ΜΕΤΑ ΤΗΝ ΕΓΕΡΣΙΝ ΑΥΤΟΥ
A Scribal Interpolation in Matthew 27:53?

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Abstract: Since the seminal work of Adalbert Merx, Willoughby C. Allen, and Erich Klostermann, a growing number of scholars have asserted that the prepositional phrase μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ in Matt 27:53 is an early scribal interpolation and an example of the orthodox corruption of Scripture. However, this claim is based on a misunderstanding of the internal evidence and exaggerated claims regarding the external evidence. This article provides a careful and detailed analysis of the internal and external evidence and concludes that the prepositional phrase was contained in the earliest text of Matthew that can be reconstructed from the currently available data.

Keywords: Matthew 27:53, scribal interpolation, textual criticism, orthodox corruption.

Introduction

A growing number of scholars view the prepositional phrase μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ in Matt 27:53 as an early scribal interpolation.[1] W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison reversed their earlier view that the phrase was authentic and stated "we (in a change of mind) suspect it is an early

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[1] Over a century ago, Adalbert Merx proposed that the prepositional phrase was an interpolation in an early written tradition that was later utilized in the composition of Matthew's Gospel. See Adalbert Merx, *Die vier kanonischen Evangelien nach ihrem ältesten bekannten Texte: Übersetzung und Erläuterung der syrischen im Sinaikloster gefundenen Palimpsesthandschrift; Zweiter Teil, erste Hälfte, Erläuterung. Matthaeus* (Berlin: Reimer, 1902), 427–29. Five years later Willoughby C. Allen suggested that the author of Matthew was an "editor" who produced his Gospel by combining a revision of Mark with material that may have originated with the apostle Matthew and with an additional "cycle of Palestinian traditions." The editor/author had added the prepositional phrase to the traditional material to ensure that Jesus remained the first-fruits of them that slept. However, he also entertained the possibility that an early scribe purposefully or mistakenly altered "after their resurrection" to "after his resurrection." See Willoughby C. Allen, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), lvi-lvii, lx, 296. Erich Klostermann and Hugo Gressmann suggested that the phrase was interpolated by a post-Matthean scribe (Erich Klostermann and Hugo Gressmann, *Die Evangelien I. Matthäus* [HNT 2.1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1909], 350). Klostermann suggested that a scribe inserted the prepositional phrase in order to preserve Jesus's status as the "firstborn from among the dead" (Col 1:18). He noted that Origen commented (ser. lat. 139): "egrediantur … non ante resurrectionem primogeniti ex mortuis (Col 1:18), sed post resurrectionem ipsius." A similar position was affirmed in Alexandros Pallis, *Notes on St Mark and St Matthew. New Edition* (London: Milford, 1932), 108. Recent works that view the phrase as an interpolation include Maria Riebl, *Aufstehung Jesu in der Stunde seines Todes? Zur*

gloss."[2] Craig Evans stated that Davies and Allison are "probably correct" and suggested that the "clumsy gloss of vv. 52b–53 led to the qualifying gloss of v. 52a."[3] Likewise, Ronald L. Troxel pointed out that the earliest witnesses to the phrase were the fourth century codices. He argued:

> Certain tendentious scribal modifications of the text occurred before that, and such a scribal insertion could easily have found its way into all extant manuscripts. We cannot prefer a reading simply because it is widely attested (no matter how early the first witnesses) when strong arguments can be mounted against its legitimacy.[4]

Most scholars who view the prepositional phrase as an interpolation suggest that the scribe who inserted the phrase was motivated by theological concerns. The scribe was a Pauline redactor who sought to preserve the primacy of Jesus by conforming Matthew's statement to Paul's descriptions of Jesus as the "firstborn from the dead" (Col 1:18) and "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15:20, 23). Consequently, the insertion of the phrase constitutes a very early example of "the orthodox corruption of Scripture."[5]

This essay will examine the evidence for and against the authenticity of the prepositional phrase. It will suggest that the phrase is suitable in its context and is consistent with Matthean style. It will demonstrate that the external evidence used in support of the claim that the prepositional phrase is a scribal interpolation is often overstated. The manuscript evidence supporting the omission is actually late and meager.

Internal Evidence

The praxis of textual criticism normally begins with a discussion of external evidence and then proceeds to a discussion of internal evidence.[6] However, this exercise will begin with the treatment of the internal evidence for two reasons. First, the arguments employed by scholars who affirm the interpolation theory suggest that they generally regard the internal evidence as weightier. Second, the prior discussion of internal evidence facilitates a better understanding of some aspects of the external evidence.

Botschaft von Mt 27, 51b–53 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1978), 12, 17; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001–2007), 3:568-69; Rudolph Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 290; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew* (trans. D. Green; Atlanta: John Knox, 1975), 516; Ronald Troxel, "Matthew 27:51–54 Reconsidered: Its Role in the Passion Narrative, Meaning and Origin," *NTS* 48 (2002):30–47, esp. 36–38. Luz's acceptance of the interpolation view was cautious. He regarded the hypothesis of a very early scribal interpolation as possessing the fewest problems but admitted that the view "still has major difficulties."

[2]   Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19–28*, 634–35. They cite Klostermann, Riebl, and Schweizer in support.

[3]   Craig A. Evans, *Matthew* (New Cambridge Bible Commentary; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 467. The context shows that Evans intended to write "53a" rather than "52a."

[4]   Troxel, "Matthew 27:51–54 Reconsidered," 37.

[5]   For the meaning of this description, see Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 26–32.

[6]   See, for example, Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 280: "Criticism of the text must always begin from the evidence of the manuscript tradition and only afterward turn to a consideration of internal criteria."

Chronological Tension

Raymond Brown has rightly described the μετά τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ phrase as "the most difficult phrase in Matt 27:51–53."[7] The phrase is often viewed as introducing chronological tensions into the narrative. Many scholars have interpreted the temporal phrase as implying that the saints were raised at the time of Jesus's crucifixion and remained in the ruptured tombs patiently waiting only to emerge three days later after the resurrection of Jesus.[8] With only thinly veiled sarcasm, Brown referred to this delayed exit from the tombs as "an extraordinary courtesy!"[9] Schweizer called the prepositional phrase "very strange" and argued that in the unlikely event that Matthew wrote the phrase, it actually belonged in verse 52.[10] Several plausible solutions have been proposed to address this perceived chronological difficulty.

