Numerals in Early Greek New Testament Manuscripts: Text-Critical, Scribal, and Theological Studies

Zachary J. Cole

Doctor of Philosophy in New Testament Language, Literature and Theology

The University of Edinburgh
2015
I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Zachary J. Cole

___________________________                  _________________________
signature                                           date
This thesis examines the phenomenon of numerals as they were written by early New Testament scribes. Chapter 1 briefly introduces the two basic ways that early scribes wrote numerals, either as longhand words or in alphabetic shorthand (e.g., δόο or ā̄̄), and summarizes the fundamental research question: how did early Christian scribes write numerals and why? The need for such a study is described in chapter 2, which reviews past discussions of the phenomenon of scribal number-writing in New Testament manuscripts. While scholars are aware of the feature and have been eager to draw it into a variety of important discussions, this has been done without any systematic or thorough study of the phenomenon itself. After these introductory chapters, the thesis proceeds in two basic parts: the first isolates the relevant data in question and the second aims to examine those data more fully and from several different angles.

Part one is a systematic examination of all numerals, both cardinal and ordinal, that are extant in New Testament manuscripts dated up through the fifth century CE (II–V/VI). The principal concern is when and where numerical shorthand occurs in these manuscripts. Can we discern a Christian style of number-writing that can be distinguished from contemporary scribal customs, and, if so, what is the nature of that style? One aim is to discern the function of number-writing within individual codices, and so its relation to other codicological and scribal features is also considered. Chapter 3 examines numerals in papyrus witnesses and chapter 4 examines them in majuscules written on parchment.
Part two then comprises a more thorough investigation of some important issues that arose in part one. Chapter 5 approaches the feature of number-writing from the angle of textual genealogy. Did scribes ever mimic the particular number-forms as they were written in their exemplars or did they choose between them at their own leisure? In either case, what implications does this have for our understanding of textual relationships? Chapter 6 takes a brief detour to evaluate a commonly repeated axiom: that, in Greek copies of the Old Testament scriptures, Jewish scribes consistently used longhand numerals and avoided numerical shorthand. I argue that this idea is invalid and has distorted our understanding of the provenance of some early manuscripts. Chapter 7 then considers whether theological reflection ever influenced a scribe’s decision to employ numerical shorthand. In the same way that devotional practice seems to lie at the origin of the *nomina sacra*, the group of scribal contractions for divine names and titles, can we detect similar patterns of number-writing that relate to theologically significant concepts and/or referents? I argue that, aside from a handful of isolated yet intriguing examples, no coherent system similar to the *nomina sacra* can be detected—a conclusion that nonetheless sheds a great deal of light on devotional practices among early Christians.

In chapter 8, I describe a hypothesis that seeks to make sense of much of the data observed in part one. In our examination of the numerals in the early manuscripts, four curious features are identified that distinguish Christian scribal practice from that found in other corpora, all relating to numerals (or kinds of numerals) that Christian scribes, as a rule, wrote longhand rather than in shorthand. I argue that this unique adaptation of numerical abbreviation in New Testament
manuscripts reflects an awareness and intentional policy to avoid forms that were potentially ambiguous in the reading of those texts, and especially in their public reading. The final portion, chapter 9, then summarizes the thesis, draws out some implications of the study, and suggests areas in which more research would be potentially fruitful.
LAY ABSTRACT

In the same way that modern English contains two basic ways of expressing numerals, with words such as “two” or with symbols such as “2”, writers of ancient Greek also had two basic number systems at their disposal. Greeks used standard, longhand number-words (δύο = “two”) and corresponding numerals taken from the alphabet (β̄ = 2). In ancient Christian manuscripts, and specifically within copies of scriptural texts, both number systems were used, but they were used unpredictably. This thesis aims to discern what principles, if any, governed Christian scribes’ decisions to use numerical symbols as opposed to longhand words, and whether or not anything in particular can be learned by a systematic examination of the phenomenon.

While chapter 1 introduces the Greek shorthand numeral system, chapter 2 reviews how scholars have misunderstood the phenomenon or drawn faulty conclusions about it. Far from being an irrelevant detail of penmanship, number-writing techniques can help shed enormous light on how scribes went about their work. Chapters 3 and 4 then provide a systematic study of all numbers that are present in New Testament manuscripts dated up through the fifth century CE in order to provide a foundation of hard data. This helps to refine our understanding of individual manuscripts, their composition, production, and relationship to others.

The remaining chapters build upon this systematic analysis of numbers and apply the data several different contexts. For example, chapter 5 asks if the particular ways in which scribes wrote numerals might reveal relationships between other manuscripts. Does, for example, the presence of 5 (rather than “five”) in one text
indicate dependence upon another manuscript also containing a 5 in the same chapter/verse? I argue that there are several instances where such coincidences in specific number-styles plausibly reveals relatedness between manuscripts. Another question concerns a widely held assumption that Jewish scribes would never use numerical shorthand; an axiom that supposedly helps to distinguish between Jewish copies of the Greek Old Testament and those that are Christian. I argue that this is a false distinction based on insufficient evidence; Christian and Jewish scribes may have had more in common that often realized. This bears implications for our understanding of the relationship between the two groups in the early centuries CE.

Chapter 7 aims to identify patterns that might reveal a theological use of numerical symbols by scribes. Scholars are aware, for instance, of a widespread scribal pattern that uses contractions for divine names such as Lord, God, Jesus, and Christ, but keeps non-sacred names written in full (called the nomina sacra). Does the same ever happen with numerical symbols? I argue that this might occur in isolated instances, where, for example, the symbol 12 is used for Jesus’s disciples and “twelve” is used for other referents (twelve years, for example), but, for the most part, such patterns are very hard to find. This probably indicates the relative importance that names and titles had for early Christians over against that of numerals and it demonstrates what sorts of theological concepts took root earlier and lasted longer within those communities.

A final chapter then seeks to make sense of some curious patterns observed in our analysis. While Christian scribes seem to have used numerical symbols unpredictably, there are some interesting similarities shared by nearly all our manuscripts; for example, no scribe ever employs the symbol form of the number
“one” (א in Greek)—the most frequently occurring number in the New Testament. I argue that the unifying reason for these curious similarities are a shared concern to make manuscripts easy to read aloud and less prone to ambiguity. This confirms what scholars have observed in other features, namely, that early Christians intended their books to be read aloud in the context of Christian worship.
I still recall when Dr. Daniel B. Wallace—my principal supervisor in seminary—suggested I investigate “a topic that may seem a bit bizarre and insignificant.” Such is, I suppose, the nature of many doctoral theses, but it is to him that I owe the basic idea for this project. I am grateful for his guidance especially in that early stage.

Sincere thanks are due to my doctoral supervisor, Prof. Paul Foster, both for his initial excitement about my research and for his much-needed help all along the way. My second supervisor, Prof. Larry Hurtado, also deserves my gratitude. His feedback made this a far better thesis that it otherwise would have been. I must also say that the post-graduate community at New College turned out to be a warm, richly engaging, and intellectually stimulating context for doctoral work; I am quite sad to leave it.

Especially formative for me were the years I spent as an undergraduate at Palm Beach Atlantic University learning Greek and Hebrew. During that time, I benefited enormously from the faculty in the School of Ministry: Dr. Randy Richards, Dr. Karelynne Ayayo, Dr. Nathan Lane, and Dr. Bernie Cueto, to name a few.

I cannot list all those to whom I am indebted, but here are some more. I wish to express heartfelt appreciation for my parents, Tim and Michele. Dad introduced me to textual criticism at a young age (may the conversations continue!), and Mom, in her gentle way and at key moments, helped push me to achieve more than I had thought I could. But most of all, my wife, Kayla, deserves unparalleled recognition, not only for leaving sunny Florida (for Scotland of all places!), but also for her devotion, patience, and support during the course of this program. (It would have been no fun without you anyway.) Finally, I am ever thankful for our girls, Fiona and Ivy, to whom I dedicate this thesis.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .................................................................................................................................................. i  
Lay Abstract ......................................................................................................................................... v  
Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................................... ix  
Table of Contents .............................................................................................................................. xi  
Abbreviations ........................................................................................................................................ xiii  
Chapter 1: Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 1  
Chapter 2: History of Research ........................................................................................................... 15  

**PART ONE: THE DATA**  
Chapter 3: Internal Profiles of Papyri ............................................................................................. 49  
Chapter 4: Internal Profiles of Majuscules ......................................................................................... 103  

**PART TWO: STUDIES**  
Chapter 5: External Analysis: Selected Comparisons .................................................................... 161  
Chapter 6: Numerals in Manuscripts of the Greek Old Testament ................................................ 183  
Chapter 7: Theological Orthography and the Possibility of *Numeri Sacri* .................................... 211  
Chapter 8: Numerals and the Dynamics of Public Reading ............................................................... 247  
Chapter 9: Conclusions ..................................................................................................................... 283  
Bibliography ......................................................................................................................................... 291
ABBREVIATIONS

For journal abbreviations and abbreviations of other standard works I have followed Billie Jean Collins et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014). For editions of papyri and majuscules I have generally followed the abbreviations given in John F. Oates et al., eds., *Checklist of Editions of Greek and Latin Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*, 5th ed., BASPSup 9 (Oakville, CT: American Society of Papyrologists, 2001). An online version is available at [http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html](http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html). For manuscript sigla, I follow the NA²⁸. Abbreviations not contained in the aforementioned resources are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td><em>Bulletin of the Bezan Club</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESCJ</td>
<td>Études sur le christianisme et le judaïsme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBSBSup</td>
<td>Institute of Biblical Studies Bulletin Supplement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTF</td>
<td>Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung (<a href="http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/">http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXX/OG</td>
<td>Septuagint/Old Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OT</td>
<td>Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMSHS</td>
<td>University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why Numerals?

The present thesis is intended to provide a thorough investigation of a somewhat obscure but nevertheless important feature of NT manuscripts: numerals as they were written by scribes.¹ Similar to modern-day English, writers of Koine Greek could employ two different styles of numbering, longhand number-words such as δύο and alphabetic shorthand such as β̅. That early Christian scribes made use of the shorthand system within the texts of Scriptural manuscripts is well known to scholars, but what is not known is the precise nature of that system, nor the principles (if any) that governed its seemingly random usage.

The reader might reasonably ask what justifies a full-scale study of such a minor and seemingly trivial subject as NT numerals. The answer is simply that the issue of scribal number-writing techniques has been drawn into many scholarly discussions pertaining to a variety of topics. For example, numerals and numerical abbreviations have been involved in scholarly debates about the nomina sacra and their origins, the distinctions between Christian and Jewish scribal techniques, the social context and training of early Christian copyists, the causes of textual corruptions, the genealogy and textual relationships, the aural/oral dictation theory of manuscripts, the date of some codices, the codicology and production of some manuscripts, as well as others (see the following chapter for more details).

¹ In what follows, I use the terms numeral and number interchangeably. The terms longhand and plene denote numerals written out as full words (e.g., δύο), while shorthand, abbreviation, or symbol denote alphabetic numerals (e.g., β̅).
Scholars have thus discussed numerals and numeral writing in Christian manuscripts on repeated occasions, yet they have done so apart from any thorough analysis of the feature itself: no descriptive survey has yet been attempted. In fact, most scholars have relied on the handful of remarks made by Colin H. Roberts, who is without doubt to be thanked for numerous valuable contributions, but whose understanding of numerals in manuscripts was unfortunately incomplete and not based on thorough (or at least widespread) observation. Some imprecise remarks of his in particular have contributed to more than one misunderstanding about the scribal treatment of numbers, and no critical analysis has provided occasion to check these errors.

What is needed, therefore, is an inductive analysis of the scribal technique of number-writing within NT manuscripts. Only a systematic examination of the data will permit us to isolate what Christian scribes would or would not do as it relates to numerals, which will determine how (in)accurately numerals have been used in the discussions briefly mentioned above. The primary even if broad research question that drives this thesis is therefore how did NT scribes typically write numerals and why? Several other questions are closely connected to this general inquiry, however, such as:

1. What is the precise nature of the alphabetic numeral system utilized by NT scribes?
2. What similarities and differences exist between the numeral techniques NT scribes and their extra-biblical contemporaries?
3. What principles, if any, would govern a scribe’s use of numerical shorthand?
4. Did scribes mimic numeral forms in their exemplars or exercise freedom in choosing number-style?
5. Can numerical symbols be used to detect relationships between witnesses?
6. Were numerical symbols ever handled in a way analogous to the nomina sacra?
7. How did numerical shorthand affect the act of publicly reading a text?
Rather than advancing one unified proposition concerning number-writing techniques in early NT manuscripts, this thesis seeks to isolate the phenomenon itself and examine it from a variety of angles. Such an approach is intended to shed light not just on the feature alone but also on its relation to several other contexts, and thereby add to our knowledge of ancient Christians and their books.

1.2 Greek Alphabetic Numerals

The system of numerical shorthand found in NT manuscripts is simple and can be summarized briefly. In addition to longhand number-words (eĩc/µία/ἐν, δόο, τρεῖc, etc.), writers of Koine Greek employed the so-called Milesian system of numerals. This method of numbering employed the letters of the alphabet as numerals. Specifically, the alphabet was divided into three groups—with some additional characters—and used to represent ones (1–9), tens (10–90), and hundreds (100–900).

The Milesian system contains three additional characters. First, $\zeta$ (= 6) is usually called digamma or stigma, although in antiquity it was referred to as γαβέξ/γαµέξ. In our manuscripts it is fairly rare (most scribes tended to use the longhand ἕξ), but when it appears it sometimes takes the form $\tilde{\varsigma}$, which is undifferentiated from a lunate sigma (= 200). The second additional character is $\varphi$ (= 20).

---


4 On these three characters, see A. N. Jannaris, “The Digamma, Koppa, and Sampi as Numerals in Greek,” CQ 1 (1907): 37–40.
90), called *koppa*, which sometimes resembles the Coptic letter *fai* (٦). Finally, there is "ϡ" (= 900), called *sampi* or *παρακύλις*, which occurs nowhere in the manuscripts we examine here (see table 1.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.1. Alphabetic Numerals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>α</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>γ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>δ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ζ/c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ζ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>η</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compound numerals are created by simply adjoining multiple figures, nearly always in descending order (e.g., ρνγ = 153).

Alphabetic numerals were most often written with a supralinear stroke above (e.g., α), but not always. In contexts where the letter is unambiguously functioning as a numeral, such as in pagination, *stichoi* totals, running titles, and Eusebian canons, numerals are often unaccompanied by the overstrike. On rare occasions one will find numerals in the body texts of manuscripts that lack overstrikes.

Values in the thousands are indicated by a superscripted curl atop (or immediately prior to) the character in question (γ or ʿγ = 3,000), or by a preceding

---

5 See Jannaris, “The *Diegemma*, *Koppa*, and *Sampi*,” 38–39, who argues that the origin of ϑ was in the fusing of a *theta* atop an *iota*, indicating 9 × 10 = 90.

6 Sometimes, although rarely, numerals appear in ascending order, e.g., ακ (= 21). See James. A Notopoulos, “Notes on Athenian Inscriptions of the Empire Period,” *AJP* 69 (1948): 415–19, and Tod, “The Alphabetic Numeral System in Attica,” 129. In the present survey of NT manuscripts, I found only one single instance of this ascending order; it is (of course) found in Codex Bezae (D 05); βι (= 12; Luke 8:43).
oblique stroke \((γ = 3,000)\).\(^7\) The latter method is found predominantly in manuscripts from the fourth century and later.\(^8\) Both methods are relatively rare in NT papyri, but they occur on occasion. Where these appear in our manuscripts, I alternate between the curl and the oblique strike based on what better represents the actual appearance of the stroke as the individual scribe wrote it. Particularly important is the use of what I call “hybrid” abbreviations, which combine a longhand element with a shorthand one: e.g., \(ζ̅ \chiλιαδε\c = 7,000\). These are more common in our manuscripts than the full abbreviations for values in the thousands.

It is instructive to compare when and where numerical abbreviations occur in ancient texts. The practice is ubiquitous in Greek documentary papyri—a broad genre encompassing a range of workaday texts such as receipts, contracts, tax registers, letters, memoranda, lists, government records, and so on. In such documents, numeral figures are used for dates, monetary values, titles, and virtually every conceivable kind of number, but not always consistently or predictably; scribes often fluctuated between longhand and shorthand forms.

In contrast, well-executed copies of Graeco-Roman literature typically do not contain numerical shorthand in their body texts. Papyrologist Eric Turner once observed that he had never seen alphabetic numerals used as a replacement for longhand numbers in a well-copied literary manuscript except for a single unpublished papyrus manuscript.\(^9\) This does not mean that they were never employed

---


\(^8\) H. J. M. Milne and T. C. Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors of the Codex Sinaiticus* (London: British Museum for the Trustees, 1938), 62–64, though we will revisit this later.

at all, for numeral abbreviations were quite useful for such things as denoting changes of speakers in works of drama, items in lists, and titles. But where numbers occur within the body text of a Greek literary manuscript, these were consistently written longhand by scribes. The avoidance of numerical shorthand in the body texts of literature seems to be a feature of professional quality.

Similar to this is Jewish literature. In existing copies of Hebrew Scripture, regardless of date, numerals are written out longhand. While this generalization accurately describes the witnesses that are currently extant, there is evidence that this was not a consistently applied rule in actual practice. In particular, scholars have observed scribal errors in Jewish manuscripts that are best explained as misreadings of abbreviations, and in particular numerical abbreviations. When it comes to Jewish copies of the Septuagint/Old Greek (LXX/OG), the consensus view is that scribes avoided using numerical shorthand and only used full number-words. Those manuscripts of the LXX/OG that can be identified as Christian in origin, however, regularly include use of numerical abbreviations. We will have occasion to revisit this view in due course, but this helps to set the context for what we find in Christian manuscripts.

The widespread use of numerical shorthand in early NT manuscripts has, therefore, been seen as an important contrast to the scribal practices in Jewish

---

10 See, for example, the manuscripts of Ptolemy’s Geography discussed by Aubrey Diller, “Incipient Errors in Manuscripts,” TAPS 67 (1936): 232–39. There are also good examples of how such numerals could be the cause of textual corruptions.


Scriptural manuscripts and well-copied Graeco-Roman literature. Scholars have understood this feature to be a significant link between Christian manuscripts and documentary papyri—suggesting that early Christian copyists were accustomed to making documents, not copies of literature. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that numerical abbreviations were eventually disused in the Constantinian era, when manuscripts increased in scribal quality and professional production.13

Such are the basic outlines of the practice. It will be our task to examine the numerals in NT manuscripts in greater detail and draw out any implications that may arise from our observations.

1.3 Method, Scope, and Limitations

1.3.1 What Constitutes a Numeral?

In our attempt to examine precisely how Christian scribes wrote numbers, we will restrict our investigation in some important ways. For instance, the question as to what actually qualifies as a numeral is significant. The most obvious candidate is the grammatical category of cardinal numbers: εἷς/μία/ἐν, δύο, τρεῖς, and so on. Ordinal numbers—πρῶτος, δεύτερος, τρίτος, etc.—are less obvious but nonetheless properly considered numerals. Beyond these two categories, Koine Greek contains a variety of words that are numerical in nature even if not proper numbers. For example, numerical adverbs such as τρίς (“three times”) are fairly common in the NT, as are

---

13 One wonders if this eventual disuse of numerical shorthand is related—or at least analogous—to the phenomenon of Atticism, the second-century revival of Attic style and grammatical sensibilities that seems to have led some NT scribes to alter the text in accordance with Attic standards. See G. D. Kilpatrick, “Atticism and the Text of the Greek New Testament,” in Neutestamentliche Aufsätze, ed. J. Blinzler, O. Kuss, and F. Mussner (Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1963), 125–37; and J. Keith Elliott, “The Atticist Grammarians,” in Essays and Studies in New Testament Textual Criticism, EFN 3 (Cordoba: Ediciones el Almendro, 1992), 65–77. Or, it may simply be part of a more general progression in terms of production quality.
compound words with a numerical element. While the Milesian system was quite flexible with regard to the range of terms that could be shortened, we restrict our examination to cardinals and ordinals. The reason for this limitation is that these are the only two categories of number-words that appear as abbreviations in the NT manuscripts under investigation; they therefore provide the most fertile ground for comparison.

1.3.2 Numerals in the Body Text

It is also necessary to state that our concern is only with numerals as they were written in the body text of NT manuscripts, not as they appear in paratextual features such as running titles, stichoi totals, page numeration, and so on.

Where scribal corrections are present, the following rule of thumb has been followed: corrections made by the original copyist (in scribendo, prima manus) or by a contemporaneous hand (diorthotes) are always considered, but those made by subsequent hands have been ignored unless otherwise specified. The issue of corrections is more relevant for some manuscripts than others, and so further details will be provided where appropriate.

1.3.3 Date Range

In order to gain a clear picture of the Christian practice of number writing, a sizeable body of manuscripts has been chosen. In view are all NT manuscripts, both papyri

---

14 For example, Δεκαπόλεως (Matt 4:25), διετούς (Matt 2:16), δωδεκάφυλον (Acts 26:7), ἐκατονταετής (Rom 4:19), ἐκατονταπλαίον (Matt 19:29; Mark 10:30), ἐκατόνταρχος (Matt 8:5, 8, 13; 27:54), μικρόφθιλον (Matt 18:9), τετράρχης (Matt 14:1), τετραδίοι (Acts 12:4), τετράγωνος (Rev 21:16), τετράχρυσος (John 4:35), τετραπλοῦν (Luke 19:8), τετράπους (Acts 10:12; 11:6; Rom 1:23), τριμύνων (Acts 20:31), τρίμυνον (Heb 11:23), τριτέχος (Acts 20:9), ὀκτοήμερος (Phil 3:5), and πεντηκόστης (Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8); one exception to this will be noted in the section on Codex Bezae (D 05) in chapter 4.

and majuscules, dated up through the fifth century CE (i.e., II–V/VI).\textsuperscript{16} Fragmentary manuscripts in which no numerals remain extant are, of course, not examined. This wide range of data will allow a large-scale comparison of scribal techniques from the earliest available evidence to the rise of the great uncials in the fourth and fifth centuries.

Indeed, the scope of this investigation is somewhat broad in the sense that it encompasses numerals in every book of the NT as found in manuscripts from a wide range of dates. Such an approach admittedly runs the risk of skimming over details that could be discovered in a narrower examination of a smaller data set. Nevertheless, the principal benefit of a wider view is that it will allow us to observe scribal patterns that span all of our extant witnesses, that is, similarities shared by (virtually) all of our copyists. This will permit us to discern the most important features of the subject and at the same time leave room for others perhaps to dig deeper where more work can be done.

1.3.4 Collection of Data

The reader may be interested to know exactly how the data were collected. The first step was to read through the Greek NT marking each occurrence of a numeral. This was recorded in an electronic database, organized by NT book, listing all cardinal and ordinal numbers and their chapter-verse references. To double-check this database, a concordance of the Greek NT was used to verify the location of each

\footnote{Dates are taken from Kurt Aland et al., eds., \textit{Kurzgefasste Liste der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments}, 2nd ed., ANTF 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), updates provided on the website of the Münster Institute for New Testament Textual Research (http://www.uni-muenster.de/NTTextforschung).}
word. A third check was made with the help of Accordance® Bible software (version 9), which allows searches to be made by grammatical tags such as “Adjective > Cardinal,” and so forth.

These steps, however, only identify locations of numerals in the standard critical text of the Nestle-Aland, not numerals that comprise textual additions to our manuscripts. Other kinds of variants, such as omissions and transpositions, are easily detected, but additions are particularly troublesome because there is no predicting when and where a scribe is likely to insert extraneous numerals. Various publications are available to help account for these added words, namely, those that systematically list variants from the expected text. It is possible that some of these have been overlooked; nevertheless, it is doubtful that these additions would substantially alter our overall picture.

With this database of numbers in place, I examined each manuscript at each occurrence (or omission) of a numeral, recording the precise reading for every witness. Photographs were examined for nearly every manuscript in question with only a handful of exceptions, for which the editiones princeps were used (all of which are specified in chapters 3 and 4). Two websites were key to this end, the Institute for New Testament Textual Research (INTF) and the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (CSNTM). In a handful of instances, I was able to

---


inspect manuscripts or portions of manuscripts in person; where applicable, these are explicitly mentioned.

1.4 Chapter Previews

Chapter 2 seeks to review the scholarly literature on the topic of numerals in NT manuscripts. This will highlight the ways in which numerals have been drawn into scholarly discussions, and at the same time it will reveal several gaps in our current understanding of the subject and identify areas where there is much to learn.

After the literature review, the bulk of the thesis proceeds in two basic parts. Part 1 describes the relevant data and part 2 aims to test these data in a variety of ways.

Chapters 3 and 4 lay out the foundational data that is needed to gain an accurate picture of NT numerals by systematically examining all the extant numerals in our manuscripts. The principal concern is how individual scribes handle numbers, first in the papyri and then in the majuscules. We will also consider other potentially important features in connection with number-writing styles; attention to features such as (but not limited to) changes in scribe, “block mixture” of textual affiliation, and interlinear corrections will reveal something about codex in question and its history. This is the *internal* analysis of manuscripts and their numerals.

With this foundation in place, part 2 proceeds to examine the feature of numerals from a variety of angles. Chapter 5 seeks to view the phenomenon of number-writing *externally*—that is, to trace numbers in particular passages across

---

20 Fortunately, I was able to examine several folios of P⁴⁵, P⁴⁶, and P⁴⁷ at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. Having requested several folios in particular, I was able to verify some of the more troublesome readings in these papyri. I also examined P⁴¹⁵ in person at the Sackler Library in Oxford. Many thanks are due to the respective librarians for their patience with me.
several manuscripts. This will involve line-by-line comparison of numbers in manuscripts that overlap in biblical content (such as P⁶⁶ and P⁷⁵). I pursue this for two main reasons. First, this will allow us to identify patterns of number-writing (or lack thereof) that extend beyond individual scribes to wider customs or trade practices. Secondly, however, there is some evidence that numerical abbreviations might have sometimes functioned as “visual links” between witnesses. In other words, alphabetic numerals might sometimes have been carried over directly by copyists from their exemplars, meaning that they could have a genealogical significance. It will be shown that, in general, numerals are not an effective means by which to detect genealogical relationships between witnesses; at the same time, however, we will see several instances in which groups of manuscripts agree precisely in their particular number-forms at specific locations, suggesting that the wording of shared archetypes can sometimes be inferred.

Chapter 6 examine numerals in manuscripts of the LXX/OG, both Jewish and Christian. It has been claimed—and on several occasions reiterated—that Christian copies of the LXX/OG contain shorthand numbers while identifiably Jewish ones contain only longhand numbers exclusively. This chapter will simply test that claim. All known manuscripts of the LXX/OG dated up through the third century CE are examined for number-writing style. I will argue—against the dominant view—that the available evidence does not permit us to say with any certainty that this truly is a valid distinction between Christian and Jewish scribes. The implications of this conclusion are then brought to bear upon several manuscripts of disputed origins.

Chapter 7 attempts to detect instances where scribal number-styles were in some way affected by theological reflection. It is known that numerals were used as
“theological tools” in other contexts, such as documentary papyri and inscriptions. Are there any instances in NT manuscripts, I ask, in which we might say that numerical shorthand was used because it either bore some symbolic meaning, held a visual significance, or in any way referred to a concept or person in a manner that the ordinary longhand numbers could not? Are there any similarities in numerals to the more well-known phenomenon of the *nomina sacra*? Several possible instances are examined with external support from early Christian exegesis and from documentary papyri. I argue that the scribal treatment of numerals is most illuminating when held in contrast to the more widespread convention of the *nomina sacra*.

In chapter 8, we aim to study the phenomenon of numerical shorthand as it relates to the public reading of NT manuscripts. An important observation from part 1 is that NT copyists as a group appear to have adopted an incomplete system of numerical abbreviations. Specifically, they use what is essentially the alphabetic numeral system known from documentary papyri but with several curious differences—differences that are both striking and consistent across virtually all of our early manuscripts. I argue that NT copyists took the normal system of numerical abbreviations and intentionally adapted it for optimal use in a context where public reading and clear pronunciation of these codices were priorities.

Chapter 9 then summarizes the thesis, draws out some implications of the study, and suggests areas in which more research would be potentially fruitful.
CHAPTER 2:  
HISTORY OF RESEARCH

2.1 Manuscripts as Artifacts

Since the inception of NT textual criticism as a discipline, the primary interest in manuscripts has been in the texts they carry. And rightly so; it is through the comparison of these texts that errors in transmission can be identified and removed.¹ But, within the last few decades, the study of early Christianity has undergone what has been called a “material turn.”² This movement is characterized by a deepening interest in the visual and physical features of manuscripts as artifacts of the development of early Christian culture and theology.

A prime example of this material turn is the consideration given to the codex book format. Two essays that appeared in the *Cambridge History of the Bible*, one by C. H. Roberts and another by T. C. Skeat, were especially formative in drawing attention to the early Christian preference for the codex over the bookroll—the more common book design of the early Roman period. Roberts, for instance, observed that, while both Jewish Scriptures and copies of Graeco-Roman literature were typically written on bookrolls, early Christian evidence points to a “deliberate and almost exclusive choice” of the codex.³ This observation raised a number of

---


questions and invited deeper reflection upon the early Christian community. Both Roberts and Skeat reviewed this and other related features in great detail, offering tremendous insights into the developing “Christian reading culture” as distinct from its Jewish and pagan counterparts.

Another important physical feature of early Christian manuscripts is the group of reverential contractions employed for sacred names and titles, the nomina sacra.\(^4\) Four names in particular, Ἰησοῦς, χριστός, κύριος, and θεός, were written using abbreviated forms in virtually all of our early Christian manuscripts. So, for example, rather than writing the name Ἰησοῦς out fully, Christian copyists contracted the name by removing letters from the middle of the word: یک, یو, and يو (the supralinear stroke signals to the reader the presence of abbreviation). Importantly, this method of abbreviation by contraction stands in contrast to the more prevalent Greek practice of suspension, the removal of letters only from the end of the word in


question; e.g., ι̅η̅(coup). Unsurlprisingly, the nomina sacra have been the focus of lively debate among scholars, not least because of the possibility that this similar scribal treatment stems from a religious veneration of the persons in question. Much more could be said on the topic, but here we simply note that the nomina sacra will frequently come into view in our study because of their similarities with abbreviated numerals in appearance, mechanics, and (possibly) in function.

Aside from these studies that address one particular scribal feature, many have analyzed several such features within single manuscripts. The groundbreaking work of H. J. M. Milne and T. C. Skeat on Codex Sinaiticus is perhaps the most well-known example, but recent years have seen a rapid increase in similar publications. For example, David C. Parker’s monograph on Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis (D 05), titled *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and Its Text*, is a landmark publication. In addition to a study of its text, Parker combined aspects of its palaeographical, orthographical, and codicological elements to shed light on the scribe and history of the manuscript. The success of this study can be seen in the number of similar publications that followed, such as Dirk Jongkind’s work on Codex Sinaiticus (א 01), Paul Canart’s analysis of Codex Vaticanus (B 03), and most recently W. Andrew Smith’s study of Codex Alexandrinus (A 02).

---

6 Kathleen McNamee, ed., *Abbreviations in Greek Literary Papyri and Ostraca*, BASPSup 3 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1981), xi. See also Michael Avi-Yonah, *Abbreviations in Greek Inscriptions (The Near East, 200 B.C.–A.D. 1100)* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1940), 21–28. It is worth noting that such suspended forms of the nomina sacra do in fact occur in some Christian manuscripts (e.g., P45 and Egerton 2 papyrus), but they are not common.


cumulative effect these studies have had on the field is the recognition that physical aspects of manuscripts—not simply the texts they carry—are worthy of study in their own right, and they can illuminate a great deal about a manuscript’s history, composition, and role in the ancient Christian worship setting.

The present study fits within this context of investigating the physical and visual features of NT manuscripts, even as the issue of scribal number-writing techniques has not featured prominently in these scholarly discussions. The above studies are important for our purposes, however, because they clearly describe the important elements of the emerging Christian “material and visual culture” of which, as we will see, number writing forms an important part.

**2.2 Numerals in New Testament Research**

A handful of scholars have seen the potential value in the analysis of scribal number-styles, but, to date, no focused study on the subject in NT manuscripts has been conducted. Discussions of the issue have always been brief, usually imprecise, and rarely systematic; nevertheless, many important observations have been made that invite further research. What follows, therefore, is not intended to be an exhaustive account of every scholarly note involving number-forms in NT manuscripts, but a description of the most significant contributions to our knowledge of the practice.

**2.2.1 Pre-modern Studies**

Before the modern era, many readers of the NT were aware that numbers, especially when abbreviated, could easily be misunderstood and miscopied by

---

scribes. For example, in discussing a textual variant of Rev 13:18 in which the Number of the Beast was given as 616 rather than the expected 666, Irenaeus (ca. second century) proposed that the variant wording had been caused by the misreading of a poorly written numeral. He suggested that the second letter of \( \chi\xi\zeta\zeta \) (= 666) was written in such a way that an inattentive copyist mistook it for \( \chi\iota\zeta\zeta \) (= 616).  

Irenaeus states, “I am inclined to think that this has occurred through a scribal error as can happen since the numbers are expressed by letters so that the letter \( \iota \) was expanded into \( \iota \).”  

Thus, when written as a symbol, the number \( \chi\xi\zeta\zeta \) was easily distorted, but, if the number were written longhand (\( \varepsilon\xi\alpha\kappa\omicron\omicron\varsigma \omicron \varepsilon\varsigma \)), the same mistake would (presumably) not have been made; and he seems to suggest this sort of error happened with some regularity.

Another interesting example comes from the writings of Jerome (ca. fourth/fifth century), who offered an explanation for the discrepancy between the specific hour of Jesus’s death as recorded in the Gospels of Mark (“the third hour”, 15:25) and John (“the sixth hour”, 19:14). Jerome suggests that Mark’s Gospel originally read “the sixth hour,” just like John’s, but that a copyist had confused the numerals \( \chi\varsigma\varsigma \) (= \( \varepsilon\xi\kappa\tau\eta \)) for \( \Gamma \) (= \( \tau\rho\iota\tau\eta \)) and corrupted the true reading: “The error was on the part of the scribes, for originally in Mark the sixth hour, likewise, was written, but many thought there was a \( \gamma\mu\alpha \) instead of an \( \varepsilon\pi\iota\si\mu\omicron\omicron \), the Greek number

---


11 Birdsall’s translation of Irenaeus, Haer. 5.30.1 (which might be a later interpolation): “Hoc autem arbitror scriptorum peccatum fuisse, ut solet fieri, quoniam et per litteras numeri ponuntur, facile littera graeca quae sexaginta enuntiat numerum in iota Graecorum litteram expansa” (Birdsall, “Irenaeus and the Number of the Beast,” 352). See also Birdsall on the curious final line, “numerum in iota Graecorum litteram expansa,” which is actually not at all straightforward; how exactly could a \( \iota \) “expand” into an \( \iota \)? The reverse seems more likely. For the text, see Adelin Rousseau, ed., Irénée de Lyon Contre les Hérésies, Livre 5, SC 153 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1969), 2:372.
sign.”

Jerome’s explanation hinges on the shorthand forms of the ordinal numbers. He takes it as a matter of course that copyists would have both used shorthand for such numbers and confused them often. So, already in the first few centuries of Christianity, readers of NT manuscripts recognized that the particular forms of numbers could at times cause unwanted disruptions in textual transmission, and they appealed to the mechanics of number-writing to account for what they believed to be spurious readings.

### 2.2.2 Henry A. Sanders

About a century ago Henry A. Sanders made the first substantial examination of scribal number-writing styles in a given manuscript. When Sanders published the *editio princeps* of Codex Washingtonianus (W 032) in 1912, he argued that the codex had been pulled together from several unrelated exemplars. This was suggested by the manuscript’s curious assortment of disparate textual affinities that effectively resembled a patchwork composition. For example, while he saw that the Gospel of Matthew was Byzantine in textual character (though he used different terminology), the Gospel of John was clearly Alexandrian in text-type; Luke 1:1–8:12 was also essentially Alexandrian, but Luke 8:13–24:53 was Byzantine, and so on. Sanders’s

---


key observation was that there were similar changes in *scribal techniques* that accompanied each change in textual affinity. Among these changes in scribal technique were certain forms and frequencies of the *nomina sacra* contractions, the use of paragraph breaks, and, importantly for our study, the use of numerical abbreviations.

Sanders found that the scribe of W consistently avoided using numerical abbreviations in the Byzantine portions of the codex and only used longhand numbers; but, in other portions of the manuscript, such as the two text blocks of Mark’s Gospel (1:1–5:30; 5:31–16:20), the scribe was happy to use dozens of numerical abbreviations. Other such distinctions are also evident in the Gospels of John and Luke. These shifts in scribal technique, along with the other features noted above, indicated to Sanders that the scribe had copied numerals over directly from the various exemplars as he found them without altering their form (whether longhand or shorthand). In short, therefore, the shifting preferences of number writing in Codex W could confidently be said to reflect the contents of the source-text(s).

Unfortunately, Sanders did not account for all the relevant data and overlooked many numbers; we will address such quibbles in due course. Still, these omissions do not nullify his argument for the patchwork hypothesis, which remains persuasive and has not (to my knowledge) been surpassed.\(^\text{14}\) Thus, one result of Sanders’s study is that it was discovered (though not fully appreciated) that number-writing styles, when viewed as an individual scribe’s technique, could indicate

something about a manuscript’s history, and they might suggest how the strictly the
copyist followed the exemplar texts. We will, therefore, take care to look for similar
patterns in our investigation of other manuscripts.

2.2.3 H. J. M. Milne and T. C. Skeat

A different use of number-styles can be found in the work of H. J. M. Milne and T.
C. Skeat, librarians in the British Library who published the foundational study of
Codex Sinaiticus. Specifically, Milne and Skeat believed that the scribe’s number-
writing styles were indicative of a particular date of the manuscript’s creation,
namely, the mid-fourth century. Based on a survey of symbols used for numbers in
the thousands in explicitly dated papyri from the fourth-century, they observed that

In the course of the fourth century the old method of representing the figures
1,000–9,000 by the ordinary cardinal numbers for 1–9 with a surmounting curl
or crest (e.g. $\bar{A} = 1,000$, $\bar{B} = 2,000$, etc.) gradually went out of fashion, the curl
being replaced by a simple slanting stroke to the left of the numeral (e.g., 'A,
or 'A = 1,000).\(^{15}\)

They concluded that this transition occurred between 338–360 CE. The presence of
both methods in Sinaiticus seemed to confirm that the codex was created in this
period of transition; Skeat later softened on this stance somewhat.\(^{16}\) This discussion
is only of limited relevance for our study, however, as there are only a handful of
numerical abbreviations for values in the thousands in NT manuscripts, and none in
Sinaiticus (those observed by Milne and Skeat were in 1 Maccabees). Unfortunately,
Milne and Skeat did not devote their attention to the preferences of number writing

---

\(^{15}\) Milne and Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors*, 62.

\(^{16}\) I should like to repeat here that the statistics quoted are only a hasty collection which makes no
claim to be exhaustive; another late instance of the use of the older system is BGU 940, of A.D. 398”
(T. C. Skeat et al., “Bibliography: Graeco-Roman Egypt Part I: Papyrology [1938],” *JEA* 25 [1938]:
70–93 [86]). Nevertheless, the original argument from *Scribes and Correctors* was affirmed and
followed by others such as Colin H. Roberts, *Greek Literary Hands*: 350 B.C.–A.D. 400 (Oxford:
among the different scribes of Sinaiticus, nor did they observe how numbers are written elsewhere in the codex more generally. As it will be discussed in chapter 4, however, Codex Sinaiticus exhibits a remarkable pattern of numerical abbreviations that invites a close investigation. Still, their argument about the date of Sinaiticus, whether persuasive or not, represents a novel use of scribal number-styles and suggests that a similar method could be used to study other manuscripts.

2.2.4 Colin H. Roberts

The published volume of Schweich Lectures given by Colin H. Roberts, titled *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt*, represents one of the most important examinations of early NT and OT papyri as physical artifacts that illuminate the birth and development of Christianity in Egypt. This study is perhaps most famous for its attention to the *nomina sacra*, which Roberts forcefully argued were uniquely Christian and therefore critical for our understanding of the worship practices of the early church. In another chapter in that publication, titled “Evidence from the Papyri,” Roberts brought into focus many other scribal characteristics of the papyri and their putative sources of origin. Indeed, numerous features of early Christian manuscripts appear to share strong connections to Greek documentary papyri rather than the more formal literary texts. (Broadly speaking, “documents” in this context refers to texts such as private letters, receipts, clerical paperwork,

---

17 Another novel use of numerals by Milne and Skeat was to argue for the dictation theory of Codex Sinaiticus from a seemingly inexplicable collocation of four nonsensical numbers and letters in 1 Macc 5:20 (Η̅ϘΗ̅Ͱ͑), maintaining that the confusion arose due to difficulties in oral dictation (Milne and Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors*, 57). This particular argument, however, lies outside our purview; for a response, see Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*, 251–52, and Zachary J. Cole, “A Paleographical Problem with Milne and Skeat’s Dictation Theory of Codex Sinaiticus,” *JBL* 152 (forthcoming).

18 Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*. 

---

Roberts observed, for example, that Christian scribes often enlarged initial letters and jutted them into the margin in order to denote a sense-unit in the text (called ekthesis)—a practice found in documentary papyri but not in copies of Greek literature. Other similar features are informal and semi-cursive scripts, the practice of leaving spaces between words or groups of words, and, quite importantly, the use of abbreviated numerals. All of these observations led Roberts to assert that:

From this survey of the externals of our earliest Christian manuscripts we can conclude that their writing is based, with some changes and with a few exceptions, on the model of the documents, not on that of Greek classical manuscripts nor on that of the Greco-Jewish tradition.\footnote{Roberts, Manuscript, Society and Belief, 20.}

Thus, the use of abbreviated numbers was one item among many that led to Roberts’s larger point about the scribal quality of early Christian papyri.\footnote{Roberts, Manuscript, Society and Belief, 13–15. Specifically, the NT papyri he was describing were P4, P32, P52, P64-67, and P77, plus some OT and noncanonical papyri.}

Roberts actually credited the papyrologist Eric G. Turner as the first to observe that the number-writing techniques of Christian manuscripts differed from those in Greek literary manuscripts. According to Turner, “I know of only one Greek book manuscript (an unpublished papyrus of Strabo) in which figures are not written out in full, but given in numerical notation.” He went on, “Only if a literary manuscript were treated as a careless private copy or were copied by a Christian
scribe would one expect to find abbreviations of this kind.” No particular study was cited to this effect, but we have no reason to doubt that this is an accurate description of the evidence. The use of numerical shorthand in early Christian manuscripts is therefore reflective of the sub-literary register of scribal activity in which they were produced.

Although Roberts’s general argument about the documentary quality of early Christian manuscripts is not, for our present purposes, in dispute, it is necessary to point out that his discussion of alphabetic numerals was brief and imprecise. Let us examine it in detail. First, Roberts observed that—in some Christian papyri—the use of abbreviated numerals was “not invariable,” meaning that both number systems (longhand and shorthand) were evidently used interchangeably and inconsistently. This observation itself is absolutely correct, but it is accompanied by a perplexing footnote: “[For example], in the Bodmer St. John [= P66]; here the scribe with the eccentricity that characterizes him uses both systems, cf. 5:5 with 6:10 or 8:57.” The verses cited by Roberts indeed show that P66 contains both longhand and shorthand numbers, but the label of “eccentricity” is rather misleading. As it will be shown in later chapters, many early NT manuscripts contain a startling mixture of abbreviations and longhand number-forms. Even a brief examination of P135, P147, or P115, for example—all of which contain far more variability in number-forms—will reveal that P66 is not in the least eccentric in this regard. On the contrary, P66 exhibits relatively few deviations from the normal mode of longhand numbers.

23 Roberts, Manuscript, Society and Belief, 18.
Second, that same footnote continues with another problematic statement: “In the Bodmer Luke/John codex [= P75] only the thousands are written out while δύο and τρεῖϲ are expressed in symbols.” It is unclear if Roberts meant to say that δύο and τρεῖϲ are always or only sometimes written as symbols in P75, but the former seems to be the implication. Either way, this assertion is also misleading; as we will see in chapter 3, δύο and τρεῖϲ are written plene repeatedly throughout the codex.24

Third, Roberts noted that numerical abbreviations can be found in later codices, namely Vaticanus (B 03) and Sinaiticus (א 01), which illustrates how the practices among the papyri persisted for centuries even in manuscripts created outside of Egypt.25 In the case of Sinaiticus, this observation is incisively accurate; this manuscript evidences a liberal use of numerical shorthand. In the case Vaticanus, however, it is necessary to note that—in its NT portion at least—only one exceptional use of a numerical abbreviation is used among the myriad of longhand numbers. This scribal tendency conflicts starkly with what Roberts intimated; on the contrary, it is remarkable how consistently the scribe of Vaticanus avoided using numerical abbreviations.26

Fourth, as quoted above, Roberts observed that the Christian practice of using numerical symbols stands in contrast to that of Jewish manuscripts of the LXX/OG and high quality copies of Greek literature—both of which, as a rule, show numbers written fully. He cited in particular three Greek manuscripts of the OT in which

---


26 Although multiple scribes were involved in the production of Codex Vaticanus, it seems that only one was responsible for the NT portion; see Canart, “Le Vatikanus graecus 1209,” 19–45, and Milne and Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors*, 88.
“numbers are regularly written out.”

27 Roberts did not cite any publication that dealt with the subject, and we are left to assume that his comment was based on his own examination. This is somewhat unsettling because we have just seen that his comments on the practice in NT manuscripts were at best imprecise and at worst incorrect. Frankly, the three OT papyri he referred to contain a grand total of twenty-two numerals in their extant texts—hardly a representative sample of Jewish scribal practice.

28 By comparison, the Chester Beatty papyrus manuscript of Numbers-Deuteronomy (P. Beatty VI), generally regarded as Christian in origin, contains well over three hundred visible numerals; and this is just papyrus one of many.

Nevertheless, this distinction between scribal styles is important. If Christians alone used numerical abbreviations in their copies of Scripture, two significant implications present themselves: (1) This would reinforce and add to what we know of a distinctive Christian “visual and material culture” that can be distinguished from contemporaries, and (2) it would suggest that numerical abbreviations might be a possible criterion by which one can determine the provenance of Greek copies of the OT, as either Christian or Jewish. Regarding this latter point, one of the notable difficulties in LXX/OG studies is in determining which manuscripts should be classified as Christian and which should be classified as Jewish in origin. And if Roberts was indeed correct about the consistent use of longhand numbers in Jewish

---

27 Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 19. This is cited by Peter M. Head, “The Date of the Magdalen Papyrus of Matthew (P. Magd. Gr. 17 = P64): A Response to C. P. Thiede,” *TynBul* 46 (1995): 251–85 (275): “A further important factor is the use in P64 of abbreviated symbols to represent numbers (frag. 3 verso line 2: ἰβ for διδοκα). This is not found in either the Greek literary manuscript tradition or in Jewish manuscripts of the Greek Old Testament (where numbers were written in full), but it is characteristic of early Christian manuscripts from Egypt.”

28 He explicitly cites *P. Fouad inv.* 266 (10 visible numerals), the Qumran Leviticus/4Q119/LXXLev² (two visible numerals), and the Minor Prophets scroll from Nahal Hever (10 visible numerals); for more details, see chapter 6 of this thesis.
manuscripts, scholars might gain an additional tool with which to sort the tangled collection of texts from this period. Accordingly, one chapter of the present study will examine the Greek copies of OT scriptures with a view toward testing to see if this distinction between scribal styles is valid.

Thus, for the most part, Roberts’s observations effectively highlight some of the major questions that surround the issue of number-writing, such as its origins in documentary practices, its variable usage among Christian texts, and its apparent absence from Jewish manuscripts of Scripture. It is clear, however, that Roberts only had a limited awareness of this feature in specific manuscripts, and his study suffered from a lack of accuracy in the details. For these reasons many of his assertions will be revisited and refined in later chapters.

2.2.5 David C. Parker

In the detailed investigation of Codex Bezae (D 05) mentioned above, David C. Parker gives a brief examination of the number-writing styles of Bezae’s copyist. One of Parker’s stated aims in the book is to “explore what can be found out about the ancestors of D, in particular its exemplar, and in examining how the scribe of D worked.”29 This entails a close examination of the scribe’s orthography, of which numerals and numerical shorthand form a part. The inconsistent use of numerical shorthand in Bezae does not fit into Parker’s major arguments about the history of the codex. Parker’s main theses are that the text of Acts in D derived from a different exemplar than that of the Gospels (inferred from differences in sense-line arrangements), and that the exemplar for the Gospels was the work of two different scribes working in succession (inferred from changes in orthography). But after an

29 Parker, Codex Bezae, 75.
examination of the numerals in D, he concludes, “the numerals present a problem…. I have no explanation for any of this.”30 Indeed, the numerals in Bezae do not seem to conform to any sort of discernible pattern.

It is important to note that such an appeal to number-writing styles in D 05 essentially follows the lead of Sanders in his work on Washingtonianus, in which numerals positively revealed information about the manuscript’s history and exemplar texts. Unlike W, however, D’s use of abbreviations does not appear to either confirm or contradict the Parker’s hypothesis concerning the manuscript’s exemplars.

More can be done in this area, however. First, Parker presents a limited account of the numerals in Bezae; statistics are given for “seven,” “eight,” “ten,” and “twelve,” but there are many other numbers to be observed. Second, we have seen that scribal numbering techniques can be and have been used for more than simply evaluating a scribe’s adherence to exemplar texts. There are, therefore, several questions that could be pursued in greater detail. Why, for instance, does a fifth-century codex such as D contain so many numerical abbreviations when others from that era contain so few, if any at all (e.g., A 02, B 03, C 04)?31 Why does the Gospel of John in D exhibit so few abbreviations compared to the other Gospels? Is there a relationship between the use (and nonuse) of abbreviations and Bezae’s arrangement into sense-units rather than full paragraphs? A more thorough investigation of the numerals in D will enable the pursuit of these and other questions.

---

30 Parker, *Codex Bezae*, 115 (see also 111).

2.2.6 T. C. Skeat

The subject of numerical abbreviations briefly came into view in T. C. Skeat’s reconstruction of the second-century papyrus fragments P⁴, P⁶⁴, and P⁶⁷. In an oft-cited article titled “The Oldest Manuscript of the Four Gospels?,” Skeat argued that these three papyri were originally part of the same manuscript, and, in addition, that they are the remains of the first codex containing all four canonical Gospels. This hypothesis, if sound, would be an amazing insight into the text of the NT in the second century. Nevertheless, Skeat’s reasoning has been criticized on a number of points, and it is not necessary here to dissect the whole of his argument (though in a later chapter I will offer more comment). What is interesting, however, is how the issue of number-writing styles introduces a degree of doubt into Skeat’s argument.

A large part of Skeat’s argument rested on his reconstruction of P⁶⁴ (containing parts of Matthew 26), which he used as a template to calculate the space between it and the end of Matthew’s Gospel (i.e., chaps. 26–28). Specifically, he offered a hypothetical reconstruction of one full page of P⁶⁴, counted its number of letters per page, then used this (hypothetical) total to calculate how many such pages would be needed to complete the book of Matthew. This led Skeat to conclude that “the remainder of the Gospel would have occupied 10,115/2,267 = 4.46 leaves, i.e. 4 complete leaves, with the Gospel ending just before the foot of col. 2 of the fifth leaf.” He then specified the precise point at which the Gospel ended: “probably about 3 or 4 lines from the foot, leaving enough space for the colophon.”

---


degree of detail was crucial to Skeat’s argument because the exact location of Matthew’s ending suggested that Luke—which by the same kind of calculation from $P^4$ must have begun at the top of column 1 on its leaf—could not have followed immediately; the scribe, he claimed, would not have left two whole empty columns between the end of Matthew and the beginning of Luke. Skeat proposed, therefore, that another Gospel must have originally stood between Matthew and Luke (John?). And since a three Gospel codex would be “unthinkable” (according to Skeat), this must have originally been a four Gospel codex.\(^{34}\)

But how did Skeat calculate numerals in the reconstructed text of $P^{64}$, as longhand words or as abbreviations? Although this may seem to be a minor point, Matthew 26–28 contains no fewer than thirty-one numbers, roughly ten per chapter.\(^{35}\) Skeat saw that $P^{64}$ contained a numerical abbreviation (Matt 26:14) and then applied this form for all the other numbers in the hypothetical reconstruction of Matthew 26–28: “I have followed the practice of the scribe in writing numbers as numerals [= abbreviations],” and later, “Using the text of $\text{NA}^{27}$ and making allowances for the *nomina sacra* used by the scribe and for numbers written as numerals, I calculate that the remaining portion of the Gospel after the end of the reconstructed leaf contains about 10,115 letters.”\(^{36}\) Again, this level of specificity was crucial for Skeat’s argument to work, but was it correct to assume that the scribe would be consistent in abbreviating all numbers? Remarkably, even Skeat admitted his own misgivings about this: “At Matt 26:14 I have printed $\tilde{\tau} \omega \nu\bar{\iota}$, but I have

---


35 That is, thirty-one cardinal and ordinal numbers. Although Skeat does not explicitly say so, it is clear from his reconstruction that he calculated all ordinals as abbreviations (e.g., Matt 26:17; col. 2, ln. 26); see Skeat, “The Oldest Manuscript?,” 12.

some doubts about this since I believe that scribes, though perfectly happy to use
umerals [= abbreviations], disliked aggregations of them.” Such skepticism is
laudable. As we will see in subsequent chapters, NT scribes were seldom predictable
in their choice of number-style, and utmost caution ought to be used when
reconstructing texts containing numbers. In spite of his own stated hesitation,
however, Skeat dubiously calculated all of the thirty-one numerals as abbreviations
rather than full words or a mixture of both, which was without any doubt a serious—
and fatal—error. Even a minor alteration in how the numerals are calculated
compromises the precise (hypothetical) ending of Matthew, which destroys the
crucial link to Luke, and in turn negates the whole argument.

The simple point to be made about this complicated argument is that Skeat’s
calculations were overly precise given the uncertainty of scribal number-writing
techniques (not to mention the possibility of substantial textual variants from the
NA^* text). The presence of one abbreviation in P^64 is not a sufficient basis upon
which to make presumptions about every other number in the book. Several of
Skeat’s mistakes could have been avoided by a study that clearly outlined typical
number-techniques of Christian scribes. For example, the present study will
demonstrate that NT scribes did not abbreviate the number “one,” but consistently
used the longhand form; this tendency is so reliable that not a single example can be
found in any manuscript up through the fifth century. And yet Skeat reconstructed
several such numbers in this way in his edition (e.g., Matt 26:14, 21, 22), and
calculated several others Matthew 26–28 in this way assuming that they were also

38 Skeat’s thesis has been criticized on similar grounds by Peter M. Head, “Is P^4, P^64 and P^67 the
similarly abbreviated (e.g., 26:40, 47, 69; 27:14, 15, 38 [2x], 48, 63; 28:1). A similar critique can be made of his dubious treatment of ordinal numbers. Hopefully our analysis will allow for other refinements.

2.2.7 Kim Haines-Eitzen

Another scholar who has recognized the importance of numerical abbreviations is Kim Haines-Eitzen. In her monograph on the scribal contexts of early Christian papyri, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature*, Haines-Eitzen draws attention to the use of numerical shorthand as an indication of the social background of copyists of Christian books.39 Her larger concern is to demonstrate that most early Christian copyists were evidently trained in or at least capable of both documentary and literary styles of writing—what she calls scribal “multifunctionality.” The use of alphabetic numerals is one feature among many that indicates Christian scribes were comfortable with and accustomed to a documentary style of writing even though they produced what is essentially a literary hand. Haines-Eitzen has admittedly drawn from the previous work of Roberts and Turner, who laid the important groundwork (see above), but she offers valuable refinements and additions of her own. She notes, for example, that P⁴⁵ and P⁶⁶ show a clear preference for longhand number-forms and only occasionally resort to symbols, while, on the other hand, P⁷⁵ and P⁴⁷ contain regular use of numerical shorthand. Moreover, she suggests the provocative comparison of P⁶⁶ and P⁷⁵ in their overlapping text of John’s Gospel; the differences between the two are numerous and invite a thorough investigation. Although brief, Haines-Eitzen’s discussion of the

practice is important because she cites particular examples of verses in which two (or
more) manuscripts differ in their choice of number-style. Comparisons such as this
have the potential to reveal points of similarity or diversity in scribal techniques of
the early manuscript tradition.\textsuperscript{40}

Haines-Eitzen also finds it significant that, whereas many NT papyri contain
these documentary features, the same is not true of Jewish manuscripts of the Greek
OT or of well-copied manuscripts of Greek literature. Again, this very well might
point to and reinforce our conception of a distinctive scribal style that characterized
the early Christian “book culture” in contrast to other groups of that era, but a more
thorough analysis is required to rely on it as fact.

The larger point made by Haines-Eitzen, that most Christian papyri fit
squarely in the overlap between literary and documentary styles, is well taken, but
this does not change the fact that several questions remain unanswered. Can the
postulation of “documentary influence” adequately account for the presence and
frequency of numerical abbreviations that we find in NT manuscripts? This question
is worth asking because some comparable scribal features have proven to be
deceptive in this regard. The \textit{nomina sacra}, for example, are abbreviations—typically
a feature of documentary papyri—but they are not a pragmatic technique to conserve
space; rather, most scholars maintain that they reflect a theological and devotional
practice.\textsuperscript{41} Similarly, the use of \textit{ekthesis} (projecting initial letters into the margin) and

\textsuperscript{40} A minor correction to a comment made by Haines-Eitzen to the effect that numerical
abbreviations occur “in all of our early Christian papyri” is the simple fact that, aside from page
numeration, they are not in fact used in several early papyri such as P\textsuperscript{46} and P\textsuperscript{72} (Haines-Eitzen,

\textsuperscript{41} This point has, of course, been contested, however; see, for example, Tuckett, “Nomina Sacra’:
Yes and No?,” 431–58.
paragraph breaks are akin to techniques of documentary papyri, but these were intended to denote sense units, facilitate public reading, and enable proper understanding of the text, they do not simply represent unconscious relapses into documentary practice. Furthermore, identical features of text division can be found in Jewish scriptural manuscripts from the Judean Desert, suggesting that the source of influence for Christian scribes was not solely documentary papyri. In much the same way, there are several indications that the use of shorthand numbers is not simply a vestige of documentary techniques. For one, we will see that scribes occasionally employ numerical shorthand, but sometimes just once or twice in an entire codex; if the aim was to conserve space, why not abbreviate all or most of the numbers? We will see that most copyists did not abbreviate even the most frequently occurring numerals. In sum, Christian scribes seem to have employed a very restricted version of the alphabetic numeral system. An inductive study of the practice will permit a more nuanced understanding of the subject at hand and its role in the wider context of scribal techniques.

