

UPDATE ON THE CODEX SINAITICUS
DEBATE WITH AN ANALYSIS OF THE REVIEW
BY THE PROTESTANT TRUTH SOCIETY

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This article has been inspired, in part, by the review of the Codex Sinaiticus controversy as published by Kevin McGrane on behalf of the Protestant Truth Society. Mr. McGrane's review specifically provides analysis of the book by Dr. W.R. Cooper on *The Forging of Codex Sinaiticus*, parts of which were based upon research published earlier by this author, as acknowledged by Dr. Cooper in his book.¹ The purpose of our part in the argument is to defend those areas of research that were first published by our company, and that have now been called into question by Mr. McGrane's essay.² In particular, we must address his comments pertaining to the *Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*, which are perhaps the two strongest evidences, showing the fingerprints of the Greek paleographer, Constantine Simonides found in the Sinai manuscript. In addition, there are a number of other critical points in the history of the Codex controversy that must be addressed to defend the record of what happened, according to the living witnesses of the 19th century. In the following article, we will

¹ See comments made in Dr. Cooper's book; in particular, his defense of this author's portrayal of Tischendorf (in the film, *Tares Among the Wheat*) as a man given to vanity, who desired fame and glory. Dr. Cooper's defense of our portrayal shows that he saw our film and followed the controversy back in 2013, when we were accused of supposedly "slandering" Tischendorf by Dr. James White and his supporters. Dr. Cooper's book was later published in 2016, while *Tares* was released in October 2012.

² References to Kevin McGrane's Review are taken from "A Review of 'The Forging of Codex Sinaiticus' - Updated" as posted on the Protestant Truth Society website, as of Jan. 7, 2018. The full review can be found here: <http://protestanttruth.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Forging-of-Codex-Sinaiticus.pdf>

show that many of Mr. McGrane's arguments are flawed and provably wrong. Some of his reasoning and information is, we think, worthy of examination for anyone investigating the story of Simonides; but he makes a series of demonstrable blunders with key information and is often swept away by his own excessive imagination. Some of his assertions about things he *thinks* Simonides must have done (without any facts to support his claims) fluctuate between the extreme to the completely ridiculous.

First, we wish to briefly review the events that have brought us to this point, for the benefit of those who might be encountering this controversy for the first time.

It has now been a little more than five years since the historic debate between myself and Dr. James White on December 11, 2013. At the time, it was (to our knowledge) the first significant public challenge to the authenticity of the dating ascribed to the famous Codex Sinaiticus since the publication of *Literary Forgeries* by James Farrer in 1907. Of course, the debate itself was inspired by the release of our film, *Tares Among the Wheat*³ and then the follow up audio CD titled, *Codex Sinaiticus: The oldest Bible? Or a modern hoax?* In both works, we unfold the generally unknown history of the claims made by the 19th century Greek paleographer, Constantine Simonides; that he was, in fact, the true author of the Sinai manuscript, having created it in the year 1840 on Mt. Athos, as he said.

While Simonides provided many circumstantial details to support his story, almost none of them were properly investigated. His critics were empowered by the newspapers of the time, publications that might be called the “fake news media” of the 19th century. They engaged in absurd hysteria about Simonides, accusing him of being nothing more than a trickster and deceiver, who they said forged literally “thousands” of

³ *Tares Among the Wheat* was part two of our documentary series, *A Lamp in the Dark: The Untold History of the Bible*; for which, we traveled to the British Library and interviewed Dr. Scot McKendrick (the head of Western Heritage Collections), and Dr. Juan Garces (curator). Both men were working on the *Codex Sinaiticus Project* when we spoke with them, and they appear in our film series, discussing both the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus. It was Dr. McKendrick who informed us that the ending of Mark's gospel in Sinaicitus was changed from its original reading, which is one of the reasons why we came to suspect it had been deliberately altered to match the shorter ending of Mark in Vaticanus.

manuscripts; something that would be physically impossible for any living man, especially at that point in history. If one reads the arguments of the leading scholars of that time, their comments against him were mostly academic. Often, they did not accuse Simonides himself of forgery; but generally believed that if some of his works were forgeries, they had been created centuries earlier by someone else.

If one studies the accounts carefully, they will learn it was actually the newspapers of England that were chiefly responsible for turning a man who was considered by others to be a brilliant paleographer and Egyptologist into an almost comical character, claiming that he forged virtually everything, including his friends, family, private letters, and the manuscripts in his possession. They claimed he had created countless forgeries which had deceived, they said, some of the greatest experts in Europe. But in the next breath, they then argued it was not possible that he could have engineered the one manuscript they wanted to believe in; the alleged “world’s oldest Bible,” the Codex Sinaiticus.

Many of the news reports were either outlandish or provably false, so much so that more than a hundred years later, it is often difficult to discern truth from error. In particular, the letter that was used to discredit Simonides in the end, where someone claiming to be a Greek monk boldly declared that Simonides could not be the author of the Codex Sinaiticus because the manuscript was supposedly recorded in the ancient catalogue of St. Catherine’s Monastery. It later turned out that there was no ancient catalog, and the alleged monk was thought to be someone hired by the supporters of Tischendorf; yet the letter was used anyway as “proof” that Simonides was lying. As we will show, some of these dubious reports have found their way into the arguments of Mr. McGrane, who presents misguided analysis as a result. Yet, having studied the newspaper reports and history of the subject matter for years, we must extend some measure of grace to anyone delving into this controversy, because we are well aware of the often confusing and contradictory information.

Since my debate with James White, there have been a series of books that have been written on the subject. To my understanding, the first of them was *The Forging of Codex Sinaiticus* by Dr. Bill Cooper, which is the work that was reviewed by Mr. McGrane, (who only briefly mentions our film) along with the other books that have been published, also on these issues: *Neither Oldest Nor Best* by Dr. David Sorenson, *Is the World's Oldest Bible a Fake?* by David Daniels; and also, *Was Codex Sinaiticus Written in 1840!* by Dr. Jack Moorman.⁴ While each of these books differs in terms of the specific arguments that are made, based on the private investigations of the authors, they are all in general agreement with our original assertion that the evidence overwhelmingly supports the conclusion that the Codex Sinaiticus is not an ancient manuscript, but rather, a production of the 19th century.

In 2013 when this controversy first exploded in the online Christian community, my position was in agreement with that of James Farrer in his 1907 book, *Literary Forgeries* where he summed up the story of Simonides this way:

“It is to be regretted that this matter was never cleared up at the time the claim was made. It cannot be said to have been settled by the mere opinions of Tregelles or Bradshaw, or by the more critical and paleographical objections urged by Mr. Scrivener in his *Introduction to the Sinaitic Codex* (1867). The two former examined the Codex two months before Simonides had made his claim to it as his work, so that they had no reason to examine it with suspicion. And Mr. Scrivener’s argument that no mere youth of at most nineteen could in a few months have composed a volume of nearly 4,000,000 uncial letters, though convincing about most youths, is not convincing where that youth was Simonides. On the side of Simonides is his unlimited skill in calligraphy; the very audacity of such a claim if entirely baseless; the remarkable presence in the Codex of a portion of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which Simonides was the first scholar ever to have seen in Greek; the very natural allusions to the work in the lithographed letters; the fact

⁴ In addition to these works, it is also worth mentioning the written transcript of the teaching by Pastor Bryan C. Ross: *A Tale of Two Constantines: Rethinking Codex Sinaiticus*, for those who wish to investigate the controversy further.

that no visitor to the monastery at Mount Sinai before 1844 had ever seen or heard of such a work as belonging to the monks; and the very extraordinary story told by Tischendorf of his discovery and acquisition of the Codex. **The question therefore, pending the acquisition of further evidence, must remain among the interesting but unsolved mysteries of literature.**⁵

Since the release of *Tares*, we made additional discoveries that were later published in the documentary sequel, *Bridge to Babylon: Rome, Ecumenism & the Bible*. At this point, we have only become further persuaded that the Sinai MS. is almost certainly a fraud, deliberately manipulated for the purpose of undermining faith in the Bible. With its 23,000 corrections, along with the title, “The World’s Oldest Bible” it has served to convince an entire generation that the Bible itself simply *cannot* be the inspired, inerrant Word of God. As a result, much of Western Civilization has lost confidence in God’s law and the historic values of the Christian faith.

Part of our continued conviction is the result of hearing the arguments from leading apologists for the Critical Text, namely Dr. James White, and Dr. Daniel B. Wallace, both of whom have attempted to refute the story of Simonides without success. Dr. White was answered by this writer during our debate, and in such a manner that one of his own supporters was inspired to publish an article revealing his surprise at White’s inability to prevail on the issues.⁶ It is our understanding that most of the authors who have since published books in our favor, also heard the debate. Meanwhile, we answered Dr. Wallace in an article written in response to a presentation given by him at Liberty University in 2013, and learned from one of our supporters that, while we were not

⁵ *Literary Forgeries*, by James Anson Farrer, Bombay and Calcutta, Longmans, Green, & Company, 1907 pp. 64, 65, emphasis added

⁶ See: *Disappointment with the White VS. Pinto Debate*, by Hiram (Dec. 13, 2013) who wrote: “... I was pretty sure James White’s statements about Pinto’s ideas being far-fetched and based on loose threads woven together by conspiracy were right. But when the debate took place ... I saw that Dr. White was wrong.... White neither presented a logically cogent case, nor did he succeed in refuting Pinto’s position. Again, Pinto presented actual historic documentation that drills numerous holes into the ‘official’ story regarding Simonides, whereas Dr. White simply dismissed Pinto’s sources, failing to provide counter evidence to Pinto’s argument. Consequently, it is Pinto, in my opinion, who won the debate.”

mentioned by name, it was our film that Dr. Wallace had in mind when he spoke of those who were defending the story of Simonides.⁷

And now, because of the lengthy attempt by the *modern*-day Protestant Truth Society, through Mr. Kevin McGrane to explain away the claims of Simonides, we must confront his arguments, for the benefit of those who truly desire to learn the truth about the Codex and its history.

HISTORY & CONSPIRACY THEORY

Mr. McGrane's chief failing, is that he attempts to bundle all information that questions the authenticity of Codex Sinaiticus into the category of *conspiracy theory*. Now to some extent, much of *any* history requires a certain amount of theorizing since historians are attempting to discern records from the past. But McGrane's approach is to have a dismissive attitude about it, as if his own speculations are of different sort. We find this to be somewhat strange because the article is published on behalf of the Protestant Truth Society, an organization founded in the 19th century based on what can only be called a "conspiracy theory" that Rome was trying to subvert England and the Protestant Church. In fact, the founder, John Kensit, was directly influenced by a book that we quote extensively in our film: *The Secret History of the Oxford Movement* by Walter Walsh:

"... in 1897, author Walter Walsh published *The Secret History of the Oxford Movement*. Walsh claimed to have uncovered the Catholic conspiracy behind the Oxford Movement and its contemporary incarnation, Ritualism. Walsh invited readers to join the battle against ... lecherous Catholic secret societies bent on reuniting the Church of England with Rome. The book proved to be wildly popular *The Secret History* had an immediate impact, both fueling and coinciding with John Kensit's anti-Ritualism

⁷ Private correspondence with one of the listeners of our radio podcast, who received an email from Dr. Wallace.

campaign, launched in January 1898 ... Kensit ... the founder of the Protestant Truth Society (1889) ...”⁸

We question whether or not Mr. Kensit would have approved of McGrane’s approach, since he now serves as a council member for the Society. John Kensit himself was considered a radical in his day, and certainly agreed with Walter Walsh that Romanists were conspiring secretly against Protestantism. Consider this quote from Walsh’s book:

“At present the Church of England is literally honeycombed with Secret Societies, all working in the interests of the scheme for the Corporate Reunion of the Church of England with the Church of Rome. These secret plotters are the real wire-pullers of the Ritualistic movement.”⁹

If someone today said that modern churches were “honeycombed” with secret societies, how would that be received? A person who wrote that would be undoubtedly dismissed as a conspiracy theorist. Yet in the 19th century, Walter Walsh was admitted as a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society¹⁰ -- for this work specifically. Despite the fact that the founder of his own society was greatly influenced by conspiratorial thinking, McGrane takes the following approach in his review:

“The blogosphere is freighted with conspiracy theories Many recycle statements taken out of context copied without checking their sources *ad fontes*, or properly understanding the things that they write. Among such in recent years we can mention David W. Daniels, who produced a book *Is the World’s Oldest Bible a Fake?*, Chris Pinto, who produced a video *Tares among the Wheat*, which includes details about Codex Sinaiticus ... These are deeply flawed and unbalanced, and to a greater or lesser extent they utilize the methods of conspiracy theory.”¹¹

⁸ *The Great Church Crisis and the End of English Erastianism, 1898-1906*, by Bethany Kilcrease, pp. 4, 5

⁹ *The Secret History of the Oxford Movement by Walter Walsh*, 1898, p.vi

¹⁰ *The Great Church Crisis and the End of English Erastianism, 1898-1906*, by Bethany Kilcrease, p. 5

¹¹ McGrane, p. 12

Mind you, McGrane presents no examples of any of the alleged “flaws” in our film. As we have said before, others have gone over every quote and citation in *Tares Among the Wheat* without issue. This was something we were very careful about at the time, and even James White (who would have pounced if he had found anything) could provide no examples of information flaws in the research. All of the data is fully documented, and every key piece of information is traced back to the earliest original sources possible. We are going to show, however, that Mr. McGrane has engaged in much wilder theories than anything we presented¹² and fails to provide adequate footnotes when, at times, he runs off into fantasy land. For example, consider this sampling from his many assertions about the endless amounts of fakery that he claims Simonides was supposedly engaged in:

“From 1860 onwards Simonides started adjusting his personal history in order to prepare his claims for having written Codex Sinaiticus himself ... This he did by inventing books, correspondence and fake documentation (a) to move his birth date back from 1824 to 1820 (so that he appeared older and more experienced when at Mount Athos in 1840, and to have received his PhD aged 22); (b) to eradicate his ‘long time in Russia’ so that he could be back at Mount Athos again in 1843; (c) to fit in three trips to St. Catherine’s monastery just prior to Tischendorf’s three visits; (d) to include invented revised details in publications with forged earlier dates; (e) to set up false/invented witnesses to his activities.”¹³

To support this cacophony of speculations, McGrane presents absolutely no evidence. He just fantasizes that this is what Simonides *must* have done, to fit with his view that everything Simonides ever said or did was somehow a lie or a forgery. Another of his assertions is this remarkable claim:

¹² We remind the reader that when reviewing the work of the Revision Committee of 1881 (four members of whom were part of the Simonides affair), and the often secret, underhanded methods they employed, it was the Dean of Chichester, John W. Burgon who wrote at the time: “all this ... I frankly avow, to me, looks very much indeed like what, in the language of lawyers, is called ‘Conspiracy.’” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, 1883, p. 398) As such, we are certainly not the first to recognize that men were conspiring to undermine the Bible.

¹³ McGrane, p. 82

“It is well known that Simonides slipped in forgeries when attention was distracted elsewhere, including by hanging around archaeological digs waiting for the workmen to take a break, in order to plant his ‘evidence’, and thus associate a forgery with genuine archaeological artefacts.”¹⁴

A footnote was provided, by which the reader is expected to find some book reference, or document about Simonides “hanging around” while archaeologists were digging stuff up, waiting to throw a parchment in the hole, and then pretend he suddenly found it. But instead, the footnote says: “We read of exactly the same unscrupulous behavior in the Crusades, e.g. finding the tip of the lance that is supposed to have pierced Jesus, and other supposedly auspicious holy relics.” In other words, McGrane had no specific reference for this supposedly “well known” information about Simonides. It would appear his accusation was entirely fabricated. He does this again and again.

His speculations continually assume that Simonides was always lying, and that any support for the antiquity of Codex Sinaiticus must be true. At one point, he quotes from the work of Falconer Madan, who unfolds how Simonides said he had placed special markings within the Codex, that would prove he was the true author:

“Simonides asserted, not only that he had written it, but that, in view of probable skepticism of scholars, he had placed certain private signs on particular leaves of the codex. When pressed to specify these marks, he gave a list of the leaves on which were to be found his initials or other monogram. The test was a fair one, and the MS., which was at St. Petersburg, was carefully inspected. Every leaf designated by Simonides was found to be imperfect at the part where the mark was to have been found. Deliberate mutilation by an enemy, said his friends. But many thought that the wily Greek had acquired through private friends a note of some imperfect leaves in the MS., and had made unscrupulous use of the information.”¹⁵

¹⁴ McGrane, p. 126

¹⁵ F. Madan, *Books in Manuscript* (1893), McGrane, p. 72

It was a Greek monk and friend of Simonides, named Kallinikos, who claimed in his letters that Tischendorf had removed the special markings in the Codex.¹⁶ But despite the fact that this is well documented, McGrane chooses to deny the information by arguing that Kallinikos must have been the invention of Simonides himself, which we will discuss in greater detail later. Having declared the historic witness (whose existence is well documented) to be a fictional character, he goes on to lay the groundwork for his own invented fantasy:

“Simonides remained in England during 1858-65 and had no opportunity to examine the Codex after Tischendorf had removed it from Egypt in 1859. Therefore, finding missing pieces of parchment when checking every location listed by Simonides unquestionably suggested foul play. But whose? Simonides ... knew the locations to specify *either* because he knew them from having defined them (i.e. he wrote the manuscript), so someone had taken scissors to the manuscript to remove the evidence or because he was informed of them, perhaps even with photographic evidence. To be covertly supplied with the list of locations or photographic images merely suggests foul play of a different kind by a different party. It is then a question of determining whose foul play is the more likely.”¹⁷

Here, McGrane gets to the heart of the issue. Who was more likely to operate in a dishonest manner over the Codex? Would it be Simonides and his supposedly secret friends in Russia, who stood to gain *nothing* from all of this? Or would it be Tischendorf, who was so celebrated over Sinaiticus that “nearly all the European courts showered so many orders and distinctions on him that they could never have found room on one man’s chest,”¹⁸ along with his fellow scholars (Hort, Tregelles, Scrivener, Wright), many of whom would have the honor of serving on the Revision Committee in 1870, using Codex

¹⁶ Letter from Kallinikos of Alexandria, published in *The Literary Churchman*, 2nd November 1863, where he wrote the following: “Professor Tischendorf ... with inconceivable recklessness, he mutilated and tampered with [the Codex] according to his liking, in the year 1859. Some leaves he destroyed, especially such as contained the Acrostics of Simonides...”

¹⁷ McGrane, p. 73

¹⁸ *Secrets of Mt. Sinai*, by James Bentley, p. 103

Sinaiticus to change the text of the New Testament? Also, remember that the members of that committee were accused by Dean John W. Burgon of engaging in “Conspiracy” due to how they handled the revision in such an underhanded manner, and because of their acceptance of the illogical Westcott & Hort theory.¹⁹

The review goes on to partly acknowledge what was asserted by Farrer, that important matters were never properly resolved. And the issue of the special markings in the Codex, which were specifically identified by Simonides, is one of them. McGrane recognizes the difficult position in which this places the defenders of the Codex, since the events were documented before many witnesses:

“... J.K. Elliott and most scholars ... because they do not properly resolve this phenomenon by taking the matter to its logical conclusion, they are leaving the field open to ... conspiracy theories. Clearly, Simonides was either aware from his own resources or he was made aware of the relevant places in the manuscript He was thus not acting alone... Simonides had willingly indulged in foul play against Jonas King, Alexandros Rangavis and others in the 1840s at the behest of powerful political interest groups.”²⁰

The above assertion, while perhaps not impossible, is not supported by any consistent logic or proof. The “powerful political interest groups” would have been leaders of the Greek Orthodox Church; but if they wanted to undermine Tischendorf, why did they allow him access to St. Catherine’s Monastery? Why would they cooperate with him, allowing him to remove the Codex to Egypt?²¹ McGrane tells us that it was

¹⁹ Dean John W. Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, 1883, p. 398

²⁰ McGrane, p. 73

²¹ The account of how the MS. was removed in 1859 strongly suggests political interests on behalf of Tischendorf, who had already been working with the Vatican since 1843, and whose friends had a well-known and fully documented interest in developing a new Greek text. The “discovery” of Sinaiticus would provide them with a co-witness for the unique readings of the Vatican text (namely the omission of the last 12 verses of Mark), permitting the identification of a manuscript family, all which was necessary for the W&H theory. In the letters of Hort, we read: “The Greek Text itself had proved a much slower work ... He had communicated to [Tregelles] his own and Mr. Westcott’s scheme in 1857, and had received from him hearty approval and promises of help.... the work of Tregelles, Tischendorf, and Scrivener are important as showing how the principles of his own edition were developing in his mind. The readings of Codex Sinaiticus became accessible in 1863. It was in 1859 that Hort and his collaborator adopted the plan ...” (*Life & Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, Vol. 1, p. 374)

impossible for Simonides to have seen the manuscript himself²², and that from “1862 to 1869 the codex was secure in a fireproof safe in the custody of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”²³ As such, it would require someone with government level access to provide the Greek with the necessary information. Either that, or we could adopt the simple answer, which is that Simonides wrote the manuscript, which is why he knew where the secret markings were. Of course, the purpose of the PTS review is to fight against that idea no matter what, so McGrane writes:

“If we merely consider the possibility that Simonides’ tale was a small but important part of a disinformation campaign by the Russian government towards the English, then we can understand the ease with which the Russian government could supply to Simonides the very locations of missing parchment that he would need to cite, together with photographic evidence as required.”²⁴

So, Mr. McGrane, who began his review by dismissing all the internet conspiracy theories, decides to create a 19th century version of the *Russia collusion* narrative in order to support his ideas. The reader should keep in mind that, during the time that this controversy was unfolding, we know of no one who ever gave such speculation. While there was clearly a connection between the Greek and Russian worlds at that time, this fact only serves to support Simonides’ story, that his uncle Benedict, who was a Greek monk, instructed him to create the Codex as a gift to the Czar of Russia. That, in itself, was a politically motivated act. Meanwhile, there is no evidence of secret spies operating in Russia, who smuggled photos into London, so their wily Greek friend could pretend he wrote the manuscript. If anything, McGrane’s fantasy only serves to offer further support for the story told by Simonides.

²² From the time of its discovery by Tischendorf in 1859. It was a facsimile of the Codex that Simonides identified while in Liverpool in 1860.

²³ McGrane, p. 73

²⁴ McGrane, p. 73

SIMONIDES & THE GREEK CHURCH

There is no question that Simonides had earlier been accused of forgery among his fellow Greeks, and the reasons seem to have been politically motivated (i.e., that he had been accused, *and* that he engineered forgeries for political purposes), since he was also a zealous Greek patriot. But if one studies these accounts, it becomes clear that he was working with key leadership in the Greek Orthodox Church and carrying out their designs. It would appear that they capitalized on his talents, almost as if he were working for an intelligence organization. In other words, they recognized his natural abilities at calligraphy and employed him for their own agenda, which was to fight against their perceived enemies. It is unfortunate, as the review points out, that one of their enemies should have been Dr. Jonas King, who, by all accounts, seems to have been a true minister of the Gospel.²⁵ His great and persistent efforts on behalf of Biblical truth were often thwarted by the leaders of the Greek church, and by the Greeks themselves, who defended their religious traditions against what they saw as the invasive doctrines of a foreigner. But where Simonides' role is concerned, these activities must be viewed in a proper historical context.

If a leading American scholar went to work for the CIA and created forgeries for the United States government as part of a political plan, we would not then conclude that everything he ever touched or came near was a forgery. Some might not even see that person as a scoundrel, and those who are patriotic might even see him as a hero, which is how Simonides was perceived, by at least some of his fellow Greeks. We must consider that the greater body of Greek culture and the leadership of the Greek church were against Dr. King, in the same way many Catholics opposed the Reformation.

²⁵ Indeed, Dr. Jonas King is sometimes referred to as the "Greek Martin Luther" because he preached against the superstitions of the Greek church (which are similar to those of Rome), and was persecuted for it, in ways that seem all too familiar to those who study the great Reformation. As a result, the Greek church fought against Dr. King, and Simonides was employed by them, in much the same way Jesuits were commissioned by the Pope; to engage in militant activities, often involving misinformation and propaganda.

If one reads the accounts of Simonides' opposition to Jonas King (which was greatly supported by many of the Greek people), it is typically in defense of Greek theological teachings (which have *Romish* characteristics), and of the culture of Greece itself. During this period, Simonides was a young man, still in his twenties. While McGrane points out that Simonides published a series of false accusations against Dr. King in a document called "the Orgies," there is more to the story than meets the eye. The following quote from a biography of Jonas King openly reveals the relationship of Simonides to the leadership of the Greek Church. We read:

"Of Simonides it should be said, he seems to have been an unprincipled adventurer, used as a tool by the Archdeacon Leontius E. of Constantinople, the real author of the 'Orgies.'"²⁶

According to the above account which was published in 1879, we find that Simonides was working as a "tool" of the Archdeacon of Constantinople. It would be like having a Catholic agent who was doing work for a Cardinal or Bishop in the Church of Rome, something not unusual in the world of Catholicism. By this argument, we do not in any way support the underhanded, persecuting activities of those (whether Greek or Roman) against our Protestant brethren.