First, a period may replace the comma after the mention to the rupture of the tombs. Consequently, the phrase "after his resurrection" modifies the resurrection of the saints, the abandonment of the tombs, and the entrance into the holy city. Given this punctuation, the earthquake that occurred during Jesus's crucifixion opened the tombs. However, those entombed remained dead until after Jesus's resurrection.[11] Although this punctuation is possible, it is improbable. This punctuation disrupts the unity of the series of five passive verbs linked with the coordinating conjunction καί ("and") and spoils this otherwise carefully arranged structure. The structure makes it difficult to believe that Matthew's original readers would have read the text in this way.

Second, the phrase τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ may refer to a resurrection performed by Jesus rather than a resurrection experienced by Jesus. A few Greek scribes and the interpreter behind the Ethiopic version evidently read the text in this manner, since they attempt to clarify the text by converting "his resurrection" (ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ) into "their resurrection" (ἔγερσιν αὐτῶν).[12] This would eliminate all chronological tension by placing all of the events in 52–53 at the time of the crucifixion. This is grammatically possible if the noun ἔγερσις is capable of a transitive meaning and if αὐτοῦ is a subjective genitive.[13] Although the noun ἔγερσις is a *hapax legomenon*, the related verb ἐγείρω is often transitive and clearly is so in the preceding verse. The one hindrance to accepting this view is the fact that the agent who performed the action of the divine passives in 51–52 is God (the Father). However, the antecedent to the pronoun αὐτοῦ in 53 is clearly Jesus. Thus the interpretation creates tensions with other elements of the text. The more natural reading regards αὐτοῦ as an objective genitive (or subjective genitive assuming

[7]   Raymond Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 2:1129 (n. 78).

[8]   Calvin flatly rejected this interpretation as a "conjecture" with "no probability." See John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (trans. William Pringle; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 3:325.

[9]   Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:1130.

[10] Schweizer, *Matthew*, 516.

[11] Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists*, 3:325; John W. Wenham, "When Were the Saints Raised? A Note on the Punctuation of Matthew xxvii.51–53," *JTS* 32 (1981): 150–52; Craig Blomberg, *Matthew* (NAC 22; Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 421. See also Josef Blinzler, "Zur Erklärung von Mt 27,51b–53: Totenauferstehung am Karfreitag?" *Theologie und Glaube* 35 (1943): 91–93; Reginald C. Fuller, "The Bodies of the Saints, Mt 27, 52–53," *Scr* 3 (1948): 86–87.

[12] See 30. 220. 1689. *l* 32.

[13] A transitive use of ἔγερσις appears in Judg 7:19 (LXX-A). Although the subjective genitive is not used, the verbal form ἤγειρεν that immediately follows is clearly transitive and the cognate dative naturally assumes a transitive force. The noun refers in this context to an act of raising and not an act of resurrection.

the verbal idea is intransitive) and interprets the phrase as referring to the resurrection that Jesus experienced.[14]

Third, one may punctuate verse 53 so that the phrase "after his resurrection" modifies only the finite verbs "entered" and "appeared." Consequently, the dead were raised and exited the tombs at the time of the crucifixion but did not enter the city of Jerusalem or appear to large numbers of people until after Jesus's resurrection. Brown expressed this view in the following translation: "And having come out from their tombs [on Friday], after Jesus' resurrection [on Sunday] they entered into the holy city." Nothing in the grammar or structure precludes this punctuation. The Greek participle that refers to coming out of the tombs is in the aorist tense, which may express antecedent or contemporaneous action with finite verbs in the aorist tense. However, the context makes it clear that the action of the participle is temporally antecedent to that of the main verbs.[15] The participle gives no indication of the length of time that transpired between the two actions and the passing of a couple of days in the interval is fully plausible. Thus a number of scholars and some translations have adopted this view,[16] and it has several advantages over the preceding view.

Most importantly, this view is supported by Matthew's normal style. In addition to 27:53, Matthew uses μετά with the accusative to express temporal priority nine times (1:12; 17:1; 24:29; 25:19; 26:2, 32, 73; 27:62, 63). Except for Matt 27:62 in which the prepositional phrase functions as a predicate adjective with εἰμί, the prepositional phrase always precedes the verb or verbs which it modifies.[17] In Matthean style the word order mimics the temporal relationship between the actions or events referred to in the prepositional phrase and the main verb. This pattern supports the theory that the μετά phrase in 27:53 modifies the verb(s) that follow it rather than the preceding participle. The only slight difference from other examples of Matthean style is the absence of the conjunction δέ (1:12; 24:29; 25:19; 26:32, 73) or καί (17:1). However, Matthew contains two examples of the temporal use of μετά phrases that lack conjunctions. In Matt 26:2, the construction lacks the conjunction, because it expresses the content of knowledge (οἴδατε ὅτι). In Matt 27:63 the phrase appears in dialogue and is introduced by εἶπεν. Thus it appears that Matthew normally uses a conjunction with temporal μετά phrases in narrative, but not in dialogues. This makes the usage in 27:53 distinct. However, the καί that precedes the participle approximates the construction in 17:1, merely with the addition of an adverbial participle.

Overall, the best solution to the perceived chronological problem is to punctuate the text in such a way that the phrase "after his resurrection" refers only to the entrance of the saints into the holy city. This view, of course, leaves unanswered the question as to where the resurrected

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[14]   A survey of the 617 occurrences of ἔγερσις in the ancient Greek literature in the database of *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* located only one late example of the use of a subjective genitive with the transitive sense of this noun (διὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ ἔγερσιν τοῦ λίθου ἐκ τοῦ μνήματος; Pseudo-Theodoret, *Quaestiones et responsiones ad orthodoxos*). See A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Θεοδωρήτου ἐπισκόπου πόλεως Κύρρου πρὸς τὰς ἐπενεχθείσας αὐτῷ ἐπερωτήσεις παρά τινος τὸν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐπίσκοπον ἀποκρίσεις* (St. Petersburg: Kirschbaum, 1895), 119, l. 23. Note, however, that in this example, the noun refers to an act of removal rather than resurrection.

[15]   In any interpretation the tombs had to be exited before the holy city could be entered.

[16]   Theodor Zahn, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* (Leipzig: Scholl, 1910), 1:716–17; Adolph Schlatter, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Stuttgart: Calmer, 1947), 415; Brown, *Death of the Messiah* 2:1139; David Turner, *Matthew* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 670. For translations supporting this interpretation, see NIV mg.; New International Reader's Version; Wycliffe Bible.