2.2.8 James R. Royse

The subject of number-style appears and reappears on several occasions within James Royse’s exhaustive study of the scribal habits of early papyri.\textsuperscript{42} For Royse, “scribal habits” mainly entails the manner in which a copyist handled his or her exemplar text and what changes were made in the process of transcription; he does not focus on the use of abbreviations except insofar as they shed light on the nature and causes of errors. There is, therefore, no systematic analysis of the number-writing habits of these early NT papyri in his study. For Royse, the value of

\textsuperscript{42} Royse, \textit{Scribal Habits}.

numerical shorthand is its occasional utility in explaining the rise of scribal errors (and usually only in the case of singular readings). In John 12:1, for example, the scribe of P⁶⁶ originally wrote πεντε but quickly corrected it to the expected number ἕξ. To explain this, Royse proposes that the scribe saw ἕξ in the exemplar and misread it as the numeral ε (= 5), perhaps misled by the rough breathing mark or an exaggerated xi. Immediately recognizing the error when trying to make sense of the (now meaningless) letter xi, the scribe deleted the unnecessary letters πεν and overwrote τε with εξ. This hypothesis in particular is sound and sufficiently explains the rise of the original error,⁴³ but elsewhere Royse appears to stretch the evidence too far. On a number of occasions, for instance, he attempts to explain an error by supposing that a numerical abbreviation stood in the exemplar but the copyist “failed to see [its] meaning.”⁴⁴ This is supposed to account for the glaring omissions of both πέντε and δῦο from Mark 6:41 in P⁴⁵. At first glance this might seem attractive, but an examination of the numbers in P⁴⁵ shows that the scribe himself employs several numerical abbreviations elsewhere in the codex, and both πέντε and δῦο were already written correctly earlier in the immediate context (Mark 6:38), rendering this solution wholly unsatisfactory.

It is certainly legitimate to consider the possibility that variable number forms contributed to specific scribal errors, in fact this is advisable (and has been done since at least the time of Irenaeus), but it is unrealistic to say that early Christian

---


⁴⁴ Royse, Scribal Habits, 134 n. 150; see also 372 and 588 n. 237; the latter example regards the omission of ὄκρο from 1 Pet 3:20 in P⁴⁵: “Perhaps this was written as a letter (ἡ’), which the scribe did not understand.”
scribes simply did not understand many numerical abbreviations. A more
systematized approach to this scribal habit might have allowed a more secure
proposal. This is a good example of the need for the present study; an inductive
analysis of all manuscripts and their numbers will reveal what specific practices were
current in the NT period, which numbers were problematic, and what a typical
copyist would have been comfortable or familiar with.45

2.2.9 Peter M. Head

In a 2008 publication, Peter M. Head conducts an investigation of the second Gospel
in Codex Sinaiticus that includes attention to scribal number-writing style.46 Head’s
larger aim is “to investigate the way in which the Greek text of Mark is presented in
Codex Sinaiticus,” which involves discussions of quire formation, paragraphing,
*nomina sacra*, Eusebian sections, and singular readings. Focusing on the scribe’s
number-writing techniques, Head notices the changing use of numerical
abbreviations and entertains an intriguing possibility of a deliberate scribal pattern of
shorthand. The symbol form of twelve ((buff) is normally used to refer to the disciples
(e.g., 3:14, 16; 4:10; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11), except when Judas is present, in which
cases the *plene* form is used (e.g., 14:10, 20, 43). Head observes that this would seem
to indicate that the copyist reserved the abbreviation for a “positive portrayal of the

45 In contrast, Dirk Jongkind recognizes the possibility that a variable number form could lead to a
scribal error, but he does not fall into the trap of assuming that the scribe did not understand the form
in question: “The age of Anna in Luke 2:37 is given in Sinaiticus as ἐβδομηκοντα τεσσαραυν instead of
ογδοηκοντα τεσσαραυν. There is no obvious explanation for the origin of this variant. If the exemplar
had the numerals written as letters the scribe must have read ὀᾶ for ὀᾶ” (Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*,
236). See also Bernhard Weiss, *Die Johannes-Apokalypse: Textkritische Untersuchungen und
Textherstellung*, TU 7/1 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1891), 62, who identifies numerals that would have been
easily confused.

46 Peter M. Head, “The Gospel of Mark in Codex Sinaiticus: Textual and Reception-Historical
twelve,” and the presence of Judas (as in 14:10–12) with the twelve “somehow contaminates the concept,” resulting in the longhand form. In the end, Head concedes that there is too little consistency to establish this pattern reliably; the abbreviated form is used, for example, in reference to “twelve years” in 5:42. The alternative conclusion is that the copyist(s) “exercised considerable freedom in relation to the deployment of numerical abbreviations in the text.” This is then confirmed by Head’s examination of other numbers as they occur in Mark: δύο, τρεῖς, τέσσαρες, πέντε, ἐξ, ἕπτα, ἰδέα, τριάκοντα, ἐξήκοντα, ἕκατον, which demonstrate “considerable variation” in number-forms. (Head also notes that larger numbers such as διακόσιοι, τριακόσιοι, δισεκάτικοι, τετρακισεκάτικοι, and πεντακισεκάτικοι are consistently longhand.)

Head’s analysis is one of the more thorough studies of the number-writing techniques in a given manuscript of the NT, even as his primary aim in that article is much broader. There are two notable strengths of his study: (1) The systematic treatment of all numbers within a given span (i.e., the Gospel of Mark in Sinaiticus) rather than a handful of numbers, and (2) the sensitivity to referent and context as potentially significant factors in the copyist’s choice of number-style. On the first point (1), we have seen that many previous studies suffer from selectivity and lack of systematization; often only a handful of values are examined and then only some of their occurrences. Without any doubt, this sort of approach will lead to a distorted representation of a scribe’s actual practice. Regarding the latter point (2), the initial hypothesis Head identifies is not confirmed, but that does not mean similar routes will necessarily lead to dead ends. We will see that the scribe of Sinaiticus does

---

indeed reserve numerical symbols for a particular referent, though the pattern in question is not evident in the text of Mark. That is why a study of a scribe’s number-writing method should incorporate all numbers in all parts of a given manuscript with an eye toward both referent and context.

### 2.2.10 Tommy Wasserman

Tommy Wasserman conducts a similar investigation of number-writing styles on a smaller scale. In an essay on the early Greek text of Matthew’s Gospel, Wasserman devotes some discussion to a problematic reading involving a number in the fragmentary manuscript P⁴⁵, a third-century witness to the Gospels and Acts.⁴⁸ Scholars have proposed a variety of reconstructions of one line in P⁴⁵ for which only a handful of letters are now extant (Matt 26:15–16; folio 2, recto, line 33). The array of possible reconstructions is due in part to the question of whether the number τριάκοντα was written by the copyist in full or in shorthand (as λ̅). The significance of this seemingly trivial point is its implication for what else could fit on the line in question; if, for instance, the number was written plene, there would not be sufficient room for all the expected words (and an omission must be presumed). If, on the other hand, the number was written as an abbreviation, there is evidently no need to propose the omission of a word (e.g., αὐτῷ, καὶ)—the difference between the two forms totals no less than eight letters.

The key weakness with other attempts at the reconstruction of this line is that the choice between abbreviation and longhand has apparently been made on the basis of intuition or perhaps even convenience; that is, no survey of the practice of

---

number-writing in P⁴⁵ informed the process of reconstruction.⁴⁹ In contrast, Wasserman bases his decision on an investigation of the numbers in P⁴⁵: “My examination shows that the scribe uses either cardinal numbers [= full words?] or numerals [= abbreviations?] for the numbers 12, 15, 18, 40, and 72, so the question is open.”⁵⁰ Further, this statement is accompanied by a footnote detailing the number-forms of P⁴⁵ with specific verse references. In the end, Wasserman’s caution is laudable here. He is certainly correct to note that the scribe of P⁴⁵ used both number-systems, and the number “twelve” in particular occurs as both a symbol and full word, so any reconstruction would be pure conjecture. It is a wonder that the previous scholars who proposed readings here did not conduct (or at least they failed to mention) similar examinations of numbers in P⁴⁵ to justify their decisions. Again, this is admittedly a minor point, but it reveals how a thorough study of these scribal practices can refine our reconstructions, strengthen our transcriptions, and avoid pronouncements of certainty where there are insufficient grounds for it.

2.2.11 Numerical Shorthand in Chronological Development

Another important issue related to the use of numerals in NT manuscripts is that of chronological development. At some point Christian scribes stopped using numerical shorthand as a substitute for number-words. When and how did this actually happen? Since, of course, alphabetic numerals and documentary-style writing seem to go hand in hand, it is usually assumed that when this register of scribal style fell into

---

⁴⁹ It appears that one other scholar, Augustus Merk, made a similar survey, though it seems to have been incomplete; see Augustus Merk, S. J., “Codex Evangeliorum et Actuum ex Collectione Papyrorum Chester Beatty,” in Miscellanea Biblica, ed. Pontifical Biblical Institute (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1934), 2:375–406 (378). For references to other reconstructions, see Wasserman, “The Early Text of Matthew,” 92, as well as the discussion in chapter 3 of this thesis.

disuse—during the rise of the formal bookhand in NT manuscripts—so did numerical abbreviations. This would mean that within calligraphic productions such as Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus we should find an absence of—or at least a decline in—the use of numerical shorthand. It has already been hinted above, however, that this is not entirely true. We will, therefore, attempt to track the chronological development of the practice and identify any relationship it might have with documentary and reformed documentary styles of writing.

2.3 Numerals Outside the New Testament

Finally, we should make note of extra-biblical sources that indicate Christian use of and interest in numerical shorthand. In particular, scholars have recognized that abbreviated numerals are a significant—even if mysterious—feature of Christian documentary papyri from Egypt. Specifically, it has long been known that in private letters of correspondence and in other similar documents, Christians employed a host of ciphers, monograms, crosses, nomina sacra, and symbolic numbers to express a variety of things. A prime example is the numeral 99, written ϙθ̅, which appears in several texts as a cryptic symbol for the word “amen.” This is an example of isopsephy, the practice of adding up the numerical value of the letters in a word (equivalent to Hebrew gematria). As David Martinez explains its presence in P.Oxy. XXXI 2601 in the Oxford Handbook of Papyrology:

The word “amen” is written in cryptogram form, ϙθ̅, that is, the numeral 99, the numerical value of the letters of the word spelled in full (α = 1 + μ = 40 + η = 8

51 See, for instance, John S. Kloppenborg, “Literate Media in Early Christ Groups: The Creation of a Christian Book Culture,” JECS 22 (2014): 21–59 (24–25): “In contrast to the earlier Christian papyri that will be discussed below, the great fourth-century uncial codices, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, have all the characteristics of the elite book: written scripta continua in a careful and consistent bookhand, with no ligatures or documentary characteristics...”
+ ν = 50). This isopsephism, like the obscure χρύ, becomes part of a stock of cryptograms and symbols that increasingly appear in fourth-century or later Christian documents, frequently at the beginning and end.⁵²

The precise function of these numerals in documents is debated. They could be expressions of piety, esoteric marks of solidarity with other believers, or perhaps apotropaic symbols used to ward off evil. Whatever the intended purpose these numbers might have had, however, it is agreed that they are distinctively Christian in nature. This is confirmed by the fact that they are usually accompanied by other distinguishing marks of Christian faith: e.g., nomina sacra, Christian names, crosses, acrostics, and monotheistic phraseology. Indeed, some have described the cryptogram φθ for amen as “exclusive to Christians.”⁵³

What is particularly important for our study is that this practice of isopsephy always entails the numerical shorthand for 99 rather than the longhand form ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα. Unsurprisingly, the abbreviated forms of numbers lend themselves more readily to isopsephistic connections than do longhand number-words. Thus, for early Christians in Egypt, there was a special significance attached, not simply to the value of a number, but especially to the specific abbreviated form in which that number was written.


Equally as relevant is another more recent discovery of Christian graffiti from Asian Minor. Recent archaeological discovery of a Roman basilica in the ancient city of Smyrna has uncovered a wealth of textual evidence in the form of graffiti dating as early as the first quarter of the second century CE.54 The graffiti were discovered written on and incised into layers of plaster covering foundational columns in the basement of the basilica, and their contents relate to a wide swath of social contexts and subjects. One graffito in particular is identifiably Christian and makes use of isopsephy. It reads: ις οψηφα | κύριο ω | πίς τι ω (“Equal in value: lord, 800; faith, 800”). The author here highlights the isopsephistic connection between the words lord and faith, perhaps suggesting that it is none other than “the Lord” that one should entrust one’s faith in. In any case, this inscription again confirms that Christians were engaged in numerical exegesis and highlighting numerical connections at a remarkably early date. Even more important, however, is the fact that the location of the discovery demonstrates that this numerical interest was not isolated to Egypt but it was geographically widespread; there is, therefore, a strong likelihood that this same fascination bore itself out on the pages of NT scriptures.

As the focus of this study is on Christian literary manuscripts (i.e., copies of the NT), characteristics of documentary papyri and graffiti are only of indirect relevance and will not be a major area of investigation, though we will revisit the practice of isopsephy in a later chapter. Still, the presence of these isopsephisms in Christian documents and graffiti raises important questions about Christian literary

---

54 Roger S. Bagnall, *Everyday Writing in the Graeco-Roman East*, Sather Classical Lectures 69 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 7–26. I leave aside the issue of dating, which is perhaps debatable. Bagnall identifies an inscription dated to 125/6 CE on the uppermost layer of plaster on Bay 16, while the Christian inscription in question occurs in the next layer under on Pier 100.
texts. If numerals, and specifically abbreviated numerals, formed such a theologically significant role in Christian graffiti, letters, prayers, and even commercial receipts,\textsuperscript{55} is it not conceivable that they could have served a similar role in Christian scriptural texts? Other scribal symbols and forms such as the \textit{nomina sacra}, staurograms (\textsuperscript{✝}), and christograms (\textsuperscript{☧}) do occur in Christian literary and documentary texts, and have been recognized to be significant,\textsuperscript{56} but no particular consideration has been given to the potentially symbolic use of numerical-abbreviations in early copies of the NT. This is all the more surprising when we recognize the enormous amount of numbers in Christian scriptures.

We will see that this is in fact a difficult question to answer. How can one determine that the use of a numerical symbol was theologically rather than practically motivated (or even \textit{motivated} at all)? Such difficulties should not prevent us from at least taking a close look at the practice in early manuscripts to see what patterns might emerge.

2.4 Conclusion

This survey has highlighted the major scholarly contributions to our understanding of ancient Christian number-writing techniques. By way of summary and reflection, it is worth outlining the variety of ways in which number-techniques have been studied:

\textsuperscript{55} For example, \textit{P.Mich.} VI 378, a fourth-century list of payments received at a public granary, begins on the first line with a cross, an acrostic, and an isopsephism: \textsuperscript{✝} χμυ φθ (ln. 1). For further discussion, see chapter 7 of the present thesis.

\textsuperscript{56} On staurograms and christograms in early Christian manuscripts, see Hurtado, \textit{Earliest Christian Artifacts}, 135–54.
(1) As sources of textual corruption
(2) As visual indicators of a manuscript’s history and genealogy
(3) As clues to a manuscript’s date of creation
(4) As a vestige of documentary scribal practice
(5) As a feature of a particular scribe’s style/preference
(6) As theological symbols in documentary papyri and inscriptions

This is an impressive list of ways in which number-writing techniques can be a fruitful line of inquiry. Nevertheless, the critical commentary provided throughout this chapter confirms that there is much room for improvement, refinement, and clarification. To that end, we will begin our investigation in the following chapter with an examination of numbers in the papyri.
PART ONE:

THE DATA
CHAPTER 3:
INTERNAL PROFILES OF PAPYRI

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we saw that numerals have been drawn into a variety of discussions about early Christians and their texts, and that, despite this awareness of the phenomenon, no studies have focused directly on the issue of scribal number-writing. The purpose of this and the following chapter is to survey inductively how NT scribes chose to write numbers and provide a foundation for what follows. To this end, we will isolate the number-writing techniques within individual NT manuscripts, giving primary attention to when, where, and how often our scribes employ numerical shorthand compared to longhand forms.

The following survey will identify each cardinal and ordinal number written in the body text of NT manuscripts through the fifth century. Note again that cardinal and ordinal numbers are considered, but numerical adverbs (e.g., ἑπτάκις = “seven times”) and other numerical terms are not in view; such were indeed abbreviated in the wider Graeco-Roman world, but they are consistently longhand in our manuscripts. Nor are numerals outside the text (e.g., stichoi totals, pagination, Eusebian apparatus, etc.) in view here.

In all but one instance I was able to examine photographs of the papyri in question to examine the numerals (one folio of P⁵); in this case, the editio princeps was followed.¹ For all others, manuscript images were checked against published

¹ For manuscript photographs, see the INTF website (http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace), which also provides manuscript transcriptions, and that of CSNTM (www.csntm.org).
transcriptions of the papyri, and I make note of discrepancies between them where relevant.

3.2 Major Papyri

First we examine the most substantial papyri from our period: P⁴⁵, P⁴⁶, P⁴⁷, P⁶⁶, P⁷², P⁷⁵, and P¹¹⁵.

3.2.1 P⁴⁵

3.2.1.1 Cardinal Numbers

P⁴⁵ is a third-century papyrus containing portions of the four Gospels and Acts. The great majority of its cardinal numbers are given in longhand form, with only a handful of exceptions (see table 3.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
<th>Shorthand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Matt 25:45; 26:14, 21, 22; Mark 9:5; 11:29; Luke 9:33 (3x); 10:42; 12:6, 27, 52; 13:10; 14:18; John 10:16 (2x), 41; 11:49, 50, 52; Acts 4:32; 8:24; 11:28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Matt 20:24; 26:2; Mark 6:38; Luke 9:30, 32; 10:35; 12:6, 52 (2x); Acts 9:38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Acts 10:11; 11:5; 12:4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mark 6:38; Luke 12:6, 52; 14:19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Luke 13:14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mark 8:20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Luke 9:28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Matt 26:14, 20; Mark 6:43; John 11:9</td>
<td>Mark 8:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>John 11:18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>Luke 13:11, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>Acts 7:36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td>Luke 10:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>Mark 6:37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>Mark 8:20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>Mark 6:44; 8:19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Luke 14:31 ((δεκα χιλιατων))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table indicates, most cardinal numbers in P⁴⁵ were written longhand. Only values between “twelve” and “seventy” are given in symbol form, and the scribe inconsistently handled these. For example, “fifteen” falls within this range but was written longhand (John 11:18); also, “twelve” is represented with longhand and shorthand forms: ἱβ (Mark 8:19) and δωδεκά (Matt 26:14, etc.). The number “one” (ἐἷς/µία/ἕν) is the most frequently occurring number, occurring twenty-four times, but it is never abbreviated. There are several values in the thousands, but these were not abbreviated (e.g., πεντακιςχιλιοι in Mark 6:44; 8:19; and τετρακιςχιλιοις in 8:20), even though the method of doing so was rather simple.³ In all, only five numbers are given in abbreviated form: ἱβ (Mark 8:19), ἰη (Luke 13:11, 16), µ (Acts 7:36), and ὁ (Luke 10:17), and they are evenly spread across the five books of P⁴⁵ and not concentrated in any one particular area.

There is no clear reason why these numbers in particular were abbreviated. Two of the five fall at the end of their respective lines (Mark 8:19; Luke 10:17), which gives the impression that they were employed for their benefit of creating an even margin. But this can only account for these two. The referents of the numbers seem not to have been a factor of their abbreviation; for instance, the longhand δωδεκά and the abbreviated ἱβ are both used to refer to twelve baskets picked up after the feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 6:44; 8:19). In terms of grammatical categories, all the numbers given in abbreviated forms are in the accusative case with the exception of ὁ (Luke 10:17, nominative), though many other numbers occur in the

accusative case but are longhand (e.g., δύο in Matt 26:2; Mark 6:38; Luke 9:32; 10:35; and Acts 9:38; πεντε in Luke 14:19; ἐπτα in Mark 8:20a; and τετρακιςχιλιους in Mark 8:20). Importantly, however, all abbreviated numbers in $P^{45}$ stand for indeclinable adjectives, meaning that the number-words do not have inflected forms (as opposed to δύο, etc.). This similarity notwithstanding, there is no obvious reason why these numbers and no others were given in shorthand.

The dual use of ι̅η̅ for “eighteen” (Luke 13:11, 16) deserves special comment, as it bears an exact visual likeness to the unique form of nomen sacrum employed in $P^{45}$ for the name Ἰησοῦς. That is, whereas in most other early NT manuscripts the typical nomen sacrum form for Ἰησοῦς involves the first and last letters of the name (e.g., ι̅ς), $P^{45}$ famously employs the first two letters only (i.e., ι̅η̅); the result is that the name of Jesus and the number eighteen in $P^{45}$ are visually identical. One suspects that the scribe could have employed this abbreviation precisely because of its visual similarity to the contracted name of Jesus, rather than for the simple practicality of trimming the text here. This particular instance and others like it, however, will be treated in more detail later in chapter 7.

### 3.2.1.2 Ordinal Numbers


### 3.2.1.3 Problematic Readings

Especially problematic is the original wording of $P^{45}$ in Matt 26:15, due primarily to the possible use of a symbol for the number “thirty.” This question is important
because if the numeral were written fully there would be insufficient space for all the expected words, and it would therefore seem probable that the scribe omitted something from this line. Hans Gerstinger originally reconstructed this verse using the longhand form τριάκοντα without comment, which—given the limited space in the lacuna—creates a line that is several letters too long.\(^4\) Alternatively, Augustus Merk proposed that the number was written as a symbol (i.e., \(\lambda\)), though he did so without a clear rationale.\(^5\) Kyong Shik Min prints the longhand form accompanied by a question mark, ultimately pleading ignorance,\(^6\) and, similarly, Tommy Wasserman accepts both as being possible based on his observation that the copyist’s number-writing habits were inconsistent.\(^7\) Indeed, as we have seen, there is no way to be certain about this reconstruction due to the scribe’s unpredictable technique; Wasserman and Min are correct to leave the question open.

The precise reading at Luke 10:17 is also a matter of debate. Frederic Kenyon, who initially edited the manuscript, transcribed it as \(\overline{\alpha}β\) (= 72), giving no indication

---


\(^6\) Min, Die früheste Überlieferung, 115 n. 8.

that there was any doubt about the reading.\footnote{Kenyon, The Gospels and Acts, Text, 17.} Colin Roberts, on the other hand, read $\overline{\alpha\varsigma}$ (= 76), “as evidenced by the photograph and confirmed on the original.”\footnote{Colin H. Roberts, “An Early Papyrus of the First Gospel,” HTR 66 (1953): 233–37 (236 n. 14).} Yet another value was seen by Bruce Metzger, who, correcting both Kenyon and Roberts, was able to examine the papyrus “under natural and artificial light” and proposed $\overline{o}$ (= 70).\footnote{Bruce M. Metzger, “Seventy or Seventy-two Disciples?,” NTS 5 (1959): 299–306 (299); repr. Bruce M. Metzger, Historical and Literary Studies: Pagan, Jewish, and Christian, NTTS 8 (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 67–76 (67–68).} According to Metzger, what looked to Kenyon like a $\beta$ and to Roberts like a $\digamma$ was in fact a diple (>), “which scribes would use occasionally in order to bring an otherwise short line even with the right-hand margin of the column.”\footnote{Metzger, “Seventy or Seventy-two?,” 299 (= 68 in Brill reprint).} I was fortunate enough to examine this folio in person with the aid of a magnifying glass (and all three proposals in mind), and, although the fragmentary state of the manuscript prevents absolute certainty, my opinion is that Metzger’s proposal of $\overline{o}$/70 is superior.\footnote{For high resolution photographs, see CSNTM. Unfortunately, this results in a different value than that found in P. The reading 72 was recently maintained by Thomas J. Kraus, “From ‘Text-critical Methodology’ to ‘Manuscripts as Artefacts’: A Tribute to Larry W. Hurtado,” in Mark, Manuscripts, and Monotheism: Essays in Honor of Larry W. Hurtado, ed. Chris Keith and Dieter R. Roth, LNTS 528 (London: T & T Clark, 2015): 79–98 (94), though it is not clear that Kraus is aware of the debate.} Two additional readings should be noted. Kenyon proposed two reconstructions in the editio princeps that are ultimately doubtful. Instead of $\delta\delta\theta\nu$ in John 11:6 he proposed the abbreviation $\overline{\beta}$, and in place of $\varepsilon\zeta$ in Acts 11:12 he proposed the abbreviation $\overline{\varsigma}$ (= 6), without commenting on either.\footnote{Kenyon, Gospels and Acts, Text, 32 and 43. The IGNTP volume of John reconstruct $\delta\delta\theta\nu$ longhand; W. J. Elliott and D. C. Parker, eds., The Papyri, vol. 1 of The New Testament in Greek, 4: The Gospel according to St. John, ed. The American and British Committees of the International Greek New Testament Project, NTTS 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 61.} Both are dubious.
Where these two values occur elsewhere in P⁴⁵, they are consistently longhand. There is thus no indication within the papyrus that symbol forms should be more likely than full ones.

A final feature to note about P⁴⁵ is its tendency to omit numerals. For example, in the feeding the 5,000 narrative, the scribe omits πέντε (Mark 6:41a), δύο (6:41b), and a four-word phrase containing two more numbers, κατὰ ἑκατὸν καὶ κατὰ πεντήκοντα (6:40)—all of which are classified as singular readings.¹⁴ Whether the scribe intentionally deleted these or accidentally overlooked them is a matter of debate,¹⁵ but from what we have seen above, it is unlikely that the omissions were occasioned by the scribe simply misunderstanding shorthand numerals in the exemplar. The scribe employed them in the text with a frequency that suggests they were well understood. Nevertheless, this tendency to remove numerals forms a distinct feature of the scribal character of P⁴⁵.

### 3.2.1.4 Summary of P⁴⁵

The clear scribal preference in P⁴⁵ was to write numbers out as full words and to avoid alphabetic numerals, although there are a handful of exceptions. Of eighty-one numbers extant in P⁴⁵ (including fifteen ordinals), only five are abbreviated and these fall between the values of “twelve” and “seventy.” This inconsistency renders the reconstruction of some portions of P⁴⁵ extremely difficult, and great caution ought to

---


be used in these places. In addition, several notable omissions suggest that either the scribe intentionally removed some numbers, or that copying them posed some difficulty.

3.2.2 \( P^{46} \)

3.2.2.1 Cardinal Numbers

\( P^{46} \) is a manuscript of Paul’s letters dated ca. 200 CE.\(^{16} \) Every extant cardinal number is given longhand (see table 3.2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rom 5:18 (2x), 19 (2x); 9:10; 12:4, 5 (2x); 1 Cor 3:8; 4:6 (2x); 6:16 (2x), 17; 8:4, 6; 9:24; 10:8, 17 (3x); 11:5; 12:11, 12 (2x), 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 26; 14:27, 31; 16:2; 2 Cor 5:14; 11:24; Gal 3:20 (2x); 4:22 (2x), 24; 5:14; Eph 2:14, 15, 16, 18; 4:4 (3x), 5 (3x), 6, 7, 16; 5:31, 33; Phil 1:27; 2:2; 3:13; Col 4:6; Heb 10:12, 14; 11:12; 12:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 Cor 6:16; 14:27, 29; 2 Cor 13:1; Gal 4:22, 24; Eph 2:15; 5:31; Phil 1:23; Heb 6:18; 10:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 Cor 13:13; 14:27, 29; 2 Cor 13:1; Gal 1:18; Heb 10:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 Cor 14:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Heb 11:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>2 Cor 12:2; Gal 2:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Gal 1:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>2 Cor 11:24; Heb 3:10, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430</td>
<td>Gal 3:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>Rom 11:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>1 Cor 10:8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No alphabetic numerals appear in the body text of \( P^{46} \), and this is not for lack of opportunity. The number “one” appears no less than sixty-five times, always as a longhand word. Larger numbers, including values in the thousands, are also regularly written \textit{plene}.

---

3.2.2.2 Ordinal Numbers

In addition to this consistency in cardinal numbers, ordinal numbers in $P^{46}$ are all given in longhand form as well. For example, πρῶτος and its inflected forms occur twenty times (Rom 10:19; 15:24; 1 Cor 12:28; 14:30; 15:3, 45, 46, 47; 2 Cor 8:5; Eph 6:2; Phil 1:5; Heb 7:2; 8:7, 13; 9:1, 6, 8, 15, 18; 10:9); δεύτερος and its forms occur eight times (1 Cor 12:28; 15:47; 2 Cor 13:2; Heb 8:7; 9:3, 7, 28; 10:9); τρίτος and its forms occur five times (1 Cor 12:28; 15:4; 2 Cor 12:2, 14; 13:1); and δέκατος and its forms occur four times (Heb 7:2, 4, 8, 9).¹⁷

3.2.2.3 Problematic Readings

There is one problematic reading related to a number in $P^{46}$. In the editio princeps, Kenyon proposed a reconstruction of 1 Cor 15:6 with the abbreviation $[\varphi]$ standing for πεντακοσίως ($= \text{“five hundred”}$).¹⁸ It is not clear why the abbreviated form would be necessary or even probable here, especially given that $P^{46}$ contains no visible numerical abbreviations elsewhere (aside from page numbers, etc.)¹⁹. Also included in Kenyon’s reconstruction, just one line above $[\varphi]$, is the longhand $[\deltaοδεκα]$ (15:5), but no justification is provided for this either. In reality, both numbers could easily have been written in either style. As a point of comparison, Comfort and Barrett offer

¹⁷ One ordinal is reconstructed: $[\deltaωναραφ]$ (2 Cor 1:15). Numerical adverbs are also longhand (2 Cor 11:24, 25 [2x]; 12:8; Phil 4:16).

¹⁸ Kenyon, Supplement: Pauline Epistles, Text, 86. In regards to numerals, the editions of Kenyon and Sanders differ only at one point, where Sanders reconstructs a few lines containing the number $[\sigmaυο]$ (Gal 3:16), whereas Kenyon does not (Sanders, A Third-Century Papyrus, 103).

¹⁹ It is worth noting that $P^{46}$ does contain number-symbols for page numeration and superscripted titles (e.g., προς κορινθιους α and προς κορινθιους β), but these cannot be ascribed to the primary scribe; most scholars recognize these features as belonging to later hand. See Günther Zuntz, The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum, Schweich Lectures 1946 (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1953; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 253, and Sanders, A Third-Century Papyrus, 15.
a reconstruction in which both numbers are longhand and no text is lost. But whether or not these abbreviations were ever used within the body text of P46, however, is uncertain, and so it is probably safest in both instances to withhold judgment.

3.2.2.4 Summary of P46

In all, P46 contains no visible instances of numerical abbreviations within its body text; all cardinal and ordinal numbers are consistently written in full.

3.2.3 P47

This third-century manuscript of Revelation exhibits remarkable freedom in number-writing techniques. It is worth noting at the outset that P47 bears a scribal hand of a decidedly lower register than those of other comparable papyri (especially, e.g., P45 and P75). Given the connection that we have noted between Greek documentary papyri and abbreviations, it may well be that the quality of script in P47 is an important factor in understanding the unique number-writing techniques that were employed.

3.2.3.1 Cardinal Numbers

The scribe of P47 exhibits a notable preference for abbreviated cardinal numbers over longhand ones. Out of forty-one visible cardinal numbers, no less than twenty-nine are abbreviated and only twelve are longhand (see table 3.3).

---

20 Comfort and Barrett, Text of the Earliest, 277.


The table clearly shows the scribe’s inclination to employ abbreviated numbers over against longhand number-words. In fact, P47 is notable in that there are more abbreviated numbers than those written longhand—which is true of no other manuscript in this study. All occurrences of the number “one” are longhand, but above that, the copyist used abbreviations liberally.

There seems to be no predictable patterns of numerical abbreviation in P47. For instance, from a purely mechanical point of view, most abbreviations evidently were not employed simply to fit the text into the end of a line; of the twenty-nine abbreviated cardinal numerals in P47, only three can be found at the end of their lines (χειλιαδες ζ in Rev 11:13; ζ in 15:6b; and ζ in 17:1a). Alternatively, if we consider numbers and their grammatical categories, abbreviations are used for all cases: for instance, nominative (9:15; 10:4; 11:10, 16; 15:8), accusative (9:10; 11:9; 12:3 [3x]; 13:11; 15:1, 7c), dative (15:7b), and genitive (9:18; 12:1; 14:3a; 15:7a; 17:1b). Moreover, some inflected words are abbreviated (τριων, 9:18; τεσσαρον, 14:3;
τεκόρων 15:7). And finally, particular referents of the numbers do not seem to have been an important factor; for example, the identical phrase πληγας ἡ πτα ("seven plagues" [fem. acc.]) is written in both styles (15:1, 6), as is ἡ/πρι της ἡμερας ("three days" [fem. acc.], 11:9, 11).

The single occurrence of the longhand form of ἡ πτα rather than the shorthand appears in Rev 15:1. Initially, it seemed reasonable to infer that the scribe’s use of the longhand form was attributable to its position at the beginning of the line, as a measure to ensure clarity. This explanation, however, is obviated by the later occurrence of the name number written as ἱ at the very beginning of its line (15:7b). Scribal freedom seems to be the rule.

Two notable features in P47 should be underscored. The first concerns numbers in the thousands. The copyist used longhand forms (χειλιων εξακοςιων, 14:20), full abbreviations (/ας ζζ [?], 12:6),23 and a mixture of the two in a sort of hybrid abbreviation: e.g., χειλιαδες ζ = 7,000 (11:13), ἐοιχειλιαδες = 144,000 (14:1, 3). This latter style retains the χιλιοι element. Nevertheless, the more economical and expected style is the full abbreviation (e.g., /ας ζζ), which is common in the Milesian system.24 This tendency to use symbols for values in the thousands stands in contrast to what is found in other NT manuscripts, nearly all of which use longhand forms.

Secondly, it is rather significant to reiterate that the number “one,” even with only four extant instances (9:12, 13; 13:3; 17:1), was always written longhand in P47. On the one hand, this is a surprising departure from a clear preference for abbreviation, given the surplus of numerical shorthand in P47. On the other hand,

23 Kenyon actually transcribes a different numeral here, which is discussed in more detail below. See Kenyon, Pauline Epistles and Revelation, Text, 24.
24 See Gardthausen, Die Schrift, 370.
however, it will be shown that not a single NT manuscript surveyed here contains an abbreviated form for the number “one” (its high frequency in the NT notwithstanding), and thus \( P^{47} \) evidently shares in that commonality.

On one occasion a numeral (apparently) lacks the supralinear stroke: an initially omitted \( \dot{\epsilon} \pi \tau \alpha \) is added supralinearly by the first hand as the symbol \( \zeta \) but without the signature stroke above (10:4).

3.2.3.2 Ordinal Numbers

In addition to this frequent use of abbreviated forms for cardinal values, there is a similar usage of abbreviations for ordinal numbers (see table 3.4). This is rare in NT manuscripts but not beyond the capability of the alphabetic numeral system.\(^{25}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
<th>Shorthand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>13:12 (2x); 16:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>11:14</td>
<td>14:8; 16:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>11:14; 12:4*; 14:9</td>
<td>9:15*; 16:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>16:8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>9:13, 14; 16:12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>10:7; 11:15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth</td>
<td>11:13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all, \( P^{47} \) contains eight longhand ordinal numbers and ten abbreviated ordinals. Very few NT papyri use numerical shorthand for ordinals, and certainly no other NT manuscript surveyed here exhibits more abbreviated ordinals than longhand. Again, however, there appears to be no obvious reason for the scribe’s choice of abbreviations. Ordinals of most grammatical cases are abbreviated: nominative (11:15; 14:8; 16:3, 4, 8, 12), dative (9:14), and genitive (10:7); the only

\(^{25}\) The acrophonic number system did not use abbreviations for ordinal numbers as did the alphabetic system such as we find in the NT papyri; see B. H. McLean, *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods from Alexander the Great down to the Reign of Constantine* (323 B.C.–A.D. 337) (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 2005), 60.
ordinal number in the accusative case extant in $P^{17}$ is the longhand το $|\pi\rho\omicron\tau\omicron\nu$ (13:12).

Two ordinals are marked by an asterisk (*) in the table. These designate instances in which ordinals are actually functioning as fractions. For example, in 12:4, το $\tau\omicron\rho\omicron\tau\omicron\nu$ means “a third,” and on one occasion the same fraction is given in abbreviated form: $\gamma$ (9:15). Similar abbreviations for fractions are attested in other texts outside the NT. The word for “half” ($\mu\mu\varsigma\omicron\varsigma\varsigma$), however, is not an ordinal form and is always longhand in $P^{17}$ (11:11; 12:14).

### 3.2.3.3 Problematic Readings

Kenyon originally transcribed the numeral in 11:10 as $\omega$ προφητα[$ιλ] $|\omega$ $\beta$ (“the two prophets”), but this seems to be incorrect. As observed by Royse, there is clearly another stroke preceding the beta, over which the supralinear stroke extends. Close inspection of photographs—and personal examination of the folio itself—confirm that Royse is right to identify the stroke as an iota, meaning that the reading should be $\omega$ προφητα[$ιλ] $|\omega$ $\iota$ (“the twelve prophets”). Unfortunately, the first reference to the prophets is lost (11:3), even as the supralinear stroke is plainly visible. Subsequent references are also lost ($\alpha$ $\delta$ $\omicron$ $\epsilon$λαία $\kappa\alpha$ $\alpha$ $\delta$ $\omicron$ $\lambda$υχία$\alpha$), 11:4). These

---


28 Comfort and Barrett also acknowledge the presence of the stroke, although they consider it a “colon-shaped mark” (Comfort and Barrett, *Text of the Earliest*, 340). Personal inspection of the folio, however, allowed me to confirm Royse’s observation that it is in fact an iota that has lost some papyrus fibers in the middle of the stroke, resulting in a “colon-shaped mark.” The placement of the overstrike adds considerable weight to this revised reading.

29 The presence of the beta in Rev 11:3 is fairly certain due to the faint traces of ink, but fragmentation makes it impossible to determine if an iota preceded it.
would potentially show that the “twelve” in 11:10 is either an isolated scribal error or an alternative reading otherwise unattested.

An especially difficult reading due to deterioration is the numeral in 12:6. Kenyon originally proposed $\overline{\rho} \overline{c} \overline{\zeta}$, which is essentially a nonsense reading. The awkward numeral combination of $\overline{\rho}$ (= 100), $\overline{c}$ (= 200), and $\overline{\zeta}$ (= 60) could technically total 360, but it is not a standard collocation; written correctly, 360 is $\overline{\tau}\overline{\zeta}$. To be sure, the first character appears to have a descending tail similar to a rho, but this does not seem to me to be the most likely reading. Another option is that the numeral is $\overline{\alpha\varepsilon\zeta}$, and what appeared to Kenyon as a rho was in fact the oblique stroke denoting thousands. This conforms to the majority reading and is followed by Comfort and Barrett, although Royse follows Kenyon. Royse’s reason for doing so traces back to Milne and Skeat, who argued that the latter method of denoting thousands was not en vogue until the mid-fourth century (which they used to date the production of Codex Sinaiticus). Specifically, the older method, $\gamma = 3,000$, was gradually replaced by a newer method, $\gamma$ or $/\gamma = 3,000$, in the fourth century, the evidence for which came mainly from documentary papyri. On the other hand, Skeat later relaxed his view on this issue, admitting that his collection of evidence was “hasty” and not at all exhaustive. It seems that this uncertainty should at least reinstate $\overline{\alpha\varepsilon\zeta}$ as a

---

30 The non-descending order of numerals occurred occasionally in inscriptions; see, for example, Marcus N. Tod, “The Alphabetic Numeral System in Attica,” *ABSA* 45 (1950): 129. But the repetition of two numbers in the hundreds, as Kenyon proposed, is certainly unprecedented among the NT witnesses.


33 “I should like to repeat here that the statistics quoted are only a hasty collection which makes no claim to be exhaustive; another late instance of the use of the older system is BGU 940, of A.D. 398”
possible (if not probable) transcription of $P^{47}$. This makes the best sense of the visible ink strokes and is, after all, the expected wording (1,260). Nevertheless, caution is in order.

Although not a problematic reading per se, the numeral in Rev 11:2 shows that transcribing numbers often posed problems. The scribe originally wrote $\bar{c}$ (which could be either a *sigma* or a *stigma/digamma*—the scribe did not differentiate), which was immediately corrected and overwritten with $\bar{\mu}\bar{\beta}$, but no attempt was made to erase the $\bar{c}$. It does not seem likely that, as Comfort and Barrett suggest, “$\bar{c}\beta$ was changed to $\bar{\mu}\bar{\beta}$.”34 The wide gap between the $\bar{c}$ and the $\bar{\beta}$ seems to indicate that a *sigma* alone was written and then corrected. It is not clear, however, what caused the error.

### 3.2.3.4 Summary of $P^{47}$

The scribal preference for number writing in $P^{47}$ was to employ numerical shorthand instead of full number-words, although this is not totally consistent. Unlike most other substantial papyri surveyed here, numerical abbreviations are used more often than longhand forms, and for virtually all values above “one.” The degree to which $P^{47}$ exhibits these features makes it the most unique among the major papyri in terms of number-writing habits. This is most likely related to two factors: (1) the documentary style of script and (2) the sheer amount of numbers in the book.35 These

---


35 In the eight fragmentary chapters of $P^{47}$ there are no less than 59 visible numbers ($\approx 7.4$ per chapter), while in the approximate 80 chapters of the Pauline corpus in $P^{66}$ there are 130 numbers ($\approx 1.6$ per chapter), in the 20 chapters of $P^{66}$ there are 83 numbers ($\approx 4.2$ per chapter).
factors do not explain the unpredictable use of number-writing systems in P⁶⁷, but they certainly help describe some of the idiosyncrasies of this text. That being said, it is clear that the scribe often had difficulty in deciphering and writing numbers (e.g., omissions and substitutions).

3.2.4 P⁶⁶

P⁶⁶ is a third-century manuscript of John’s Gospel that contains a fairly consistent use of longhand number forms.³⁶

3.2.4.1 Cardinal Numbers

Nearly all the cardinal numbers in P⁶⁶ were written longhand (see table 3.5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
<th>Shorthand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>John 1:40; 3:27; 6:8, 70, 71; 7:21, 50; 8:28, 41; 9:25; 10:16 (2x), 30; 11:49, 50, 52; 12:2, 4; 13:21, 23; 17:22 (2x), 23; 18:26, 39; 20:1, 7, 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1:35, 37, 40; 2:6; 4:40, 43; 6:9; 8:17; 11:6; 19:18; 20:4, 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2:6, 19, 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11:1³⁷</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4:18; 5:2; 6:9; 12:1*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2:6; {12:1}</td>
<td>6:70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>6:67, 71; 11:9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>11:18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td>5:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>2:20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>8:57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>19:39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>6:7; 21:8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>12:5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>6:10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


³⁷ An additional instance of the number “four” is listed in the 1962 edition: [τεϲϲε] | ρ̣α̣ (John 19:23). I omit it here because images of the papyrus suggest that this reading is not entirely certain.
As the table indicates, the scribe of P° preferred longhand forms to numerical symbols. The scribe consistently wrote longhand numbers for smaller values (twenty-nine instances of the number “one”) and those in the hundreds and thousands.\textsuperscript{38} Only two numerical abbreviations were used (John 5:5; 6:70). There is no apparent reason why these two numbers and no others were abbreviated in P°. For instance, the referent of the number seems not to have been a factor in number-style: the abbreviation for “twelve” was used to refer to the twelve disciples (6:70), but elsewhere the number is given in longhand form twice for the same referent (6:67, 71). Furthermore, the abbreviated form $\lambda \eta$ is used to refer to a length of years (5:5), but elsewhere, the length of fifty years is written longhand (8:57). Neither does grammatical case seem to have been a factor in number-style. On the one hand, both abbreviations in P° are in the accusative case; on the other hand, however, longhand forms were used for a variety of values in the accusative case: δυ (John 2:6; 4:40, 43; 6:9; 11:6), τρε (2:6), πεντε (4:18; 6:9), ἐκατον (19:39). Practicality and space conservation seem not to have been a concern: neither abbreviation occurs at the end of the respective lines of text, and in fact, $\lambda \eta$ stands at the beginning of its line.

Perhaps the reason for their presence is simply that these numeral abbreviations were in the scribe’s exemplar and were copied directly over.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{38} The “one” in 17:11 was probably written as a correction in the margin but it is not visible due to fragmentation. Note the insertion mark above the $\mu \omicron$ (and see Elliott and Parker, Papyri, 365).

\textsuperscript{39} P° is known to contain block mixture of textual affinities, but these seem to be unrelated to the use of abbreviations. For example, the text of chapters 1–5 is closest to Alexandrian witnesses (i.e., P°, B, and C), that of chapters 6–7 shows “Western” influence (i.e., from D 05), and that of 8–21 shows Byzantine influence; but the two numerical abbreviations fall in two different blocks. See Gordon D. Fee, Papyrus Bodmer II (P°): Its Textual Relationships and Scribal Characteristics, SD 34 (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1968), 35.
The asterisked reference in the table (12:1*) refers to an instance in which the scribe initially wrote a numeral, and then altered it to a different value, denoted by {12:1}; see below for a more thorough explanation. I have listed both for the simple reason that the two iterations should be considered scribal acts of “number-writing.”

One minor note can be made about the number in 5:5. The scribe originally transposed the phrase λ̅η̅ ετη to ετη λ̅η̅ and then corrected it (with transposition marks).\(^40\) This transposition could be related to a short leap due to the similar endings of ετη and λ̅η̅, suggesting that the scribe’s exemplar might well have contained the same numerical abbreviation (importantly, \(P^75\) has an abbreviation here as well). Yet, another explanation might be more compelling. Evidently, some scribes would intentionally transpose numbers and the units they modify when employing shorthand numerals (e.g., δύο ἕτη → ἕτη β̅). This technique is generally not found among our NT papyri, but it occurs as a consistent feature in related manuscripts, such as \(P.Beatty\) IV (Rahlfs 961), a fourth-century copy of Genesis—and nearly always with the term ἐτο (“year”).\(^41\) Such a tendency could have given rise to the initial transposition. We could suppose that the scribe of \(P^66\) (or that of the exemplar) created the transposition according to a (perhaps unconscious) habit similar to that of \(P.Beatty\) VI, and reference to a second exemplar led to its correction. More evidence would be needed to make a confident decision here, but

---

\(^40\) The IGNTP John volume identifies this correction as the work of the original scribe: \(P^{66+*}\) (Elliott and Parker, \textit{Papyri}, 176).

this principle might help illuminate similar numeral-unit transpositions elsewhere in the NT (e.g., Mark 14:5; Luke 5:2; 10:35; Gal 1:18; Rev 14:8).

Colin Roberts, in observing the numbers in P66, remarked: “Here the scribe with the eccentricity that characterizes him uses both systems, cf. 5:5 with 6:10 or 8:57.” Roberts rightly pointed out that P66 contains two numerical abbreviations, but it should be sufficiently clear that the description of “eccentricity” is somewhat misleading. The number-writing techniques found in P45, P47, and, as we will see, in P75 are far more “eccentric” than that of P66. That is to say, the scribe’s technique may not have been rigidly consistent, but it was not necessarily eccentric.

3.2.4.2 Ordinal Numbers

Several ordinal numbers are also extant in P66 and all are given longhand form:

πρωτος (e.g., 1:15, 30, 41; 2:10, 11; 7:51; 10:40; 12:16; 15:18; 18:13; 19:39; 20:8);
δευτερος (John 3:4; 4:54; 9:24); τριτος (2:1); ἐκτος (4:6; 19:14); ἔβδομος (4:52);
δέκατος (1:39). Kurt Aland listed the ordinal value πρωτον (19:32) in his newly found fragments, but photographs were not available to verify this.

3.2.4.3 Problematic Numbers

In John 12:1, the scribe originally wrote πετε iota eta meron (“five days”) and subsequently corrected it to εξ. There is some debate about how this error initially arose, whether it was introduced by the scribe of P66 misreading a numeral in the exemplar, or whether it simply represents a tradition of reading “five” instead of “six.” Boismard, for example, suggested the latter option, that “five” represents not a

---


43 The original reading is πρωτον, which was marked with deletion dots and corrected to αρχην.

44 Aland, “Neue Papyri III,” 378; cf. Elliott and Parker, Papyri, 397. In addition, numerical adverbs in P66 are also longhand (e.g., 13:38).
scribal slip but a variant tradition. Alternatively, however, Colwell persuasively argued for the former, that the scribe saw εξ and mistook the epsilon + “bold rough breathing” mark as the shorthand form of πέντε (i.e., ε̅); he then realized his error trying to make sense of the xi. Royse follows this argument and explains it in the following way: “The scribe misread the ε of εξ as a numeral (i.e., as ε'), represented it as a word (πε̅|τε), then apparently caught his error when he tried to understand the ξ. He then marked πε̅ for deletion, wrote εξ over τε, and continued with ημερων.”

One can indeed clearly see that the scribe originally wrote the longhand πε̅|τε and altered it to εξ. If Colwell and Royse’s rehearsal of events is accurate, it is interesting to note that the scribe thought the exemplar contained an abbreviated form of πέντε (i.e., ε̅) but chose to write it longhand. This might indicate that the scribe was attempting (perhaps with limited effort) to standardize the number writing in the papyrus and remove many of the abbreviated forms. Such a scenario could shed light on the dramatically different number-writing technique found in P75. In any case, this is another instance where a number has apparently caused trouble for a copyist (either that of P66 or an earlier one).

3.2.4.4 Summary of P66

To summarize the number-technique of P66, the preferred method was longhand for cardinal and ordinal numbers, but rarely, abbreviations occur for mid-range values.


47 Royse, Scribal Habits, 430.
(“twelve” and “thirty-eight”). In addition, there are a few instances in which the scribe evidently had difficulty transcribing numbers from the exemplar text.

3.2.5. \textit{P}^{72}

3.2.5.1 Cardinal Numbers

\textit{P}^{72} is a third- or fourth-century manuscript of 1–2 Peter and Jude that was written in a rather rough and untrained scribal hand. There are only four visible cardinal numbers present in \textit{P}^{72}, and they are all longhand (see table 3.6).

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Value} & \textbf{Longhand Forms} \\
\hline
1 & 2 Pet 3:8 (3x) \\
1,000 & 2 Pet 3:8 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Cardinal Numbers in \textit{P}^{72}}
\end{table}

3.2.5.2 Ordinal Numbers

All ordinal numbers in present in \textit{P}^{72} are likewise longhand: πρῶτος (1 Pet 4:17; 2 Pet 1:20; 2:20; 3:3), δεύτερος (2 Pet 3:1; Jude 5), εβδομάδος (Jude 14), and ογδοον (2 Pet 2:5).

3.2.5.2 Problematic Numbers

A couple omissions involving numerals should be mentioned. First is the omission of ὀκτώ from 1 Peter 3:20b: κηθιστον εἰς ἐν | ολίγοι τούτο ετίν [om. ὀκτώ] ψνχα \\
διευωθη|σαν ὅτι οὐδότος (“the ark, in which a few, that is, [eight] persons, were saved through water”). This seems to be a simple case of careless omission. It is tempting to speculate that the cause could be traced to how the number was written in the exemplar. The accidental omission of a word such as ὀκτώ is certainly possible, but

---

it is also likely that the exemplar of P\textsuperscript{72} contained the number written in its abbreviated form (= \(\bar{n}\)) and thus it would be more easily overlooked or misunderstood by the copyist. Royse suggests the latter.\textsuperscript{49} But this explanation seems to stand in tension with the fact that P\textsuperscript{72} contains numerals as page numbers and in the book titles (e.g., \(\pi\varepsilon\tau\rho\nu\varepsilon\pi\acute{\iota}\tau\omicron\lambda\eta\ \bar{\omega}\)). In the end, the accidental omission of one character seems more likely than the accidental omission of a full word.

Secondly, there is another omission shared only by \(\aleph\) 01 in 2 Peter 3:8b: \(\omicron\tau \iota \mu\iota \iota \iota \eta \mu\iota \varepsilon\rho\alpha\ \parallel \ k\bar{\omega} \acute{\omicron} \chi\lambda\iota\alpha \ \bar{\epsilon} \tau\iota [\text{om. } \kappa\alpha\ i\chi\lambda\iota\alpha \ \bar{\epsilon} \tau\iota] \acute{\omicron} \eta\iota\mu\iota\rho\alpha\ \mu\iota\a (\text{“that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, [and a thousand years] as one day”}). This omission is almost certainly due to a leap from same to same: \(\chi\lambda\iota\alpha \ \bar{\epsilon} \tau\iota\). This means that the omission probably does not tell us anything about how the scribe understood or transcribed numbers, since the error would probably have been made regardless of how the number was written in the exemplar.

\textbf{3.2.5.3 Summary of P\textsuperscript{72}}

Within the body text of P\textsuperscript{72}, the scribe only employed longhand forms for both cardinal and ordinal numbers. This is somewhat surprising, given that the hand of P\textsuperscript{72} is notoriously sloppy and on the low end even of the documentary classification. Outside of NT texts, it is typically in these informal hands and in documentary papyri that one finds number abbreviations used.\textsuperscript{50} Regardless, the copyist was aware of and able to use numerical abbreviations, as the page numbers and book titles indicate. Given the omission in 1 Pet 3:20, however, it may have been the case that the scribe had some difficulty in reading and/or transcribing them.

\textsuperscript{49} Royse, \textit{Scribal Habits}, 588 n. 237.

\textsuperscript{50} See the discussion in Turner, \textit{Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World}, 15.
3.2.6. $P^{75}$

$P^{75}$ is a manuscript of Luke and John dated to the third century that contains an impressive display of abbreviated numerals.\(^{51}\)

### 3.2.6.1 Cardinal Numbers

$P^{75}$ contains nearly fifty abbreviated cardinal numerals (see table 3.7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
<th>Shorthand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>John 11:17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Luke 11:26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Luke 9:28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Luke 15:8; 17:12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Luke 24:9, 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>John 11:18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>John 6:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td>John 5:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>Luke 4:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td>John 2:20 ((\mu\ \kappa\alpha\tau\ \varepsilon))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>Luke 24:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
<td>Luke 10:1, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Luke 16:7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td>Luke 15:4, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>John 12:5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>John 6:10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Luke 14:31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>Luke 14:31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The value “one” is not listed in the above table for the sake of clarity, but every extant instance of the number is longhand, without exception. This is a remarkable degree of consistency toward the use of longhand forms, including no less than fifty occurrences of the number.  

Nearly all of the above have been verified with photographs of the manuscript. Furthermore, there are several instances where the editio princeps contains reconstructed numbers that are nearly certain:  

(1) το[ν ἰβ] ἦτις οὐκ ἴρχειν απί οὐδε (Luke 8:43)  
(2) ο σανας ἴδου [μ ε]τη οὐκ εδει λω (Luke 13:16)  
(3) ως σταδιου[ς κε] ἡ λ (John 6:19)  
(4) είς [εκ] τον [ἰβ] και μετα ταυτα: (John 6:71)  

In each of these instances, the numerals can be rather safely reconstructed because the lacunae are so small. The addition of these four abbreviations does little to change the overall picture of the number-writing techniques in P.  

What could account for such varied usage of abbreviations in P? There may be some indication that grammatical case had an effect upon number-style. Consider, for example, Luke 12:52, which reads: ε[ονται γιαρ απο του νυν ε, εν ενι οικω διαμεμεριμενοι γ επι δωσιν | και ἰβ επι τρισιν. That is, the numbers “three” and “two” are written twice in this verse, once abbreviated and once longhand each. Evidently  

52 Luke 5:3; 8:22; 9:33 (3x); 10:42; 11:46; 12:6, 27, 52; 13:10; 14:18; 15:4, 7, 8, 10, 15, 19, 26; 16:5, 13 (2x), 17; 17:15, 22, 34 (2x), 35; 18:10; 22:47, 50, 59; 23:39; 24:1, 18; John 1:3, 40; 3:27; 6:22, 70, 71; 7:21, 50; 8:41; 9:25; 10:16 (2x), 30; 11:52; 15:5. Additionally, the word είς is not visible in John 12:4, but the breathing mark is still plainly visible.  

53 In two instances, I am relying on the editio princeps in lieu of photographs: μ (Luke 4:2) and ιβ (Luke 6:13). Others are recorded in the transcription but I have omitted them because they are no longer visible in photographs: ιβ (Luke 9:17), δ[ο]μο[ν] (Luke 18:10), and [δυσκο']το[ν] (John 6:7). And finally, very little ink is visible for the occurrence of ιβ in John 6:67, but I have retained it in the table above because those traces are consistent with the numeral.  

54 On the other hand, several reconstructed numbers proposed by Comfort and Barrett are simply speculative: e.g., Luke 7:41a, 41b, 41c; 8:2; 9:3, 13a, 13b; 9:14a; 17:2, 17a, 17b; John 12:1.
the scribe wrote the numbers in the nominative case as abbreviations while the numbers in oblique cases (here, the dative) were spelled out fully.

Although these examples suggest a distinction between abbreviated nominative cases and longhand oblique cases (esp. dative), this pattern does not hold elsewhere in the codex. In fact, there are several examples of abbreviations standing for numbers in the dative (e.g., θ̅ Luke 15:7; ἀ 24:9; μ καὶ εξ John 2:20; ὁ 6:67), in the genitive (e.g., ὁ Luke 8:42), and scores for those in the accusative cases (e.g., ὅ Luke 6:13; 9:1; 22:30; John 6:13, 70; ν Luke 9:14; ὅ Luke 9:16, 32; 10:1, 35; 15:11; John 2:6; 4:40, 43; 6:9, etc.). A more likely explanation for the distinction made in Luke 12:52 relates not strictly to grammatical case but to inflection. That is, δυς and τρις were written longhand not because they are datives (necessarily), but because they have declinable forms. Elsewhere, “two” is abbreviated several times (Luke 9:16, 32; 10:1, 35; 12:52; 15:11; John 1:35; 2:6; 4:40, 43; 6:9), but never for the inflected form δυς/δυς, in which cases the longhand is used (Luke 12:52; 16:13). Similarly, the number three is abbreviated only when standing for the lexical form τρις (Luke 9:33; 12:52a; John 2:6), but as an inflected form the longhand is used exclusively: for instance, τρις (Luke 10:36, genitive), τρις (Luke 12:52b; John 2:19, 20, dative), and τρις (Luke 13:7, 21, accusative). The tendency, therefore, seems to be to avoid using symbols where they could be potentially ambiguous with respect to their exact referent (ὁ = δύο or δύοι?).

In a later chapter we will have occasion to explore this distinction in greater detail and determine how consistent it is, but for now we can simply observe that the

---

55 The declension of δύο is as follows: δύο (nom.), δύο (acc.), δύο (gen.), δυς (dat.).
scribe of P⁷⁵ exercised great freedom in number-writing, and it is rarely obvious why shorthand was chosen over longhand forms where these occur.⁵⁶

Another observation is in order. Although the numerical abbreviations are somewhat evenly spread throughout the manuscript, there are a few blocks that extend for a chapter or more in which only longhand numbers are used: for instance, Luke 13:14–15:3; 17:12–18:10; John 6:71–12:16. This might suggest that the technique was being employed simply to constrict the text to fit into a desired space where the scribe felt the need, thus indicating the space-saving function of the abbreviations. They could, on the other hand, reflect the contents of the exemplar(s).

More information would be needed, however, to determine this.

### 3.2.6.2 Ordinal Numbers

Although P⁷⁵ contains an unusually high amount of numerical abbreviations, there are no abbreviations for ordinal numbers; this feature sets it apart from P⁴⁷. All the visible ordinals in P⁷⁵ are given in their longhand forms (see table 3.8):⁵⁷

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>John 4:52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth</td>
<td>Luke 23:44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth</td>
<td>John 1:39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


⁵⁷ One ordinal is reconstructed: [πρωτον] (John 12:16), and numerical adverbs are longhand (Luke 18:12; 22:34, 61).
3.2.6.3 Problematic Numbers

The editio princeps suggests that at Luke 10:1, P75 reads [ανα] β, but given the fragmentary state of the papyrus, this reading is not entirely certain.\(^{58}\) The text could be reconstructed as [ανα β] β or perhaps [ανα δυο] β. Given the uncertainty, the NA\(^{28}\) is correct to withhold P75 as support for either reading at this point.

3.2.6.4 Summary of P75

P75 exhibits a marked tendency to employ abbreviated numbers, though never for “one,” for values above one hundred, or for ordinal numbers. The scribe seems to avoid employing numerical shorthand in place of numbers that are grammatical inflected (e.g., τριῶν). Thus, uninflected cardinal values between “two” and “one hundred” are commonly, though not consistently, abbreviated by the copyist.