However, the purpose of our overall investigation is to determine whether or not Simonides was the true author of Codex Sinaiticus. Proving that he engineered forged materials for top leaders in the Greek Orthodox Church *does not remove* this possibility. If anything, it only confirms his assertions that he was actively involved with Bishops and chief Monks within the Greek world, and that he was commissioned, as a young man, to create a manuscript that was intended for the Czar of Russia. Since Simonides had been commissioned (by the Archdeacon of Constantinople) to create works in the Jonas King affair, it is not then unusual that Greek leaders would also commission him to create the work on Mt. Athos.

²⁶ *Jonas King, Missionary to Syria and Greece*, by Mrs. F.E.H. Haines, p. 309

Part of the weakness of McGrane's analysis is that he cannot seem to make up his mind about whether he believes Simonides was a brilliant forger, or a barely competent young man. At one point, he cites a Greek publication called *The Orthodox Review*, from 1863 that wrote:

"... we find that the monks at the Panteleimon monastery judged that when he arrived there in 1839, 'He was a poor boy, who could, of course, write Greek, but not much more.'"²⁷

Writing that Simonides was an inexperienced youth in 1839 (the same year he claimed to begin working on Codex Sinaiticus) was obviously calculated to undermine his story; to give the impression that he did not have the ability to create the MS. But then we are to believe that he went from being hardly educated to becoming a master forger within a few short years, with the ability to create thousands of works that could deceive some of the most enlightened academics in the world. The idea is absurd. According to Simonides, he was raised up by his uncle, Benedict, who was a Greek monk, and so taught him paleography and ancient languages from an early age. He had an uncanny talent for calligraphy and comprehending works of antiquity, which was acknowledged by virtually everyone, including his enemies.

Also, 1863 was the same year Simonides challenged Tischendorf to a public debate over the manuscript, asking him to appear in London before all the chief scholars. While Tischendorf appears to have initially agreed to the meeting, he later backed out.²⁸ It is also interesting that the year 1863 was when Tischendorf formally admitted that he had been wrong in an earlier debate he had with Simonides over a copy of the Shepherd

²⁷ McGrane, p. 56

²⁸ *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, by J.K. Elliott, p. 109. Elliott quotes Simonides from *The Literary Churchman*, 16th June, 1863, who wrote: "The public were assured that in May, Tischendorf was to be in London, armed with a portion at least of his great Codex. I have waited in England hoping to have the opportunity of meeting him, face to face, to prove him in error; but May has come and gone, and the discoverer has not appeared. Let the favourers of the antiquity of the MS. persuade him to come at once, and brave the ordeal, or else for ever hold his peace."

of Hermas²⁹ (1856), and this information appears to have been published discreetly and kept out of the mainstream news at the time. Men like James Farrer, having studied the issues, recognized that Simonides' abilities in paleography were superior even to Tischendorf, as he wrote:

“Tischendorf was only the senior of Simonides by five years, and in the science of palaeography had neither his knowledge nor his experience.”³⁰

Because of this, it is not unlikely that the famed German scholar did not wish to risk being publicly humiliated by the Greek. As such, the friends of Tischendorf who desired to promote Sinaiticus as genuine, chose to create as many distractions as possible, and could very well have hired false witnesses to write letters for the newspapers in an attempt to discredit Simonides. This issue is important because McGrane builds upon this information, using the quote from *The Orthodox Review* to suggest that Simonides did not have the abilities that virtually *everyone* else who knew him claimed he did. To understand the quote, and its likely source, we must consider the following: the year 1863 was the very height of the conflict being played out in the newspapers over the Codex Sinaiticus. In November of that year, the Greek monk Kallinikos had warned in writing that certain other monks had been hired to publish information against Simonides, as was published in *The Literary Churchman*:

“I have to add, that some of the more foolish among our monks at Cairo were bribed to copy and sign certain letters sent from Leipzig and England, containing many things adverse to Simonides.”³¹

And also, another letter was published shortly afterwards in *The Guardian* with this warning from Kallinikos:

²⁹ See Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, who writes: “... 1863, where Tischendorf in consequence of the intervening discovery of the Cod. Sinaiticus retracted his former objections to the originality of the Greek Hermas from Mt. Athos [brought ... by Constantine Simonides] ...”

³⁰ *Literary Forgeries*, by James A. Farrer, p. 50

³¹ Kallinikos, letter published in *The Literary Churchman*, 2nd November, 1863

“Know also that lately two pseudo-monks have been hired that they may write against Simonides and make their nonsense known through the English press, as at other times also those miserable men did in Germany, France and Turkey.”³²

Of course, McGrane does not inform his readers about these warnings, or the obvious inconsistencies in the testimonies of certain monks, whose letters he relies upon.³³ To get around the letters of Kallinikos (which are devastating to the credibility of Tischendorf and the Codex), he chooses to adopt the tactic of W.A. Wright,³⁴ who operated as sort of a hatchet-man where propaganda is concerned, making one wild claim after another. It was Wright who originally suggested that Kallinikos was not a real person but had been invented by Simonides. He takes the same approach with Benedict, his uncle. Yet these issues were confronted by Farrer back in 1907:

“... the attempt to throw doubt on the existence of Kallinikos failed as completely as the attempt to dispose in the same way of Benedict.... Yet one has only to refer to the Lampros’ Catalogue of the Mount Athos MSS. to find Benedict’s name ... The same work attests as conclusively the real existence of Kallinikos.... Kallinikos was a real person, and his intervention in the controversy with his attestation of having seen Simonides write the Codex cannot be brushed aside as the testimony of a fabulous being. In fact it is upon Kallinikos that the whole question hinges.”³⁵

Kallinkos not only claimed to have seen Simonides working on the Codex back in 1839-40, but then learned that part of the manuscript had been removed from St. Catherine’s by “a German” in 1844. Farrer’s analysis reveals why the protectors of the

³² Kallinikos, letter published in *The Guardian*, 11th November, 1863

³³ As stated elsewhere, the greatest example of a fraudulent “pseudo-monk” letter is the one used to discredit Simonides by claiming that the Codex was contained in the Ancient Catalogues, which did not exist. The supporters of Tischendorf conveniently looked the other way at this, without acknowledging the obvious fraud.

³⁴ W.A. Wright, who was a leading propagandist against Simonides, would go on to serve on the Old Testament company of the Revision Committee with Westcott and Hort in 1870.

³⁵ *Literary Forgeries*, by James A. Farrer, pp. 61, 62

Codex fought so hard in the past, and in the present, to discredit the testimony of Kallinikos. At one point, McGrane, who rejects all evidence to the contrary, writes:

“Simonides made appeal to the importance of Hieromonk Kallinikos of Thessaloniki as an witness, and used his imaginary Kallinikos not only to accuse Tischendorf of being a thief, and stupid, and unable to read Greek (!) ...”³⁶

In the above quote, McGrane is quite literally parroting the fake news media of the 19th century, who expressed the same shock and indignation at the suggestion that Tischendorf did not fully understand Greek. Of course, the rest of the world saw Tischendorf as the great Greek scholar -- *How ludicrous to suggest otherwise! Obviously, this proves Kallinikos is a fraud* -- so the argument went. But let us examine what he actually said, and then compare it with what we learn from others about Tischendorf. In a letter from Alexandria in November 1861, Kallinikos wrote:

“Now we shall see whether they will endorse the vain talking of Tischendorf, **whom I have myself seen and conversed with four times**, and whom I found superficial in all things, and quite ignorant of the language of our immortal ancestors. He only chatters mechanically the Scriptures and understands their meaning by Latin versions, and not at sight; so that every ancient Greek work which has not been translated is considered by him as hard to understand, and is set down by him as being in the common Greek tongue, which the foolish critics have christened Romaic In a simple word, he deceives the world by his reputation ...”³⁷

Notice in the above letter that Kallinikos boldly declares that he met and spoke with Tischendorf on *four* occasions. Yet while the defenders of the Codex were supposedly searching for proof of Kallinikos’ existence, none of them ever bothered to ask Tischendorf if he remembered him. This is especially peculiar and causes us to

³⁶ McGrane, p. 76

³⁷ Letter from Kallinikos, 9th November, 1861, see: *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, by J.K. Elliott, p. 89 (emphasis added)

wonder why they avoided asking the obvious question: “Hey Tischendorf, this monk says he met you and spoke with you four times. Is that true? Do you remember him?”

Consider that those who were making the opposing arguments were often personal friends of Tischendorf. Yet nobody asked that question. The reason is quite probably because Kallinikos had also accused him of stealing the first 43 leaves of the Codex from the monastery back in 1844. In a letter dated August 17, 1858, we read:

“... I understood from Gabriel, the keeper of the treasures,³⁸ that his predecessor had given the manuscript to a German, who visited the monastery in 1844 in the month of May, and who having had the MS. in his hands several days, secretly removed part of it, and went away during the time that the librarian lay ill ...”³⁹

It is likely the above letter⁴⁰ (dated 1858, the year before Tischendorf’s discovery in 1859), is the key reason no one was willing to ask him directly about Kallinikos. They would have had to ask: “Tischendorf, this monk says you stole the first 43 leaves of the Codex back in 1844. Is that true?” And Tischendorf would have had to give an answer, which his friends likely wanted to avoid, since most people were at least suspicious of the story he came up with. Instead, his supporters created distractions. W.A. Wright went to great lengths to accuse Simonides of mailing pre-written letters from London, all the way to Alexandria, Egypt, and then, suggested he had someone else send them back to the newspapers in London, so they could have the postmark of Alexandria on them. Bear in mind, this would have happened back in the 1860s, and Simonides would have had to do

³⁸ In a footnote on p. 75 of his review, McGrane attempts to refute the name of the ‘keeper of the treasures’ (sacristan) but offers no documentation to affirm his assertion. He says that “Simonides would not have known his name, so he invented one.” But if Simonides had powerful, high-ranking friends in the Greek Church, they could have easily told him who the sacristan was in 1844. On other occasions, Simonides demonstrated detailed knowledge about St. Catherine’s and boldly denied that there was an “Ancient Catalog” there, which could have been quickly produced to prove him wrong; yet no one ever produced it. Elsewhere, McGrane speculates that Simonides had powerful friends in Russia who must have been able to gain access to the Codex while it was locked in a fireproof safe, and supposedly sent him photographs of certain parts of it, for which there is no proof. McGrane’s review is filled with such inconsistent speculations. When it favors his argument, Simonides is a brilliant, well-connected forger with powerful friends; or if necessary, to make a point, Simonides will quickly become an ignorant child, who only knew a little Greek and was denounced by everyone.

³⁹ Letter from Kallinikos, 17th August, 1858, see: *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, by J.K. Elliott, p. 87

⁴⁰ This was said to be an earlier letter sent to Simonides in 1858 from Kallinikos, but published in *The Literary Churchman* 16th January, 1863 and in *The Guardian* 14th January 1863. (See Elliott, p. 85)

it about four times. The idea of it, originally from Wright, and repeated by McGrane (who adds his own theories) is completely ridiculous.

Furthermore, the scoffing over Tischendorf and the Greek language only backfires when one learns more about the German scholar's knowledge of Greek during the time when he first visited St. Catherine's Monastery in 1844. It was on this trip when he is supposed to have met Kallinikos.

Dr. Daniel B. Wallace of Dallas Theological Seminary is one of the leading textual critics in the United States, and perhaps, in the world today. In his presentation on the discovery of Codex Sinaiticus, he says the following about Tischendorf and his knowledge of the Greek language early in his career:

"We know that his modern Greek was *abysmal* at this time ... He claimed that he could neither understand what the Greeks were saying, nor they him."⁴¹

In the same presentation, Dr. Wallace goes on to describe Tischendorf's writing in Greek, comparing things he wrote in both 1853 and 1859. He tells us that Tischendorf's handwriting demonstrated "awkwardness with the language" that matured over time. Assuming that Dr. Wallace's analysis is correct, it corresponds with the testimony of Kallinikos. In fact, it reveals a careful and specific detail about the famed German scholar that only someone *who actually met him in person* would know. Of course, that person would also have to have a superior understanding of the Greek language, in order to recognize Tischendorf's deficiency. Only the distant admirers of Tischendorf, who saw him as the great "Greek expert" would be the ones to scoff at the suggestion that he did not fully understand Greek.

⁴¹ Daniel B. Wallace, live presentation on *Tischendorf and the Discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus*, at Liberty University

When making other points in his review, Mr. McGrane will sometimes rely upon spurious letters from so-called “monks” who wrote to the London newspapers for the purpose of discrediting Simonides in 1863. He repeatedly asserts that Simonides never went to Mt. Sinai, but his argument is based on the letter from the same monk who claimed the Codex was contained in the “ancient catalogues” of St. Catherine’s Monastery. The alleged monk, who called himself *Kallinikos of Sinai*, wrote in part for the purpose of trying to deny the existence of the real Kallinikos:

“... there is no other Kallinikos Hieromonachus in this holy monastery. But I lived away from the monastery from the year 1838 to 1855, having been sent on different monastic services to Damascus, Rhodes, and elsewhere; and never anywhere have I made acquaintance with any Simonides. Since, then, there is no other Kallinikos Hieromonachos besides myself among the brethren of this monastery, and I have never known any Simonides, and consequently I did not write the aforesaid letters to shield him in his tricks, it follows that these letters have been forged by Simonides himself.”⁴²

Of course, at the time Kallinikos was writing to the newspapers in London, he was not living at Mt. Sinai but in Alexandria. The name *Kallinikos* itself was a very common name in the Greek world in the 19th century. If the person writing had been genuine, especially since he claimed no knowledge of Simonides, he would have likely considered that a mistake may have been made. Instead, he says “it follows that these letters have been forged by Simonides ...” How would he possibly know? Why is he so eager to denounce a complete stranger as a liar and forger? The person writing then claims that Simonides never came to St. Catherine’s, and says:

“Since, then, Mr. Simonides never visited Mount Sinai ... he lies when he positively affirms that the ancient MS. of the Holy Scripture published by Mr. Tischendorf is his work; because **the MS. in question** (as the librarian of our holy monastery, having been so from the year 1841 to 1858, assured me) belonged to the library of the monastery, and **was marked in the ancient catalogues**. The book then,

⁴² *The Literary Churchman*, 1st June, 1863

which the librarian who was appointed in 1841 found in this library, how could it possibly be the work of Simonides In every way, then, the assertion of Simonides is proved false, when he says that the ancient MS. was his work.”⁴³

Simonides defended himself against what he said was “the negative testimony of a Kallinikos of Sinai, whose name I have never heard, and of whose existence I am doubtful ...”⁴⁴ He went on to say of the alleged monk’s language that “these are not genuine Greek expressions, but *English or French compliments translated into our tongue* ... the whole letter bears evident marks of translation from a foreign language ...” Simonides also noted that the letter had been dated on April first, which was considered “April fool’s day” even in the Greek world at that time:

“The first of April and its absurdities are perpetuated in Greece with far more freedom than in Europe. It is the great day for amusing deceptions and delusions; the day on which hoaxes of all sorts are perpetrated, and no man, either clerical or lay, who wished to be believed, would dream of dating his letter the first of April.”

In the same letter, Simonides also boldly declared the following:

“I emphatically deny that the Codex Sinaiticus was inscribed in the Ancient Catalogue, for the good reason that no ancient catalogue exists: there was none there whatever, till I made a catalogue, during my first visit, for the Patriarch of Constantinople, Constantius, who before was Archbishop of Mount Sinai.”

If someone wanted to “unmask” Simonides, all they needed to do was go to St. Catherine’s and produce a copy of the ancient catalog in question. It supposedly contained information about the Codex Sinaiticus that would prove the MS. was of ancient origin and could not be a modern work. But strangely, no one ever went looking

⁴³ *The Literary Churchman*, 1st June 1863 - for more details, see Elliott, *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, pp. 104-106

⁴⁴ *The Literary Churchman*, 16th June, 1863

for that catalog. Why? Well, think about it. What do you find in a library's catalog? Typically, you see books listed, with the names of the authors, and the year in which various works were published. If there had been documentation from ancient times about the Codex, the scholars in Europe would have been able to put their paleographical powers to the test. A record found in a catalog could tell them who the real *author* was, and in what *year* the manuscript was created. So, why did they not look for it? There are two likely answers: one is that they knew the catalog was a lie from the beginning. The second possibility is that they feared finding such a work at all. Such a document might contradict all the assertions they had put forth about the Codex, in particular, their argument that it was a fourth-century work. What if an ancient record showed up giving the year 1421 A.D. as the date the manuscript was written? Or placed it somewhere in the seventh or eighth centuries? It would have made the scholars who staked their reputations on it being a fourth-century MS. appear to be incompetent and would have spoiled their plans to have a co-witness for Vaticanus.⁴⁵

Yet whoever was put up to writing the letter in question may not have taken these things into consideration. The letter was deemed "suspicious" by *The Literary Churchman* when it appeared⁴⁶ and, as we have shown, contained at least one demonstrably false declaration. Yet McGrane makes repeated reference to it, sometimes indirectly, for example, in his footnote where he denies that Simonides made a catalogue.⁴⁷ He says: "No one has ever seen a catalogue by Simonides. This is just more evidence that Simonides was spinning a yarn."⁴⁸ Yet he does not reveal whether or not anyone ever *looked* for a catalogue by Simonides.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ That deception was used both to obtain the Codex Sinaiticus and then to discredit Simonides, is not a matter of doubt. While McGrane's review focuses on a thousand peripheral issues, the vast majority of which are generally unprovable and unimportant, he avoids the greater concern, which is the underhanded methods employed by the men whose works would influence the Church for generations following.

⁴⁶ *The Literary Churchman*, 16th June, 1863, commented on the "suspicious ... too round and complete ..." nature of the letter itself. Furthermore, J.K. Elliott tells us that: "*The Christian Remembrancer* July 1863 points out that the Greek of Kallinikos of Sinai is less classical than that of Kallinikos of Alexandria." (see Elliott, *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, p. 106)

⁴⁷ McGrane, footnotes, p. 40

⁴⁸ McGrane, p. 41

⁴⁹ The fact that Simonides claimed he created a catalog for the Patriarch of Constantinople (to whom he may have given it, which would be why it is not found at St. Catherine's) is worth noting. Consider that it was said to be for the *Archdeacon of Constantinople* that he was working during the Jonas King controversy. In other words, it is

More importantly, knowing the response given by Simonides, he must have known the context; yet he carefully avoids the obvious falsehood of the witness he relies upon. Another point is when he argues that “by 1864 ... Simonides had been completely unmasked ...”⁵⁰ When was he unmasked? And by whom? For anyone who follows the timeline of events as they unfolded in the newspapers, there is only one answer: the letter from the monk who called himself *Kallinikos of Sinai*. There were several follow up letters sent by other alleged “monks,” but each of them purposed to reinforce the earlier claims of the doubtful Kallinikos against Simonides. One of them, sent by someone called *Amphilochius of Pelusium*, writes of allegedly scandalous behavior by Simonides, attempting to denounce virtually everything about him.⁵¹ But then at the end of his letter, he says the following:

“Lastly, I have informed by the Venerable Priest Constantius, of this place, who is also a compatriot of Mr. Simonides, that when the latter came here five or six years ago, he neither visited the holy Mount Sinai, nor upper Egypt.”⁵²

The above letter was dated October 5, 1863 and was sent from Alexandria, Egypt. The wording is as it appears, given by Elliott; and it is not clear if the words “I have informed” should read “I have *been* informed” ... In any case, the immediate problem with it, is that Constantius, who was the “compatriot of Mr. Simonides” died four years earlier, on January 5, 1859. How then did this Amphilochius have communication with him in 1863? These obvious inconsistencies were ignored, then, as they are today. Clearly, the letter was sent to reinforce the argument that Simonides had never been to

documented elsewhere that Simonides had been commissioned to create works for the Greek leaders in Constantinople; as such, his claim is entirely plausible.

⁵⁰ McGrane, p. 127

⁵¹ In this lengthy letter, the alleged *Bishop of Pelusium* puts onto Simonides the accusations that had earlier been made by Kallinikos against Tischendorf. He claims that “in some of the said monasteries he mutilated many manuscript books, wickedly tearing out of them entire sheets, the entrance to many libraries of the said monasteries was forbidden him, and thus he departed ... with disgrace.” (Elliott, p. 119) While there is no supporting evidence that Simonides ever dealt thus with works of antiquity, there are repeated assertions that Tischendorf did just that, from the original discovery where he obviously removed 43 leaves, to his removal of the fragment of Genesis in 1843, and then the assertion that he mutilated the Codex after finding it in 1859.

⁵² *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, by J.K. Elliott, p. 120

Mt. Sinai, in order to derail his claims of seeing the Codex there, and of making a tracing of his acrostic in Genesis 24. The whole message appears to have been contrived.

The reader should take note that, while Kallinikos of Alexandria was known personally by Simonides, in ways that can be proven; these monks who sent letters designed for purposes of character assassination, were not directly known by anyone. The correspondence was conducted by an English minister named J. Silvester Davies, who is at once cast into suspicion, because of the great lengths he goes to, in order to justify the first letter he received from *Kallinikos of Sinai*, focusing on *how* the letter was sent, rather than whether or not it came from a reliable source. Furthermore, Davies went on to defend the obviously fraudulent claim of the monk in question, without proper investigation. He wrote:

“... I should now give my reasons for having written to Kallinikos of Sinai. I was anxious to discover the writer of the letters from Alexandria ... signed simply ‘Kallinikos Hieromonachos.’ Many believed that the writer of those letters was rather to be sought for in England than elsewhere and many believe he is to be found here still.... I thought it probable that fresh evidence might be obtained from Sinai. And this has been the case. Kallinikos of Sinai asserts, on the authority of his old and long-standing brethren, that no Simonides has visited the monastery, and that the Codex published by Tischendorf was marked in the ancient catalogue of the monastic library.”⁵³

At the point of writing the above paragraph, Simonides had already publicly denounced the claim that there was an “ancient catalogue” at St. Catherine’s. All Davies would have needed to do was write another letter asking for a copy of the details of that document, or he could have gone with others to the Monastery and made a copy of it himself. But instead, he embarks on an illogical course of action, investigating whether the special markings on the letter demonstrate that it could have come from Mt. Sinai. He focuses on a secondary issue, of minor importance, considering the critical and audacious claim of the letter. This becomes even worse when one considers that Davies

⁵³ Letter from Silvester Davies, *The Guardian*, June 24, 1863, see Elliott, p. 111

himself was a scholar and historian, who would have known the importance of an ancient catalogue, in terms of documenting the true history of the Codex.⁵⁴ He even doubles-down against Simonides' objections to the first letter, making reference to the catalogue as if it proves that he is lying.

The things the original Kallinikos wrote were devastating, and, if true, would wreck any hope of declaring Sinaiticus to be genuine. So, the supporters of Tischendorf had to find a way to discredit this meddlesome monk, this friend of the scoundrel, Simonides. So, Mr. Davies, inspired by W.A. Wright, took it upon himself to conduct a "search" for the real Kallinikos; but if one follows the accounts in the newspapers, it becomes clear that this was conducted in an illogical manner and appears to have been a sham. In his book, J.K. Elliott tells us what happened once the dubious letters arrived from Kallinikos of Sinai, and his supporting agents:

"It is at this point that the search for Kallinikos, the supporter of Simonides is abandoned. No more is heard of him. It is at this stage too that Simonides himself fades from the scene. Journals like *The Literary Churchman* and *The Guardian*, previously filled with his name and his correspondence, moved on to other pursuits."⁵⁵

And apparently, that is how it all ended back in the 19th century. This is what Mr. McGrane refers to as the "unmasking" of Simonides. But if one follows the storyline in the newspapers, as shown in Elliott's book, it becomes obvious why James Farrer would call the whole issue an unsolved mystery, even in 1907. There was never any serious

⁵⁴ Even J.K. Elliott, who is a modern critical scholar, acknowledges: "While this letter was written with the intention of supporting Tischendorf's claim that Sinaiticus ... is ancient, it did cause scholars to question Tischendorf's statement about the condition in which he found the manuscript. Is it likely, they wondered, that a manuscript known in the library catalogue would have been jettisoned in the rubbish basket." (Elliott, p. 16) Yet Elliott himself proceeds to pass over the inconsistency through the rest of his book, never bothering to consider that if the men who attacked Simonides were lying about the ancient catalogue, how could their testimony be trusted? And since Simonides was able to boldly, and accurately, declare that no such catalogue existed, it demonstrates that he had greater knowledge of St. Catherine's than the supposed "monk" who wrote the letter. Hence, it is more likely that he went to Mt. Sinai, just as he said. In reality, Simonides discredited the testimony of these monks, which in a court of law, would have been fully exposed. But because the scholars of Europe were accountable to no one but themselves, they embraced the lies as their necessary proof, and declared Sinaiticus to be genuine.