[17]   Note that an error appears in Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 569, n. 76: "Matthew usually places designations of time with μετά *after* the verbs associated with them" (emphasis mine). Luz's original German edition correctly said "*before* [vor] the verbs associated with them."

saints went immediately after they exited the tombs. Although the question troubles modern readers, it was apparently not a concern of the author of the text.

Rare Vocabulary

Assuming that the genitive αὐτοῦ is objective as discussed above, the prepositional phrase in Matt 27:53 refers to Jesus's resurrection using the noun ἔγερσις. This is the only occurrence of the noun in Matthew. Furthermore, it is the only occurrence of this noun in the entire NT. Elsewhere Matthew and the other NT writers consistently refer to resurrection using the noun ἀνάστασις (Matt 22:23, 28, 30, 31). The LXX utilized the noun ἔγερσις three times (Judg 7:19; 1 Esd 5:59; Ps 138:2), but none of the occurrences refer to resurrection. Unless a reasonable explanation can be offered for Matthew's use of this unusual vocabulary, the appearance of ἔγερσις in Matt 27:53 may suggest that the verse contains non-Matthean material.[18]

Reasonable explanations for the unusual vocabulary have been offered. Brown, who argues that verse 53 is of Matthean origin, notes that the verb ἐγείρω appears thirty-six times in Matthew's Gospel and that thirteen of these usages refer to the resurrection of the dead.[19] He suggests that Matthew utilized the rare noun in order to draw a connection with the verbal form. Two factors support Brown's position.

First, as Davies and Allison have demonstrated, verses 51–53 contain a number of catchword connections with the immediate context and is marked by repetitive vocabulary. Examples include the references to "earth/land" (γῆ in 45 and 51), repetition of the verb "split" (σχίζω; 51a and c), repetition of the adjective "many" (πολλά/πολλοῖς; 52 and 53), and repetition of the adjective "holy" (ἅγιος; 52 and 53).[20] The use of the noun ἔγερσις in 53 following the use of the verb ἐγείρω in 52 may be yet another example of simple catchword connection.

Second, the unusual vocabulary may also be motivated by Matthew's euphemistic description of death as "sleep." Although the term ἀνάστασις normally means "resurrection" specifically, the noun ἔγερσις is more generic and refers broadly to an "awakening."[21] Thus ἔγερσις better fits with the imagery in the previous verse.

Use of Vocabulary Statistics for Determining Authorship

If the explanations offered above for the rare vocabulary in 27:52–53 are unsatisfying, scholars may be tempted to conclude that the rare vocabulary establishes the text as either material that Matthew borrowed and adapted from another source or as a later scribal interpolation. Several considerations preclude assuming that the rare vocabulary demonstrates the non-Matthean origin of the passage.

First, *hapax legomena* are very frequent in Matthew. The standard editions of Matthew's Gospel contain 667 *hapax legomena* in its 1068 verses. Several verses in Matthew that have high concentrations of *hapax legomena* are universally recognized as authentic. For example, Matt 15:9, a quotation of a portion of Isa 29:13, contains four *hapax legomena* in a single verse consisting of only eight words. The rare vocabulary in this case results from Matthew's borrowing from another source. This may also explain the unusual vocabulary in 27:52–53 and thus some scholars conclude that Matthew borrowed this tradition from another source. Yet

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[18]   See Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:1139, n. 105. Brown stated: "Arising from vocabulary there are two objections to attributing v. 53 to Matt." He lists ἔγερσις as one such objection.
[19]   Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:1124, n. 65.
[20]   Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, 628.
[21]   See "ἔγερσις," LSJ, 469.

even texts which are an apparent product of Matthean redaction sometimes contain rare vo-
cabulary. Matthew 6:7 is normally considered a product of Matthean redaction and is filled
with Mattheanisms.[22] Yet this verse consisting of fifteen words contains three *hapax legomena*.
Thus the presence of a *hapax legomenon* in 27:53 is not inconsistent with Matthean authorship.

Second, Matthew's vocabulary is rich, and he sometimes introduces new vocabulary af-
ter consistent use of other terms. An example of this appears in the discussion of the three
pillars of Judaism in Matt 6:1–18. The three sections on almsgiving, prayer, and fasting have
several shared elements. Each section begins with ὅταν followed by a prohibition of being
like the hypocrites (ὥσπερ/ὡς οἱ ὑποκριταί). Each section repeats the statement ἀμὴν λέγω
ὑμῖν, ἀπέχουσιν τὸν μισθὸν αὐτῶν. The first two sections conclude with the statement καὶ ὁ
πατήρ σου ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ ἀποδώσει σοι. The third section concludes with an identi-
cal statement except that Matthew replaces κρυπτῷ with the synonym κρυφαίῳ that disrupts
the pattern of symmetry between the three sections. Furthermore, the two occurrences of the
adjective κρυφαίος in 6:18 are the only occurrences in the entire Gospel.[23]

Given the frequency of *hapax legomena* throughout the Gospel and the not uncommon
instances of a shift to rare vocabulary after consistent usage of other terms elsewhere in the
Gospel, the somewhat unexpected use of the noun ἔγερσις in Matt 27:53 does not support the
view that the μετά τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ phrase was a scribal interpolation.

The absence of compelling internal evidence against the originality of the prepositional
phrase requires critics to evaluate the reading based wholly on the external evidence.

External Evidence

Scholars frequently claim that the prepositional phrase is absent from three ancient witnesses:
the Palestinian Syriac lectionary, the Diatessaron, and 243. They also claim that some figures
in the early church interpret Matt 27:53 in a manner that suggests that the prepositional phrase
was lacking in the text(s) available to them. However, these arguments need to be reevaluated.

Palestinian Syriac Lectionary

The prepositional phrase is absent from the Palestinian Syriac Lectionary. The omission was
noted by Constantinus Tischendorf and S. C. E. Legg and verified by an examination of the
published transcription of the lectionary.[24] All three major codices of the lectionary (A, B, and
C) omit the phrase. All three also replace ἰδού in 27:51 with εὐθέως. Agnes Lewis and Margaret

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[22] Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. John Marsh; 2nd ed.; Oxford: Black-
      well, 1969), 133, 146, 324; Robert Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Foundation for Understand-
      ing* (Dallas: Word, 1982), 282; Robert Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a
      Mixed Church under Persecution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 103–4. Ulrich Luz protested:
      "We have here an independent logion that is so distinctive in its vocabulary that the evangelist
      can hardly have been its author" (*Matthew*, 1:305).