3.2.7 P\(^{115}\)

Although badly mutilated, P\(^{115}\) is a third- or fourth-century papyrus of Revelation consisting of fragments of nine leaves.\(^{59}\)

3.2.7.1 Cardinal Numbers

Most of the cardinal numbers still visible in P\(^{115}\) were written in shorthand (see table 3.9). In addition to the cardinal numbers listed in the table, there are two more that are nearly certain due to the visibility of supralinear strokes that indicate the use of abbreviations. In Rev 15:7 the overstrike of [δ̅] (= τεσσάρων) is visible, and in 12:1 the left end of an overstrike of [ιβ̅] (= δώδεκα) is visible.\(^{60}\)

\(^{58}\) Martin and Kasser, Evangile de Luc, 72; this is followed by Comfort and Barrett (Comfort and Barrett, Text of the Earliest, 528).

\(^{59}\) For the text of P\(^{115}\), see P.Oxy. LXVI 4499.10–35.

\(^{60}\) Cf. P.Oxy. LXVI 4499.32 n. 208 and 35 n. 418.
Table 3.9. Cardinal Numbers in P\textsuperscript{115}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Longhand</th>
<th>Shorthand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13:3\textsuperscript{61}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12:14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10:3; 15:6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>11:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>616</td>
<td>13:18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>14:20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.7.2Ordinal Numbers

There are only a handful of visible ordinal numbers in P\textsuperscript{115}, and with one exception they were written longhand (see table 3.10).

Table 3.10. Ordinal Numbers in P\textsuperscript{115}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Longhand</th>
<th>Shorthand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>13:12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>11:14\textsuperscript{62}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>8:7\textsuperscript{63}, 11, 12</td>
<td>8:7\textsuperscript{64}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The one exceptional use of an abbreviation for an ordinal was subsequently corrected to a longhand form. Specifically, in 8:7 the scribe originally wrote \(\gamma\) in place of \(\tau\rho\iota\tau\nu\) (in the phrase \(\tau\rho\iota\tau\nu\ \tau\nu\ \delta\varepsilon\nu\rho\omega\nu\)), denoted in the table by curved braces (\{8:7\}), but this abbreviation was corrected to \(\tau\rho[\tau]\nu[\nu]\): the \textit{gamma} was modified into a \textit{tau}, a compressed \textit{rho} + \textit{iota} added, and \(\nu\nu\) was written above the line.\textsuperscript{64}

Further, the abbreviation here was used for an ordinal functioning as a fraction: \(\tau\rho\iota\nu\gamma\ \tau\nu\ \delta\varepsilon\nu\rho\omega\nu\) (“a third of the trees”); this was not abnormal in documentary

\textsuperscript{61} This reading is somewhat tenuous; only part of the final stroke of a \textit{nu} is now visible: [\(\mu\alpha\)]\nu (13:3).

\textsuperscript{62} This reading of the \textit{editio princeps} is not certain but the visible traces of ink seem to be consistent with the final \textit{alpha} in [\(\delta\varepsilon\nu\rho\nu\)] (11:14).

\textsuperscript{63} This reading in the \textit{editio princeps} is discerned on a very slender basis: \(\tau[\rho\tau\nu]\) (8:12). Images show only slight traces of ink that are nevertheless consistent with the initial \textit{tau}.

\textsuperscript{64} \textit{P.Oxy.} LXVI 4499.27 n. 13. Note Comfort and Barrett’s comment: “\(\gamma\) (= 3) was changed to \(\tau\rho[\tau]\nu[\nu]\) by a corrector” (Comfort and Barrett, \textit{Text of the Earliest}, 667 n. a).
papyri can also be seen once in P in Rev 9:15. It is possible that the use of numerical-abbreviation for a fraction was seen to be potentially confusing.

### 3.2.7.3 Reconstructed Numbers

The *editio princeps* of P contains many reconstructed numbers, most of which are in symbol form, and this deserves comment. There are thirty-three cardinal numbers reconstructed by the editor and fourteen reconstructed ordinals. It would not be practical to examine each reconstruction in the transcription, but this particular manuscript is a good example of the difficulties present when attempting to reconstruct lost text, especially when that text contains many numbers. One need only to read the transcriptional notes in the editor’s publication to see how often numerals complicate the reconstruction of missing text: phrases such as “There would perhaps be room … if πειροτος were written γ’,” are commonplace. Many cardinal numbers can be reasonably reconstructed as abbreviations, given the evident scribal preference, but it is clear that no scribe is entirely predictable. Such uncertainty significantly increases the measure of doubt about a host of reconstructions and calls for great caution.

### 3.2.7.4 Problematic Readings

The final epsilon of a longhand πέντε might be visible in 9:10, though this is uncertain. The editor does not reconstruct the text here, but gives ]ε επ αντο (the

---

65 Wilcken, *Grundzüge*, xlvi.


67 Many numerals are reconstructed in the following instances: e.g., Rev 5:8 (2x); 6:6 (2x); 8:6 (2x), 7 (2x), 8, 12 (4x), 13 (2x); 9:12 (2x), 13 (3x), 14 (2x), 15 (2x); 10:4; 11:3 (2x), 4 (2x), 11:9, 10, 11, 13 (2x), 14, 15; 12:3 (3x), 4; 13:11; 14:3 (2x); 15:6, 7 (2x) (*P.Oxy.* LXVI 4499). Comfort and Barrett contain even more, ultimately more speculative, reconstructions: e.g., Rev 2:1; 6:5 (2x); 8:8, 9 (2x), 10 (2x); 9:1, 5, 18 (2x); 10:7; 11:16; 12:6; 13:1 (3x), 12; 15:1 (2x).
clear absence of an overstrike confirms that the *epsilon* is not the abbreviated form of five, i.e., $\varepsilon$. The expected wording at this point is $\mu\eta ν\tau\epsilon \xi\chi\omicron\upsilon \epsilon\pi\alpha\omega\tau\omicron\nu$ (9:10b–11a) and so the *epsilon* could only be part of $\pi\nu\tau\epsilon$ if the verb $\xi\chi\omicron\upsilon\nu$ was either transposed or omitted altogether—neither of which should be assumed. The presence of the *epsilon*, therefore, is difficult to explain.

At 14:20, the copyist appears to use the numerical symbol $\bar{\beta}\bar{\chi}$. The editor represents it as $\bar{\beta}\bar{\chi}$, due to the fact that the *beta* is most likely standing for 2,000. As we have seen, letters such as *beta* could be used for thousands in the alphabetic numeral system (e.g., $/\beta$), but this technique is somewhat rare NT codices. What is actually written in $P^{115}$, however, is not entirely straightforward (see figure 3.1):

![Figure 3.1. $P^{115}$ – Rev 14:20](image)

The characters $\bar{\beta}$ and $\bar{\chi}$ are fairly certain, but it is not clear if the circle on the top left of the *beta* ($^{0}\bar{\beta}$) is functioning as the thousands marker, nor is it likely that this mark is from the hand of the original scribe. What appear to be faint traces of ink directly above the *beta* might be the remnants of some kind of apostrophe indicating thousands, and the slightly lighter circle to the left might be a later scribal insertion.

---

68 Compare with [πεντε given by Lincoln H. Blumell and Thomas A. Wayment, eds., Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, Documents, and Sources (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015), 146.

69 Followed by Comfort and Barrett, Text of the Earliest, 677.

70 See Gardthausen, Die Schrift, 370; see also Colin Roberts, Greek Literary Hands, 24.
intended to highlight that β̅ is functioning as 2,000. If indeed the *beta* is being used to notate thousands, this would be a rare usage of the “full form” among the manuscripts surveyed here; most other cases of numbers in the thousands in these texts are either completely longhand or in a hybrid form (e.g., ρ̅μ̅δ̅ χιλιαδες), though the full abbreviation does sometimes occur in NT manuscripts. The value of the number in this case would be 2,600 (ºβ = 2,000; χ = 600), while most manuscripts read 1,600. In fact, this reading is otherwise virtually unattested, with the sole exception of a marginal note in one later minuscule.\

David Parker has suggested another option that he himself finds unlikely: that the χ̅ is being used here for 1,000, as it was often used in inscriptions (i.e., β̅χ̅ = 2 × 1,000 = 2,000). This, however, would be the only such occurrence among NT papyri surveyed here. Parker also notes that, as the papyrus is shorn off after the χ̅, we cannot be sure there was not another numeral (or two) immediately following. In the end, however, 2,600 seems to be the best option since this “full abbreviation” for thousands does occur elsewhere in NT manuscripts.

There is a rather famous issue at 13:18, where P¹¹⁵ reads χις (= 616) while most other manuscripts, including P⁴⁷, have 666. The value in P¹¹⁵ is shared by C 04. Note, however, that the forms of the *sigma* and *digamma* are not distinguished in P¹¹⁵, and so the abbreviation was written thus: χις. As this wording is clear, there is not much that needs commenting here, except for the fact that scholars have argued

---

71 GA 456/Hoskier 75 (tenth century) contains the expected wording in the text (/α̅χ̅ = 1,600) but with a marginal note that reads ἐν ἀλλί /β (“in others 2,000”). See images at the INTF website.


that the textual variation is most likely related to the slight distinction between \(\chi\varsigma\varsigma\) and \(\chi\varsigma\varsigma\), while the longhand forms were less likely to be confused: i.e., \(\xi\alpha\kappa\omicron\omicron\) \(\xi\kappa\omicron\nu\tau\alpha\) \(\xi\) versus \(\xi\alpha\kappa\omicron\omicron\) \(\delta\omicron\kappa\alpha\) \(\xi\).\(^{74}\) (Another strange feature, though one that is ultimately uncertain, is the presence of \(\eta\) or \(\acute{\eta}\) or \(\hat{\eta}\) prior to the numeral.)

A final uncertain reading is in 14:1, where the editor transcribes \([\rho\mu\delta\chi\epsilon\iota\lambda\alpha\delta\epsilon\varsigma]\) (= 144,000). This is the most probable reading, but I have refrained from listing it above because the wording is simply not verifiable. Photographs show that the letter identified as \(\textit{sigma}\) is a mere speck of ink that is far from certain.

### 3.2.7.5 Summary of \(\textit{P}\)\(^{75}\)

The scribe of \(\textit{P}\)\(^{75}\) evidences a clear preference for the abbreviation of cardinal numbers (though evidently not for the number “one”), and one ordinal number was (at least initially) written shorthand as well. Several textual problems involving numbers suggest that this text transmits distinctive textual traditions or that the scribe had some difficulty with transcribing numbers.

### 3.3 Fragmentary Papyri

Now we turn to the fragmentary papyri of the first five centuries. Some of these papyri do not have any extant numbers in them, but only have reconstructed numbers; these are denoted by an asterisk (*). In general, I have followed the transcriptions given by the respective editors of the papyri, \(^{75}\) but on some

---

\(^{74}\) As observed by Bruce M. Metzger, \textit{A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament}, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 676. For other variants here, see Hoskier, \textit{Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse}, 2:364.

\(^{75}\) In addition to the editions cited below, the following resources were referenced: Elliott and Parker, \textit{Papyri}; K. Junack, E. Güting, U. Nimtz, and K. Witte, eds., \textit{Röm.}, 1. \textit{Kor.}, 2. \textit{Kor.}, Part 1 of \textit{Die paulinischen Briefe}, vol. 2 of \textit{Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus}, ANTF 12 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989); and K. Wachtel and K. Witte, eds., \textit{Gal, Eph, Phil, Kol, 1 u. 2 Thess, 1 u 2. Tim, Tit, Tit, Tit}. 81
occasions—where examination of photographs reveals discrepancies—I provide a new transcription; such instances are cited explicitly.  

3.3.1 P¹

Three cardinal numbers are extant in P¹. All three are abbreviated: $\overline{\theta}$ (Matt 1:17 [3x]). Although the original publication presented all three as fully visible, deterioration in the papyrus has led editors to indicate the partial visibility or loss of some of the relevant letters. There is, however, no doubt that shorthand forms were used here.

3.3.2 P⁴

Three cardinal numbers are extant in P⁴, two of which are abbreviations: $\overline{\lambda}$ (Luke 3:23) and $\overline{\mu}$ (Luke 4:2). The third was given by the original editor as $[\delta \upsilon] \overline{\theta}$ (Luke 3:11), but available images of the papyrus now suggest that the entire word ought to be placed in brackets: $[\delta \upsilon \theta]$. The presence of abbreviated numbers in this papyrus is possibly significant given the high register of scribal hand and professional quality with which it was produced.


76 I use underdots (e.g., $\overline{o}$) to indicate letters that are partially visible but probable.

77 In the original publication of P¹, Grenfell and Hunt record each numeral as fully visible (P.Oxy. I 2.4–7), as did Carl Wessely, ed., Les plus anciens monuments du christianisme écrits sur papyrus, PO 4/2 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1908), 144 [50], and Ellwood M. Schofield, “The Papyrus Fragments of the Greek New Testament” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Clinton, NJ, 1936), 91. Comfort and Barrett add a dot under the delta of the third numeral, indicating partial visibility (Comfort and Barrett, Text of the Earliest, 41). Min’s transcription is more cautious, showing $\overline{\delta}$, $\overline{\theta}$ and $[\delta]$ respectively (Min, Die früheste Überlieferung, 62–64).

78 Jean Merell, “Nouveaux fragments du papyrus IV,” RB 47 (1938): 5–22. Note how the more recent transcription provided by the INTF website encloses the entire word in brackets. Comfort and Barrett actually reconstruct an abbreviated form here: $[\alpha \varepsilon \chi \nu \omega \nu \beta]$ $\chi \tau \iota \nu \omega$ (Comfort and Barrett, Text of the Earliest, 58).
3.3.3 \(P^5\)

Five cardinal numbers are extant in \(P^5\), all are longhand: \(\delta\upsilon\alpha\) (John 1:35), \(\delta\upsilon\alpha\) (1:37), \(\delta\upsilon\alpha\) (1:40), \(\delta\upsilon\alpha\) (20:12), and \(\delta\upsilon\delta\varepsilon\kappa\alpha\) (20:24). Three cardinal numbers are reconstructed by the editor: \(\varepsilon\nu\alpha\) (20:12 [2x]) and \(\varepsilon\iota\xi\) (20:24), as well as two ordinal numbers: \(\pi\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\) (1:30) and \(\delta\varepsilon\kappa\alpha\tau\eta\) (1:39).

3.3.4 \(P^6\)

One cardinal number is extant in \(P^6\), it is longhand: \(\varepsilon\nu\) (John 11:52). Three cardinal numbers are reconstructed by the editor: \(\delta\upsilon\alpha\) (11:6) and \(\varepsilon\iota\xi\) (11:49, 50).

3.3.5 \(P^7\)

One cardinal number is extant in \(P^7\), it is longhand: \(\tau\varepsilon\iota\varepsilon\omicron\omicron\kappa\omicron\nu\tau\alpha\) (Luke 4:2).

3.3.6 \(P^8\)

\(P^8\) contains three extant cardinal numbers, all longhand: \(\mu\iota\) (Acts 4:32), \(\varepsilon\iota\xi\) (4:32), and \(\tau\rho\iota\omicron\nu\) (5:7). Two cardinal numbers are reconstructed by the editor: \(\delta\upsilon\delta\varepsilon\kappa\alpha\) (6:2) and \(\varepsilon\pi\tau\alpha\) (6:3); although possible, neither reconstruction can be confirmed.

---

79 P. Oxy. II 208.1–8, and P. Oxy. XV 1781.8–12. Scholars have subsequently added underdots: \(\delta\upsilon\alpha\) (John 1:35), \(\delta\upsilon\alpha\) (1:37) (Elliott and Parker, Papyri, 29); \(\delta\upsilon\alpha\) (John 1:35), \(\delta\upsilon\alpha\) (1:37) (Comfort and Barrett, Text of the Earliest, 75); \(\delta\upsilon\alpha\) (1:35), \(\delta\upsilon\alpha\) (1:37) (Schofield, “The Papyrus Fragments,” 113–14). But no numerals are substantially affected.

80 For \(P^5\), I was unable to view photographs of folio 3 and have relied on transcriptions.


82 The "nu" is written with an underdot in the IGNTP transcription (Elliott and Parker, Papyri, 39).


3.3.7 \(P^{13}\)

\(P^{13}\) contains three visible cardinal numbers, all longhand: τεσσεράκοντα (Heb 3:10) and τεσσεράκοντα (3:17, *sic*), μια (10:14). Two longhand ordinal numbers are visible, [εβδομάδας] (4:4) and [εβδομή] (4:4), and a third is likely but only scant traces of ink are now visible: [πρωτός] (10:9). Several other numbers must be reconstructed: [δευτερός] (10:9), [μιαν] (10:12), [ευς] (11:12), [επτά] (11:30), and [μια] (12:16).

3.3.8 \(P^{15+16}\)

No numbers are extant in \(P^{15+16}\), although the editor has reconstructed one longhand cardinal: [εν] (Phil 3:13).

3.3.9 \(P^{17}\)

No numbers are extant in \(P^{17}\), although the editor has reconstructed one longhand ordinal: [πρωτή] (Heb 9:18).

3.3.10 \(P^{18}\)

\(P^{18}\) contains one extant cardinal number, and it is longhand: επτά (Rev 1:4). One cardinal number is reconstructed by the editor: [επτά] (1:4).

3.3.11 \(P^{19}\)

One cardinal number is given as partially visible by the editor of \(P^{19}\): [εν] (Matt 10:42). Photographs of the papyrus reveal, however, that this may be overly

---

85 P. Oxy. IV 657.36–48 and PSI XII 1292.209–10. Although the *editio princeps* reads τεσσεράκοντα (Heb 3:17), the INTF website has τεσσεράκοντα, Schofield had τεσσεράκοντα (Schofield, “The Papyrus Fragments,” 162), and Comfort and Barrett have τεσσεράκοντα (Comfort and Barrett, *Text of the Earliest*, 86). Examination of photographs leads me to side with INTF in seeing only one sigma. For a photograph of the Florence fragment, see http://www.psi-online.it/documents/psi;12;1292.

86 P. Oxy. VII 1008.4–8 and P. Oxy. VII 1009.8–11.

87 P. Oxy. VIII 1078.11–13.

88 P. Oxy. VIII 1079.13–14. I concur with the INTF website transcription which adds the underdot to the *tau*. 
confident—only a slight trace of ink is now visible. The editor has reconstructed another numeral: [δωδεκά] (11:1); on the basis of line length, this seems reasonable.  

3.3.12 P²⁴

Two numbers are extant in P²⁴: an abbreviated cardinal number, ω (Rev 5:6), and a longhand ordinal number, τεταρτ[ου] (6:7). The presence of other numbers in the immediate context—which may or may not have been abbreviated—makes the reconstruction of the fragment complicated; caution is in order here.  

3.3.13 P²⁵

Three cardinal numbers are extant in P²⁵, and all are longhand: δύο (Matt 19:5), μιαν (19:5), and δυ[ο] (19:6). One more can be confidently reconstructed: [μα] (19:6).  

3.3.14 P²⁸

P²⁸ contains three visible cardinal numbers, and all are longhand: πεντε (John 6:9), [πεντακι]χιλε[ι] (6:10), and εικο[π] (6:19). The particular form πεντακισχιλεωι (6:10) is somewhat uncertain, since scribes often wrote hybrid forms such as χιλιοι, but such is not likely in this instance due to the length of the line. In

---


90 Grenfell and Hunt refrained from giving a reconstruction, but noted that τεττάρων and τρεῖς were very likely shortened (P. Oxy. X 1230.18–19). The INTF website reconstruction puts all reconstructed numbers in abbreviated form, though Comfort and Barrett proceed with slightly more caution and do not give a reconstruction (Comfort and Barrett, Text of the Earliest, 115).

91 Otto Stegmüller, “Ein Bruchstück aus dem griechischen Diatessaron (P. 16388),” ZNW 37 (1938): 223–29. Underdots have been added by INTF website (δυ[ο]), but there is no doubt this is the longhand form.

92 P. Oxy. XIII 1596.8–10. Underdots are variously added by IGNTP (Elliott and Parker, Papyri, 44–45), Comfort and Barrett (Text of the Earliest, 123), Schofield (“The Papyrus Fragments,” 225), and Blumell and Wayment (Christian Oxyrhynchus, 101), but no substantial changes are implied.
addition, the editor reconstructs three more cardinal numbers: [δύο] (6:9), [τριακοντα] (6:19), and [έν] (6:22).  

3.3.15 P^{30*}

No numerals are visible in P^{30}, but one ordinal is reasonably reconstructed: [πρωτον] (1 Thess 4:16).  

3.3.16 P^{35}

There are four visible numbers in P^{35}. Three are longhand: δύο (Matt 25:22), [δ]υο (25:22), and δυ[ο] (25:22), while one is abbreviated: ε̅ (25:15). As shown in the editio princeps, there is clearly a horizontal stroke below this last numeral in addition to the expected supralinear stroke: ε̅. If this “underline” is in fact being used in conjunction with the overstrike, this is the first and only such numeral demarcation in all manuscripts under examination; the typical mark for numerals is the overstrike, occasionally accompanied by medial dots. It is likely, however, that what appears to be an “under-strike” is actually the overstrike for a numeral on the following line, which is now lacunose. The lost text, if similar to that in NA^{28}, would contain two numbers, [ὁ δὲ δόο, ὁ δὲ ἕν, ἑκάστῳ] (25:15), both of which could have been abbreviated. Only scant traces of ink from the tops of the lost letters are visible,

---

93 I mention P^{30} (P.Oxy. XIII 1597:10–12) at this point simply to point out that the compound term δωδεκαφυλον is partially visible, and its numerical component is clearly given longhand: δωδεκ[αφυλον] (Acts 26:7). One ordinal is also reconstructed: [πρωτον] (26:20).

94 P.Oxy. XIII 1598.12–14.

95 Min adds the following underdots: δύο, [δ]υο, and δυ[ο], respectively (Min, Die frühere Überlieferung, 74).

96 PSI I 1.1–2. Min’s transcription does not show the sublinear bar but his facsimile does (Min, Die frühere Überlieferung, 74 and 82, respectively). Schofield, however, does print the underline (Schofield, “The Papyrus Fragments,” 255).

97 If the ἕν were abbreviated (= ἄ), it would be the first and only such occurrence in the manuscripts surveyed.
making several text reconstructions possible; certainty about how the numbers were written on this line is impossible.

3.3.17 \(P^{37}\)

There are five extant cardinal numbers in \(P^{37}\). Three of these are longhand: \(\epsilon\nu\zeta\) (Matt 26:21), [\(\mu\)]\(\tau\nu\) (26:40), and \(\epsilon\nu\zeta\) (26:51)\(^98\); and two are abbreviated: \(\overline{\eta}\beta\) (26:20, 47).\(^99\)

There are two reconstructed cardinal numbers [\(\delta\omicron\omicron\omicron\)] (26:37) and [\(\epsilon\nu\zeta\)] (26:47). There is one visible ordinal: \(\delta\zeta\nu\tau\epsilon[\rho\omicron\omicron]\) (26:42).

Furthermore, the editor hypothesized that \(P^{37}\) lacks the phrase \(\epsilon\kappa\ \tau\rho\omicron\tau\omicron\omicron\) (26:44) along with several other witnesses (A 02, C 04, D 05, etc.) due to the length of lines, and most scholars follow this.\(^100\) Accordingly, \(P^{37}\) is listed in NA\(^28\) in support of the omission of the phrase. It is at least possible, however, that the phrase was not omitted, only it was given in abbreviated form: \(\epsilon\kappa\ \overline{\gamma}\).\(^101\) Given that the scribe is known to employ numerical abbreviations (\(\overline{\eta}\beta\), 26:20, 47), \(P^{37}\) should perhaps be

---

\(^98\) Only the extreme tops of \(\epsilon\nu\zeta\) (26:51) are now visible, and even these are difficult to decipher. It is clear, however, that no supralinear stroke is present, confirming that a shorthand numeral was not used here.

\(^99\) As the editio princeps indicates, the presence of a supralinear bar is not certain in 26:20, due to the fragmentary state of the manuscript; although, one can clearly be seen over the same numeral form in 26:47. See Henry A. Sanders, “An Early Papyrus Fragment of the Gospel of Matthew in the Michigan Collection,” \(HTR\) 19 (1926): 215–26 (esp. 224–26). See also Sanders’ transcription, \(P.Mich.\) III 137.9–14. Min’s transcription has an overstrike above both numerals (Min, \(Die\ \früheste\ \Überlieferung\), 83 and 87); Comfort and Barrett print the overstrike but admit that it is not visible (Comfort and Barrett, \(The\ \Earliest\ \Text\), 141 n. a).

\(^100\) See the INTF website, Comfort and Barrett (\(Text\ of \ the\ \Earliest\), 143), and Schofield (“The Papyrus Fragments,” 265).

\(^101\) \(\tau\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\) is represented by a symbol in \(P^{47}\) (e.g., Rev 9:15; 16:4). Furthermore, by my count the average number of letters per line on the verso is about 43, ranging from 38–48 per line. The line without \(\epsilon\kappa\ \tau\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\) would total 42; accordingly, the presence of the abbreviated phrase \(\epsilon\kappa\ \overline{\gamma}\) is at least possible.
removed from support of this reading or at least be listed as $P^{37\text{vid}}$ (= ut videtur), indicating lack of certainty.\(^{102}\)

3.3.18 $P^{39}$

There is one partially visible cardinal number in $P^{39}$ and it is longhand: δυ[ο] (John 8:17).\(^{103}\)

3.3.19 $P^{40*}$

There are no visible numbers in $P^{40}$, but one cardinal is reconstructed by the editor: [εις] (Rom 3:30).\(^{104}\)

3.3.20 $P^{48}$

There is one extant cardinal number in $P^{48}$ and it is abbreviated: $\mu$ (Acts 23:13).\(^{105}\)

3.3.21 $P^{50}$

There are two extant ordinal numbers in $P^{50}$, both longhand: τεταρτης (Acts 10:30) and εννατης (10:30).\(^{106}\)

3.3.22 $P^{51*}$

There are no extant numbers in $P^{51}$, but the editor has reconstructed two cardinal numbers: the abbreviated $[\iota\varepsilon]$ (Gal 1:18), which seems to be likely on the basis of line length, and the longhand $[\tau\rho\mu\alpha]$ (Gal 1:18).\(^{107}\)

\(^{102}\) Another minor note is that in 26:22, $P^{37}$ is reconstructed as ηρξαντο [λεγειν εκας] τος αυτων, according to some witnesses (e.g., A 02, K 017, W 032, Γ 036, Δ 037, etc.), although it is possible that it contained a numeral: ηρξαντο λεγειν εκ κας τος αυτων (cf. $P^{37\text{vid}}$, D 05, Θ 038, 11\text{f}'). It is not listed in support of any particular reading here in NA\(^{28}\).

\(^{103}\) P.Oxy. XV 1780.7–8.

\(^{104}\) P.Bad. IV 57.28–31 and Junack et al., Röm., 41–47, 75–80.

\(^{105}\) PSI X 1165.112–18.


3.3.23 P53

In P53, one cardinal number is clearly visible, μηνι (Matt 26:40), and another is given by the editor as δ[ων] (26:37). Regarding the latter, however, photographs reveal that only scant traces of the delta can now be detected.108 One longhand cardinal is reconstructed: [δων] (Acts 9:38).

3.3.24 P56

There are two partially visible numbers in P56: προτο[ν] (Acts 1:1) and διο (1:10).109 One can be reconstructed with some confidence: [τεκσσεράκοντα] (1:3).

3.3.25 P64 + 67

One cardinal number is partially visible in P64+67: [τ]β (Matt 26:14).110 Only the bottom half of the beta is visible, but no alternative readings have been put forward that posit a different letter here.111 An overstrike is not visible. The reconstruction of

108 Henry A. Sanders, “A Third Century Papyrus of Matthew and Acts,” in Casey, Lake, and Lake, Quantulacumque, 151–61. Min here adds some caution to both words: i.e., δ[ων] and μηνι (Min, Die früheste Überlieferung, 154–55); though, Comfort and Barrett give the same readings as the editio princeps (Comfort and Barrett, Text of the Earliest, 369–73). A numerical adverb is also partially visible: [τ]ρεῖς (Matt 26:34).


111 Colin Roberts transcribed the numeral without an overstrike or underdot: [τ]β (Roberts, “An Early Papyrus,” 236). Carsten Thiede’s transcription also lacks the bar, but correctly adds a dot underneath the beta, as the upper half of the letter is not visible (Carsten Thiede, “Papyrus Magdalen 17 [Gregory-Aland P64]: A Reappraisal,” ZPE 105 [1995]: 13–20 [20]), although the reprinted version in TynBul appears to lack the dot; see Carsten Thiede, “Papyrus Magdalen 17 (Gregory-Aland P64): A Reappraisal,” TynBul 46 (1995): 29–42 (41). For the response to Thiede, see Peter Head, “The Date of the Magdalen Papyrus of Matthew (P. Magd. Gr. 17 = P64): A Response to C. P. Thiede,” TynBul 46 (1995): 251–85. Head likewise prints the underdot and no overstrike. Rather freely, Skeat added the overstrike, lost the underdot, and added surrounding medial points (i.e., ‘[τ]β’) as is the practice
[α | τὸν ἰ]β given by T. C. Skeat is dubious given the absence of such wording (i.e., abbreviated “one”) from any extant NT manuscript examined here.\(^\text{112}\)

3.3.26 P\(^6^\text{6*}\)

There are no extant numbers in P\(^6^\text{5}\), but one cardinal is reconstructed by the editor: [ενα] (1 Thess 2:11).\(^\text{113}\)

3.3.27 P\(^6^\text{9*}\)

Although there are no visible numbers in P\(^6^\text{9}\), it is very likely on the basis of line length that it contained the abbreviated cardinal for “twelve” and the numeral “one”: [εῑ τον ἰβ] (Luke 22:47).\(^\text{114}\) Another issue deserves comment. In a lacunose portion of 22:59 (verso, line 3), there does not seem to be enough space for the expected wording ὀτε ὁρας μιᾶς ὅλος τις, and editors have proposed different solutions. The original editor posited the omission of μιᾶς and τις: ὡς[εῑ ὁρας ἄλλοις ἒχες], though this is not required; the original wording is uncertain.\(^\text{115}\)

3.3.28 P\(^8^\text{6}\)

P\(^8^\text{6}\) contains one ordinal number: πρῶτος (Matt 5:24).\(^\text{116}\)

\(^{112}\) T. C. Skeat, “The Oldest Manuscript?,” 12. And Min has [ι]β (Min, Die frühere Überlieferung, 168). In any case, although the letter is only partially visible and the use of an overstrike and medial dots are uncertain, the numeral itself is not to be doubted.

\(^{113}\) PS\(\text{I XIV}\) 1373.5–7.

\(^{114}\) This is how the original editor reconstructed the fragment (P\(\text{Oxy. XXIV}\) 2383.2), and no change was made in the more recent transcription by Thomas Wayment, “A New Transcription of P. Oxy. 2383 (P\(^6^\text{6}\)),” NovT 50 (2008): 351–57. But see [εῑ τὸν δοῦλον] in Blumell and Wayment, Christian Oxyrhynchus, 38–41.

\(^{115}\) P\(\text{Oxy. XXIV}\) 2383.3, which is followed by Wayment (Wayment, “A New Transcription,” 352).

\(^{116}\) This is the INTF website transcription contains the unlikely ὡς[εῑ ὁρας ἄλλοις τις] (i.e., α = μιᾶς). Comfort and Barrett posit the omission of only μιᾶς (Comfort and Barrett, Text of the Earliest, 472).
3.3.29 P^{88}

P^{88} contains two extant cardinal numbers. The presence of εις (Mark 2:7) is clear, but the second numeral is now hardly discernible due to fragmentation, τ[εκκαρων] (2:3), though the original editor was able to see more: τ[εκκ]αρων.\textsuperscript{117}

3.3.30 P^{90*}

There are no visible numbers in P^{90}, but one is reconstructed by the editor: [ενα] (John 18:39).\textsuperscript{118}

3.3.31 P^{91*}

There are no visible numbers in P^{91}, but one longhand ordinal is reconstructed by the editor: [ενατην] (Acts 3:1).\textsuperscript{119}

3.3.32 P^{98}

Two cardinal numbers are visible in P^{98}, and both are shorthand: ζ (Rev 1:20), and ζ (1:20); the presence of supralinear strokes must be inferred due to fragmentation of the papyrus.\textsuperscript{120} One letter of a third numeral is suggested by the editor’s transcription, αστερες ε[ (1:16), that is, αστερες ε[πτα]. Photographs of the


\textsuperscript{118} P.Oxy. L 3523.3–8.


\textsuperscript{120} The manuscript’s editor notes that that the first of these two abbreviations is a “difficult reading,” as the horizontal strokes of the zeta are not totally visible; see Dieter Hagedorn, “P.IFAO II 31: Johannesapokalypse 1,13–20,” ZPE 92 (1992): 243–47 (247). The editio princeps of P^{98} is technically Guy Wagner, ed., Papyrus grecs de l’Institut Français D’Archéologie Orientale (Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale du Caire, Bibliothéauæ d’Étte, 1971), 2:47–48 (§31), who, not recognizing its text, termed it a “list of objects.” Compare the two transcriptions of P^{98}:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:16/in. 7</td>
<td>αστον έ(.) ερες</td>
<td>αστον αστερες ε[</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:20/in. 18</td>
<td>λυχνος</td>
<td>ζ λυχνος α[ε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:20/in. 19</td>
<td>ζελη μ. ο[</td>
<td>ζ εκκλησιων ε[</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
manuscript are not clearly in favor of this reading; Comfort and Barrett, in fact, posit ἀς τερε [才干].

In addition, Hagedorn proposed the unlikely reconstruction of ἂ in place of πρῶτος (1:17), citing for support the fact that P47 frequently uses alphabetic numerals.121 This suggestion is most unlikely since no papyri (or parchment manuscripts) surveyed here use ἂ to stand for εἰκ/μι/ν and certainly not for the ordinal πρῶτος (not even P47).

3.3.33 P100

There is one longhand cardinal number in P100, εἰς (James 4:12),122 and one ordinal, πρῶτος (3:17).

3.3.34 P101

One cardinal number is visible in P101, and it is abbreviated: ῆ (Matt 4:2). In addition, although it is no longer visible, another cardinal number can be confidently reconstructed given the length of the lines: [ἃ] (Matt 4:2).123

3.3.35 P104*

P104 contains no extant numbers, but the longhand ordinal [πρῶτος] (Matt 21:36) has been reconstructed.124

122 P.Oxy. LXV 4449.20–25.
123 See the reconstruction by J. David Thomas, ed., P.Oxy. LXIV 4401.2–4. See also the reconstruction of Comfort and Barrett (Comfort and Barrett, Text of the Earliest, 638). In addition, Peter Head observes that the numeral stands for τετετερακοντα without comment on the second number; see Peter M. Head, “Some Recently Published NT Papyri from Oxyrhynchus: An Overview and Preliminary Assessment,” TynBul 51 (2000): 1–16 (8).
124 P.Oxy. LXIV 4404.7–9. Min gives the same reconstruction (Min, Die früheste Überlieferung, 234).
3.3.36 P\textsuperscript{105*}

There are no visible numbers in P\textsuperscript{105}, but one longhand cardinal has been reconstructed by the editor: [τρεις] (Matt 27:63). There is, however, slight uncertainty about the editor’s reconstruction of lines 5–6 (27:63–64):

\[\text{[νος ο πλανος] εἰπεν ἐτι [ζων μετα]}\]
\[\text{[τρεις ημερας] εἴηρομαι [ι κέλευς]}\]

On the basis of line length, the editor opts against the reading of D\textsubscript{05}, which contains οτι between ζων and μετα. It is at least possible, however, that τρεις was written as the abbreviation (i.e., \(\overline{y}\)), thus allowing room for the οτι (no variant is listed here in NA\textsuperscript{28}).\textsuperscript{125} This is, of course, only one possibility.

3.3.37 P\textsuperscript{106}

In P\textsuperscript{106} there is one visible cardinal number, δυο (John 1:40), and two visible ordinal numbers, πρω[τ]ος (1:30) and πρω[τ]ο[ν] (1:41).\textsuperscript{126}

3.3.38 P\textsuperscript{107}

One cardinal number is extant in P\textsuperscript{107}: εν (John 17:11).\textsuperscript{127}

3.3.39 P\textsuperscript{108*}

No numbers are visible in P\textsuperscript{108}, but one cardinal is reconstructed by the editor: [εν] (John 17:23).\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{125} P.Oxy. LXIV 4406.12–13; specifically, D\textsubscript{05} and 157 have οτι between ζων and μετα.

\textsuperscript{126} P.Oxy. LXV 4445.11–14. Comfort and Barrett reconstruct several other numbers, e.g., [δυο] (John 1:35, 37), [δεκατη] (1:39), and [εις] (1:40) (Comfort and Barrett, Text of the Earliest, 646); all are impossible to verify.

\textsuperscript{127} P.Oxy. LXV 4446.14–16.

\textsuperscript{128} P.Oxy. LXV 4447.16–18.
3.3.40 P₁₀⁹∗

No numbers are visible in P₁₀⁹, but one cardinal is reconstructed by the editor: [εν] (John 21:25).¹²⁹

3.3.41 P₁¹¹∗

The editor of P₁¹¹ reconstructs two cardinal numbers; one is abbreviated: [ι] (Luke 17:12), and the other is longhand: [μια] (17:22). The former is a possible reconstruction but certainty is impossible given the fragmentary state of the papyrus. Others have, in fact, reconstructed the same number as longhand.¹³⁰

3.3.42 P₁¹⁹

The original editor recorded one cardinal number as partially visible, ε[ιc] (John 1:40), but the epsilon is now difficult to discern in photographs of the papyrus.¹³¹ Another is reconstructed: [δυο] (1:40). In addition, there is one partially visible ordinal number, and it is longhand: [δεκατη] (1:39). One ordinal is reconstructed: [πρωτον] (1:41).

3.3.43 P₁²⁰

There is one extant longhand cardinal number in P₁²⁰: δυο (John 1:37); the editor reconstructs another: [δυο] (1:35).¹³²

3.3.44 P₁²¹∗

No numbers are visible in P₁²¹, but the editor has reconstructed one cardinal: [δυο] (John 19:18).¹³³

¹³⁰ P.Oxy. LXVI 4495.3–5. For reconstructions of the longhand form, see the INTF website, Comfort and Barrett (Text of the Earliest, 659), and Blumell and Wayment (Christian Oxyrhynchus, 41–43).
¹³¹ P.Oxy. LXXI 4803.2–6; cf. ε[ιc] (1:40) in Blumell and Wayment, Christian Oxyrhynchus, 72.
¹³² P.Oxy. LXXI 4804.6–9.
3.3.45 $P^{122}$

One abbreviated cardinal number is visible in $P^{122}$: ρṝγγ (John 21:11). The supralinear bar, in fact, is only visible over the first character due to fragmentation of the papyrus (i.e., ρṝγγ), but there is no doubt that the latter two characters form part of the numerical abbreviation.\(^{134}\) There is also a reconstructed ordinal: [τρττον] (John 21:14).

3.3.46 $P^{123}$

In $P^{123}$ there is one partially visible cardinal number, π̣ε[ντα][κοιοις] (1 Cor 15:6), although only the very tops of the letters remain (the editor is more confident about identifying letters here). Another is reconstructed: [δωδέκα] (15:5). One ordinal number is partially visible: π̣ρ̣ω[τοι[ς] (15:3). The editor posited traces of another, [τριτ]η (15:4), but this is not discernible from images of the papyrus.\(^{135}\)

3.3.47 $P^{127}$

Two cardinal numbers are visible in $P^{127}$, one is abbreviated, μ̅ (Acts 10:41), and one is longhand, τρ̣ι (17:2). One longhand ordinal number is hardly visible: π̣ρ̣ω[τοι[ς] (17:4).

Importantly, the numeral μ̅ (= τεσσεράκοντα) in 10:41 occurs within a phrase not found in the Alexandrian textual tradition (ημερας τεσσερακοντα), but is found in a couple Greek witnesses (D 05, E 08) and versions (it, sa, mae, sy\(\text{h}^{19*}\)), along with other variations.\(^{136}\) This numeral in particular is written in shorthand in both $P^{127}$ and

---

\(^{133}\) *P.Oxy.* LXXI 4805.9–11.

\(^{134}\) *P.Oxy.* LXXI 4806.11–14.


\(^{136}\) *P.Oxy.* LXXIV 4968.1–45.
D 05, the two earliest witnesses to the phrase. (For more discussion on this, see chapter 5, section 5.7.1)

3.4 Observations and Summary

3.4.1 Diversity of Numbers in the Papyri

The preceding analysis has shown that there is considerable diversity in the number-writing techniques of the early NT papyri. This is seen clearly in two ways: (1) There are great differences between the number-writing techniques of different scribes (that of P\textsuperscript{46} and P\textsuperscript{47}, for example), and (2) individual scribes were often inconsistent in their choice of number-style, even with multiple iterations of the same values.

Furthermore, manuscripts with overlapping text, such as P\textsuperscript{66} and the John portion of P\textsuperscript{75}, clearly indicate that scribes did not adhere to a rigid standard of number-writing techniques. Copyists evidently felt free to vary their use of numeral styles. Diversity is also evident in the way that various classes of numbers that are handled; for instance, in P\textsuperscript{75}, only cardinal numbers are abbreviated, while in P\textsuperscript{47}, cardinal and ordinal numbers are abbreviated. We should also note that numerical shorthand also appears where it is not expected (e.g., manuscripts written in literary hands) and it often does not appear where it could be expected (e.g., manuscripts written in documentary hands).

3.4.2 Uniformity of Numbers in the Papyri

In spite of these considerable differences in the styles of number writing in early papyri, there are some notable similarities that can be observed.

(1) First, every extant instance of εἷϲ/µία/ἕν (“one”) is longhand, even as it is by far the most frequently occurring number in the NT. This defies coincidence. We might suppose that these words are always written out because—being only two or
three letters in length—they require no shortening, yet it would then be curious to find δύο so frequently abbreviated.\footnote{εἷϲ/µία/ἕ is used with surprising frequency \textit{(nearly ninety times)}, however, in the \textit{P.Beatty VI Numbers} papyrus (e.g., 6:11 [2x], 7:13, 19, 20, 21 [3x], 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32, 33 [2x], 34, 37 [2x], 38, 39 [3x], 40; 28:11, 15, 21, 27, etc.)—which is most likely a Christian copy; Frederic G. Kenyon, ed., \textit{Numbers and Deuteronomy, Text}, vol. 5 of \textit{The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri} (London: Emery Walker, 1935), see also chapter 6 of this thesis.}

(2) Another similarity is the avoidance of number symbols for values in the thousands, which are nearly always written in full. Papyri of Revelation, however, are exceptions to this (e.g., P$^47$ and P$^{115}$). The same also applies to ordinal numbers, which are consistently given as longhand forms in our papyri, with the exceptions of P$^47$ and P$^{115}$.

(3) Beyond these similarities, it appears that the use of numerical symbols is essentially unpredictable. Yet it is evident that particular numbers were more likely to be represented by alphabetic numerals than others; for example, the numbers τεϲϲερίκοντα and δόδεκα are abbreviated with great frequency across a range of witnesses. There is also some indication that scribes would avoid using numerical symbols for words that are declinable (e.g., τριῶν), but this tendency will need further investigation to be confirmed.

(4) A final observation to be made from these data is the tendency for certain books or groups of books to be treated in the same way by scribes. Consider, for example, the papyri of Paul and Hebrews that contain visible numbers (i.e., P$^{13}$, P$^{46}$, and P$^{123}$), none of these contain any numerical abbreviations.\footnote{There is, of course, P$^{51}$, for which an abbreviated number has been reconstructed.} Granted, this is a small set of data compared to the papyri we have for say, Matthew’s Gospel, but it is still significant that the number-writing techniques in them are consistent all the way
through. This is also true for the two manuscripts of the Catholic Epistles, P\textsuperscript{72} and P\textsuperscript{100}, which contain only longhand numbers, though, again, this is admittedly a small sample of data. Such a tendency to avoid abbreviations could be compared with the papyri of the Gospels and Acts. In these manuscripts, numerical abbreviations are found frequently, though never exclusively, for cardinal numbers ranging from “two” to “one hundred” (not, however, for ordinals). Manuscripts of Revelation, on the other hand, evidence a far more frequent and flexible employment of numerical abbreviations. These observations evidently suggest that scribes employed different number-writing techniques within particular books and/or groups of books.

### 3.4.3 Syntax of Numerals

One important observation that must be made concerns the use of numerical shorthand and Greek syntax. Generally, our copyists employed numerical abbreviations as a direct substitute for longhand words without any change to word order. This marks a clear difference from other comparable scribal techniques. For example, the *P.Beatty* IV (Rahlfs 961), a fourth-century papyrus manuscript of Genesis, reveals a consistent pattern of transposing word order when employing numerical shorthand (e.g., δύο Ἔτη → Ἐτη β̅).\textsuperscript{139} This tendency might help to illuminate the nature of textual variants that involve transpositions between numerals and units.

3.4.4 Chronological Development

Tracking a chronological development of scribal number writing is methodologically problematic for several reasons, not least of which is that manuscript dates are only approximate and often disputed. The nature of paleography is such that scholars will disagree on the precise window of dates to which a given manuscript belongs.\textsuperscript{140} Even more problematic is that, in their fragmentary state, it is impossible to say whether or not a given papyrus once contained numerical shorthand. We have seen that most scribes were inconsistent (and therefore unpredictable) in their choice of number-style, which means that the presence of one or two longhand numerals is not a sufficient basis upon which to presume a scribal preference in the rest of a codex. In any case, however, it is clear that the practice of employing numerical abbreviations is discernible in a wide range of dates:

- II: $P^{98}$
- III: $P^{45}, P^{46}, P^{47}, P^{48}, P^{66}, P^{75}, P^{101}$
- III/IV: $P^{37}, P^{72}$
- IV: $P^{24}, P^{35}$
- IV/V: $P^{122}$
- V: $P^{127}$

The large number of papyri containing numerical shorthand in the third century is occasioned simply by the relative surplus of textual evidence from that era. Thus, at present, the data do not indicate any sort of chronological development with the practice.

3.4.5 Reconstructs

We have also seen that, given the high degree of inconsistency among the number-writing techniques of the papyri, many textual reconstructions turn out to be questionable. It is exceedingly difficult to predict how a scribe would have written numbers, especially when they display inconsistency in the extant portions of text. It is dangerous for editors to propose an abbreviated number-form in order to reconstruct the text without omissions or transpositions—much like a “safety valve”; but these situations require caution more than anything. Reconstruction of numerals is problematic even in manuscripts that seem to contain a clear pattern of number-style (e.g., \(P^{66}\)), given those manuscripts that contain only a couple exceptions (e.g., \(P^{66}\) and \(P^{45}\)).\textsuperscript{141}

3.5 Conclusion

With a systematic study of all the numerals in our early NT papyri, we have the beginnings of a foundation upon which to build. It is hoped that we can now begin to describe the nature of the number-writing techniques used by the early Christian scribes and refine our understanding of the transmission of the NT text. Along the way we have added valuable data to our understanding of individual scribes and their techniques. One immediate benefit of this information is the ability to reevaluate the

---

\textsuperscript{141} As an example, we could take Skeat’s reconstruction of \(P^{64+67}\), which—on the basis of what we have observed here—contains multiple problems; see Skeat, “The Oldest Manuscript?,” 1–34. In his reconstructed folio of Matt 26, Skeat posited three instances of \(\bar{\alpha}\) standing for \(\varepsilon\upiota\chi\mu\omicron\upsilon\lambda\upsilon\nu\) (Matt 26:14, 21, 22) and another standing for \(\pi\rho\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\) of which are most certainly incorrect. There is an even greater problem when we consider Skeat’s larger aim, which was to reconstruct the precise ending of Matthew’s Gospel in the original codex of \(P^{64}\). “Just before the foot of col. 2 of the fifth leaf—probably about 3 or 4 lines from the foot” (pg. 14). This was crucial to his argument that \(P^{64}\) was originally part of \(P^{64+67}\). Yet Skeat calculated every numeral between Matt 26:33 and 28:20 as if they were numerical symbols (see pg. 14); and there are no less than thirty-three numerals in those verses. Given what we have seen with scribal treatments of numbers, this was a serious mistake. Calculating those thirty-three numerals as longhand words (or a mixture of shorthand and longhand) would easily compromise Skeat’s over-precise ending of Matthew, thereby obviating any arguments about how \(P^{64}\) originally related, and in turn compromising any supposed relationship between \(P^{64}\) and \(P^{64+67}\).
relative strengths and weaknesses of manuscript editions and reconstructions as it concerns numerals. Furthermore, our examination has uncovered multiple questions and issues that will require further testing and development. But before we can address these it is necessary to survey our other major body of data: the majuscules. It is to these that we now turn.
CHAPTER 4:
INTERNAL PROFILES OF MAJUSCULES

4.1 Major Majuscules

This chapter continues the internal analysis of scribal number-writing techniques in NT manuscripts begun in chapter 3. As we turn from the papyri to parchment manuscripts, minor changes in method are necessary. The same temporal window applies (II–V/VI), but in surveying the major uncials such as Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus, some of which contain the (near) complete texts of the NT, it would be impractical and unhelpful to cite explicitly every occurrence of a numeral as was done with the papyri. Accordingly, for the major parchment witnesses only those numbers given in abbreviated form will be listed fully and the others will simply be summarized. Within the fragmentary majuscules, however, every numeral will be listed explicitly.¹

Three manuscripts in particular will require more in-depth analysis than others. Codex Sinaiticus (א 01), Codex Bezae (D 05), and Codex Washingtonianus (W 032) each contain quite complicated and surprising scribal patterns of number writing that cannot be easily summarized. Therefore, in addition to discussing the specifics of their numeral techniques, we will examine possible relationships to other important codicological features such as nomina sacra, paragraph breaks, irregularities in quire formation, and orthography.

¹ One early majuscule has been omitted from this discussion, GA 062, of which the available photographs were illegible and for which I was unable to find a published transcription.
4.1.1 Codex Sinaiticus – Ξ 01

We begin with Codex Sinaiticus (Ξ 01), a complete copy of the NT from the fourth-century. A distinctive problem with Sinaiticus is the mass of corrections made to its text. Many such corrections were made contemporaneously with the initial act of copying (in scribendo) or immediately after (by the diorthotes), but others were made much later, circa the seventh century. Unless otherwise stated, the latter category has been ignored, and, where contemporaneous corrections are present, both these and the original reading are considered.

4.1.1.1 Cardinal Numbers

Sinaiticus contains more than a few numerical abbreviations in its NT portion. Below are listed all occurrences of numerical abbreviations in Ξ 01 and corresponding longhand forms used elsewhere (see table 4.1); where there is no longhand form of a given value, this is noted by a dash (–).

---

2 For images of Codex Sinaiticus, see the website (http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/). For the printed text, see C. Tischendorf, ed., Novum Testamentum Sinaiticum: sive Novum Testamentum cum Epistula Barnabae et Fragmentis Pastoris ex Codice Sinaitico (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1863). See also F. H. A. Scrivener, ed., A Full Collation of the Codex Sinaiticus with the Received Text of the New Testament: To which is Prefixed a Critical Introduction (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, & Co.; London: Bell & Daldy, 1864), which consistently lists all occurrences of numerical abbreviations in the collation.

Cardinal numbers written in abbreviated form in Σ fall between the values of 2–144, and each value occurs elsewhere in the codex in longhand form at least once except for 144. The number “one” is always written longhand, and there are no less than 338 of such instances. The most frequently abbreviated cardinal value is “twelve,” written in symbol form twenty-eight times (and in two additional instances from a seventh-century corrector), followed by thirty (9x), and two (7x). Many numbers, however, are given only in their longhand forms: e.g., ἕξ (10x), ὀκτώ (6x), ἑννέα (1x), δέκα (23x), ἕνδεκα (5x), δεκαπέντε (3x), δεκαείκοσι (5x), εἴκοσι (1x), εἴκοσι τέσσαρες (5x), εἴκοσι πέντε (1x), τριάκοντα και ὀκτώ (1x), τεσσεράκοσια δύο (2x),

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Shorthand Forms</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7x</td>
<td>123x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6x</td>
<td>60x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matt 12:40; 15:32; 18:20; Mark 9:5; Rev 21:15 (2x)</td>
<td>Matt 13:33; 17:4; Rev 11:9, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3x</td>
<td>26x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matt 24:31; Mark 2:3; Rev 7:1</td>
<td>John 11:17; Acts 21:23; 27:29, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1x</td>
<td>33x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matt 14:19</td>
<td>Matt 14:17; 25:15, 20; Rev 9:10, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5x</td>
<td>80x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matt 16:10; Mark 8:5, 6; 12:20; Luke 2:36</td>
<td>Matt 12:45; Luke 20:31; Rev 5:6, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>28x</td>
<td>33x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matt 10:1, 2, 5; 11:1; 19:28 (2x); 20:17; 26:14, 20, 47; Mark 3:14, 16; 4:10; 5:42; 6:7, 43; 8:19; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; Luke 2:42; 1 Cor 15:5; Rev 21:12 (2x), 14 (2x), 21; 22:2</td>
<td>Matt 9:20; 14:20; 26:53; Mark 5:25; 14:17; Luke 8:1, 42, 43; 9:1; 18:31; John 6:67, 70; Acts 6:2; 7:8; 19:7; James 1:1; Rev 12:1, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3x</td>
<td>2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matt 1:17 (3x)</td>
<td>2 Cor 12:2; Gal 2:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>9x</td>
<td>1x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>2x</td>
<td>13x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2</td>
<td>Matt 4:2 (2x), Acts 4:22; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>1x</td>
<td>5x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matt 6:40</td>
<td>Luke 16:6; John 8:57, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>3x</td>
<td>2x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matt 13:23; Mark 4:8, 20</td>
<td>Matt 13:8; 1 Tim 5:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>3x</td>
<td>8x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matt 13:23; Mark 4:8, 20</td>
<td>Matt 13:8; 18:12, 28, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>1x</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rev 21:17 (σκατό</td>
<td>μό)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Table 4.1. Cardinals in Σ 01 |

4 This total includes instances in which numerals were omitted and supplied by a contemporaneous hand (Matt 9:18; Luke 12:25, 52; 17:35; 23:17) and original readings that were subsequently altered or deleted by later hands (Mark 12:20; Rev 7:13b), but not where the numeral is introduced by a later corrector (John 1:3; 6:70; 17:22; 1 Cor 12:12c, 26; Gal 3:28; Phil 2:2; Rev 9:13; 15:7).
Values in the thousands are consistently written longhand: e.g., χίλιοι (7x), δισχίλιοι (1x), τρισχίλιοι (2x), τετρακισχίλιοι (5x), πεντακισχίλιοι (6x), ἐπτακισχίλιοι/χιλιάκες ἐπτά (2x), δέκα χιλιάς (1x), δώδεκα χιλιάς (11x), εἴκοσι χιλιάς (1x), εἴκοσι τρεῖς χιλιάς (1x), χίλιοι διακόσιοι (1x), χίλιοι διακόσιοι ἐξήκοντα (2x), ἐκατόν τεσσεράκοντα χιλιάς (1x), ἐκατόν τεσσεράκοντα μίαν χιλιάς (1x), ἐκατόν τεσσεράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάς.⁶ There is evidence that this consistency reflects a deliberate choice to avoid numerical shorthand. At Rev 14:3, for example, the scribe mistakenly wrote ἐκατόν τεσσεράκοντα μίαν χιλιάς, substituting μίαν for τέσσαρας—a singular reading, corrected in the seventh century, and doubtless a misreading of a shorthand form: ΡΜΔΧΙΛΙΑΔΕΣ → ΡΜΔΧΙΛΙΑΔΕΣ.⁷

An interesting pattern seems to characterize the scribe’s writing of the number “twelve” in Matthew. Specifically, every time the number refers to the disciples of Jesus in the first Gospel, it is given in symbol form (ϛ), but when it refers to years

---

⁵ These examples have been given in their lexical forms.

⁶ We might also note the longhand forms of μυριάδας πεντακόσια = 50,000 (Acts 19:19) and δοῦν μυριάδαν μυριάδας = 2 myriads/200 million (Rev 9:16).

⁷ On the singular status of the reading, see Juan Hernández Jr., Scribal Habits and Theological Influences in the Apocalypse: The Singular Readings of Codex Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and Ephraemi, WUNT 2/218 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 85, 205. The explanation of a confusion between alpha and delta was posited by Bernhard Weiss, Die Johannes-Apokalypse: Textkritische Untersuchungen und Textherstellung, TU 7/1 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1891), 62.
(9:20), baskets (14:20), and legions of angels (26:53), it is written longhand 
(δώδεκα). This pattern is not entirely consistent, however, as it is abbreviated twice 
in 19:28 when referring to twelve thrones and twelve tribes of Israel (καθησεσθε και 
αυτοι επι τιβ· θρονουε | κρινοντες τις τιβ | φυλας του ιηλ). Given the context, 
however, these referents might be so closely linked with the disciples themselves that 
they were given the same scribal treatment, thus maintaining the distinction between 
τιβ and δώδεκα.

This pattern is significant because it mirrors the practice that is found with the 
nomina sacra—the scribal contractions of sacred names.\(^8\) Even in the earliest 
Christian manuscripts, divine names such as Ἰησοῦς, χριστός, κύριος, and θεός were 
regularly contracted (e.g., Ἰς, χς, κς, θς), while non-sacral counterparts such as 
“gods” and “lords” were often not.\(^9\) Could a similar practice be found in the use of τιβ 
for Jesus’s disciples? We will return to this issue in chapter 7 and explore it in 
greater detail, but it is sufficient to note for now that the same pattern is not found in 
any other books of the codex outside of Matthew, except in the lists of witnesses 
of the resurrected Jesus in 1 Cor 15:5, where it is given in symbol form. Nevertheless, 
for now we can tentatively suggest that if indeed there were a scribal practice of 
reserving the abbreviation τιβ for Jesus’ disciples, it was present only in the exemplar 
for Matthew and the scribe of 8 had no interest in continuing its use elsewhere.

---

\(^8\) Scholarly literature on the nomina sacra is now copious; for an excellent summary of the data and 

scholarship, see Larry W. Hurtado, The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian 

\(^9\) For examples of this distinction in Sinaiticus, see Jongkind, Scribal Habits, 62–84; and for the 
same in Alexandrinus, see W. Andrew Smith, A Study of the Gospels in Codex Alexandrinus: 
Abbreviated numbers in \( \mathfrak{n} \) tend not to stand for inflected forms. For example, the number “two” is abbreviated with some regularity, but only when standing for the lexical form \( \delta\nu\omicron \) (e.g., Matt 14:19; 21:1, 28, 31; 26:60; 27:21; Mark 6:41b); when, in contrast, the word is inflected, as in \( \delta\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\nu\omicron \), the longhand form is invariably used (e.g., Matt 6:24; 22:40; Luke 12:52a; 16:13, etc.). Similarly, with the number “three,” abbreviated forms are used for \( \tau\rho\epsilon\omicron \) (Matt 12:40; 15:32; 18:20; Mark 9:5; Rev 21:13b, 13c), but when declined, as in \( \tau\rho\iota\omicron\,\tau\rho\iota\alpha,\tau\rho\omicron\iota\iota\), the longhand is always used (e.g., Matt 13:33; 18:16; 26:61; 27:40; Mark 14:58; 15:29; Luke 4:25; 10:36; 12:52b; 13:7, 21; John 2:19, etc.). There are some exceptions to this tendency, however, particularly when an inflected form of the number “four” (e.g., \( \tau\epsilon\zeta\zeta\alpha\rho\omicron\omicron\nu \)) is represented by a numerical symbol (e.g., Matt 24:31; Mark 2:3; Rev 7:1a).