⁵⁵ *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, by J.K. Elliott, p. 120

investigation into the story of Simonides; which critics have dismissed because he was looked upon with suspicion. But why would these great scholars not do their diligence in terms of fully investigating the history of the Codex? If they had sought out the ancient catalogue, we might at least have the impression that they were in earnest; but their deliberate avoidance of it shows that they wanted to be able to master the history of the Codex and turn it into whatever *they* wished it to be, without any interference from outside sources. “Internal evidence” would be what determined its history. In other words, the personal opinions about the text itself, from the scholars who were declared (by themselves and each other) to be most fit to judge. The antiquity of Codex Sinaiticus rests on nothing more than that.

EVIDENCE FROM THE LETTERS OF TISCHENDORF

In the past few years since our investigation began, an important quote has surfaced, from among the personal letters of Tischendorf, as published by J.M. Featherstone. We read the following from January 17, 1859, which was several weeks before the main discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus on February 4th of that year:

“The Prussian consul and Russian consul [from Cairo] are old acquaintances of Tischendorf. The Russian vice-consul in Alexandria tells Tischendorf that during the past year the Russian consulate has done much in favour of the Sinai monastery: Good preparation! All correspondence from the Synod in Petersburg goes through the Russian vice-consulate, and there is nothing to arouse suspicion. The goal of his journey is known at least here in Alexandria, but there is no connexion here with the monastery. **He has heard again of the stories told by Simonides.** He is in a hurry to go to Cairo and then further on to his goal.”⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Letter of Tischendorf from Alexandria, dated 17 January 1859; taken from *The Discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus as reported in the personal letters of Konstantin Tischendorf*, by J.M. Featherstone, (emphasis added); special thanks to Steven Avery for uncovering this detail.

The above quote is important, because the context has to do with Tischendorf traveling to St. Catherine's Monastery to gather the rest of the manuscript he first discovered back in 1844. He seems to know that he is going to find it, based on what he writes. When he says the "Russian consulate" has made "good preparation" and that "there is nothing to arouse suspicion" -- what exactly does he mean? Suspicion of what? Then he says the "goal of his journey" is known in Alexandria (which is where Kallinikos was) and that he has heard "the stories told by Simonides." What stories? Remember, this information is from the letters of Tischendorf, and so the critics cannot now accuse Simonides of inventing them. In light of these things, it would seem to support the information written in the letter of Kallinikos, that he had sent a warning in 1858 to his friend, Simonides about how part of his manuscript at St. Catherine's had been stolen by "a German" in 1844.

Were the "stories" told by Simonides directly related to his creation of the Codex in 1840? Was he communicating these things to his fellow Greeks, and hence, the information made its way to Tischendorf? Admittedly, there are unanswered questions that are yet to be fully pursued; but the fact that Tischendorf wrote about these issues several weeks *before* his great discovery of 1859 lends even more credibility to the claims of Constantine Simonides.

At this point, we should also mention the lithographed letters of Kallinikos, which are mentioned by James Farrer:

"... Kallinikos is said to have had lithographed at Moscow in 1853 and at Odessa in 1854 certain letters between himself and Simonides and the patriarch Constantius, wherein repeated allusion is made to the Codex prepared by Simonides for the Czar."⁵⁷

Farrer goes on to speculate whether or not Simonides could have "antedated by ten years" these letters, in order to support his claim; an issue investigated by John Eliot Hodgkin in 1863. Mr. Hodgkin reported that:

⁵⁷ Farrer, *Literary Forgeries*, p. 62

“... he was informed by a ‘correspondent of unquestionable reputation at Odessa’ that the foreman of certain lithographing works in that city perfectly remembered the printing of the letters at the time alleged.”⁵⁸

In other words, Hodgkin received confirmation from an independent source, that Simonides was telling the truth. Of course, we are not given many details in Farrer’s account, and the person in question would have been remembering an event that took place ten years earlier. Yet it is certainly possible that the foreman in question remembered the older Greek monk who came into his shop. He may have also read the letters in question, and saw the name of *Simonides*, who was at that time, well-known in the Greek community, as both a skilled paleographer, and notorious political agitator. He would have also seen the name of *Constantius*, who was another prominent leader in the Greek church. As such, it is very likely that he could have remembered the experience since the names of such specific personalities would not necessarily appear in his work every day. We consider that the foreman did not deny the event, or claim that he could not recall, but rather, that he *perfectly remembered*. We also consider that Hodgkin, who investigated the issue, was a respected figure with no reputation for dishonesty.

Yet, in handling this information, McGrane takes his typical approach of dismissing the testimony of living witnesses at the time these events took place and assumes that everything to do with Simonides must have been forged. He says:

“Two of the lithographs purport to be letters by Simonides from Mt. Sinai in April 1852 (during one of Simonides’ three fictitious visits). Because these are simply manuscript lithographs and not typeset printed they could have been created any time anywhere, and the evidence indicates that they were forged between October 1862 and March 1863.”⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Farrer, *Literary Forgeries*, p. 62, 63

⁵⁹ McGrane, p. 76

He calls Simonides' visits to Mt. Sinai "fictitious" which he has no way of proving. It is one of many examples of McGrane's habit of denying documented, historic testimony in favor of his own imagination. Yet it is perfectly logical that Simonides, who clearly moved among the chief leaders of the Greek world, would have traveled to one of its most prominent and ancient monasteries at several points in his life. He is known to have traveled all over Europe, Mt. Athos, through Egypt, and to Russia -- why not to St. Catherines' Monastery? Concerning the lithographed letters, he also says: "the evidence indicates that they were forged" -- yet he presents no evidence, as he continues:

"Kallinikos was very useful to corroborate Simonides' tales, and invent a false back story for him, and of course Simonides could (and did) put libelous comments under his name ... Simonides, through Kallinikos, is indulging in self-justification, justifying his attacks on Tischendorf as though at the instigation and encouragement of the holy man Kallinikos (i.e. himself)."⁶⁰

All of the above without any real proof to support his claims.⁶¹ If Mr. McGrane had presented some documentation for these assertions, there might be something more to consider. But as it stands, his review reads like the speculations of modern textual critics, who often replace the record of real history with their own theories.

KALLINIKOS IN SUMMARY

In summation of the controversy concerning Kallinikos, the friend of Simonides, we offer seven reasons to believe his testimony, based on the available evidence:

⁶⁰ McGrane, p. 76, 77

⁶¹ McGrane (p.74) offers his own interpretations of the Greek entries in the *Lampros Catalogue*, in an attempt to cast further doubts on the person of Kallinikos, arguing details that are simply unconvincing. We believe the analysis of the catalogue by James Farrer (a respected English Barrister) to be more accurate. The catalogue proves not only the person of Kallinikos, but also that he had a working relationship with Simonides that is well documented.

1) Kallinikos openly claimed to have met with Tischendorf four times, and the critics failed to ask Tischendorf if he remembered him, and Tischendorf was apparently silent on the issue, which is suspicious.

2) Kallinikos revealed detailed information about Tischendorf's ignorance of Greek while he was yet a young scholar, which is confirmed by independent sources, and could only be known by someone who actually met him in person.

3) Kallinikos' testimony claimed that Tischendorf stole the first 43 leaves of the Codex back in 1844, which agrees with the evaluation of nearly every other researcher and fits with the more likely narrative of the first discovery.

4) Kallinikos claimed to have warned Simonides prior to 1859 that "a German" had taken away part of his manuscript from St. Catherine's. His testimony seems to parallel the letters of Tischendorf, who wrote that he had heard the "stories of Simonides" several weeks before his 1859 discovery.

5) Kallinikos warned of certain monks that had been hired to publish information against Simonides, which was confirmed by a series of letters which arrived to discredit him. The letters contained false information, suggesting they were not genuine and appear to have been contrived.

6) The records on Mt. Athos prove that Kallinikos was a real person, a Greek monk, and also the friend of Simonides. These records were examined by James Farrer (an English barrister) who argued that Kallinikos' letters "cannot be brushed aside" as if he were an imaginary figure.

7) John Eliot Hodgkin was given confirmation from a foreman in Odessa that Kallinikos had certain letters between himself and Simonides from 1854, lithographed years before the 1859 discovery of Sinaiticus. The letters contained references to the Codex having been authored by Simonides as a gift for the Czar of Russia.

EVIDENCE FROM JAMES SNAPP

McGrane is certainly not alone in the camp of those who, while defending the Received Text, believe they have a responsibility to also defend the chief MS. that has been used to undermine it. James Snapp opposed our research early on, and in a series of emails beforehand, attempted to dissuade this author from even debating with James White on the issue. He also wrote his own article in 2017, to show evidence against the story of Simonides; however, he unwittingly ended up providing more support.

In a section titled, “Ten Reasons Why Sinaiticus Was Not Made By Simonides,” his third reason relates the following passage, from a footnote in the Codex:

“Codex Sinaiticus Has a Note About An Ancient Manuscript Made at Caesarea. After the book of Esther, a note in Codex Sinaiticus states, *‘Checked for accuracy using a very old copy corrected by the hand of the martyr Pamphilus. At the end of this ancient book, which begins with the First Book of Kings [i.e. First Samuel], and ends with Esther, is the handwriting of Pamphilus himself; it says: ‘Copied and corrected against the Hexapla of Origen as corrected [or, made accurate] by him. Antoninus the confessor cross-checked it; I, Pamphilus, corrected the volume in prison, by the great grace and ability from God. And if it is not an overstatement, it would not be easy to find a manuscript like this one.’*”⁶²

To understand why this is yet another argument that has backfired on Mr. Snapp, we must first consider that Pamphilus the martyr (also known as *Pamphilus of Caesarea*) was beheaded in February of the year 309 A.D. during the Diocletian persecutions. Meanwhile, the estimated date (given by textual critics) for the writing of Codex Sinaiticus is somewhere between 330 to 360 A.D.

⁶² *Sinaiticus and Simonides* by James Snapp Jr., (March 2017), italics in the original.

In other words, Pamphilus was martyred just forty years earlier, so we are expected to believe. If so, then why would the editor of the Codex refer to the book he used as an “ancient book.” How ancient could it have been? Also, would the writer not have referred to Pamphilus in a more modern manner? He might have said, “the holy martyr, Pamphilus, who was not long ago slain for refusing to sacrifice to the pagan gods, in obedience to the faith ...” etc. Yet the footnote provided by the writer of Codex Sinaiticus gives us the impression that the citation of Pamphilus is an *ancient* one, which would not have been true in 350-360 A.D. But it would certainly have been true in the year 1840.

Also, the footnote sounds very much like the commentaries Simonides was known for in other writings about manuscripts, etc. Consider this quote, when he elaborates on the details of their work on Mt. Athos:

*“... I myself yielded to the entreaties of my venerable uncle and undertook the performance of the work ... my hand was very well practiced from childhood in the ancient writing. And so we straightway inspected the oldest MSS. preserved in Mount Athos of the sacred writings referred to.... And the learned Benedict taking in his hands a copy of the Moscow edition of the Old and New Testament (published at the expense of the illustrious brothers Zosimas, and by them presented to the Greeks), collated it, with my assistance, with three only of the ancient copies, which he had long before annotated and corrected for another purpose and cleared their text by this collation from remarkable clerical errors ...”*⁶³

The footnote presented by Mr. Snapp actually *sounds* like it was something written by Simonides. It is interesting to note that Simonides’ own description of the process they underwent on Mt. Athos continually involved “correcting” certain manuscripts from errors, just as we read in the footnote presented about Pamphilus. And what is one of the chief characteristics of the Codex? Its many, many corrections. His

⁶³ Simonides, Letter to *The Guardian*, 26th August, 1863

reference to the “ancient copies” of manuscripts they used could very well be, in part, a reference to the aforementioned volume in the footnote.

RELIANCE UPON PROVABLY INACCURATE HISTORY

The PTS review relies upon historic arguments from otherwise trusted sources, but that are provably flawed. For example, McGrane quotes Frederick G. Kenyon, the Director and Principle Librarian from the British Museum in the 20th century, who reported the controversy this way:

“An ingenious Greek, Constantine Simonides ... [claimed to have written] the Codex Sinaiticus, which he had copied from the Moscow Bible in about six months at Mt. Athos in 1840. The story was patently absurd; for in 1840 Simonides was only 15 years old, he could not have obtained 350 large leaves of ancient vellum (modern vellum is quite different), he could not have copied it in six months, and no Moscow edition of the Bible with a similar text exists.”⁶⁴

The story told by Simonides is well documented and was printed in the newspapers at the time his claims were made. Let us confront the arguments of Kenyon, one at a time, to show factual errors, beginning with the issue of Simonides’ age.⁶⁵ There was a dispute over how old he was, which his critics seized upon, apparently more as a distraction than anything else. Simonides claimed he was nineteen years old when he created the Codex, but a biography about him placed him at only fifteen. Yet even if he were nineteen, the critics argued, he could not have done the work. We invite the reader

⁶⁴ McGrane, p. 11

⁶⁵ The confusion over Simonides’ age stemmed from a biography written about him by Mr. Charles Stewart, in London, who was his friend. Stewart recorded Simonides’ birth date incorrectly, which Simonides explained. Part of the difficulty was that Simonides spoke very little English, and so what he said or wrote in Greek was sometimes misrepresented, as was explained at one point by his friend, J.E. Hodgkin. Furthermore, a publication from 1856, *The Gentleman’s Magazine & Historical Review*, Vol. 201 wrote that “Constantine Simonides is now said to be in his 36th year ...” This was three years before his biography was published, and four years before the Sinaiticus controversy; in other words, before anyone began to dispute his age. Take note that the editor thus places Simonides’ age at about 19 or 20 in the year 1840, just as he said (see p. 440).

to consider that Mozart was eight years old when he wrote his first symphony, while Picasso finished his famous early painting, *First Communion* when he was just fifteen.⁶⁶ Simonides was seen as a prodigy, and his calligraphy was called “miraculous” by men like James Farrer. Also consider that those who denounce him as a forger, will almost always acknowledge that he was a *brilliant* or *ingenious* forger.⁶⁷ In other words, he was very talented in the field of paleography, and some will even call him the greatest forger of all time, because of his tremendous abilities. In 1863, he directly addressed the issue of his age this way:

“Still you wonder and say, ‘How was it possible for a mere child, under fifteen years of age, to produce such a large MS.’ (I was really nearly twenty years old.) I equally wonder at Hermogenes from Tarsus, who at fifteen composed his famous treatise on Rhetoric, which was justly admired by the rhetoricians older than he ... And yet I transcribed a prepared work, being nineteen years of age, while Hermogenes composed a very learned work, being younger than I.”⁶⁸

So, according to Simonides, he was nineteen years old, not fifteen as Kenyon stated. Next, Kenyon says that Simonides could not have obtained the vellum⁶⁹ upon which the Codex was written, but he clearly explained where he obtained it and why it has an ancient appearance. He claimed that while on Mt. Athos, he took a volume from the library of a work that had been prepared by a monk, centuries beforehand. The monk

⁶⁶ If one studies this famous work by a young Picasso, the average person would find it no less than remarkable, since the painting exhibits the skill of a master artist. Yet Picasso, like Simonides, was taught from an early age.

⁶⁷ One of the most famous of Simonides’ alleged forgeries was a palimpsest called *Uranius*. A *palimpsest* is a manuscript with text written on the original vellum, that is then scraped away (as much as possible), and then overwritten, resulting in two layers of text, the lower layer faintly seen beneath. With the *Uranius*, it was argued that the upper layer of text was genuine, while Simonides had supposedly forged the bottom layer, which is like saying he had the ability to write convincingly *beneath* a layer of text. One critic argued that if he truly had the talent to do that, he should have been paid twice as much for the forgery! Needless to say, not everyone believed the work was forged; some believed it to be genuine. While the work disappeared with Simonides in 1864, if it truly was a forgery he created, it would only further demonstrate his tremendous abilities.

⁶⁸ Simonides’ letter published in *The Guardian*, 21st January, 1863

⁶⁹ It is also worth noting that Simonides was said to have thousands of MSS. in his possession while in London, which were on display for the public, which alone proved he had access to a tremendous amount of vellum. Kenyon’s argument also contradicts the charges of forgery; how could Simonides have created his forgeries without vellum to make them in the first place? If they were forgeries, they had to be realistic enough to deceive the experts; and the experts surely would not have been deceived by ordinary paper. Meanwhile, none of their criticisms ever questioned the vellum itself that was used for the works that were rejected as spurious.

had prepared the vellum, written on a few pages of it, and for some reason, never completed the project. The result was that there were several hundred pages of blank vellum with only a few pages written upon:

“I selected from the library of the monastery, with Benedict’s permission, a very bulky volume, antequely bound, and almost entirely blank, the parchment of which was remarkably clean, and beautifully finished. This had been prepared apparently many centuries ago - probably by the writer or by the principle of the monastery ...”⁷⁰

It is a matter of historic record that Simonides was on Mt. Athos and therefore had access to the libraries there.⁷¹ Also, the presence of Christian monks on Mt. Athos stretches back to the third or fourth century, and so the possibility of having many works from antiquity, including ancient pages of vellum parchment, is very likely. Again, Kenyon’s objection is easily explained. Next, he says that Simonides claimed he copied the Codex from the “Moscow Bible in about six months” which is also inaccurate. According to the story Simonides told, the manuscripts he used for the Codex were described this way:

“... the learned Benedict taking in his hands a copy of the Moscow edition of the Old and New Testament ... collated it, with my assistance, with three only of the ancient copies, which he had long before annotated and corrected for another purpose ... and again collated them with the edition of the Codex Alexandrinus ... and still further with another very old Syriac Codex ...”⁷²

As we can see, the Codex produced by Simonides on Mt. Athos was put together from more than just the Moscow Bible. It included readings from “three ancient copies” which were unnamed, along with an “edition of the Codex Alexandrinus” and also

⁷⁰ Simonides’ letter published in *The Guardian*, 3rd September 1862

⁷¹ See *Literary Forgeries*, by James Farrer, p. 61

⁷² Simonides’ letter to Mr. Charles Stewart, January 1860, published in *The Guardian*, 26th August 1863, as recorded by J.K. Elliot, in *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, p. 56

“another very old Syriac Codex.” That is the story Simonides actually told.⁷³ As we can see, this is a third error in the account given by Kenyon. The fourth error has to do with the time he said it took to accomplish the work, which Kenyon claimed was “about six months.” Yet the actual time frame given by Simonides was approximately twenty months, from the time he began the project “about the end of the year 1839” to the time when he received word from Constantius, the Bishop of Sinai, who acknowledged receipt of the manuscript in a letter dated “13th Aug. 1841.”⁷⁴

Simonides also related that he had beforehand given the MS. to the bookbinders on Mt. Athos to replace the cover, and then traveled to Constantinople, where it was first shown to Constantius, who then requested that it be delivered to the monastery at Mt. Sinai.⁷⁵ Shortly afterwards, the MS. was delivered to Constantius, who sent the letter of acknowledgment. Considering the turnaround time with the bookbinders, travel, etc., we may suppose that the length of time Simonides spent working on the Codex was about seventeen months out of the twenty he allotted. Even if we were to estimate a few months less, it is still much longer than the six months reported by Kenyon.

The claim, which is often repeated by critics, that Simonides could not have done the work in the time frame he described has been refuted over and over.⁷⁶ It is well known that the average length of time for a scribe to make just one copy of the Bible was about ten to twelve months in the Middle Ages. Then we have the very specific example of Desiderius Erasmus, who produced his first edition Greek New Testament in 1516, which was written in two languages (Latin and Greek) in parallel columns. Erasmus

⁷³ If the manuscript described were put together with such a collection of exemplars, including works that are yet uncatalogued, the result would likely be a very unique work. Consider that Codex Sinaiticus is said to contain characteristics that are not found in most of the biblical texts from antiquity. Also consider that in modern times, the Greek monks on Mt. Athos report that as many as a thousand manuscripts are there, which have never been published or catalogued by the outside world. In other words, it is very possible that among such a collection, one would find the works that were used to create the Codex. The Greek copy of Hermas, which Simonides had taken the first three leaves from, was discovered in 1888, because Professor Lambros took the time to go looking for it. We can only wonder what might happen if scholars searched Mt. Athos from the perspective that Simonides was actually telling the truth.

⁷⁴ Simonides' letter to *The Guardian*, 3rd September 1862.

⁷⁵ For details, see: *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, by J.K. Elliot, pp. 27, 28

⁷⁶ As James Farrer wrote in 1907: “That Simonides was a good enough calligrapher, even at an early age, to have written the Codex, is hardly open to doubt ...” (*Literary Forgeries*, p. 59)

said famously that he had done “six years work in eight months.” This quote is well known by Critical Text adherents, who love to remind us that the foundation for the *Textus Receptus* was hurriedly put together by Erasmus, and so, they say, was full of mistakes. But their memory goes faint when it comes to Simonides, even though, if he had done the work in a hurry, this would certainly explain why the Codex has some twenty-three thousand corrections⁷⁷ in it, making it the most corrected Biblical manuscript in history. What is the chief characteristic (according to critics) of Erasmus’s first edition? Lots of errors. Why? Because a work done hastily is more likely to breed error, and Sinaiticus has plenty of that. As in other areas, even if the opponents are correct in arguing that Simonides was an inexperienced youth, who would have to work quickly, their argument only serves to explain why the MS. appears as it does.

THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS

When we first began investigating the story of Simonides for our film, it was assumed that the official accounts were generally true. This interesting character, who was fully accepted as a notorious forger (because everyone seemed to say so) made the audacious claim that he was the true author of the Codex Sinaiticus. But why? The reason given by nearly everyone was that he wanted *revenge* against Tischendorf, because the German scholar had supposedly exposed one of his forgeries. It turns out the forgery in question was a Greek copy of the Shepherd of Hermas, which Simonides brought from Mt. Athos and presented at the University of Leipzig in 1855. As we read from author, James Bentley:

⁷⁷ The number of corrections is partly a mystery. Tischendorf reported 14,800 corrections in the 19th century; and when we asked Dr. Juan Garces about it at the British Library in 2008, he replied, “That sounds about right,” although he admitted they were still investigating the number. Then Dr. Scot McKendrick reported 23,000 corrections in the Codex in a BBC Four documentary, *The Beauty of Books* in 2011.

“Tischendorf knew that Simonides was taking a humorous revenge after a previous episode. When he had tried to sell the forged copy of the Shepherd of Hermas in Germany, Tischendorf had exposed him.”⁷⁸

Bentley, however, does not go on to tell us that Tischendorf changed his mind. To understand the importance of what actually happened, we must consider that in the Western world, there were no other copies of the Shepherd in Greek.⁷⁹ Scholars had only Latin versions, and generally believed the Greek copies (which were the most ancient) had been lost with the passage of time. When Simonides presented his copy of the Shepherd, it was seen as a marvel by the scholars in Germany. Initially, it was embraced as genuine, and was going to be published by two professors, Rudolph Anger and Wilhelm Dindorf. But as they were about to publish the work, Tischendorf argued that the copy was, in fact, a forgery. Not that he believed Simonides had forged the MS., but rather, that it was a Medieval retranslation.

However, when this objection was raised, Simonides himself answered Tischendorf in writing. His response was included in the *Biographical Memoir* about him, published by Mr. Charles Stewart in the 19th century. He mentions how the copy of Hermas was published at the request of both Anger and Dindorf, which was said to have inspired jealousy in Tischendorf:

“This preference given to the two latter gentlemen appears to have given considerable annoyance to Professor [Tischendorf]⁸⁰, and hence arose a jealousy that was most unfavorable to Simonides. It was reported by [Tischendorf] that there was a deception in the manuscript of Hermas ... A controversy arose in consequence ... and Simonides ... published a pamphlet ... showing that the manuscript Hermas was correct

⁷⁸ *Secrets of Mt. Sinai*, by James Bentley, p. 101

⁷⁹ McGrane attempts to argue against this idea, citing that a Russian scholar, Porphyrius Uspensky had examined Cod. Sinaiticus in 1845 and 1850 (which fits perfectly with the timeline given by Simonides); but his work was not published until many years later, in 1856-57. Hence, any mention of the Shepherd to the outside world would remain unknown; and so, scholars like Farrer are correct in crediting Simonides with being the first to present the work in Greek (1855).