[23] Not surprisingly, the Byzantine reading in L W Θ 0233. 0250 *f*[13] 33 maintains the symmetry with
      the reading κρυπτῷ but this is likely a scribal correction. The alternative reading preserved in ℵ
      B (Dᶜ) *f*[1] is apparently older and more difficult.

[24] See Constantinus Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Lipsiae: Giesecke & Devrient, 1869;
      repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1:204; S. C. E. Legg, *Novum Testamentum
      Graece: Euangelium secundum Mattheaeum* (Oxford: University Press, 1940); and Agnes S. Lewis
      and Margaret D. Gibson, *The Palestinian Syriac Lectionary of the Gospels: Re-edited from two Sinai
      Mss. and from P. de Lagarde's edition of the "Evangeliarium Hierosolymitanum"* (London: K. Paul,
      Trench, Trübner and Co., 1899), xxxviii, 212.

Gibson date the three codices to 1030, 1104, and 1118 CE respectively. Peter Williams suggests that the origins of the Christian Palestinian Aramaic version should be traced to the fifth century.[25] If this suggestion is correct, the consistent readings of the three codices may suggest that the fifth century text on which the lectionaries were ultimately based lacked the phrase. This would attest to the existence of the variant in the fifth century, not long after the production of the earliest extant Greek uncials. Nevertheless, the lectionaries are rather late and are rightly regarded as inferior witnesses to the Christian Palestinian Aramaic version. Unfortunately, earlier MSS of the Christian Palestinian Aramaic version, some of which date to the sixth century, are lacunose in this passage.[26] The lectionaries contain a number of doubtful and corrupted readings. An accidental omission in a single text produced anytime between the fifth to the twelfth century could account for the reading in the lectionaries. Williams noted, "Until more is known about its [Christian Palestinian Aramaic version] history, its value as a witness to particular readings will be harder to assess."[27] The absence of the phrase in texts from the High Middle ages that are hypothetically traced to the fifth century is unimpressive evidence for the absence of the phrase in Matthew. Yet some scholars insist that this evidence is bolstered by other more compelling witnesses.

Egerton Papyrus 3

Davies and Allison, Luz, William Petersen, and Troxel add that the phrase is also absent from Egerton Papyrus 3.[28] This fragment is a very important witness to the state of the text in the late second and early third century. Harold Bell and Theodore Skeat noted great similarity of the "neat, sloping, oval uncial hand" in this fragment to P. Oxy. 2082 (late second century) and P. Ryl. 57 (late second to early third century). Bell and Skeat, joined by Wilhelm Schubart, dated the fragment to the very early third century making the manuscript "one of the earliest surviving manuscripts of Christian theological literature."[29] Since Matt 27:53 is not preserved in any of the presently known extant papyri, the quotation of Matt 27:53 in the Egerton papyrus is presently the earliest extant witness to the text.[30] The text from which the author copied his

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[25]   Peter J. Williams, "The Syriac Versions of the New Testament," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the* Status Quaestionis (ed. Bart Ehrman and Michael Holmes; 2nd ed.; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 155. Bruce Metzger suggested that the version should be called the Christian Palestinian Aramaic version, a label with "more propriety" than Jerusalem or Palestinian Syriac version. See Bruce Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission, and Limitations* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 75–82.

[26]   For a brief discussion of these manuscripts and their contents, see Christa Müller-Kessler and Michael Sokolov, *The Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament Version from the Early Period: Gospels* (A Corpus of Christian Palestinian Aramaic, IIA; Groningen: STYX, 1998), 3–4, 209–213. Manuscripts that contain portions of Matt 27 are: CCR1 (Matt 27:9–19, 39–48, and 27:64–28:3); CCR8 (Matt 27:27–41); CSRO^d (Matt 27:2–10); CSRO^e (Matt 27:7–22); and CSRP^f (Matt 27:3–17).

[27]   Williams, "Syriac Versions of the New Testament," 155.

[28]   Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19–28*, 634–35; Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, 569; William L Petersen, *The Diatessaron and Ephraem Syrus as Sources of Romanos the Melodist* (CSCO 475 Subs. 74; Leuven: Peeters, 1985), 109–10; and Troxel, "Matthew 27:51–54 Reconsidered," 37. Luz made this assertion on the basis of Petersen's work. Troxel made his assertion in dependence on Davies and Allison.

[29]   Harold Bell and Theodore Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 42.

[30]   For a discussion of the papyrus fragments of Matthew, see Kyoung S. Min, *Die früheste* Überlieferung *des Matthäusevangeliums (bis zum 3./4. Jh.): Edition und Untersuchung* (ANTF 34; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005) and Tommy Wasserman, "The Early Text of Matthew," in *The Early Text of*

quotation of Matthew is presumably a manuscript from the second half of the second century.[31] Thus the absence of the phrase in the Egerton papyrus is much more impressive than in the Palestinian Syriac lectionary, at least initially.

However, the Egerton fragment is not convincing evidence of the absence of the phrase in the text from which the author copied.[32] Fragment 1 (recto), column 1 of Egerton papyrus 3 contains quotations of two biblical texts.[33] Lines 4–8 contain a free quotation of Matt 4:5. Lines 9–12 clearly cited Matt 27:52–53:

[πάλιν γέγραπτ]αι·πολλὰ σώ-
[ματα τῶν κε]κοιμημένων
[ἁγίων ἠγέρθ]η καὶ εἰσῆλ-
[θεν εἰς τὴν ἁγ]ίαν πόλιν

The papyrus is defective at this point and the text must be reconstructed.[34] The team correctly recognized that the column did not contain sufficient space for the inclusion of the phrase μετὰ

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the New Testament (ed. Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 83–107. Against objections to using evidence from the Egerton papyri to establish the New Testament text, see J. K. Elliott's comments on the use of Egerton Papyrus 2 for establishing the text of John 5:39 in "Desiderata in an *Apparatus Criticus*," in *The Textual History of the Greek New Testament: Changing Views in Contemporary Research* (ed. Klaus Wachtel and Michael Holmes: Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 138.