Beyond this, however, there seem to be few predictable patterns that govern the use of number-style in \( \mathfrak{n} \). A clear example is a comparison of the numbers in the Parable of the Sower in the Gospel of Matthew (see table 4.2):

| Table 4.2. Parable of the Sower in \( \mathfrak{n} \) 01 |
|------------------|------------------|
| \textbf{Matt 13:8b} | \textbf{Matt 13:23b} |
| καρπον ο μεν ε | εις ος δη καρπο |
| κατον ο δε εξηκ- | φορι και ποιει ο |
| τα ο δε \( \lambda \) ο εχων | μεν ρ ο δε \( \xi \) ο δε \( \lambda \) |
| \( \omega\tau\alpha\) ακουετο | αλλην παραβολη |

These are the same numbers (one hundred, sixty, and thirty) in the same order with the exact same referents, given in the same grammatical case and genders, but the scribe used different number-styles in the two iterations. (It is worth pointing out that the parallel verses in Mark have all of the numbers shorthand [Mark 4:8, 20]). This particular example from Matthew shows that there are simply no obvious external
principles that govern the use or non-use of a numerical abbreviation in א. It is impossible to predict when and where the scribe would employ numerical shorthand.

A detailed look at the number “seven” further confirms this observation. The following table lists each occurrence of the number seven in the book of Mark (see table 4.3); “position” refers to the placement of the word or letter on its given line of text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loc.</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Referent</th>
<th>Gender/Case</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:5</td>
<td>ζ̅</td>
<td>loaves</td>
<td>masc./acc.</td>
<td>end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:6</td>
<td>ζ̅</td>
<td>loaves</td>
<td>masc./acc.</td>
<td>middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:8</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>baskets</td>
<td>fem./acc.</td>
<td>middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:20a</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>loaves</td>
<td>masc./acc.</td>
<td>near end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:20b</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>baskets</td>
<td>fem./gen.</td>
<td>end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:20</td>
<td>ζ̅</td>
<td>brothers</td>
<td>masc./nom.</td>
<td>beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:22</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>brothers</td>
<td>masc./nom.</td>
<td>split</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:23</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>brothers</td>
<td>masc./nom.</td>
<td>middle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Referent seems not to have been a factor in the scribe’s decision to abbreviate: both forms of the number are used in reference to loaves (ζ̅, Mark 8:5; επτα, 8:20a), as well as in reference to brothers (ζ̅, 12:20; επτα, 12:22). Furthermore, grammatical case and gender seem to be unrelated to the number-style: as a masculine nominative, “seven” is given in both shorthand (12:20) and longhand forms for brothers (12:22, 23). Placement of the number in the line of text seems not to have been a major factor in the scribe’s decision to abbreviate or not. Once the scribe employs an abbreviation at the very end of the line, which has the effect of rounding off the row of text and allowing a new word to begin the following row (8:5). But once the scribe did not take such an opportunity, and effectively divided the word precisely where an abbreviation would have been convenient (επτα, 12:22; see also Matt 22:25). Elsewhere, however, we can see some sort of a decision, as in 8:6,
where the scribe initially wrote ε (of ἐπτά?), which was deleted and followed by ζ; though, no motivation is obvious here. A final observation is that there is no real correspondence of number-forms in parallel passages; that is, the numbers are written in different styles (ἐπτά/ζ, Matt 16:10//Mark 8:20; Matt 22:25//Mark 12:20). Again, even with a general idea of the scribe’s preferred method of number-writing, one simply cannot predict when or where it will appear in the text. This conclusion can be more or less confirmed when we observe a more obvious pattern to the use of number-style in Κ, but first it is necessary to address the writing of ordinal numbers.

4.1.1.2 Ordinal Numbers

Nearly all the ordinal numbers in Κ are written longhand. There are, however, eleven exceptions to this rule. Almost all occur in the text of Revelation, and ten occur within the span of two verses (see table 4.4):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Abbreviated Form</th>
<th>Longhand Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>1x {John 21:16}</td>
<td>40x Mark 12:31, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>1x Rev 21:19</td>
<td>55x Acts 2:15, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>1x Rev 21:19</td>
<td>9x Rev 4:7, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>1x Rev 21:20</td>
<td>2x Rev 9:1; 16:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>1x Rev 21:20</td>
<td>13x John 4:6, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>1x Rev 21:20</td>
<td>8x Heb 4:4, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth</td>
<td>1x Rev 21:20</td>
<td>3x Luke 1:59, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth</td>
<td>1x Rev 21:20</td>
<td>9x Mark 15:34, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth</td>
<td>1x Rev 21:20</td>
<td>6x Heb 7:8, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh</td>
<td>1x Rev 21:20</td>
<td>2x Matt 20:6, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelfth</td>
<td>1x Rev 21:20</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most frequently occurring ordinal numbers are πρῶτος (“first”) and δεύτερος (“second”); πρῶτος occurs 150x and δεύτερος occurs 40x, all of which are longhand with one exception: at John 21:16, the phrase τὸ β (τὸ δεύτερον) is written as a marginal correction contemporaneous with the original copying (by
S1). Nearly all the other ordinals in Sinaiticus are also longhand, save for the exceptions listed above. Thus, aside from the marginal correction in John 21:16, the only abbreviated ordinals that came from the first hand of א are found within two consecutive verses in a sequence of consecutive ordinals (Rev 21:19–20). These abbreviations therefore represent isolated exceptions to the otherwise normal scribal preference of using longhand forms for ordinals. Note that other lists of consecutive ordinals are not treated this way; see, for example, πρῶτον–τέταρτον (Rev 4:7) and πρῶτος–ἐκτός (16:2–12). What could account for these exceptions?

Interestingly, this portion of Revelation in א contains an anomaly in quire formation, a feature that may be related to the sudden use of abbreviated ordinals. Whereas the typical quire in א is composed of four sheets folded in half (thus comprising eight leaves), quire 90, which contains the end of Revelation and beginning of Barnabas (Rev 20:10–22:21 and Barn. 1:1–14:4), is composed of only three sheets (thus comprising six leaves). This is followed by quire 91, which is a single sheet quire (comprising two leaves) that contains the ending of Barnabas. The reason for the irregularity in makeup of quires 90 and 91 is not obvious, and multiple explanations are possible. Dirk Jongkind has argued that this irregular quire formation is most likely due to an error related to space restrictions that led to the removal of one whole sheet from quire 90. In short, it appears that the scribe miscalculated the space required to write the end of Revelation and the whole of Barnabas.

Two other abbreviated ordinals occur as interlinear corrections by a seventh-century hand (Rev 6:9; 16:17). For a recent study of the corrections in Revelation, see Juan Hernández Jr., “The Creation of a Fourth-Century Witness to the Andreas Text Type: A Misreading in the Apocalypse’s Textual History,” NTS 60 (2014): 106–20. The total of ordinals includes instances in which a numeral was deleted by a contemporaneous hand (e.g., John 2:11). For other examples, see πεντεκαιδεκατω (Luke 3:1), τεσσαρεκατεκατατη (Acts 27:27, 33).

11 See Jongkind, Scribal Habits, 48–51.
Barnabas, which is followed by the Shepherd of Hermas on a new quire. Jongkind postulates that the scribe realized the space problem only after he had begun to copy the second folio of the first quire, which he then removed in order to recopy with fewer blank columns (after the end of Rev), thereby fitting more text into the quire. A full discussion is not possible here, but it is significant that the ten abbreviated ordinals of Rev 21:19–20 all occur on the verso of the first sheet of quire 90—which is immediately prior to the sheet that was removed. The sudden increase in numerical shorthand seems to indicate that the scribe, approaching the transition from Revelation to Barnabas, foresaw this difficulty in writing the full amount necessary and took measures to trim the text. To do this, the copyist departed from the typical style of number writing and employed several abbreviations for cardinal and ordinal numbers. The technique alone did not solve the problem, however, and the second sheet still had to be removed.

Another minor detail fits this hypothesis. When writing the numeral θ̅ (Rev 21:20), the scribe initially wrote ε—the first letter of the longhand form ἑνατο—to which was then rubbed out and followed by the abbreviated form θ̅. We might suppose that the scribe began to write ἑνατο and quickly altered it to the abbreviated form in order to conserve the much-needed space. This would confirm that the use of numerical shorthand was deliberate and not simply carried over from an exemplar.

This, of course, is speculative, but there is no other observable motivation for the scribe to have suddenly changed the otherwise consistent manner of writing ordinals (note also the abbreviated cardinals in this context as well; e.g., Rev 21:12

---

This sudden reuse of numerical abbreviations supports Jongkind’s explanation for the irregular quire formation, and, in general, confirms his observation that “no single, fixed procedure was followed in the production of Sinaiticus. The way in which the writing of the main text was divided up between the three scribes seems to betray a number of ad hoc decisions and attempts to cover up previous mistakes.”¹³

### 4.1.1.3 Cardinals and Ordinals Together

As hinted above, the whole of Codex Μ contains a discernible pattern of number-writing style (see table 4.5):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
<th>Abbreviated Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>{1}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts+Cath</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that, as the codex progresses, numerical abbreviations are employed with decreasing frequency. The low frequency of abbreviated number forms in John, Paul’s Epistles, Acts, and the Catholic Epistles is certainly not due to the lack of opportunity; several hundred numbers are present in these books, and nearly all are longhand. This decreasing frequency of usage is not found in any other NT manuscript under investigation here.

What accounts for this pattern of abbreviations? Scholars hold that multiple scribes are responsible for Codex Sinaiticus—could the different scribes have created

---

¹³ Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*, 57. Later, he describes “a low level of standardisation in regard to the production and composition of this large codex” (59).
this inconsistent use of abbreviations? This is unlikely. First, almost without exception, one scribe was responsible for the NT portion of Sinaiticus: Scribe A. Secondly, the few places in the NT where a different scribe was at work show no significant variation in number-writing techniques; these are the replacement sheets that were penned by a different copyist (Scribe D), but none contains any clear differences in number-style. In any case, these brief sections of text cannot account for the overall picture of the declining use of numerical abbreviations.

Also significant is the fact that no change in number-writing is evident where scholars have identified block mixture of different textual affiliations. Specifically, the text of John from 1:1–8:38 has been observed to be more “Western” in character than the expected Alexandrian, yet no change in numerals accompanies this mixture. This is significant in light of what we will find with other comparable majuscules (most notably Codex Washingtonianus, W 032).

Although the precise reason for the diminishing usage is not immediately obvious, the most straightforward proposal is that the scribe initially aimed at conserving space but gradually ceased doing so. Numerical shorthand can clearly trim the length of a text by no small degree, and it is reasonable to suppose that its use (or non-use) reflects a conscious decision of the scribe. The exception to this overall pattern—as noted above—is immediately prior to the transition from

---

14 See Jongkind, *Scribal Hands*, 39–44. There has been disagreement about how many scribes produced Codex Sinaiticus, for a recent defense of four over three, see Amy Myshrall, “The Presence of a Fourth Scribe?,” in *Codex Sinaiticus* (McKendrick, et al.), 139–48.

15 The replacement sheets are folio 74.2 (Matt 16:9–18:12), folio 74.7 (Matt 24:36–25:21), folio 76.4–5 (Mark 14:54–Luke 1:56), folio 84.3 (1 Thess 2:14–5:28), folio 84.6 (Heb 4:16–8:1), and folio 89.1 (Rev 1:1–5); see Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*, 40–41; and Milne and Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors*, 29.

Revelation to Barnabas, where several abbreviations were employed, and there may have been a codicological difficulty that required space-saving techniques. To test this tentative proposal of diminishing usage, we should briefly examine some other scribal features that might serve to corroborate or contradict our suspicion. Jongkind’s thorough study of the codex provides several valuable points of comparison. In particular, he analyzes the style and frequency of *nomina sacra*, ligatures (joined letters), and text-divisions among the different scribes. We might suppose that if the copyist employed numerical shorthand for the purpose of saving space or constricting the text, we should see similar patterns with these related scribal features. Unfortunately, however, matters are not so simple. On the whole, Jongkind found that the scribe responsible for most of the NT portion did not, in fact, employ these features in any discernible patterns.\(^{17}\)

Let us consider, for instance, the frequency of paragraph breaks. The scribe created a paragraph break by simply leaving a portion of a line blank and beginning again on the following line. This effectively results in “expanding” the text, while the effect of *not using* paragraph breaks results in more letters per line, column, page, etc. Let us suppose for the moment that if the scribe were attempting to conserve space, he could simultaneously use numerical abbreviations (thereby shortening words) and avoid using paragraph breaks (thereby eliminating wasted lines). Yet this is precisely what is not found in, for example, John’s Gospel, in which there is an absence of numerical shorthand *and* a low frequency of text-divisions—which would, at least theoretically, cancel each other out.\(^{18}\) Furthermore, in the Gospels we


find great fluctuation in the use of text-division and no discernible pattern that could be matched with the steady decrease in numerical abbreviation. That said, however, there are two interesting points of coincidence between these two features. Paul’s letters, and particularly Romans, contains the most frequent usage of paragraph breaks and only one numerical abbreviation, while the book of Revelation contains the fewest paragraph breaks in the codex and many numerical abbreviations near the end. The former example could be seen as a concerted effort to expand the text (with fewer abbreviations and more blank lines), and the latter could be seen as an effort to cram more text into the allotted space (with more abbreviations and fewer blank lines). Nevertheless, these two minor agreements are not a sufficient basis upon which to conclude that the two features are intimately related or used in concert; outside of Romans and Revelation there is not great coincidence of such features and, particularly within the Gospels, the scribe appears to have fluctuated greatly in paragraphing without any pattern.

The nomina sacra also show mixed results. Here I reproduce data presented in Jongkind’s study that compares the occurrences of contracted forms and plene forms of certain words. Three words in particular are of special note: ἀνθρώπος, οὐρανός, and υἱὸς (see table 4.6).²⁰

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scribe A</th>
<th>Matt</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Luke</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>Paul</th>
<th>Rev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ἀνθρώπος</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>οὐρανός</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>υἱὸς</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²⁰Table taken from Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*, 257.
With the first word, ανθρωπος, there is a noticeable similarity to the use of numerical abbreviations. In Matt and Mark there is a high frequency of contracted forms of ανθρωπος, about 88 per cent and 70 per cent of the time respectively, while in Luke-John-Paul, the tendency reverses to a clear preference for longhand forms—much the same with numerical abbreviations. And in Revelation, the ratio is more balanced, as it is with numerals. A similar pattern is found with ουρανος, though to a lesser degree, which likewise has a much higher frequency of contraction in Matt and Mark compared to Luke-John-Paul (though the ratio in Mark does not fit perfectly); and again, in Revelation, the use of contracted forms increases. With the final term, ιος, the pattern is again noticeable, but not perfectly aligned with the pattern of number-writing. The frequency of contraction in Matt and Mark fits the expected pattern, but no shift is discernible in Luke and John as was observable with the other two terms. The frequency of contraction does not diminish significantly until the Pauline letters, where the plene form of ιος occurs twice as often as the shortened form, and with Revelation, no significant change is observable. There is, therefore, a general—but not strict—similarity in the pattern we found with numerical abbreviations, which is the increasing tendency to avoid shorthand forms as the codex progresses until Revelation, when the feature resurfaces. It is therefore not entirely clear if these features are related, nor is it obvious that the scribe was following any sort of pattern with either.

Before moving on, we should take note of the number-writing techniques that occur in the books that follow Revelation. The last two books in Sinaiticus are the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. An investigation of the numerals in these books reveals important data. On the one hand, there is nothing immediately
surprising about the numerals in these books: “ones” are consistently given longhand, as are ordinal numbers and values in the thousands. On the other hand, however, it is curious that roughly a dozen numerals were written in shorthand: e.g., \( \overline{\gamma} \) (Barn. 9:7), \( \overline{\zeta} \) (Barn. 15:5), \( \overline{\delta} \) (Barn. 8:3 [2x]; Herm. 94:1, 2), \( \overline{\lambda} \) (Herm. 23:1), \( \overline{\alpha} \) (Herm. 92:4), \( \overline{\mu} \) (Barn. 4:7 [2x]; 14:2; Herm. 92:4), \( \overline{\nu} \) (Herm. 22:6).\(^\text{21}\) Thus, after the steady decline of numerical shorthand in the early NT books and its sudden reuse near the end of Revelation, Barnabas and Hermas then revert back to frequent use of alphabetic numerals (roughly similar to the frequency of Mark’s Gospel). Different scribes were responsible for transcribing these books: Scribe A penned Barnabas (as well as most of the NT) and Scribe B penned Hermas. However, no significant change with respect to numerals can be observed between the work of these two scribes. It is not clear what accounts for this renewed use of alphabetic numerals.

**4.1.1.4 Orthography**

Abbreviated numbers in א generally take the expected form: letter and overstrike (e.g., \( \overline{\beta} \)). At Matt 14:19, however, the way in which shorthand numbers were demarcated is altered. Two numbers are written in Matt 14:19, and both are letters with overstrikes, but they are given additional demarcation of surrounding medial dots: ·\( \overline{\epsilon} \)· and ·\( \overline{\beta} \). The dots were clearly added after the line of text had been written, because they are forced between letters that do not have ample space surrounding them. Why the change? The fact that both of these abbreviations occur at the extreme ends of their lines suggests the reason for their additional demarcation. Usually, the use of a supralinear stroke at the end of a line indicates the *nu*-bar, a common scribal

---

\(^{21}\) References for these books are given in the system used in Michael W. Holmes, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007) and on the Codex Sinaiticus website ([http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/](http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/)).
abbreviation for *nu* (e.g., πα’ |τας = πας|τας) used frequently in א. The visually similar stroke over the numeral, especially used over *epsilon* at the end of its line, might well have been recognized as ambiguous in meaning. Accordingly, the possible (or actual) confusion was recognized and rectified by supplying additional denotation for shorthand numbers. This supplementary marking is then used with abbreviations frequently (e.g., Matt 15:32; 16:10; 18:20) but by no means exclusively in the rest of the codex (e.g., Matt 19:28b; 20:17; 21:28).

4.1.1.5 Summary of א 01

It seems that with א we have uncovered more questions than answers. The scribe employed numerical shorthand in a curious pattern of diminishing usage and suddenly reverts to its usage near the end of Revelation. No clear connections can be made between the use of alphabetic numerals and other scribal features, which makes it exceedingly difficult to observe any rhyme or reason in the scribe’s process. Nevertheless, a few principles are observable: numbers given in abbreviated form fall between “two” and “one hundred” (or slightly higher, e.g., εκατο’) µ, Rev 21:17), while the number “one,” multiple hundreds, and thousands are consistently longhand. Abbreviations are often, but not always, used to round off a line and avoid splitting a word between two lines of text. It is possible that the symbol form for “twelve” in Matthew was reserved for Jesus’ disciples, but this pattern is not seen elsewhere in the manuscript (though we will revisit this question); scribal freedom seems to be the underlying principle. The declining usage of numerical symbols is not easy to explain, but its sudden reuse near the end of Revelation is likely related to the irregularity in quire formation that accompanies it.
4.1.2 Codex Alexandrinus (A 02)

4.1.2.1 Cardinal Numbers

Unlike Codex Sinaiticus, the NT portion of Alexandrinus is almost totally consistent in presenting numbers longhand. Of the plethora of numbers extant in A, there are just two exceptional uses of numerical abbreviations. Even with these two exceptions, the clear preference in Alexandrinus was to write numerals in their full forms. There are no less than 282 instances of the number “one.” This consistency is especially notable in light of paleographical analysis which identifies the hands of at least three different scribes at work in the NT portion of A; no differences in number-writing are evident in the work of these scribes.

Of the two exceptional abbreviations, one is found in Rev 21:17 where δ και [[εκ]aternity ιεκσερακοντα stands for ἕκατον ιεκσεράκοντα ιεκσέρακον. Even as the numerical value is correct (144), the transposed word order and addition of και suggest that the scribe had difficulty deciphering with the wording of the exemplar. Weiss suggests that the transposition of words and addition of και were the result of the scribe’s desire to conserve space with the abbreviation δ. This is not a helpful explanation, however. If the scribe wanted to save space, why transpose the numbers and insert the unnecessary word και? It would have been perfectly acceptable and far simpler to maintain the normal word order, refrain from adding και, and abbreviate

---


23 Smith, A Study of the Gospels in Codex Alexandrinus, 182–244. After surveying several views on this issue, Smith concludes that Scribe 1 was responsible for Matthew and Mark, 1 Cor 10:8 through Philippians; Scribe 2 wrote Luke through 1 Cor 10:8; and Scribe 3 wrote Revelation. It is noteworthy, then, that the two exceptional instances of numerical abbreviations in A were both written by Scribe 3.

24 Weiss, Die Johannes-Apokalypse, 75.
ἑκατὸν or τεσσεράκοντα. Compare, for example, with the reading of Μ here: εκατοτ
μδ, which is far more economical than A’s wording. A more likely explanation for
the reading in A is that the scribe accidentally omitted τεσσάρον and wrote αυτης |
eκατον τεσσαρακοντα πηχων. Immediately realizing the error and, rather than
inserting the number interlinearly, the scribe simply added δ και to the end of the
previous line where there seemed to be sufficient space. Two observations support
this: (1) δ και was written in a script noticeably smaller than the normal hand, and (2)
it conspicuously juts out into the inner margin (see figure 4.1):

Figure 4.1. Rev 21:17 in A 02

While this has not yet been recognized as a first-hand correction, there is yet
more evidence that this is so.25 Remarkably, the scribe commits almost the exact
same error of omission earlier in the book. Whereas the expected wording in Rev 7:4
is ἑκατὸν τεσσεράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάδες (144,000), the scribe originally wrote
εκατον τεσσαρακοντα χιλιαδες (140,000)—i.e., τέσσαρες was again omitted. The
omission was immediately caught and supplied in a smaller hand supralinearly:
εκατον τεσσαρακοντα δ χιλιαδες. This means that the only two numerical

25 See Hernández, Scribal Habits, 109 n. 60.
abbreviations in the NT portion of A 02 are both inserted corrections necessitated by scribal lapses; they are not the means by which the scribe conserved space.

In neither Rev 7:4 nor 21:17 is it clear that the scribe would have been more likely to omit τέσσαρες/τεσσάρων from an abbreviated or longhand form (ῥυς or ἐκατὸν τεσσάρακον τέσσαρες); both seem equally prone to error. It is thus not certain what was in the scribe’s exemplar at these points.

What further confirms that trimming the text was not the motivation for the use of these abbreviated numerals is the myriad of numbers given in longhand form in A. The scribes maintained a rigid preference for longhand forms even when abbreviated symbols would have been particularly convenient. For example, note the several instances in which the scribes wrote δω|δεκα, i.e., the word is split between two lines after the first two characters (e.g., Matt 26:14; Luke 8:43; 22:3, 30; Rev 7:5c). Other numbers are handled similarly: ε'| (John 6:9), δε|καπεντε (11:18), ε|να (Acts 2:3), ε|νι (1 Cor 12:13a). To modern eyes at least, these scenarios appear to be ideal occasions for the use of abbreviations in order to round off the line, not only allowing the next line to begin with a new word but also conserving space. This is precisely how many numerical abbreviations are used in other NT manuscripts, but such was evidently not a concern for the scribes of A.

4.1.2.2 Ordinal Numbers

All ordinal numbers in A are longhand without exception.

4.1.2.3 Cardinal and Ordinal Numbers Together

The scribe’s consistency in number writing can be seen most clearly when laid out graphically like so (see table 4.7).
### Table 4.7. All Numbers in A 02

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
<th>Abbreviated Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts+Cath</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.1.2.4 Additional Books

Following the NT books in Alexandrinus are portions of 1 Clement and 2 Clement.

No change in the scribal handling of numerals can be detected in these books. All numbers, both cardinal and ordinal, are given in their longhand forms.\(^{26}\)

### 4.1.2.5 Summary of Alexandrinus

The clear scribal preference for numbers in A 02 was to use longhand forms, and the scribe is almost perfectly consistent in this method. There are only two departures from this otherwise rigid practice in the entire codex, and both seem to have been used as scribal corrections by the original hand.

### 4.1.3 Codex Vaticanus (B 03)

#### 4.1.3.1 Cardinal Numbers

The NT portion of Codex Vaticanus is almost totally consistent in presenting numbers longhand, with only one isolated exception to this rule.\(^ {27}\) Aside from this

---

\(^{26}\) For some randomly chosen examples: εἷϲ/µία/ἐν (1 Clem 17:4; 32:1; 46:6 [4x]; 8 [2x]; 47:6; 2 Clem 12:2, 3 [2x]), δύο (1 Clem 5:4; 47:6; 2 Clem 6:1, 3, 5; 12:2, 3 [2x]), δωδεκα (1 Clem 43:2), τεσσαρακοντα (1 Clem 53:2 [2x]), πεντακοσια (1 Clem 25:2), and εξακοσιας χιλιαδας (1 Clem 43:5). The referencing system used is that of Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*.

\(^{27}\) For the text of Vaticanus, see C. Tischendorf, ed., *Novum Testamentum Vaticanum* (Leipzig: Giesecke and Devrient, 1867). Additionally, each number was verified with reference to the facsimile: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Bibliorum Sacrorum Graecorum Codex Vaticanus B* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1999). Images of the facsimile are available at CSNTM. It is worth pointing out the OT portion of B is not rigorous in using longhand number forms; see, for example, β (Num 29:17, 26), ζ (29:2), ιδ (29:17, 23, 26, 32), and ϕ (31:39).
one exceptional use of a numerical abbreviation, the scribe of Vaticanus was rigidly consistent in presenting numbers *plene*, including no less than 303 instances of the numeral “one,” the most frequently occurring number.

It is difficult to account for the one exceptional use of a numerical abbreviation. In Mark 5:13, the scribe used the full form abbreviation /\(\beta\) for \(\delta\epsilon\chi\lambda\omicron\) (= 2,000). There is no obvious reason in the context for this singular usage; the abbreviation falls near the end of its line, but not at its extreme end (it is followed by two characters). There are several conceivable scenarios that could have led to its employment here, but none is entirely persuasive.³⁰ It is sufficient here simply to point out that it appears that the occurrence of /\(\beta\), while not itself a scribal slip, seems to be related to some sort of mistake. Observe from the image that the supralinear stroke clearly extends over an erased letter (see figure 4.2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 4.2. Mark 5:13 in B 03</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Image of Mark 5:13 in B 03]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²⁸ Although two scribes were probably responsible for copying Vaticanus, only one produced the NT portion; see Milne and Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors*, 87–90; see also Paul Canart, “Le Vaticanus graecus 1209: notice paléographique et codicologique,” in *Le manuscrit B de la Bible (Vaticanus graecus 1209)*, ed. Patrick Andrist, HTB 7 (Lausanne: Éditions du Zèbre, 2009), 19–45.

²⁹ I have included in this count three instances in which the numeral seems to be accented by a later hand as a preposition (\(\epsilon\nu\)) rather than a numeral (\(\epsilon\nu\)) (Mark 4:8 [3x]).

³⁰ Supposing that the erased character between \(\omicron\) and /\(\beta\) is an *iota*, the scribe of Vaticanus might have originally written \(i\beta\) through a misreading of /\(\beta\) in the exemplar (and then corrected it). And yet, this explanation does not account for why was the scribe was willing to write the abbreviation \(i\beta\) in the first place. Another possibility is that the exemplar contained \(\omega\chi\lambda\omicron\beta\) and the scribe of B’s eye jumped to the \(i\beta\). A third possibility is that what looks like an *iota* is actually the backbone of a *beta*.
The (virtual) absence of numerical shorthand in B seems to have been a matter of intentional policy. This can be inferred not just from the almost perfect consistency of longhand number-forms, but also from a telling scribal error. In Acts 27:37, the scribe wrote the phrase εν τω πλοιω ος εβδομηκοντα εξ (= 76) rather than the expected ἐν τῷ πλοῖῳ διακόσιαι ἐβδομηκόντα ἕξ (= 276). This seemingly strange substitution is understandable if we envision the scribe’s exemplar containing the shorthand form: εντωπλοιω ς̅ ο̅ ίσ̅ (= 276). This could have been easily misunderstood as εντωπλοιω ς̅ ο̅ (= 76), especially if the supralinear stroke was poorly written. Such a mistake would not have been as likely if the number were written fully: εν τῷ πλοῖῳ διακόσια εβδομηκόντα ἕξ. Furthermore, we may reasonably ascribe this mistake to the scribe of B since this reading is properly classified as a singular reading.31 The conclusion we may draw from this, therefore, is that the exemplar that stands behind B (at least in Acts) contained numerical abbreviations, but the scribe preferred to write them fully.32

4.1.3.2 Ordinal Numbers

Without exception, all ordinal numbers in B 03 are longhand.

4.1.3.3 Cardinal and Ordinal Numbers Together

A total of all numbers, both cardinal and ordinal, helps to display the scribe’s impressive consistency (see table 4.8).


32 Another singular reading involving a numeral in B 03 is the omission of τρεῖς from Acts 10:19, resulting in the (still sensible) phrase ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες ζητοῦντές σε. It is conceivable that the scribe would be more likely to overlook a numerical abbreviation (γ/Γ) rather than a full word such as τρεῖς. Other explanations are possible, of course.
4.1.3.4 Summary of Vaticanus

As Vaticanus contains only one numerical abbreviation, the clear scribal preference was to write numbers in longhand form. This makes it the earliest example (fourth century) of a NT majuscule manuscript that consistently avoids using numerical shorthand, and we are able to discern from a telling scribal error that this was not a matter of chance, but it was an intentional policy.

4.1.4 Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (C 04)

4.1.4.1 Cardinal Numbers

Ephraemi Rescriptus is totally consistent in presenting all cardinal numbers in longhand form.\(^{33}\) Large portions of the manuscript are lost, however, and no assumptions can be made about the number-style in those leaves; codices A 02 and B 03, for instance, both contain exceptions to an otherwise strict consistency.

Nevertheless, every visible number in C 04 is longhand. The most frequently occurring cardinal number in C is εἰκ/μία/ἐν, and this occurs no less than 193 times.

---

\(^{33}\) For the published text of Ephraemi, see C. Tischendorf, ed., *Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus: sive Fragmenta Novi Testamenti e Codice Graeco Parisiensi Celeberrimo Quinti ut videtur post Christum Seculi* (Leipzig: Bernh. Tauchnitz, 1843), and corrections in R. W. Lyon, “A Re-examination of Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus,” *NTS* 5 (1958–59): 260–72. Each number, with a handful of exceptions that are no longer visible, was verified using the images available at the INTF website. The following numerals could not be verified by examining manuscript images and were checked with a transcription: ετερο/δευτερο (Matt 21:30), τριων (Mark 14:58), δευτερου (14:72), ενα (15:6), ενοϲ (Luke 10:42), ἐν (Δωδεκα (Acts 27:43), δωδεκα (James 1:1), ενοϲ (Rom 5:18b), εἰς (1 Cor 4:6), δυο (6:16), εν (6:17; 12:19, 20), χλων εξακοςιον (Rev 14:20), and τεϲϲαρα (19:4).
4.1.4.2 Ordinal Numbers

All ordinal numbers in C 04 are likewise longhand.

4.1.4.3 Cardinal and Ordinal Numbers Together

It is not certain how many copyists were responsible for the NT portion of Codex C 04, but it is possible that there were at least two. This is significant because there are no observable changes in scribal technique of number writing at any point in the extant portions of the codex (see table 4.9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
<th>Abbreviated Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts+Cath</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.4.4 Summary of Ephraemi Rescriptus

The scribal preference for numbers in C 04 was to use longhand forms exclusively, although there may have been exceptions to this in the lost portions.

4.1.5 Codex Bezae (D 05)

4.1.5.1 Cardinal Numbers

Codex Bezae (D 05) contains far more abbreviated numbers than any other comparable majuscule manuscript, a noteworthy feature considering that it contains only the Gospels and Acts. Below are listed all the cardinal numbers that appear in

34 For a brief discussion, see Lyon, “A Re-examination,” 264–65.

abbreviated forms in D 05 as well as representative examples of their longhand counterparts; where no longhand forms occur in D an n-dash (−) is used.36 Note that numerals in the supplementary leaves (Matt 3:7–16; Mark 16:15–20; John 18:14–20:13) are not included (see table 4.10).

As the table indicates, Codex Bezae contains abbreviations for a wide range of values. Shorthand numerals are given for values anywhere between 2–5,000, a far greater variety than ς or most papyri. The number “one” is never abbreviated; this includes no less than 196 instances of the number. Several numbers are given only in longhand form: ἕξ (7x), ὀκτώ (3x), ἐννέα (1x), δεκαπέντε (1x), εἴκοσι (1x), εἴκοσι πέντε (1x), τριάκοντα καὶ ὀκτώ (1x), πεντήκοντα (6x), ὀγδοίκοντα (1x), διακόσιοι (3x), and πεντακόσιοι (1x).

Nearly all values in the thousands are longhand: δις χίλιοι (1x), τρις χίλιοι (1x), τετρακις χίλιοι (5x), δέκα χιλιάς (1x), and εἴκοσι χιλιάς (1x).37 Two exceptions are noted above: once the “full form” is used for five thousand, ἕξ: (Mark 6:44), and once a hybrid form is used for the same value, χιλιάδες ἕξ (Acts 4:4).

As in ς, there is a tendency for inflected number forms to be written longhand in D. Inflected forms of the number “two” are always written in full (e.g., Matt 22:40; Luke 12:52a; 16:13; Acts 12:6b; 21:33) and abbreviations consistently stand for the lexical form δύο (e.g., Matt 25:15; Mark 6:7, 9, 41 [2x]; 9:43, 45, 47; 10:8 [2x]; 11:1; 14:1; 15:27, 38). The same is generally true of the number “three,” as symbols can be used for lexical forms (e.g., Matt 15:32; Mark 9:5, 31; Acts 11:11;

36 A special problem with the text of Bezae is its many extraneous additions, often containing numerals. Identifying these was significantly aided by James D. Yoder, ed., Concordance to the Distinctive Greek Text of Codex Bezae, NTTS 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1961), which lists every word in the text of Bezae not present in Westcott and Hort’s edition of the Greek New Testament.

37 Further, we might add μοριᾶς πέντε (sic) = 50,000 (Acts 19:19).
19:8; 20:3), but the longhand is used for inflected forms (e.g., Matt 13:33; 18:16;
26:61; 27:40; Mark 14:58; Luke 4:25; 12:52b; 13:7, 21, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Shorthand Forms</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14x Matt 25:15; Mark 6:7, 9, 41 (2x); 9:43, 45, 47; 10:8 (2x); 11:1; 14:1; 15:27, 38</td>
<td>87x Matt 4:18, 21; Mark 12:42, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1x Mark 13:27</td>
<td>6x John 11:17, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7x Matt 25:15, 16; Mark 6:38, 41 (2x); 8:19; Acts 19:9</td>
<td>25x Luke 1:24, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>14x Matt 15:36, 37; Mark 8:5, 6, 8, 20 (2x); 12:20, 22, 23, 16:9; Luke 8:2; Acts 6:3; 12:10</td>
<td>14x Acts 20:6, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1x Mark 10:41</td>
<td>11x Luke 17:12, 17, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1x Luke 24:33</td>
<td>3x Mark 16:14, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>6x Matt 13:8, 23; 26:15; Mark 4:8, 20; Luke 3:23</td>
<td>1x John 6:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>8x Matt 4:2; Mark 1:13; Acts 4:22; 7:30, 36, 42, 10:41; 13:21</td>
<td>3x Luke 4:2, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>4x Matt 13:8, 23; Mark 4:8, 20</td>
<td>1x Luke 24:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>2x Luke 10:1, 17</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>1x Acts 7:14</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>1x Luke 2:37</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>1x Matt 18:13</td>
<td>3x Matt 18:12, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>6x Matt 13:8, 23; 18:28; Mark 4:8, 20; 6:40</td>
<td>4x Luke 15:4; 16:6, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>1x Acts 1:15</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153</td>
<td>1x John 21:11</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>1x Mark 14:5</td>
<td>1x John 12:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>2x Acts 7:6</td>
<td>1x Acts 5:36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450</td>
<td>1x Acts 13:20</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>2x Mark 6:44 (†); Acts 4:4 (χιλιαδες 36)</td>
<td>5x Matt 14:21, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4.10. Cardinals in D

Beyond this, there are no clear patterns that govern the usage of abbreviated or
longhand number forms in D. For example, within the Gospel of Matthew, the
number “two” occurs forty times, and it appears in longhand form in no less than
thirty-nine of those occurrences.\(^{38}\) There is thus one abbreviated form of “two” in

\(^{38}\) See, e.g., Matt 4:18, 21; 5:41; 9:27, 28; 10:10, 29; 14:17, 19; 18:8 (2x), 9, 16 (2x), 19, 20; 19:5, 6;
20:21, 24, 30; 21:1, 28, 31; 22:40; 24:40, 41; 25:17 (2x), 22 (3x); 26:2, 37, 60; 27:21, 38, 51.
Matthew (25:15); but this particular instance of the number is completely unremarkable. Grammatically, it is a neuter accusative that refers to τάλαντα given to a steward, but the same number with the exact same grammatical categories and referent occurs twice in 25:17 and both are longhand. Furthermore, the sense-line in which the abbreviation occurs is comparatively short; it was clearly not used to trim the length of the line.

A look at the number “twelve” in Bezae also reveals the same unpredictability. The value occurs in Matthew thirteen times and is abbreviated in all but three of those occurrences; but no substantive difference (in referent, grammatical properties, etc.) can be observed between those three longhand forms and the ten that are abbreviated. In contrast, the Gospel of John contains four occurrences of the number longhand and two shorthand. In Luke, “twelve” occurs thirteen times, eleven abbreviations and two longhand forms. In Mark, all thirteen occurrences of “twelve” are abbreviated. Finally, in Acts, three abbreviations for “twelve” are used and one longhand is used. No patterns related to referent or grammatical properties are discernible in these books, and only occasionally do the numerals appear necessary to fit the text into their sense-lines. In all, therefore, scribal freedom seems to be the principle factor in number-style.

4.1.5.2 Ordinal Numbers

Most ordinal numbers are longhand in D 05. There are a handful of exceptions to this, however (see table 4.11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Shorthand Forms</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>1x Mark 15:33</td>
<td>6x John 4:6, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth</td>
<td>1x Mark 15:33</td>
<td>7x Mark 15:34, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By far, most ordinals are written in their longhand forms: e.g., πρῶτος (80x), δεύτερος (14x), τέταρτος (2x), πέμπτος (1x), ἐβδομῆς (2x), ὑάτος (2x), δέκατος (1x), ἐνδέκατος (2x), and πεντεκαιδέκατος (1x). Thus, the use of abbreviations for ordinals occurs only in two isolated passages. One of these occurs in a cramped sense-line (׳ס [sixth], Mark 15:33), which might explain the reason for its use, but the other abbreviated ordinals are in reasonably comfortable sense-lines. 39

4.1.5.3 Orthography

A few curious features regarding the orthography of numbers in D 05 must be mentioned. There are a handful of numerical abbreviations in D that apparently lack the signature strike above the character(s); e.g., ʾ·β· (Mark 9:43, 47; 14:1), ʾ·δ· (Mark 13:27), ʾ·β· (Mark 6:7; Acts 6:2), and ʾ·μ· (Acts 7:36). In every one of these instances except for Acts 6:2, the numeral is surrounded by medial points that help serve to set the symbol aside as an abbreviation. These medial points are often used in D in conjunction with the characteristic overstrike (e.g., ʾ·ֵיַחְדִי). On one occasion, a numerical abbreviation is given in non-descending order: i.e., ʾח (Luke 8:43). This order can be found in other ancient texts, although it was decidedly less common than the typical descending order, and no other examples are found among the NT manuscripts under investigation here. 40

Furthermore, twice the scribe employed an abbreviation for a numerical term that is not strictly a cardinal or ordinal number. In Acts 7:23, D contains ʾ·י· ετης, even though this ought to be the distinct word τετερακονταετής, not a cardinal.

---

39 In Acts 2:15, ʾ·γ· occurs twice for τρίτη, though the second iteration is part of a later correction (Corrector A), so it is not counted here.

number. The same occurs again in 13:18, where \( \varepsilon \tau \epsilon \varsigma \varsigma \varepsilon \varphi \alpha \kappa \omicron \alpha \varsigma \varepsilon \tau \eta \) is written for \text{τεσσερακονταετή}.\(^{41}\)

### 4.1.5.4 Cardinals and Ordinals Together

The table below displays the total of numbers, both cardinal and ordinal, in D (see table 4.12). It is structured in accordance with the arrangement of Gospels found in Bezae known as the Western order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
<th>Abbreviated Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taking all numbers in the text of D into account, we can see that the scribe wrote numerals in full more often than in abbreviated form, at a rate of roughly five to one. Even still, Bezae contains more numerical abbreviations in its text than any other NT manuscript studied here. Again, this feature is all the more significant given the fact that the codex only contains the canonical Gospels and Acts.

As was mentioned in chapter 2, David Parker gave some consideration to the number-writing techniques in Bezae, ending with a negative conclusion: “the numerals present a problem…. I have no explanation for any of this.”\(^{42}\) Parker’s hypothesis concerning the ancestors of D was essentially twofold: (1) Two exemplars were used, one for the Gospels and another for Acts (based on differences

---

\(^{41}\) Although I have not cited these for other manuscripts, D 05 is the only one surveyed here that contains abbreviations at these points.

in sense-line arrangements), and (2) the exemplar for the Gospels was the work of

two different scribes working in succession (based on changes in orthography).

Regarding the latter point, Parker observed that differences in the scribe’s

orthography indicate two main groups: Matt + Mark + John 1–5 on the one hand and

John 5–21 + Luke on the other. This suggests that the order of the Gospels in D’s

exemplar was Matt-Mark-John-Luke, and that the second scribe picked up the task of

copying at John 5 (which is roughly halfway through the codex), at which point

changes in orthography are discernible.

As Parker himself observed, the changes in number-writing techniques in

Bezae do not correspond to these groupings. In contrast, when we examine the

numerals in D, two different groups emerge: Matt-Mark-Luke-Acts on the one hand

(with frequent abbreviations) and John by itself (with very infrequent abbreviations).

Further distinctions are possible. In Matthew and Mark, for example, the scribe used

shorthand for a wide range of values: as low as “two” and “three” and as high as

“one hundred” (as well as many values between). In contrast, however, in the texts of

Luke and Acts, lower values tend to be given only in longhand; the lowest

abbreviated value in Luke is “seven.” In Acts this tendency is slightly less

pronounced, as there are a few exceptional instances of the abbreviated form for

“three” and “five.” But the practice in Acts does not distinguish itself in any

meaningful way—in spite of the hypothesis that it was unrelated to D’s exemplar of

the Gospels. But while these observations do not dovetail with Parker’s arguments,

neither do they pose any real problem for them; in many ways they are

complementary.

---

43 Parker, *Codex Bezae*, 111.
For instance, the uniqueness of John in D is a recurring observation. Parker notes several eccentricities in this Gospel, such as the use of the apostrophe after the name Αβρααµ and the high frequency of contracted forms of πατήρ. We can also now add the clear (though not total) preference against numerical shorthand; this was not obvious from Parker’s presentation of the numeral-related data, but it is another curious distinction with the scribal technique in this Gospel. It is possible that these differences reflect characteristics of the text of John as it circulated prior to its incorporation into D’s exemplar for the Gospels. Otherwise, it is difficult to account for such a strange departure from the scribe’s normal mode of transcription.

Perhaps a more important factor in the scribal preference of number writing is the fairly obvious issue of D’s arrangement into sense-lines. Whereas the texts of other uncialss and papyri were arranged into justified columns, the text of D 05 as well as the Latin side d 5 were arranged into short phrases divided by sense. This results in left-hand justification and an inconsistent right-hand vertical line. It would be reasonable to suppose, then, that numerical shorthand functioned for the scribe as a way to trim the text, if necessary, into manageable sense-lines and to maintain correspondence between the Greek and Latin sides. This does not explain every use of a numerical abbreviation, but, as we will see shortly, the copyist certainly seems to have been aware of this practical function.

4.1.5.5 Numerals in the Latin Column

At this point we should examine the numerals in the Latin portion of Bezae. Broadly put, there is a striking degree of correspondence between the particular numeral forms of the Greek and Latin columns of Bezae. All told, there are over 650 points of perfect agreement in number-style between the two columns. This similarity is
remarkable given the unpredictability of numerals in the Greek side that we have seen, and it helps to confirm the close relationship between the two columns that previous studies have posited.

The Greek and Latin columns disagree in number-style in forty-four instances, where one column contains numerical shorthand and the other has the full form. The great majority of these disagreements entail an abbreviation in the Greek not in the Latin; in only six instances is it the reverse.

Very often it appears that the discrepancy in number-form is related to the scribe’s space-saving measures. So, for example, in Matt 9:20, the Greek column contains the longhand form δώδεκα in a sense-line of average length, while the Latin contains the Roman numeral ‐XII in a cramped sense-line that nearly runs into the margin. In other words, the shorthand form was utilized to trim the Latin text into a single sense-line, while there was no such need for constriction in the Greek side. Other examples are frequent (Mark 6:7; 8:9; 9:31, 47; Luke 22:3; John 6:70), but one in particular duly confirms our suspicion. In Luke 15:7, the two columns read the following (see table 4.13):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.13. Luke 15:7 in D 05 / d 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>μετανοοῦντι ἡ ἐπὶ ἐπενηκόντα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐννεα δίκαιοι οἰπνεῖν οὐκ ἔχουσι</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the comparison shows, the Greek column has the full number form (ἐπενηκόντα | ἐννεα = ninety-nine) split between two sense-lines. The Latin side, in contrast, contains a composite form: ‐XC‐ | nouem (“90-nine”). A glance at the two columns immediately reveals that the first line is comparatively longer on the Latin side than the Greek, and the shorthand ‐XC‐ served as a convenient substitute for the longhand
counterpart *nonaginta*—a far longer word that would have required the copyist to either run the text into the margin or wrap the text onto the following line.

But economy was not the sole motivation here. If such were the case, the entire number would have been written as the Roman numeral \(XC\ UIIII\) as it appears elsewhere (see Matt 18:12, 13). Rather, correspondence between the Greek and Latin columns seems to have been equally as important to the scribe. Once the partial abbreviation \(XC\) was employed, the scribe began again on the following line with the rest of the number in longhand form so that it would mirror the Greek side, even as the result was an idiosyncratic hybrid of a Roman numeral and a number word.\(^{44}\) So, the shorthand numeral was useful for two related scribal techniques: constricting the text and maintaining correspondence between the Greek and Latin columns.

One major factor contributing to the differences of number-form between the two columns relates to smaller numbers. Specifically, the Latin side almost never contains abbreviations for values “two” and “three,” while these are often given in shorthand in the Greek side. This accounts for no less than eighteen of the forty-four discrepancies (e.g., Matt 15:32; 25:15; Mark 6:9, 41b; 9:31, 43, 45; 10:8 [2x], etc.). A similar difference concerns the handling of ordinal numbers. As noted above, four ordinals are abbreviated in the Greek text of Bezae, but they are never so handled in the Latin text (Mark 15:25, 33 [2x]; Acts 2:15). In later chapter (chapter 8), we will return to this specific point about smaller numbers and ordinals in the Latin column of Bezae, and I will offer a hypothesis that seeks to make sense of this tendency. For

---

\(^{44}\) There are several examples of hybrid abbreviations involving a digit and a value in the thousands (e.g., \(\overline{\varepsilon\chiι\lambdaων}\)), but I am not aware of any other instances such as this one involving a digit and a tens value in Codex Bezae.
our purposes here, however, it is sufficient simply to identify what constitutes the differences between the two columns.

A few discrepancies between the columns stem from a difference in Latin idiom, where, for example, the single word biduum corresponds to †β †ημερας (Mark 14:1). But many of the discrepancies are inexplicable (e.g., Matt 4:2; 15:36; 18:28; 25:16, etc.). They might simply trace back to differences in their respective exemplars. To summarize, then, we can say that the remarkable agreement in numbering styles between the two columns of Bezae confirms previous observations about the close relationship between these texts, and the comparatively few differences we found help to illustrate two aspects of the scribe’s work: (1) the practical function of abbreviations in saving space, and (2) the desire to maintain correspondence between the Greek and Latin sense-lines.

4.1.5.6 Summary of Bezae

To summarize, Bezae contains regular use of numerical abbreviations, though never for “one” and rarely for numbers in the thousands and ordinals. The recurring use of alphabetic shorthand for numbers in D is often (though not always) related to its arrangement of sense-lines. By using symbols, the scribe could trim the text into its sense-lines and maintain a correspondence between the Greek and Latin columns.

---

45 Another example is per uinos (= binos), which corresponds to ανα †β (Mark 6:7).

46 See Parker, Codex Bezae, 248, who offers a nuanced version of this basic summary: d is “a translation from a Greek text similar to, but by no means identical with, its present companion.”

47 A more detailed comparison of the numerals in the two columns could be rich in value. For instance, I find it highly suspicious that, of the “inexplicable” differences in number-style (where space and idiom cannot account for the differences), there are seven in Matthew and five in Mark, but none at all in John, Luke, or Acts. Surely this must reveal something about the different relationships between the Greek and Latin texts of each of these books.
4.1.6 Codex Washingtonianus (W 032)

Codex W does not lend itself to generalizations about scribal techniques due its unique block mixture of disparate textual affinities. Specifically, the text of Matthew is considered Byzantine in text-type, John 1:1–5:11 is Alexandrian/Western, John 5:12–21:25 is Alexandrian, Luke 1:1–8:12 is Alexandrian, Luke 8:13–24:53 is Byzantine, Mark 1:1–5:30 is Western, and Mark 5:31–16:20 is akin to P⁴⁵ (rather than Caesarean, as it was once thought). The original editor of the manuscript observed this block mixture, though he used different terminology to describe the textual clusters, and he likened this textual stratification of the codex to a patchwork composition. Although the codex is from the hand of one copyist (except for John 1:1–5:11, noted as W⁵), these blocks of text contain noticeably distinct text-types and scribal features. It is necessary to make note of this heterogeneous makeup because, as it will be discussed more fully below, each block of text bears its own distinct scribal preference for number-writing style. First, however, we will examine the overall usage of abbreviated cardinals. Note that numerals in the supplementary quire of John (W⁵) are not in view unless otherwise noted.

4.1.6.1 Cardinal Numbers

Below are all abbreviated cardinals in W (except W⁵) and corresponding longhand forms; where no such longhand forms occur an n-dash (–) is used (see table 4.14).

---


Values abbreviated in W 032 fall between 7–300, most of which have longhand counterparts elsewhere in the codex. Some numbers are given only in longhand form: δύο (88x), τρεῖς (26x), τέσσαρες (4x), πέντε (27x), ἕξ (5x), ὀκτώ (3x), ἑννέα (1x), δέκα (12x), ἑνδέκα (3x), δεκαοκτώ (3x), δεκαπέντε (1x), ἑβδομήκοντα (2x), ὑγδοήκοντα (1x), ἐκατόν πεντήκοντα τρεῖς (1x), δικάκοσι (2x), and πεντακόσι (1x).

Furthermore, numbers in the thousands are consistently written longhand: δισακόσι (1x), τεσσαράκοσι (4x), πεντακίσχιλι (6x), δέκα χιλιά (1x), and εἴκοσι χιλιά (1x).

No clear patterns emerge in W between numerals and their referents, placement in line, or grammatical cases. Although, as in א and D, the scribe seems to have avoided abbreviations for inflected number forms. Numbers that have inflected forms such as δύο, τρεῖς, and τέσσαρες are consistently longhand, regardless of their grammatical case, and indeclinable numbers are abbreviated freely: e.g., ἕπτά, δώδεκα, τριάκοντα, τεσσεράκοντα, πεντήκοντα, εξήκοντα, and ἐκατόν (see chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Shorthand Forms</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8x</td>
<td>Mark 8:6, 8, 20 (2x); 12:22, 23; Luke 2:36; 8:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>2x</td>
<td>Matt 1:17 (2x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>1x</td>
<td>John 6:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>4x</td>
<td>Mark 4:8, 20; Luke 3:23; John 6:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>2x</td>
<td>Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>1x</td>
<td>Mark 6:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>2x</td>
<td>Mark 4:8, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>1x</td>
<td>Luke 2:37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>2x</td>
<td>Luke 15:4, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>4x</td>
<td>Mark 4:8, 20; 6:37, 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>1x</td>
<td>Mark 14:5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
above for examples). There are two exceptions to this trend. The inflected compound number ὅγδοήκοντα τεσσάρων is abbreviated to πʰ (Luke 2:37), and the genitive τριακοσίων is also abbreviated (Mark 14:5). On the whole, however, abbreviations are only used for number-words that are indeclinable.

### 4.1.6.2 Ordinal Numbers

All ordinals in W are written longhand (with some exceptions in W§).

### 4.1.6.3 Cardinals and Ordinals Together

Considering cardinals and ordinals together, W contains quite a few abbreviated numbers (see table 4.15):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
<th>Abbreviated Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This summary, however, obscures a more important pattern of number-writing style in W. Specifically, a look at numbers as they relate to the block mixture in W is necessary because of their implications for the relationship of the scribe to the exemplar and the number-forms found in it.

As noted above, each text block in W contains a distinct scribal preference for number writing. For example, Matthew is Byzantine in text throughout; every number in the text of Matthew is written longhand, with just two exceptions from among over two hundred numbers (Matt 1:17, 2x). The next block of text is the replacement quire (W§), John 1:1–5:11, and it is Alexandrian/Western in textual affinity. It contains a surprisingly high density of numerical abbreviations; out of
twenty-six numbers, ten are given in abbreviated form (= 38% abbreviated).\(^50\) After this shift in John’s Gospel (5:12–21:25) the text is Alexandrian and remains nearly consistent in avoiding abbreviated numbers; just two abbreviations are found compared to the seventy-seven longhand (= 3% abbreviated).

The Gospel of Luke also contains a shift in text type. The first eight chapters (1:1–8:12) exhibit several abbreviations, five out of thirty-two numbers (= 16% abbreviated). The rest of Luke, however, is distinctly Byzantine in textual affinity, and it contains only two numerical abbreviations (= 1%) compared to the plethora of longhand forms (= 99%). Mark 1:1–5:30 in W is nearest to the Western textual cluster (or D text), and, out of nineteen numbers, nine are abbreviated (= 47% abbreviated). The rest of Mark (5:31–16:20) is similar to P\(^{45}\) in textual character, and it too contains many numerical abbreviations, but not nearly as many; there are twenty-one abbreviations compared to ninety-two longhand forms (19%–81%). This information can be summarized like so (see table 4.16):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Block</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
<th>Abbreviated Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matt 1:1–28:28</td>
<td>219 = 99%</td>
<td>2 = 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*John 1:1–5:11(^{supp})</td>
<td>16 = 62%</td>
<td>10 = 38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 5:12–21:25</td>
<td>77 = 97%</td>
<td>2 = 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 1:1–8:12</td>
<td>27 = 84%</td>
<td>5 = 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 8:13–24:53</td>
<td>148 = 99%</td>
<td>2 = 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark 1:1–5:30</td>
<td>10 = 53%</td>
<td>9 = 47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark 5:31–16:20</td>
<td>92 = 81%</td>
<td>21 = 19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words, scholars have observed heterogeneous textual affinities in W, and each of these blocks contains a distinct frequency of numerical shorthand.

\(^{50}\) I am at a loss as to Sanders’s comment about the first quire of John: “Numerals are always given by the letters except once, though the letters had been used but once in Matthew, viz. in the first chapter” (Henry A. Sanders, “Age and Ancient Home of the Biblical Manuscripts in the Freer Collection,” AJA 13 [1909]: 130–41 [133]).
Byzantine portions tend to avoid abbreviations (Matthew and Luke 8:13–24:53), while those portions with elements of Western or P\textsuperscript{45}-text include both number-styles (Mark 1:1–5:30; 5:31–16:20).\textsuperscript{51}

It is highly significant that numerical shorthand is not the only feature to exhibit radical changes throughout the codex. The manuscript’s editor, Henry Sanders, observed similar changes in other scribal features such as nomina sacra, punctuation, paragraphing, diacriticals, and orthography that correspond precisely with the noted shifts in textual affinity. It is unlikely that these changes in scribal techniques were introduced independently by the copyist, but, more likely, they reflect the contents of the source text(s)—either a “patchwork” codex (as Sanders argued) or multiple fragmentary (and otherwise unrelated) exemplars. In other words, the shifting techniques of number writing in W most likely reflect not scribal caprice but close adherence to the unique contents of the exemplar texts. This much was argued by Sanders originally, although a more thorough analysis of the numerals in W has helped confirm it.\textsuperscript{52} This bears two noteworthy implications: (1) the scribe, at least in this respect, aimed at producing a close copy of the available source text(s),\textsuperscript{53} and (2) it is likely that other scribes similarly mimicked the precise number-forms of their exemplars, suggesting that numerals might be an important factor of manuscript genealogy.

\textsuperscript{51} For more discussion, see Zachary J. Cole, “Evaluating Scribal Freedom and Fidelity: Number-Writing Techniques in Codex Washingtonianus (W 032),” \textit{BASP} 52 (2015): 225–38. A few numbers have been added to the table that appears in the article; I since identified a handful of numerals.

\textsuperscript{52} Sanders did not account for all the numerals in W. He counted one abbreviation in John 5:12–21:25 where I count two, six in Luke where I count seven, and nineteen in Mark where I count thirty; see Sanders, “Age and Ancient Home,” 134. See also related comments above.

\textsuperscript{53} The opposite has been stated elsewhere; see Philip Comfort, \textit{Encountering the Manuscripts: An Introduction to New Testament Paleography and Textual Criticism} (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 84–85.
4.1.6.4 Summary of Washingtonianus

It is difficult to generalize the number-writing technique of W because of its heterogeneous composition. Each text block contains a different usage of numerical abbreviations. On the other hand, however, since the patterns of number-style shift in each textual block, this is probably an indication that the scribe simply copied numerals over directly from the Vorlage(n). This close adherence to the exemplar(s) would account for the shifting styles of numbers we find in different portions of the manuscript. Aside from this particular question, there are some general tendencies found throughout the codex: the number “one” is always longhand, and only values between 7–300 are ever given in abbreviated form, and there is great inconsistency with these.

4.2 Fragmentary Majuscules

As we turn to the fragmentary majuscules, we once again will cite explicitly each occurrence of a number. For a handful of witnesses, no decipherable photographs were available for examination, and the editiones principes have been relied upon (I 016, T 029, 048, 0219, 0242, 0254, and 0321).54 Again, an asterisk (*) accompanies those manuscripts in which numerals are reconstructed but no longer extant.

4.2.1 I 016

Twelve cardinal numbers are extant in 016 and all are longhand (see table 4.17):

---

54 Furthermore, I was unable to locate any decipherable photographs or published transcription for GA 062, so it has been omitted from discussion.
In addition, the editor reconstructs fourteen cardinals, all longhand: [εἰκ/μία/ἐν] (1 Cor 12:14; 16:2; Gal 4:22 [2x]; Eph 2:15, 16, 18; Phil 3:13; 1 Thess 5:11 [2x]), [δό] (Eph 2:15; 1 Tim 5:19), [τρε] (Heb 10:28; 1 Tim 5:19). In terms of ordinal numbers, there are several extant, all longhand: πρώτος (1 Cor 12:28; 1 Thess 4:16; 1 Tim 2:1, 13; Heb 9:1, 2, 18), δευτερός (Heb 8:7; 9:3), [τριτός (2 Cor 13:1), εβδομάς (Heb 4:4 [2x]), δέκατος (Heb 7:8, 9). Finally, several ordinals have been reconstructed (e.g., 1 Cor 12:28; 15:3; 2 Cor 12:14; 13:2; Heb 7:2; 8:7).\(^{55}\)

4.2.2 Q 026

Twenty-two cardinal numbers are extant in 026, and all are longhand (see table 4.18):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13x Luke 4:40; 5:3; 12:25, 27; 15:15, 19, 26 (ἐνα); 17:35; 18:10; 20:1, 3; 23:39; John 12:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6x Luke 5:2; 17:35; 18:10; 21:2; 22:38; 23:32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2x Luke 6:13; 22:30 (δεκα)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>1x John 12:5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


4.2.3 T 029

Twelve cardinal numbers are extant in 029, and all are longhand (see table 4.19):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5x Luke 22:47, 50; John 7:21, 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2x Luke 22:38; John 8:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1x John 5:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3x Luke 22:30, 47; John 6:67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>1x John 5:5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three ordinal numbers are also extant: πρωτον (John 7:51), δευτερον (John 4:54), and εβδομην (John 4:52).