⁸⁰ In Elliott's record of the *Memoir*, the name appears with the spelling “Tissendorf” which may have been an error by Mr. Stewart in the original printing; however, Tischendorf is intended.

and that the common Latin translations from which it differed had been made, not in accordance with the Greek originals, but to suit the views of the Latin translators ... The affair caused considerable excitement among theologians, and as some of the chief dogmas of the Latin Church were severely attacked by an exposure of the fraud in the Latin translations, Simonides gained much ill-will among the members of that Church.”⁸¹

It is worth noting that, according to the *Memoir*, Simonides made enemies in the Church of Rome.⁸² Being a member of the Greek Orthodox Church, he would have already been at historic enmity with the papacy. We must also consider that Tischendorf had been quite friendly with Rome (having been supported by Catholic leaders, and meeting in a private audience with the pope back in 1843) for some years beforehand. It may be that because Tischendorf was really a Latin scholar first, he had a tendency to understand Greek through Latin, as Kallinikos conveyed in his letters.⁸³ It was likely this tendency that caused him to evaluate the Mt. Athos copy of the Shepherd of Hermas as he did. As stated earlier, Tischendorf would later change his view in the year 1863, having discovered a matching copy of Hermas as part of the Codex Sinaiticus. The *Memoir* goes on to reveal that:

“It may here be observed that, up to the present time two editions of Hermas have appeared from two copies of Simonides. The first is the correct one, which was discovered in the monastery of Gregory in Mount Athos, written by Clemens of Larissa in 1475, and first published by Anger and Dindorf at Leipsic in 1856. The second transcribed in the vernacular by Abraham of Telos in 1821, and therefore corrupt ...”⁸⁴

⁸¹ *The Biographical Memoir of Simonides*, by Charles Stewart, as published by J.K. Elliott in *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, p. 183

⁸² Simonides' opposition to Rome may well have been why most English newspapers denounced him in favor of Tischendorf. In 1881, Protestant historian J.A. Wylie argued that the Jesuits controlled most of the newspapers in Britain: “The press of Great Britain is already manipulated by them [i.e. the Jesuits] to an extent of which the public but little dream. Not a few newspapers have a Jesuit on their staff as editor, or ‘contributor,’ or ‘reporter.’ The reporting force of the kingdom is, to a considerable extent, made up of Romanists ... The whole English press of the world is supervised, and the word is passed round how writers, speakers and causes are to be handled, so that everywhere its verdict may be the same, and applause or condemnation dealt out just as it may accord with the interests and wishes of Rome.” (J.A. Wylie, *The Jesuits, their Moral Maxims and Plots Against Kings, Nations and Churches*, (1881), pp. 93, 94)

⁸³ See Elliott, p. 89

⁸⁴ *The Memoir*, as recorded by Elliott, p. 183

At this point, we should reveal that this biography was published in the year 1859, before the controversy over Codex Sinaiticus took place. Part of the reason for the *Memoir* was to vindicate Simonides concerning a conflict he became embroiled in while in Germany at Leipzig; not only over the Hermas controversy, but also over another MS. called the *Uranius*. The professors also embraced this work as genuine, but then turned and called it a forgery. But the circumstances reveal some troubling details about the scholars in question, Professor Dindorf in particular. All historians seem to agree that Dindorf was swept away with the *Uranius*, and desired to obtain it, believing it was quite genuine. What happened next is a matter of dispute, even to this day. Some sources will claim that Simonides tried to get Dindorf to purchase the manuscript, but only pretended that he did not wish to sell it, in order to raise the price, or something like that. The impression is given that Simonides somehow attempted to deceive the scholars at the university, despite all evidence to the contrary.

According to Simonides, it happened quite differently. The *Uranius* was, perhaps, his favorite MS., and one that he mentioned often, seeing it as one of his greatest possessions, being a record (written in Greek) of the kings of ancient Egypt. It was a palimpsest, with two layers of text, one below, with a second layer written on top. Simonides claimed that he had only agreed to *lend* Dindorf his copy of the manuscript, for which the Bodleian Library would pay “2,000 Saxon thalers, *not as an equivalent for the original*, but in return for a *copy* of the manuscript.”⁸⁵ At that point, we learn that Dindorf apparently “published a pamphlet at Oxford” relating to this work, and then went to sell it, but without permission from Simonides:

“After the publication of this pamphlet Dindorf went to Berlin, and parted with the palimpsest of *Uranius* to the King of Prussia for 15,000 Prussian thalers, and this without the warrant of Simonides, and then, returning to Leipsic, paid him the 2,000 as his remuneration. After this, the trickery of Dindorf becoming known to Simonides through the newspapers of January 29th 1856, he appealed against the treacherous Dindorf, whereupon, new machinations were devised against Simonides, that is to say,

⁸⁵ Elliott, p. 184, italics in the original

they accused him in the first place of having purloined the palimpsest from the Turkish Library, and secondly of having forged it himself.”⁸⁶

In other words, Simonides claimed that Dindorf tried to steal the manuscript and sell it for money. When he confronted him, Dindorf came up with a false charge in order to have Simonides arrested and gotten out of the way. While all of this is Simonides’ version of events, as related by Charles Stewart in the *Memoir*, there is reason to believe that his claims have merit, because of what was reported in the German newspapers as a result. Simonides was arrested and charged with forgery, accordingly. When he appeared before the court, the accusations against him quickly fell apart:

“In his defense before the magistrates he said, If the manuscript was stolen, as my accusers assert, from the Turkish Library, it is consequently genuine, and no charge of its being fictitious can avail; if I wrote it myself, it is my private property, and no one has a right to deprive me of it. Again, if it was purloined, let them mention the place from which it was stolen and shew at the same time the catalogue of the library in which it is entered.”⁸⁷

Notice that Simonides demanded his accusers show “the catalogue of the library” that he supposedly stole the Uranius from. The *Memoir* of Simonides was well known by those who argued in favor of Tischendorf, and they made repeated reference to its details in the newspapers. It may be that someone familiar with this work, as a result, came up with the false claim about an “ancient catalogue” at St. Catherine’s Monastery, perhaps in mockery of what Simonides had demanded years earlier.⁸⁸ As we have stated before, if Simonides’ claims about Codex Sinaiticus had been examined in a court of law, chances are, Tischendorf and his supporters would have all been exposed, much as the scholars in Leipzig were exposed. We read:

⁸⁶ Elliott, citing the *Biographical Memoir* of Simonides, p. 185

⁸⁷ Elliott, from the *Memoir*, p. 185

⁸⁸ Tischendorf and the scholars at Leipzig University would likely have been familiar with Simonides’ testimony in court, especially since he was acquitted, they would wish to know why; and if, as he said, they were concerned it would damage the reputation of the university.

“The magistrates again asked him if he purloined it from the library of the present Sultan, Abdul Medjid, and he very properly [replied] that the Sultan had no library, and that the Sultans do not even know what a library is. The tribunal of Leipsic, having no proof against Simonides, and being convinced that he was unjustly persecuted, and that the accusation was made solely to get possession of the palimpsest, in order that it might afterwards be presented to the King of Prussia, acquitted him at once ...”⁸⁹

It was later argued by Simonides that the real reason for having him arrested was so that one of his supposed friends, Lepsius could obtain some of his manuscripts and artifacts. We read that:

“... the seizure of Simonides and his unfair removal to Berlin was induced by a desire to obtain possession of his manuscripts. Some of the stolen property was actually found in the hands of Lepsius, as the tribunal of Berlin informed Simonides by a letter afterwards sent to him at Munich.”⁹⁰

When one reads the following accounts, he is immediately struck by what appears to be the ruthless and dishonest behavior of the scholars at Leipzig University. Of course, we must consider that this is from Simonides’ perspective, who then tells us that Tischendorf and Dindorf worked to have him run out of Saxony because “the credit of Leipsic University would be in danger if his assertions were authenticated.”⁹¹ Yet the most powerful argument in his favor is firstly, the fact that the court rejected what they must have seen as obviously false charges⁹² against him; and secondly, the headline published in the Vienna journal, April 10, 1856 which read:

⁸⁹ Elliott, from the *Memoir*, p. 185

⁹⁰ Elliott, from the *Memoir*, p. 186

⁹¹ Elliott, from the *Memoir*, p. 187

⁹² It is worth noting that other publications acknowledge many of the same details, while spinning the information in favor of the German scholars. For example, *The Gentleman’s Magazine & Historical Review*, Oct. 1856 (pp. 441, 442) documents how Simonides was “tried, and -- acquitted, to the surprise and astonishment of all,” and that the reason was because of “his ignorance of the transaction of Professor Dindorf with the Berlin Academy, which purchased the MS. of ‘Uranios’ for 5000 dollars ...” This supports Simonides’ assertion that Dindorf operated secretly and against his wishes. This same publication then attempts to whitewash Dindorf, referring to his “high character” and saying that “his only fault consisted in letting his zeal outrun his discretion ...” They mention nothing of Dindorf trying to swindle Simonides out of his MS., then they turn and heap blame on Simonides. Other writers

“SIMONIDES NO FORGER. -- The Greek, Simonides, the champion of Philology, writes the *Berlin Morning Post*, though cleared from all charges affecting his honour, has left us the most painful Palimpsestic doubts. In literary circles, those who have been able to judge, and who have taken any interest in doing him justice, maintain that his Uranius MS. is genuine ... They declare that had Simonides been capable of writing such a manuscript as Uranius he would have deserved double the sum that he asked for it ... The learned and honourable Simonides may, however, comfort himself with the consciousness that his laborious task has not been fruitless, and that future generations will make him amends for what he has now suffered ...”⁹³

Needless to say, the details given in this account are typically omitted by modern scholars, who portray Simonides as the guilty forger, and generally vindicate the scholars at Leipzig University. However, in the 19th century, this was not necessarily the case. It is worth noting that, according to the account given by Simonides, Professor Dindorf certainly believed in the genuineness of the Uranius manuscript when he wanted to sell it for money. However, once he was confronted by Simonides, and the whole thing turned into a scandal, suddenly the manuscript is declared to be a forgery. It is an example of how scholars make pronouncements, not necessarily based on scientific analysis, but rather, based upon their own ambitions. It would appear that another example would be the Shepherd of Hermas.

A Canadian professor of New Testament studies, Stanley E. Porter, published a book titled, *Constantine Tischendorf: The Life and Work of a 19th Century Bible Hunter*. The work was published in 2015 and was obviously determined to celebrate Tischendorf and remove any suggestion that he was an underhanded sort of character. Porter also dedicated some attention to the controversies surrounding the Simonides affair, and acknowledged the following:

will argue that Simonides tried to trick Dindorf for money, when, in fact (based on all the supporting evidence), it appears to have been the other way around.

⁹³ Story as found in *Fac-Similes of Certain Portions of the Gospel of St. Matthew*, edited by Constantine Simonides; (1861, p. 35). The story was taken from the *Berlin Morning Post* and also appeared in Vienna, in *Die Presse*, No. 88, Wien, 10th April, 1856. Also see Elliott, pp. 130-131.

“In 1855 ... a man by the name of Constantine Simonides ... sold to the University of Leipzig a manuscript. He said that it was a copy of the original Greek manuscript of the *Shepherd of Hermas* ... His manuscript consisted of three sheets supposedly from a manuscript from Mt. Athos (written in a fourteenth century hand) and six sheets purporting to be from the same manuscript but written in Simonides’s own hand as he had been unable to secure the rest of the manuscript. The library quickly purchased the pages and two classical scholars, Rudolph Anger and Wilhelm Dindorf, set about publishing them.... Tischendorf thought that the three sheets purportedly from Mt. Athos reflected the translation into Greek of an earlier Latin version ... Tischendorf was wrong on the first point regarding the three sheets ... As a result of Tischendorf’s publication of his results in the form of an edition of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, Anger and Dindorf admitted that their edition was of no scholarly value.... but the entire situation changed in 1859, when the rest of *Sinaiticus* was discovered, and then, in 1863, when a new edition of the *Shepherd of Hermas* was published.”⁹⁴

Now, we must say, that Porter’s handling of the information is perhaps the most politically correct way of acknowledging that Tischendorf was wrong. Take note of the typical flip-flopping among the “experts” on the issue of what is genuine, and what is not. Porter, like most other critics, fails to mention that Simonides had debated the issue at the time; and what they do not wish to admit, is that Simonides was right and Tischendorf was wrong. Instead, we find Porter telling us about Tischendorf’s “expertise in handwriting” (i.e. paleography) while failing to alert the reader that he simply changed his mind because he found a matching copy of *Hermas* as part of Codex Sinaiticus.⁹⁵

Did Tischendorf change his view because he really believed the Mt. Athos copy was genuine? Or because he knew it would simply be a matter of time before other

⁹⁴ *Constantine Tischendorf: The Life and Work of a 19th Century Bible Hunter*, by Stanley E. Porter, pp. 38-39, italics in the original. This account confirms what we have discovered elsewhere, that Tischendorf changed his opinion because of Codex Sinaiticus, then made it official in 1863, admitting that Simonides’ copy of the *Shepherd* was genuine, and not a forgery.

⁹⁵ Porter’s account is certainly better than most modern scholars, who typically do not acknowledge the *Shepherd* controversy at all. However, his book is determined to promote Tischendorf in a positive light, rejecting the suggestion that Codex Sinaiticus could have been the work of Simonides, and carefully unfolds information to lead the reader away from certain details.

scholars would note the similarities between the two works, concluding that if one of them was a forgery, then so is the other. In fact, that would be the argument made by James Donaldson as we will soon see. But first let us consider how the information is portrayed by Mr. McGrane in his review. He says the following about how Simonides supposedly obtained the three genuine pages of the Shepherd:

“When Simonides paid a visit to Mount Athos again in 1851 he ... was found ripping out and stealing sheets from precious manuscripts (three leaves of *The Shepherd of Hermas* was one example, which he subsequently sold at Leipzig) and, says Amphilochius who was there and met Simonides at the time ...”⁹⁶

Here again, Mr. McGrane makes reference to one of the monks whose doubtful testimony was used for purposes of character assassination back in 1863, at the climax of these events. The alleged monk, *Amphilochius* was the same person, who wrote that he had spoken with Constantius (the friend of Simonides) even though he had died four years earlier (1859). Again, the letter of Amphilochius was written to support the earlier letter which claimed the Codex was contained in the “ancient catalogue” at St. Catherine’s Monastery -- a provably false assertion, and likely, an intended mockery of Simonides. Despite the provable flaws in the testimony of this monk, his letter is used again and again by McGrane as “evidence” against Simonides.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, he continues, through much of his review, to base arguments on the unlikely testimony of Amphilochius,⁹⁸ adding to it his own fantasies, which even contradict the official view of what happened, according to the historians and critics.

⁹⁶ McGrane, footnote, p. 56

⁹⁷ Indeed, McGrane’s extreme bias against Simonides is repeatedly shown, as he writes that the “most outrageous lies that human or diabolical ingenuity ever invented were foisted upon the world by Simonides” (p. 60). In contrast, when it comes to Tischendorf’s dishonesty, he writes that “His much later account of his discovery ... is a tale that appears to have developed somewhat apart from the truth ...” (p. 35). Obviously, if the Codex Sinaiticus is a fraud, the lies of Tischendorf would prove to be far worse than anything attributed to Simonides.

⁹⁸ While Amphilochius accused Simonides of “tearing out ... entire sheets” from MSS., he does not mention the Shepherd of Hermas in his letter (See Elliott, pp. 118-120). Furthermore, he says that he arrived at Mt. Athos in 1843 and heard stories of Simonides, who had been there before -- which fits with the timeline of creating the Codex in the years 1839-1840.

We have already learned from Professor Stanley Porter that the original copy of Hermas, the one that Simonides sold to the University of Leipzig, published by Anger and Dindorf, was an authentic copy. His second copy was the corrupt one. Yet in McGrane's review, he reverses the order, and relates the following:

"... Simonides forged a deliberately inaccurate text by introducing many changes of his own This was part of a plan to double his money by a double deception. He sold the three stolen leaves to the University of Leipzig, and professors Anger and Dindorf produced a critical edition of Hermas ... Simonides kept back the original transcription in order to make a forged palimpsest for sale at a later date The forged palimpsest was intended to assume value once it was realized that the critical edition by Angers and Dindorf was based on a worthless forgery.... Inveterate liar as he was, Simonides represented his corrupted version as the purest one, and the original fair transcript as ... corrupt."⁹⁹

The above description seems to be saying that Simonides deliberately sold a forged manuscript to the University, so that once it was discovered to be a fake (which he expected them to do), the same people would come back to him and then want to purchase his forged palimpsest later on. Yet why Simonides would assume that anyone would want to buy something from him *after* he sold them a forgery, makes no sense whatsoever. Of course, this is all based on McGrane's assumption that virtually everything Simonides ever said or did was based on forgery and trickery.

While the analysis goes against the arguments of a variety of other scholars, we must acknowledge that the historic details surrounding the episode, are, admittedly full of contradictions. McGrane is almost certainly basing his assumptions on the paleographic conclusions published by Professor Spyr P. Lambros in 1888, who claimed to have found the original manuscript from which Simonides took the first three leaves of the Shepherd of Hermas. McGrane, of course, adds his own theories, etc. But in the work by Lambros, we find a strange detail about *who* it was that actually took the first three leaves

⁹⁹ McGrane, footnotes on p. 80

of this particular copy of Hermas:

“... there is a tradition among the monks in whose monastery it lies, that the missing leaves were abstracted by Minas Minoides (as they told me, confusing him no doubt with Simonides) ...”¹⁰⁰

Take note of the above quote, and consider that, among the many other inconsistencies we are to believe, we must accept that the name “Minas Minoides” is somehow a corruption of *Constantine Simonides*. Apparently, the monks were seriously confused, which would be strange, since Simonides was a very well-known figure in the Greek world. Perhaps Simonides was operating undercover; or even more likely, it could be a completely different person.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, if what Lambros says is true, it further proves that the textual critics are continually confused in their analysis of ancient texts, and their opinions should not be trusted.¹⁰² Here is a partial explanation of Lambros’s conclusions as published in *The Cambridge Review*,¹⁰³ the year of its release:

“Until about thirty years ago the Shepherd of Hermas was only known to us in a Latin version. In 1856 Anger and Dindorf produced a Greek text, taken from the three MS. leaves and a copy of six other leaves which the forger Simonides professed to have brought from Mt. Athos.... Of the six leaves, however, Simonides had another copy giving a very different text, but corrected largely by Simonides himself. Of course when the forger’s bad faith was discovered the value of the MS. and both sets of copy was of a

¹⁰⁰ *A Collation of the Athos Codex of the Shepherd of Hermas*, by Spyr. P. Lambros (1888) p. 6

¹⁰¹ Elsewhere, we find mention of a “classical scholar from the region of Macedonia” by the name of Minas Minoides, who is said to have lived until 1859, 1860 or 1864. It is very likely that this person is completely separate from Simonides. It appears Minoides (whose first name was *Konstantinos*) was a well-known Greek scholar of the 19th century, who lived during the same period that these events transpired. Other than the paleographic theory of Professor Lambros, there is no reason to believe that it was somehow Simonides; it may be that Minoides provided Simonides with the pages himself. We would further argue that this detail calls the rest of the analysis into question.

¹⁰² Especially when determining the accurate readings of Scripture, since the critics raise continual doubts about certain verses, based upon these ever-changing opinions about manuscripts, papyri, history, etc.

¹⁰³ The review clearly represents Simonides as a “forger” without question, undoubtedly because the majority of the scholars who opposed him (Hort, Scrivener, Wright, Bradshaw) were all out of Cambridge University. Both Westcott and Hort were Cambridge scholars, who conducted the Revision of 1881, using Codex Sinaiticus; as such, the university would have had an interest in denouncing Simonides, to protect the reputation of their scholarship. But as noted elsewhere, Charles Darwin came out of Cambridge and was celebrated by some of these men, and by the university itself, showing that its discernment was abysmal in matters of history and paleography.

very doubtful character, and subsequent editors have held conflicting views about them. Dr. Lambros has, however, now discovered and made known to the world the true state of the case. Simonides did find a MS. of the Shepherd at Athos; three leaves of this he really brought to Leipsic; six he left, but brought a copy of, though neither an accurate nor conscientious one. This copy, however, was contained in his second set of leaves (which were afterwards published by Tischendorf, and with the text of which the Sinaitic fragment discovered still later by Tischendorf, substantially agrees, so far as it goes), not in the first set which Anger and Dindorf had published.”¹⁰⁴

In the above analysis, we see the order apparently reversed.¹⁰⁵ We suspect that the university had an interest in protecting the reputation of Tischendorf, whose work they used for the Revision of 1881. Regardless of which order the copies were given, the undeniable fact is that Simonides possessed a Greek copy of the Shepherd of Hermas in 1855 that matched a second copy found as part of Codex Sinaiticus in 1859. It would be interesting to learn if the *inaccurate* parts of Simonides’ Hermas also appear in the Sinaitic fragment, since the wording of the Cambridge article seems to suggest it. If any of the emendations of Simonides were to be found in the Sinaitic fragment of Hermas, it would further reinforce his claims.

¹⁰⁴ *The Cambridge Review*, Vol. 9, May 10, 1888, p. 320. It is also worth noting that this “discovery” happened after the release of the Critical Text in 1881, and the denunciations of it published by Dean Burgon (1883), who rejected Codex Sinaiticus as a corrupted text. Burgon wrote: “My one object has been to defeat the mischievous attempt which was made in 1881 to thrust upon this Church and Realm a Revision of the Sacred Text, which -- recommended though it be by eminent names -- I am thoroughly convinced, and am able to prove, is untrustworthy from beginning to end.... Our revisers ... stand convicted of having deliberately rejected the words of Inspiration in every page, and having substituted for them fabricated Readings which the Church has long since refused to acknowledge, or else has rejected with abhorrence; and which only survive at this time in a little handful of documents of the most depraved type.” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, from the *Dedication*) Codex Sinaiticus was seen by Burgon as one of the most “depraved” MS. ever discovered.

¹⁰⁵ McGrane builds upon this argument, rejecting the assertion of Simonides that the first copy of Hermas was genuine, and the second corrupt. He says, “Simonides simply wanted to foul Tischendorf.” (p. 81) From this, we suspect that the purpose of the critics at Cambridge appears to have been to protect Tischendorf’s reputation. Yet it was Tischendorf himself who retracted his own view in 1863, as we showed elsewhere from Philip Schaff. Elliott writes that “Tischendorf’s judgment about the age, composition and significance of Codex Sinaiticus were to remain without serious challenge.” (Elliott, p. 120) Since the Codex, along with the research of Tischendorf was used to change the text of the New Testament in 1881, protecting the *judgment* or discernment of the German scholar became increasingly important.

Also, let us consider the analysis of James Farrer who, in 1907 wrote about the new discovery of 1888, and had this to say about its influence for understanding the story of Simonides:

“His sojourn in Leipsic is famous for his dealings with two works, of which one was the first known Greek copy of the Shepherd of Hermas. The first three leaves of this had been extracted by him from a copy still existing in the monastery of St. Gregory on Mount Athos; six other leaves were a copy of a remaining portion left at Mount Athos. It was for long disputed to what extent this copied portion, and another copy by Simonides, corresponded with the original, but **the recent discovery of the remainder of the original at St. Gregory seems to absolve Simonides from the charge of any worse crime than an endeavor to emendate a very mutilated text**, and to help himself by translating the conclusion from the Latin translation.”¹⁰⁶

According to Farrer, Simonides was endeavoring to “emendate” (i.e. correct) a text that was already corrupt, in the additional pages that he provided. There was nothing underhanded about it, because he openly explained what he did at the time. We compare Farrer’s sober minded examination of the evidence, with the fantastical (and unprovable) accusations that were made by Kevin McGrane; who then attempts to dismiss the great importance of the Shepherd controversy:

“Of course, the fact that the Greek texts of The Shepherd of Hermas in Codex Sinaiticus and in the Athos Codex are similar means nothing more than that they are copies of the same Greek recension. Any other alleged association is accidental or conjectural.”¹⁰⁷

This argument shows a lack of understanding and fails to acknowledge the unique circumstances surrounding the issue. In contrast, consider the analysis of James Donaldson, a renowned Greek scholar, back in 1874, who wrote about the almost

¹⁰⁶ Farrer, *Literary Forgeries*, pp. 44, 45 (emphasis added)

¹⁰⁷ McGrane, p. 81

“miraculous” discovery of Tischendorf, who claimed that he had found the first pages of the Codex, containing parts of the Old Testament, discarded in a rubbish basket in 1844, and then returned in 1859, when he recovered a complete Greek copy of the New Testament, along with certain apocryphal works:

“The torn and scattered fragments, which had been cast into the large basket to feed the fire had come forth, they had all united and now constituted a complete whole, a whole so complete that the like of it does not exist. Not only were the other parts of the Old Testament found: but the only complete uncial manuscript of the New Testament was contained in it, and added to this was the complete Greek of the Epistle of Barnabas and nearly as much of the Greek of the Pastor of Hermas as had been given in the Simonides manuscripts.”¹⁰⁸

Notice how Donaldson does not merely mention Barnabas and Hermas in the discovery, but he specifically tells us that they contained “nearly as much ... *as had been given in the Simonides manuscripts.*” Why does Donaldson tell us this? There was no need for him to mention it, other than the fact that “the like of it does not exist” anywhere else in the history of manuscripts. As he points out, not only did the Codex contain a fragment of the Shepherd of Hermas that would match the earlier copy presented by Simonides, but also contained a copy of the Epistle of Barnabas, portions of which were unknown anywhere else in the world.¹⁰⁹ It happens that Simonides also published a matching copy of this epistle (*Barnabas*) in the year 1843, long before the 1859 discovery. As we will see, McGrane attempts to refute this (partly following a false argument from the 19th century) but his unsuccessful efforts will be shown in the next section. First, let us consider the analysis of James Donaldson, who was a classical scholar, and went on to be knighted by the king, becoming *Sir James Donaldson* in later years. When mentioning the story of Tischendorf’s discovery, he wrote:

¹⁰⁸ *The Apostolical Fathers*, by James Donaldson (1874), p. 386

¹⁰⁹ In particular, the Western academic world. Indeed, Tischendorf himself wrote: “For two centuries search has been made in vain for the original Greek of the first part of this epistle” (*When Were Our Gospels Written*, by Constantine Tischendorf, 1866, by the American Tract Society, p. 35)

“There are many circumstances in this narrative calculated to awaken suspicion, and there are other circumstances of an equally suspicious nature which I have not mentioned. But those who are most competent to judge, have allowed that it seems a genuine ancient manuscript.”¹¹⁰

When he mentions those “who are most competent to judge” he is simply referring to the paleographers, whose alleged expertise in handwriting analysis has determined the antiquity of the Codex. Why? Because the historical data surrounding the manuscript provides absolutely nothing to support the claim of its ancient origin. One must literally believe that the Codex laid quietly for some 1500 years, while containing some of the most unique books and readings found anywhere in the world; all the while being in a Monastery frequented by curious scholars.¹¹¹ This suggestion alone is less likely than anything claimed by Simonides. Furthermore, when Donaldson compared the copy of the Shepherd of Hermas from Sinaiticus with the one brought by Simonides from Mt. Athos, he concluded that:

“... the Sinaitic Greek is to stand or fall with the Athos Greek. And this must be, for they are substantially the same.”¹¹²

¹¹⁰ *The Apostolical Fathers*, by James Donaldson, (1874) p. 387

¹¹¹ An attempt was made by Dr. Daniel Wallace to define a history for Sinaiticus prior to 1844, citing an Italian explorer (Vitaliano Donati) from 1761, who visited St. Catherine’s Monastery and claimed to have seen “a Bible comprising leaves of handsome, large, delicate, and square-shaped parchment, written in a round and handsome script.” The British Library also says this *may* be a reference to the Codex, however, there were thousands of manuscripts at St. Catherine’s and the description is very general. Also, the word *delicate* in the original Italian is “sottili” which is usually translated to mean, *thin* or *slender*. The Italian reads: “*una Bibbia in membrane bellissime, assai grandi, sottili, e quadre, scritta in carattere rotondo ...*” and could also read: “a Bible in beautiful parchment, very large, thin and square, written in round characters (letters) ...” If the MS. seen by Donati was a thin codex, it would not have been Sinaiticus. None of the unique characteristics were described by Donati; 1) that it contained a *complete* copy of the New Testament (unlike any other Greek codex from antiquity); 2) that it is written in a four-column format (very rare), 3) that it contains many corrections (an average of 30 per page), 4) that it deliberately omits the last twelve verses of the Gospel of Mark (one of only two Greek MS. in this category), 5) that it contains copies of the Shepherd of Hermas and Epistle of Barnabas (Greek apocrypha not contained in any other MS. on earth). In 1949, Kenneth W. Clark documented 3,300 manuscripts at St. Catherine’s and there may have been many more back in 1761, since scholars have been removing works from the library there for the past two centuries. Donati’s description could have applied to a variety of different works. The first association of Donati’s journal shows up in 1909 in the *Revue Archeologique*, just two years after Farrer’s *Literary Forgeries*, of 1907, in which he argues that the Simonides affair was an unsolved mystery. The association appears to have been an attempt to answer Farrer.