[31] This is a conservative estimate and the manuscript of Matthew used by the author of Egerton Papyrus 3 may actually be significantly earlier than this. Recent studies suggest that the shelf-life of biblical texts may have been longer than is often assumed. See Craig A. Evans, "How Long Were Late Antique Books in Use? Possible Implications for New Testament Textual Criticism," *BBR* 25 (2015): 23–37; George W. Houston, "Papyrological Evidence for Book Collections and Libraries in the Roman Empire," in *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (ed. William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 233–67.

[32] Bell and Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel*, 42–51. The author of the text preserved in the fragment is likely Origen. Bell and Skeat viewed this theory of authorship as "so attractive at first sight," but dispensed with the idea, because they believed that the fragment was too early to have come from Origen. However, the next twenty years would generate a handful of treatments of the issue of the authorship of the fragment that would unanimously conclude that the text was from Origen. See Robert M. Grant, "More Fragments of Origen?" *VC* 2 (1948): 243–47; Alfred R. C. Leaney, "The Authorship of Egerton Papyrus No. 3," *VC* 9 (1955): 212–17; and Henry Chadwick, "The Authorship of Egerton Papyrus No. 3," *HTR* 49 (1956): 145–51. Chadwick wrote: "To conclude, the style, argumentation, and grouping of the biblical references in the papyrus are sufficient to make it as good as certain that this 'Gospel Commentary' is a piece of Origen" (150). Chadwick argued that the compelling evidence for Origen's authorship of the text meant that paleographers needed to reconsider their dating of the papyrus. He proposed a date between 225 and 235 and argued that such a date was consistent with the known chronology of Origen's labors as a writer. He noted that Christian writings were sometimes copied and widely distributed almost immediately after their production citing the example of Irenaeus's *Adversus haereses* which was read in Oxyrhynchus within fifteen to twenty years after its production in Gaul.

[33] Bell and Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel*, 42–51.

[34] The reconstruction by Bell and Skeat appears to be accurate except for the substitution of the form εἰσῆλθεν for εἰσῆλθον (NA[28]). Apparently, the editors assumed the use of the third person singular form with the neuter plural subject because of the use of ἠγέρθη. However, although a number of texts use the third singular form ἠγέρθη (A C K M U W Δ Π 2 28 157 565 700 1346 1424 𝔐), even these texts shift to the third person plural form εἰσῆλθον in the next clause because ἅγιοι rather than σώματα is the intended subject. The NA[28] apparatus lists no variants here. However, the more extensive apparati in Tischendorf and Legg show that, although some ancient texts

τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ. Yet neither is there sufficient space for the participial clause καὶ ἐξελθόντες ἐκ τῶν μνημείων that immediately preceded the prepositional phrase, despite the fact that the participial clause is contained even in the other witnesses that omit the prepositional phrase.

Thus the quotation of Matt 27:53 in Egerton Papyrus 3 appears to have been intentionally truncated by the author. The references to the "holy city" in lines 6 and 8 of fragment 1 r. (in both biblical citations) and "city" in line 16 suggests that the author cited the verse primarily for its reference to the holy city and felt free to abbreviate the verse as necessary to emphasize his primary point. Skeat stated confidently: "Clearly the whole of this passage centers upon some mystical interpretation of the Holy City."[35] The author simply stopped quoting Matthew at the end of 27:52, then picked back up with the clause in the middle of verse 53, skipping the first clause of the verse and omitting the last in the manner illustrated below.[36]

> ~~καὶ τὰ μνημεῖα ἀνεῴχθησαν καὶ~~ πολλὰ σώ[ματα τῶν κε]κοιμημένων [ἁγίων ἠγέρθ]ησαν, ~~καὶ ἐξελθόντες ἐκ τῶν μνημείων μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ~~ εἰσῆλ[θον εἰς τὴν ἁγ]ίαν πόλιν ~~καὶ ἐνεφανίσθησαν πολλοῖς~~.

Consequently, the fragment does not provide evidence that the prepositional phrase was absent in the text of Matthew that the author of the Egerton papyrus cites. Egerton Papyrus 3 should not be cited as evidence for the absence of the phrase in Matthew's original text.

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dropped the prefixed preposition from the verb (D it vg Sy[s.hier] sa bo) or omit the verb entirely (ℵ), the verb is consistently third person plural. The reconstruction by Bell and Skeat is correct at this point only if the author of the text adapted the grammar from his text of Matthew due to the omission of the participial clause and prepositional phrase that originally stood between the two verbs. However, this is not likely given the evidence of the other biblical quotations in the papyrus. The author exhibited a clear hesitancy to revise the biblical text. Bell and Skeat's reconstruction of the quotation of Matt 4:5 in lines 5–8 suggests that he substituted τὸν Ἰ(ησοῦ)ν for the pronoun αὐτόν. However, since the author used the nomina sacra (see esp. IN in line 68), the character count for the pronoun and the articular nomen sacrum are the same. Thus the author's only change may have been a variation in word order. The quotations of Matt 5:8 (lines 44–46), Ps 11:7 (lines 54–58), John 1:14 (lines 64–65), Phil 2:6 (lines 84–87), and 2 Tim 2:19 (lines 132–33) show no variation from the standard texts (NA[28] and Rahlfs). The quotation of John 1:29 (lines 68–71) differs only by the omission of the καί. The quotation of John 6:55 (lines 75–77) differs only by the omission of γάρ. This suggests that the author quoted the biblical text conservatively. He sometimes omitted material that he did not consider essential to the meaning of the text but was hesitant to make other adaptations.

35 Bell and Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel*, 49.

36 Interestingly, Chrysostom abridged Matt 27:53 in an almost identical manner in *Hom.* 88 on Matt 27:45–48: Πολλὰ γὰρ σώματα τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων ἠγέρθη, φησὶ, καὶ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν, καὶ πολλοῖς ἐνεφανίσθησαν. Ἵνα γὰρ μὴ νομισθῇ φαντασία εἶναι τὸ γεγενημένον, καὶ πολλοῖς φαίνονται ἐν τῇ πόλει. Greek text is from PG 58:777. Chrysostom's quotation differs from the Egerton fragment by including the last clause "and appeared to many." The difference is due to the different purposes of the authors. The author of the Egerton fragment merely quoted the text because of its reference to the "holy city" but Chrysostom quotes the text because of its reference to the public appearance of the resurrected saints as his next sentence demonstrates. Notice that Chrysostom maintained the third person plural verb εἰσῆλθον despite its awkwardness after the omission of the participial clause in the manner suggested earlier for the proper reconstruction of the lacuna in the Egerton fragment.