4.2.4 048

Thirty-two cardinal numbers are extant in 048 and all are longhand (see table 4.20).


57 For the Rome portions (T 029), see P. J. Balestri, ed., Novum Testamentum, vol. 3 of Sacrorum Bibliorum Fragmenta Copto-sahidica Musei Borgiani (Rome: S. Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, 1904), 202–18, 234–60; for the Paris portions (0113 + 0125 + 0139), see M. É. Amélineau, ed., Notice des manuscrits coptes de la Bibliothèque Nationale, vol. 34/2 of Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale et autres bibliothèques (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1895), 399–402, 404–5, 406–7. Note that the New York portions are not published and so have not been examined; these would contain two cardinals and one ordinal. In addition the numbers above, two numerical adverbs are visible: τρις (Luke 22:34, 61).

58 For the text of 048, see Dale Eldon Heath, “The Text of Manuscript Gregory 048 (Vatican Greek 2061)” (Ph.D. diss., Taylor University, 1965). Images of the manuscript are available on the INTF website, but I have relied mostly on Heath’s transcription due to the illegibility of the palimpsest.
28:7, 17; 1 Cor 12:28; 1 Tim 5:12; 2 Tim 2:6; 2 Pet 2:20; 3:3; 1 John 4:19), δευτερος (1 Cor 12:28; 2 Pet 3:1), and τρτος (1 Cor 12:28).^59

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13x Acts 28:13, 25; Rom 15:6; 1 Cor 12:26; 14:31; 2 Cor 5:14; Eph 5:31 (2x),^60 33; 1 Tim 5:9; Heb 12:16; 2 Pet 3:8 (2x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4x Eph 5:31 (2x); Phil 1:23; 1 Tim 5:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9x Acts 28:7, 11, 12, 15, 17; 1 Cor 13:13^61; 1 Tim 5:19; James 5:17; 1 John 5:7^62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1x 1 Cor 14:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1x Acts 28:14 (επτα)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>1x 1 Tim 5:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>1x 1 Cor 15:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>2x 2 Peter 3:8 (2x)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.2.5 058

There are two visible cardinal numbers in 058 and both are longhand: δοο (Matt 18:19) [ε]πτα (18:22). In addition, while C. R. Gregory reconstructed the longhand cardinal [εκατον] (18:28), an alternative reconstruction was offered by Carl Wessely, who proposed the abbreviated form of the number: [τρ].^63 The latter might well be the better reconstruction. Compare the following transcriptions (see table 4.21, ln. 2):

---


^60 The repetition of both μυαν and δοο in Eph 5:31 occur in an otherwise unattested addition in 048: μυαν + οστε εις αν δοο ει μυα (Heath, “Gregory 048,” 117, 254); it is not listed in the NA apparatus. It seems to be a harmonization to the wording of Jesus’s pronouncement on the same subject: δοε τοιχετα γειν δοε γελα καιρος. (Matt 19:6; cf. Mark 10:8).

^61 It is probable that in Heath’s transcription, the line [ ]p[ ]c [ ]ε[ (f. 198 v, col. 2; 1 Cor 14:26–33) contains the longhand τρες (1 Cor 14:29), but I have not listed it here due to the uncertainty; see Heath, “Gregory 048,” 83.

^62 This instance (1 John 5:7) of the numeral τρες is fairly tenuous: [ ]c (Heath, “Gregory 048,” 208). Examination of images, however, seems to confirm the identity of the sigma.

Table 4.21. Matt 18:28 in 058

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gregory (1900)</th>
<th>Wessely (1912)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[οφειλε]γαυ</td>
<td>[ ]γαυ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[τοικατουνδ]ναρια</td>
<td>[τωρδη]ναρια</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[και κρατηςας]</td>
<td>[καιρατηςας]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[α]υτονεπνι</td>
<td>[α]υτονεπνι</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wessely’s reconstruction is probably correct in proposing the abbreviated number-form because it makes better sense of the second line; this was a commonly abbreviated number. Images of the manuscript confirm that this line is not at all overloaded in the way that Gregory’s transcription requires.

4.2.6 059 + 0215

Three cardinal numbers are visible in 059 and all are longhand: ενα (Mark 15:27), ενα (15:27), and τρις (15:29). Two numerals have been reconstructed. First, [δυο] (15:27) appears likely, but the shorthand form might is also possible given the length of the line. Second, [εις] (15:36) is posited by Wessely, but this seems to be pure conjecture given the textual variation at this point; for instance, why not τις with Κ, Β, Λ, Δ, Ψ, Φ? Two ordinal numbers are also visible and both are longhand: ενατης (15:33) and ενατη (15:34).64

4.2.7 067

Four cardinal numbers are visible in 067 and all are longhand: πετε (Matt 14:19), δυο (14:19), πεντακις|χιλιοι (14:21) and [μ]ια (Mark 14:66).65

---

64 For 059, see Gregory, Textkritik des Neuen Testamentes, 1:73–74; and Wessely, Griechische und koptische, 3:243 (§186); for 0215, see Peter Sanz, ed. Biblica, Vaterschriften und Verwandtes, vol. 1 of Griechische literarische Papyri christlichen Inhalts, MPER N. S. IV (Baden bei Wien: Rohrer, 1946), 57–58 (§34).

65 C. Tischendorf, ed., Fragmenta Sacra Palimpsesta, vol. 1 of Monumenta Sacra Inedita, Nova Collectio (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1855), 3–20. Note that a portion of 067 (Matt 24:37–25:1, 32–45; 26:31–45) is now considered a distinct manuscript, identified as 0321; see K-Liste on the INTF website and Pasquale Orsini, Manoscritti in Maiuscola Biblica: Materiali per Un Aggiornamento, Edizioni dell’Università Degli Studi Di Cassino, Collana Scientifica/Studi Archeologici, Artistica, Filologici,
4.2.8 068
There is one cardinal number in 068: εις (John 13:23).  

4.2.9 069
There is one cardinal number in 069: δωδεκα (Mark 11:11).  

4.2.10 076
There is one cardinal number visible in 076: ενδ̣εκά (Acts 2:14). The original editor also transcribed one ordinal, τριτη (2:15), but I was unable to decipher this line from available photographs.  

4.2.11 088
Two cardinal numbers are visible in 088: µιαν (1 Cor 16:2) and µιας (Tit 1:6).  

4.2.12 0162
Three cardinal numbers are visible in 0162, two are longhand and one is a mixed abbreviation: [τ]ρις (John 2:19), μ και εξ (2:20), and τρις (2:20).  

4.2.13 0165
One cardinal number is visible in 0165 and it is longhand: χειλιαδε̣ς [πεντε̣] (Acts 4:4). This was transcribed as χειλιαδες [πεντε] by the original editor.  

Although Filosofici, Letterari E Storici 7 (Rome: Ed. Univ. degli Studi di Cassino, 2005), 296. Note also that its date is not certain; compare, for instance, the sixth-century date listed in NA28 with the fifth-century date given in the K-Liste. It is retained for the sake of completeness.

67 P.Oxy. I 3.7.
68 P.Amh. I 8.41–43.
69 Tischendorf, Fragmenta Sacra Palimpsesta, 45–48.
the parchment is badly deteriorated at πε[νε], the letters are clear enough to rule out
the use of a shorthand numeral. There is also an ordinal: πρωτο (3:26).

4.2.14 0169

One ordinal number is visible in 0169 and it is longhand: πρωτη (Rev 4:1).72

4.2.15 0171

One cardinal number is visible in 0171: εις (Luke 22:50). Three more are reasonably

4.2.16 0176

There is one cardinal number in 0176 and it is longhand: τετρακοντα (Gal 3:17). Two more are reconstructed: [ενος] (3:16) and [εις] (3:20).74

4.2.17 0181

Two cardinal numbers are visible in 0181, one is abbreviated and one is longhand:
οβ (Luke 10:1) and δυο (10:1).75 In addition, three numerical adverbs are visible:

The appearance of the numerical abbreviation οβ in 10:1 is noticeably different
from the rest of the writing. While the omicron more or less assumes its standard
form, the beta is markedly smaller than its typical form both in width and height. In
addition, the supralinear bar is shortened, only just stretching over the right vertical
of the omicron (see figure 4.3).

72 P.Oxy. VIII 1080.14–16.
73 For the Luke portions, see PSI 222–4 and PSI II 124.22–25; and for the Matt portion, see Kurt
(25–28).
74 PSI II 251.108–10.
75 Wessely, Griechische und koptische Texte, 241–42 (§185).
The atypical appearance of the numeral is not easy to explain; it may have been intended by the scribe to help signal the presence of an abbreviation.

4.2.18 0182

Two cardinal numbers are visible in 0182 and both are longhand: [πεν]τε (Luke 19:18) and πεντε (19:19). One ordinal number was transcribed by the editor, although it is no longer visible in available photographs: δ[ε]υ[τερος] (19:18).76

4.2.19 0188*

No numbers are visible in 0188, but one has been reconstructed by the editor: [δω|δεκα] (Mark 11:11). This is, however, impossible to verify.77

4.2.20 0189*

No numbers are visible in 0189, but [τριων] (Acts 5:7) has been reconstructed.78

4.2.21 0201

Three cardinal numbers are transcribed in the editio princeps of 0201 and they are longhand: εν (1 Cor 12:12b, 13b) and δ[υο] (14:29). Only one of these is now visible in available photographs, however: εν (12:13b). Three are reconstructed by W. E.

76 Wessely, Griechische und koptische Texte, 244 (§188).
Crum and H. I. Bell, the original editors: [εν] (12:11), [ενι] (12:13a), and [δυο] (14:27). A more recent edition offers two more reconstructions: [τρεις] (14:27) and “(εἰ)” (14:27, curved brackets indicating the editor’s confidence) where Crum and Bell have μερός[.]

Difficulty in the reconstruction of this manuscript has led to the proposal of a numerical abbreviation. Uncertain that there was enough space in the line in 12:13, Crum and Bell suggested that either the preposition ἐν was omitted or that ἐνί was abbreviated: [ἐν αἰ πνί]. By way of comparison, however, Güting manages to reconstruct the text without an omission or abbreviation.

4.2.22 0207

There are seven visible cardinal numbers in 0207; four are abbreviated: ε (Rev 9:5, 10), δ (Rev 9:14, 15); three are longhand: μια (9:12), δυο (9:12), μιαν (9:13). There is one ordinal number and it is longhand: εκτο (9:13).

4.2.23 0217

There are two visible cardinal numbers in 0217 and both are longhand: εἰς (John 12:2) and [τριακοσι]ων (12:5). Two others have been reconstructed: [εξ] (12:1) and [ετι] (12:4).


80 Crum and Bell, Wadi Sarga, 39 n. 72.

81 The occurrence of ε in Rev 9:5 is difficult to discern because this side of the parchment is extremely faded.

82 PSI X 1166.118–20. Note that 0207 is a witness to the text without τέσσερις in 9:13 (with P47, A, 1611, 2057, etc.) or εκτο in 9:14 (with A).

83 Sanz, Biblica, 61–63 (§37).
4.2.24 0218

One cardinal number is visible in 0218 and it is longhand: [τρια]κοϲ[κον] (John 12:5). One more can be reasonably reconstructed: [ειϲ] (12:2).84

4.2.25 0219

One number is partially visible in 0219: ειϲ (Rom 3:30),85 though here I am relying on the printed edition and could not verify with a photograph of the manuscript.

4.2.26 0221

There are two partially visible cardinal numbers in 0221: [ενο]ϲ (Rom 5:17a) and ε[ϲ] (5:17b). Two more can be reconstructed: [ενϲ] (5:17c, 19b).86

4.2.27 0226

One ordinal is partially visible in 0226: [προϲ]τον (1 Thess 4:16).87

4.2.28 0231

There is one partially visible cardinal number in 0231: τ̣ρ̣ιακο[ντα] (Matt 27:3).88

4.2.29 0240

One cardinal number is visible in 0240: μιϲ (Tit 1:6).89

---

84 Sanz, Biblica, 63–64 (§38).
85 This number is not recorded in the editio princeps (Sanz, Biblica, 69 [§42]), but rather in a second fragment which was subsequently identified as part of 0219; see Kurt Treu, “Papyri und Majuskeln,” in Studies in New Testament Language and Text: Essays in Honour of George D. Kilpatrick on the Occasion of his sixty-fifth Birthday, ed. J. K. Elliott, NovTSup 44 (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 373–86 (384–86).
86 Sanz, Biblica, 70–72 (§43).
87 Sanz, Biblica, 82–83 (§48).
88 P. Ant. I 11.23–24. There is also one reconstructed numerical adverb: [τροϲ] (26:75).
89 Giorgi Zereteli, “Un palimpseste grec du Vᵉ siècle sur parchemin (Epist. ad Fit. [sic] 1. 4–6, 7–9),” Académie royale Belgique: Bulletin de la classe des lettres Vᵉ sér. 18 (1932): 427–32 (note that the title of the publication should have read: “Epist. ad Tit.”). I was unable to verify this reading with photographs and have relied on the transcription.
4.2.30 0242

One cardinal number is partially visible in 0242. At Matt 13:33, the editor gives \([\tau\rho\theta\alpha]\), though this is difficult to discern in available photographs; a more cautious reading would perhaps be \([\tau\rho\theta\alpha]\).

4.2.31 0244

One cardinal number is visible in 0244: \(\tau\epsilon\varsigma\varsigma\alpha\varsigma\rho\varsigma\varsigma\) (Acts 12:4).

4.2.32 0254

One cardinal number is transcribed in the edition of 0254: \(\varepsilon\|\nu\) (Gal 5:14), though I am unable to discern this from the available photographs.

4.2.33 0274

There are seven cardinal numbers visible in 0274 and all are longhand: \(\varepsilon\iota\varsigma\) (Mark 10:17, 18), \(\varepsilon\nu\) (9:37; 10:21), \(\delta\upsilon\omega\) (9:45, 47), and \(\delta\omicron\omega\delta\epsilon\kappa\alpha\) (9:35). Two more can be reasonably reconstructed on the basis of line length: \([\tau\epsilon\rho\delta\varsigma\varsigma\chi\iota\lambda\iota]\) (8:9) and \([\tau\rho\epsilon\varsigma]\) (9:31). One longhand ordinal number is visible: \(\pi\rho\omega\varsigma\tau\omicron\varsigma\) (9:35).

4.2.34 0308

One cardinal number is extant in 0308, and it is written shorthand: \(\kappa\delta\) (Rev 11:16).

4.2.35 0312

One cardinal number is visible in 0312: \(\delta\upsilon\omega\) (Luke 7:18).

---


93 J. Martin Plumley and Colin H. Roberts, “An Uncial Text of St. Mark in Greek from Nubia,” JTS 27 (1976): 34–45. The editors also transcribe \(\varepsilon\iota\pi\tau\alpha\) (8:8), but this seems to me to be optimistic; only the extreme bottom edge of this letter is visible.

94 P.Oxy. LXVI 4500.35–37. It is unclear what the editor means here when referring to the abbreviated number as a “cypher” (pg. 36).
4.2.36 0321

There are seven visible cardinal numbers in 0321: εἰς (Matt 24:40), μια (24:41b), δέκα (25:1), [ε]νι (25:40), ενι (25:45), δυο (26:37), and μιαν (26:40); and two more can be reasonably reconstructed: [δυο] (24:40), and [μια] (24:41a). There are two visible ordinal numbers: δευτερου (26:42) and τριτου (26:44).

4.3 Observations and Summary

4.3.1 Diversity of Numbers in the Majuscules

Much like the papyri, there are several elements of diversity that characterize the number-writing techniques among the majuscules. (1) First, and unsurprisingly, different scribes had different preferences of number writing. (2) Second, individual scribes were inconsistent in their choice of number-forms, often fluctuating between longhand and shorthand forms, even for the same values, and they did so unpredictably.

Other similarities with the papyri are also evident. For one, there is diversity regarding the ways in which particular classes of numbers are handled. For example, in B 03 and D 05, numbers in the thousands were occasionally abbreviated, while A 01 and W 032 contain many abbreviations but never for values in the thousands. Further, D 05 alone abbreviates ordinal numbers.

Another observation concerns Codices A 02 and B 03. The scribes of these two uncials had a clear preference for longhand number-forms, but they were not totally consistent in avoiding abbreviations; both contain at least one exception. Thus, even

---


96 Tischendorf, *Fragmenta Sacra Palimpsesta*, 11–16. In addition, there is one numerical adverb: τριϲ (Matt 26:34).
among those manuscripts that appear to standardize number-forms, this effort was not completely inflexible, and abbreviations could be used on occasion. Again, scribal freedom seems to be the crucial factor.

4.3.2 Uniformity of Numbers in the Majuscules

There are also some striking similarities to be discerned among the numerals in the majuscules.

(1) First, similar to the papyri, there are no instances of “one” (εἷ/μία/ἕν) being given in abbreviated form. This is noteworthy given the high frequency of the number in the NT; “one” occurs more than any other number in the NT yet it is never shortened. It is also noteworthy in light of the fact that at this number was regularly given in shorthand form in texts outside the NT.

(2) Second, also similar to the papyri is the nearly exclusive avoidance of abbreviations for values in the thousands. There are a total of three exceptions to this, two in D 05 and one in B 03, but values in the thousands are nearly always given in longhand form among the majuscules.

(3) Third, there is also continuity with the papyri regarding numbers that were more likely to be abbreviated than others; that is, if a manuscript contains abbreviations, there are a handful that are more common than others (e.g., τεσσεράκοντα and δώδεκα, etc.).

(4) And fourth, there is a tendency for different NT corpora to contain distinct scribal tendencies of number-writing: for example, the Gospels often contain abbreviated forms (e.g., in Ν, D, and W), epistles do not (with just one exception in Ν), and Revelation often does (e.g., Ν, A, 0207). This is also found in the papyri, but there the pattern is more pronounced. These similarities might be reflective of the
state of these texts in earlier stages of transmission, perhaps when the books (or
collections of books) circulated independently.

4.3.3 Syntax of Numerals

Similar to the papyri, the unit-numeral relationship does not change. When numerical
shorthand appears, it merely substitutes for the longhand word; scribes did not alter
the syntax by transposing the number and unit.

4.3.4 Chronological Development

A surprising observation to be made at this point is that the use of numerical
shorthand did not, in fact, cease with the onset of parchment manuscripts, even those
of fine quality. There is no question that majuscules such as א 01, D 05, and W 032
are the products of professional, well-funded copying projects, and yet these contain
surprisingly high frequencies of numerical shorthand—a feature that is generally
associated with a lower register of scribal hand. That said, we are able to see outlines
of a movement away from the practice as it is found in the papyri. It is in the fourth
century majuscule B 03 in particular that we see a sizeable codex with a remarkable
degree of consistency in avoiding numerical abbreviations. This is followed by other
impressive examples in the fifth century such as A 02 and C 04. It is at this point that
the technique begins to disappear from NT manuscripts, though never completely. A
brief look at later manuscripts of, say, the sixth and seventh centuries, shows that it
can be found occasionally in later centuries.97

97 I once suspected that there would be a definite cut-off point after which no numerical shorthand
was used in NT body texts (which could function as a means by which to date certain manuscripts),
but there are too many exceptions to permit such a rule. Especially problematic are the supplementary
quire of John in Codex W 032 (W3), uncial Φ 043, 070, 0187, and 0307, all of which have traces of
the practice. This was the subject of my conference presentation, “Numerical Abbreviations and the
Date of Codex Washingtonianus (W/032)” (paper presented at the Green Scholars Initiative
We should be reminded that the avoidance of numerical shorthand seems to have been a feature of high-quality scribal work.\(^9\) It is therefore no coincidence that when Christian manuscripts began to improve in scribal quality and production value, numerical shorthand began to disappear, albeit slowly. The decline of this feature should therefore be seen as one element in the wider movement towards the professional workmanship and material quality of Christian books in the Constantinian era.

### 4.4 Conclusion

Although used with far less frequency than in the papyri, alphabetic numerals are an important scribal feature of NT manuscripts written on parchment. Close attention to the number-writing styles of our early scribes has allowed remarkable insights into the production and history of many of our codices. In some cases we were able to see how numerals can confirm the hypotheses of other scholars concerning certain manuscripts (such as Sanders with W, and Jongkind with \(\aleph\)), and for others we have uncovered supplementary information (such as Parker with D, etc.). Taking our observations from the papyri and the majuscules combined, we can now see the outlines of a “Christian number-writing technique”: if a NT manuscript contains numerical abbreviations, these will be used primarily (but inconsistently) for cardinal values between 2–100, never for “one,” and only very rarely for ordinals and values

---

\(^9\) Eric G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*, 2nd ed., rev. P. J. Parsons, IBSBSup 46 (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), 15: “I have never observed in a well-written Greek papyrus manuscript of classical literature (Christian texts being quite different in this respect) the kind of abbreviation postulated by the emenders of such terms as δεκαδαρχιαν, Dem. vi 22, into τετρααρχιαν…. But the use of numerical notation and of abbreviations of this kind … is common in documentary papyri and is found in copies of the sacred scriptures. Only if a literary manuscript were treated as a careless private copy or were copied by a Christian scribe would one expect to find abbreviations of this kind.”
in the thousands. Furthermore, this analysis has allowed us to refine our understanding of many codices, correct some errors, rule out some (now unlikely) possibilities for reconstructions of manuscripts, and get a better sense of what Christian scribes would or would not do as it relates to numerals. In addition to these gain, however, our observations have also raised some key questions that must be addressed, and the aim of part 2 is to pursue these in greater detail.
PART TWO:

STUDIES
CHAPTER 5:
EXTERNAL ANALYSIS: SELECTED COMPARISONS

5.1 Introduction
In part one we identified the different ways in which numerals have been used in discussions about the NT text, and we then conducted a thorough analysis of the relevant data. Aside from adding to our knowledge of the composition and creation of specific manuscripts, this foundational survey has uncovered a handful of issues that need to be pursued in greater detail. One question that has arisen repeatedly in the preceding chapters is the possible connection between numerical symbols and textual genealogy; that is, were alphabetic numerals ever carried over directly by scribes from their exemplars, and, if so, can this reveal anything about a manuscript’s genealogy? The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to examine number-writing techniques externally, which will involve comparing numerals in specific locations across multiple manuscripts.

Given the wealth of numbers in the NT documents, we will have to be selective. Except for manuscripts of Revelation, the following numbers will be omitted from view: ones, ordinals, and values in the thousands. There is so little (if any) variation with numbers in these categories that comparisons would not be particularly helpful. Furthermore, to simplify the presentation of the data, uncial manuscripts such as A 02, B 03, and C 04 are not usually listed explicitly due to the fact that they almost always contain longhand number-forms. Unless otherwise specified, these witnesses can be assumed to have the longhand numbers in their extant portions.
5.2 Numerical Abbreviations and Textual Genealogy

Two concrete examples suggest that number-styles might be genealogically significant. The first is one we have already seen in tracing the numbers in Codex Washingtonianus (W 032). As described, this manuscript is uniquely variegated in its textual affinities, much like a patchwork composition. Importantly, the number-writing techniques employed by the copyist shift from one text block to another; so, for example, the Alexandrian portion of Luke’s Gospel (1:1–8:12) contains repeated usage of numerical shorthand, but when the book shifts in text type to Byzantine (8:13–24:53), the copyists opts for longhand forms. This happens several times within the codex and it suggests that the numerical shorthand was not independently introduced but was copied directly from the various source-texts. If so, then there is an intriguing possibility that numerals could have a similar genealogical significance between other manuscripts as well.

The second example is a group of later manuscripts, the Western Pauline codices. In particular, Codex Augiensis (F 010) and Codex Boernerianus (G 012) are two ninth-century Graeco-Latin diglot manuscripts that share a common ancestor; they might even have been copied from the same exemplar.¹ In any case, there is no doubt that they are related very closely to one another. Remarkably, in terms of number-writing techniques, both F and G are exactly the same in their choices of numerical-styles. Both codices predominantly contain longhand number-forms throughout their texts, but there are three exceptions in both F and G at precisely the

same three locations: “forty” (2 Cor 11:24), “three” (Gal 1:18), and “four-hundred thirty” (Gal 3:17). This threefold agreement in numerical abbreviation almost certainly reflects the contents of their common source-text and therefore confirms a close genealogical relationship between the two codices. Granted, F 010 and G 012 were copied in a later, Latin-speaking milieu and may not be representative of earlier scribal practices; nevertheless, there is no reason to assume that they would be entirely unique in their copying habits either.

There is also some evidence to the contrary. An important study by Rachel Yuen-Collingridge and Malcom Choat analyzed the behavior of scribes in producing duplicate copies of Greek documentary papyri. While there are several points of noteworthy similarities between duplicate copies of documents produced by the same scribes (such as nu-bars and line fillers even where the textual layouts differ), in at least one instance there is a numerical symbol in “copy A” that is subsequently written longhand in “copy B.” In such a case one may infer that the exemplar is less influential than the scribe’s individual decision. Even as this illustration arises from the documentary genre rather than the literary, the principle is nonetheless significant for our purposes; it confirms that we should by no means expect that scribes—whether in literary or documentary contexts—always copied abbreviations over directly from their exemplars.

---


3 Also relevant is David C. Parker, An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and their Texts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 133–41, 259–61, who examines duplicate NT manuscripts and shows that scribes were often selective in what features of an exemplar they chose to mimic.
In the tables that follow, numerals are recorded as they appear in the manuscripts. Shorthand numerals are highlighted in gray to aid in identifying similarities between witnesses. “Lac.” denotes lacunose portions, “var.” denotes variant wording lacking the numeral in question, and “omit” denotes omissions.

### 5.3 Manuscrits of Matthew

We begin with witnesses of Matthew’s Gospel, in which manuscripts B 03, C 04, and W 032 (with a couple exceptions) are consistent in using longhand forms (A 02 is lacunose until chapter 25); in contrast, 𒈗 01 and D 05 contain many numerical abbreviations and can be fruitfully compared. Many fragmentary papyri and uncials exhibit variable practices and these have been included for the sake of comparison.

#### 5.3.1 Matthew Selection 1 (1:17–4:2)

This first selection is a good example of the contrasting scribal treatments of numerals in our early manuscripts. Among the majuscules that contain numerical shorthand (𒈗 01, D 05, and W 032), for example, none are predictable or consistent in doing so. It is also notable that P\(^1\) contains abbreviated forms along with 𒈗 01, but with such small selections of evidence, it would be dubious to suppose that these are necessarily related (table 5.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>P(^1)</th>
<th>P(^\text{lo})</th>
<th>𒈗 01</th>
<th>D 05</th>
<th>W 032</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:17a</td>
<td>ι̅δ</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>ι̅δ</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>δεκατεσσαρες</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:17b</td>
<td>ι̅δ</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>ι̅δ</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>ι̅δ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:17c</td>
<td>ι̅δ</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>ι̅δ</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>ι̅δ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:2a</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>μ</td>
<td>τεσσαρακοντα</td>
<td>μ</td>
<td>teçasaraconta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:2b</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>μ</td>
<td>τεσσαρακοντα</td>
<td>μ</td>
<td>teçasaraconta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.2 Matthew Selections 2 (chaps. 9–11) and 3 (chap. 13)

Together, Selections 2 and 3 illustrate a complicated relationship between א 01 and D 05. On the one hand, the manuscripts show a great deal of agreement in their respective use of numerical shorthand (e.g., Matt 10:1, 2, 5; 13:8c, 23a, 23b, 23c), and in their use of longhand numbers (esp. 9:20). In particular, it is noteworthy that neither copyist abbreviated δώδεκα in 9:20 but both did so in the following three instances (10:1, 2, 5). This is a remarkable pattern of coincidences. On the other hand, however, these two manuscripts also contain several notable differences (11:1; 13:8a, 8b). In any case, the two texts are not known to be related genealogically in any significant sense, and B 03, which is considered to be much closer to א 01, is consistent in using longhand forms. It seems most likely, therefore, that the degree of similarity in numbering is either coincidental or related to a similar scribal preference, but not a common archetype (tables 5.2 and 5.3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.2</th>
<th>Matthew Selection 2</th>
<th>Table 5.3</th>
<th>Matthew Selection 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>א 01</td>
<td>D 05</td>
<td>Ref.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:20</td>
<td>δωδεκα</td>
<td>δωδεκα</td>
<td>13:8a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:27</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>13:8b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:28</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>13:8c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:1</td>
<td>ιβ·</td>
<td>ιβ·</td>
<td>13:23a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:2</td>
<td>ιβ·</td>
<td>ιβ·</td>
<td>13:23b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:5</td>
<td>ιβ·</td>
<td>ιβ·</td>
<td>13:23c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:10</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>11:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:29</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.3 Matthew Selection 4 (25:15–22)

An important observation to be made from this selection is that the four numerals extant in P^35 agree perfectly in number-form with those in D 05. Nevertheless, these
two manuscripts are not known to be closely related textually, and the text which stands much closer genealogically to P35 is that of א01, which itself contains all longhand forms (see table 5.4).

| Table 5.4 Matthew Selection 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ref. | P35 | א01 | D05 |
| 25:15a | ε·πεντε·ε· | | |
| 25:15b | lac. δυο·β̅· | | |
| 25:16a | lac. πεντε·πεντε· | | |
| 25:16b | lac. πεντε·ε· | | |
| 25:22a | [δ]υο δυο δυο | | |
| 25:22b | δυ[ο] δυο δυο | | |
| 25:22c | δυο δυο δυο | | |

5.3.4 Matthew Selection 5 (26:14–27:3)

The final selection from Matthew is worth highlighting because several papyri and majuscules are extant here (see table 5.5).

| Table 5.5 Matthew Selection 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ref. | Various Mss. | P35 | א01 | D05 |
| 26:14 | [ι]β (P64) | δωδε[κα] | ·β· | ·β· |
| 26:15 | lac. | ·λ· | ·λ· |
| 26:20 | ιβ (P67) | [δω]δεκα | ·β· | ·β· |
| 26:37 | δ[υο] (P67) | δυο (0321) | lac. | δυο δυο |
| 26:47 | ιβ (P67) | lac. | ·β· | ·β· |
| 26:53 | lac. | δωδε[κα] | ·β· | |
| 26:60 | lac. | β | δυο |
| 26:61 | lac. | τριω | τριων |
| 27:3 | τριακο[ντα] (0231) | lac. | ·λ· | lac. |

These additional witnesses confirm the same picture as seen above; they help to illustrate that shorthand was used commonly but not exclusively in early witnesses. Concerning א01 and D05 specifically, we again see a complicated relationship; there are several agreements but also some important differences in number-style
(26:53, 60). On the other hand, there are some instances where א and D are joined by earlier witnesses (26:14, 20, 47), suggesting that these particular abbreviations might go back further to an earlier source-text (without implying a close genealogical link), but this is not certain.

5.4 Manuscripts of Mark

In the Gospel of Mark, manuscripts A 02, B 03,4 and C 04 are consistent in using longhand forms, but א 01, D 05, and W 032 contain many abbreviations and can be compared. In addition, extant portions of P⁴⁵ offer some important insights as well.

5.4.1 Mark Selection 1 (1:13–5:25)

One important comparison to be made from this first selection concerns D and W, which are regarded as similar in text-type, as W is considered “Western” (or D-text) in Mark 1:1–5:30. Even at first glance, D and W contain a remarkable degree of agreement in their use of numerical shorthand. This similarity would seem to suggest that their shared style of number-writing is indeed genealogically significant, implying that they inherited these symbols from a common archetype. While this is possible, a telling counterpoint is the witness of א, which, though not textually related, contains almost the exact same level of agreement in shorthand (except in 2:3 and 5:25). So, another explanation for this degree of similarity is that early copyists could have been for some reason more willing to employ numerical

4 The one exceptional abbreviation in B 03 is in Mark 5:13 (β̄ο = 2,000). I have found only one other manuscript that contains a numerical abbreviation here, namely, minuscule 719, a twelfth-century Gospels manuscript written on paper and containing Theophylact’s commentary. The numeral is written βόι—meaning (διςχιλιοι). Since, however, this manuscript contains other numerical abbreviations elsewhere in its body text (e.g., ν, Mark 5:25; 850, Mark 8:9), it is unlikely that there is in any particular dependence on B 03. For images, see the INTF website.
shorthand in the text of Mark’s Gospel, but they were not necessarily dependent on an earlier source for these abbreviations (see table 5.6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.6 Mark Selection 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ref.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:8a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:8b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:8c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:20a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:20b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:20c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.2 Mark Selection 2 (6:37–9:5)

The second selection highlights passages where P⁴⁵ is extant. Importantly, scholars have identified a significant level of textual agreement between P⁴⁵ and Codex W (esp. after 5:31 in W), and so we might expect some correspondence between the number-writing of the two manuscripts.⁵ Nevertheless, the situation is in fact more complex than this (see table 5.7):

---

A significant observation to be made about W is that, in the portion that is not “Western” in textual affinity (5:31–16:20), the similarities to D have noticeably decreased. Fewer abbreviations are used in comparison to D, and on one occasion, a symbol is used in W where the longhand is used in D (6:37). As this shift in scribal tendency in W away from D coincides with a shift in textual affinity (toward P\textsuperscript{45}), it seems reasonable to infer that the change in number-writing techniques reflects the contents of another textual tradition. And yet, when W is compared to its closest “relative” (P\textsuperscript{45}), there is very little agreement of number-styles, and the two never contain an abbreviation at the same location. Where W contains an abbreviation P\textsuperscript{45} contains the longhand (Mark 6:37; 8:20), and, remarkably, the reverse is also true at one point (8:19). Furthermore, the similarities between \(\text{A}\) and D (6:41d, 43; 8:19; 9:5) confirm that agreement in number-style is not necessarily due to genealogical relationship. Scribal freedom seems to be the rule.

It is also instructive to observe the threefold agreement of \(\text{A}\), D, and W in reading \(\overline{\text{ι}}\beta\) at Mark 6:43. Without the witness of P\textsuperscript{45} one might be tempted to suspect that this triple agreement represents the wording of an earlier textual stratum.
Nevertheless, our earliest witness to the text of Mark 6:43 is P^45, in which the number is given longhand.

### 5.5 Manuscripts of Luke

In the Gospel of Luke, the three majuscules א 01, D 05, and W 032 offer some instructive points of comparison, and several papyri and fragmentary majuscules add valuable data.

#### 5.5.1 Luke Selection 1 (3:11–4:2)

The first selection from Luke simply shows two numbers in particular that seem to have a long tradition of being represented in symbol form, but even these are not uniform. Shorthand forms for these numbers are found in several papyri and majuscules, but the longhand forms in P^7 and D confirm that copyists were free to vary their style (see table 5.8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>P^4</th>
<th>P^7</th>
<th>P^75</th>
<th>א 01</th>
<th>D 05</th>
<th>W 032</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:11</td>
<td>[δυο]</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>δυο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:23</td>
<td>λ̅·</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>λ̅·</td>
<td>λ̅·</td>
<td>λ̅·</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:2</td>
<td>µ εσεκακοντα</td>
<td>µ</td>
<td>µ</td>
<td>τεσσεκακοντα</td>
<td>µ</td>
<td>µ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5.5.2 Luke Selection 2 (9:28–10:17)

Selection 2 is important because it allows the comparison of two substantial papyri, P^45 and P^75 (see table 5.9). The combined witness of P^45 and P^75 confirm that copyists exercised a great deal of freedom in their usage of abbreviations. This selection also shows the complexity involved in attempting to trace genealogical links through the use of numerical shorthand. No two witnesses contain significant agreement, and even when agreement in number-styles can be observed, this
provides no sure indication of textual relationship.

5.5.3 Luke Selection 3 (13:4–21)

Importantly, this selection displays the same witnesses (except 0181) in curious agreement of number-style (see table 5.10).

Without the information provided by the previous selection (Luke Selection 2), we might be tempted to see a special relationship between P^{45}, P^{75}, and D because of their substantial agreement in numerical abbreviation (e.g., 13:11, 16). But Luke Selection 2 showed the same witnesses in substantial disagreement elsewhere, meaning that no genealogical relationship ought to be inferred. That being said, however, the threefold agreement of these witnesses in the abbreviation of τρια (Luke 13:14, 16) might actually suggest that this particular abbreviation might extend
further back in the textual tradition and probably predates P^{45} and P^{75}, but without implying a direct genealogical relationship.

5.6 Manuscripts of John

For the Gospel of John there are two early papyri of substantial length that can be compared fruitfully: P^{66} and P^{75}.

5.6.1 John Selection 1 (1:35–2:20)

The differences between P^{66} and P^{75} here are notable, and they further illustrate how copyists were free to vary their style of numbering (table 5.11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>Various Mss.</th>
<th>P^{66}</th>
<th>P^{75}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:35</td>
<td>[δ]υο (P^5)</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:37</td>
<td>δυο (P^120)</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>δυο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:40</td>
<td>[δ]υο (P^5)</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>δυο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>δυο (P^{106})</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>δυο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:6a</td>
<td>εξ</td>
<td>εξ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:6b</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:6c</td>
<td>γεβ</td>
<td>γεβ</td>
<td>γεβ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:19</td>
<td>τρις τιν (0162)</td>
<td>τρις τιν</td>
<td>τρις τιν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:20a</td>
<td>μ και εξ (0162)</td>
<td>τετέρων και εξ</td>
<td>μ και εξ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:20b</td>
<td>τρις τιν (0162)</td>
<td>τρις τιν</td>
<td>τρις τιν</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, however, the similarity between P^{75} and majuscule 0162 is striking: both employ a hybrid abbreviation of shorthand + longhand (μ και εξ rather than μ και εξ) for the first value in 2:20, as well as the longhand for the second (τρις τιν). The two witnesses otherwise do show a high degree of similarity in textual affinity, suggesting that they might owe their numbering-style to a common ancestor, but the testimony of 0162 is far to brief to permit certainty.
5.6.2 John Selection 2 (4:18–8:17)

To these early papyri D 05 can be added, which was lacunose for John 1:16–3:26, but now adds a helpful comparison (table 5.12).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>(P^{66})</th>
<th>(P^{75})</th>
<th>(D) 05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:18</td>
<td>πεντε</td>
<td>ε</td>
<td>πεντε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:40</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>δυο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:43</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>δυο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:2</td>
<td>πεντε</td>
<td>ε</td>
<td>πεντε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:5</td>
<td>λὴ</td>
<td>λὴ</td>
<td>τριακοντα και οκτω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:7</td>
<td>διακοσιων</td>
<td>[διακοσιων]</td>
<td>διακοσιων</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:9a</td>
<td>πεντε</td>
<td>ε</td>
<td>πεντε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:9b</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>δυο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:13a</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>(\overline{ι})β</td>
<td>δωδεκα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:13b</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>ε</td>
<td>πεντε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:19a</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>[κε]</td>
<td>εικοσι πεντε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:19b</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>(\lambda)</td>
<td>τριακοντα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:67</td>
<td>δωδεκα</td>
<td>(\overline{ι})β</td>
<td>δωδεκα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:70</td>
<td>(\overline{ι})β</td>
<td>(\overline{ι})β</td>
<td>(\overline{ι})β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:71</td>
<td>δωδεκα</td>
<td>(\overline{ι})β</td>
<td>δωδεκα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:17</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>(\overline{β})</td>
<td>δυο</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, this selection confirms a clear difference in scribal preference between \(P^{66}\) and \(P^{75}\). Second, the scribal preference in D seems to have shifted to the use of longhand forms (compared to its text of Matt-Mark-Luke).

A couple numbers in particular are worth singling out. The agreement of number-style between \(P^{66}\) and \(P^{75}\) in John 5:5 is striking. The use of an abbreviation in \(P^{75}\) is not surprising because the scribe employed them frequently, but the use of one in \(P^{66}\) is notable because elsewhere the papyrus shows clear preference for longhand forms. Could this departure in style indicate that the copyist carried the symbol over from an exemplar? If so, does this suggest that the symbol could be
traced back to a shared archetype of $P^{66}$ and $P^{75}$? This is, of course, possible but not verifiable.

Also significant is that the number twelve in John 6:70 is given in abbreviated form by three witness, $P^{66}$, $P^{75}$, and D. Again, the use of abbreviations in $P^{66}$ is rare, and the same is true of D in the Gospel of John. The referent in this context bears no obvious significance ($οὐκ ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς τοὺς δώδεκα ἔξελεξάμην; καὶ ἔξ ὑμῶν εἰς δύδολος ἔκτιν); “the twelve” are repeatedly referred to elsewhere in the book, and $P^{66}$ and D otherwise give those occurrences in the longhand form. It is also interesting to observe the placement of these abbreviations in their respective lines of text. In $P^{66}$, $ι̅β̅$ falls in the center of its line, not at the end; the same is true of the abbreviation in $P^{75}$; and in D, the abbreviation occurs at the end of a relatively lengthy sense-line, but there is sufficient space for the longhand word. Considering this and the fact that numerical abbreviations are rare in $P^{66}$ and D (only in John), it might well be the case that the symbol traces back to a distant ancestor, but the disparate textual affinities of the witnesses suggests that this is not necessarily required.

5.6.3 John Selection 3 (8:57–12:5)

This selection is important because it shows that individual copyists could drastically vary their chosen numerical styles within single codices. Both $P^{75}$ and D are notable in their heavy use of numerical shorthand elsewhere in their respective texts, but in this stretch from John 8:57 to 12:5 no numerical symbols were used in either, despite the recurring numbers in the passage. It is not clear what accounts for this pattern (see table 5.13).
### Table 5.13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>Various Mss.</th>
<th>$P^{45}$</th>
<th>$P^6$</th>
<th>$P^7$</th>
<th>$D 05$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:57</td>
<td>[δυο][P] (P$^6$)</td>
<td>[δυο][P] (P$^6$)</td>
<td>[δυο][P] (P$^6$)</td>
<td>[δυο][P] (P$^6$)</td>
<td>[δυο][P] (P$^6$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:6</td>
<td>[δυο][δεκα][P] (P$^{45}$)</td>
<td>[δυο][δεκα][P] (P$^{45}$)</td>
<td>[δυο][δεκα][P] (P$^{45}$)</td>
<td>[δυο][δεκα][P] (P$^{45}$)</td>
<td>[δυο][δεκα][P] (P$^{45}$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:17</td>
<td>τεσσαρας</td>
<td>τεσσαρας</td>
<td>τεσσαρας</td>
<td>τεσσαρας</td>
<td>τεσσαρας</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:18</td>
<td>[δε][καπεντε][P] (P$^{45}$)</td>
<td>[δε][καπεντε][P] (P$^{45}$)</td>
<td>[δε][καπεντε][P] (P$^{45}$)</td>
<td>[δε][καπεντε][P] (P$^{45}$)</td>
<td>[δε][καπεντε][P] (P$^{45}$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:1</td>
<td>€ξ</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>€ξ</td>
<td>€ξ</td>
<td>€ξ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:5</td>
<td>τριακοσιον (026)</td>
<td>τριακοσιον (026)</td>
<td>τριακοσιον (026)</td>
<td>τριακοσιον (026)</td>
<td>τριακοσιον (026)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[τριακοσιον] (0217)</td>
<td>[τριακοσιον] (0217)</td>
<td>[τριακοσιον] (0217)</td>
<td>[τριακοσιον] (0217)</td>
<td>[τριακοσιον] (0217)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.7 Manuscripts of Acts

In the Book of Acts, all uncial manuscripts except for $D 05$ are consistent in using longhand, but $P^{45}$, as well as other fragmentary witnesses, offer some valuable comparisons.

#### 5.7.1 Acts Selection 1 (7:20–12:4)

In this portion of Acts, Codex D again reverts to the use of numerical shorthand (after mostly longhand in John’s Gospel). Few numbers can be compared between D and $P^{45}$, and the two do not show any great similarity, except for perhaps µ in 7:36 (see table 5.14).

The reading in Acts 10:41 deserves special note. The text of 10:41 in most Greek manuscripts lacks any numeral, but several witnesses contain the added phrase (with some variation): μετὰ τὸ ἀναστήναι αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν + ἡμέρας τεσσεράκοντα. This addition is present in $P^{127}$ and $D 05$, and both have the number in abbreviated form (i.e., µ); this could suggest that the symbol itself could have been present the shared source that contained the added phrase, though, it is impossible to be certain.\(^6\)

---

An important comparison can be made by examining the other witnesses in which this addition is found, both Greek and versional: E 08, Old Latin (it), Harklean Syriac (sy₃₈** = asterisked readings from Greek Vorlagen), Sahidic (sa), and Middle Egyptian (mae)—all of which, except for the Old Latin text represented by the Latin column of Bezae (d 5), have longhand forms here. Thus, whatever might be the particular relationship between these witnesses with respect to the additional phrase “for forty days,” the numerical abbreviation was only used in P¹²⁷, D 05, and d 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.14</th>
<th>Acts Selection 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>Various Mss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:20</td>
<td>[τρι]c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:29</td>
<td>lac.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>lac.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:36</td>
<td>μ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:42</td>
<td>lac.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:38</td>
<td>[δυο] (P¹²⁷)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:11</td>
<td>τεθαρατίν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:41</td>
<td>μ (P¹²⁷)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:5</td>
<td>τεθαρατίν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:11</td>
<td>lac.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:12</td>
<td>lac.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:4</td>
<td>τεθαρατίν (0244)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.7.2 Acts Selection 2 (23:13)

Selection 2 is included to highlight the fact that an early witness to Acts (third century) may indeed contain an abbreviated numeral, but this is not necessarily repeated in any later codices; D 05 here is lacunose (see table 5.15).

---

5.8 Pauline Epistles

5.8.1 Pauline Epistles Selection 1 (1 Cor 15:5)

Due to the near perfect consistency of longhand numbers in the Pauline and Catholic Epistles in the early witnesses, very little comparison is needed. The only clear use of a numerical abbreviation in either corpus is in one manuscript at one particular point (see table 5.16):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>P46</th>
<th>P123</th>
<th>א 01</th>
<th>A 02</th>
<th>B 03</th>
<th>C 04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23:13</td>
<td>א 02</td>
<td>א 02</td>
<td>א 02</td>
<td>א 02</td>
<td>א 02</td>
<td>א 02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.16
Pauline Epistles Selection 1

In neither P46 nor P123 is the precise wording certain, but the reconstructions have been included for the sake of completeness. א 01 is thus the only certain witness of our period to use an abbreviated numeral in the Pauline letters.

5.8.2 Pauline Epistles Selection 2 (Gal 1:18)

One other abbreviation in Paul’s Epistles has been plausibly reconstructed, but contemporary manuscripts are consistently longhand; C 04 is lacunose here (table 5.17).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>P46</th>
<th>P51</th>
<th>א 01</th>
<th>A 02</th>
<th>B 03</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Cor 15:5</td>
<td>דודא</td>
<td>דודא</td>
<td>ו</td>
<td>ו</td>
<td>ו</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.17
Pauline Epistles Selection 2

Gal 1:18 דקפא눈 | ו | דקפא눈 | דקפא눈 | דקפא눈 | דקפא눈
5.9 Manuscripts of Revelation

For manuscripts of Revelation, ordinals and values in the thousands are listed because these were occasionally abbreviated by scribes. The main early witnesses for this book are א 01, A 02, C 04, P^47 and P^115, plus some fragmentary manuscripts.

5.9.1 Revelation Selections 1 (1:4), 2 (1:20), and 3 (5:6)

The first three selections are included simply to show where some early papyri are extant. Evidently, there is a tendency for papyri of Revelation to contain abbreviated forms, although the uncials seem not to have retained this practice (see tables 5.18, 5.19, and 5.20).

![Table 5.18 Revelation Selection 1](image1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>PN</th>
<th>א 01</th>
<th>A 02</th>
<th>C 04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:4a</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>επτα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:4b</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>επτα</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Table 5.19 Revelation Selection 2](image2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>PN</th>
<th>א 01</th>
<th>A 02</th>
<th>C 04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:20b</td>
<td>ζ</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>επτα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:20c</td>
<td>ζ</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>επτα</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Table 5.20 Revelation Selection 3](image3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>PN</th>
<th>א 01</th>
<th>A 02</th>
<th>C 04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:6d</td>
<td>ζ</td>
<td>επτα</td>
<td>omits vac.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.9.2 Revelation Selection 4 (9:5–15)

This selection lists where manuscript 0207 is extant; A 02 contains all longhand forms, and C 04 is lacunose (see table 5.21). There are two notable points of correspondence between P^47 and 0207 with respect to number-style (9:10, 15). But there is a difference in 9:13a, in which an ordinal value is abbreviated by the copyist of P^47 but is longhand in 0207. In any case, the relationship between the text of 0207 and the P^47-א group is not especially close, and little can be inferred from this comparison.
Table 5.21
Revelation Selection 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>0207</th>
<th>P'</th>
<th>ν01</th>
<th>A 02</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:5</td>
<td>ε</td>
<td>vac.</td>
<td>πε</td>
<td>πεντε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:10</td>
<td>ε</td>
<td>ε</td>
<td>πεντε</td>
<td>πεντε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:12</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>δυο</td>
<td>δυο</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:13a</td>
<td>εκτοción</td>
<td>π'</td>
<td>εκτοción</td>
<td>εκτοción</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:13b</td>
<td>omit</td>
<td>omit</td>
<td>omit</td>
<td>omit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:14a</td>
<td>omit</td>
<td>π'</td>
<td>εκτω</td>
<td>omit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:14b</td>
<td>δ</td>
<td>δ</td>
<td>teccarēc</td>
<td>teccarēc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15</td>
<td>δ</td>
<td>δ</td>
<td>teccarēc</td>
<td>teccarēc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.9.3 Revelation Selection 5 (10:3–11:2)

The remaining selections are included to show where the early papyri P⁴⁷, P¹¹⁵ and others are extant; where extant, A 02 and C 04 have longhand forms (table 5.22).

Very little can be compared between our witnesses here in Selection 5, but there are a couple helpful observations. P⁴⁷ and P¹¹⁵ do agree in their use of number style (11:2), but this does not require any sort of genealogical relationship, only a similarity in scribal treatment. It is also instructive to observe how the scribe of ν was resistant to using numerical shorthand even where convenient (10:3, 4b; 11:2), which, as we have seen, contrasts sharply with its increase at the end of the book.

Table 5.22
Revelation Selection 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>P'</th>
<th>P¹¹⁵</th>
<th>ν 01</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:3</td>
<td>omit</td>
<td>ζ</td>
<td>επτα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:4a</td>
<td>omit</td>
<td>omit?</td>
<td>επτα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:4b</td>
<td>{ζ}</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>επτα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:7</td>
<td>ζ</td>
<td>lac.</td>
<td>εβδομου</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:2</td>
<td>μβ</td>
<td>μβ</td>
<td>τέτευκακοντα δυο</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

8 The *editio princeps* of P¹¹⁵ (P.Oxy. LXVI 4499) contains several reconstructed numerals that I have simply represented as “lac.” in order to avoid the impression of certainty.
5.9.4 Revelation Selection 6 (11:16)

The lone visible number in manuscript 0308 is abbreviated as in P⁴⁷, but little in particular can be learned from this given the brevity of the fragment (see table 5.23).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>0308</th>
<th>P⁴⁷</th>
<th>P⁴¹⁵</th>
<th>א 01</th>
<th>A 02</th>
<th>C 04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:16</td>
<td>κδ</td>
<td>κδ</td>
<td>vac.</td>
<td>εικοσι τεκαρες</td>
<td>εικοσι τεκαρες</td>
<td>εικοσι τεκαρες</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.9.5 Revelation Selection 7 (13:18–15:6)

This final selection is perhaps the best comparison of P⁴⁷ and P¹¹⁵. Note that, where extant, א 01, A 02, and C 04 consistently have all longhand forms. None of the following abbreviations, therefore, have left their mark on our later uncial (see table 5.24).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>P⁴⁷</th>
<th>P¹¹⁵</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13:18</td>
<td>χζζ</td>
<td>χις</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:1</td>
<td>ρμδ χιλιαδες</td>
<td>[ρμδ χιλιαδες]ζ (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:20</td>
<td>χιλιων εξακοςιων</td>
<td>οβχ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:1a</td>
<td>ζ</td>
<td>lac.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:1b</td>
<td>[ε]πτα</td>
<td>lac.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:6a</td>
<td>ζ</td>
<td>lac.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:6b</td>
<td>ζ</td>
<td>ζ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown above, the two papyri agree in number-style in several instances (e.g., Rev 13:18; 14:1[?]; 15:6b), but there are important differences as well (e.g., 14:20). This level of disagreement again confirms that scribal use of numerical shorthand is not a significant feature of a manuscript’s genealogical tradition; rather, the text of Revelation was simply treated with more abbreviations by copyists than other books.
5.10 Conclusion

More detailed comparison of these witnesses and others (including versions) is possible, but the above selections permit our basic questions to be answered adequately. On the whole, number-writing style appears to be most directly influenced by individual scribal preferences rather than genealogical relationship. Groups or pairs of manuscripts that share relatively close familial relationship often exhibit starkly different number-styles in their overlapping texts (e.g., P\textsuperscript{66} and P\textsuperscript{75}). At the same time, some manuscript pairs that are textually dissimilar show remarkable agreement in number-writing styles (e.g., א\textsuperscript{01} and D\textsuperscript{05}), confirming that their numerical likeness should be attributed to a similar scribal style rather than common ancestry. The conclusion must therefore be that the analysis of number-writing techniques is generally not an effective tool by which to detect or confirm genealogical relationships between NT manuscripts. Number-writing appears to be a feature of individual scribal technique and preference.

That being said, however, there are a handful of number symbols that share significant agreement among early witnesses. These are all the more striking when found in manuscripts that rarely or only occasionally contain abbreviated forms. It is not unreasonable to suspect that these abbreviations might represent the number-forms of a common archetype, without, of course, implying that the witnesses are directly or even closely related. That is, on certain occasions, it may well be that some numerical symbols function as vestiges of earlier stages of the text and, in some cases, representative of distant archetypes; but even these isolated readings cannot be confirmed with certainty.
A final comment is important. Our earlier observation that different NT corpora appear to bear distinct scribal practices of number-writing has been confirmed. Specifically, the witnesses to the books of Mark and Revelation tend to contain far more numerical shorthand than other books, such as Matthew, Luke, and Acts. Furthermore, witnesses to Paul’s Epistles, the Catholic Epistles, and to a lesser extent the Gospel of John tend to avoid numerical shorthand altogether. Remarkably, these generalizations hold true across a wide range of manuscripts. Such patterns might be traceable to the time when NT subcollections (or individual books) circulated independently.
CHAPTER 6:
NUMERALS IN MANUSCRIPTS OF THE GREEK OLD TESTAMENT

6.1 Introduction

Papyrologist Colin H. Roberts once stated that numerical abbreviations were not used in copies of the Greek OT that can be confidently identified as Jewish. That is, while Christian scribes were evidently willing to utilize numerical shorthand in their copies of Scripture (both of the OT and NT), Roberts observed that, in manuscripts of Jewish origin, “numbers are regularly written out.”¹ This purported difference of scribal technique was subsequently understood by the wider scholarly community as a reliable criterion for distinguishing between Jewish and Christian manuscripts of the Greek OT. In fact, this has been reiterated as a definitive rule on a number of occasions by more than one scholar, and it has affected (for good or ill) the discussion of several OT manuscripts of disputed origins.²

Nevertheless, there are two reasons why this claim ought to be scrutinized. First, Roberts did not cite any particular study that had demonstrated that Jewish scribes categorically avoided numerical shorthand, and so we must infer that this was based on his own observations; this reason alone would invite a more thorough investigation. Second, however, we have seen that Roberts made numerous comments regarding number-writing techniques in NT manuscripts that were


imprecise, if not simply incorrect. Were his comments regarding Jewish manuscripts equally as imprecise and/or incorrect? The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to test and see if this is a true or false distinction between Jewish and Christian scribal styles. Before doing so, it will be helpful to review some of the other criteria that have been invoked to distinguish Christian and Jewish manuscripts.

### 6.2 Criteria for Determining Jewish or Christian Origins

A set of criteria for distinguishing between Christian copies of the Greek OT from Jewish ones is desirable because it could allow confident identification of distinct scribal styles and textual groupings; this would allow more accurate pictures of the social and religious aspects of these early groups. Nevertheless, what constitutes legitimate criteria for this distinction is not as clear as one might wish. The older view that tended to draw sharp lines of separation between uniquely Christian scribal practices and uniquely Jewish ones has recently been the object of strong criticism.

For example, in 1973, Kurt Treu leveled a sharp critique of what he considered to be three false criteria hindering an accurate picture of early Graeco-Jewish texts: (1) That all LXX/OG manuscripts of the Common Era must be Christian, as the Jews supposedly abandoned it as a translation; (2) that Jews only used scrolls for their Scriptures, and codices must be Christian; and (3) the use of *nomina sacra* can only

---

3 A good example of this is the following statement: “In the still earlier [than *P.Fouad Inv. 266*] Rylands Deuteronomy fragment (= H. 57 [P.Ryl.Gk. 458/Rahlfs 957]) there is no instance of a numeral” (Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 19 n. 1). As we will see below, however, there is in fact a very clear instance of a numeral in this manuscript.

4 In many ways the older view is thought to be present in, for example, Colin H. Roberts, “The Christian Book and the Greek Papyri,” *JTS* 50 (1949): 155–68 (esp. 157–58).
be Christian. Treu regarded these as false axioms that implied a far greater degree of separation between early Jews and Christians than existed in reality. These misguided notions dispelled, he went on to suggest that many manuscripts that were commonly assumed to be Christian were just as likely to be Jewish in origin (detailed below).

A similar criticism has been voiced more recently by Robert Kraft, who likewise suggests that the original milieu of several early manuscripts should be an “open question” or at least explored in greater detail. He argues that a rigid application of the older, traditional criteria results in a picture of early Jewish book culture that is too simplistic. For example, he argues that, even among manuscripts from the Judean desert (such as the Dead Sea Scrolls), there is a “range of [scribal] hands and styles” rather than a strict uniformity, and this means that there may have been significant overlap between the scribal styles of Jews and Christians.

Kraft offers a list of the major criteria that have been invoked by previous scholars for this question, and it will be helpful to summarize these here:

1. Scroll vs. codex
2. Parchment (or leather) vs. papyrus
3. Treatment of nomina sacra
4. Treatment of Tetragrammaton
5. Treatment of numbers (longhand or symbol form)
6. Use of scriptio continua (the absence of spaces between letters/words)
7. Assessment of scribal hand/literary style

---


Many objections raised by Treu and Kraft are sound. In fact, some of the
criteria listed above are now recognized as patently false. Regarding (2), for
example, several Dead Sea Scrolls, which are undeniably Jewish in origin, are
papyrus manuscripts; this leaves no room to doubt that Jewish copies of Scripture
were written on both materials (as were, in fact, Christian ones). Similarly, regarding
(6), while it is true that Christian manuscripts reveal a departure from the unbroken
writing of *scriptio continua* with such features as punctuation, word spacing,
divisions of sense-units (of “verses” and paragraphs), and enlarged initial letters at
the beginnings of lines and phrases, recent studies show that many Jewish biblical
manuscripts contain the exact same features (e.g., the Minor Prophets scroll from
Naḥal Ḥever⁷); Christian manuscripts are thus not unique in this regard, and so the
value is this “criterion” is effectively nil.

