leslie Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 76–78, 80–82 (figs. 63, 65, Rossano Gospels); Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, 32, 79, 122–23 (fig. 74, Rossano Gospels), 178–79 (fig. 104, Sinope Codex). We borrow the term "cinematographic" from Weitzmann (*Studies*, 250).

[153] There are four surviving pre-iconoclastic illuminated Gospels: the Rossano Gospels, the Sinope Gospels, the Syriac Rabula Gospels, and a Syriac Gospels held in Paris (Rossano: Cathedral Library, BA: S.N.; Paris: Bibliothèque nationale suppl. gr. 1286; Florence: Laurenziana cod. Plut. I, 56; Paris: Bibliothèque nationale cod. Syr. 33).

[154] Velmans, *Le Tétraèvangile de la Laurentienne*, 6; Deshman, "The Illustrated Gospels," 40. Also see Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 38–47, 55–57. As Brubaker points out, following the iconoclastic controversies of the eighth and ninth centuries, Byzantine artists were under increased pressure to produce images what would be perceived as traditional rather than innovative (43). Though the Laurenziana codex was illustrated more than a century later, arguably this earlier conservatism influenced the selection of miniatures. We would like to thank Professor Brubaker for her assistance with the ninth-century illuminated homilies of Gregory of of Nazianzus held in Paris (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale gr. 510). According to some early art historical works, this MS depicts the woman taken in adultery. As Professor Brubaker explained, however, the Paris Gregory illustrates the story of the woman with flow of blood, not the adulteress.

[155] To our knowledge, the Laurenziana Gospels preserves the only extant illumination of the pericope in the Byzantine tradition, a phenomenon that may also be linked to its lack of liturgical prominence. As Weitzmann argues, illuminated MSS gradually reduced the number of scenes portrayed, so that only the most prominent passages, especially those connected to the main liturgical feasts, were chosen for enlargement, and in a more grandiose, hieratic style (Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex*, 104–105, and *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination*, 290. Compare Shigebumi Tsuji, "Byzantine Lectionary Illustration," in *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections*, 37–38). Thus, a comparable eleventh-century Gospels held in Paris (Paris. Bibliothèque nationale cod. gr. 74), though also richly decorated, neglects to illustrate the *pericope adulterae*, as well as other, more marginal episodes.

[156] Paul Bloch specifically links Codex Egberti to the frieze-style Gospel illuminations of earlier centuries, suggesting that the artist adapted his image of the pericope from a now lost illustrated Gospels of this type. See Bloch, "Ehebrecherin," 582.

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books and images, and onto an eleventh-century Byzantine *tetra-evangelion* may not be possible. Nevertheless, long-standing interactions between text and image—complicated by the intense material and cultural intercourse between Byzantine-Frankish and then Ottonian-Byzantine courts—place the *pericope adulterae* within an on-going setting of interface and exchange.[157] Notably, both the Eastern and Western imagery highlight Jesus' writing.[158] By the twelfth-century, Constantinopolitan scholar Eustathius of Thessaloniki simply assumed that his audience knew the story well. Calling the passage a "gospel pearl" and invoking it as a proof of God's compassion, Eustathius implored his brothers to follow Christ's example by showing mercy to one another instead of casting stones.[159]

The Story Continues

The continuing development of the *pericope adulterae* emphasizes this story's long-standing place in the Christian imagination. As meaning and text shifted over time, traditions associating divine judgment with writing on the ground came to influence both Greek and Latin texts and paratexts. In the Greek case, the observation that Jesus/God inscribes sins into the ground was literally written into some manuscripts of John. In Latin, exegetical and liturgical decisions made by Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Cassiodorus, Pacian, Sedulius, and others were carried forward into Carolingian and Ottonian royal theology, influencing the books, liturgy, art, and scholarship produced at this time. Yet here claims about what Jesus wrote—first introduced by Ambrose or Augustine—were applied not to Jews or the woman's accusers but to kings, an appropriate choice given the court setting of the artists, illuminators, and scholars who fashioned these books and images. Once proposed, these interpretive innovations were repeated, gaining so strong a foothold that the thirteenth century Dominican scholar Jacobus de Voragine (ca. 1230–1298) could simply assume that Ambrose and Augustine had associated Jesus' writing with the words "terra terram accusat."[160] Revisiting the *pericope adulterae*

[157] On the importance of luxury books as Byzantine-Frankish royal gifts, see Brubaker, "Elephant and the Ark," 175–95; on the exchange of artifacts and ideas across the Ottonian and Byzantine Empires, see Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination* 1:119–201.

[158] Shapiro strikingly says about the miniature in Codex Egberti, "[Jesus'] pointing finger touches the last letter, as if to indicate his act of writing. . . . It is not written horizontally across the field like other inscriptions in the miniatures of this manuscript. It is the only inscription of speech in the entire series of Gospel scenes. But these are not really spoken words; by calling upon the accusers to read his mute writing, Christ evokes in them a corresponding inner speech, the voice of conscience." Meyer Shapiro, *Words, Script, and Pictures: Semiotics on Visual Language* (New York: George Braziller, 2000) 189.