¹¹² *The Apostolical Fathers*, by James Donaldson, (1874) p. 391

In other words, if one is genuine, then so is the other. But if one of them is a forgery, likewise, *so is the other*. Thus, they stand or fall together. This is why we argue that the Shepherd is like a *fingerprint* within the Codex itself, and its match leads directly to Simonides. In fact, if the Codex Sinaiticus were involved in a crime, and detectives were attempting to determine who could have created the manuscript, it would be argued that, “It must have been Simonides, because he was the only man in the world who possessed a matching copy of the Shepherd of Hermas, without which, the production of the Codex would have been impossible!” The possession of a matching copy of the Shepherd of Hermas is like a smoking gun in the hand of the Greek.

Donaldson’s analysis shows us the great importance of the issue surrounding the Shepherd of Hermas and the Simonides affair, one that most scholars have wanted to avoid for the greater part of the last century.¹¹³ Rather than discuss the real *history* surrounding these works (which begins with Simonides, Tischendorf, St. Catherine’s Monastery, etc.) most scholars choose to engage in imaginings, by traveling back to the fourth century in their speculations, inventing a world for Codex Sinaiticus that simply does not exist. By detaching the Codex from reality, it opens the door for all sorts of textual theories, which are then imposed and enforced by the paleographic badge of authority (which can change at any moment), but by nothing more.

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS

The second *significant* fingerprint of Simonides found within the Codex Sinaiticus is the presence, as we mentioned earlier, of a Greek copy of the Epistle of Barnabas. As Tischendorf himself noted, this particular copy contained passages that were not found anywhere else in the Western academic world at that time. In his account

¹¹³ We find a curious footnote from Stanley E. Porter in his recent publication: “It is unfortunate that the Simonides affair has apparently been lost sight of in recent discussion of the Shepherd of Hermas (e.g. there is no mention of the affair, nor of Tischendorf’s involvement in it, in the introduction by Bart Ehrman in the latest Loeb edition, *The Apostolic Fathers, II ...*” (See Porter, p. 38) It is interesting that scholars like Ehrman, who dedicate their careers to convincing others that the Bible itself must be doubted, would not wish to discuss the doubts and controversies surrounding the *manuscripts* they employ in order to conjure up their conclusions.

of the discovery of the Codex in 1859, where he claimed that he found the balance of it wrapped in a red cloth, having been kept by a “steward” in the Monastery, he wrote:

“I unrolled the cover, and discovered, to my great surprise, not only those very fragments which, fifteen years before, I had taken out of the basket, but also other parts of the New Testament complete, and in addition, the Epistle of Barnabas For two centuries search has been made in vain for the original Greek of the first part of this epistle, which has been only known through a very faulty Latin translation.”¹¹⁴

Tischendorf himself revealed the importance of this discovery, showing that for some two hundred years, scholars had been searching for the very unique passages in Greek that he had just found. It becomes devastating then, to find out that Simonides just happened to have published a Greek copy of the Epistle of Barnabas in the year 1843, which also contained the same unique readings. We find a comparison of the copies mentioned by James Donaldson in 1874:

“A copy of the Greek original of Barnabas was found by Tischendorf, in the Codex Sinaiticus Simonides also printed an edition of the entire text, as found in the Sinaitic, with notes; on the title page of which the date is 1843, and the place of publication Smyrna.”¹¹⁵

Donaldson does not go into great detail about the Simonides publication, yet he reveals that he had printed the entire text as it was “found in the Sinaitic ...” Also consider that Donaldson wrote that the history of Sinaiticus “borders on the miraculous.” Did he mean this sincerely? Or was it tongue and cheek? We have reason to ask, because he also mentioned the “suspicious” nature of the whole discovery, and also “other circumstances” that he believed were *equally suspicious* but chose not to mention. It may be that his comments had something to do with this Epistle of Barnabas, which he strangely, drops onto the page suddenly, as if leaving a clue for others to explore. He

¹¹⁴ *When Were Our Gospels Written*, by Constantine Tischendorf, 1866, by the American Tract Society, pp. 34, 35

¹¹⁵ Donaldson, *The Apostolical Fathers* (1874), p. 315

goes out of his way to tell the reader that this edition of Simonides, which is dated back to the year 1843, also contains the same Greek text as the Sinai copy. We might also mention that Simonides himself listed this epistle among his personal catalog of works he completed in the year 1843, which can be seen in the introductory pages of *The Periplus of Hannon*, which he published in 1864, right before departing from England.

The work by Donaldson was published in 1874, a decade after the affair was over. Within two years, a publication called *The Athenaeum* would publish a review of his work, January 8, 1876, in which they said the following:

“The editors are puzzled by an assertion in Dr. Donaldson’s ‘Apostolic Fathers,’ on which we are able to throw some light.”¹¹⁶

The article then proceeds to declare that the publication of the Epistle of Barnabas in 1843 was supposedly one of the “fabrications” of Simonides:

“Dr. Donaldson mentions an edition of the Epistle of Barnabas, printed by Simonides, and containing the text as found in the Sinaitic Codex, but bearing the date 1843, and the place of publication Smyrna. The editors put a query at the date 1843. The date given, notwithstanding its apparent improbability, is given correctly, and the edition of Barnabas is one of the most curious of the many fabrications which Simonides devised. The Greek went to the trouble of printing at his own expense an edition of the entire Epistle of Barnabas, for the very purpose of putting the date 1843 upon it. He wished to make people believe that he had manuscripts of the entire Barnabas before Tischendorf found his famous codex.”¹¹⁷

So, the editor of the *Athenaeum* article is well aware of the implications, and that if Simonides’ version of Barnabas was truly published in 1843, it would be significant proof in favor of his claim to have authored the Codex Sinaiticus. Of course, this editor

¹¹⁶ *The Athenaeum*, January 8, 1876, p. 53

¹¹⁷ *The Athenaeum*, January 8, 1876, pp. 53-54

does not believe that, and went on to claim that he was able to detect the fraud of the wily Greek, who yet again, created one of countless forgeries to prove that he was the author of something that would provide no benefit to him personally, whatsoever. But how did he detect the deception? In fact, he tells us:

“In the copy of it which Simonides gave to the writer of this article ... he had made several corrections in the Preface. Simonides was not content with printing the text, he produced in attestation of the genuineness and date of his edition a newspaper of Smyrna, published in 1843, containing a long review of the work. The paper and the print of the newspaper looked uncommonly fresh, and, on subsequent inquiries at Smyrna, it was found that no such newspaper had ever existed ... Simonides had taken the trouble to fabricate his newspaper as well as the date of his edition.”¹¹⁸

We find it interesting that the *Athenaeum* article did not bother to mention the name of the newspaper in question. Strangely, that information was withheld from their readers in the 19th century. This information would have allowed other investigators to inquire further and see whether or not such a newspaper actually existed, to test if what they were being told was accurate. At this point, it can be shown that it was not accurate. The newspaper in question was called the *Star of the East* and the historic records show that it was in fact a real newspaper, published in Smyrna during this same period.

Our research team first discovered this information back in 2014, which was later picked up by Dr. Cooper, who presents some of the information in his book. Details that we obtained from the Gennadius Library in Athens, Greece revealed that the name and details of the newspaper mentioned by Simonides was *Star of the East*, no. 26, August 1, 1843. We looked further to confirm that the newspaper had been published in Smyrna during the 1840's which was initially, difficult to discover. There were a number of Greek papers with the same name, the most prominent of them was found in Athens. However, the Library of the Hellenic Parliament confirmed that another newspaper called *Star of the East* was, in fact, published in Smyrna in the early 1840's. The page taken

¹¹⁸ *The Athenaeum*, January 8, 1876, p. 54

from Dr. Cooper's book of the newspaper (also shown by Kevin McGrane, p. 92) was the same that was provided to us by the library and shared at the time we made the discovery. However, in the PTS review, there are provably false assertions. McGrane writes:

"... Simonides ... produced an edition of Barnabas with a fake date, and for those who might question its date and place of publication he supplied a sheet carrying a review of it purporting to come from [Star of the East], dated August 1, 1843.... A copy of the alleged review is in the Gennadius library, and purports to be a supplement to the newspaper edition of No. 26, August 1, 1843.... But a supplement to Issue no. 26 ... never existed, and of that we can be certain."¹¹⁹

McGrane recognizes that the newspaper was real, but as we shall see, makes a number of blunders with handling the information. For example, he writes:

"Though the title [Star of the East] was published and printed in Smyrna, having its first issue on October 17, 1841, it ceased publication in mid-1842, so there were certainly no 1843 editions. Neither did the title start up again, nor did a publication with the same name or similar name emerge in the 1840s."¹²⁰

As proof of his assertion, he cites two modern Turkish sources, published in 1973 and another in 2003. But when we look to the 19th century history in the British Empire, it turns out that in 1856 (more than 10 years after the *Star of the East* newspaper allegedly expired), a renowned physician named Dr. George Rolleston provided a *Report on Smyrna to the Secretary of State for War of the British Empire*, in which he related the following about the newspapers operating in Smyrna:

"Of the four newspapers published in Smyrna, three are Greek, and one French. Of the three Greek, one, the 'Amalthea,' is a journal of considerable pretensions; the

¹¹⁹ McGrane, pp. 91, 92

¹²⁰ McGrane, p. 90

other two, the ‘**Star of the East**’ and the ‘Prometheus,’ ... are inferior in size, execution, and respectability.”¹²¹

Clearly, the report mentions the *Star of the East* in the present tense, and thus it must have continued into the 1850’s according to Rolleston’s report. Also, because of its inferior size and respectability, this would explain why scholars in the Western world would be uninformed of the publication of an Epistle of Barnabas in 1843. But McGrane claims to have discovered evidence that the newspaper shut down at some point; and in so doing, may have also unwittingly provided a very revealing clue that would further confirm the testimony of Simonides. He writes:

“... the first edition of this title was on October 17, 1841, and being a weekly publication Issue 26 came out as expected on April 10, 1841. Just to be very clear about this, we exhibit below ... the subsequent Issue 27 on April 17, 1842. This evidence forever closes off any glimmer of an Issue 26 in 1843.”¹²²

What he appears to be saying is that because of when the weekly newspaper began, the *issue numbers* would fall at about the same time each year. So, Issue 26 would be published on April 10, 1841, and then next year we would find Issue 27 on April 17 of 1842. His point seems to be that “Issue 26” would not have been published in August of 1843, as is shown in the Simonides news clipping, but should have appeared back in April of that same year. Since Issue 26 was published in August 1, 1843, this would theoretically prove it was a forgery. However, if McGrane has learned that the newspaper *shut down* during that year, he may have provided us with more evidence that will backfire on his arguments.

Earlier, he told us that the newspaper closed in “mid-1842.” Without an exact date, it would be difficult to tell the month, or the circumstances involved. However, we know from Dr. Rolleston that the newspaper resumed publication later on. It may very

¹²¹ *Report on Smyrna*, by George Rolleston, (1856), p. 40 (*emphasis added*)

¹²² McGrane p. 92

well be that the paper shut down for several months and then reopened, which would likely account for why there is a gap of 4-5 months. If the paper shut down in early April, and then reopened at the beginning of August, this would account for the later appearance of “Issue no. 26.” It is yet one more mystery to be investigated, and there are likely other circumstances yet unknown, but as it stands, the available evidence continues to fall in favor of the story of Simonides.¹²³

We must also mention that McGrane made use of the testimony of the editor of the *Athenaeum*, who gave a *provably* false report in 1876, by saying that such a newspaper had never existed in Smyrna. Referencing this editor, he wrote:

“One other contemporary reader who received a copy of Barnabas from Simonides himself and inspected the news sheet, likewise reported that ‘The paper and the print of the newspaper looked uncommonly fresh’ for a production from 1843, and he was not convinced that it was genuine. His instincts were entirely correct.”¹²⁴

Incredibly, McGrane uses this quote to defend his argument, even though he knows that in the very next part of the exact same sentence, the writer in question proceeds to announce that he “made inquiries at Smyrna” and discovered that “no such newspaper had ever existed.” How then could his *instincts* have been *entirely correct*? Any sober researcher would necessarily conclude that whatever “inquiries” were made by the writer in question were, at best, incompetent. If the *Athenaeum* editor was not incompetent, or misinformed, then he was lying. Since his article was published in 1876,

¹²³ Additional research should also consider McGrane’s assertion that the Simonides news clipping was “a supplement to Issue no. 26” as he said. If this is correct, it may have been like an insert of some kind and this detail could very well affect other important details of the clipping. Yet at this point, there is no significant reason to believe the article was a forgery. McGrane quotes the opinion of Joannes Gennadius from 1923, who believed the 1843 copy of Barnabas was supposedly “printed in England at about 1860 in order to support certain claims of Prince Rhodocanakis ...” (see McGrane pp. 88-89). But this argument is illogical since the forgeries of Rhodocanakis were invented to demonstrate his claim to the Byzantine throne. Furthermore, claiming that it was printed “about 1860” seems only calculated to support the idea that Tischendorf’s discovery happened first. Gennadius presents no proof of his assertion. At one point, McGrane argues that because Gennadius “was a Greek bibliophile among the Greek community in England and familiar with the styles, conventions, type and capabilities of printers of Greek ...” (p. 94). Yet he does not reveal that in 1860 Gennadius himself was only 16 years old.

¹²⁴ McGrane, p. 94

he would have had access to the *Report on Smyrna* from 1856 and could have easily learned that the *Star of the East* was a real newspaper. Since this report had been published years earlier, we are even more suspicious as to why he did not inform his readers of the name of the newspaper at the time. It is one important example in a growing list of provable falsehoods and inconsistencies that were published by the scholars and journalists of the 19th century (on the Sinaiticus issue) and is partly why we refer to them as the “fake news media” of their time.

THE UNREALISTIC SIMONIDES

To accept McGrane’s arguments, we have to believe that Simonides had nothing better to do with his *entire* life than to spend every ounce of energy (which would have undoubtedly been required) to forge all the necessary details, in multiple writings, newspapers, ancient texts, etc., and then go set up some false witnesses to tell lies; all so he could pretend he was the real author of Codex Sinaiticus. All this effort, so that once the world believed him, he would get what? What exactly did he stand to gain from all of this? A million dollars? A prominent position somewhere? No. Actually, even if he could have convinced the world that he was telling the truth, he stood to gain absolutely nothing.¹²⁵

The sad reality is that there was no payoff for all his effort, and no reason for Simonides to fabricate such an elaborate story, much less to go to the time and trouble of engineering all the alleged forgeries necessary to support it. Yet he maintained his story both publicly and privately for four years in England, and even after he departed, went to his grave declaring that he was the true creator of the Codex.

¹²⁵ In contrast, we must consider that Tischendorf and the leading figures who opposed Simonides gained directly from the acceptance of Codex Sinaiticus. A number of them formed part of the Revision Committee of 1870 (F.J.A. Hort, F.H.A. Scrivener, S.P. Tregelles and W.A. Wright), using Cod. Sinaiticus along with Cod. Vaticanus to change the text of the New Testament. The fact that some of these men (Tischendorf & Hort in particular) wrote about creating a new Greek text beforehand is established through their private correspondence and demonstrates their previously conceived plan; hence, their likely motivation in defending the Codex.

Typically, when someone is a forger, and their deception is finally exposed, they will usually come forward and admit to what they did, while people marvel at the genius of their work. If one studies the history of forgers, we see this happen again and again, as with the notorious modern art forger, Wolfgang Beltracchi who is now celebrated for his clever deceptions. But such was not the case with Simonides. He always rejected the charge of forgery when it was leveled against him, and he was able to engage his opponents with critical and historic evidence to defend his position. Nevertheless, this fact does not prevent McGrane from asserting that there were “many thousands” of forgeries “done by Simonides over the years ...”¹²⁶

THE MAYER PAPYRI

While James Farrer did not completely trust Simonides, he recognized that the extreme view of believing that all things associated with him were forgeries was simply unreasonable:

“... Simonides did not always invent or forge or lie; probably these lapses occupied the smaller portion of his activity, and much of his work was honest, laborious and useful. But naturally discrimination in these circumstances was difficult or impossible, and his contemporaries found it the easier course to reject as spurious anything connected with his name. It is probable that skepticism has gone farther than was necessary in this direction, and that literature has lost in consequence some acquisitions that rightfully belong to it.”¹²⁷

In other words, there are likely genuine works associated with Simonides that have been wrongly rejected as forgeries. What some critics fail to recognize about the so-called forgeries in question, is that not everyone thought they were forgeries. The disputes were typically made over issues of history and paleography that (if one studies

¹²⁶ McGrane, p. 72

¹²⁷ Farrer, *Literary Forgeries*, p. 66

carefully) are often uncertain, and full of contradictions, where it is clear that an interpretation of data could be seen one way or another. The same could be said about nearly the whole field of modern textual criticism, which is often driven by little more than conjecture.

Even years after the Simonides affair took place, there were those who believed certain works that had been questioned were genuine and there was no legitimate reason to reject them. For example, the Mayer Papyri. In 1907 James Farrer writes of certain papyri that were purchased by the Mayer Museum in Liverpool years before Simonides arrived in England. Simonides was employed by Mr. Joseph Mayer (owner of the museum) to unroll the ancient scrolls, because when he had attempted it before, they began to crumble. Simonides had a special technique for unrolling them, since such scrolls were not uncommon to him. Mr. Mayer publicly declared that he had purchased these papyri years before he ever met or worked with Simonides, and it was further affirmed that they were unrolled in the presence of others:

“The difficult work of unrolling these papyri, of fixing them on canvas, and of deciphering them, was conducted by Simonides in the Museum, in the presence, more or less constant, of Mr. Mayer himself, of the Curator of the Museum, and of Mr. John Eliot Hodgkin.”¹²⁸

In addition to the fact that known and respected witnesses were present while all of this was happening, we find a statement from Mr. Joseph Mayer, who provided clarification to the newspapers, from Liverpool, December 18, 1861:

“Dr. Simonides was introduced to me, as stated by him, at my Museum; and after we had been acquainted for some time ... I requested him to unroll and decipher for me some of the many rolls of Papyrus ... and he shortly afterwards commenced his operations in the Library of the Museum, the necessary materials ... being supplied by the Curator, who attended on him, and with myself, saw many of the MSS. opened.... it

¹²⁸ Farrer, *Literary Forgeries*, p. 54

is absolutely necessary that the public should be made aware that the Papyri in question are in no way connected with Dr. Simonides, except in as far as he has unrolled and illustrated them, and that they are, and have been for some years, the property of, Yours Respectfully, Joseph Mayer.”¹²⁹

Because the unveiling of the papyri was done openly, not in secret, and also because they were obtained by Mr. Mayer years before he came in contact with Simonides, it is difficult for careful researchers to accept that they were forgeries created by the Greek. Those who are affected by *Simonides derangement syndrome*, will of course, cry “forgery!” no matter what. But this is one area where some believe that true manuscript relics of antiquity may well have been hastily denounced, as part of the illogical bias of that time. This is why Farrer wrote that:

“It is almost impossible to believe in his manufacture of these papyri. They correspond in writing and appearance with numberless papyri which have of recent years been discovered and published. And there are in the collection three papyri, still unrolled, time-worn and brittle, looking like huge cigars, and containing no one knows what precious secrets of antiquity. If these are forgeries, they can hardly be forgeries by Simonides; and if he was guiltless in respect of these, he was presumably guiltless in respect of the others.”¹³⁰

Nevertheless, when McGrane handles the issue, he quite literally abandons all common sense, even in the face of overwhelming evidence against his arguments. Criticizing Dr. Cooper, he writes:

“Dr. Cooper states, in defence of Simonides, that Simonides ‘had never been within a mile’ of the Mayer papyri ‘prior to Mayer’s invitation.’ That is entirely beside the point: it was what Simonides did once he gained unfettered and unsupervised access

¹²⁹ *The Periplus of Hannon, King of the Karchedonians*, by C. Simonides (1864), p. 2

¹³⁰ Farrer, *Literary Forgeries*, p. 56

to the collection after his invitation that is relevant. Simonides was granted many weeks of unsupervised access to the Mayer collection, and took the papyri home!”¹³¹

If McGrane had studied the details a bit more carefully, he would have realized that Simonides not only unrolled the papyri in question before witnesses, but he also examined them in front of witnesses, at the Museum, for *four months* before taking them to his own residence. As Farrer tells us:

“It was not till August that some of these papyri were removed to Simonides’ own house for purposes of further examination. The discovery therefore on 1st May of certain fragments of St. Matthew’s Gospel on one of these papyri would seem to have been made under conditions which rendered fraud impossible or unlikely.”¹³²

Despite this, McGrane declares: “These have been shown to be outright forgeries.”¹³³ Perhaps they were forgeries, but if so, they would have been created centuries earlier, and not by Simonides. It is highly unlikely that two very educated men (as Mayer and Hodgkin both were) would not have examined the papyri during the four months they were revealed at the Mayer Museum. Of course, they would have been watching with great interest what was revealed in these scrolls, that they had kept for years, wondering what secrets might be within them. Would these men not have *noticed* if Simonides altered these works later on, after he took them into his home? Otherwise, we must then determine that these witnesses were either disinterested bystanders, or else part of a conspiracy with Simonides to deceive the world. And that is something no one believed in the 19th century.