Furthermore, some of the above criteria, if not false, are now recognized to
have exceptions. For example, regarding (1), it has been assumed that a Greek OT
manuscript in codex format must be a Christian one, since Christians preferred this
format so strongly; but Treu, as noted above, questioned whether one can assume
that Jews *never* used the codex format for biblical texts (perhaps they did so for
private use?). A significant example is *P.Oxy.* IV 656, which is widely thought to be
Jewish because it contains θεος and κυριος longhand (where Christians would
employ *nomina sacra* contractions), yet it is written on a codex. Moreover, it is also
not certain that all Jewish scribes categorically avoided any form of *nomina sacra.*

For example, *P.Oxy. VII* 1007 (*P.Lit. London* 199/Rahlfs 907) contains an abbreviated form of θεός (θο) as well as a Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew characters (two yods with a strike through them) in place of κύριος; this is possibly an example of a Jewish use of a *nomen sacrum*.

Even with the exceptions noted above, the latter two criteria are widely held to be probable (though not certain) indications of a manuscript’s origin. That is, as Emanuel Tov has summarized,

> A major criterion, but not the only one, for the Jewish nature of a text is the writing in scrolls … but this criterion is not always stable…. The Christian nature of Scripture texts can usually be detected by their being written in codex form … and their abbreviated forms of the divine names.⁸

Thus, if a manuscript of the OT is written in codex format, with Christian forms of the *nomina sacra*, and lacks any Jewish treatment of the Tetragrammaton, it is generally thought to be of a Christian milieu. Accordingly, there is a large body of manuscripts whose origins are more or less agreed upon by scholars.

The particular criterion of scribal number-writing style has not been subjected to this same level of scrutiny. The present chapter aims to provide an analysis of the number-writing techniques in manuscripts that are Jewish, Christian, and those that are in dispute, with a view toward evaluating its legitimacy as such a criterion. Can it be maintained that Christian manuscripts typically abbreviated numbers? If so, how consistently did they do so? Did Jewish copyists strictly avoid them? Can manuscripts of disputed origins add any evidence to this discussion?

---

6.3 Method

To provide a sizable, yet manageable, set of data, this investigation is restricted to Greek manuscripts of the OT that are dated from the second century BCE through the third century CE (II BCE–III CE). I have followed the list of manuscripts and their dates given in Rahlfs-Fraenkel\(^9\) and in the list compiled by Tov.\(^{10}\) This includes sixty-nine manuscripts (on papyrus, leather, and parchment), though many of these do not contain any visible numerals and are therefore outside our purview.\(^{11}\)

After identifying the manuscripts that contain visible numbers in their body texts\(^\text{12}\) (either longhand or shorthand), they were divided into three groups. The first group consists of manuscripts of undisputed Jewish origin; this mainly includes those from the Judean desert (e.g., the Dead Sea Scrolls), but also others that are paleographically dated prior to the Christian era. The second group includes manuscripts generally thought to be Christian, most important of which are the Chester Beatty, Schøyen, and Bodmer papyri, but there are others. The third group consists of manuscripts that are of uncertain origin, and those that were once thought to be Christian but have now been called into question; for these disputed manuscripts, I list all that Treu and Kraft have argued to be Jewish or at least an “open question” (omitting, of course, those without any extant numbers).\(^{13}\)

---


\(^{10}\) See Tov, Scribal Practices, 303–10.

\(^{11}\) Unfortunately, this excludes many manuscripts of contested origins: e.g., \(P.\) Berol. 17213, \(P.\) Lit. Lond. 202, \(Bodl.\) Ms. Gr. Bibl. g. 5, \(P.\) Oxy. VIII 1075, \(P.\) Oxy. IX 1166, \(P.\) Oxy. X 1225, etc.

\(^{12}\) I thus am not considering page numbers, \textit{stichoi} totals, Psalm identification numbers, etc.

\(^{13}\) For more relevant discussions, see Joseph van Haelst, ed., Catalogue des papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens, Série Papyrologie 1 (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976).
The aim of each section is to examine all extant numerals in these manuscripts with the hopes of identifying a pattern of scribal technique. It is not my intention here to take issue with the arguments of Treu or Kraft, but only to examine the technique of number-writing in greater detail than has been previously been done with the hope that it might be seen more accurately and perhaps put to use.14

6.4 Manuscripts of Jewish Origin

We begin with Greek OT manuscripts that are widely held to be Jewish in origin. The first to be considered are manuscripts discovered in the Judean Desert; the Jewish milieu of these texts is undisputed primarily because of their early date and their discovery amidst other Jewish sectarian documents. There are four such manuscripts that contain visible numbers.15

(1) 4Q120 or papLXXLev\(^b\) (Rahlfs 802) is dated to 1 BCE and contains two instances of the number “one,” both longhand: \(\text{μων}\) (Lev 4:27) and \(\text{μή\text{φ}}\) (5:17). The following are reconstructed: \(\text{μ\text{φ}}\) (4:27), \(\text{δευτερον}\) (5:10), and \(\text{ε\text{νο}}\) (5:22).16

(2) 4Q119 or LXXLev\(^a\) (Rahlfs 801) is dated to 1 BCE and contains: \(\text{πεντε\ μ\text{ων\ ε\text{κ}[α\text{το}}}\) (Lev 26:8) and \(\text{ε\text{κατο\ μ\text{ων\ διω}[\text{ζοντ}]}\) (26:8).17

---

14 Images of the following manuscripts are not as accessible compared to their NT counterparts, so I have mostly relied on their published transcriptions.

15 For example, the edition of 7Q1/papLXXExod (Rahlfs 805) contains two reconstructed numbers, \(\text{δων}\) (Exod 28:7) and \(\text{δωξι}\) (28:7), but neither can be confirmed because the manuscript is so fragmentary; see M. Baillet, J. T. Milik, and R. de Vaux, eds., Les “petites grottes” de Qumrân, DJD III (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), 142–43. Furthermore, no numbers are visible in 7Q2/papEpJer gr (Rahlfs 804), which contains part of the Epistle of Jeremiah (Baillet, Milik, and de Vaux, Les “petites grottes,” 143), or in 4Q122 or LXXDeut (Rahlfs 819), see P. W. Skehan, E. Ulrich, and J. E. Sanderson, eds., *Qumran Cave 4.IV: Palaeo-Hebrew and Greek Biblical Manuscripts*, DJD IX (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 195–97.

16 Skehan, Ulrich, and Sanderson, *Qumran Cave 4.IV*, 167–86.

(3) 4Q121 or LXXNum (Rahlfs 803) is dated to I BCE and contains: [πε]γε [Num 3:50] and δυ[ο] (3:39?).\(^{18}\)

(4) 8HevXII gr (Rahlfs 943) is dated to I BCE and contains the following:

τρεις (Jonah 2:1), τρεις (2:1), τριων [3:3], [τεσσερακοντα] (3:4), επτα (Mic 5:4), οκτω (5:4), [εβδομα] (Zech 1:12), [τεσσαρος] (2:3), μιαν (8:21), and δεκατεσσαρακοντα (8:23).\(^{19}\) There are also several numbers that have been reconstructed.\(^{20}\)

Four other manuscripts of undisputed Jewish origin contain numbers:

(5) *P.Ryl.Gk.* 458 (Rahlfs 957) is a papyrus roll of Deuteronomy, recognized as Jewish primarily because of its early date of II BCE.\(^{21}\) It contains only one visible number, written longhand: τεσσαρακοντα (Deut 25:3).

(6) *P.Fouad Inv.* 266b (Rahlfs 848) is a papyrus roll of Deuteronomy, recognized as Jewish because of its I BCE date and the use of Hebrew characters for the Tetragrammaton (in a second hand).\(^{22}\) It contains the following: μιας (Deut 18:6), τριτης (19:4), [μια]ν (19:11), εις (19:15), [τεσσαρακοντα] (22:12), εις (25:5), [ε]ν (25:9), μια (28:7), επτα (28:7), and επτα (31:10).\(^{23}\)


\(^{20}\) For example, [μιας] (Jonah 3:4), [πρωτης] (Mic 4:8), [τεσσαρακοντα] (Zech 2:10), [τεταρακοντα] (8:19), [πεντηκοντα] (8:19), [εβδομα] (8:19), [δεκατεσσαρακοντα] (8:19), and [μια] (8:21).

\(^{21}\) Colin H. Roberts, *Two Biblical Papyri in the John Rylands Library*, Manchester (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1936). Again, see Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 19 n. 1, for the curious suggestion that this manuscript does not contain a numeral.

\(^{22}\) For a photographic facsimile, see Zaki Aly and Ludwig Koenen, eds., *Three Rolls of the Early Septuagint: Genesis and Deuteronomy. A Photographic Edition*, Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 27 (Bonn: Habelt, 1980); the two other Fouad manuscripts do not contain any visible numbers.

\(^{23}\) A handful of others can be reasonably reconstructed: [μιας] (Deut 19:5), [δυο] (21:15), [μια] (21:15), and [μια] (21:15); the partially visible επτατεσσαρακοντα (26:12) might also be of interest.
(7) *P.Oxy.* L 3522 (Rahlfs 857) is a papyrus roll of Job, regarded as Jewish because of its I CE date and the Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew characters. Only the following are visible: \(\mu\tau\lambda\nu\) [Job 42:11], and \(\mu\nu\rho\mu\alpha \tau\alpha\kappa\iota\chi\lambda\alpha\) (42:12), the latter of which seems quite likely on the basis of line length.

(8) *P.Oxy.* LXV 4443 (Rahlfs 996) is dated to the I/II CE and contains a portion of Esther. Jewish origin is likely given its roll format and uncontracted forms of \(\theta\varepsilon\omicron\upsilon\) (col. 1, ln. 12), \(\kappa\omicron\omicron\tau\eta\rho\mu\alpha\upsilon\) (col. 1, ln. 29), and \(\alpha\nu\omicron\rho\omicron\omega\pi\omicron\upsilon\) (col. 2, ln. 5). It contains one partially visible ordinal number: \(\delta\omicron\upsilon\omicron\delta\upsilon\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\tau\omicron\upsilon\) (E20/Esth 16:19/8:12).

In summary, among the manuscripts of the Greek OT that are regarded as Jewish in provenance, there are no visible instances of numerical abbreviations. It must readily be admitted, however, that this is a small pool of data, and in each case we are dealing with very fragmentary witnesses. We will see that, especially in light of the Christian evidence, it is highly unlikely that this provides sufficient evidence to assert that Jewish scribes did not ever employ numerical abbreviations.

### 6.5 Manuscripts of Christian Origin

The first group of manuscripts widely regarded as Christian in origin belong to the Chester Beatty collection.

1. *P.Beatty* VI (Rahlfs 963), is a II CE manuscript of Numbers and Deuteronomy. It is widely regarded as Christian because of its codex format and its consistent use of Christian *nomina sacra*. The Numbers portion of this papyrus

---

24 *P.Oxy.* L 3522.1–3.

25 *P.Oxy.* LXV 4443.4–8.

contains a wealth of abbreviated numerals, far too many to list here, though several notable examples can be cited.27 Furthermore, a unique feature of *P.Beatty* VI is its abbreviation of the number “one” (𝜏), which occurs at least eighty-five times28 (this is a form not found among NT manuscripts). The scribe had an obvious preference for numerical shorthand, though the practice is certainly not invariable.29 All numerical values considered, an examination of the manuscript reveals well over 250 instances of alphabetic abbreviations. The Deuteronomy portion, however, contains twenty-one visible numbers (both cardinal and ordinal) but none are abbreviated, even as the papyrus was written in the same hand as Numbers.30 This is an interesting difference in style, but there are several places in this fragmentary text where the most likely reconstruction includes abbreviated numbers (see table 6.1).

For example (here I reproduce Kenyon’s transcriptions):

---

27 For example, ζ (Num 6:9), β (6:10), ο (7:2), ε (7:3), ιβ (7:3), β (7:7), δ (7:7), δ (7:8), ι (7:8), λ και ρ (7:13), ο (7:13), ι (7:14), ε (7:17 |2x|), λ και ρ (7:19), ο (7:19), ι (7:20), β (7:23), ε (7:23 |3x|), γ (7:24), λ και ρ (7:25), ο (7:25), ι (7:26), β (7:29), ε (7:29 |3x|), δ (7:30), λ και ρ (7:31), ο (7:31), δ (7:35), ε (7:35 |3x|), ε (7:36), λ και ρ (7:37), ο (7:37), ε (7:38), ε (7:41 |3x|), λ και ρ (7:43), δ (7:43), ι (7:44); though there are dozens more abbreviations. Unfortunately, the text does not overlap with that of the Jewish manuscript 4Q121 (LXXNum; Rahlfis 803) treated above.

28 For example, Num 6:11 (2x), 7:13, 19, 20, 21 (3x), 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32, 33 (2x), 34, 37 (2x), 38, 39 (3x), 40, 43, 45 (2x), 46, 49 (2x), 50, 51 (3x), 55 (2x), 56, 57, 58, 61 (2x), 62, 63, 64, 67 (2x), 69 (2x), 73 (2x), 74, 75 (3x), 76, 79, 81 (3x), 82, 85 (2x); 8:8; 28:11, 15, 27; 29:2 (2x), 3, 9, 11, 13, 14 (2x), 31, 36 (2x), 38. Longhand instances of the number “one”: Num 6:14 (3x), 19 (2x), 7:11, 13, 14, 15 (2x), 16, 19, 25, 27 (2x), 44, 52, 57 (2x), 70, 80, 8:12 (2x); 26:65; 28:4, 12, 13, 14 (2x), 22, 31:49; 36:8. I cannot discern any principle of distinction between these uses.

29 For example, [δη][φα] (Num 7:68), δεκα (7:74), δ[η][ο] (28:3) τρια (29:3); many ordinals values are likewise given longhand (see also the longhand “ones” noted above).

While these examples cannot be confirmed with certainty, they do seem to be the most likely reconstructions. In any case, there is no question that numerical abbreviations are an important feature of the copyist’s treatment of the text of Numbers.

(2) *P.Beatty* IX + X (Rahlfs 967/968), although originally given two catalog numbers, are now regarded as one manuscript containing portions of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Esther dating to II/III CE.\(^\text{31}\) Christian provenance is considered probable due to its codex format and *nomina sacra* forms for θεός, κύριος, and πνεῦμα. In terms of number-writing techniques, the manuscript contains several abbreviated numerals, but they are not distributed evenly throughout the codex. The remains of Ezekiel contain only two visible numbers, both longhand: τρεῖς (Ezek 14:16) and τρεῖς (14:18). The text of Daniel contains a few dozen longhand numbers (both cardinal and ordinal),\(^\text{32}\) and two are given in shorthand: ρκζ (Dan 6:1/6:2) and ρκζ (6:3/6:4).


\(^{32}\) For example, τεσσαραις (Dan 3:92), τεσσαραιν (3:92), οκτωκαιδεκατου (4:1/4:4), τριακον (4:12/4:7), μιαν (4:16/4:19), επτα (4:29/32), επτα (4:30/34), ετε (4:30/34), τεσσαραις (7:2), εν (7:3), εν (7:3), προ(του (7:4), ενοι (7:5), τρι[α] (7:5; not “γρι”), χειλεαι | χειλειαιδες (7:10), μυραι | μυραιδες (7:10), ενα (7:16), τεσσαραι (7:17), [τετ]αρτον (7:19), [τε]αρτον (7:23), τεταρτη (7:23), δεκα (7:24).
Finally, Esther contains several abbreviations for both cardinals and ordinals: \( \bar{B} \) (Esth 3:7), \( o (3:7), ρε(13:1/13a), \) \( o (13:6/13f), \) and \( v (5:14) \),\(^3\) and several longhand forms: \( δυο \) (Esth 2:21), \( δυο \) (2:23), \( μια \) (3:7), \( μια \) (3:13), \( [δωδεκα]του \) (3:13), \( δευτερου \) (13:6/13f), \( δωδεκατου \) (13:6/13f), \( μυριον \) (4:7), \( τριακοντα \) (4:11), \( μια \) (15:5/5:1a), and \( εις \) (7:9).

(3) \textit{P.Beatty} V (Rahlfs 962), a III CE manuscript of Genesis, is also regarded as Christian in origin.\(^4\) This is suggested by the codex format and contracted forms of θεός, κύριος, and πνεύμα. The scribe of this codex shows a remarkable fluctuation in number-writing technique; there are dozens of numerical abbreviations as well as longhand forms. There are far too many to cite all of them here, but it is worth listing some notable examples of the former\(^5\) and of the latter.\(^6\)

(4) \textit{P.Beatty} VII (Rahlfs 965) is a III CE manuscript of Isaiah.\(^7\) Its Christian provenance is suggested by its codex form and the contracted forms of θεός, κύριος,

---

\(^{3}\) One other abbreviation is reconstructed by Kenyon, but it is uncertain: \( \bar{B} \) (Esther 15:5/5:1a).


\(^{5}\) For example, \( \phi \) (Gen 32:15 [2x]), \( \bar{κ} \) (32:15 [3x]), \( \chi \) (32:15/16), \( \mu \) (32:15/16), \( \iota \) (32:15/16 [2x]), \( \nu \) (32:22/23) \( \bar{v} \) (33:1) \( \chi \) (41:18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26 [3x], 27 [4x], 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 47), and \( \bar{ι} \) (42:13).

\(^{6}\) For example, \( \deltaυο \) (Gen 31:37), \( \varepsilon[κος] \) (31:41), \( \tauε[πρακος] \) (32:6), \( \delta[νο] \) (32:7), \( \muον \) (32:8), \( \deltaυο \) (32:22), \( \deltaυο \) (33:1), \( \deltaυο \) (34:25), \( τετις \) (40:10), \( τετις \) (40:12 [2x]), \( ενυ \) (41:22), \( ενυ \) (41:25), \( επτα \) (41:26), \( [τρι]κοντα \) (41:46), \( επτα \) (41:48), \( δυο \) (41:50), \( επτα \) (41:50), \( επτα \) (41:53), \( επτα \) (41:54), \( ενυος \) (42:11), \( [τρεις] \) (42:18), \( δωδεκα \) (42:32), \( δυο \) (42:37). Ordinals are given longhand: \( δεκατη \) (32:9), \( πρωτυ \) (32:17), \( δευτερον \) (32:19), \( [πρωι]το \) (32:19), \( τρετη \) (34:25), \( δευτερον \) (41:43), \( δευτερον \) (41:52).

and πνῄμα. Only a handful of numbers are visible among the extant fragments, none of which are shorthand: τρις (Isa 16:14), πρωτα (43:18), πρωτον (43:26), πρωτοτι (43:27), πρωτος (44:6), and πρωτος (60:9).\(^{38}\) This is not surprising since all but one of these are ordinal values.

Two important OT papyri are a part of the Schøyen collection, one of Joshua and one of Leviticus.

(5) \textit{P.Schøyen} 2648 (Rahlfs 816), is dated to the II CE. It is written in codex format and contains Christian \textit{nomina sacra}.\(^{39}\) There are only six visible numbers (cardinal and ordinal), and no less than three are given in abbreviated form: πεντε (Josh 10:5), εῐ (10:30), δευτερα (10:32), ε̅ (10:22), ε̅ (10:23), and ε̅ (10:26).\(^{40}\)

(6) \textit{P.Schøyen} 2649 (Rahlfs 830), also dates to the II CE and might have been written by the same scribe as \textit{P.Schøyen} I 2648.\(^{41}\) It is in codex form and contains Christian \textit{nomina sacra}. All visible numbers are longhand: τεσσαρων (Lev 11:20), τεσσαρων (11:21), τεσσαρες (11:23), τεσσαρω[ν] (11:27), τεσσαρων (11:42), μι[ν] (12:8), μια[ν] (12:8), ενα (13:2), επτα (13:4), εβδομη (13:5), επτα (13:5), εβδομη (13:6), δυο (23:20), δεκατη (23:27), and εβδομου (23:27).\(^{42}\)

(7) \textit{P.Bodm. XXIV} (Rahlfs 2110) is an extensive copy of the Psalter that dates to the II/IV century.\(^{43}\) It is considered Christian in origin primarily because of its codex format and Christian \textit{nomina sacra}. The Psalter as a whole does not contain

\(^{38}\) One more is reconstructed by the editor: [επτα] (Isa 11:15).


\(^{40}\) Plus one number reconstructed by the manuscript’s editor: [πεντε] (Josh 10:16).

\(^{41}\) \textit{P.Schøyen} II 2649.3–68 (§26; ed. Kristin de Troyer).

\(^{42}\) A couple numbers are reconstructed by the editor: [δυο] (Lev 12:8) and [δυο] (12:8). Adverbial numbers are also longhand: e.g., δεκατη (Lev 13:5, 6).

many numbers compared to other OT books, but of those extant in Bodmer XXIV, two are given in abbreviated form: ιβ̅ χειλιαδας (59:2), μ (94:10); others are given longhand: μιαν (Psalm 26:4), ευ (33:21), δευτέρα (47:1), ενος (52:4), εις (81:7), χειλια (89:4), εβδομηκοντα (89:10), ογδοηκοντα (89:10), τετραδι (93:1), χειλιας (104:8), εις (105:11), and μιαν (108:13).44

There are five remaining manuscripts generally considered to be Christian that are extremely fragmentary, few containing more than a single number.

(8) P.Oxy. LXV 4442 (Rahlfs 993) is a III CE fragment of Exodus.45 Christian provenance is suggested by the codex format and the use of the Christian nomen sacrum θ̅ c̅ (plus the reconstructed use of κ̅ c̅). One number is visible and it is longhand: εξ (Exod 20:11). Two ordinal numbers can be confidently reconstructed: [εβδομη] (20:12) and [εβδομην] (20:12).

(9) Library of Congress 4082B (Rahlfs 844) is a III CE fragment of Isaiah 23. Christian origin is suggested by codex format and Christian nomina sacra. One number is partially visible: [εβδομηκο]γτα (Isa 23:15).46

(10) P. Egerton 4 (Rahlfs 971) is a III CE fragment of 2 Chronicles.47 Its provenance is suggested by the codex format and Christian nomina sacra. It contains one visible number, written longhand: πεντε (2 Chron 24:27).

44 One more is reconstructed by the editor: [μια] (Psalm 83:11).
45 P.Oxy. LXV 4442.1–4.
(11) *P.Monts./II Inv. 3* (Rahlfs 983) is a fragment of 2 Chronicles and might have originally belonged to the same codex as *P.Egerton 4* (though it is dated to II/III CE). Its provenance is suggested by the codex format and Christian *nomina sacra*. It contains several examples of abbreviated numerals, e.g., \(\tilde{o}\) (2 Chron 29:32), \(\tilde{p}\) (29:32), \(\tilde{c}\) (29:32), \(\tilde{\chi}\) (29:33), including one that can be confidently restored: \([\gamma]\) (29:33). In addition, one ordinal is given in longhand form: \([\delta\epsilon\upsilon]\tau\rho\omega\) (30:2).

In summary, the manuscripts generally regarded as Christian in origin are far more substantial in size and number than their Jewish counterparts, and fortunately they offer a great deal of numeral-related evidence. Perhaps as expected, many of these manuscripts contain abbreviated numerals. No less than seven of the twelve manuscripts treated here show use of numerical shorthand (and seven of eleven if the two fragments of 2 Chronicles belong to the same codex).

We will restrict our observations of these manuscripts until the final group has been analyzed, but a few preliminary thoughts are worth noting here. In general, it is significant to point out that the particular techniques of number-writing found among these manuscripts accords rather closely with what we find among manuscripts of the NT. That is, just as in copies of the NT, these manuscripts exhibit occasional (rather than exclusive) use of numerical abbreviations numbers, but the practice is never predictable. Further, there is a similar tendency for scribes to abbreviate cardinal numbers (though not ordinals), and to retain the longhand forms for values in the

thousands (except for “hybrid” forms; e.g., ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β). Finally, much like in NT manuscripts, the number “one” is typically not abbreviated. The one exception to this is P.Beatty VI (Numbers-Deuteronomy), which contains literally dozens of these abbreviations for “one.”

It is also worth pointing out that the practice of abbreviating numerals is not as consistent as it is sometimes assumed to be. Not every manuscript contains alphabetic numerals (e.g., P.Schoyen 2649), and those that do are not necessarily consistent in this regard (e.g., esp. P.Beatty V, VI, and IX + X). These reflections will suffice until we can survey numbers in the disputed manuscripts and then synthesize all the relevant data.

6.6 Manuscripts of Disputed Origin

Here it is not necessary to rehearse the debates about the Christian or Jewish origins of the manuscripts in this group, but it will be helpful to note the basic reasons why these in particular have been disputed.50

(1) P.Yale I 1 (Rahlfs 814), sometimes called the Yale Genesis, has been variously dated, but likely belongs to at least III CE or earlier.51 It was originally

---

49 Also in the P.Beatty VI codex (Numbers-Deuteronomy): e.g., ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β (Num 26:23), ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β (26:40), μ ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β (26:50), ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β (26:51), ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β (31:35), τ και λ ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β (31:36), ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β (31:36), ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β (31:38), λ ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β και φ (31:39), τ λ ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β και φ (31:43; = 337,500), and ι̅β ι̅β ι̅β (31:44).

50 I omit from this discussion Berlin, Äg. Mus. P. 11778v (Rahlfs 974), a III CE fragment that contains a portion of Job of disputed origins; rather than a continuous biblical manuscript, it is a magical prayer text that contains a quotation from Job. In any case, it does contain two visible numbers: χιλιοι (Job 33:23) and εἰς (33:23).

believed to be Christian in origin primarily because of its codex format, but also because of its informal hand and the use of a numerical abbreviation. The one number in this fragment is the shorthand symbol for 318: τιη (Gen 14:14). According to Roberts: “With [P. Yale 1] it is not just the codex form which points to a Christian origin, but the fact that the numeral 318 is written not in words but in symbols, contrary to the usual practice of Graeco-Jewish manuscripts.” Nevertheless, no divine names are visible on the fragment (neither nomina sacra nor Tetragrammaton), and so the matter is not certain. If it could be established that numerical abbreviations are indeed a reliable indicator of Christian scribal activity, this will be an important manuscript to reevaluate.

(2) P. Oxy. VII 1007 (Rahlfs 907), a III CE parchment fragment of Genesis, is particularly contentious. On the one hand, the manuscript is a codex and contains the (usually Christian) nomen sacrum form θϲ for θεοϲ. On the other hand, however, the Tetragrammaton is written in paleo-Hebrew characters composed of two yods with a horizontal strike through them (instead of κύριοϲ)—a form found in Jewish coins of II BCE. Three numbers are visible: δυο (Gen 2:24), μιαν (2:24), and δυο (Gen 2:25). In addition, one has been reconstructed: [δυο] (3:7); the length of the line renders this reconstruction uncertain but likely.


53 Here I reproduce the transcription given by Emmel, “Greek Biblical Papyri,” 290, against that of the editio princeps, which has the entire numeral enclosed in brackets: [τιη] (Gen 14:14). Images of the fragment clearly support Emmel’s transcription; see http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/rak//lxxjewpap/PYale1v.jpg.

54 Roberts, Manuscript, Society and Belief, 78; see also Roberts, “P. Yale 1,” 25–28.

55 P. Oxy. VII 1007.1–3.
(3) *P.Oxy*. IV 656 (Rahlfs 905) is a II/III CE codex containing four leaves of Genesis.\(^{56}\) The origin of this manuscript is disputed because, although it is a codex, the treatment of divine names is ambiguous. First, both θεο and κυριος occur uncontracted in the first hand. Second, at Gen 15:8, where one expects the Tetragrammaton, the original copyist left a blank space which was subsequently filled in by a second hand with κυριε; in other manuscripts one finds the Tetragrammaton written in Hebrew/Aramaic script by a second hand at these blanks (e.g., *P.Fouad* 266b). Third, on two occasions it is possible that the second hand wrote a suspended form κυ instead of κυριος/κυριε (Gen 24:31, 42), though neither is certain (and no supra-linear bars are visible); this is a typically Christian abbreviation. In regards to numbers, only the first letter of one cardinal number is visible, δ[υο] (Gen 19:36), and one has been reconstructed: [ενα] (24:36).\(^{57}\)

(4) *P.Harr*. II 166 (Rahlfs 896; Birmingham, *Woodbr.Coll., OLRC, P.Inv. 54c*) is a III CE manuscript of Exodus.\(^{58}\) Its origin is uncertain because, although it is written on a roll, it lacks other earmarks that could help confirm its identity (such as nomina sacra). One number is visible, τρεις (Exod 23:14), and one other can be reconstructed with some confidence due to line length: [επτα] (23:15).

(5) *BL P.Inv.Nr. 230* (Rahlfs 2019; *P.Lond.Lit. 207*) is a III CE manuscript of the Psalms.\(^{59}\) Its origin is unclear because, although it is written on a roll, several

\(^{56}\) *P.Oxy*. IV 656.28–35.

\(^{57}\) Roberts explained that he originally thought *P.Oxy*. IV 656 was Christian because of the codex format, but he subsequently changed his opinion; see Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 76 n. 5.

\(^{58}\) *P.Harr*. II 166.1–5 (ed. Manfredo Manfredi).

divine names are contracted: e.g., κ̅ε̅, αν̅π̅ν, and θ̅ν̅. In terms of numbers, two occurrences of the number “one” are visible: ενοće (Psalm 13:1) and ενοće (13:3).  

(6) *P.Ant.* I 8 + III 210 (Rahlfs 928) is a III CE manuscript containing portions of Wisdom books. It is a codex and contains Christian *nomina sacra* (e.g., ανανς, θυ, θης, and [κπδ]); nevertheless, Treu argued for Jewish origin because its text showed divergences from the LXX/OG toward the Hebrew. Only one number is visible, [πρω]τος (Sir 45:20), and two others have been reconstructed: [εν] (Wis 9:20), and [εν] (12:9).  

(7) *P.Oxy.* XIII 1594 (Rahlfs 990) is a III CE fragment of Tobit. It is a “miniature codex” but contains no instances of the *nomina sacra* and has not been confirmed as a Christian copy. It contains three extant numbers, two of which are abbreviations: εις (Tob 12:15), ζ̅ (12:15), and θ̅ (12:16).

The final two manuscripts of disputed origin are far more lengthy and, as we will see, present us with particular difficulties.

(8) Freer Manuscript V (GA-W) is a III CE copy of the Minor Prophets. It is a codex and contains Christian *nomina sacra* (e.g., κκς, θς, ανανς, πνα, etc.), but Treu has argued that the character of its text, which appears to be a pre-Hexaplaric revision moving towards the Hebrew, is suggestive of Jewish influence. In terms of number-writing technique, the scribe almost exclusively used longhand numbers, with dozens of such instances, but there is one visible use of a numerical

---

60 Psalm numbers in this manuscript are abbreviated in form but are not in view here.
62 *P.Oxy.* XIII 1594.1–6.
abbreviation: δ (Zech 6:5). This manuscript is potentially problematic for whichever group it truly belongs to. If it is Jewish, as Treu argued, it would contain the only example of an abbreviated numeral. If it is Christian, then it is curious that so many other numbers in the manuscript were written longhand.

(9) P. Berlin G. 2a (Rahlfs 911; P. Berlin Fol. 66 I, II), sometimes called the Berlin Genesis, is a III CE manuscript containing a substantial portion of Genesis. It is a codex and exhibits a consistent use of *nomina sacra* (e.g., κκ, Θc, etc.). Nevertheless, True argued that, like the Freer Minor Prophets codex (GA-W), its text is a pre-Hexaplaric revision towards the Hebrew, and this makes Jewish origin possible. In terms of number-writing style, the manuscript contains scores of longhand numbers, none of which are given in numerical abbreviation.

The consistent use of longhand number-forms in the Berlin Genesis is in fact surprising in light of the presence of many other types of abbreviations in the codex.

For example, the scribe frequently used a supralinear stroke as an abbreviation mark

---


66 There are far too many to list them all here; some notable cardinal numbers which are extant or partially so: Gen 4:19; 5:4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32; 6:10, 15; 7:2 (2x), 3, 4 (2x), 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 17 (2x), 24; 8:6 (2x), 12, 13; 9:19, 23, 28, 29, 11:10, 11, 12, 13 (3x), 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 32; 12:4; 14:4, 9 (2x), 14; 16:3, 16; 17:1, 17, 20; 18:6, 24, 26, 28 (4x), 29 (2x), 30 (2x), 31 (2x), 32 (2x); 19:1; 20:16; 24:22; 25:7, 16, 20, 23, 26, 34; 27:9; 45; 29:2, 16, 18, 20, 27, 34, 30:19, 20, 36; 31:7, 23, 33, 37, 38, 41 (5x); 32:7, 8, 15 (4x); 16 (5x), 22 (3x); 33:1 (2x), 13, 19; 34:25. Occurrences of the number “one”: 2:11, 21; 8:13; 10:25; 11:1, 6; 32:13, 33:16, 22. Ordinals are invariably written longhand as well; e.g., 14:5, 20; 15:16, 28:22, 29:27, 30:7, 17; 31:2, 5, 22; 32:9, 18, 20 (3x); 33:2; 34:25.
for the omission of single letters and syllables: e.g., νυκ̅ = νυκτα (Gen 14:15), π̅λ̅ = πληρης (25:8), and επορε̅ = επορευθη (28:7). The editor identified these kinds of scribal abbreviations as belonging to a “business cursive,” composed mainly of the technique of suspension and to a lesser extent contraction.67 Several numbers in the manuscript are affected by this kind of abbreviation, e.g., εκατο̅ (11:10; in the middle of its line), τριακο̅τα (18:30), and δε̅τερο [ν] (29:33), but none are actually given in alphabetic numerals. This raises the interesting question of why the copyist would be willing to utilize an abbreviation system so extensively (at least 240 words are so abbreviated) but consistently write out each numeral longhand. Perhaps the repeated use of supralinear strokes for other kinds of abbreviations was thought to render alphabetic numerals too confusing. In fact, some contracted words are essentially indistinguishable from alphabetic numerals aside from context: e.g., ιδ̅ = ιδου (or δεκατέςςαρε; 29:24), θ̅ = θη ω (or ἐννέα; 17:2); this kind of overlap would have undoubtedly caused confusion.

In summary, among the disputed manuscripts, items 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are very fragmentary and contain only longhand numbers. More important for our purposes are items 1, 7, 8, and 9, which either contain clear uses of numerical abbreviations or enough data to raise the question of whether this feature is a helpful criterion. In the least, it is important to point out that because the origins of these manuscripts have been disputed on other grounds (such as nomina sacra and/or Tetragrammaton), we can already surmise that the presence of numerical abbreviations cannot function as any kind of decisive indicator one way or another. Before making conclusions about

---

67 Sanders and Schmidt, eds., The Minor Prophets, 240.
this analysis, however, it will be most beneficial to synthesize the observations we have made already.

6.7 Synthesis and Implications

6.7.1 Implications for Jewish Manuscripts

The survey of manuscripts that are confidently Jewish in origin produced results that were consistent yet inconclusive. That is to say, up through the third century CE at least, there is not a single instance of an abbreviated numeral being used in the body text of a Greek OT manuscript of undisputed Jewish provenance. However, the data pool is pitifully small. Of eight manuscripts, only two contain more than a handful of visible numbers; these are the Minor Prophets scroll from Nahal Ḥever and the P.Fouad Inv. 266b manuscript of Deuteronomy, which together contain a total of twenty visible or partially visible numbers (plus some reconstructed ones). This is in every sense an inadequate body of evidence with which to work. There are quite literally hundreds of numbers in the Greek books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy that are not represented by extant Jewish manuscripts, and so the evidence available cannot be considered in any way representative. This skepticism is necessary because of the tendency for copyists to be inconsistent (and therefore unpredictable) in their number-writing techniques has been observed in many, if not most, of the manuscripts examined in this study (both of the OT and NT).

Therefore, without several lengthy manuscripts of the Greek scriptures of clear Jewish origin, it is impossible to identify confidently a pattern of scribal technique related to number-writing. The absence of numerical abbreviations in the
manuscripts that are extant might very well be incidentally caused by the paucity of evidence.

It is also instructive to consider manuscripts that evidently contain a mixture of Christian and Jewish scribal features. For example, *P.Oxy.* VII 1007 (disputed item 2) is a codex and contains a Christian *nomen sacrum* form $\theta \varsigma$ for $\theta\epsilon\varsigma$ and a Jewish Tetragrammaton in paleo-Hebrew characters. Here it is difficult to say in which direction the influence has gone; nevertheless, this example seems to suggest that some copyists used a mixture of Jewish and Christian scribal elements, and it is easy to envision how numerical shorthand could be another one of those elements. Therefore, even if one were able to demonstrate that Jewish copyists usually avoided numerical abbreviations (though the evidence is lacking), it would be impossible to say that occasional mixture of number-styles did not ever occur.

### 6.7.2 Implications for Christian Manuscripts

Christian manuscripts of the OT constitute a great deal more evidence and allow some confident conclusions. The first and most obvious observation to be made is that numerical abbreviations are clearly an important feature of Christian manuscripts. Out of the twelve manuscripts in this group, no less than seven show clear usage of numerical shorthand. And again, if *P.Egerton* 4 and *P.Monts./II Inv.* 3 (Christian items 10 and 11) belong to the same codex, the ratio increases to seven out of eleven. Moreover, the only Christian manuscripts that do not have clear examples of numerical abbreviations are extremely limited in their available evidence; each is very fragmentary or contains only a handful of visible numbers. The scribes might well have used shorthand elsewhere in the manuscripts.
The second observation to be made, as pointed out above, is that the scribal techniques of number-writing evident among these manuscripts closely resembles what we find among manuscripts of the NT. This similarity is seen primarily in the general avoidance of abbreviated forms for the number “one,” ordinals, and values in the thousands. The Chester Beatty manuscript of Numbers–Deuteronomy seems to be the only exceptional example of the use of abbreviations for the number “one.” Aside from this and the handful of abbreviated ordinals in the Chester Beatty manuscript of Esther (P.Beatty IX + X), there is in this regard a striking degree of continuity between the scribal techniques of NT and Christian OT manuscripts.

A third observation is that scribes were unpredictable in their usage of numerical shorthand, often fluctuating between shorthand and longhand; not surprisingly, this also mirrors closely what can be observed in NT manuscripts. More specifically, a scribe who was willing to abbreviate some numbers was evidently not compelled to do so consistently or even frequently within a given manuscript. Even manuscripts such as P.Beatty VI (Num-Deut), which contain a surplus of numerical shorthand, do not do so rigidly; rather, copyists employed numerical abbreviations (apparently) as they were felt needed or convenient.

For these reasons, a manuscript should not be discounted as Christian simply because it contains longhand numbers, especially if only one or a handful of numbers are visible.

6.7.3 Implications for Disputed Manuscripts

The preceding analysis allows us to bring new evidence to the problem of manuscripts with disputed origins. First, while it is clear that no specific examples of numerical shorthand can be found among the Greek OT manuscripts of Jewish
origin, we have seen that this does not (and cannot) amount to a prescriptive rule, even though it has been so used. This was stated most clearly by Colin Roberts, but it has since then been repeated on several occasions by different scholars. For instance, this was applied by Roberts to the Yale fragment of Genesis (\textit{P.Yale I 1}) as evidence of Christian origin,\footnote{Roberts, “P. Yale I,” 25–28; Roberts, \textit{Manuscript, Society and Belief}, 78.} but, in light of the present discussion, this is a dubious line of reasoning. The argument must be made on other grounds.

The issue was also invoked in a similar discussion of the Library of Congress fragments of Isaiah (LoC 4082B; Rahlfs 844). For instance, its editor asks, “Was this a Jewish or Christian copy? On the one hand, writing a number out in full is a scribal feature common to Jewish manuscripts and could thus point to a Jewish milieu. Christian scribes preferred numerical writing.”\footnote{Luijendijk, “A New Fragment,” 36.} In light of the manuscripts examined above, however, this view of number-writing techniques is problematic; there is no justification for the belief that all Christian scribes avoided longhand numbers, nor is it clear that all Christian scribes “preferred numerical writing” (= numerical abbreviation), and even those that did were not consistent. This reasoning is especially problematic when only one number is visible in a given manuscript. Fortunately, the editor of LoC 4082B rightly maintains its Christian origin due to other telling features.

Our observations might also call into question the origin of \textit{P.Oxy. XIII 1594} (Rahlfs 990), the III CE fragment of Tobit. It contains two abbreviated numbers and one longhand. But without any instances of the \textit{nomina sacra}, there does not seem to
be sufficient evidence for viewing it as a Christian copy with certainty. The abbreviated numerals cannot be considered a helpful criterion for this question.

The two lengthy manuscripts of disputed origin, the Chester Beatty Minor Prophets and the Berlin Genesis, are especially noteworthy. If the former is Christian rather than Jewish, then it is a rare example of a substantial manuscript that rigidly avoids the use of numerical shorthand, with only one exceptional use out of a plethora of longhand forms. This would further illustrate how inconsistent copyists were with regard to number-style, and it would confirm the legitimacy of our caution against assuming consistency among the fragmentary remains of Jewish manuscripts. On the other hand, if the manuscript is Jewish, then this would confirm one instance in which a Jewish scribe used an abbreviated number. It remains, however, an open question.

Similarly, if the Berlin Genesis is truly Christian in origin, the lack of any alphabetic numerals would be important. This would also show that manuscripts with consistently longhand numbers are not necessarily Jewish in production. Alternatively, if the manuscript is Jewish in origin, then we would gain the first truly substantial copy of a Greek OT book with a great deal of numbers from a non-Christian milieu. This would then add some weight to the idea that Jewish scribes avoided numerical abbreviations. But, again, the question is inconclusive.

6.8 Conclusion

The most important conclusion to be made from this investigation is that, judging from the evidence up through the third century at least, the presence or absence of numerical abbreviations cannot be used as a criterion for determining the Christian or
Jewish origin of a manuscript. It can indeed be shown that this feature is common among Christian OT manuscripts, but there is insufficient evidence to prove the reverse for Jewish manuscripts. Without a body of definitively Jewish manuscripts comparable in number and size to those we have of Christian origin, no confident presumption can be made about a consistent Jewish technique of number-writing.

In addition, we have seen that numerical abbreviations are used with great regularity in Greek OT manuscripts of Christian provenance, and that this practice is closely mirrored by that in NT manuscripts. This investigation confirms, therefore, that the scribal style of number-writing in OT texts is largely in continuity with other Christian Scriptural books. This adds more valuable details to our understanding of early Christian book culture, the techniques employed by the earliest copyists, and the physical and visual realities experienced by the users of these texts.
CHAPTER 7:
THEOLOGICAL ORTHOGRAPHY AND THE POSSIBILITY
OF NUMERI SACRI

7.1 Introduction

In his 2001 essay titled “Names and Numbers in Early Christianity,” François Bovon highlighted the enormous theological significance names and numbers held in the imaginations of early Christians.¹ Bovon proposed that early Christians used both names and numbers as “theological tools” to unlock hidden, mystical truths about God, creation, history, and eschatology.² One need not look to the Pseudepigrapha, Gnostic tractates, or the metaphorical exegesis of the church fathers to find this numerical and onomastic fascination, the NT itself is replete with names and numbers loaded with theological meaning. Whether it was the salvific name of Yeshoua (Matt 1:21), the renaming of the disciples (Mark 3:16–17), the name “at which every knee will bow” (Phil 2:10), the prayer “hallowed be thy name” (Matt 6:9), or even the names of prisoners, servants, and evil spirits (e.g., Mark 15:7; John 18:10; Luke 8:30, respectively), to list only a few examples, early Christians writers went out of their way to give characters specific and often symbolic names and titles. Similarly, regarding numerical values, the ominous number of the Beast (Rev 13:18), the symbolic band of twelve disciples (Luke 6:13), Jesus’s forty day fast in the wilderness (Mark 1:13), and John’s overly specific catch of 153 fish (John 21:11)

² Bovon, “Names and Numbers,” 267.
immediately come to mind, but no one will deny that the pervasive repetition of values such as “three,” “seven,” “twelve,” and “forty” reflects a deeply-rooted fascination among early Christians with the deeper levels of meaning embedded in numbers.

To illustrate how Christians employed names as “theological tools,” Bovon rightly drew attention to the fact that onomastic interest was so intense and so deeply ingrained in the culture that it manifested itself not just conceptually in literature but even visually in physical copies of Scripture, represented in the form of a scribal custom of devotional abbreviations for divine names. These so-called nomina sacra were reverential contractions of sacred names and titles, most notably κύριος, θεός, Ἡσυχίας, and χριστός, which are present in virtually all known NT manuscripts from the earliest available evidence onwards. Certainly there is a great deal of scholarly disagreement about the origin of these contractions, their potential roots in Jewish scribal practice, the qualities that allowed them to be so rapidly and universally accepted, and about their implications for our understanding of early Christian devotion if there are any. Still, the majority view of this practice is that it was a Christian innovation signifying a degree of religious veneration for the referents of the contracted words, effectively resulting in a visual phenomenon within copies of

---


4 Some fragmentary manuscripts such as P45, for example, do not contain visible nomina sacra.
Scripture containing an embedded theological message. Thus, we might say that early Christian interest in theologically significant names was so fundamental and so widespread that it emerged from the otherwise mundane stratum of scribal orthography.

7.1.1 The Possibility of Numeri Sacri

To illustrate how Christians employed numbers as “theological tools,” Bovon offered an impressive array of relevant data concerning numerical values invested with theological importance, particularly in NT texts and in subsequent patristic exegesis, but he did not ask if these numbers were given unique scribal treatment in actual manuscripts as the sacred names were. Thus the question not asked was, “Did early Christian interest in theologically significant numbers, which evidently was also fundamental and widespread, ever manifest itself in physical copies of Scripture as uniquely written numerals?”

At least in theory this is a valid line of inquiry, for just as there were two scribal methods of writing divine names—either in full or by contraction—we have likewise seen two scribal methods of writing numbers (as we have seen): as full words (e.g., δύο) or as alphabetic numerals (e.g., β). Indeed, the mechanics of abbreviating numbers were so similar to names that, apart from context, the nomina sacra can be at times visually indistinguishable from abbreviated numbers. Both modes of abbreviation involve ordinary Greek characters and a horizontal stroke placed directly above the letters in question. Thus, the scribal mechanics for

---

5 According to Roberts, “[The nomina sacra] are a unique device that in the minimum of space provides a summary outline of theology” (Roberts, Manuscript, Society and Belief, 47).
signaling a sacred number lay close at hand in a system of numerical abbreviations, the question here is if this possibility was ever exploited.

We have already seen, moreover, that numerals were used in these ways within other corpora by early Christians (see chapter 2). The theological use of isopsephy found in graffiti from Smyrna (“Equal in value: lord, 800; faith, 800”) and the cryptic numerical symbols used in Christian letters from Oxyrhynchus (ϙ̅θ̅ = ἄμην) illustrate quite clearly how numerical shorthand could be used in unique ways and for theological reasons. The present study, therefore, seeks to explore the terrain where abbreviated numbers and nomina sacra might overlap in function within manuscripts of the NT. Can it be shown that number-symbols ever served a theological, devotional, or mystical function analogous to, or at least similarly to, the nomina sacra? Were alphabetic numerals ever reserved by copyists for particular referents? Were the reasons for abbreviating numbers ever theological, or were they simply practical? Do any numerical symbols bear a special visual significance over against the longhand word? Did the practice of gematria or isopsephy ever influence a copyists’ number-writing technique? If so, how can we confidently identify a theologically-motivated abbreviation? We might for convenience refer to these possible uses with an analogous epithet numeri sacri, though, of course, it is our task to see if any candidates might legitimately populate this category.

7.1.2 Scribes and Readers

Before turning to the manuscripts themselves, a few preliminary remarks are needed. Recent studies show that it was not simply scribes who were active in the transmission and corruption of the NT text, but readers and users of these books were
at least equally able to affect a manuscript’s wording. This is important for our
discussion chiefly because one of the criticisms leveled against the majority view of
the *nomina sacra* is that those who were actually doing the copying were incapable of
or unconcerned with the theological reflection required to invest the supposedly-
devotional contractions with any real meaning. Scribes, it is thought, were simply
copying the text in front of them and had no real understanding of the exegetical
significance of some of the more cryptic abbreviations such as the *nomina sacra*. In
contrast, a scribal convention such as the contraction of commonly occurring names
is considered to be a space-saving technique or an economic shorthand rather than a
mark of piety.

However, even if we grant the supposition that scribes were completely
unaware or incapable of employing reverential abbreviations, which is entirely
plausible, it is beside the point. Whatever power scribes wielded over the form of
text contained in our early manuscripts, the owners, users, and readers of those
manuscripts wielded certainly as much, if not more. Indeed, it is the committed
reader of a book who is likely to observe and attempt to resolve tensions in the text,
insert corrections, and add marginal comments, all of which were liable to be moved
from the margins into the main text in subsequent iterations of copying. Examples of

---


8 A helpful distinction is made here by Dirk Jongkind, *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus*, TS 3/5 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2007), 83, who says: “The origin and subsequent use of *nomina sacra* is connected with reverential notions, but the use of *nomina sacra* in *Sinaiticus* is not determined solely by reference.”
this phenomenon in NT manuscripts have been carefully demonstrated in recent studies that cannot be recounted here, but the point is clear enough.9

Furthermore, an illuminating point of comparison is available in the genre briefly alluded to above: Christian documentary papyri. It has long been known that early Christians in Egypt employed a variety of symbols, acrostics, monograms, crucifixes, and indeed cryptic numerals in their private letters, personal notes, amulets, and the like. There is no question that many, if not most, of these features were theologically motivated and used for devotional and apotropaic purposes.10 In fact, the presence of these features is now used precisely to identify a document as Christian rather than pagan. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to search for similar features in literary texts (i.e., copies of Scripture); such examples of “theological orthography” in documentary papyri provide both precedent and motivation for the present study. In any case, the point worth stressing here is that the discussion that follows requires the possibility that early theological reflection could be and indeed was at times embedded into texts at the orthographical level, that is, within abbreviations, symbols, and other visual features.

7.2 “Twelve”

The first possible numerus sacer to be considered concerns a unique scribal treatment of the number “twelve” in the Gospel of Matthew as found in Codex Sinaiticus (✉ 01).

---


10 See discussion below for examples and references.
In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus’s disciples are frequently referred to by their number. Three times they are referred to as “the twelve disciples [or apostles]” (10:1, 2; 11:1) and five times they are referred to simply as “the twelve” (10:5; 20:17; 26:14, 20, 47). In Codex Sinaiticus there seems to be a scribal pattern concerning this numerical value, though to my knowledge, this has not yet actually been observed. Every time the number “twelve” occurs specifically in reference to the disciples of Jesus, it is given in abbreviated form: \(\tilde{i}β\). In contrast, when the number refers to years (Matt 9:20), baskets of bread (14:20), and legions of angels (26:53), it is given in the normal, longhand form \(δώδεκα\). In the eight instances that it refers to Jesus’s disciples, however, it is consistently abbreviated (Matt 10:1, 2, 5; 11:1; 20:17; 26:14, 20, 47). Further, we might also note that when the longhand number “twelve” occurs in reference to “years” (9:20), it is conspicuously split between two lines after two letters, that is, \(δοι\deltaεκα\). As the abbreviation consists of only two characters (\(\tilde{i}β\)), this would appear to be a convenient location to employ it, by which the copyist could have completed the line of text without dividing the word between two lines. This in fact appears to be how many numerical abbreviations are used both

---

11 In Matt 20:17 the presence of \(μαθητάς\) is actually in question; it is absent from Codex Sinaiticus, but is printed in the NA\(^{28}\) in square brackets.

12 The two most thorough studies of Codex Sinaiticus are H. J. M. Milne and T. C. Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors of the Codex Sinaiticus* (London: British Museum for the Trustees, 1938), and Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*, neither of which focuses at length on scribal number-writing styles. In contrast, see Peter M. Head, “The Gospel of Mark in Codex Sinaiticus: Textual and Reception-Historical Considerations,” *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 13 (2008): 1–38 (13–15), http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/v13/Head2008.pdf, who sees a tendency in \(\text{N}\)’s text of Mark to reserve the abbreviated form of twelve for “positive portrayal[s] of the twelve”—i.e., when Judas is not present, in which cases the longhand form is used. He concludes, however, that the pattern is not consistent enough to be confirmed.
in Sinaiticus elsewhere and in other comparable manuscripts\(^\text{13}\); nevertheless, the longhand form was used.

There are two instances that do not strictly follow this pattern. In Matt 19:28 the manuscript reads: καθηεςθε και αυτοι έπι θρονους | κρινοντες τας θρονους | φυλα του ιηλ. Thus, “twelve thrones” and “twelve tribes” here are written using the abbreviated form. We cannot, however, simply conclude that these two instances break the rule. In the context, the twelve thrones and twelve tribes are so closely associated with the twelve disciples that it could be argued that they are overlapping in meaning. Jesus’s prediction seems to suggest that the twelve disciples will come to represent the twelve tribes as their judges, and “thrones” is simply a metonymy for that judicial authority. It is not difficult to see how the close association of these concepts could lead to their shared scribal treatment. A similar phenomenon is seen to occur with the *nomina sacra*, where, for example, the name of the OT character Joshua is contracted exactly like the name of Jesus in Christian copies of the LXX/OG (e.g., ṭc, ṭc), perhaps because this figure was retrospectively understood as a foreshadowing type of the true Yeshoua.\(^\text{14}\) Thus, it was not uncommon for copyists to contract terms that were considered as closely related to the divine names.

Thus, there seems to be a reliable orthographical pattern established in Matthew’s Gospel of Sinaiticus in which the number “twelve” is always given in symbol form when referring to the disciples and closely related referents, but is given in longhand form for everything else. This is no doubt somewhat of a surprise, for, as

---

\(^{13}\) See in \(\text{א}\), for example, ḫ (Matt 12:40), ζ (14:19), ζ (14:19), ζ (Mark 4:8), ζ (4:20), ζ (8:5), and ζ (Luke 4:2), all of which occur at the extreme end of their respective lines.

\(^{14}\) See, for instance, within Sinaiticus: Josh 13:1 (2x); 14:1, 2. For more relevant information, see Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*, 62–84. In other NT papyri: \(\text{P}^\text{6}\) (Heb 4:8), \(\text{P}^\text{13}\) (Heb 4:8), and in the OT papyrus *P.Schøyen I 2648* (Josh 10:29).
a point of comparison, the term “disciple” (μαθητής) was never included into the corpus of nomina sacra, not even in later stages of scribal traditions in which terms such as “mother,” “Jerusalem,” and “Israel” joined ranks with their respective contracted forms. As far as I am aware, there are no nomen sacrum forms of μαθητής.

A brief look at the number “twelve” in other comparable manuscripts is instructive. Contemporary uncial manuscripts like Codex Vaticanus (B 03), Ephraemi Rescriptus (C 04), and Alexandrinus (A 02), consistently employ the longhand forms of “twelve” regardless of referent without ever using the abbreviation. Codex Bezae (D 05), on the other hand, does contain several uses of the symbol for “twelve,” and very often for the twelve disciples, but no pattern of distinction is discernible. So, for example, while there are several occurrences that fit the pattern (Matt 10:1, 2, 5; 20:17; 26:14), the longhand form is used four times when referring to the twelve disciples (Matt 11:1; Luke 9:12; John 6:67, 71), and the abbreviated form is used for a variety of referents other than the disciples (baskets of bread, Matt 14:20; Mark 6:43; 8:19; legions of angels, Matt 26:53; and years, Mark 5:25, 42; Luke 2:42; 8:42, 43). Likewise, Codex Washingtonianus (W 032) contains several uses of the abbreviation for twelve, though in no apparent pattern (e.g., Mark 5:25, 42; 6:7, 43). Neither is this pattern discernible in any early papyri of the Gospels.

This distinctive use of ιβ for disciples in Sinaiticus appears to be a technique that closely parallels that of the nomina sacra, in which an alternative orthographical form is employed for a word specifically when it refers to a particular entity but not when that word refers to others. So, for example, in Sinaiticus we find that the word
“God” is contracted in its typical form of nomen sacrum (Θεος), except in cases such as John 10:34 and 10:35, in which the plural term “gods” occur twice and the words are written out fully (Θεοι, Θεους); the implication is that “I said, you are gods” and “he called them gods” are not contracted because they do not refer to the one true God. So also the number “twelve” is given in an alternative orthographical form depending on its referent.

The glaring difficulty with this pattern, to which mention has already been made, is that there is no question that the practice is confined only to the book of Matthew in one manuscript. Moving to the Gospel of Mark in Sinaiticus, for instance, the pattern completely breaks down, and the Gospels of Luke and John, and the Acts of the Apostles show absolutely no sign of it. So, for example, in Mark the abbreviated form is used in reference to twelve years (Mark 5:42) and baskets of bread (6:43; 8:19), and the disciples are referenced using the longhand form several times (14:10, 17, 20, 43). In Luke, John, and Acts, the abbreviation is never used in reference to the disciples. In 1 Cor 15:5, however, when the Apostle Paul lists the witnesses to the resurrected Jesus—Cephas, the twelve disciples, the five hundred brothers, etc.—the number “twelve” is given as an abbreviation and “five hundred” is written longhand. However, even with this isolated occurrence of the symbol in 1 Cor 15:5, the obvious lack of a pattern in Mark, Luke, John, and Acts precludes any claim of consistency.

We are therefore forced to conclude that this pattern with regard to the symbol form of “twelve” was probably not an intentional technique implemented by

---

15 For more examples of this distinction in Sinaiticus, see Jongkind, Scribal Habits, 62–84; for the same in Codex Alexandrinus, see W. Andrew Smith, A Study of the Gospels in Codex Alexandrinus: Codicology, Palaeography, and Scribal Hands, NTTSD 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 219–25.
the copyist of Sinaiticus, otherwise it would have continued in Mark, and so on. Nonetheless, its presence in Matthew is not easy to dismiss, suggesting that it might represent a tradition present in a source-text that ceased to exert influence on the manuscript transmission. Perhaps then this distinction made between the two orthographical forms for “twelve” is suggestive of an experimental venture that simply did not accrue many—or any—followers.  

7.3 “Eighteen”

One number that is known to have been of considerable theological importance in early Christian thought is “eighteen.” Fixation with this value, however, has deep roots in Jewish thought. For example, O. H. Lehmann has observed that in the Hebrew Scriptures eighteen is the number of times that the name of God is mentioned in Psalm 29, it is the number of times the Tetragrammaton (YHWH) occurs in the Song of Moses (Exod 15:1–18), and the names of the patriarchs occur eighteen times in the Pentateuch. Furthermore, he notes that in the Manual of Discipline from Qumran (1QS II 2), the priestly blessing is structured in the unique form of six stanzas of three stresses each, totaling eighteen altogether. Furthermore, in Rabbinic tradition, it was observed that the name of God is mentioned eighteen times in the Shema prayer, Abraham’s wife Keturah had eighteen sons and

---

16 An “experimental phase” of nomina sacra was suggested by Roberts in reference to the odd forms found in the (probably) second-century Egerton papyrus that failed to catch on: e.g., προφήταϲ (= προφήτας), μω (= μωϋϲῆϲ) and Ἡϲαίαϲ (= Ἡϲαίαϲ); Roberts, Manuscript, Society and Belief, 39.
grandsons (Gen 25:1–6), eighteen commandments are given concerning the Tabernacle, and, moreover, there are eighteen vertebrae in the human body.\(^\text{17}\)

Eighteen was also of special interest to early Christians. It occurs three times in the NT, all within one chapter of Luke’s Gospel. The first occurrence is used in reference to eighteen people killed by a fallen tower in Siloam (Luke 13:4), and the second and third refer to a span of eighteen years for which a woman was physically oppressed by a spirit of illness with the result that she could not stand upright (13:11, 16). The triple occurrence of the number in this chapter seems to suggest that the number had symbolic value for the Evangelist, but its particular significance is not immediately obvious. In a moment we will examine manuscripts of this particular passage, but there is an important non-canonical text that reveals that the number held deep theological significance for some Christians.