Tatian's Diatessaron

Allison and Troxel follow Petersen in claiming that the Diatessaron omitted the prepositional phrase.[37] Petersen noted that both Eastern witnesses to the Diatessaron (Ephrem's commentary [twice] and three of his hymns, the commentary of Ishoʿdad [twice], the hymns of Romanos [twice]) and Western witnesses (the Pepysian Harmony [twice] and the *Heliand*) present the appearance of the saints as occurring immediately after the death of Jesus. He cited the Pepysian Harmony:

> And with that, the veil that hung in the temple before the high alter [sic] burst in two pieces, the earth quaked, and the stones burst, and the dead men arose out of their graves. And entering the holy city, they appeared to many.[38]

Petersen argued that when Eastern and Western witnesses to the Diatessaron agree on a reading that is not found in any non-Diatessaronic sources (whether the canonical Gospels or Patristic sources not connected to the Diatessaron), one has likely located a reading of the Diatessaron.[39]

   Although the study of the Diatessaron is difficult and most specialists admit that it is difficult to reach hard and fast conclusions regarding its readings,[40] Petersen is likely incorrect in the claim that the phrase was absent from the Diatessaron.[41] First, the methodology that

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[37]   William Petersen, "Tatian's Diatessaron," in H. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1990), 425–26. Recent research raises serious questions regarding the usefulness of the Diatessaron as a witness to the early text of the canonical Gospels. For example, Petersen suggested that Tatian drew upon the harmonized gospel traditions of his teacher, Justin (see esp. Petersen, "Textual Evidence of Tatian's Dependence upon Justin's ΑΠΟΜΝΗΜΟΝΕΥΜΑΤΑ," *NTS* 36 [1990]: 512–34; idem, *Tatian's Diatessaron: Its Creation, Dissemination, Significance, and History in Scholarship* [VCSup 25; Leiden: Brill, 1994], 346–47). He posited, however, that Tatian likely used other sources as well. The Diatessaron sometimes agrees with non-canonical gospel traditions and this suggests "Tatian used not just the four canonical Gospels, but at least one extracanonical source" (Petersen, "Diatessaron," 428). Although Petersen claimed that the Diatessaron preserved the earlier form of Matthew that existed before a Pauline redactor produced the canonical form (*Romanos the Melodist*, 103–4, 110–11), his own theories regarding the origin of the Diatessaron raise doubts about that claim. Justin may have adapted Matthew to produce his harmony. Although Justin's quotations are sometimes identical to the Greek text in modern critical editions (NA and GNT), his quotations often differ from both the restored text and the currently known variant readings in the textual tradition. On this, see Joseph Verheyden, "Justin's Text of the Gospels," in *The Early Text of the New Testament*, 315.

[38]   Petersen's citation of the Pepysian Harmony is from Margery Goates, *The Pepysian Gospel Harmony* (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), 100. Petersen stated that the "evidence for this reading is too complex to give here; it is presented in my *The Diatessaron and Ephrem Syrus*, 95–112."

[39]   Petersen, "Tatian's Diatessaron," 420–21. For challenges to Petersen's approach, see Ulrich B. Schmid, "The Diatessaron of Tatian," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research,* 115–42.

[40]   Arthur Vööbus seems correct in his assertion that the study of the Diatessaron is "one of the most difficult topics in all the field of New Testament textual criticism" (Arthur Vööbus, *Early Versions of the New Testament* [PETSE 6; Uppsala: Estonian Theological Society in Exile, 1954], 3).

[41]   Petersen stated: "The text of the Diatessaron must be reconstructed from snippets of text tucked here and there in 'witnesses' to the Diatessaron." He added: "Consequently, many genuine Diatessaronic readings have either been lost or are unverifiable. After checking hundreds of possible readings in each of ten or fifteen witnesses, a yield of five percent as genuinely Diatessaronic is good." Idem, *Diatessaron*, 5–6. Tjitze Baarda recently discussed the challenges in using the

Petersen employed is unsound. Appeal to late sources such as the Pepysian Harmony and the Heliand as Western witnesses helpful in the reconstruction of Diatessaronic readings is increasingly rejected in contemporary scholarship.[42] Codex Fuldensis is the earliest Western witness to the Diatessaron. Ulrich Schmid asserted that Codex Fuldensis is the ultimate archetype of the entire harmony tradition in Latin and other Western vernacular languages and is the most important Western witness to the Diatessaron.[43] Codex Fuldensis includes the prepositional phrase: *et exeuntes de monumentis post resurrectionem eius venerunt in sanctam civitatem et apparuerunt multis.*[44]

 Petersen's appeals to Ephrem's Hymns, the commentary of Ishoʿdad, and the hymns of Romanos as eastern witnesses to the Diatessaron suffer from a similar weakness. Ephrem's commentary on the Diatessaron and the Arabic harmony are increasingly recognized as the most important Eastern witnesses to Tatian's harmony.[45] Chester Beatty Syriac MS 709 which contains Saint Ephrem's commentary on the Diatessaron does not quote Matt 27:53 in its entirety, but only isolated phrases.[46] Nevertheless, Peterson admits that the Armenian version of Ephrem's commentary on the Diatessaron does not support the omission of the phrase.[47] The

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Diatessaron in the apparatus criticus of the Gospel text and concluded: "And, indeed, it is my conviction that it is not possible to make the Diatessaron a standard witness in any apparatus." He added, "In short, it is a long and risky road along which one has to travel to reach the goal, the reconstructions of the readings of the Syriac Diatessaron, and a longer road if one wants to find their Greek equivalents in the harmony, even more the readings in the Greek Gospel texts behind this harmony" ("Tatian's Diatessaron and the Gospels," in *The Early Text of the New Testament*, 348–49).

[42] For challenges to Petersen's approach, see Ulrich B. Schmid, "The Diatessaron of Tatian," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research*, 115–42. Schmid insisted that Codex Fuldensis is the one relevant Western witness to the Diatessaron and added: "Forget about the rest, if you want to reconstruct Tatian's Diatessaron" (137).

[43] Schmid, "The Diatessaron of Tatian," 137.

[44] E. Ranke, *Codex Fuldensis: Novum Testamentum Latine Interprete Hieronymo* (Lepizig: Elwert, 1868), 156.

[45] See Schmid, "The Diatessaron of Tatian," 137. Tjitze Baarda, "Tatian's Diatessaron and the Gospels," 338–45.