John Eliot Hodgkin continued to defend the story of Simonides, and to encourage an investigation into his claims about Sinaiticus. Chances are, the unfairness of the Mayer Papyri episode had something to do with Hodgkin’s persistence, since he would

¹³¹ McGrane, p. 126

¹³² Farrer, *Literary Forgeries*, p. 54

¹³³ McGrane, p. 126

have known personally what happened, having been there at the time, and witnessed the unreasonable accusations made by the scholars and newspapers in England, since media hysteria was not unlike it is today. Despite this, McGrane gives his readers the impression that Hodgkin turned his back on Simonides, as if he eventually came to believe he was a liar:

“... by 1864, when Simonides had been completely unmasked, Hodgkin declared that Simonides ‘has behaved so extremely badly, that I cannot take any further interest in his affairs.’”¹³⁴

If one looks up the rest of this quote, Hodgkin goes on to say, “He seems to me to be the most impracticable of human kind.”¹³⁵ He was writing to renowned chemist, Henry Deane, and appears to have been referring to the stubborn nature of Simonides in defending his views of history and paleography; in particular, concerning a completely different manuscript (the *Uranus*), which had nothing to do with Codex Sinaiticus. Yet McGrane does not alert his readers to this fact, and gives the false impression that Hodgkin believed he had been exposed as a fraud. Neither does he acknowledge that J.E. Hodgkin continued to uphold the testimony of Simonides into the 20th century, regardless of whatever falling out they may have had personally. If he had truly come to believe that the whole episode was a hoax, and that he had been deceived by a wily Greek, he would have undoubtedly reported that to James Farrer, who would have documented as much in his book. Yet we read no such thing.

SIMONIDES STRIKES AGAIN?

An article published in July of 2018 shows perfectly the uncertain nature of paleographical analysis and conclusion, as we find modern academics still debating the mysterious character of Simonides. We read:

¹³⁴ McGrane, p. 127. In this quote, Hodgkin goes on to say of Simonides,

¹³⁵ See: *Die getauschte Wissenschaft: Ein Genie betrug Europa - Konstantinos Simonides*, p. 122

“Constantine Simonides ... has come to the fore again as the Italian classicist Luciano Canfora proposed that Simonides had forged the Artemidorus papyrus allegedly containing the *Geographoumena* of Artemidorus of Ephesus. Today most scholars think that papyrus is genuine, but the case is not settled.”¹³⁶

Notice that there is an ongoing debate about whether the work in question is genuine or not. Apparently, most scholars think the papyrus is genuine, but Mr. Canfora thinks it is the forged invention of Simonides. This was exactly the situation in the 19th century, on a whole variety of works, and into the 20th century on the Mayer papyri. Furthermore, if one reads the article (quoted above) by Tommy Wasserman (professor of Biblical studies at Ansgar University College), he will note that this modern scholar, who goes over the Mayer papyri and the episodes with Simonides and the scrolls, largely quotes from the arguments that were made by the 19th century committee.

Most Christians do not realize that most of the conclusions found in modern Biblical criticism are mostly parroted from the scholars of the 19th century. We have heard some speak of advancements in paleographical science, etc., but this is largely a fantasy. If one reads the book, *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus* by Dirk Jongkind (a work recommended by the British Library today), he will learn that nearly all analysis of the Codex is still chiefly based on the opinions of Tischendorf, Tregelles and Scrivener, above any other. There are some few developments here and there (such as the British Library believing there were three scribes for Sinaiticus, rather than four as claimed by Tischendorf), but the core arguments remain the same. Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are said to be from the fourth century (despite all evidence to the contrary) because that is what one *must* believe in order to support the Critical Text theory. As such, we consider the words of James Farrer back in 1907 on the subject of the Mayer papyri:

¹³⁶ *Simonides' New Testament Papyri: Their Production and Purported Evidence*, by Tommy Wasserman, published in *Marginalia*, July 6, 2018

“... if these Mayer papyri are to continue to be regarded as spurious, it ought to be only after an impartial re-study of them, and a clear statement of the palaeographical reasons for differentiating them from others which are accepted as genuine.”¹³⁷

We heartily agree with Mr. Farrer on the above point, as well as his earlier conclusion about the uncertainty of Codex Sinaiticus. We believe there should be a complete reevaluation of the whole Simonides controversy, conducted by scholars and researchers who are sober enough to pursue the matter objectively. Thus far, such a body of men has not emerged among the establishment academics, who control most of the universities and Bible colleges, and who are wholly committed to defending the official narrative of Sinaiticus, since it supports the illogical Westcott and Hort theory.¹³⁸ As with the theory of evolution, anyone who departs from Darwin’s narrative will be ostracized; the same is true of the Critical Text. And so, for now, it falls to independent researchers to accomplish the challenging work of investigation.

THE DOUBTFUL HISTORY OF SINAITICUS

We find it interesting that even the British Library cannot fully commit to an official story about the discovery of the manuscript, because of the shady dealings of Tischendorf. His tale about how he first discovered the Codex in 1844 continues to inspire doubt among researchers even today. Following a politically correct method of tip-toeing around uncomfortable information, the library historians have communicated the following on the official Codex Sinaiticus website:

¹³⁷ Farrer, p. 57

¹³⁸ We are happy, however, to report that at least three PhDs (Cooper, Sorenson & Moorman) have written books agreeing with the general thesis that the Codex Sinaiticus is most likely a 19th century production. Nevertheless, because these men support the Received Text and are against the W&H theory, they are seen as outcasts among mainstream, establishment academics.

“... events concerning the history of the Codex Sinaiticus, from 1844 to this very day, are not fully known; hence, they are susceptible to widely divergent interpretations and recountings that are evaluated differently as to their form and essence.”

A masterful way of saying nothing and everything at the same time. If one reads the rest of what the British Library relates in terms of the manuscript's history, it is quite incredible. They have clearly adopted what can only be called a “politically correct” version of events, so that no one will be offended. They actually state that “the monks at Saint Catherine's brought to the attention of the visiting German biblical scholar, Constantine Tischendorf, 129 leaves of the Old Testament portion of the Codex.”¹³⁹ Of course, this is not at all what Tischendorf himself communicated. He clearly said that the monks at the monastery were casting pages of the allegedly invaluable manuscript into the fires. Here are Tischendorf's own words:

“In visiting the library of the monastery, in the month of May, 1844, I perceived in the middle of the great hall a large and wide basket full of old parchments; and the librarian, who was a man of information, told me that two heaps of papers like this, mouldered by time, had been already committed to the flames. What was my surprise to find amid this heap of papers a considerable number of sheets of a copy of the Old Testament in Greek, which seemed to me to be one of the most ancient I had ever seen. The authorities of the convent allowed me to possess myself of a third of these parchments, or about forty-five sheets, all the more readily as they were destined for the fire. But I could not get them to yield up possession of the remainder. The too lively satisfaction which I had displayed, had aroused their suspicions as to the value of this manuscript.... I enjoined on the monks to take religious care of all such remains which might fall in their way.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ *History of Codex Sinaiticus*, as found on the website at: <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/codex/history.aspx>

¹⁴⁰ *When Were Our Gospels Written? An Argument*, by Constantine Tischendorf, published by The American Tract Society, 1866, p. 28, 29

Now, we must say that the great majority of investigators who have looked into all the circumstances surrounding these events have come to the conclusion that Tischendorf was simply lying. The monks at Mt. Sinai argue that he slandered them, by suggesting that they were burning ancient manuscripts. After reading Tischendorf's original story aloud for an audience, Dr. Daniel B. Wallace (who is certainly a Critical Text supporter), said the following:

“Did Tischendorf fabricate his story of the monks burning leaves of manuscripts? Perhaps.... After all, what he took from Sinai would be perceived better if it looked like a rescue mission rather than a theft.”

He then goes on to suggest another option, which is that Tischendorf might have confused the manuscripts with firewood, which we consider to be completely unbelievable. What Tischendorf describes in his account is far too specific for him to have mistaken firewood for a collection of manuscript pages “mouldered by time.” In his final analysis, however, Dr. Wallace says that:

“... what has been presented in the West for many decades, that the original Indiana Jones rescued one of the most important biblical manuscripts from destruction just in the nick of time, *is almost surely a myth.*”¹⁴¹

The general consensus is that, one way or another, Tischendorf fabricated the details of his account.¹⁴² When he returned from his 1844 discovery, he published the original 43 leaves¹⁴³ under the name *Codex Frederico-Augustanus*. At first, he would not tell anyone where he found them; and years later, he came up with his story about monks throwing the pages into the fire. These details become important when investigating the claims of Simonides, since one of his chief supporters (Kallinikos) argued that the

¹⁴¹ See Dr. Daniel B. Wallace, *Tischendorf and the Discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus*, presentation at Liberty University (2013), emphasis added.

¹⁴² Hence, the narrative given on the British Library's website does not even mention Tischendorf's story about the monks throwing the pages into the fire. It appears they are tacitly admitting they do not trust his account.

¹⁴³ The account published by The American Tract Society says “45 sheets” which may be a misprint. Most sources agree that it was “43 leaves.”

German scholar actually *stole* the first pages, removing them from the monastery without permission. This is one of the reasons why the testimony of Kallinikos continues to be important; because it actually fits with the details that have been gathered about what really happened during that time. Again, and again, on key issues, we find that the story of Simonides is supported by the circumstantial evidence; while the story of Tischendorf and the paleographers, only becomes more and more suspicious.

A JESUIT FORGERY?

One of the central arguments presented in the PTS review is an attempt to refute the probability of a conspiracy involving Constantine Tischendorf and Rome, which we find to be quite strange, considering that men like John Kensit fully believed that the Anglo-Catholic movement was quite active and aggressive during this period. When we interviewed Dr. Ronald Cooke, a minister from Northern Ireland, and author of many works defending the history of Protestantism, he described Westcott and Hort as “Anglo-Catholics.”¹⁴⁴ It is surprising to us that Mr. McGrane seems to overlook such details, along with the other clear associations between the Critical Text scholars and the Vatican. Setting up what appears to be a strawman, he writes:

“The suggestion that Codex Sinaiticus is a nineteenth century forgery by Jesuits, and the attempts to prove such by means of conspiracy theories, are huge distractions from consideration of its real provenance ...”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ We consider Dr. Cooke’s testimony to be important, since he hails from Great Britain and was closely associated with Dr. Ian R.K. Paisley, who throughout his life was the great champion of Protestant heritage, and the founder of the European Institute of Protestant Studies. While it was considered politically incorrect to say so, the fight against the Received Text was really a battle against “the Protestant Scriptures” which empowered the great Reformation. The Romish leanings of Westcott and Hort were significant, and likely why Hort viewed the T.R. as “villainous.”

¹⁴⁵ McGrane, p. 2

In reality, the *provenance* of any manuscript begins with the origin and circumstances of its discovery, not with theories conjured up by handwriting analysts.¹⁴⁶ The fact that the MS. has no history prior to 1844 is one of the key elements that supports the story of Simonides. But take note of how McGrane presents the argument, as if the issue is whether or not the Codex is “a nineteenth century forgery by Jesuits.” To our knowledge, no one has suggested the MS. was created by the Jesuit order; the issue surrounds the claims of Simonides. Certainly, Rome had a strong interest in the discovery since it ultimately supported her prized Vaticanus. The question of Jesuitical deception, therefore, has more directly to do with whether or not Tischendorf was working in cooperation with the interests of Rome.

In *Tares Among the Wheat* we put forth the timeline of events, showing that Tischendorf’s first discovery happened shortly after he met in a private audience with the Pope in Rome, and also with Cardinal Mai, who had been working on the Codex Vaticanus¹⁴⁷ for decades. All these things are admitted in Tischendorf’s writings and are fully documented in our film. Yet they are carefully avoided in McGrane’s review.

Strangely, he makes no mention of the fact that Tischendorf was welcomed into the Vatican with open arms, that he was given a poem in Greek by a leading Cardinal of the time (Mezzofanti), that he had a “prolonged audience” with the Pope; and that he met with Cardinal Mai -- all right *before* he travelled to St. Catherine’s Monastery to make his first discovery of 1844. In other words, he meets with Cardinal Mai who has been

¹⁴⁶ The word *provenance* literally means “the place of origin or earliest known history of something” or “the beginning of something’s origin” (*Oxford Living Dictionaries*). The earliest known history of Codex Sinaiticus begins at St. Catherine’s Monastery at Mt. Sinai, Egypt, in 1844. In truth, all investigation into its provenance should begin there. The fact that it was introduced by Tischendorf who told a story that virtually no one believes, should immediately cast the work into suspicion.

¹⁴⁷ Part of McGrane’s review is spent attempting to refute the idea that Vaticanus was hidden away from the vast majority of scholars prior to its publication in 1858 and he gives the impression that easy access was permitted. Yet this contradicts statements made by leading scholars of the time, such as F.J.A. Hort, who wrote about “the great Vatican Codex, the readings of which were till recently made inaccessible by Papal jealousy.” (*Life & Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, p. 246, 247). It would appear that Rome only gave access to scholars she believed would somehow represent the work in a manner she agreed with, and that would serve her agenda; a practice she has continued into modern times. Writers David A. Yallop (author, *In God’s Name*) and John Cornwell (author, *Hitler’s Pope*) both testified that they were granted access to Vatican Archives because Rome believed they would give a favorable review of controversial issues as they pertained to the papacy.

working on the Vatican Codex for some thirty years; then when he leaves his new friends in Rome, he goes to St. Catherine's and finds the *one manuscript in the entire world* that will confirm the strange readings of Codex Vaticanus. We can further see how some would describe these events as "miraculous," while others, especially those who know the history of Rome, view them with a bit more suspicion.

THE POLITICAL ALLIES OF TISCHENDORF

We must also consider that Tischendorf's work was supported by truly powerful interests, within the remnant of what had been the Holy Roman Empire. Historically speaking, these were *not* the friends of the Bible, and had centuries of enmity towards Protestantism; a hatred that can be traced back to the Reformation, and one that was being stirred up again in the 19th century. From an article published in *Leipziger Zeitung* of May 31, 1866, Tischendorf provided a list of some of his political supporters:

"I had been commended in the most earnest manner by Guizot to the French Ambassador, Count Latour Maubourg; I was also favored with many letters of introduction from Prince John of Saxony to his personal friends of high rank; and in addition with a very flattering note from the Archbishop Affre, of Paris, directed to Gregory XVI. The latter, after a prolonged audience granted to me, took an ardent interest in my undertaking; Cardinal Mai received me with kind recognition; Cardinal Mezzofanti honored me with some Greek verses composed in my praise ..."¹⁴⁸

Tischendorf's list of helpers reads like an index of Rome's political pawns in 19th century Europe, leading all the way to the Pope himself. Francois Guizot was a prominent French statesman, along with Victor Latour Maubourg. France had been the historic enemy of the Protestant Huguenots; their Catholic monarchy persecuted them relentlessly, in the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, the Revocation of the Edict of

¹⁴⁸ *The Parchments of the Faith*, by George E. Merrill, American Baptist Publication Society (1894), p. 176

Nantes, and then outlawed the Bible for about 100 years prior to the French Revolution. Prince John of Saxony was the brother of Frederick Augustus II, the king of Saxony, and a Roman Catholic, for whom Tischendorf named the original 43 leaves *Codex Frederico-Augustanus*. Following the death of his brother in 1854, Prince John (also Catholic) became king, and later fought on the Austrian side of the Austro-Prussian war in the year 1866, which is of no small importance.

Austria represented the House of Habsburg¹⁴⁹ that traditionally controlled the office of the emperor for the Holy Roman Empire, and was hence, loyal to the papacy, while Prussia represented the interests of Protestantism in Germany. In other words, Tischendorf was politically aligned in favor of Rome, and hence, against the Protestant governments of Europe. This would partly explain why he received favorable treatment from Archbishop Affre, a very powerful Catholic leader, who provided him with the letter of recommendation for his audience with Pope Gregory XVI.¹⁵⁰ Notice that when he arrives at the Vatican, he admits to a meeting with Cardinal Mai, and says that another Cardinal, Giuseppe Mezzofanti, who was a celebrated linguist, “honored” him with a poem written in Greek, apparently praising him. Why would the powers in Rome be so welcoming to a Protestant scholar? Surely, they knew he had been financed by Catholic monarchs, who would have had a political interest in undermining what were called the “Protestant Scriptures,” which were all derived from the Textus Receptus.

We must remember that, historically, once Erasmus produced his Greek New Testament, which is the foundation for the Received Text, the work was taken by Luther who then produced a German translation, and then by William Tyndale, who produced

¹⁴⁹ Even in the 20th century, when Dr. Ian Paisley denounced Pope John Paul II as “Antichrist” in 1988 at the European Parliament, he was assaulted by several members, who pushed him out of the room. Paisley said: “There is no difference between Europe today and Europe in Reformation times.... The Emperor Charles, Head of the Holy Roman Empire. Who was he? He was a Habsburg. It is interesting to note that one of the men who attacked me is the last of the Habsburgs -- Otto Habsburg, the Pretender to the Crown of Austria and Hungary. I said to myself, ‘The Habsburgs are still lusting for Protestant blood. They are still the same as they were in the days of Luther.’” (Dr. Ian Paisley, as quoted in *The Gilded Chalet*, by Padraig Rooney, 2016)

¹⁵⁰ It is worth noting that, while in Paris, Tischendorf produced a parallel bible (half in Greek, half in Latin) to appease the interests of Catholics; and dedicated the work to Archbishop Affre, who appears to have rewarded Tischendorf with his favor.

the first English translation derived from the original Greek. From there, the great Reformation was empowered, once the common people were able to behold the Word of God with their own eyes, and in their own language. As a result, most of the countries of Western Europe turned away from the Pope, who they denounced as the Antichrist, and adopted Reformed Protestantism. The papacy has never forgotten this, and it was this conflict that was foremost in the hearts and minds of leaders of 19th century Europe. It is nearly impossible to imagine that they had some disinterested view of the political issues pertaining to the Bible.

About his 1843 trip to Rome, Tischendorf also wrote:

“... I had to content myself with six hours for a hasty examination of the Codex Vaticanus and the transcription in *fac simile* of a few lines.”¹⁵¹

The above quote reveals that Tischendorf not only met with Cardinal Mai, who had been working on the Vatican MS. for many years, but that he was permitted to see the work in person, prior to his arrival at St. Catherine’s in 1844. In other words, he knew from first-hand experience what the Vaticanus looked like, in terms of its general appearance and the key readings of the text. As such, Tischendorf did not *coincidentally* discover a similar text; he was familiar with the general character of the Vatican text beforehand. He would also likely have made notes, which could have been employed for reference when searching out other majuscules. Of course, these details become of great importance when exploring the thesis that Tischendorf was working with Rome to supplant the Received Text, by engineering a contrived “manuscript family” for the Codex Vaticanus, which would then be used by Westcott and Hort. The reader should consider that these key players in the plot to change the Bible, were not detached personalities who built upon each other’s work from a distance. They were, in fact, friends who knew each other and communicated for years prior to the Revision of 1881.

¹⁵¹ *The Parchments of the Faith*, by George E. Merrill, American Baptist Publication Society (1894), p. 176

In a letter to the Rev. John Ellerton on April 19, 1853, Hort wrote of a meeting he had just had with Westcott, in which they discussed the following:

“He and I are going to edit a Greek text of the N.T. some two or three years hence, if possible. Lachmann and Tischendorf will supply rich materials, but not nearly enough ... Our object is to supply clergymen generally, schools, etc., with a portable Gk. Test., which shall not be disfigured with Byzantine corruptions.”¹⁵²

The Byzantine Greek texts are the very foundation of the *Textus Receptus*, as virtually any bible scholar knows. Hort’s letter demonstrates that his plan with Westcott to change the Bible, began as early as 1853, at least six years before Tischendorf’s greater discovery of Codex Sinaiticus. His reference to Lachmann must have been in reference to whatever works he completed prior to his death in 1851. Yet Tischendorf was clearly a part of the plan and take note that Hort expected him to supply “materials” for the new text. Furthermore, creating a new Greek text was said to be the ambition of Tischendorf himself back in the 1840’s when he began his travels:

“Tischendorf in 1844 at the age of twenty-nine, he outlined his life’s scholarly work ... ‘collect the few manuscripts of the text of the New Testament written before the tenth century and lying dispersed through the libraries of Europe ... a text will at length be formed upon the strictest scientific principles; a text that will approach as closely as possible to the very letter as it proceeded from the hands of the Apostles.’”¹⁵³

We find later evidence in his testimony of 1866 when he wrote that the “original text of the Apostles’ writings” had been copied and recopied over the centuries, to such an extent that the Christian world was supposedly “in painful uncertainty as to what the Apostles had actually written.”

¹⁵² *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, Vol. 1, p. 250

¹⁵³ *Studies on the Text of the New Testament and Early Christianity*, edited by Daniel Gurtner, Juan Hernandez, Jr., Paul Foster, p. 16

Tischendorf's entire career operated on a subversive presupposition, which was the false problem that the Church did not really have an accurate version of Scripture. He then gives the solution, which was to abolish the traditional text of the Bible and replace it with a new Greek text.¹⁵⁴ Of course, this new text would be based on the corrupt materials he would gather and publish. He wrote that:

“Learned men have again and again attempted to clear the sacred text from these extraneous elements. But we have at last hit upon a better plan than this, which is to set aside this *textus receptus* altogether, and to construct a fresh text, derived immediately from the most ancient and authoritative sources.”¹⁵⁵

It was Tischendorf who greatly influenced the “older is better” doctrine of thinking that an older manuscript will somehow be closer to the original text.¹⁵⁶ That argument, of course, has many problems, not the least of which is that in the early centuries, it is well recorded by Irenaeus and others that heretical groups, such as the Gnostics, deliberately corrupted New Testament writings. Since this was happening in the second century, for example, if one discovered a manuscript from that era, it would be older, but not necessarily better. Its origin (not just its date of creation) would have everything to do with the quality of the text. If the MS. was created by a heretic, it would likely have the heretic's corruptions in it. This undeniable circumstance is typically brushed aside by modern critics, who blindly embrace manuscripts and papyri, focusing on their age, while exercising little discernment as to their origin.

¹⁵⁴ To relate this corrupt thinking to modern times, consider that the Western world is currently undermined by radical left-wing socialists, whose method is to introduce the false problem that Christian society is filled with unjust standards of bigotry and inequality. The only solution, they argue, is to remove the Christian standard (i.e. liberty) and replace it with the totalitarian standard of Socialism.

¹⁵⁵ *When Were Our Gospels Written: An Argument* by Constantine Tischendorf, Translated and published by the Religious Tract Society in London, 1866 (p. 21)

¹⁵⁶ Tischendorf wrote: “... I proposed to collect together all the Greek manuscripts which we possess, which are of a thousand years' antiquity ... so as to exhibit in a way never done before, when and how the different manuscripts had been written. In this way we should be better able to understand why one manuscript is to be referred to the fourth century, another to the fifth, and a third to the eighth, although they had no dates attached to determine when they were written.” (*When Were Our Gospels Written*, pp. 23, 24)

As for Tischendorf, if one reads his writings, it becomes clear that his ambitions to alter the traditional text of Scripture began back in the 1840's and were supported by Catholic political interests from the beginning.

VATICANUS & SINAITICUS

To understand the significance of the Codex Sinaiticus, and its relationship to Codex Vaticanus, we must understand how manuscripts are evaluated by the critics. If a certain manuscript appears that has strange and unique elements to it, in terms of its readings or appearance, it will typically be dismissed as either spurious, or a forgery, or an anomaly of some kind; and will have no scholastic authority because it stands *alone*. Then, if a few years later, another MS. is recovered somewhere, that has the same strange, unique elements, scholars will claim to have a *co-witness*. The co-witness will essentially confirm the odd readings and characteristics of the previous work. A good example is what happened with the Mt. Athos copy of the Shepherd of Hermas presented by Simonides in 1855-56. It was initially declared to be a forgery by Tischendorf, who said it was a Medieval retranslation; until three years later, once he recovered another copy of the Shepherd (which was part of Codex Sinaiticus), with the same qualities to it, and thus had found a co-witness, which then compelled him to change his view of the Mt. Athos copy, declaring it to be *genuine*. Whether or not this is an accurate method of determining what is genuine or not, is a secondary issue; but in short, that is how codices are handled in the world of textual criticism.

As such, the situation with Codex Vaticanus prior to the discovery of Sinaiticus was that the Vatican had a manuscript with strange and unique characteristics; chiefly, that it contained the *deliberate* omission of the last twelve verses of the Gospel of Mark. No other Greek manuscript from antiquity had the same feature. While other specifics and scribal habits are certainly discussed by the critics, in reality, this was the number one issue at hand. Because of this, the Vaticanus needed a co-witness in order to be validated in the academic world.

Modern paleographer, Professor J. Neville Birdsall, worked with scholars such as Dr. Bruce Metzger (considered by many to have been the leading New Testament critic of the 20th century) and some of those at the British Library today. He was considered an expert on the subject of Codex Vaticanus, and his commentary on the MS. can be found in a work called, *The Bible as Book: The Transmission of the Greek Text*. When speaking about the history of the MS., he said:

“Isolated and scarcely studied as Codex Vaticanus remained between the fifteenth century and the mid-nineteenth century, it made little impact on the theory and analysis of the data of New Testament manuscripts. Nor was it, I consider, the printing of its text or the facsimile reproduction alone that made it spring into the prominence that it has held ever since. **It was the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus in the same period** that enabled scholars to perceive the distinctive form of text that these two majuscules presented distinctively and outstandingly, primarily by reason of their greater age ...”¹⁵⁷

Take note that this leading paleographer, highly respected among Critical Text adherents, openly admits that Vaticanus had no impact until after the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus. In other words, the Pope’s Bible was not embraced by the scholarly, academic world, which was primarily made up of Protestants. Consider that at this point in history, most Catholics were still forbidden by Rome from reading the Bible.¹⁵⁸ Certainly, there were Catholic scholars, like J.L. Hug, who were influential, but the vast majority of those who cared anything about the Scriptures were of the Protestant faith. We also learn from Professor Birdsall that:

¹⁵⁷ *The Bible as Book: The Transmission of the Greek Text*, edited by Scot McKendrick & Orlaith O’Sullivan, p. 35

¹⁵⁸ For historic reference, see *The Burning of the Bibles: Defence of the Protestant Version of the Scriptures Against the Attacks of Popish Apologists* (1843) by John Dowling, who documents how Catholic priests in Champlain, New York were still burning Bibles into the 19th century. In this work, Dowling writes that “Popery condemns the circulation of any translation of the Scriptures, in the vulgar tongue, as productive of ‘more harm than good.’”