A somewhat famous exposition of the number eighteen is found in the second-century apologetic book The Epistle of Barnabas.\(^\text{18}\) A major concern in Barnabas is the demonstration that the Jewish Scriptures—when properly interpreted—actually confirm Christianity rather than Judaism to be the true expression of God’s covenant, thereby validating the Jesus movement and its frequent appeal to Jewish roots. To do this, the author offers a creative interpretation of Genesis 14 that hinges on a symbolic reading of the number “eighteen” (Barn. 9:7–9). When Abram’s (Ἀβραάμ/Abraham in Barnabas) nephew Lot is kidnapped and taken north by his captors, the patriarch collects 318 men and leads them on a


\(^{18}\) For the text and a brief discussion of its date, see Michael W. Holmes, ed., The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 370–441.
mission to rescue his captured nephew (Gen 14:12–14). Barnabas maintains that, when rightly understood, the passage refers to Jesus Christ, although he demonstrates this with an exegetical move that requires an imaginative numerical interpretation. Abram, it is said, had “received the teaching of the three letters” (Barn. 9:7)—that is, the alphabetic form of the number 318, which abbreviated is την: τ (300) + ι (10) + η (8). Since the letter τau visually resembles a crucifix, Barnabas sees this as a hidden reference to the crucifixion: “The cross, which is shaped like the T, was destined to convey grace” (9:8). Furthermore, the letters iota-eta might total eighteen, but they are also the first two letters of Jesus’s name, and “thus you have ‘Jesus’” (9:8). So, by “reveal[ing] Jesus in the two letters, and the cross in the other one” (9:8), we are made privy to the veiled reference to Jesus Christ.

This is not the only example of early Christian interest in the number eighteen as it relates to the name of Jesus, but it is the best example for two reasons: (1) it is early, circa the second century, and therefore it predates most of our earliest NT manuscripts, and (2) the exegesis hinges not simply on the number but on the abbreviated written form of the number. That is, the full number-word

---

19 Bovon also noted that a connection between the number “eighteen” and Jesus’s name is also made in Book 1 of the Sibylline Oracles, which he dates to the second or third century CE (Bovon, “Names and Numbers,” 282–83). Furthermore, this connection is cited with disapproval in the second century by Irenaeus: “The emission of the Dodecad of the Aeons is indicated [they claim] by the fact that the Lord was twelve years old when He disputed with the teachers of the Law; likewise, by the choice of the apostles. Besides, the other eighteen Aeons were revealed by the fact that after his resurrection from the dead, he is said to have spent eighteen months with his disciples. Likewise, the ten Aeons are pointed out by iota, the first letter of his name. For this reason Savior said: ‘Not one iota or one title shall be lost … till all is accomplished.’” (Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. 1.3.2; trans. Dominic J. Unger, St. Irenaeus of Lyons Against the Heresies, ACW 55 (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1992), 1:28 (emphasis Unger’s).
ἐξοκοσίους δέκα καὶ ὀκτώ is less prone to Barnabas’s interpretation because the first two letters of Jesus’s name are not present as they are in the symbol form ἰη.\textsuperscript{20}

While it does not explicitly say so, this passage from Barnabas seems to be linked to the scribal practice of the nomina sacra. This is because one of the early, even if unusual, forms of nomen sacrum for the name of Jesus is the suspended ἰη (in contrast to the more common contraction ἰ, ἰ, ἰ), precisely the same form used for the numeral eighteen. Both involve the letters iota-eta and a signature stroke directly over. This rare written form for the name of Jesus is used consistently in P\textsuperscript{45}, the third-century papyrus codex of the Gospels and Acts, and a few other early Christian texts.\textsuperscript{21} H. I. Bell and T. C. Skeat in fact proposed that, in light of this connection made between “eighteen” and the name of Jesus in Barnabas, ἰη might very well have been the first form of nomen sacrum.\textsuperscript{22} More recent scholars have reiterated and strengthened this view.\textsuperscript{23} For our purposes, however, it is unnecessary to establish a causal link between the number “eighteen” and the nomina sacra, our interest here is simply to search for traces in early NT manuscripts that the number was treated in special or at least distinct ways, which might indicate a practice parallel to that of the contraction of divine names.

\textsuperscript{20} It does not actually matter how the number was written in “Barnabas’s copy of Genesis” (assuming he even had one); but see Reidar Hvalvik, “Barnabas 9.7–9 and the Author’s Supposed use of Gematria,” NTS 33 (1987): 276–82 (279), who thinks that “in Barnabas’ Genesis text the number was written in full.”

\textsuperscript{21} Paap lists five other Christian manuscripts with this form: the Egerton 2 papyrus (= “unknown Gospel”), the Dura fragment (= GA 0212/Diatessaron), P.Oxy. VIII 1079 (= P\textsuperscript{15}), P.Oxy. X 1224 (= Gospel of Peter?), and P.Oxy. XVII 2070 (= anti-Jewish dialogue); see Paap, Nomina Sacra, 107–9.


\textsuperscript{23} See, for example, Hurtado, “The Origin of the Nomina Sacra,” 655–73.
Did the theological reflection found in Barnabas, therefore, ever bear itself out on the pages of early NT manuscripts? A few early manuscripts contain this number in its symbol form. Specifically, P⁷⁵ employs the abbreviated form in each of the three instances (Luke 13:4, 11, 16) and Codex Bezae employs it for two of the three (13:11, 16), though the longhand form is used once. Both of these manuscripts, however, contain scores of other numerical abbreviations and thus the presence of ι̅η̅ in them appears to be unremarkable; they are not distinct in any way (see the respective sections in chapters 3 and 4).

A more intriguing pattern is found in P⁴⁵. Unfortunately, the papyrus is not extant for the first instance of the number (Luke 13:4), but the latter two are visible (13:11, 16). Both are given in their abbreviated form ι̅η̅. In P⁴⁵ this is significant for two reasons. First, it is notable because elsewhere the copyist shows a clear preference against the use of abbreviated numerals. For example, there are over sixty-five extant cardinal numbers in P⁴⁵ and with only five exceptions, they are all written longhand. Two of these five exceptions are the number “eighteen,” and the other three alphabetic numerals are ι̅β̅ (Mark 8:19), μ̅ (Acts 7:36), and ο̅ (Luke 10:17). This shows a fairly consistent preference against the use of abbreviated forms with only a handful of exceptions; a good point of contrast is P⁷⁵, which contains dozens of abbreviated numerals. For this reason, the twin occurrences of ι̅η̅ stand out and invite the question of why these numbers, and so few others, were given in symbol form.

Secondly, however, the abbreviation of eighteen in P⁴⁵ is conspicuous because of the issue mentioned briefly above, namely, that this is one of the few early Christian manuscripts that contains an unusual form of nomen sacrum for the
name of Jesus created by suspension (ι̅η̅) rather than contraction. So, in effect, the copyist wrote the name of Jesus in precisely the same manner as the symbol form of eighteen, meaning that the two are indistinguishable except in light of their context (see table 7.1).

To articulate the matter succinctly, twice P⁴⁵ contains the number “eighteen” written in contracted form against its scribal preference for number-writing, which creates an identical form to that which is used for the name of Jesus, which itself is a rare form of nomen sacrum. Further, the Barnabas passage confirms that the connection between eighteen and the name of Jesus had been made as early as the second century.²⁴

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7.1. ΙΗ in P⁴⁵</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²⁴ Although I had already seen this pattern in P⁴⁵, I was pleased to find that it was also identified by Mikeal C. Parsons, “Exegesis ‘By the Numbers’: Numerology and the New Testament,” *PRSt* 35 (2008): 25–43. He suggests, incidentally, that Luke himself intended the connection between the nomen sacrum ΙΗ and the numeral.
It is therefore worth asking if this visual similarity between “eighteen” and the name of Jesus was intentional. If so, we have identified a numeral that appears to share functional overlap with the nomina sacra—a visual form of a word bearing an embedded theological message. Perhaps a copyist, or more likely a reader, saw the relationship between the number and the name of Jesus and chose to make that relationship explicit by employing the symbol form of the number.25

Certainly this is only a possibility, for there are other explanations. For instance, the similarity of forms could be the result of simple harmonization to regular usage, meaning that the numeral was abbreviated simply because the copyist was in the habit of suspending the name of Jesus to μη. This would remove any element of theological intent from the phenomenon.26

Another possible problem with this theory is the presence of another suspended form of nomen sacrum in P45, namely χρ (for χρίστου; Acts 16:18), suggesting that μη is not unique. In fact, the two forms occur together: μη χρ.27 This implies that μη was employed by the copyist because of a preference for suspension, not because of a supposed connection to the value “eighteen.”28 While this is indeed

---

25 Mikeal C. Parsons, Luke, Paideia (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 220: “Luke, like other early Christian writers, saw the christological value of the number eighteen. For Luke, eighteen was the appropriate length of time for the woman’s illness, for Christ himself is hidden in the number. Read properly, the reference to “eighteen” would have served as a rhetorical marker that the woman’s time of illness had reached its fullness. The very length of the bent woman’s illness, eighteen years, is the sacred name of Jesus. Despite the nature and length of her illness, or perhaps because of its (!), this woman is revealed by Jesus to be a daughter of Abraham, one who is not a woman of weak character or evil disposition, but rather a woman of courage, who, as the length of her illness reminds us, is reclaimed by Christ. Thus, she takes her rightful place within the family of God as a ‘daughter of Abraham.’”

26 I credit Lonnie Bell with making this suggestion.

27 The phrase μη χρ also occurs in P.Oxy. VIII 1079 = P18 (Rev 1:5).

28 This objection is raised by Thomas Kraus particularly in reference to the supposed connection between the nomina sacra in P45 and the numerical significance of μη in Barn. 9:7–9; he does not note, however, the numerical abbreviations in Luke 13:11 and 13:16; see Thomas J. Kraus, “Ad fontes: Gewinn durch die Konsultation von Originalhandschriften am Beispiel von P.Vindob.G 31974,” Bib
a significant point, and too little attention has been given to the use of χρ as it relates to the nomina sacra, this need not rule out the possibility that ἰη was seen to have a deeper meaning. The presence of ἰη χρ notwithstanding, the overwhelmingly preferred forms of nomina sacra in P45 were clearly those of contraction; for example, A. H. R. E. Paap lists thirty-five occurrences of contracted forms of θεός, thirty-five of κύριος, eighteen of πατήρ, twenty-one of υἱός, one of σταυρόν, and even a probable instance of one for χριστιανός (i.e., [χρα]νος)—none of which have any suspended forms in P45. In fact, the only suspended nomen sacrum in P45 aside from ἰη is the single occurrence of χρ in Acts 16:18.

Given, therefore, (1) the early external attestation of theological interest in the number eighteen which requires the visual representation of the abbreviated numeral as a mystical connection with the name of Jesus, and (2) the rare form of nomen sacrum for the name of Jesus in P45, and (3) the scribe’s preferred method of longhand numbers, it is at least conceivable that the numeral was intentionally abbreviated to highlight this connection.

7.4 “Ninety-Nine”

Another number of special interest to many early Christians is ninety-nine. As we saw in chapter 2, a notable example of this interest comes from private letters between Christians in documents discovered in ancient Oxyrhynchus. In no less than

eight documents, many dated to the third and fourth centuries, the number ninety-nine is employed in a curious way. In each, the number is written in symbol form (Ϙθ) in the opening line or the close of the letter or document as a cipher for ὄμην. This is an example of isopsephy, the Greek equivalent of Hebrew gematria. Isopsephy involves adding up the numerical values of each letter in a given word into a single value, and it often entails connecting this with other words that equal the same numerical value.\footnote{Famously, it was through isopsephy that Suetonius noted that Emperor Nero killed his own mother, as the numerical total of the letters in the name Νερῶν is the exact same as the phrase ἰδίαν μητέρα ἀπέκτεινε (“He killed his own mother”).} In this case, \( \varphi \theta = 99 \), which happens to be the same value as the combined sum of ὄμην: that is, \( \alpha (1) + \mu (40) + \eta (8) + \upsilon (50) = 99 \). The documents in which \( \varphi \theta \) is employed this way are the following:

(1) \textit{P.Oxy. XXXI} 2601 (early fourth cent.), letter from Copres to his “sister” Sarapias. It concludes: ἀπ(όδος) τῇ ἀδελφῇ π(αρὰ) Κοπρῆτ(ος) \( \varphi \theta \) (ln. 34; “Deliver to my sister, from Copres. 99/Amen.”).

(2) \textit{P.Oxy. VIII} 1162 (fourth cent.), letter of recommendation from priest Leon on behalf of Ammonius. It concludes: ἐρώτωθαι ὑμᾶς [ἐ]ὑχουμε | ἐν κ(υρί)ῳ [θ]ε(ς)φ."
'Εμυ(ἀνονη)λ. μαρτυ(νε ?) | φθ. (lns. 13–15; “I pray for your health in the Lord God. Emmanuel is my witness. 99/Amen.”).  

(3) P.Oxy. LVI 3857 (fourth cent.), letter of recommendation for Germania. Before the final greeting, the body of letter concludes: ’Εμυ(μανονη)λ. φθ. (ln. 13). 

(4) P.Oxy. LVI 3862 (fourth/fifth cent.), letter from Philoxenus to his family. The first line begins: χμυ ♯ φθ (ln. 1). 

(5) PSI XIII 1342 (fourth cent.), letter from two sitologoi (directors of a granary) of the village Alabastrinus requesting money from “holy father” anchorite Sabinus. Before the body of the letter, the first line begins: χμυ φθ (ln. 1). 

(6) SB XVI 12304 (late third/early fourth cent.), letter of recommendation from “Papas” π(α)π(ἄc) Heraclitus on behalf of a “brother.” Before the final greeting, the body of the letter concludes: μυνη φθ (ln. 13; the meaning of μυνη here is uncertain). 

(7) P.Mich. VI 378 (first half of fourth cent.), “List of Payments in Kind,” a daybook of grain received at a public granary. The first line begins, ♯ χμυ φθ (ln. 1). 

(8) P.Oxy. VI 925 (fifth/sixth cent.), Christian prayer. The last line concludes: γενοίτο, φθ (ln. 7; “So be it; 99/Amen.”). 

As noted in chapter 2, while scholars are agreed as to the definition of φθ, its intended function is debated. For example, in her study of private Christian letters from Oxyrhynchus, AnneMarie Luijendijk sees the isopsephistic cipher as a mark of piety: 

31 The meaning of χμυ is not known for certain, but some scholars regard it as an acrostic: χ(ριϲτον) μ(αριϲ) γ(ενοιτο) = “Mary begat Christ.” See Llewelyn, “The Christian Symbol XM,” 156–68 (§14). Further, the editor notes that the cross (♯) might actually be a ταυ-tho monogram (†), but it is obscured. 

32 The numeral is used in a similar way in later inscriptions and graffiti in Egypt. See, for example, SB IV 7429 (ln. 22), SB IV 7488 (ln. 4), SB IV 7494 (ln. 9), SB IV 7497 (ln. 5), and SB IV 7513 (ln. 5), many of which are prayers.
The use of the isopsephy in this letter [P.Oxy. XXXI 2601] strikes me as a strong indication of the family’s piety. By writing “amen” at the end of his letter, it appears as if Copres concludes a prayer or a part of a liturgy. “Names and Numbers,” [François] Bovon concludes, “are a gift from God that express an extralinguistic reality beyond what other words are capable of transmitting.” In that light we should interpret koppa theta at the end of Copres’s letter to his wife as a prayer, a sign of his faith, and a sign that he had arrived safe and sound.33

Here Luijendijk alludes to the important essay by François Bovon already mentioned above to propose that the cipher \(\varphi\theta\) signifies a degree of Christian devotion.34 Alternatively, it is possible that the number had an apotropaic function, that is, for the purpose of warding off evil.35 On the other hand, Kurt Treu offers a third view, namely that such isopsephisms functioned as covert signals of Christian authenticity between author and addressee, or as “esoterisches Legitimationszeichen.”36 Treu argued this about P.Oxy. VIII 1162 in particular, which is a letter of recommendation between churches endorsing a fellow Christian. It is easy to envision how such a scenario would benefit from secretive codes of good faith. By including cryptic Christian number-symbols, the author could ensure a

33 AnneMarie Luijendijk, Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, HTS 60 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 221 (see also 226), citing Bovon, “Names and Numbers,” 288. Further, the editor of P.Oxy. XXXI 2601 called it a “sign of special zeal” (P.Oxy. XXXI 2601.171)

34 “Names and Numbers in Early Christianity.”

35 See, for example, Lincoln H. Blumell, Lettered Christians: Christians, Letters, and Late Antique Oxyrhynchus, NTTSD 39 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 47: “Over time however, isopsephy became somewhat common among Christians and all sorts of letter combinations were subsequently developed and even came to be imbued with apotropaic power.”

degree of fidelity or trustworthiness to the recipient on behalf of the one being recommended. Unfortunately, this does not seem to fit the context of some of the other documents (e.g., letters between family members, a grain receipt, a personal prayer). But, of course, φθ may have served more than one function.

Whatever the intended purpose of such isopsephisms such as φθ and χµγ might have been, it is clear that they are distinctively Christian. Luijendijk, for instance, refers to such uses of numerals in conjunction with nomina sacra as “markers of Christian identity” and “specific Christian scribal practice.”37 Also, in Lincoln Blumell’s 2012 study of Christian documentary evidence from Oxyrhynchus, Lettered Christians, the following are listed as being “markers of Christian identity within letters”: Christian names, crosses and monograms, nomina sacra, monotheistic terminology and phraseology, familial language and the use of ἀγαπητός, and isopsephisms and acrostics.38 Others describe the use of φθ as a cryptogram “exclusive to Christians.”39 The symbolic usage of numerical abbreviations by early believers was thus so common that it is now seen as indicative of a document’s Christian authorship.

The link between the number ninety-nine and the word amen is not, however, confined to Egyptian documentary papyri; as early as the second century, in fact, Irenaeus knew of and disapprovingly commented on this specious interpretation of Marcosian heretics, who tended to make much of numerical symbolism:

37 Luijendijk, Greetings in the Lord, 107, 111, 149, and 219.
38 Blumell, Lettered Christians, 36–85 (esp. 46).
Accordingly, when the numbers that are left over—namely, nine in reference to the coins [Luke 15:8–10] and eleven in reference to the sheep [Luke 15:3–7]—are multiplied by each other, the number ninety-nine is the result, because nine multiplied by eleven makes ninety-nine. And for this reason, they say ‘Amen’ contains this same number.\(^{40}\)

This interpretive connection, whether deemed by Irenaeus to be orthodox or not, can thus be firmly placed in the second century.

The key point to be made here is the importance of the numerical abbreviation as opposed to the longhand form of the number. Every time the value ninety-nine occurs as a Christian greeting within the Oxyrhynchus documents, it is written as an abbreviation (ϙ̅θ̅), not a longhand number-word (ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα). This is unsurprising as the latter form does not easily lend itself to the exploits of isopsephy, and was therefore not used for such.

Turning now to NT manuscripts, there are several that contain the numerical abbreviation for ninety-nine, but only one demands our close attention. While both P\(^{75}\) and D 05 employ the symbol in question, both contain many other abbreviated numbers; this suggests that they were employed simply because the copyists regularly used numerical shorthand, not out of a special treatment of this particular number. But one manuscript in particular is worth a closer look. As we saw in chapter 4, the text of Luke in Codex Washingtonianus is split in textual affinity: 1:1–8:12 is Alexandrian in text-type and 8:13–24:53 is Byzantine.\(^{41}\) In the Byzantine portion specifically, 150 numbers occur (both cardinal and ordinal), and all are

---


longhand, except for the two instances of “ninety-nine” in Luke 15:4, 7. Moreover, both of these abbreviations occur, incidentally, in the middle of their respective lines of text. In other words, this portion of W shows a clear preference against the use of abbreviations, the only two exceptions being ϑ̅ in Luke 15:4, 7.

Is this an instance in which early Christian interest in the symbol ϑ̅ has influenced the scribal treatment of the number? It might easily be countered that the number-word in question is rather lengthy, ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα, a total of fifteen letters, and the copyist is simply conserving valuable parchment. On the contrary, however, many other numbers of comparable lengths are present in the text of Luke and not any of those were abbreviated. For example, πεντακοσια (7:41), πεντηκοντα (7:41; 9:14; 16:6), πεντακεισελίλιοι (9:14; sixteen letters), εβδομηκοντα (10:1, 17), δεκακοτο (13:4, 11, 16), δεκα χιλιαι (14:31), εικοσι χιλιαιδων (14:31; fifteen letters), ογδοηκοντα (16:7), and εξηκοντα (24:13) are all written longhand. So, why these two and no others?

There is in fact no way to determine if this use of numerical abbreviations was theologically motivated. It is entirely possible that, at some point, early Christian readers and manuscript-users who were aware of the custom of using ϑ̅ as a cipher for ἀμήν saw the number in Luke 15 and sought to highlight that connection by intentionally using the abbreviated form. For instance (and admitting that this is purely speculative), this could have been taken to suggest that, even in the perilous loss of one sheep, God’s providential oversight protected the safety of the flock; the implicit presence of amen seems to confirm that both the single stray sheep as well as the ninety-nine are secure even amidst apparent danger.

---

42 Sanders does make note of these two abbreviations in Luke, but does not make any suggestions about the possible isopsephism (Sanders, The Washington Manuscript, 10–11).

43 For instance (and admitting that this is purely speculative), this could have been taken to suggest that, even in the perilous loss of one sheep, God’s providential oversight protected the safety of the flock; the implicit presence of amen seems to confirm that both the single stray sheep as well as the ninety-nine are secure even amidst apparent danger.
by the longhand form. One benefit of this explanation is that it might to help explain the reason for what appears to be scribal inconsistency. If a copyist regularly wrote numbers in full within a manuscript and broke from that pattern only twice with the same number, it is conceivable (though not necessary) that this was a conscious decision rather than simple capriciousness. And when this exceptional departure from an otherwise standard consistency occurs with a number that is known to have been of theological interest, the chances seem to increase. This is, however, all that can be said; for, without other evidence there is no way to verify that it is anything more than a pragmatic abbreviation. And furthermore, Washingtonianus would be the only NT manuscript that seems to contain this exceptional treatment.

7.5 “Fourteen”

The number “fourteen” occurs a total of five times in the NT, and three of these occurrences are in a single location (Matt 1:17). At the close of the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel, the evangelist states, “So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.”44 The value fourteen thus functions as the structural principle by which the genealogy was constructed. Scholars are more or less agreed that this value is employed rhetorically rather than as a statement of historical fact, since not only did Matthew omit several generations from the list, the final section of the genealogy (from Babylon to Jesus) only contains thirteen names rather than fourteen.

44 NA²⁸: πᾶς τῶν αἰ γενεὰς ἀπὸ Ἁβραὰμ ἦς Δαυὶδ γενεὰς δεκατέϲϲαρεϲ, καὶ ἀπὸ Δαυὶδ ἦς τῆς μετοικεϲίας Βαβυλῶνοϲ γενεὰς δεκατέϲϲαρεϲ, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς μετοικεϲίας Βαβυλῶνοϲ ἦς τοῦ Χριϲτοῦ γενεὰς δεκατέϲϲαρεϲ.
If the number of generations between Abraham and Jesus was not actually three sets of fourteen, the question then arises, “Why did Matthew choose to use fourteen?” It is not inconceivable that the evangelist chose to order the genealogy according to sets of fourteen because the value was in some way symbolic. Along these lines, one explanation that has been offered appeals to the numerical value of the Hebrew word for the name of David (דוד), which, when added together, equals fourteen: ד (4) + ו (6) + ד (4) = 14. Such a genealogical schematic would underscore the Davidic, and thus the royal, nature of Jesus’s ancestry, demonstrating for the readers the providential ordering of the true King’s arrival. A difficulty with this viewpoint is that, judging from his OT citations, Matthew typically draws from the Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures rather than the Hebrew, and the Greek spelling of David (δαυιδ) does not total fourteen, but 419.\(^{45}\) It is also likely that the spelling of the name David current in the time of the NT was דוד (= 24), as it is in the Qumran texts, which would also compromise the connection to the value “fourteen.” Furthermore, since this putative key of David’s name/number is not explicitly stated by Matthew, it is doubtful that the audience would be able to adduce such a subtle use of gematria. The only certain instance of gematria/isopsephy in the NT is in Rev 13:18, where the author overtly states that the “number of the Beast” is an isopsephistic cipher that must be calculated: ὁ ἔχθρον νοῦν ψηφικάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου (“Let anyone with understanding calculate the number of the beast”). But no such instruction is given by Matthew.

Whatever the reason for the use of fourteen here, several early NT

\(^{45}\) δαυιδ = 4 + 1 + 400 + 10 + 4 = 419.
manuscripts appear to mark it as distinct. For example, in Codex Sinaiticus, each of
the three occurrences in Matt 1:17 are written as numerical abbreviations (ι̅δ̅), but the
two occurrences in 2 Cor 12:2 and Gal 2:1, in which the number refers to spans of
years, are given in the normal, longhand form (δεκατεσσαρων). Interestingly, while
the first instance of ι̅δ̅ in Matt 1:17 falls near the end of its line of text, the second
and third abbreviations fall near the beginning of their lines and are followed by
significant blank spaces that equate to paragraph breaks. Both spaces appear to be of
sufficient length to accommodate the whole word, but the symbols were nevertheless
employed (see figure 7.1). Is it possible that these three instances of fourteen (1:17)
were abbreviated because they are connected so closely with Jesus (viz. his
genealogy) and the other two are not because they concern the life of the Apostle
Paul? Probably not. Many other numbers in Sinaiticus are similarly abbreviated, and
these three numerical symbols do not seem to carry sufficient weight to be
considered unique or intentional uses of numerical shorthand; they could simply be
practical abbreviations. Moreover, our observation of ι̅’s larger pattern of
diminishing usage of numerical shorthand suggests this solution is unlikely.

| Figure 7.1. Matt 1:17 in ι̅ 01 |

![Image of manuscript page showing Matt 1:17 in Codex Sinaiticus]

237
In another early manuscript, P\(^1\), the abbreviated form is used three times in Matt 1:17 (no spaces follow the numerals). Unfortunately, these are the only three numbers extant in this fragmentary papyrus, and so it is unclear if this is standard or exceptional for the copyist. Finally, Codex W 032 contains the first instance in Matt 1:17 longhand, but the second and third are given in symbol form.\(^{46}\) This pattern is especially notable in W because of the scribe’s clear preference against numerical shorthand in Matthew’s Gospel. These are in fact the only two alphabetic numerals employed in the whole of the Gospel. Furthermore, similar to Codex Sinaiticus, W contains blank spaces that equate to paragraph breaks after the second and third uses of the numerals, though here they are not spacious enough to accommodate the full word δεκατέκαρες. Comparable uncialss such as B 03 and C 04 adhere to their consistency in using the longhand forms here.

The following table summarizes these and other relevant data (see table 7.2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS</th>
<th>Matt 1:17a</th>
<th>Matt 1:17b</th>
<th>Matt 1:17c</th>
<th>2 Cor 12:2</th>
<th>Gal 2:1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P(^1)</td>
<td>i̅δ̅</td>
<td>i̅δ̅</td>
<td>i̅δ̅</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(^{46})</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρων</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρων</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Μ 01</td>
<td>i̅δ̅</td>
<td>i̅δ̅</td>
<td>i̅δ̅</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρων</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρων</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 02</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρων</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρων</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 03</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρες</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρες</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρες</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρων</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρων</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 04</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρες</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρες</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρες</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρων</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 05</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I 016</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>[δεκα]τεκαρ[ων]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 032</td>
<td>δεκατέκαρες</td>
<td>i̅δ̅</td>
<td>i̅δ̅</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is not clear, however, how this particular abbreviated numeral would function differently from the longhand form. For example, in the case of i̅η̅ in P\(^5\),

\(^{46}\) A similar pattern is observable elsewhere in W 032. It seems that where a value is repeated several times in a context, the first is given longhand and those that follow are abbreviated. Perhaps the initial plene form establishes the numeral and those that follow are less prone to misunderstanding. See, for example, επτά (Mark 8:5), followed by ζ (8:6, 8, 20 [2x]); also επτα (Mark 12:20) followed by ζ (12:22, 23).
there is (1) a connection to the name of Jesus (Ἰησοῦς) that does not exist with the longhand form, and (2) a visual similarity with the *nomen sacrum* for Jesus’s name, which also would not exist with the longhand form. But what is unique about ι̅δ̅ over against δεκατέκαρες? There does seem to be a slight visual likeness between the numeral ι̅δ̅ and the contracted form of the name David, written δαδ, which might have led the copyist (or reader) to opt for the shorthand form (see figure 7.1, Ins. 2, 3). 47 The purpose could have been to highlight the relationship between David and “fourteen,” which in turn highlights the royal lineage of Jesus. This would, however, only apply to Codex Sinaiticus, as P1 and W 032 have the name David written in full. Also lacking in the case of “fourteen” is external testimony from early Christian sources of exegetical and theological significance being applied to the number. Without any such additional information, the most likely conclusion is that the number “fourteen” did not invite scribal treatment similar to that for the *nomina sacra*, and thus the abbreviations were not theologically motivated.

### 7.6 666/616

Another possible *numerus sacer* concerns the so-called number of the beast in Rev 13:18. There is, to be sure, a wealth of scholarly literature on this particular number, some more scholarly than others, but the relevant information can be summarized fairly succinctly. In the Seer’s prophetic vision of the Beast who would come to deceive the earth, the reader is exhorted: ὁ ἔχων νοῦν ψηφιάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ 47 Traube suggested that the name David was originally abbreviated as a transliteration of the Hebrew form (דוד) = δαδ—which indeed would bear an undeniable similarity to the numeral ι̅δ̅—but he gave no specific examples of this form in any manuscripts, nor have any surfaced since his time (Traube, *Nomina Sacra*, 47, 104–5).
θηρίου (“Let anyone with understanding calculate the number of the beast.”). The verb ψηφιζω is that which is used in other texts when referring specifically to isopsephistic calculation.  

The Elder goes on: ἀριθμός γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐκτίν, καὶ ὁ ἀριθμός αὐτοῦ ἐξακόσιοι ἐξήκοντα ἥξι (“For it is the number of a person. Its number is six hundred sixty-six.”).

This is another instance where scholars have proposed that the ancient practice of gematria should be involved. The Beast has been identified with “Nero Caesar,” because, when transliterated into Hebrew as קסרגנ, the added total is 666: ר + (200) + ס (60) + פ (100) + ט (50) + י (6) + ר (200) + נ (50). A strength of this view is that it seems to account for the early variant reading 616 (as in P115 and C04), which can be reached by simply removing the final nun from the name Nero (666 – 50 = 616). The validity of this particular solution, however, is not our concern here.

In two early papyri of Revelation, this number is given in symbol form: χξϛ (= 666) in P47 and χιϛ (= 616) in P115 (Rev 13:18).  
There are no indications, in either case, that the numeral was treated as unique. Both papyri contain dozens of abbreviated number forms and it is not clear how this one in particular functioned differently. True, abbreviated forms lend themselves more readily to isopsephistic calculations as we have seen, but this still would not require us to view these numerals as theologically-motivated abbreviations. Moreover, the uncial manuscripts from our period (א 01, א 02, C 04) consistently give the number in longhand form.

48 See LSJ, s.v. ψηφίζω I.2, 2022.

49 In both manuscripts, however, the final character διγαμμα/στίγμα is written exactly like a lunate sigma: χζϛ (= 666) and χιϛ (= 616). See also below.
There has been one suggestion about this number, however, that, if accepted, might qualify it as a *numerus sacer*. One scholar has proposed that the variant value 616 originated as an intentional change aimed at mimicking the visual form of the name Jesus Christ. In 2007, Peter Williams observed that the numerical form of 616, which in P\textsuperscript{115} is χιϛ, bears an eerily similar visual resemblance to the contracted forms of Christ and Jesus, which are χς and ις, respectively. This is possible only because, in P\textsuperscript{115} (and in P\textsuperscript{47}), the letter stigma/digamma (ϛ) is not distinguished from the lunate sigma (ς), resulting in the following appearance of the numeral: χις.

Unfortunately, no such *nomina sacra* are visible in the papyrus, and so it cannot be confirmed that the forms χς (χριτός) and ις (Ἰησοῦς) were used as opposed to their longer counterparts χρις and ις:

Nevertheless, even if longer forms were used elsewhere in the manuscript, readers would probably have been struck by the visual resemblance of the number to common designations of Jesus. We must therefore consider whether the number as written in P\textsuperscript{115} could be a deliberate mimicking of the appearance of these *nomina sacra.*

In other words, the symbol form of the numeral was chosen in order to express a theological point at the level of scribal orthography (which would parallel the function of the *nomina sacra*).

This proposal is not without problems; what would motivate one to alter the number of the beast to more closely resemble the name of Jesus Christ? Elsewhere, there seems to have been the opposite tendency, namely, to alter names away from resembling Jesus. For example, although the external evidence is slim, the earliest reading in Matt 27:16–17 seems to be that the full name of Barabbas the “notorious prisoner” was “Jesus Barabbas” (Ἰησοῦ Βαραββᾶ). Even though this is the more

---

likely wording, most known Greek witnesses lack the first name Ἰησοῦν, however, which probably shows the desire to disassociate the two; as Origen maintained: “in the whole range of scriptures we know that no one who is a sinner [is called] Jesus.” On the other hand, however, it is possible that the change to χιϛ was made to contrast the characters of the Beast and Jesus. Scholars have observed that the description of the Beast seems to be an intentionally ironic parody of the Lamb (cf. 5:6), a literary device that speaks of the counterfeit nature of the Beast. A change to χιϛ could then be intended to draw a closer connection (through visual similarity) between the Beast and the Lamb, which further highlights their stark comparison. In any case however, on account of the high frequency of numerical abbreviations elsewhere in P47 and P115, there is not much that suggests either χιϛ or χιϛ were used as numeri sacri.

7.7 “Forty”

Finally, another number that is known to have symbolic value within Christian Scriptures is “forty.” It occurs repeatedly in the OT, referring to the days and nights of the rain that brought the flood (Gen 7:4, 12), the days and nights Moses spent on Sinai (Exod 34:28), the days and nights Elijah travelled to Horeb (1 Kings 19:8), and the days approaching David’s battle with Goliath (1 Sam 17:16). It refers to the years Israel wandered in the desert (Num 32:13; Deut 2:7), the years of David’s reign (1 Kings 2:11), and the years of Solomon’s reign (11:42), to cite merely a few. This

repetition of the number was clearly important to the NT writers, who, for example, record that Jesus fasted in the wilderness for forty days (Matt 4:2, who adds “forty nights”; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2) and was seen after his resurrection for at least forty days before ascending (Acts 1:3). It occurs in several NT books, most frequently in Acts, and almost always referring to a length of time, usually days or years.

The number “forty” is also one of the most frequently abbreviated values among our early NT manuscripts. For example, the value in Mark 1:13 is given as the symbol μ by א, D, and W; in Luke 4:2, it is given as a symbol by א, W, P⁴, and P⁷⁵; and it is abbreviated elsewhere in P¹⁰¹ (Matt 4:2a and [4:2b]), P⁴⁵ (Acts 7:36), P¹²⁷ (10:41), and P⁴⁸ (23:13). In D alone the number is abbreviated no less than eight times (Matt 4:2a; Mark 1:13; Acts 4:22; 7:30, 36, 42; 10:41; 13:21) compared to the longhand form which occurs only three times (Matt 4:2b; Luke 4:2; Acts 1:3).

Observe how the value is written in early manuscripts (see table 7.3). Note that, where extant, uncial A 02, B 03, and C 04 consistently have longhand forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loc.</th>
<th>Referent</th>
<th>τεσσαράκοντα</th>
<th>μ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matt 4:2a</td>
<td>Days in wilderness</td>
<td>א W D P¹⁰¹</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt 4:2b</td>
<td>Nights in wilderness</td>
<td>א D W [P¹⁰¹]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark 1:13</td>
<td>Days in wilderness</td>
<td>– א D W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 4:2</td>
<td>Days in wilderness</td>
<td>D P⁴ W P⁴ P⁷⁵</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 1:3</td>
<td>Days</td>
<td>א D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 4:22</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>א D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 7:30</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>א D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 7:36</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>א D P⁴⁵</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 7:42</td>
<td>Days</td>
<td>– D P¹²⁷</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 10:41</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>א D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 13:21</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>א P⁴⁸</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 23:13</td>
<td>Conspiracy</td>
<td>א P⁴⁸</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 23:21</td>
<td>Conspiracy</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Cor 11:24</td>
<td>Lashes</td>
<td>א P⁴⁶</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heb 3:10</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>א P¹³ P⁴⁶</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heb 3:17</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>א P¹³ P⁴⁶</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A comparison of Sinaiticus and Bezae is instructive here. In terms of length, these two are the most substantial manuscripts of the group, and so one is able to observe larger trends in number-writing styles. But neither manuscript offers anything predictable. For example, the values in Matt 4:2a//Mark 1:13//Luke 4:2 all refer to the same thing (days in the wilderness), yet neither manuscript is consistent; both alternate between longhand and shorthand forms for the same numeral.

Furthermore, it is impossible to judge the nature of abbreviations in fragmentary papyri that do not allow internal comparison (P\textsuperscript{4}, P\textsuperscript{48}, P\textsuperscript{101}, and P\textsuperscript{127}). Its abbreviation in P\textsuperscript{45} is interesting, given the rarity of shorthand in this papyrus, but no particular significance of this use of the number is evident (Acts 7:36; years Israel spent in the wilderness). In P\textsuperscript{75} the abbreviation is simply one among many. Likewise in W, the abbreviations occur within text blocks that contain many other abbreviated forms (Mark 1:1–5:30; Luke 1:1–8:12).

There was, no doubt, significant theological interest in the number “forty” outside the NT in patristic literature, but none (as far as I know) concerns the specific written forms of the number. So, although the numeral “forty” was undoubtedly vested with considerable theological symbolism by the earliest Christians, this did not have any noticeable effect on scribal orthography of the number, at least one that is evident in a consistent pattern. Perhaps the best explanation for its high frequency of abbreviation is obvious: it was a frequently recurring number and scribes felt free to shorten it.
7.8 Conclusion

Of the numbers studied here, only a handful give the impression that “theological orthography” contributed to their abbreviation. First, there seems to be a consistent pattern for the number “twelve” in Matthew’s Gospel of Codex Sinaiticus, however brief it may be. Similarly, the coincidental agreement between the numeral “eighteen” and the rare nomen sacrum for the name of Jesus in P⁴⁵ suggest that there was a degree of intentionality in its usage. Thirdly, the treatment of the number “ninety-nine” in Christian documentary papyri suggests that the lone abbreviation of that value in Luke 8:13–24:53 of W 032 could have been an intentional echo of ϙ̅θ̅/“amen.” The remaining examples of “fourteen,” 666/616, and “forty” either lack external testimony of theological interest in the number-symbol or they lack the internal signs of scribal intentionality, to which we must conclude that their abbreviated forms were simply pragmatic, not theological, in nature.

Unsurprisingly, it is difficult to determine scribal motivations. Out of the plethora of abbreviated numbers in our early NT manuscripts, very few patterns that resemble the nomina sacra are evident. Even those few patterns that seem to be present are ultimately uncertain; each entails significant reservations, and there are no unquestionable examples of a numerus sacer. It is thus not undeniably clear that numeri sacri is a legitimate category of early Christian scribal practices within literary manuscripts.

Although this is more or less a negative conclusion, that theological interest in numbers did not typically manifest itself on the scribal level within NT manuscripts, we are nonetheless provided with valuable information about early Christian devotional practices. Specifically, the concept of alphabetic numerals can
function now as a reference point by which to evaluate the significance of the more commonly occurring *nomina sacra*, which heretofore have had no real object of comparison. So, in the case the divine names, virtually every manuscript contains them, from the earliest available evidence onward, and while there is a certain degree of dissimilarity in the specific forms and contractions that were employed, there is undeniably a broad stream of consistency that unites our manuscripts in this reverential treatment of sacred names and titles.

But as we have seen, the same cannot be said of numbers. Despite the fact that an analogous orthographical system of number-words and their respective abbreviations existed in Koine Greek, both of which were comfortably used by many NT copyists, they were never developed into a coherent system by which particular forms were reserved for particular referents, except perhaps in one or two instances in a handful of manuscripts. No number in particular was written as a symbol in all or even most of the texts we find, rather, every candidate examined here is either a debatable or plainly unqualified recipient of the term *numerus sacer*. Thus, while there is certainly no doubt that theological interest in numerical values was alive and well among early Christians, it seems reasonable to conclude that, judging from the impact observable on physical copies of Scripture, appreciation for divine names and titles and their theological implications took root earlier, appealed to much wider circles, and ultimately lay closer to what is the center of what was distinctively Christian.
CHAPTER 8:
NUMERALS AND THE MECHANICS OF PUBLIC READING

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 The Hypothesis

One of the more curious observations that have arisen from this examination of early Christian number-writing techniques is the markedly restricted application of the alphabetic numerical system. That is, the NT manuscripts that contain abbreviated numerals in their body texts exhibit only a limited expression of numerical shorthand compared to the far wider practice evident in documentary papyri. This selective usage is surprising when we consider that scholars have been eager to show that the practice itself was adopted directly from documentary papyri. This link may be a real one, but the assumption of wholesale borrowing has obscured several notable differences between the two groups of texts. The key differences in number-writing styles of NT manuscripts are the avoidance of abbreviated forms for (1) the number “one”, (2) ordinal numbers, (3) inflected number-words, and (4) values in the thousands\(^1\)—all of which are commonly abbreviated in documentary papyri from the Graeco-Roman world.\(^2\) These four tendencies have been noted repeatedly in previous chapters, but my aim here is to explore these patterns in more detail and offer an explanation for why early NT manuscripts share these similarities.

---

\(^1\) Technically, all four of these categories are related to grammatical inflection (as it will be shown), but is nevertheless helpful to distinguish between them and take them separately.

\(^2\) There are other differences as well. For example, in documentary papyri, one finds compound words abbreviated using alphabetic numerals, such as πεντακωςία written as ε̅κων. The NT manuscripts studied here do not contain such abbreviations, even as compound words are found all throughout the NT. See Nikolaos Gonis, “Abbreviations and Symbols,” in The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology, ed. Roger S. Bagnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 170–78 (173). The exception to this is in Bezae: μετη (Acts 7:23; 13:18).
In this chapter, I argue that the unifying factor that best explains the presence of this unique use of alphabetic abbreviations is the concern to produce manuscripts that can be read aloud in public with minimal ambiguity. Numbers whose correct aural pronunciation would be obscured or rendered ambiguous by abbreviation were almost always written in longhand form, despite the apparent temptation of economy, because the overriding concern in the production of these codices was clarity in public reading. Fortunately, there are several other features in early Christian manuscripts which are best explained in this way, and, as we will see, scribal number-writing habits fits squarely in that context.

8.1.2 Public Reading of Christian Books and “Reader’s Aids”

In recent decades, the study of NT manuscripts as physical artifacts has produced a better understanding of the function of these texts in the context of early Christian worship. Specifically, scholars have observed in early Christian papyri a variety of scribal features that are most likely attempts to facilitate public reading, and, importantly, these features are noticeably absent from well-copied manuscripts of Graeco-Roman literature. While the literary bookroll presented the would-be reader with several obvious challenges, particularly the absence of such things as word division, punctuation, accents, and paragraph breaks, Christian codices demonstrate a variety of concrete attempts to overcome those challenges with what has been broadly called “reader’s aids.”

William Johnson provides a fitting summary of Graeco-Roman literary manuscripts:

---

The product seems, to the modern eye, something almost more akin to an art object than a book; and, with its lack of word spaces and punctuation, the ancient book roll is, to the modern perception, spectacularly, even bewilderingly, impractical and inefficient as a reading tool. But that the ancient reading and writing systems interacted without strain is indisputable: so stable was this idea of the literary book, that with only small variations it prevailed for at least seven hundred years in the Greek tradition.¹

Unlike these inscrutable books, however, early Christian manuscripts evidence a variety of features aimed at assisting the reader.⁵ So, for example, whereas professionally copied books of Greek literature were written in scriptio continua⁶—without spaces between letters or words—Christian manuscripts contain several techniques intended to break up the text into comprehensible sections. For example, ekthesis describes an initial letter that has been projected into the left-hand margin used to indicate a new unit or section of text; these can be found in Greek poetical texts, marking new sections or poems, and in lists and commentaries signaling new entries. A similar effect was achieved by leaving a blank space in the text. Alternatively, instead of blank spaces, some copyists extended strokes from final letters to function as “line-fillers” (such as the middle stroke of an epsilon or a horizontal stroke of a lunate sigma). Importantly, these features are common in many early Christian manuscripts, and they appear to reflect the intention to aid readers in dividing the text correctly.

One feature that actually does appear with some frequency in Graeco-Roman literary bookrolls is the paragraphus—a horizontal stroke placed between lines of

---


⁶ Turner, Greek Manuscripts, 7.
text usually near or in the left-hand margin. Its function in prose texts may well have been to facilitate reading, but in dramatic texts it indicates a change of speaker, and in documents it marks different sections of a letter, account, or law code. Christian codices, however, exhibit a variety of other such marks. For example, other forms of punctuation include the dicolon (:), high stop (¨), and middle stop (·), which alternated in exact function but generally equated to modern punctuation marks such as full stops, commas, and semicolons (though their precise meanings varied). Turner describes other “lectional aids” such as the apostrophe (‘), diastole (,) and diaeresis (¨), all of which were used to facilitate proper pronunciation and separation of vowels. Copyists also used accents and breathing marks, but inconsistently. All of these are rare in literary texts, but they are present with marked frequency in many of our early NT manuscripts.

Papyrologist Colin H. Roberts is usually credited with being the first to draw out the implications of the fact that these features can be found in many early Christian papyri. He argued that the high frequency of such reader’s aids in early Christian codices was important for two basic reasons: (1) They link Christian manuscripts with documentary papyri, from which Christian copyists borrowed many of these features, and (2) they illustrate the fact that Christian codices were intended to be read and used in corporate worship. As we have seen previously,

---

Roberts’ first point can no longer be taken for granted; recent papyrological studies now point to Jewish scribal practices as a major context from which Christian copyists borrowed (and perhaps, over time, vice versa). In fact, many of the Dead Sea Scrolls and manuscripts discovered in the Judean desert contain precisely the same sorts of scribal features, such as divisions of verses, sections, *paragraphoi*, and *ekthesis*. Nevertheless, this does not mean that documentary papyri are irrelevant, for there is some undeniable overlap between the two scribal styles. Most notably for our present purposes, it will be shown that NT scribes appear to have inherited the practice of abbreviating numbers from documentary papyri—an observation made by Roberts himself. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to qualify this statement because, as we have seen, they did not borrow the system wholesale, rather they adapted the practice with several important differences.

This brings us to Roberts’ second point—that Christian manuscripts were intended to be read aloud in the context of corporate worship. Subsequent research in this area has confirmed and strengthened this perspective. The work of Larry W. Hurtado is especially noteworthy in this regard, for, in addition to the features detailed above, Hurtado has shown that the physical layouts of Christian manuscripts reflect the aim to create readable texts; they often contain, for example, wide margins, generous spacing between lines, and large, clearly-written letters. When

---


compared with pagan literary manuscripts of comparable dimensions, they often contain fewer letters per line and lines per page. This is not to suggest that every early NT manuscript has all or even most of such reader’s aids; some do not.

Nevertheless, these lectional aids are certainly widespread to a significant degree among our early NT papyri.¹³ Again, it seems that the best explanation for the presence of these features is that they reflect an effort to make manuscripts that can more easily be read aloud, and probably in public. Indeed, no better account for the presence of these features has been offered.

One recent study, however, has challenged this understanding. Specifically, Dan Nässelqvist has argued that scribal features such as the nomina sacra and numerical shorthand in particular would have presented readers with formidable difficulties, and that scholars such as Hurtado have exaggerated the degree to which Christian scribes “aided” the reading of their texts (though it should be said that Hurtado in particular does not consider the nomina sacra or numerical shorthand themselves to be reader’s aids).¹⁴ Nässelqvist states: “With regard to abbreviations, early Christian manuscripts presented inexperienced readers with more obstacles

¹³ One scholar has argued that it is possible to correlate a manuscript’s public/private use with that manuscript’s relative concentration of reader’s aids (which are further identified with “controlled” and “uncontrolled” copying contexts); see Scott D. Charlesworth, “Public and Private – Second- and Third-Century Gospel Manuscripts,” in Jewish and Christian Scripture (Evans and Zacharias), 148–75. There is, in my opinion, insufficient evidence to support this view.

¹⁴ See Hurtado, Earliest Christian Artifacts, 177–85. This could have been better clarified by Nässelqvist.
than non-Christian literary manuscripts from the same era in terms of performing a faultless public reading, even after extensive preparations by the would-be lector.”

To support this countering assessment, Nässelqvist cites five specific forms that could represent either a *nomen sacrum* or a numeral depending on context: ἰ̅ (18 or Ἰηϲοῦϲ), ἱϲ (16 or Ἰηϲοῦϲ), κε (25 or κύριε), υ̅ν (450 or υἱόν), χ̅ν (650 or Χριϲτόν). In such cases, the would-be reader needs “extensive preparation and familiarity with Christian manuscript conventions” in order to decide which is correct, a number or a name. Certainly, while such ambiguity is possible (though only three of the five numbers actually occur in NT books), Nässelqvist overstates his case. This handful of potentially vague forms is vastly outweighed by the enormous quantity of forms that were strictly avoided by virtually all of our scribes to maintain clarity in public reading. That is, what Nässelqvist’s treatment lacks is any consideration of grammatical inflection as it relates to abbreviations. We will see, however, that sustained attention to the numerals given as abbreviations as it relates to formal declension reveals that Christian copyists avoided a great deal of confusion by intentionally avoiding shorthand that would be ambiguous. The result is that, contra Nässelqvist, scribal number-writing techniques should indeed be understood within the context of lectional aids and the larger effort by early copyists to produce easily readable books.

---


16 Nässelqvist also points to the presence of shorthand and longhand numerals standing side by side as ambiguous in nature (pgs. 44, 54), though I fail to see the logic here.

17 To be fair, Nässelqvist’s study is restricted to P⁴⁶, P⁶⁶, and P⁷⁵—a limitation that would prevent observation of the larger patterns evident here.
8.2 The Avoidance of Abbreviations of the Number “One”

The most consistent pattern of scribal number-writing techniques in early NT manuscripts concerns the treatment of the number “one.” As observed earlier in this thesis (chapters 3 and 4 especially), no NT manuscript from the first five centuries contains a single example of the number “one”—whether cardinal or ordinal—in abbreviated form.\(^\text{18}\) This degree of consistency is especially noteworthy because “one” is by far the most frequently occurring value in the whole of the NT. A computer-generated search of the NA\(^\text{27}\) returns no less than 345 occurrences of the cardinal number εἷς/μία/ἐν, followed by δῶο, which occurs 135 times. This policy of avoiding the abbreviation for “one” is also surprising in light of Graeco-Roman documentary papyri, in which this particular abbreviation is notably common.\(^\text{19}\)

Furthermore, although Greek literary texts do not typically employ numerical abbreviations, annotations and notes written in the margins by later hands routinely do so, and the numeral ἀ often appears in these.\(^\text{20}\) So, if NT copyists were willing to borrow the alphabetic numeral system for their texts, why did they rigidly avoid abbreviation of the most frequently occurring value?

\(^{18}\) It is worth stating that the same cannot be said of manuscripts of the Greek OT; there is one exception: \(P.\text{Beatty}\) VI (Numbers-Deuteronomy) contains many instances of the abbreviation ἀ (= 1). The only explanation I can offer for this exceptional case, assuming that this copy was intended for actual use, is that the need to manage a plethora of numbers (the number “one” occurs over 180 times in LXX-Numbers) overrode the desire for clarity in abbreviation.

\(^{19}\) Some randomly selected examples of ἀ standing for εἷς/μία/ἐν from the Oxyrhynchus papyri are the following: \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) I 35 (ln. 9), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) I 45 (ln. 20), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) I 55 (ln. 16), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) I 68 (ln. 38), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) I 108 (lns. 5, 10, 13, \textit{et passim}), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) I 109 (lns. 2, 5, 7, \textit{et passim}), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) I 113 (ln. 31), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) I 115 (ln. 12), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) I 146 (ln. 3), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) IV 710 (lns. 3, 4), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) IX 1211 (ln. 4), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) IX 1212 (ln. 7), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) X 1283 (lns. 17, 21), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) X 1288 (lns. 8, 11), \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) X 1289 (lns. 7, 9), and \(P.\text{Oxy.}\) X 1290 (lns. 2, 3). It is used in these instances for items in lists and accounts, dimensions of land, duration of years, and dates.

\(^{20}\) Kathleen McNamee, ed., \textit{Annotations in Greek and Latin Texts from Egypt}, Am.Stud.Pap. 45 (Oxford: Oxbow Books for the American Society of Papyrologists, 2007), 131, 133, 224, 276, 280 (for more examples, see the helpful index of such on pg. 562).
I suggest that the answer to this question lies in the inherent ambiguity of the symbol \(\bar{\alpha}\). Specifically, the number “one” in Greek bears a multiplicity of grammatical forms, with a unique spelling for each gender and most grammatical cases; functionally, there are nine distinct forms that can be used (some forms overlap). In contrast, most number-words are indeclinable, meaning that they have only one possible form, regardless of gender or case: e.g., πέντε, δέκα, δώδεκα, and τεσσάρακοντα, etc. Accordingly, the abbreviation \(\bar{\alpha}\) could potentially stand for nine different cardinal number forms, and the oral pronunciation of the symbol is therefore highly ambiguous. For instance, what should the would-be lector say aloud when faced with the abbreviation \(\bar{\alpha}\): εἷς, ἕνα, ἕνος, ἕνι, etc.? Furthermore, this only considers cardinal forms; the ambiguity increases dramatically when we add ordinal forms and all their inflections—all of which also would be represented by the alphabetic numeral \(\bar{\alpha}\). This use in particular commonly occurs in documentary papyri and inscriptions. The obvious difficulty posed by this ambiguity is that there is no clear indication about what particular word ought to be pronounced when read aloud. In sum, the symbol \(\bar{\alpha}\) could stand for literally dozens of distinct words.

It will be helpful to examine this pattern in particular manuscripts. The copyist of \(\text{P}^{45}\), for example, occasionally employed abbreviated forms for cardinal numbers, e.g., \(\bar{\iota}\) (Mark 8:19), \(\bar{\eta}\) (Luke 13:11, 16); \(\bar{\mu}\) (Acts 7:36), and \(\bar{o}\) (Luke 10:17), but in writing the most frequently recurring number, \(\bar{\epsilon} \bar{\iota}/\bar{\mu} \bar{\iota}/\bar{\epsilon} \nu\), every extant occurrence is

---

21 That is, \(\bar{\epsilon} \bar{\iota}\) (\(\bar{\epsilon} \bar{\eta}, \bar{\epsilon} \bar{\nu}\)), \(\bar{\mu} \bar{\iota}\) (\(\bar{\mu} \bar{\iota} \bar{\nu}, \bar{\mu} \bar{\nu}, \bar{\mu} \bar{\iota}\)), and \(\bar{\epsilon} \nu\) (\(\bar{\epsilon} \nu, \bar{\epsilon} \bar{\nu}, \bar{\epsilon} \bar{\nu}\)).

longhand (totaling twenty-four instances).\textsuperscript{23} Similarly, the scribe of P\textsuperscript{66} used a couple of abbreviated numbers (Ἰ, John 6:70; Χ καὶ η, 5:5), but never did so for the number “one,”\textsuperscript{24} of which there are twenty-eight extant occurrences. The copyists of P\textsuperscript{46} and P\textsuperscript{72} consistently wrote all numbers longhand, including εἰς/μία/ἐν.\textsuperscript{25}

It is especially telling that this same trend is observed in manuscripts that exhibit a marked preference for numerical shorthand rather than occasional usage. P\textsuperscript{75}, for example, contains nearly fifty abbreviated numbers, for values ranging between “two” and “one hundred.” However, even with this remarkable willingness to use alphabetic numerals, the most frequently occurring value is “one” and it is never given in shorthand form.\textsuperscript{26} The same is true of P\textsuperscript{47} and P\textsuperscript{115}, both of which also contain clear scribal preferences for numerical symbols, though not a single instance can be found for the number “one.”\textsuperscript{27}

Turning to majuscule manuscripts, the same trend can be seen quite clearly. Manuscripts such as Codex Alexandrinus (A 02), Vaticanus (B 03), and Ephraemi-Rescriptus (C 04) are (virtually) consistent in using only longhand forms for numbers, and not a single instance of “one” is abbreviated; again, this comprises hundreds of instances of the number in each manuscript. Three lengthy majuscule

\textsuperscript{23} E.g., Matt 25:45; 26:14, 21, 22; Mark 9:5; 11:29; Luke 9:33 (3x); 10:42; 12:6, 27, 52; 13:10; 14:18; John 10:16 (2x), 41; 11:49, 50, 52; Acts 4:32; 8:24; 11:28.

\textsuperscript{24} E.g., John 1:40; 3:27; 6:8, 70, 71; 7:21, 50; 8:28, 41; 9:25; 10:16 (2x), 30; 11:49, 50, 52; 12:2, 4; 13:21, 23; 17:22 (2x), 23; 18:26, 39; 20:1, 7, 12.

\textsuperscript{25} In P\textsuperscript{46}: Rom 5:18 (2x), 19 (2x); 9:10; 12:4, 5 (2x); 1 Cor 3:8; 4:6 (2x); 6:16 (2x), 17; 8:4, 6; 9:24; 10:8, 17 (3x); 11:5; 12:11, 12 (2x), 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 26; 14:27, 31; 16:2; 2 Cor 5:14; 11:24; Gal 3:20 (2x); 4:22 (2x), 24; 5:14; Eph 2:14, 15, 16, 18; 4:4 (3x), 5 (3x), 6, 7, 16; 5:31, 33; Phil 1:27; 2:2; 3:13; Col 4:6; Heb 10:12, 14; 11:12; 12:16. And in P\textsuperscript{72}: 2 Pet 3:8 (3x).


\textsuperscript{27} For P\textsuperscript{47}: Rev 9:12, 13; 13:3; 17:1; and for P\textsuperscript{115}: Rev 13:3.
manuscripts in particular contain a significant scribal willingness to use alphabetic numerals. Again, however, none of the three contains any instances of ὅ being used for εἰς/μία/ἐν in their body texts. First, the scribe of Codex Sinaiticus (א 01) used numerical shorthand often, on roughly fifty occasions, but every occurrence of εἰς/μία/ἐν is longand.28 The same is true of Codex Washingtonianus (W 032), which contains about thirty instances of numerical shorthand; every instance of the numeral “one” is longhand. Codex Bezae (D 05) shows the most frequent usage of numerical shorthand out of the majuscule manuscripts, roughly one hundred instances. Nevertheless, every instance of the number εἰς/μία/ἐν is written out fully.

It is also worth examining some of the fragmentary manuscripts that exhibit numerical abbreviations. P37, for example, contains two uses of the abbreviation ῥ for δόξα (Matt 26:20, 47), but three instances of the number “one” that are all longhand (26:21, 40, 51). Majuscule 0207 contains several numeral abbreviations, ε̅ (Rev 9:5, 10) and ὅ (9:14, 15), but the two instances of the number “one” are longhand: μία (9:12) and μιαν (9:13).