[159] Eustathius of Thessaloniki, *Homily* 6 lines 406–445. *Eustathios von Thessalonike. Reden auf die grosse Quadragesima* (ed. Sonja Schönauer; Frankfurt: Beerenverlag, 2006) 160–61. We would like to thank Professor Alexander Alexakis for calling this sermon to our attention.

[160] The Parisian biblical scholar Peter Comestor (d. 1178/79) also suggested that Jesus wrote "terra terram accusat," attributing the phrase to Jerome but identifying its source as a Letter to Irenaeus, a letter now attributed to Ambrose (*Ep*. 68). Peter states: "Quid scribebat? Quidam dicunt id quod eis respondit.

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in a Lenten sermon, Jacobus listed a series of suggestions regarding what Jesus wrote: according to Ambrose and Augustine, Jesus wrote "terra terram accusat"; according to the *Glossa Ordinaria*, he wrote out the sins of the woman's accusers "eorum peccata";[161] finally, Jacobus reports, according to John Chrysostom, Jesus wrote "earth, swallow these men who have been disowned" (terra absorbe hos uiros abdicatos; *Sabbato Sermo* 1:45–48).[162] Demonstrating his great learning as well as his fidelity to the traditions of the church, Jacobus collected the interpretations of two Latin fathers, information gathered in the *Glossa Ordinaria*, and teachings attributed to the great orthodox preacher John Chrysostom into one, coherent narrative, all to argue that Jesus wrote words of judgment in the earth.

In the end, it is not possible to determine what Jesus wrote or even if he wrote, nor is it likely that the original intentions of the author of this passage, evangelist or interpolator, will ever be available to contemporary readers. Nevertheless, the idea that Jesus wrote with his finger in the ground has remained a source of fascination and creative engagement for centuries, capturing the imagination of artists, theologians, and biblical scholars from antiquity to today.[163] The popularity of the *pericope adulterae* may wax and wane, and its place within the canonical gospels may never be totally secure, but the passage endures. Bearing with itself and as itself the history of its multiple engagements, the story's meaning and text are circumscribed, at least to some degree.[164] Nevertheless, interpretation,

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Hieronymus in quadem epistola ad Studiosum, videtur eum velle scripsisse: Terra, terra scribe hos viros abdicatos, vel: Terra Terram accusat, in epistola ad Iraeneum" (*Historia scholastica: In Evangelia* 98; PL 198:1587).

[161] Jacobus is referring to later, more elaborate Glossed Bibles anticipated by the ninth-century St. Gall MS 292. For further discussion, see the introduction to *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria: Fascimile Reprint of the Editio Princeps Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81* (ed. Karlfried Froehlich and Margaret T. Gibson; 4 vols.; Brepols: Turnhout, 1992) 1:vii-xi. This fifteenth-century printed edition of the Glossa does not include the gloss "terra terram accusat" (4:244). Nevertheless, an interlinear gloss of Jeremiah 17:13, which was associated with the *pericope adulterae* by both Ambrose and Jerome, refers back to the passage (3:128).

[162] "Quid autem Christus in terra scriberet? Ambrosius dicit quod scribebat: 'Terra terram accusat.' Augustinus dicit quod scribebat illud quod postea uoce expressit: 'qui sine peccato uestrum etc.' Glossa dicit scribebat eorum peccata que illi legentes pre uerecundia exierunt. Chrysostomus dicit quod scribebat: 'Terra absorbe hos uiros abdicatos.'" Iacopo da Varazze, *Sermones Quadragesimales* (ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni; Edizione Nazionale dei Testi Mediolatini 13. Serie I, 8; Florence: Edizione del Galluzzo, 2005) 257. The comment attributed to John Chrysostom is a paraphrase of Jeremiah 22:29, a verse assocated with the passage by Ambrose as well, though he paraphrases the verse differently (*Epistle* 50.4). As far as we can determine, there are no known references to the *pericope adulterae* in the extant writings of John Chrysostom, a conclusion also reached by the twelfth-century scholar Euthymius Zigabenus. To Zigabenus, Chrysostom's neglect of the passage served as a decisive proof that it must be apocryphal, though he did not hesitate to comment on the story anyway (PG 129:1280d).

[163] Nicholas Poussin's *Cristo e l'adultera* (1653; Paris. Louvre, ill. 44) offers an interesting seventeenth-century example. Depicted standing, Christ points to several Hebrew characters written in the earth, letters which are likely intended to represent the Decalogue. See Francesco Saracino, " 'Quei mistoriosi caratteri'. Poussin, l'Adultera e il decalogo," *Gregorianum* 88 (2007) 5–22.

[164] On this point, see Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive*

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liturgy, text, and image remain open and contested. The story of this story will therefore continue to be written, as will speculation regarding what Jesus wrote, how he wrote and why he wrote at all.

Communities (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980); with the cautions expressed by The Bible and Culture Collective, *The Postmodern Bible* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995) 57. Also see Allen, *Intertextuality*, 95–115. Here we paraphrase McGann: "As the literary work passes on through time and other hands, to other readers besides ourselves, it bears along with and *as* itself the gathered history of all its engagements" ("Interpretation as a Game that Must be Lost," 136).

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