“In short, we cannot be certain of the exact date nor the place of origin of Codex Vaticanus, nor, in spite of scholarly efforts, can its history before the fifteenth century be traced.”¹⁵⁹

Like Sinaiticus, the Vatican codex has no ancient history,¹⁶⁰ beyond that which the paleographers have determined in their imaginations.¹⁶¹ Birdsall goes on to relate how the sudden appearance of Codex Sinaiticus provided the necessary confirmation to a predetermined theory about an “Alexandrian family” of manuscripts, and says:

“Once this text was more clearly perceived, its foil was to hand in the ‘Western text,’ already identified as an entity ... So the stage was set ...”¹⁶²

Yes, the stage was then set to alter the text of the New Testament, something that Tischendorf, Westcott, Hort, and Tregelles had been discussing for years. Their dogmatic defense of the Sinai manuscript was not without purpose; the evidence of their private correspondence before, during, and after the “discovery” reveals the scheme they had in mind. This fact alone does not prove the story of Simonides, one way or the other; yet it demonstrates that the men who opposed his claims were motivated by something other than what was shown to the rest of the world, and that they were not disinterested

¹⁵⁹ McKendrick & O’Sullivan, p. 34

¹⁶⁰ In the 16th century, Erasmus believed that Vaticanus was a corrupted text, engineered by “the Ecumenical Council of Ferrara and Florence (1438-45) ... adapting the Greek manuscripts to the Latin ...” This ecumenical gathering was just a few decades prior to 1475 when it was first entered into the Vatican Library. It has no other known history. Erasmus wrote: “... certain Greek manuscripts of the New Testament have been corrected in agreement with those of the Latin Christians. This was done at the time of the reunion of the Greeks and the Roman church.... It was thought that this ... (adaptation of the Greek biblical manuscripts to the Latin) would contribute to the strengthening of unity. We too came across a manuscript of this nature, and it is said that such a manuscript is still preserved in the papal library ... written in majuscule characters.” (See: *Erasmus & the Comma Johanneum*, by H.J. De Jonge). As De Jonge relates, it is generally agreed that the MS. in question was Codex Vaticanus.

¹⁶¹ At the end of his diatribe against the story of Simonides, McGrane admits to as much in his review, citing the “paleographers,” Benjamin H. Cowper and Sir Frederick Madden, with only their “expert” opinion to rely upon (see pp. 111-112 where McGrane asserts that “B.H. Cowper was well qualified to know what he was talking about ...”) In the absence of real proof, he relies upon the so-called qualifications of experts. The reader should consider that it was the *expert scholars in England* that pronounced Darwinism to be true during this same time period; both Westcott & Hort embraced the theory of evolution. Also consider that three PhDs have thus far written books in agreement with the thesis that Sinaiticus was a 19th century work; yet McGrane dismisses them as “conspiracy theorists” because their opinion disagrees with his own. In other words, experts are only *true* experts if they agree with what the establishment academics wish to believe.

¹⁶² McKendrick & O’Sullivan, p. 36

parties, objectively analyzing scientific data. Rather, they were a group of partisans who had predetermined the fate of the Received Text, which was called “vile” by Dr. Hort.¹⁶³ It would be Hort and Tischendorf that chiefly designed the Critical Text theory that would be adopted by the conclusion of the Revision Committee of 1881. While it is Westcott and Hort who are considered the leading engineers, it is important to remember that their work was based on the efforts of Tischendorf, who had been developing the catalog of dated MSS. for decades beforehand, who is said to have published the *only accurate version* of Codex Vaticanus,¹⁶⁴ and who discovered the Codex Sinaiticus.

SIMONIDES, THE BRILLIANT FORGER?

It is important to confront the chief argument made by those who defend the authenticity of Sinaiticus and reject the claims of Constantine Simonides. Below is a quote given by McGrane in his review that demonstrates the typical perspective of those who opposed him:

“Simonides, the notorious Greek manuscript forger ... had a most remarkable career, and as a forger ... he stands without an equal.... Several of the greatest scholars of Europe were, indeed, deceived by the forgeries of this astute Greek.”¹⁶⁵

One of the most obvious elephants in the room, is the fact that if Constantine Simonides was, in fact, the brilliant forger that he is so often said to be, this does little to help the arguments in favor of Sinaiticus being an ancient text. It only means that

¹⁶³ In his letters, Hort wrote: “Think of that vile *Textus Receptus*, leaning entirely on late MSS.; it is a blessing there are such early ones ...” Earlier in this same letter, he makes reference to “the villainous *Textus Receptus*.” (*Life & Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort, Vol. I*, p. 211)

¹⁶⁴ See: *Studies on the Text of the New Testament and Early Christianity*, edited by Daniel Gurtner, Juan Hernandez, Jr., Paul Foster; the editors write: “Tischendorf would remedy 350 years of inaccuracy in knowledge of Codex B when, in 1866, he was granted forty-two working hours with the Codex, which enabled him to publish his highly accurate edition in 1867 ...” In other words, virtually any knowledge about Vaticanus was channeled through the work of Tischendorf.

¹⁶⁵ Originally from *The Times*, October 18, 1890; a longer version of this quote is presented by Kevin McGrane in his review, p. 5

Simonides (who duped experts all over Europe), was very able to create a Codex that had the appearance of being ancient. Also consider that the scholars in question were often wrong, contradicted each other, and simply cannot be trusted. Consider this analysis of the Uranius, along with the Shepherd of Hermas back in the 19th century:

“At Leipzig, Simonides sold a copy of Hermas the Shepherd, a Christian work of the first century, hitherto known only in a Latin translation. It was published by Prof. Dindorf and Prof Anger; and is no doubt a forgery... The last achievement was Uranius. The MS., a palimpsest, was sent from Leipzig, where Simonides was staying, through Prof. Dindorf, to Berlin. With their eyes open, the members of the Academy declared that the MS. was genuine: and the Minister of Public Instruction had been ordered by the King to buy it for 5,000 thalers.... When the MS. was again examined by Prof. Ehrenberg, he discovered, by means of his powerful microscope, that, wherever the writing of the so-called palimpsest was crossed by the modern writing, the ink of the old letters overlaid the ink of the more recent works. This settled the controversy.”¹⁶⁶

The first issue we must note is that Simonides’ copy of the Shepherd of Hermas was *not* a forgery, at least according to the later opinion of Tischendorf and virtually all the scholars of the 19th century (including Scrivener, Donaldson, Schaff) and then James Farrer in the 20th century. Yet notice that the editor of this publication writes that it was “no doubt a forgery.” But once a matching copy of the Shepherd was discovered as part of Codex Sinaiticus, the academic world changed its mind. Next, look at all the flip flopping they engage in over Uranius. We are told that the members of the “Academy” with their “eyes open” declared it to be genuine. Then they changed their mind later on. Why? Because someone else argued that the bottom layer of ink in the palimpsest encroached upon the upper layer of writing.¹⁶⁷ Apparently, this could only be seen by a powerful microscope, so brilliant was the scribe’s skill in producing such a work. But we have cause to wonder: if someone else examined it, would they come to a different

¹⁶⁶ *Principa Typographica*, Vol. 2, by Samuel Leigh Sotheby, pp. 135, 136

¹⁶⁷ As stated elsewhere, a *palimpsest* is a manuscript that had previously been written on, but then the parchment was used again by a later scribe, who writes on top of the original, creating two layers of text.

conclusion?¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, if we accept that Simonides created such an ingeniously deceptive work, it only demonstrates his ability to have engineered Sinaiticus.

Some may argue that while Uranius deceived a whole collection of scholars, including prominent men like Henry Deane,¹⁶⁹ they were eventually able to figure it out. But were they? Did they really figure it out? Or just yield to a new opinion? Were they being pressured by their peers to denounce the work in order to discredit Simonides? It is interesting that the only *genuine* works that Simonides presented were said to be those that rescued the reputations of Tischendorf and F. Madden at the British Library.¹⁷⁰ As to the argument that “modern scientific methods” have settled the issue, consider that experts are still haggling over the dating of the Shroud of Turin. The scientific opinions about when it was created often contradict each other by a thousand years or so.¹⁷¹ Also consider that the *Hitler Diaries* were originally declared to be “authentic” by the handwriting experts (i.e. paleographers), only to be later exposed as a forgery. The reality is that the practice of analyzing manuscripts and artifacts is simply not an exact science. Anyone who thinks otherwise is either misinformed, or delusional. As the early 20th century scholar A.E. Housman wrote:

“... textual criticism is not a branch of mathematics, nor indeed an exact science at all. It deals with a matter not rigid and constant, like lines and numbers, but fluid and variable; namely the frailties and aberrations of the human mind, and its subordinate servants, the human fingers. It therefore is not susceptible of hard-and-fast rules. It

¹⁶⁸ Some of the text of another palimpsest, *Codex Climaci Rescriptus* seems to show areas where the original layer of tan or brownish ink cuts into the upper layer of black ink. However, this may be only because the black ink has partly faded or chipped away over time. Because the location of the Uranius MS. is today unknown, scholars are not able to examine it further.

¹⁶⁹ Deane gave “his firm statement of its authenticity in 1863, to a complete reversal of this position -- in the following year” (Source: *Following the trail of Simonides to the State Library of Victoria*, by Malcolm Choat)

¹⁷⁰ Tischendorf seems to have conveniently changed his view of the Mt. Athos *Shepherd of Hermas* (which he had denounced as a mediaeval retranslation), knowing that its similarity to the copy he found in Cod. Sinaiticus could not be denied; also, F. Madden at the British Museum declared that the materials he purchased from Simonides were *genuine* when his judgment was called in to question for purchasing them.

¹⁷¹ While we agree with Calvin’s assessment that the Shroud is a forgery, the radiocarbon dating vs. vibrational spectroscopy place the artifact anywhere from the 4th century to the 14th century.

would be much easier if it were; and that is why people try to pretend that it is, or at least behave as if they thought so.”¹⁷²

Housman perfectly describes the chief problem with those who reject the claims of Simonides, and who favor of the idea of the antiquity of the Sinai codex. They typically argue from the perspective that the analysis provided by textual critics and paleographers is somehow mathematically correct, and therefore proves that Simonides was lying. However, these academic speculators (both past and present) do not possess the precise abilities that they claim. Consider the following series of quotes from modern scholars, some of whom are more prominent than others; yet they all agree on the general character of paleographical analysis:

“Care must be taken with the results of paleography ... It is not an exact science, and all its judgments are approximate ...”¹⁷³

“Paleography is not an exact science. That is where the paleographer’s ‘feel’ comes in. For Andre Lemaire, who was the first to study the James ossuary inscription, this instinctive feeling was important. He ‘felt at home with it,’ he said. It seemed right.”¹⁷⁴

“... the dating of the letter rests primarily on the style of its handwriting. However, paleographical dating is based largely on personal intuition and subjective judgment and is not an exact science.”¹⁷⁵

“Expert paleographers often disagree over a given item by as much as a century or more. It’s never wise to rest much on one judgment ...”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² *The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism*, by A.E. Housman, 1921

¹⁷³ *The Encyclopedia of New Testament Textual Criticism*, by Robert B. Waltz, p. 769

¹⁷⁴ *Brother of Jesus*, by Hershel Shanks, Ben Witherington, III, p. 33

¹⁷⁵ *Lettered Christians: Christians, Letters, and Late Antique Oxyrhynchus*, by Lincoln H. Blumell, p. 21

¹⁷⁶ *Fragments of Mark’s Gospel May Date to 1st Century*, by John Farrell, quoting Larry Hurtado, published in *Forbes* (2012)

“Paleography is the art of analyzing and reading handwriting. Some would call it a science, and to a degree it has acquired a veneer of scientific style, classification and ordering, but ultimately it involves one human individual attempting to understand the unique efforts at communication of another. This is fundamentally an art, with some scientific props.”¹⁷⁷

As we can see, the consistent understanding is that paleography is simply not an exact science, and therefore, cannot be considered an absolute method of determining either the date, or the authenticity of any work. However, the so-called “world’s oldest Bible” is propped up by nothing else.

Right now, what protects the Codex Sinaiticus and prevents it from being subjected to more in-depth investigation in order to determine its authenticity, is the fact that it became a necessary component, one of the two great pillars, alongside Vaticanus, of the Westcott and Hort theory that is the heart and foundation of modern textual criticism. If *Aleph* is a fraud, then virtually all the works of Westcott, Hort, Nestle, Aland, Metzger and the devoted academics who have greatly admired them, along with the countless books and essays that have been written for generations, will end up in the great dustbin of history, alongside the Donation of Constantine and the Piltdown Man. This is why James White and his followers became unhinged years ago, after the release of *Tares*, demanding a public debate to confront the issue.

Because the same 19th century scholars who pronounced it genuine, had an agenda to use it to create a new Greek text, it had to be impossible that the never-before-seen Codex could ever be called into question. We believe this is the reason why they fought so hard against Simonides, refused to follow any logical course of investigation, and rabidly denounced him again and again, circulating the myth that everything he touched was nothing but forgery, fakes and lies. But as men like James Donaldson and James Farrer tell us, it was only the *paleographers* (with their highly doubtful abilities) that provided the arguments in favor of Tischendorf. This fact should never escape the

¹⁷⁷ *What is Paleography?* by Dr. Dianne Tillotson

notice of sincere researchers into the controversy. It is only handwriting analysts who provide any “evidence” of the claimed authenticity of Codex Sinaiticus.

WHY THIS CONTROVERSY MATTERS

If you are a Christian and you have doubts about your Bible, about whether or not you can trust the last twelve verses of Mark, or the story of the woman who was taken in adultery (John chapter 8); or whether or not Jesus said, “Father forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34); always remember that the men who call these verses, and many others, into question, do so, based on nothing more than their dubious claims of being able to interpret what ancient scribes “must have been thinking” when they recorded certain variants in some of the manuscripts. The fact that 95% of the biblical evidence from antiquity disagrees with their assertions is often cast aside, in favor of the so-called *expertise* of a paleographer or textual critic. But the reality is that these critics claim to know things that it is impossible for them to know, and as believers, our responsibility before God and our Lord Jesus Christ, is to avoid being deceived by them, or by those who accept their unreasonable claims (Matthew 24:4).

We have stated from the beginning, and will continue to assert, that we do not ask anyone to believe our work of itself; but to test the information and investigate it. Much has been swept under the rug of history, so to speak. While textual critics may claim to be objective, if one studies them carefully, it becomes clear that they are, in practice, ruthless partisans who abandoned sober minded thinking long ago.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ Perhaps the most biased, partisan comment found in modern study Bibles is the claim that Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are the “earliest and most reliable manuscripts.” Such commentary ignores the many scholars, from the time of Dean John Burgon forward, who called these codices the most corrupt and untrustworthy in history. It also ignores the suspicion of Erasmus that Vaticanus was a forgery created at the Council of Florence; and obviously omits the extensive claims of Simonides to have authored Sinaiticus. An *objective* academic approach would be certain to include the opposition, even in disagreement. Yet few modern Bible colleges will give the real history of these MSS., but rather, communicate paleographical theories about them, as if they are scientific fact.

Dean John Burgon confronted what we would today call the left-wing partisan nature of the Westcott and Hort footnotes. He said:

“It is the gross one-sidedness, the patent unfairness, in a critical point of view, of this work, (which professes to be nothing else but a *Revision of the English Version of* 1611,) -- which chiefly shocks and offends us... is it reasonable (we ask) to choke up our English margin, -- to create perplexity and to insinuate doubt?”¹⁷⁹

While the Geneva Bible, for example, contained many footnotes in the margins, they were aimed at helping the reader to comprehend the text more fully. In contrast, Burgon argued that the 1881 *Revision* was aimed at pointing out differences among manuscripts in such a way that would only inspire doubt:

“For, the ill-advised practice of recording, in the margin of an English Bible, certain of the blunders -- (such things cannot by any stretch of courtesy be styled ‘Various Readings’) -- which disfigure ‘some’ or ‘many’ ‘ancient authorities,’ can only result in hopelessly unsettling the faith of millions.”¹⁸⁰

What Burgon was basically saying is that the practice of writing that *some* or *many* “ancient authorities” contain variant readings or omissions, was very misleading in the footnotes of the Revision. In his view, as an expert on works of antiquity, the obvious *blunders* of ancient scribes were being presented as “various readings” which most scholars knew were just mistakes, or else came from manuscripts that could not be taken seriously. In reality, the editors were not providing the full context of the works in question but were deceptively editing their footnotes in such a way as to inspire doubt, while not truly educating the reader. This practice continues today, as modern critics repeatedly refer to Sinaiticus and Vaticanus as “older” and “better” manuscripts, while failing to provide believers with the full context of their respective histories, and the considerable questions surrounding them.

¹⁷⁹ *The Revision Revised*, by Dean John W. Burgon, p. 116

¹⁸⁰ Burgon, p. 115

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR ON THE PAGE COLORING CONTROVERSY IN THE CODEX SINAITICUS

Much of the argument in the PTS review against the overall thesis centers on the assertions made concerning the color of certain pages in the Codex. Some (including Dr. Cooper) have argued that because some pages are lighter and others darker, this was somehow proof of tampering. When the idea was first introduced to me by Steven Avery several years ago, I cautioned him about drawing conclusions from images found on the internet, because the way an image looks on a computer screen is different from how it will appear in person.

As an independent filmmaker, I do most of my own lighting and camera work. In the dramatizations used in our films with actors, props, etc., I often use lighting and different colored gels to make parchment paper look older or more ancient, because we often cover topics from centuries past. Based on my own experience, I know that the appearance and color of any paper will change with the lighting conditions. As long as researchers are relying on internet photos alone, I truly do not believe fully adequate conclusions can be reached one way or the other.

However, we can say that having communicated directly with David Daniels, author of the book, *Is The World's Oldest Bible a Fake?* he revealed that the pages he used in order to draw his conclusions, were downloaded directly from the official Codex Sinaiticus website. This fact is important, since Mr. McGrane published an entirely separate essay attempting to refute the assertions of Mr. Daniels. When some 822 pages are all shown together (as Daniels demonstrates in his online video), it is clear that in their appearance, some of the pages are yellowed, while others are much lighter, more “white” looking.

The difference in page coloring becomes yet one more compelling detail when we examine the documented history of the Codex. There are quotes describing parts of the

MS. as being made of “white parchment” by Uspensky in 1845, also described as “wonderfully fine snow-white parchment” by Ernst von Dobschutz in 1910. Such quotes have been compared with others, such as F.H.A. Scrivener in 1864, who wrote of “The vellum leaves, now almost yellow in colour ...” to being described as “quite yellow with age” by James A. Bastow in 1872. Other research has raised legitimate questions about the differences since the accusation that someone tampered with the Codex dates back to the Simonides controversy. It was Kallinikos who alleged that certain pages had been altered, changing the appearance of the manuscript:

“I know too, still further, that the same Codex was cleaned, with a solution of herbs, on the theory that the skins might be cleaned, *but, in fact, that the writing might be changed, as it was, to a sort of yellow colour.*”¹⁸¹

So we have three historic witnesses for the differences in page coloring in the Codex Sinaiticus, each revealing certain details: 1) Kallinikos, who first warned that the Codex had been tampered with, to change it to a “yellow” color; 2) Critical scholars who described some of the pages as yellow, while others called them white; and 3) the photographic images of the leaves, as shown by the British Library, where *most* of the pages have a yellowed look to them, a smaller portion being white. If we put these things together, it would appear that the Codex was tampered with, just as Kallinikos testified, but that whoever did the tampering failed to apply an equal treatment to all of the pages, which resulted in some of them retaining their lighter appearance.

As such, we agree that the physical characteristics of the manuscript, including its coloring, should be more fully investigated. As with other areas of this complex and yet unresolved mystery, there is a substantial amount of circumstantial evidence that the testimonies given by Simonides and Kallinikos were, in fact, true.

¹⁸¹ *The Literary Churchman*, December 16, 1862 (italics in the original); also see *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, by J.K. Elliott, pp. 77, 78). Special thanks to Steven Avery for the collection of quotes on color differences in the Codex.

The approach taken by the defenders of Codex Sinaiticus that “everything Simonides presented was a forgery” and “everything he ever said was a lie” is simply unacceptable; it is the instrument of what can only be called partisan propaganda. From the beginning, denouncing Simonides as universally dishonest, has been used by the protectors of the manuscript to avoid facing the facts and details that oppose what they want to believe.

MORE EXAMPLES OF ERRONEOUS STATEMENTS

Throughout the PTS review, examples of provably false assertions go on and on. Unfortunately, the average reader will be persuaded by seeing many footnotes in the work, but they should be careful to examine those footnotes. McGrane often gives citations that have nothing to do with his arguments, and frequently makes unsupported declarations or misleading statements. At one point, he tells us that:

“Notices had gone out in the 1840 and 1850s to universities, museums and libraries all over Europe warning them to beware of Simonides. During those years the vast majority of documents rejected as forgeries were non-religious classical works, and thus his long-time reputation as a forger was, until 1860, unrelated to biblical material.”¹⁸²

Elsewhere in his review, McGrane goes to great lengths to argue that in 1840 Simonides was too young and immature to have created Codex Sinaiticus; yet somehow, he had developed a reputation as a brilliant forger that people needed to watch out for? Of course, he provides no footnote and seems to be relying upon the dubious letters that arrived at the climax of 1863, as noted earlier. Also, the above argument suggests that Simonides had no dealings with *biblical* manuscripts until the year 1860, which is when he began making claims about the Codex; yet the assertion is problematic.

¹⁸² McGrane, p. 128

According to the testimony of Sir Frederick Madden, the keeper of manuscripts at the British Museum, he met with Simonides in February of 1853, at which time he purchased a copy of the Four Gospels, the Epistles of Paul, James and Peter, and the Gospel of John.¹⁸³ Obviously, this happened before 1860. There is also the fact that Simonides presented the Shepherd of Hermas at the University of Leipzig in 1855; but we cannot press this issue too far, since Hermas is generally considered apocryphal today and arguably outside what should be called *biblical material*. In this category, we might also reference the Epistle of Barnabas, published by Simonides in 1843. Mr. McGrane rejects this work and its date as a complete forgery; but as we have shown, his reasoning is flawed. Nevertheless, both works were contained in the New Testament portion of Codex Sinaiticus.

We must also mention that Sir F. Madden claimed that the New Testament materials that he purchased (for 46 pounds sterling, no less) were in fact *genuine*. Of course, it is difficult to tell if Madden really believed they were genuine at this point, or if he was simply trying to rescue his reputation, since his judgment had been called into question. It was published in the newspapers that he had purchased forgeries from the wily Greek on behalf of the British Museum. Madden attempted to refute the claim; but the explanation he gives offers important insight into the discernment powers of those who were considered the leading experts of the time. Madden wrote:

“I first saw Simonides, who was introduced to me by the late Mr. William Burckhard Barker ... for the purpose of disposing of some ancient Greek manuscripts in his possession. These MSS. were placed before me ... [he names them] ... The whole of the above, after a brief but very careful (and, to myself, quite conclusive) examination, I unhesitatingly rejected as modern forgeries. Indeed, the palpable fraud displayed on some of them did not require any extraordinary exertion of scholarship ...”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, by J.K. Elliot, p. 166

¹⁸⁴ *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, by J.K. Elliot, p. 165

So, in the first part of Madden's testimony, he says he was quite easily able to see through the forgeries of the Greek, calling it "palpable fraud." But then he goes on, revealing a curious twist:

"... Mr. Barker acted throughout as the interpreter; and on his informing the Greek that I did not think the manuscripts were genuine, his features exhibited no change whatever, nor did he attempt any sort of explanation. This impassive or astute character of the man was put to a stronger trial; for, before he left me, he applied for a ticket of admission to the Reading Room, and on my asking Mr. Barker if he would give the usual recommendation required on such an occasion, he at once refused, adding, in plain English, that he believed Simonides to be a great scoundrel. This was uttered to his face, without causing the slightest emotion on the part of the Greek; yet I had subsequent reason to believe that Simonides knew sufficient English to understand what was said!¹⁸⁵

Having returned the scrolls to him, I then inquired if he had any other Greek manuscripts ... He replied in the affirmative; and on the following day he again (accompanied by Mr. Barker) called on me, with several *genuine* Greek biblical and other manuscripts, on vellum ... [he names them] and they were purchased accordingly, on my recommendation, on the 12th of March 1853."¹⁸⁶

Now we have to wonder about this testimony. Madden tells us that Simonides tried to sell him some blatant forgeries, and as a result, his interpreter calls him a "great scoundrel," clearly implying that he believed Simonides was a con-artist. In fact, they distrust him so much that they refuse to give him access to the Reading Room. But then, Madden says, "Have you got any more manuscripts I might buy?" Why would he have any interest in materials from him at that point? It makes us wonder if Mr. Madden did

¹⁸⁵ This detail about Simonides' character is repeated elsewhere. When opposed by his adversaries, he was called unflappable, and this quality often seemed to offend others. His general demeanor was that he knew more about ancient works than scholars in the West, and that they simply operated with an inferior understanding. As *The London Review* wrote: "The few believers in Simonides represented him as a man whose towering genius had aroused the envy, alike of Grecian professors, German students, and English librarians, and banded them together in a conspiracy to crush him; while he, wrapped in his virtue, and sublimely confident in his innocence, disdained to give the explanations which would have rendered futile their plots and calumnies." (*The London Review and Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, Art & Society*, Volume 5 (Dec. 20, 1862), p. 538

¹⁸⁶ *Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, by J.K. Elliot, pp. 165, 166 (emphasis added)

not somehow adjust the details of what really happened in an attempt to make himself look better; as if he were attempting to claim that he was not really taken in by Simonides and recognized his pretensions. But of course, he could not avoid admitting that he had purchased materials from him, because that was a matter of record. It is also worth noting that Mr. Barker was deceased by the time this story was published in 1856, and therefore, unavailable to comment.