[46] Carmel McCarthy, *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron: An English Translation of Chester Beatty Syriac MS 709 with Introduction and Notes* (JSSSup 2; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). For quotations or allusions to Matt 27:52, see pp. 309, 317, 320, and 327. For comparisons of the Syriac Gospels, see George A. Kiraz, *Matthew*, vol. 1 of *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels: Aligning the Sinaiticus, Curetonianus, Peshitta and Harklean Versions* (NTTS 21; New York: Brill, 1996), 443. Syriac Peshitta: ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ (*wanpašu wbātar qyāmteh ʿalu lamdintā qadīštā*), "and they went out, and after his resurrection they entered to the holy city." Syriac Harklean (616 AD): ܘܟܕ ܢܦܫܘ ܡܢ ܩܒܪ ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܩܝܡܬܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܥܠ ܠܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ (*wkd npšw mn qbrʾ mn btr qymtʾ dylh ʿlw lmdyntʾ qdyšʾ*) "and where they went out from the graves, after his resurrection they entered to the holy city."

[47] See Petersen, *Romanos the Melodist*, 105. Note the absence of underlining which was used to mark portions of the witnesses that supported the absence of the prepositional phrase "after the resurrection" in Tatian. The Syriac text of the commentary seems to imply that the resurrection of the saints occurred at the time of Jesus's death (see 21.5–6). Ephrem states that the resurrected saints were "witnesses to its [the Spirit's] going forth [from the holy place beyond the torn veil]" but does not specify when they entered the holy city to proclaim this message. See McCarthy, *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron*, 320. Although Ephrem's commentary placed the resurrection of the saints at the time of Jesus's death, he still described Jesus as "the firstborn of Sheol" (*Comm.* 21.28) and this raises doubts about the popular claim that the prepositional phrase was inserted to avoid contradicting Paul's portrayal of Jesus as the "firstborn from among the dead."

Arabic text of the Diatessaron contains the phrase.[48] Scholars who employ the methodology of the new perspective on the Diatessaron will see the Diatessaron as a witness for the inclusion of the contested phrase.

Second, Petersen's discussion of the evidence of the later witnesses fails to convince even if one adopts his methodology. Petersen identified Ephrem's *Hymns on the Nativity*, 18.36 and 4.164 as "most specific that the dead arise and appear at the time of Jesus' death on the cross."[49] However, this is a clear exaggeration. *Hymn* 18.36 reads:

> In the year this is thirtieth,
> let the dead who were revived by His dying,
> [and] the life that returned by His crucifixion,
> and the height and depth that were pacified by Him
> {all} give thanks with us! Blessed be He and His Father![50]

Hymn 4.164–167 reads:

> For when upon the cross He revived the dead,
> did His body revive them or His will? …
> For His power darkened the sun and shook the earth;
> graves were torn open, and the dead emerged.[51]

Although the hymns portray the resurrection of the dead, the opening of the tombs, and the raised saints' departure from the graves as occurring in conjunction with Jesus's death, they do not state that the entrance into the holy city and appearance to many witnesses also occurred at this time. Thus Ephrem may simply have understood the prepositional phrase "after His resurrection" as modifying the entrance into Jerusalem and appearance to witnesses there in the manner suggested in the discussion of internal evidence.

Similarly, although Isho'dad of Merv, *Comm.* 22 clearly states that the resurrection of the saints occurred at the time of Jesus's death, Petersen failed to demonstrate that the commentary placed their entrance into the holy city immediately after Jesus's death rather than after his resurrection. The commentary simply states: "And we ought to know, that the dead who arose out of their graves at the time when the soul of our Lord departed from his body."[52] Likewise, the *Heliand*, LXVII, lines 5658–5676 states that "the graves of dead men burst open wide; and in their bodies they rose up living out of the earth—and there revealed as a marvel to men."[53] Although the *Heliand* is clear that this resurrection of the saints occurred at the time of Jesus's death, it does not state that the entrance into Jerusalem and appearance to many witnesses also occurred prior to Jesus's resurrection. Notice that the text says "and there [i.e., on earth] revealed" rather than "and then [at that time] revealed." Thus even the *Heliand* is not clear evidence against the inclusion of the prepositional phrase in the Diatessaron.

More significantly, both Romanos and the Pepysian Harmony refer to the appearance of the resurrected saints at the time of Jesus's resurrection. Pepysian Harmony 100 lists the phenom-

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48 The Arabic text reads: ومن بعد قيامته دخلوا ال المدينة الطاهرة (*wmin baʿdi qiyāmatihi daxalū ʾilā l-madīnati l-ṭāhirati*), "and after his resurrection they entered the pure city." See Augustinus Ciasca, *Tatiani Evangeliorum Harmoniae Arabice* (Rome: n.p., 1888), 197. For Ciasca's Latin translation, see p. 92: *Et post resurrectionem eius ingressi sunt in sanctam civitatem.*

49 Petersen, *Romanos the Melodist*, 108.

50 Kathleen McVey, trans., *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 165.

51 McVey, *Ephrem*, 101.

52 Petersen, *Romanos the Melodist*, 107.

53 Petersen, *Romanos the Melodist*, 108. Petersen drew this translation from Mariana Scott, *The Heliand* (North Carolina University Studies in the Languages and Literature 52; Ams Press, 1978), 194.

ena that accompanied Jesus's death and adds, "and the erthe quaked, and the stones tobrusten, and the dede men arisen out of her graues."[54] However, Pepysian Harmony 102 states that when Mary went to the tomb to anoint Jesus's body, he "was arisen fram deth to lyue, and many other dede men, that comen and schewden hem in the citee."[55] This suggests that the author of the Pepysian Harmony interpreted Matthew as implying that the resurrection occurred at the time of Jesus's death but their entrance into the city occurred at the time of Jesus's resurrection.