Is it possible that the number εἰς/μία/ἐν is never abbreviated simply because it is such a short word (two or three letters) that it requires no further shortening? Although tempting, this explanation is unsatisfactory in light of the frequent abbreviation of the number δόο, which is likewise only three characters in length. For example, Codex Bezae contains thirteen such abbreviations for δόο,29 Codex

---

28 There are far too many instances of the number “one” in א, so here I simply list references some from the book of Matthew, in which the most numerical shorthand is present for other values: Matt 5:18 (2x), 19, 29, 30, 36, 41; 6:24 (2x), 27, 29; 8:19; {9:18}; 10:29, 42; 12:11; 13:46; 16:14; 17:4 (3x); 18:5, 6, 10, 12, 14, 16, 24, 28; 19:5, 6, 16, 17; 20:12, 13, 21 (2x); 21:19, 24; 22:35; 23:8, 9, 10, 15; 24:40 (2x), 41 (2x); 25:15, 18, 24, 40, 45; 26:14, 21, 22, 40, 47, 51, 56; 27:14, 15, 38 (2x), 48; 28:1.

29 Matt 25:15; Mark 6:7, 9, 41 (2x); 9:43, 45, 47; 10:8; 11:1; 14:1; 15:27, 38.
Sinaiticus contains seven,\(^{30}\) and \(P^{75}\) contains eleven.\(^{31}\) If length of the word was the only factor, why did so many copyists bother with shortening \(δύο\)? We would also be left to wonder why values in the thousands, which are consistently lengthy words, were only abbreviated on the rarest of occasions; we will return to this latter topic shortly. In sum, there is an astonishing degree of consistency in this avoidance of shorthand for “one”—a degree of consistency that simply defies coincidence and reflects an intentional technique of early scribes.

8.3 The Avoidance of Abbreviations of Ordinal Numbers

A similar trend can be seen, although slightly less consistently, in the scribal treatment of ordinal numbers. As we saw in the first chapter, one of the key differences between the alphabetic numeral system compared to the acrophonic system is the treatment of ordinal values.\(^{32}\) The latter system did not allow ordinal values to be represented by numerical symbols. In contrast, alphabetic numerals were used equally for cardinal and ordinal numbers, which can be seen quite clearly, for example, in the frequent use of number symbols to express dates in papyrus documents.\(^{33}\)

The avoidance of abbreviated forms for ordinal numbers is can be explained by the fact that they would be ambiguous in the context of pronounced reading. As noted above, most cardinal numbers are grammatically indeclinable, but all ordinal

\(^{30}\) Matt 14:19; 21:1, 28, 31; 26:60; 27:21; Mark 6:41.


\(^{33}\) This is ubiquitous in documents, but, to offer a couple randomly chosen examples, \(P.Oxy.\) I 68 (131 CE) closes with a signature and date: \(Ἐπιφην ᾗ \(ά\) (ln. 38) = “Epiphi 1st”; or, for example, \(P.Oxy.\) II 296 (first cent. CE) closes with: \(ἴστος\) \(α\), \(μηνὸς \(Φαμος\) \(νόδο\) \(κα\) \(ln. 9\) = “1st year, Phamenoth 28th.”
numbers are fully inflected, as all other adjectives: e.g., πρῶτος (-του, -τω, -τον + plurals), δεύτερος (-ρου, -ρω, -ρον + plurals), τρίτος (-του, -τω, -τον + plurals), etc. Thus, unless an ordinal is prefaced by an article that marks gender, number, and case (which are frequently lacking\textsuperscript{34}), the exact meaning of an abbreviated ordinal is ambiguous, especially in the context of public reading. I suggest that it is precisely this ambiguity that accounts for the extreme rarity of abbreviated ordinals in NT codices.

Turning to particular manuscripts, we find very few that contain any abbreviated ordinals, and those that do exhibit very few examples. For instance, no abbreviated ordinal numbers occur in P\textsuperscript{45}, P\textsuperscript{46}, P\textsuperscript{66}, P\textsuperscript{72}, or P\textsuperscript{75}\textsuperscript{35} neither do they occur in the majuscules A 02, B 03, C 04, or W 032.\textsuperscript{36} A search of NA\textsuperscript{27} returns no less than 248 ordinals in the text of the NT. This consistency among so many substantial witnesses at so many occurrences of ordinals is remarkable and cannot be mere coincidence; rather, it reflects a deliberate avoidance of numerical shorthand for ordinal values.

There are a handful of manuscripts that do contain abbreviated ordinals, and the details are worth exploring here. In each case, however, the use of abbreviations

\textsuperscript{34} There are numerous anarthrous ordinal numbers in, for example, the Gospel of Matthew: e.g., Matt 10:2; 14:25; 19:30 (2x); 20:3, 5 (2x); 22:39; 26:42, 44; 27:45 (2x).

\textsuperscript{35} See the longhand examples in P\textsuperscript{45}: πρῶτος (Matt 20:27; Mark 7:27; Luke 9:59, 61; 11:38; 12:1; 13:30 [2x]; 14:28, 31; Acts 11:26; 13:50); δεύτερος (Acts 10:15; 11:9); in P\textsuperscript{66}: πρῶτος (Rom 10:19; 15:24; 1 Cor 12:28; 14:30; 15:3, 45, 46, 47; 2 Cor 8:5; Eph 6:2; Phil 1:5; Heb 7:2; 8/7, 13; 9:1, 6, 8, 15, 18; 10:9); δεύτερος (1 Cor 12:28; 15:47; 2 Cor 13:2; Heb 8:7; 9:3, 7, 28, 10:9); τρίτος (1 Cor 12:28; 15:4; 2 Cor 12:2, 14; 13:1); δέκατος (Heb 7:2, 4, 8, 9); in P\textsuperscript{66}: see John 1:15, 30, 39, 41; 2:1, 10, 11; 3:4; 4:6, 52, 54, 7:51; 9:24; 12:16; 15:18; 18:13; 19:14, 32, 39; 20:8; in P\textsuperscript{72} (2 Pet 2:5, 20; 3:1; Jude 5, 14); in P\textsuperscript{73}: πρῶτος (Luke 6:42; 9:59, 61; 10:5; 11:26, 38; 12:1; 13:30 (2x); 14:18, 28, 31; 15:22; 16:5; 17:25; John 1:15, 30, 41; 2:10; 7:51; 10:40); δεύτερος (Luke 12:38; John 3:4; 4:54; 9:24); τρίτος (Luke 12:38; 12:38; 13:32; 13:32; 23:22; 24:7, 21, 46; John 2:1), δέκατος and higher (Luke 23:44 [2x]; John 1:39; 4:6, 52).

\textsuperscript{36} There are far too many instances of ordinal numbers in the lengthy majuscules and they cannot be listed here; see chapter 4 for some examples.
for ordinal values are clearly exceptions to otherwise consistent habits of using longhand forms. First is Codex Sinaiticus. The clear preference in Sinaiticus is to write ordinals longhand. This is the case with all the ordinal numbers in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Paul (+ Hebrews), and the Catholic Letters. This amounts to roughly 250 instances of longhand forms. There is one passage, however, in which the scribe employed abbreviated forms for ordinal values.37 This passage is Rev 21:19–20, which contains the ordinal numbers “first,” “second,” “third,” all the way to “twelfth.” In Sinaiticus, the first two of this sequence are longhand, then τρίτο through δώδεκατο are shorthand, totaling ten such abbreviations. The particular reason for the sudden use of shorthand is not entirely clear, but—as we saw in chapter 4—it might be related to a felt need to conserve space as the scribe was approaching the end of a quire (the frequency of abbreviated cardinal values also dramatically increases in this chapter). In any case, whatever the precise reason for the scribe’s change in number-writing technique, there are ten abbreviated forms for ordinal values here compared to a couple hundred longhand forms elsewhere in the codex. There are simply too many longhand ordinals in the whole of the codex to list, though in Revelation alone there are roughly sixty-five such longhand instances. It should also be pointed out that the abbreviated forms in Rev 21:19–20 occur immediately after two longhand numbers, which in a sense alert the reader that a sequence has been initiated, and so the abbreviations that follow are thereby rendered less ambiguous. In sum, Codex Sinaiticus contains ten abbreviated ordinals and roughly 300 longhand forms.

37 I do not count two instances in which a later hand has added an ordinal in abbreviated form (Rev 6:9; 16:17).
Codex Bezae is comparable. The scribe almost exclusively used longhand forms for ordinal values, but there are four exceptions. Twice γ is used for τρίτη (Mark 15:25; Acts 2:15),38 once σ for ἕκτη (Mark 15:33), and once θ for ἕνατη (15:33). In each case the number refers to an hour of the day. This is opposed to fifteen occurrences of τρίτος longhand (Matt 20:3, 19; 22:26; 27:64; Mark 14:41; Luke 12:38; 13:32; 18:33; 20:12, 31; 24:7, 21, 46; Acts 10:30, 40), six of ἕκτος (Matt 20:5; 27:45; Luke 1:26, 36; 23:44; John 4:6), and five of ἕνατος (Matt 20:5; 27:45; Luke 23:44; Acts 3:1; 10:30). Moreover, all occurrences of πρώτος, δεύτερος, τέταρτος, πέμπτος, ἕξος, ἑνάκοτος and πεντεκαιδέκατος are all longhand (over 125 occurrences).39

P115 is also an interesting manuscript in this regard. There are only a handful of ordinal numbers visible in this fragmentary text, and most are longhand. So, for example, among those that are visible or partially so: [π]ρωτον (Rev 13:12), [δευτερον] (11:14), [τριον] (8:11), and [τετartisan] (8:12). There is one instance of an abbreviated ordinal; in 8:7, γ stands for τρίτος. However, the abbreviation has been corrected and the symbol has been altered to the full word, transcribed by the editor as τρι[τ]ον[v]. Specifically, the original gamma (γ) was modified into a tau, the letters rho + iota were added, and πον was added above the line. Importantly, this might be an indication that an abbreviated ordinal was considered ambiguous or in some way

38 There is an additional use of γ for τρίτη in Acts 2:15, but it is part of a later correction.
inappropriate by a reader or manuscript user. So, the only extant numerical abbreviation for an ordinal in P\textsuperscript{115} has been altered into a longhand form.

In contrast to these manuscripts is P\textsuperscript{47}. The copyists of this papyrus shows a marked willingness to use abbreviated forms for ordinals; even here, however, the practice is not invariable. The following table (table 8.1) summarizes the practice in P\textsuperscript{47}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Longhand Forms</th>
<th>Shorthand Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>13:12 (2x); 16:2</td>
<td>11:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>11:14; 12:4; 14:9</td>
<td>14:8; 16:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>11:14; 12:4; 14:9</td>
<td>9:15; 16:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>16:8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>9:13, 14; 16:12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>10:7; 11:15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth</td>
<td>11:13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are thus more shorthand ordinals in P\textsuperscript{47} than longhand. It is not entirely clear why P\textsuperscript{47} would exhibit such a different number-writing technique than other manuscripts. It might well be due to the simple fact that John’s Apocalypse contains so many numbers that early scribes sought to conserve space in this manner. It is also important that in the case of P\textsuperscript{47} we approach what is essentially a documentary scribal hand, and perhaps it should not be surprising to find more documentary elements. In any case, P\textsuperscript{47} is the lone manuscript that exhibits no real avoidance of abbreviated forms for ordinal numbers, in effect the exception that illustrates the rule.

Before moving on, it is worth examining some fragmentary manuscripts; without exception, they demonstrate the same principle. In P\textsuperscript{24}, two numbers are visible: cardinal number ἑπτά is abbreviated to ζ̅ (Rev 5:6), while the ordinal number τεταρτ[ου] is written longhand (6:7). Similarly, as already mentioned, P\textsuperscript{37} contains
two instances of the abbreviation ι̅β̅ for the cardinal δώδεκα (Matt 26:20, 47) and one visible ordinal: δευτ(ρου) (26:42). P127 contains the abbreviated form μ̅ standing for the cardinal number τεσσαράκοντα (Acts 10:41) but retained the longhand form for the ordinal πρ(ω) (17:4). Finally, as noted above, majuscule 0207 contains four numeral abbreviations for cardinal numbers, ε̅ (Rev 9:5, 10) and δ̅ (9:14, 15), but the one visible ordinal number is longhand: εκτος (9:13). No abbreviated ordinals are found in any of the fragmentary manuscripts of this period.

8.4 The Avoidance of Abbreviations of Inflected Forms

Another number-writing trend evident among early NT manuscripts is the tendency for numbers in grammatically inflected forms to be written longhand. This is similar to the avoidance of abbreviations for the number “one” and ordinals since these too bear several inflected forms, but some notable differences make it helpful to treat them separately. As we will see, this pattern does not relate exactly to grammatical case, for most numbers are indeclinable and do not have unique forms for individual cases. Rather, the rule is that numbers in inflected forms are almost always written longhand by NT scribes. Like the previous pattern related to ordinals, there are a handful of exceptions to this overall tendency, but there are enough notable examples to demonstrate that this is a distinct tendency among early NT manuscripts.

Before examining the data, we should consider the striking comparison of the nomina sacra. This body of abbreviations is routinely employed for inflected forms in our manuscripts without any great ambiguity. How? Because the scribal mechanism use for the nomina sacra was that of contraction: e.g., χριςτός → χ̅ς. Unlike suspended words (e.g., χριςτός → χ̅ρ) and numerical symbols (δώδεκα → ι̅β̅),
contracted words retain their final letters, which can clearly mark grammatical case. To some degree, therefore, we can see how the *nomina sacra* were able to be used far more readily and flexibly than numerical shorthand.

8.4.1 P⁴⁵ and P⁶⁶

As noted above, the abbreviated forms in P⁴⁵ are the following: $\overline{\eta}$ = δώδεκα (Mark 8:19), $\overline{\eta}$ = δεκαοκτώ/δέκα καὶ ὀκτώ (Luke 13:11, 16); $\overline{\mu}$ = τεσσεράκοντα (Acts 7:36), and $\overline{o}$ = ἐβδομήκοντα (Luke 10:17). Importantly, in each case the words in question are indeclinable adjectives; that is, the spelling does not change regardless of the grammatical case or gender. The same is true of the numerals in P⁶⁶. The abbreviated numbers are: $\overline{\eta}$ = δώδεκα (John 6:70) and $\lambda$ καὶ $\overline{\eta}$ = τριάκοντα καὶ ὀκτώ (5:5)—neither of which differ from the nominative forms. There is thus no ambiguity in these numerical symbols; they can only be pronounced one way.

8.4.2 P⁷⁵

This pattern is clearly pronounced in P⁷⁵. The number “two” is abbreviated several times (Luke 9:16, 32; 10:1, 35; 12:52b; 15:11; John 1:35; 2:6; 4:40, 43; 6:9), but importantly never for the inflected form δυκίς(v), in which cases the longhand is used (Luke 12:52a; 16:13). This pattern is also seen with the number “three.” It occurs in abbreviated form sometimes, but only when it is standing for the lexical form τρεῖς (Luke 9:33; 12:52a; John 2:6). When, however, the spelling differs from this expected form, the longhand is used exclusively: e.g., τριῶν (Luke 10:36, genitive), τριῶν (Luke 12:52b; John 2:19, 20, dative), and τριά (Luke 13:7, 21, accusative).

---

40 Of course, there are alternative forms such as δόδεκα/δικαδόο, but they have the exact same meaning.

41 The declension of δύο is as follows: δύο (nom.), δόο (acc.), δόο (gen.), δοκις(v) (dat.).
This principle is all the more striking when we observe longhand and shorthand together in the same sentence. For example:

(1) εἰςονται γὰρ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἐν ἑνὶ οἱκώ διαμεμερισμένοι ἐπὶ δύοιν | καὶ θ ἐπὶ τρισὶν. (Luke 12:52)
(2) μό καὶ ἑξετεὶν οἰκοδόμηθη ο ναὸς οὐτος καὶ οἱ ἐν τρισὶν ημεραίες εγερεῖ ἀυτὸν. (John 2:20)

In the first example, the phenomenon occurs twice, once with θ [= δύο] and δυσιν and once with γ̅ [= τρεῖ] and τρισιν (note also the longhand form of “one”: ενι). And in the second example, μ καὶ ἑξετεὶν stands for the indeclinable τεςθράκοντα καὶ ἑξε, while the following number τρισιν is given longhand; importantly, both numbers are dative forms, but only the first is indeclinable, and therefore spelled identically in all cases.

Furthermore, the number “five,” which is indeclinable, is freely abbreviated in P75 (e.g., Luke 12:6, 52; 16:28; John 4:18; 5:2; 6:9, 13), while the number “four,” which has several distinct forms for oblique cases, is longhand when it occurs (John 11:17, τεσσάρας).

It must be reiterated that the pattern is not based simply on grammatical case, for several numbers in oblique cases are abbreviated in P75. The important factor is if a number has a distinct inflected form in a particular case or gender. So, for example, τρεῖ in Luke 9:33 is grammatically feminine and accusative, but its form is indistinguishable from the nominative masculine form, and so the scribe can (and did) abbreviate it without any ambiguity. The same principle applies higher numbers in P75, the oblique cases of δόδεκα (Luke 6:13, accusative), τριάκοντα (John 6:19, accusative), τριάκοντα καὶ ὀκτό (John 5:5, accusative), τεσσεράκοντα καὶ ἑξ (John 2:20, dative), πεντήκοντα (Luke 9:14, accusative), ἑξήκοντα (Luke 24:13, accusative) ἑνενήκοντα ἑννέα (Luke 15:4, accusative; 15:7, dative), and ἕκατόν
(Luke 15:4; 16:7, accusative) are all indeclinable, and so they are abbreviated by the copyist of P⁷⁵ without risk of ambiguity.

Further confirmation of this principle is seen in the fact that words for numbers “two-hundred” and higher are declinable and inflected. Yet the copyist avoided the potential ambiguity by writing fully those that occur in declined forms: e.g., διακοσίων (John 6:7, genitive of διακόσιον) and τριακοσίων (John 12:5, genitive of τριακόσιον).

Compound numbers such as ἐκατόμηκοντα δύο are also by nature potentially ambiguous because the second digit could easily be inflected (e.g., ἐκατομήκοντα δυότι). However, when these compound numbers are abbreviated in P⁷⁵, they always stand for unambiguous forms: e.g., ὀβ (Luke 10:1, 17, for ἐκατομήκοντα δύο), λὴ (John 5:5, for indeclinable τρίακοντα καὶ ὅκτω), and μ καὶ ἕξ (2:20, for indeclinable τεσσεράκοντα καὶ ἕξ).

In other words, the copyist of P⁷⁵ consistently avoided using numerical abbreviations for numbers in inflected forms, but freely abbreviated those in the nominative case or those without inflected spellings. The fact that this pattern is repeated for δύο, τρεῖς, τέσσαρες, and for values above “two hundred” confirms that it is no mere coincidence. It seems that the motivation for this policy is that numerical abbreviations by their nature conceal the inflected spellings of declined substantives, and the correct pronunciation of those words is then not immediately obvious. This would suggest that the practice of numerical shorthand had been intentionally adapted for the purpose of clarity in pronunciation and reading.
With P⁴⁷ this pattern is present but not as clearly defined. Three instances of the number “two” occur, once it is abbreviated (Rev 13:11) and twice it is longhand (9:12; 12:14), but no abbreviations stand for declined forms. With the number “three,” it occurs in longhand form as the inflected τρια (Rev 16:13, 19), which fits the pattern, but once the abbreviation γ̅ stands for the inflected τριῶν (9:18). One might suppose that the sense of the word is still ascertainable from the context, since it occurs in the phrase των γ̅ πληγων. Even so, this does not fit the pattern we have seen thus far with the other papyri. Furthermore, the number “four” occurs several times in abbreviated form; once in the nominative: οι δ̅ αγ̅ ’γελοι (Rev 9:15); and twice in the inflected genitive: [τ]ων δ̅ ζωων (14:3), and των δ̅ εδωκαν (15:7). The latter two cases therefore do not follow the pattern. Again, however, it is notable that, in both these two cases, the sense is still discernible from the context provided by the article and/or substantive; that is, the reader might be made aware of the proper pronunciation by the preceding article των (thus, τεσσαρων).

Regarding forms that are indeclinable in P⁴⁷, numbers are freely abbreviated: e.g., πέντε (9:10), ἑπτά (10:4); 12:3 [2x]; 15:1, 6 [2x], 7 [2x], 8; 17:1 [2x]), δέκα (12:3), and δώδεκα (12:1). With higher numbers, μβ occurs twice for τεσσεράκοντα καὶ δύο (11:2; 13:5, accusative), κδ stands for εἰκοσι τέσσαρες (11:16, nominative), and χξς (or rather χςς) stands for ἐξακόσιοι ἐξήκοντα ἑξ (13:18, nominative)—all of which are identical to the lexical form and therefore unambiguous in abbreviation. In sum, P⁴⁷ contains three instances of numerical symbols for inflected forms.
8.4.4 Codex Sinaiticus

This pattern is also evident in Codex Sinaiticus. With the number “two,” several abbreviations are used, but only for the lexical form δύο (e.g., Matt 14:19; 21:1, 28, 31; 26:60; 27:21; Mark 6:41); when the declined form δυ[ι](v) is used, it is always written longhand (Matt 6:24; 22:40; Luke 12:52; 16:13, etc.). The pattern is also perfectly consistent with the number “three.” It is abbreviated several times, always standing for the form τρι[ις] (Matt 12:40; 15:32; 18:20; Mark 9:5; Rev 21:13 [2x]), but where an inflected form occurs (τρι[ιον], τρι[ια], τρι[ιιν]), it is consistently written fully (e.g., Matt 13:33; 18:16; 26:61; 27:40; Mark 14:58; 15:29; Luke 4:25; 10:36; 12:52; 13:7, 21; John 2:19, 20, etc.).

Although the rule is consistent with δύο and τρι[ις], there are a handful of exceptions with the number “four.” The shorthand symbol is used three times for declined forms: εκ των δ᾿ ἀνεμων (Matt 24:31, τεκσάρων), αἱρομε[ι]νον ὑπο δ᾿ και μη | δυναμενοι (Mark 2:3, τεκσάρων), and ἵδον ὅ αγγελου (Rev 7:1, τέκσαρας). This is evidently problematic; whereas in the first instance the sense of the word is readily ascertained from the context of the article and substantive, the same is clearly not true of the latter two examples. In any case, the number itself is usually longhand in Sinaiticus (e.g., Mark 13:27; John 11:17; 19:23; Acts 10:11; 11:5; 12:4; 21:9, 23; 27:29; Rev 4:6, 8, etc.).

Other declinable forms fit the pattern. For example, “fourteen” occurs in the nominative three times and is abbreviated each time (Matt 1:17 [3x]), but twice when it occurs in the genitive (δεκατεκσάρων), it is given longhand both times (2 Cor 12:2; Gal 2:1).
Numbers that lack declinable forms are freely abbreviated: ἑπτά (Matt 16:10; Mark 8:5, 6; 12:20; Luke 2:36), δώδεκα (Matt 10:1, 2, 5; 11:1; 19:28 [2x]; 20:17; 26:14, 20, 47; Mark 3:14, 16; 4:10; 5:42; 6:7, 43; 8:19; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; Luke 2:42; 1 Cor 15:5; Rev 21:12 [2x], 14 [2x], 21; 22:2), τριάκοντα (Matt 13:8, 23; 26:15; 27:3, 5, 9; Mark 4:8, 20; Luke 3:23), τεσσεράκοντα (Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2), πεντήκοντα (Mark 6:40), ἑξήκοντα (Matt 13:23; Mark 13:23; Mark 4:8, 20), and ἑκατόν (Matt 13:23; Mark 4:8, 20). In sum, the pattern in Sinaiticus is clearly observable but with only three instances of abbreviated forms for inflected numbers.

8.4.5 Codex Bezae

The pattern is almost perfectly consistent in Codex Bezae. The number “two” is abbreviated many times in Codex Bezae, but always for the lexical form δύο (e.g., Matt 25:15; Mark 6:7, 9, 41 [2x]; 9:43, 45, 47; 10:8 [2x]; 11:1; 14:1; 15:27, 38). When the declined form δυς(ιν) is used, it is always written longhand (Matt 22:40; Luke 12:52; 16:13; Acts 12:6; 21:33). With the number “three,” several abbreviations occur in Bezae, and most stand for the lexical form τρεις (Matt 15:32; Mark 9:5, 31; Acts 11:11; 19:8; 20:3). There are, however, two exceptions: καὶ οἰκοδομῶν ἰς [τρισίν] ἡμέρας (Mark 15:29), and ὡς ὁρῶν ἰς [τριῶν] διαστήμα (Acts 5:7). In both cases the sense of the abbreviation can be understood from the contexts, both of which contain declined substantives. The number “four” is nearly always longhand, except for in one instance where the abbreviation stands for a declined genitive: εκ τῶν ὀσ [τεσσαρών] ἀνωμων (Mark 13:27), but, for the most part, this number is given longhand (e.g., John 11:17; Acts 11:5; 12:4; 21:23).

Indeclinable numbers are abbreviated freely: e.g., ἑπτά (Matt 15:36, {37}; Mark 8:5, 6, 8, 20 [2x]; 12:20, 22, 23; 16:9; Luke 8:2; Acts 6:3; 12:10), δώδεκα

8.4.6 Codex Washingtonianus

In all, Codex W contains a few dozen alphabetic numerals, but they are very rarely used for declinable numbers. The following numbers are abbreviated freely in W, none of which have declinable forms: ἐπτά (Mark 8:6, 8, 20 [2x]; 12:22, 23; Luke 2:36; 8:2), δώδεκα (Mark 3:14; 5:25, 42; 6:7, 43; 9:35; 10:32; 11:11; 14:10, 17, 20, 43; 16:14), τριάκοντα (Mark 4:8, 20; Luke 3:23; John 6:19), τεσσεράκοντα (Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2), πεντήκοντα (Mark 6:40), ἐξήκοντα (Mark 4:8, 20), and ἑκατόν (Mark 4:8, 20; 6:37, 40).

There are two instances in W where an abbreviation is used for potentially ambiguous numbers. The first is the abbreviation of ὀγδοηκόντα τεσσάρων (genitive of ὀγδοηκόντα τεσσάρων), though it’s meaning is suggested by the context: χηρα ὡς ἐτῶν πέντε (Luke 2:37). The second is the abbreviation of τριακοσίων (genitive of τριακοσίων), though its meaning is also helped by the context: επάνω δηναρίων τί (Mark 14:5); elsewhere the number occurs longhand (John 12:5).
8.4.7 Fragmentary Manuscripts

Fragmentary manuscripts, both papyrus and parchment, fit the same exact pattern we have seen for the previous manuscripts. P₁, for instance, contains three visible instances of the numerical abbreviation for δεκατέσσαρες (δ), which is in the nominative case each time (Matt 1:17). In P⁴, the two visible abbreviations stand for indeclinable numbers: λ for τριάκοντα (Luke 3:23, genitive) and μ for τετεσσεράκοντα (Luke 4:2, accusative). In P₃⁵, the three instances of δόσι are all longhand (Matt 25:22 [3x]), and the indeclinable πέντε is abbreviated to ε (25:15, accusative). The only visible number in P₄⁸ is the abbreviated form μ̅ standing for τετεσσεράκοντα (Acts 23:13; nominative). The only visible number in P₆⁴ is the abbreviated form [ι]β standing for indeclinable δώδεκα (Matt 26:14, genitive). The two visible numbers in P⁹⁸ are abbreviations for the indeclinable ἐπτά (Rev 1:20a, accusative; 1:20b, nominative). The only visible number in P₁⁰¹ is the abbreviated form μ̅ standing for the indeclinable τετεσσεράκοντα (Matt 4:2, accusative). The copyist of P₁²⁷ abbreviated τετεσσεράκοντα to μ̅ (Acts 10:41, accusative) but retained the longhand form for the declined form τριά (17:2, accusative of τριά). In other words, no exceptions to the pattern are found among these papyri.

Only a handful of numbers are visible in the fragmentary remains of P¹¹⁵, but they also abide by the same principle we have seen thus far. So, the single instance of the number δῶσι is longhand (Rev 12:14), and numbers that lack declinable forms are freely abbreviated: ἔπτα (10:3; 15:6) and μ̅μ [τετεσσεράκοντα καὶ δόσι] (11:2). On the other hand, in P¹²², the abbreviation of the number ἐκατόν πεντήκοντα τριῶν to μ̅νγ̅ (John 21:11) is potentially ambiguous since the final digit is a genitival form.
The number is, however, given some context: ἰχθύων μεγάλων ἐκατόν πεντήκοντα τριῶν.

Fragmentary majuscules confirm the same pattern as well. Though no longer visible, the most likely reconstruction of 058 includes the abbreviated form [ρ] for the indeclinable ἐκατόν (Matt 18:28). Three numbers are present in 0162: the indeclinable compound τετσεθάκοντα καὶ ἕξ is abbreviated to μ καὶ ἕξ (John 2:20), while two instances of the declined τριῶν are written longhand (John 2:19, 20, dative of τρεῖς). The abbreviated form ὀβ in 0181 stands for the nominative form of ἐβδομήκοντα δύο (Luke 10:1). Majuscule 0207 has two abbreviations for the indeclinable πάντε (Rev 9:5, 10), and two abbreviations for τέκαρες (δ), once a nominative form (9:15), and once a declined form: του ἀγγέλου (9:14, for accusative τέκαρας)—in which context is provided. The abbreviation κδ in 0308 stands for a nominative form (Rev 11:16, ἐκοτ τέκαρες).

To summarize, there are a few instances of alphabetic numerals standing for inflected number forms (e.g., a handful in P46, 8, D, W, P122, and 0207), but the overwhelming majority of numbers in early NT manuscripts conform to the pattern we have described. This avoidance of abbreviations for inflected forms is thus not as rigid as that of abbreviations for “one,” but the tendency is nevertheless unmistakable and hardly coincidental.

8.5 The Avoidance of Abbreviations of Values in the Thousands

The fourth and final trend to be considered in greater detail is the avoidance of abbreviated forms for values in the thousands. This is one of the more striking tendencies to observe in light of the fact that numbers in the thousands generally
have lengthy words (e.g., πεντακιςχίλιοι, δώδεκα χιλιάδες), which one might suppose scribes would be eager to shorten. But it is also surprising because the abbreviation of these values occurs routinely in documentary papyri.\footnote{A handful of randomly selected examples from documentary papyri are the following: \textit{P.Oxy.} I 85 (ln. 17), \textit{P.Oxy.} II 242 (Ins. 28, 34), \textit{P.Oxy.} II 243 (ln. 42), \textit{P.Oxy.} II 271 (ln. 18), \textit{P.Oxy.} II 290 (ln. 21), \textit{P.Oxy.} II 298 (ln. 4), \textit{P.Oxy.} III 512 (Ins. 6, 7), and \textit{P.Oxy.} III 522 (Ins. 2, 3, 12, et passim), \textit{P.Oxy.} X 1288 (Ins. 14, 30), \textit{P.Oxy.} X 1289 (ln. 10, et passim). In each instance just cited, full abbreviations are used (e.g., /\textit{α}/) rather than hybrid forms (e.g., \textit{χιλιάδες} \textit{ζ}).}

An interesting phenomenon that helps to confirm the existence of this tendency is the use of “hybrid” abbreviations—combinations of longhand and shorthand forms: e.g., \tilde{\epsilon} χίλιοι (= 5,000). This style of abbreviation occurs with notable frequency in our NT manuscripts. The more economic procedure (and the more common one in documentary papyri) is the fully abbreviated form: \tilde{\epsilon} (= 5,000). All that is needed to signal thousands is a preceding oblique stroke to the numeral.\footnote{A curl resting atop a letter has the same effect.} It seems that the most likely reason why Christian copyists would avoid the full abbreviations and opt for this hybrid form was to prevent ambiguity in pronunciation. First, the simple writing of \textit{β} or /\textit{β}, for example, could be easily mistaken for \textit{β} or /\textit{β} (cf. B 03 at Mark 5:25[!]). Second, and more importantly, the terms χιλιάς/χίλιοι are fully declinable, with a great variety of possible forms depending on the context. For example: πεντακιςχίλιοι (Matt 14:21), πεντακιςχιλίων (Matt 16:9), πεντακιςχιλίων (Mark 8:19), δέκα χιλιάς (Luke 14:31), εἰκοσι χιλιάς (Luke 14:31), χιλιάδων (Luke 14:31), χιλιάδες πέντε (Acts 4:4), δώδεκα χιλιάδες (Rev 7:5), χιλιάς διακοσίας ἕξιςκοντα (Rev 12:6), and χιλίων ἕξιςκοσίων (Rev 14:20), etc. Symbols representing such words would be prone to ambiguity and easily misread in the attempt to read aloud.
All the visible numbers in the thousands in P\textsuperscript{45} are longhand: \(\pi\nu\tau\alpha\kappa\iota\chi\varepsilon\iota\lambda\iota\omega\iota\) (Mark 6:44), \(\pi\nu\tau\alpha\kappa\iota\chi\varepsilon\iota\lambda\iota\omega\iota\) (Mark 8:19) and \(\tau\tau\alpha\kappa\iota\chi\varepsilon\iota\lambda\iota\omega\iota\) (Mark 8:20).\textsuperscript{44} The same is true of the thousands in P\textsuperscript{46}: \(\epsilon\pi\tau\alpha\kappa\iota\chi\varepsilon\iota\lambda\iota\omega\iota\) (Rom 11:4), \(\epsilon\kappa\omicron\varsigma\tau\rho\omicron\varsigma\iota\epsilon\iota\omega\iota\) (1 Cor 10:8), and \(\tau\tau\alpha\kappa\iota\kappa\omicron\iota\tau\alpha\kappa\iota\omicron\eta\tau\alpha\kappa\iota\) (Gal 3:17). The one present in P\textsuperscript{66} is longhand: \(\pi\nu\tau\alpha\kappa\iota\varsigma\epsilon\iota\lambda\iota\omega\iota\) (John 6:10). One is visible in P\textsuperscript{72}: \(\chi\lambda\iota\) (2 Pet 3:8). All are longhand in P\textsuperscript{75}: \(\delta\epsilon\kappa\alpha\chi\varepsilon\iota\lambda\iota\omega\iota\) (Luke 14:31), \(\epsilon\kappa\omicron\varsigma\chi\iota\lambda\iota\omega\iota\) (Luke 14:31), and \(\pi\nu\tau\alpha\kappa\iota\chi\varepsilon\iota\lambda\iota\omega\iota\) (John 6:10).\textsuperscript{45}

P\textsuperscript{47} contains two longhand forms: \(\chi\varepsilon\iota\lambda\iota\omega\iota\varepsilon\zeta\alpha\varsigma\kappa\omicron\iota\omega\iota\) (= 1,600, Rev 14:20) and \(\delta\upsilon[\alpha] \mu\omicron\rho\iota\mu\alpha\delta\epsilon\mu\rho\iota\mu\alpha\delta\omega\iota\) (= 200 million; 9:16).\textsuperscript{46} Several hybrid forms: e.g., \(\chi\varepsilon\iota\lambda\iota\omega\iota\zeta\iota\varsigma\iota\iota\iota\iota\) (7,000, Rev 11:13), \(\overline{\rho}\mu\overline{\omicron}\chi\varepsilon\iota\lambda\iota\omega\iota\delta\) (= 144,000, 14:1, 3). And one possible instance of a full abbreviation: \(\sqrt[2]{\alpha\zeta} (= 1,260, 12:6)\), though the actual wording is uncertain, as we have seen.\textsuperscript{47} Given the copyist’s prevalent willingness to use numerical shorthand elsewhere, these longhand and hybrid forms are significant.

There are no certain forms for values in the thousands in P\textsuperscript{115}, but on one occasion it is possible that the scribe wrote \(\overline{\delta\epsilon\kappa}\chi\gamma\zeta\iota\) (= 1,600, Rev 14:20),\textsuperscript{48} which would qualify as a full abbreviation. Elsewhere, however, there is a hint that a hybrid form

\textsuperscript{44} One more is not totally visible: \([\delta\epsilon\kappa\chi\varepsilon\iota\lambda\iota\omega\iota]\) (Luke 14:31); of course, it is possible that \(\delta\epsilon\kappa\) was abbreviated in a hybrid form: \([\iota \chi\varepsilon]\lambda\iota\omega\iota\).

\textsuperscript{45} Note that this number was only partially visible until new fragments of the papyrus were identified, see Marie-Luise Lakmann, “Papyrus Bodmer XIV-VI (P75): neue Fragmente,” \textit{MH} 64 (2007): 22–41 (esp. 27).

\textsuperscript{46} Literally “twenty thousands of ten thousands.”

\textsuperscript{47} See chapter 3, and for more discussion, see James R. Royse, \textit{Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri}, NTTSD 36 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 372–73 n. 71

\textsuperscript{48} See David Parker, “A New Oxyrhynchus Papyrus of Revelation: P\textsuperscript{115} (P. Oxy. 4499),” \textit{NTS} 46 (2000): 159–74 (164).
was employed, though only a single letter is partially visible: \[\rho\mu\delta\chi\varepsilon\iota\alpha\delta\varepsilon\] (14:1),\textsuperscript{49} so certainty is impossible.

8.5.2 Majuscules

In Codex Sinaiticus thousands are consistently written longhand:

- χιλιοι-λια/χιλιαδε/-δων (2 Peter 3:8; Rev 5:11 [2x]; 20:3, 4, 6, 7)
- διςχιλιοι (Mark 5:13)
- τριςχιλιοι/-λιαι (John 6:10; Acts 2:41)
- τετρακιςχιλιοι/-λιων/-λιους (Matt 15:38; 16:10; Mark 8:9, 20; Acts 21:38)
- πεντακιςχιλιοι/-λιων/-λιους/χιλιαδες πεντε (Matt 14:21; 16:9; Mark 6:44; 8:19; Luke 9:14; Acts 4:4)
- επτακιςχιλιους/χιλιαδες επτα (Rom 11:4; Rev 11:13)
- δεκα χιλιασιν (Luke 14:31)
- δωδεκα χ(ε)λιαδες/-δων (Rev 7:5 [2x], 6 [3x], 7 [2x], 8 [3x]; 21:16)
- εικοσι χιλιαδων (Luke 14:31)
- εικοσι τρις χιλιαδες (1 Cor 10:8)
- χιλιας διακοις εξηκοντα (Rev 11:3; 12:6)
- χιλιων διακοισιον (Rev 14:20)
- εκατον τεσσαρακοντα τεσσαρες χιλιαδες (Rev 7:4; 14:1, 3)\textsuperscript{50}

This amounts to forty-three instances of values in the thousands written longhand in Sinaiticus without a single occurrence of an abbreviated form. This is particularly significant in 8 because we have seen that the scribe was evidently willing to utilize numerical shorthand elsewhere (on roughly fifty occasions). But none of these values in the thousands are given in shorthand; this cannot be a coincidence.

The same technique characterizes the scribal habits of Codex A 02. Of forty-three occurrences of values in the thousands, none is given in abbreviated form.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{49} Of course, this could also be a full longhand form (\[\epsilon\kappa\alpha\tau\omicron\tauον τεσσεράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάδες\]), though, given the scribe’s tendency to abbreviated elsewhere and length of the line, I find this possibility unlikely.

\textsuperscript{50} There are some slight variations on this exact value within Sinaiticus, but all three are written longhand.
This fact is perhaps less surprising in Alexandrinus because the scribe does not use numerical abbreviations in the body text elsewhere. There is one instance in A of a partial abbreviation: εκατον τεσσαρακοντα ὀχλιαδες (Rev 7:4). This appears to be similar to the technique of hybrid abbreviations we have seen elsewhere, but this is not truly what the scribe has done. The alphabetic numeral ὀ is in fact a first hand correction of an omitted word via interlinear addition. Thus, the abbreviation appears to be used not out of preference but out of necessity. It is also worth noting that the omitted number is τεσσαρες, rather than an inflected form, which can be unambiguously represented by the alphabetic numeral.

Similarly, Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (C 04) contains thirty-three instances of values in the thousands, and all are written in longhand forms. The same is also true of Codex Washingtonianus (W 032), which contains thirteen instances of numbers in the thousands and all are written longhand.

Two majuscule manuscripts contain an exception to this trend, one instance in each. First, and most surprisingly, Codex Vaticanus (B 03) contains a full abbreviation for the number 2,000: β̅ (= διεκατοχίλιοι, Mark 5:13). This is surprising not only because every other instance of a number in the thousands is longhand (nineteen occurrences), but also because the scribe otherwise rigidly avoids numerical abbreviations for any values whatsoever; this is the only number in the entire NT that

---

51 E.g., Mark 5:13; 6:44; 8:9, 19, 20; Luke 9:14; 14:31 (2x); John 6:10; Acts 2:41; 4:4; 21:38; Rom 11:4; 1 Cor 10:8; 2 Peter 3:8 (2x); Rev 5:11 (2x); 7:5 (3x), 6 (3x), 7 (3x), 8 (3x); 11:3, 13; 12:6; 14:1, 3, 20; 20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; 21:16.

52 E.g., Matt 14:21; 15:38; 16:9, 10; Mark 5:13; 8:9, 19, 20; Luke 9:14; Acts 2:41; Rom 11:4; 1 Cor 10:8; 2 Pet 3:8 (2x); Rev 7:4, 5 (3x), 6 (3x), 7 (3x), 8 (3x); 11:3, 13; 12:6; 14:1, 3, 20.

53 E.g., Matt 14:21; 15:38; 16:9, 10; Mark 5:13; 6:44; 8:9, 19, 20; Luke 9:14; 14:31 (2x); John 6:10.

54 Matt 14:21; 15:38; 16:9, 10; Mark 6:44; 8:9, 19, 20; Luke 9:14; 14:31 (2x); John 6:10; Acts 2:41; 4:4; 21:38; Rom 11:4; 1 Cor 10:8; 2 Pet 3:8 (2x).
is abbreviated. Importantly, the form that /β stands for is the nominative διςχίλιοι, which is the lexical form, and so the symbol is unambiguous with regard to its referent.

As we have seen previously, Codex Bezae (D 05) exhibits a clear scribal preference for abbreviated number forms with values above two. This does not, however, apply to most values in the thousands; fourteen occurrences are written out longhand.⁵⁵ There are two exceptions to this. Once, the scribe uses the full abbreviation ʹ·̄ε: in place of πεντακιςχίλιοι (Mark 6:44). The second is a hybrid abbreviation χιλιαδες ̄ε (Acts 4:4).

To summarize, there are only two clear instances in which any early NT manuscripts contain a fully abbreviated form for a value in the thousands (plus two other possible instances). The vast majority of all such numbers were given in longhand form or in hybrid form, in which the grammatically inflected portion of the word is made explicit. Again, as this tendency recurs throughout all of our early manuscripts, it cannot be mere coincidence; rather, we see a pattern that calls for an explanation.

8.6 The Latin Text of Bezae

A final case study will help confirm our hypothesis before moving to our conclusion. Let us recall for a moment an issue dealt with briefly in chapter 4: the Latin column of Codex Bezae. There we saw that there is a remarkable degree of agreement between the specific number-forms used in the Greek and Latin texts of this diglot

manuscript. When the Greek column contains an alphabetic numeral, the Latin side usually follows suit. There are, however, several points of difference between the two sides, namely forty-four points of disagreement to be exact. We saw that some of these differences are related to factors such as the need to conserve space, the need to maintain correspondence between the sense-lines, and the use of Latin idioms. However, a remarkable number of differences relate directly to our topic at hand. No less than eighteen of the forty-four differences are instances in which the Greek side contains an abbreviation for the numbers “two” or “three” and the Latin has the longhand form. This is highly suggestive.

Put simply, the Latin column avoids abbreviations for the numerals “two” and “three” because these words in Latin are fully declinable, and more so than in Greek. Greek has two possible forms of “two” (δύο and δυκίν), but Latin has several: duo (nom.), duos (acc.), duorum (gen.), and duobus (dat./abl.) in the masculine and neuter genders, and dua (nom.), duas (acc.), duarum (gen.), and duabus (dat./abl.) in the feminine. And with unique forms for the neuter gender, tres has even more possible forms than duo. It is this greater degree of ambiguity in Latin that accounts for the many discrepancies between the two columns. See, for example, Matt 15:32; 25:15; Mark 6:9, 41; 9:31, 43, 45, 47; 10:8 [2x]; 11:1; 15:25, 27, 38; Acts 5:7; 11:11; 19:8; and 20:3. In each instance, the Greek column contains the numerical abbreviation β̅ or γ̅ and the corresponding Latin has a longhand form of “two” or “three.” This remarkable comparison between the two columns of Bezae, therefore, helps to confirm our hypothesis about the necessities of oral pronunciation and clarity in reading. Scribes did not simply insert numerical shorthand on a whim,
but care was taken to avoid potentially confusing abbreviations and maximize the functionality of the texts they were copying.

8.7 Implications

Before arriving at our final conclusion, it will be helpful to offer a preliminary synthesis of the preceding observations. We have seen that although many Christian scribes often employed numerical abbreviations in their texts, they did so in a distinctively restricted way, only using alphabetic symbols for a limited set of number forms. These restrictions are the following: avoidance of abbreviating

1. the number “one,”
2. ordinal values,
3. inflected forms, and
4. values in the thousands.

Some manuscripts contain a handful of exceptions to one or more of these tendencies, but on a broad scale these patterns are indisputable. I argue that the best explanation for these trends is that they reflect a use of the alphabetic numeral system that has been intentionally adapted to avoid ambiguities inherent in such symbols, most likely for the larger purpose of public reading.

If this hypothesis is accepted, it can then be used to inform our understanding of certain witnesses. That is, we might reasonably ask about the implications of a manuscript that does indeed contain several or many numerical abbreviations that could be deemed ambiguous in public reading. Could this be an indication that that manuscript was not used, or at least intended to be used, as a publicly read text? Several manuscripts examined here contain exceptions to one or more of the four principles we outlined, such as א 01 and ד 05, but the exceptions in these witnesses are so few and isolated that they do little to outweigh the overwhelming consistency
elsewhere. It is in P47 that we find repeated exceptions to three of the four principles highlighted here (though not any for the εἰκ/μία/ἐνv principle): it contains symbols for ordinals (Rev 9:13, 14, 15; 10:7; 11:15; 14:8; 16:3, 4, 8, 12), a few inflected cardinal forms (9:18; 14:3; 15:7), and a full abbreviation for a value in the thousands (12:6).

It should also be noted, however, where P47 does abide by the principles: some ordinals are longhand (Rev 11:13, 14 [2x]; 12:4; 13:12 [2x]; 14:9; 16:2), as are some inflected cardinals (16:13, 19), and some values in the thousands are either fully longhand (14:20) or given in a hybrid form that leaves the inflected portion longhand (e.g., χειλιαδες “She, 11:13; also 14:1, 3). The key point to be made, however, is that no consistent effort has been made to minimize ambiguity as it relates to numeral shorthand; its employment seems to be more or less haphazard.

It is worth asking if these features of P47 are indicative of the manuscript’s intended function. Do these observations suggest that P47 was created to be a “private” codex, or at least that its purpose was not to be read in corporate worship? (Whether it was actually used in that capacity is another question.) I think this conclusion is quite likely, given the startling degree of consistency in the four principles we have seen in so many early manuscripts. Nevertheless, we should hesitate to pass such a judgment on these grounds alone; the numerals in P47 must be seen within a wider context of scribal hand, codex dimensions, lectional aids, and so on—a discussion that would extend beyond our current focus.

### 8.7 Conclusion

Although we have seen a handful of exceptions here and there, the earliest NT manuscripts all exhibit four curious tendencies in number-writing techniques that
contrast starkly with those of documentary papyri. These tendencies are the general avoidance of abbreviated forms for numbers that would be potentially ambiguous, specifically in regard to how those numbers ought to be pronounced. The common factor that unifies these four trends is the potential ambiguity inherent in the abbreviation of “one,” ordinals, inflected forms, and values in the thousands. It is not at all likely that these four trends are present in all of our early codices merely by coincidence. They much more likely reflect an intentional adaptation of the alphabetic numeral system that was geared toward ease of reading and pronunciation.\(^{56}\) It is therefore correct but imprecise to say that the practice of numerical abbreviation was borrowed from documentary papyri; Christian copyists did not employ it blindly, but consciously adapted the practice to suit the needs of their communities.

Therefore, in spite of at least one recent argument to the contrary,\(^ {57}\) number-writing techniques should be understood within the wider framework of reader’s aids in early Christian manuscripts. This is not to say that the inclusion of numerical abbreviations is itself a reader’s aid, for such abbreviations do not actually facilitate reading. Rather, it is more accurate to say that the unique adaptation of the scribal practice of numerical abbreviation in NT manuscripts reflects an awareness and intentional policy to avoid forms that were potentially ambiguous in the reading of those texts, and especially in their public reading. This helps both to confirm the view that these manuscripts were in fact used for reading in Christian worship and to


\(^{57}\) Nässelqvist, Public Reading.
better clarify the ways in which early copyists borrowed and adapted scribal styles from the wider Graeco-Roman world for specifically Christian ends.
CHAPTER 9:
CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Review of Part One
We began with the question, “how did NT scribes typically write numerals and why?,” and we have since covered a great deal of terrain. Let us briefly review the crucial points of our analysis, summarize our findings, and draw together the implications of the preceding research.

Chapter 2 was a summary of research dealing with NT numerals as they appear in actual manuscripts. It was shown that the scribal habits of number-writing is a topic that has been drawn into a variety of scholarly discussions, but this has been done without any inductive or widespread study of the feature itself. Thus, the particular discussions that have involved the topic of scribal number-writing habits—the origin of the *nomina sacra*, the social context and training of early scribes, the history of certain codices, to name a few—have done so without a firm foundation that is grounded upon a detailed examination of numerals as they were written by scribes. We thus identified several gaps in our knowledge and highlighted the key questions that we should address in our investigation.

Chapters 3 and 4 provided that foundation by systematically analyzing every number in Greek NT manuscripts dated up through the fifth century. This inductive method allowed us to clear away some unhelpful assumptions, to isolate the precise nature of the system as used by Christian scribes, and to correlate the number-writing techniques of individual scribes with other codicological and textual features. Most of all, we were able to identify the outlines of a “Christian number-writing
technique” that could be distinguished from contemporary scribal styles, such as that of documentary papyri and Graeco-Roman literary texts. And yet, what is particularly fascinating about general technique is that, in many ways, no two manuscripts were found to be quite alike in their treatment of numerals. In other words, within the broad outlines of the Christian numbering style, the specific details of number writing are as unique as the scribes themselves. More specifically, scribes who were willing to abbreviate some numbers were evidently not compelled to do so consistently or even frequently. Very few principles are evident that governed the usage of numerical shorthand, and it is usually impossible to tell why a given copyist has used (or not used) abbreviations.

Since number-writing methods were to some degree unique to individual scribes, close attention to such details permitted some valuable insights into the production and history of some codices. In some manuscripts, we were able to confirm (or at least corroborate) the hypotheses of other scholars, such as the errors and codicological irregularities of Codex Sinaiticus, as well as the patchwork nature of Codex Washingtonianus. In some cases, we gained a more detailed understanding of how that scribe went about his or her work and what techniques were either embraced or avoided, as in our examinations of P66 and P75. For other manuscripts, we uncovered data that were not readily applicable to current hypotheses, but that nonetheless invited deeper reflection into issues of codicology, book production, and manuscript history, as with Codex Bezae. Future studies of both these and other manuscripts would do well to incorporate number-related data as an important component of scribal technique.
Three manuscripts in particular seem to invite further analysis. The strange pattern we saw in Codex Sinaiticus, in which the frequency numerical shorthand gradually decreases as the codex progresses, begs for an explanation. We were unable, however, to discern similar patterns in other scribal features that could corroborate any sensible explanation for this diminishing rate of usage. We also have Codex Bezae—that perennially baffling manuscript. Its high density of numerical shorthand is abnormal for its era and resistant to easy explanation. There is some evidence that numerals were used to trim the text into comprehensible sense-lines (rather than wrapping the text onto the next line) and to maintain a correspondence between the Latin and Greek texts. While these two principles mark a definite increase in our knowledge of that manuscript’s production, they account for only a percentage of the total abbreviated numerals. Another manuscript that might reasonably be revisited is P115. What complicates any reconstruction of this manuscript, in addition to its extremely fragmentary state, is a repeated observation we have made throughout this study: scribes are frustratingly unpredictable in their use of number-style. The problem is multiplied exponentially in the text of John’s Apocalypse, where numerals are the most frequent. It might be worth the effort to attempt a new critical edition and reconstruction based on some of the principles that we have observed here regarding a generally “Christian” numbering style.

We were also able to see some distinction in practice between the papyri and majuscules. That distinction seems to be one of degree rather than kind; it is not as though the practice of numerical abbreviation ceased completely in the parchment manuscripts, it only gradually fell out of fashion (with some notable exceptions). The effort to eradicate such abbreviations is seen most clearly in uncial such as Codex
Vaticanus and Codex Alexandrinus, but even in these there are occasional instances of numerical shorthand.

These early chapters also allowed us to identify weaknesses in past attempts to edit and reconstruct portions of manuscripts. Specifically, our examination of a broadly Christian style of number-writing provided grounds to question some dubious suggestions about the likely wording in lost portions of text, at times to confirm earlier suspicions, and also to posit caution where certainty was unwarranted (e.g., P⁴⁵, P⁴⁶, P⁴⁷, P⁶⁴+⁶⁷, P⁹⁸, P¹¹⁵, etc.).

9.2 Review of Part Two

Our analysis in part one uncovered five issues that invited deeper examination. In each case, we have been able to answer a specific question and thus offer some contributions to the wider study of the early NT text.

First, in chapter 5, we examined the issue of number writing as a feature of textual genealogy, asking if manuscripts bear “visual links” with one another. We saw that, on a broad scale, the answer must be in the negative. Few manuscripts showed significant overlap—in terms of specific number-style—with other witnesses over the course of several verses, much less chapters. Specific textual clusters or text-types, however loosely or tightly these are to be defined, simply did not reflect uniform or even similar patterns of numerals across lengthy stretches of text. That being said, however, we did see several points at which there was notable agreement between witnesses at isolated occurrences of numerals. These coincidences of number-style are not likely to be random or unconnected; they probably show at least some sort of relationship, even if it is only a distant one that traces back to common archetypes (not necessarily direct dependence). This allows—at times—light to be
shed on the contents of some manuscript archetypes and the scribal techniques that characterized them.

There is perhaps more that can be done in a similar vein. We have noted that numerals seem to be an important genealogical feature of Codex W and some later witnesses such as Codices F 010 and G 012. One possibility would be an analysis of numerals in witnesses to John’s Apocalypse. Herman Hoskier’s exhaustive collation of the manuscripts known to him lists specifics of scribal number-forms, and a relatively simple test could explore this issue in greater detail. His detailed descriptions of manuscript families would provide a straightforward point of departure.

In chapter 6 we took a brief detour from NT manuscripts and examined the numerals in contemporary copies of the OT. This helped provide a larger context by which to evaluate our findings in part one, and, fortunately, significant conclusions were attainable. First, it was found that in Christian copies of OT books the number-writing techniques did not differ substantially from those found in NT manuscripts, with one exceptional papyrus (P.Beatty VI). The broad outlines of a “Christian number-writing style” as distinguished from that in documentary papyri still held. Second, and perhaps more importantly, it was shown that there is no real evidence that Jewish scribes categorically avoided the use of numerical shorthand, contrary to the consensus view. The pool of data that constitutes Jewish copies of the Greek OT was found to be pitifully small, containing no more than twenty or so numerals, and thus no serious case could be made about such distinctions between Christian and Jewish scribes. This calls into question the decisions that some scholars have made as it concerns the criteria by which to judge between the Christian or Jewish
provenance of a manuscript (e.g., *P.Yale I 1*, LoC 4082B). Barring the discovery of some lengthy manuscripts of Jewish origin that prove otherwise, scribal numbering-writing technique can no longer be considered a valid criterion distinguishing between Jewish and Christian manuscripts; the decision must be made on other grounds. Roberts’s dictum is thus untenable.

A further implication of this discovery is that it corroborates the hypotheses of scholars such as Kurt Treu and Robert Kraft, who (in their own ways) have argued that the early scribal “schools” of Jews and Christians were not hermetically separated from one another, but that they shared a great deal in terms of technique and practice. This area also invites further exploration. As scholars have begun to recognize a growing degree of similarities in scribal mechanics and book production between Jews and Christians, we are led to wonder what are the resulting implications (if any) for our understanding of the two groups and their interrelationship?

Another desideratum is a typology of number-writing in documentary papyri. Aside from the broad generalizations made by papyrologists, this thesis has based its understanding of numerals in the documents on just a few limited, unsystematic studies. A more thorough analysis of number-writing in this genre would be an achievement in its own right, but it would also provide valuable context for our understanding of early Christian and Jewish manuscripts.

The primary question pursued in chapter 7 was if numerals were ever treated in a similar way as the *nomina sacra*. This possibility was suggested by the commonplace occurrence of “*numer i sacri*” in extra-NT sources such as documentary papyri from Oxyrhynchus and Christian graffiti. Several intriguing
possibilities within NT manuscripts were identified, but the inescapable conclusion was that no traces of any coherent system analogous to the nomina sacra could be detected to a significant degree. Scribes were more or less unpredictable and unconcerned with distinguishing sacred and non-sacred numerals through abbreviations. This is not terribly surprising. Such a pattern would more than likely have been identified by scholars previously if it were present in many codices. This is not to say, of course, that numerals were never affected by some sort of exegetical or theological reflection. There are several instances where this seems likely, if not probable, especially given the external attestation from our other sources (such as documentary papyri and graffiti). Crucially, what is lacking is a coherent system that extends beyond single numerals in isolated manuscripts. Yet it should be recognized how this sheds helpful light on the patterns that are identifiable, that is, the nomina sacra. It is easy to forget how significant this practice is because there is almost nothing to compare it to. Yet we find it in all of our manuscripts and with a great level of consistency, while in most manuscripts numerals are not given a similar consideration. This surely sheds light on early Christian worship as it relates to the names of God and the manner in which they were expressed. It also invites further reflection on the distinctions between these two categories for early believers: what about names and titles invited such a ubiquitous system of scribal treatment, and why did the same not happen with numerals?

Our final substantive chapter offered a theory that attempted to make sense of the unpredictable nature of the number-writing styles in our manuscripts. What seems to best account for the seemingly odd collection of numerical shorthand in our codices is the pragmatic need to read these texts in a public setting. Four trends
observed in part one suggest this: the strict avoidance of abbreviations for the number “one,” and the nearly total avoidance of abbreviations for ordinals, inflected forms, and values in the thousands. These four trends are so consistent across nearly all the manuscripts analyzed that it is impossible to escape the conclusion that it was a matter of intentional policy. I argue that the function of these four rules was to eliminate the presence of ambiguous abbreviations that could stand for a variety of forms when spoken aloud (e.g., $\tilde{a} = \varepsilon \zeta$, $\mu \alpha$, $\dot{v}$, etc.?). Beyond these four categories, scribes were more or less free to abbreviate at will, either where it was felt to be convenient or where the symbols were borrowed directly from their exemplars—though deciding which is nearly always difficult. Scribal numbering-style ought therefore to be understood within the context of “reader’s aids” (though not reader’s aids themselves); they reflect conscious decisions to maximize readability and clarity in the process of public reading. This helps to confirm and add some color to our understanding of the function of texts within the early Christian worship environment. Scriptural manuscripts were not—at least at first—relics and items of veneration themselves, they were functional objects that were made to be used, and used specifically to read aloud the words of the OT and NT.


Zereteli, Giorgi. “Un palimpseste grec du V\textsuperscript{e} siècle sur parchemin (Epist. ad Fit. [\textit{sic]} 1. 4–6, 7–9),” \textit{Académie royale Belgique: Bulletin de la classe des lettres} V\textsuperscript{e} sér. 18 (1932): 427–32.