GENESIS TWENTY-FOUR

Among the special markings placed by Simonides in the Codex, were markings he claimed to have placed in the book of Genesis. Mr. McGrane seizes upon this idea and attempts to use it as another weapon against Simonides; however, his handling of the information only backfires, as in other areas. He writes:

“With cunning psychology, Simonides often provided intricate details knowing that liars are suspected when vague ... But the accomplished liar who provides precise details runs a greater risk of eventual exposure when the real facts emerge.”¹⁸⁷

Having set up his usual premise that everything Simonides said was false, declaring that he used “cunning psychology” to deceive others, etc., he then proceeds to unfold what he believes was another falsehood, relying upon what we will see is incomplete information from the Russian scholar, Uspensky. McGrane writes:

“Accordingly, on genuine evidence by Uspensky, Simonides becomes trapped in a web of his own deceit. Simonides had earlier stated that he had placed an acrostic on the page containing Genesis 24, and that in 1852 he had taken a tracing from this page at St. Catherine’s showing the acrostic. He displayed this traced page at a meeting in England.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ McGrane, p. 71

¹⁸⁸ McGrane, p. 71

Next, Mr. McGrane will attempt to move in for the kill, focusing on the fact that Simonides claimed to have traced a page from Genesis 24 in the year 1852. He is about to tell us that it was *not* possible, and therefore will conclude that this stands as proof that Simonides was lying about not only this, but also his friend, Kallinikos:

“Uspensky removed a large fragment of the leaf containing Genesis 24 on his 1845 visit; it was in Uspensky’s possession thereafter and he published a colour plate showing part of that fragment in 1857. Thus by 1852, two years after Uspensky’s second and last visit to St. Catherine’s, a large fragment of that Genesis 24 leaf was well away from St. Catherine’s monastery and safely in Uspensky’s private collection. **This would make it impossible for Simonides to make a tracing of that page at St. Catherine’s in 1852, as he claimed.**... This, of course, also means that the alleged tracing of the page was a forgery as well -- one of the many thousands done by Simonides over the years, as it happens. Such errors of fact prove not only that Simonides was telling a pack of lies, but also that he and his claimed supporting witness, Kallinikos, were one and the same person. Simonides was creating false witnesses as well ...”¹⁸⁹

We can see from the above quote that great importance is placed on this issue. But what if it *was* possible that Simonides could have traced a portion of Genesis 24 back in 1852? Take note that Mr. McGrane mentions how only “a large fragment of that Genesis 24 leaf” was taken. *But not all of it.* It just so happens that another fragment of Genesis chapter 24 was recovered by Tischendorf in the year 1853, during his second trip to St. Catherine’s Monastery. According to James Bentley:

“Tischendorf published the fragment of Genesis chapter 24 that he had found in St. Catherine’s, as well as much else.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ McGrane, p. 72 (emphasis added)

¹⁹⁰ *Secrets of Mt. Sinai*, by James Bentley, see pp. 90-92

According to the British Library, the fragment recovered by Tischendorf was another part of Genesis 24 that was separate from that which was taken by Uspensky:

“During his second visit to the Monastery in 1853, Tischendorf obtained several other manuscripts, including a fragment of the Codex that had originally formed part of the same leaf as one of the fragments acquired by Uspenskij. According to Tischendorf, this latest fragment was discovered serving as a bookmarker.”¹⁹¹

Hence, it follows that at least a fragment of Genesis 24 *did* remain at St. Catherine’s until the year 1853, and certainly could have been traced by Simonides in 1852. What would settle the issue, of course, would be to find a copy of the tracing done by Simonides, and compare it with what was recovered by Tischendorf. As we stated back in 2013, in our article responding to the assertions of Dr. Daniel Wallace: “All one would need to do is compare the tracing that was presented by him in 1863 ... the portion of Genesis 24 in St. Petersburg would have to show the same part that Simonides captured in his tracing. Assuming they match up, if his acrostic turns out to be missing in the St. Petersburg fragment, this would be clear proof that he was lying. Yet if it were there, it would prove he was telling the truth.”¹⁹²

Do the supporters of the Codex really want to brave the ordeal and put their beloved manuscript to the test? It should be said that thus far, we know of no one who has recovered the tracing presented by Simonides back in 1863. It is well documented that he presented his tracing to the world in the 19th century, but what became of it afterwards is still a mystery. Yet if it could be found, it would be one of the ways to prove whether or not he was telling the truth.

It is worth noting that Genesis 24 is a particularly long chapter in the Book of Genesis, about three pages in length in a modern Bible. However, the question remains as to why the chapter would have been fragmented as it was. And if the monks believed

¹⁹¹ *History of Codex Sinaiticus*, taken from the British Library’s Codex Sinaiticus website: www.codexsinaiticus.org

¹⁹² *Answering Dr. Daniel Wallace on Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair*, by Christian J. Pinto, Oct. 2, 2013

that it was a valuable MS., why would they use part of it for a bookmark -- especially *after* Tischendorf had supposedly informed them of its tremendous value back in 1844? This is another area where the official story simply does not add up. Tischendorf would have us believe that once he alerted the monks to the value of the Codex, they whisked it away to carefully guard it, and so it was preserved for his third discovery in 1859. But why would they separate a fragment from Genesis 24 and use it as a bookmark? Of course, we are assuming that Tischendorf was telling the truth about how he found it, which may or may not be the case. If he lied about the first discovery in 1844, he could have also lied about how he found the fragment in 1853. But how ever he found it, for some reason, it was separated from the main body of the text. Why? The answer may be because it contained the acrostic of Simonides.

As we have considered in our research elsewhere, the special markings of Simonides may have also had something to do with certain pages recovered in the New Finds of 1975. Kallinikos testified that markings or *acrostics* from Simonides were contained in the Shepherd of Hermas,¹⁹³ and leaves from this work were part of the 1975 discovery. If one studies the earthquake in 1839 that caused the collapse of the storage room, which was then followed by repairs in the years that followed, it would appear that the pages of Sinaiticus were buried during the same time period.

Based on the testimony of Kallinikos, along with the probable dishonesty of Tischendorf, it is entirely possible that the German scholar deliberately took certain parts of the MS. and cast them into the storage chamber. If he saw the acrostics, he might have removed those pages as a precautionary measure, perhaps telling himself that they might be discovered later on, which would confirm the authenticity of the Codex. Since he was there in 1844, he may have done it while repair work was going on. There is also the possibility that with his political connections, he could have had someone else within the Monastery do it for him.

¹⁹³ *The Literary Churchman*, November 2, 1863, in his letter Kallinikos wrote: "A portion of [the Codex] was secretly removed from Mt. Sinai, by Professor Tischendorf, in 1844. The rest, with inconceivable recklessness, he mutilated and tampered with Some leaves he destroyed, especially such as contained the Acrostics of Simonides; but four of them escaped him, viz., one in the Old Testament, and three in Hermas ..."

Of course, another possibility is that one of the monks who was supposed to review Simonides' work after it was delivered to St. Catherine's in 1841, may have removed the leaves for reasons we can only guess at.¹⁹⁴

We documented many specific details on the *New Finds* years ago, and how it pertains to events surrounding Simonides and Tischendorf during this period.¹⁹⁵ Dr. Daniel Wallace has argued that the discoveries of 1975 somehow prove that Simonides could not have authored the Codex; however, the specifics of what happened more likely confirm Simonides' claims; even though there are yet unanswered questions. Those who are interested in additional information may refer to our article: *Answering Dr. Daniel Wallace on Codex Sinaiticus & the Simonides Affair* from October 2013.

19th CENTURY ANGLO-CATHOLIC SCHOLARS

We must remember that the Western European scholars of the 19th century are the men who, collectively, embraced Darwin and the theory of Evolution. Their great discernment in matters of history and "science" brought them to the conclusion that the book of Genesis was, in fact, wrong and that Darwin's speculation (which is little more than the ancient Hindu doctrine of *reincarnation* repackaged as a scientific theory) was correct. Westcott and Hort are two of the leading figures of that era who clearly embraced Darwinism, as is evidenced in their letters. The fact that such men (along with an unbelieving Unitarian named George Vance Smith) would be trusted to revise the text of the Bible, should give pause to anyone who is a true defender of the Christian faith.

¹⁹⁴ While it is not possible to know every detail of what happened, those who seek the truth should not allow this to discourage them from getting to the bottom of this mystery. Remember, that the same textual critics who oppose our efforts to investigate, have themselves embraced baseless theories and ideas, the support for which they do not have even 1/100th of the evidence, by comparison, to all we have collected to support of the story of Simonides.

¹⁹⁵ The important thing to remember about the New Finds of 1975 is that the genizah (storage room) did not collapse centuries earlier, but within two years of the time that Simonides claimed the Codex arrived at St. Catherine's, and within 4-5 years of Tischendorf's arrival. Because the room collapsed and then repairs followed afterwards, it is difficult to know exactly what sort of access or exposure to the storage room others may have had. But the discovery of pages from the Codex within the genizah certainly does not remove the possibility of Simonides' authorship, especially in view of the covert activities of Tischendorf along with his supporters.

Also consider that Darwin was buried inside Westminster Abbey in 1882, just one year after the Revision Committee completed their work. What sort of people made that decision? God fearing Christian men? Or apostate heretics? Also consider that Darwin came out of Cambridge University, along with Westcott, Hort, Scrivener, Wright and Bradshaw, all of whom were the leading figures supporting the Codex. Are we to accept the idea that the generation of scholars who embraced the deceptions of evolutionary theory, believing that mankind evolved from monkeys; that such men had the expert ability to date manuscripts, without the possibility of error? The suggestion itself is utterly ridiculous. If they could be wrong about *millions* and *billions* of years, yes, they could be wrong about 1500 years. No, they did not know what they were talking about. To suggest that they did is complete nonsense.

We consider again the warning of Walter Walsh that the Church of England was literally “honeycombed” with secret societies, operating on behalf of Rome, whose desire was to overthrow Protestantism in England. There is simply no question that the Protestant movement, especially in England, was empowered by the widespread publication of the Bible in the common tongue; the English translations being taken directly from the Greek scholarship of Desiderius Erasmus, who laid the foundation of the Received Text, which was used by William Tyndale, then by those who created the Geneva Bible and later, the Authorized Version. The English Reformation was the most powerful form of Protestantism in Europe and throughout the world. In order for Rome to stop Protestantism, she knew she had to conquer it in England first, and to do so, the credibility of the Bible would need to be compromised.

The Rome-ward leanings of the 19th century textual critics have continued to this day. One only need research men such as Bruce Metzger and Kurt Aland to learn of their repeated audiences with the Pope, and their work with the depraved Jesuit Carlo Martini.¹⁹⁶ Today, a century-and-a-half later, so-called conservatives such as

¹⁹⁶ Carlo Martini, who sat on the Greek revision committees with Metzger and Aland, openly supported homosexuality and the concept of same-sex civil unions, helping to lay the groundwork for gay marriage. He continues to be a pivotal figure for promoting the normalization of sodomy in the modern churches. It is also worth

Daniel B. Wallace tell us that “Scholars are not sure of the exact words of Jesus”¹⁹⁷ and in doing so, only mirror the testimony of the Jesuit General who is quoted saying: “We don’t know what Jesus really said.”¹⁹⁸ Is it merely a coincidence that a leading American critic would come to the same conclusion as the Superior General of the Jesuits? Not if one knows the history of how the Critical Text theory was developed in the 19th century, involving Romanists and Evangelicals, who maintain the illusion to this day.

While under the pretense of giving a “gift to the Church,” much like the Trojan Horse of old, the Codex Sinaiticus has been used from the beginning of its publication in the 19th century, as a weapon against faith in the Bible as the inerrant Word of God. It is for this reason that sincere believers who care about the truth should demand that a more complete investigation be carried out concerning this controversial manuscript, that has been given too much credibility and influence in the world of biblical academia.

THE WORM HOLE DEBATE

One of the issues that researchers continue to explore is the presence of what are reported to be “worm holes” in the Codex Sinaiticus. We first brought up the issue in our audio CD in 2013, which was based upon the description given by Simonides, of how he had prepared the ancient parchment on Mt. Athos. He said:

“I selected from the library of the monastery ... a very bulky volume, antequely bound, and almost entirely blank, the parchment of which was remarkably clean, and beautifully finished. This had been prepared apparently many centuries ago I therefore took possession of the book, and prepared it by taking out the leaf containing the discourse, and by removing several others injured by time and moths ...”¹⁹⁹

noting that the Anglo-Catholic movement (which resulted from the Oxford Movement) of the Westcott & Hort era was seen by Protestants as an “unmanly” and “effeminate,” driven by homosexual influences.

¹⁹⁷ *Fifteen Myths About Bible Translation*, by Daniel B. Wallace (see “myth” number 14)

¹⁹⁸ *Jesuit Superior General: We Don’t Know ‘What Jesus Really Said,’* Breitbart News article, 23 February 2017

¹⁹⁹ Simonides’ story, published in *The Guardian*, 3rd September, 1862.

The mention of certain leaves injured by “moths” is where the original idea of the wormholes came from. Then, in an article published afterwards, in which the newspaper questioned the story that Simonides told, the editor wrote:

“Are the worm-eaten holes *through* the letters, or do the letters avoid the holes.”²⁰⁰

From this exchange, it was originally thought that the “holes” which appear in Codex Sinaiticus are *worm* holes. In the PTS article, however, Mr. McGrane makes the argument that we cannot be certain that the holes in question were caused by worms. To be fair, we should acknowledge that manuscripts from antiquity are also said to contain “maker’s holes,” which were typically made when the animal skins (from which vellum is made) were originally stretched and turned into parchment. Nevertheless, in the 19th century, the holes were assumed to have come from worms, and have even been cited as evidence against Simonides, as we find in this commentary from Edmund Richardson:

“... the efforts which Simonides expended to discredit Tischendorf’s discovery were striking: the elaborate fictions ... the physical evidence of the manuscript itself ... was his ultimate undoing. He had insisted that the Codex was a modern transcription on to ancient, battered parchment -- but, as one commentator asked, ‘are the worm-eaten holes through the letters, or do the letters avoid the holes?’ As one might expect from a genuinely ancient manuscript, it was the former ...”²⁰¹

In other words, Mr. Richardson believes the worms ate through the letters of the text, hence, showing its antiquity. But that is precisely wrong. As Dr. Scot McKendrick at the British Library has shown on camera, the scribe who created Sinaiticus specifically wrote his letters *around* the holes, signifying that the holes were present before the parchment of the Codex was written upon. This is explained in the book, *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus*, by Dr. Dirk Jongkind:

²⁰⁰ *The Christian Remembrancer*, April 1863

²⁰¹ *Classical Victorians: Scholars, Scoundrels and Generals in Pursuit of Antiquity*, by Edmund Richardson

“... some of the original holes in the parchment do occur every now and then; these can be recognized by the fact that the writing continues without interruption in the text at the other side of the disturbance.”²⁰²

Notice that Jongkind refers to them as “original holes” meaning that they were there originally before the scribe began writing. He does not, however, tell us that they were either worm holes, or maker’s holes, or how they were originally made. They are only referred to as *holes* in his description. Yet because the scribe took them into consideration and wrote around them in such a way that the text would not be broken, it stands as another piece of circumstantial evidence in favor of Simonides and fits with his original description of the parchment he claimed to use, and its condition when he found it on Mt. Athos.

TEN REASONS TO BELIEVE SIMONIDES

To give a summation of the evidence that favors the authorship of the Codex Sinaiticus by Constantine Simonides, we offer the following TEN REASONS:

1) The fact that Simonides had in his possession a Greek copy of the Shepherd of Hermas in 1855 that matched the later copy discovered in Codex Sinaiticus (1859). Because of the unique readings of these copies, found nowhere else in the world, it is possible Simonides could have used one to create the other.

2) The fact that Simonides published a Greek copy of the Epistle of Barnabas in the year 1843 at Smyrna. As with Hermas, the readings in Barnabas were unique and found nowhere else on earth. While the date “1843” has been disputed, along with the review published in the *Star of the East* newspaper in Smyrna, the arguments against the evidence have, thus far, proved unsuccessful and stand in favor of Simonides.

²⁰² *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus*, by Dirk Jongkind, p. 34

3) The presence of the Acrostics, or special markings (of Simonides) in the Codex, which Simonides was able to accurately identify, even while the manuscript was locked in a fireproof safe in Russia.

4) The testimony of Kallinikos, the Greek monk and friend of Simonides, who claimed to have seen him working on the Codex in 1839-40. Both men are shown to have been on Mt. Athos during the period described, and there are also lithographed letters of Kallinikos, in which discussion is revealed from 1853-54 concerning Simonides' production of the manuscript for the Czar.

5) The letters of Tischendorf, with his mention of the "stories of Simonides" just weeks before his 1859 discovery. This reference by Tischendorf supports the claim that Simonides had been alerted before, by Kallinikos, that "a German" had removed certain pages from his manuscript back in 1844.

6) Simonides had no motivation to lie about the production of the Codex, since he stood to gain nothing by proving his point. The arguments about "revenge" towards Tischendorf are illogical, since Simonides would have benefited through the vindication of his earlier copy of Hermas, which was declared *genuine* because of Sinaiticus.

7) A provably false testimony was used to discredit Simonides in 1863, through the letter of someone claiming to be a monk, who reported that the Codex Sinaiticus was contained in the "ancient catalogue" of St. Catherine's Monastery. This proved to be a false claim and appears to have been deliberately ignored by the defenders of the Codex, who may have been responsible for contriving the letter.

8) The fact that Simonides' description of how he created the Codex, using vellum that was already hundreds of years old, from Mt. Athos, and utilizing ancient methods of Greek calligraphy. Because paleographers judge MSS. based upon these elements (i.e. type of parchment and scribal methods), it becomes apparent why scholars

could be deceived, as they were often said to be by many other works presented in the 19th century, and even today.

9) The fact that Codex Sinaiticus has no provable history whatsoever prior to 1844, when Tischendorf returned with the first leaves taken from St. Catherine's Monastery. As James Farrer tells us, "... no visitor to the monastery at Mount Sinai before 1844 had ever seen or heard of such a work as belonging to the monks ..."

10) The details of the parchment upon which the Codex is written, matches the descriptions of both Simonides and Kallinikos. Simonides claimed the parchment, already old, had been injured by "moths" before he wrote upon it, and we find "holes" that were described as "worm holes" by 19th century analysts, with the text written around the hole, showing the holes were present *before* the scribe wrote upon them. Also, the description of the parchment leaves as being "white" and also "yellow" seems to match the assertion, made by Kallinikos, that the leaves were treated with a solution of herbs (or lemon juice), in order to weaken the appearance of the letters and give it a more "yellowed" look. The Russian scholar Uspensky, saw the Codex in 1845 and described the leaves as being "white" in appearance, while later witnesses describe its pages with a "yellow" coloring.

BRITISH LIBRARY CORRESPONDENCE

In spite of our differences towards Mr. McGrane, we are somewhat indebted to him for publishing his correspondence with the British Library and confirming what we had argued several years ago on our radio program. There were some who believed that the dating of the Codex had been confirmed by carbon dating, or some other scientific sounding method. Most Christians do not understand that *paleography* (which is simply handwriting analysis) is the only method used for dating the chief manuscripts in the great Bible debate. Here is what McGrane says he learned from the British Library:

“Unlike the case of other manuscripts where paleography alone failed to distinguish between the genuine and the fake, yet chemical and physical analysis finally confirmed modern forgery, no museum has shown any inclination to perform similar analyses on Codex Sinaiticus - or Codex Vaticanus The aforementioned private correspondence with the British Library put the matter clearly with regard to radiocarbon dating: it has no plans to perform C14 dating of Codex Sinaiticus, nor has it done any in the past.”²⁰³

This quote is just one example of why we believe it is important to continue the discussion on the claims made about the Codex and reject the assertion that the matter was resolved by the scholars of the 19th century.

IN CONCLUSION

The Simonides controversy might not be so important, if the Codex Sinaiticus were merely contained within a glass case, sitting quietly next to an index card inscribed with the words, “The World’s Oldest the Bible,” and that was all. But its influence does not end there. Based upon that declaration, scholars then claim the authority to use its strange and corrupted readings to question the traditional text of Scripture. It is at this point that we are compelled to defend our faith against those who wield Sinaiticus as though it truly represented Apostolic authority, when they remove from the pages of Scripture one verse after another, while inspiring millions to doubt, and question continually what they should trust. The endless speculations of critics, with their groundless theories, and obsessive practice of changing the Greek text with each new manuscript discovery, has brought Biblical scholarship to the brink of utter confusion. If the situation continues as it has for the past hundred years, such men will lead the Church back into another Dark Age. Even now, the entire Western world, once governed by

²⁰³ McGrane, p. 4

Christianity, has today all but abandoned the Bible as an authoritative source, and as a result, has forsaken the commandments of God.

Furthermore, because the Bible is not accepted, even among conservatives, as the chief authority for determining the moral boundaries for society, we find ourselves in peril of being overrun by Marxists and Islamic fundamentalists. In response, we then find the “populist” movements springing up, hoping to gain deliverance by winning the good opinion of the masses. Unfortunately, the globalists have anticipated this backlash, and have countered through the mass migration of millions, typically coming from Islamic and third world countries, into the West. By changing the dynamics of the population, the elites are hoping to change the popular vote. If this continues, in time, the *popular* opinion will be dominated by a call for Socialism and Sharia law.

However, if we return to the thinking of our forefathers, who believed that all men (kings, princes, judges, members of parliament/congress AND the people) must operate *under God* -- meaning that no man, and no collection of men, regardless of how many, have any right or power to oppose the *positive* laws of Scripture,²⁰⁴ then the popular vote is put into its rightful place; and what our forefathers saw as the “tyranny of the majority” is properly restrained.²⁰⁵ But without confidence in the laws of God, according to the Bible, reclaiming the freedom won by our Christian forefathers through centuries of struggle and debate, will be unlikely, if not impossible.

The original purpose of our liberty in the West, was to serve the Lord and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. But that purpose is imperiled by predatory forces, which not only undermine the Bible, but then seek to suppress freedom of speech, and religion; if they are allowed to progress, their wicked movement will

²⁰⁴ That is, the laws and principles that are beyond dispute and accepted by all of Christendom since antiquity.

²⁰⁵ This principle is why our forefathers did not establish a pure democracy, where the popular opinion of the people would determine the rule of law. They recognized that the common people can be deceived by clever men, and such deceptions have happened throughout history. As such, they established our country as a Republic, governed by a Constitution, under God, that provides a democratic process, whereby the people make decisions through their leaders, but all operating within the boundaries of God’s moral code in the Bible. Because the Bible’s credibility has been undermined by the critics, today when men speak against the “tyranny of the majority,” they believe it should be lawyers and judges (rather than Scripture) that settles the argument.

eventually trample on the preaching of the Cross and forbid it. Our forefathers fought so that the teaching and publishing of holy Scripture would abound, and that the knowledge of God might cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. It is our duty, in our time, to hold fast to all they have handed down to us, by the grace of God, and prevent the wiles of the devil from destroying the heritage of our Christian faith.

The uncertainties of secular libertarianism will be no match for the dogmatic and decisive determinations of Islamic fundamentalism, or of radical Leftism. The founders of our great nation, and builders of the free world, did not base their ideas on an undefined belief in God. They had faith in God who reveals to all men everywhere what the boundaries of liberty ought to be, through the witness of divine revelation, which, in their view, and ours, can only be found in the pages of Holy Scripture.

As for the mysteries of Codex Sinaiticus, and the defense of the true Word of God, may the Lord grant wisdom to all who love and seek for the truth.