Romanos, in his *Hymn on the Ten Drachmas* 55.17, wrote:

> Suddenly, the bodies of the dead, being animated, were raised and trampled on Hades, crying, "O Unrighteous One, where is your victory? Where is your sting, O Death?" Then suddenly all the tombs were opened automatically, and all the dead leaped out and danced. But an angel descending rolls the stone from the tomb of the Savior.[56]

Here Romanos assumes that the resurrection of the saints occurred in conjunction with Jesus's resurrection. Romanos's treatment of the resurrection of the saints in this hymn seems inconsistent with his *Hymn on the Victory of the Cross* 37.7, which places their resurrection at the time of Jesus's death. Petersen argued that this variation implies that the *Hymn on the Ten Drachmas* was based on the canonical version that included the phrase "after his resurrection" and the *Hymn on the Victory of the Cross* was based on the Diatessaron which supposedly lacked the prepositional phrase.[57] This is possible, but such a conclusion does not necessarily follow from the evidence. Perhaps the purpose of this section of the *Hymn of the Ten Drachmas* was simply to contrast the opening of the tombs of the resurrected saints and the opening of Jesus's tomb by the angel rather than to give a chronologically arranged account of the events. Hymnic material is not bound by the same strictures as historical narrative. Perhaps Romanos's differing treatments could be based on two different punctuations of Matthew, one that indicated that the resurrection of the saints occurred at the time of Jesus's death and their public appearance in Jerusalem occurred after the resurrection and another that indicated their resurrection and public appearance occurred in conjunction with Jesus's resurrection without resorting to an assumption of two different textual bases.

In any event, the evidence is not sufficient to reconstruct a distinct reading for the Diatessaron. Petersen's attempt to reconstruct the reading of the Diatessaron here was plagued by dependence on late sources of questionable value for recovering the text of the Diatessaron and on doubtful interpretation of several of these sources. Unless new evidence to the contrary comes to light, textual critics should regard the Diatessaron as evidence for, rather than against, the presence of the prepositional phrase in Matt 27:53.

Minuscule 243

Brown and Troxel claim that 243 omitted the phrase.[58] However, this claim appears to be based on a misunderstanding of Legg's or Tischendorf's aparatus. A closer examination of these apparati shows that Legg and Tischendorf merely intended to note that the pronoun αὐτοῦ was absent in 243, not that the entire phrase was missing.[59]

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54 Ibid., 107.
55 Ibid., 107.
56 Ibid., 105.
57 Ibid., 109.
58 Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:1129, n. 78; Troxel, "Matthew 27:51–54 Reconsidered," 37.
59 Tischendorf's apparatus reads: "μετ. τ. εγερσ. αυτου (30. 220. 32^{ev sem} aeth [*postquam resurrexerant apud Bode*] αυτων, 243. om): syr^{hr} om" (Constantinus Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Graece* [2 vols; Editio octava critica maior; Lipsiae: Giesecke & Devrient, 1869–1872; repr., Cambridge:

Consequently, the only clear textual evidence for the omission of the prepositional phrase is the Palestinian Syriac Lectionary. An omission in this lectionary is easily explained as accidental omission or as a deletion. An intentional deletion may have been prompted by the scribe assuming that the prepositional phrase modified the preceding participle rather than the verb that follows and desiring to eliminate the awkwardness of the saints remaining in the tombs for over a day after they were raised and their tombs opened.

Early Christian Interpretation

Davies and Allison appeal to early Christian writers who place the resurrection of the holy ones at the time of Jesus's passion rather than after the resurrection of Jesus to support the theory that the phrase in Matt 27:53 is an interpolation. They cited Ambrose, *De excessu fratris* (*Satyrus*) 2.83 as an example. Yet, despite Ambrose's interpretation, his quotation of Matt 27:53 contains the prepositional phrase, and on the basis of the phrase he argued that the resurrected saints remained in their tombs and did not enter the holy city until after Jesus's resurrection.[60] Thus Ambrose is evidence for the authenticity of the phrase rather than evidence against it.

Davies and Allison also cited Ephrem's fourth hymn on the nativity. Yet, since Ephrem merely refers to the resurrection of the saints at the time of Jesus's death and makes no mention of the saints exiting the tomb or entering Jerusalem, he does not provide evidence for the absence of the prepositional phrase.[61]

Finally, Davies and Allison cite *Questions (Gospel) of Bartholomew* 1.21 in support. One recension of the text reads:

> And Bartholomew said to him: Lord, I saw you again hanging on the cross and all the dead arising and worshipping you.

However, this recension is probably not the earliest recension of the text.[62] This reference is absent from the best recension (H), which probably predates the Latin and Slavonic text by a

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Cambridge University Press, 2013], 1:204). The apparatus intended to indicate merely that 243 lacked a personal pronoun after the prepositional phrase in 243 and did not omit the entire prepositional phrase like the Syriac lectionary. Similarly, Legg's apparatus reads: "μετα την εγερσιν (αναστασιν 470) αυτου (αυτων 30. 220. 1689. *l*32 *semel* Aeth.; *om.* 243): = *om.* Sy.hier.; = *pon. post* πολιν Aeth." 243 is a fourteenth century manuscript of no special importance. It is housed in the State Historical Museum in Moscow (vol. 92, s. 388). The contents of the manuscript have not yet been published. For additional information on the manuscript, see Caspar René Gregory, *Textkritik des Neuen Testaments* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1900), 171. Legg also noted that the Ethiopic text places the prepositional phrase after πόλιν.

60 Ambrose, *Exc.* 2.83. For the Latin text, see PL 16:1398 and Otto Faller, ed. *Sancti Ambrosii Opera: Pars Septima* (CSEL 73; Vienna: Hölder-Pickler-Tempsky, 1963), 294–95.

61 Ephrem, *Hymns of the Nativity* 4. See McVey, *Ephrem*, 92, 101 (v. 38, 166–71). Although Tryggve Kronholm viewed the first four hymns of the collection as spurious, Edmund Beck considered them unquestionably authentic. See E. Beck, ed., *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphania)* (CSCO 187; Leuven: Secrétariat du CSCO, 1959), v–vi.

62 The textual history is complex. Felix Scheidweiler found five different recensions of the text: two different Greek recensions (Vindobonensis Gr. historicus 67 [G] and Hierosl. sabaiticus 13 (H); two different Latin recensions (Vaticanus Reginensis 1050 [R] and Casanatensis 1880 [C]); and a Slavonic recension preserved in a manuscript at St. Petersburg (P) and another in Vienna (V; Vindob. slav. 125). The only complete manuscript is C but Scheidweiler viewed the text as "in a very corrupt form full of extensive interpolations, especially towards the end." He valued H as "the most valuable recension." Felix Scheidweiler, "The Gospel of Bartholomew," *NTA* 1:486. Montague R. James dated the Latin recension which he identified as Latin 2 (Scheidweiler's C

century or two.[63] Furthermore, the Latin text, which contains the reference to the resurrected dead worshipping Jesus while he was on the cross, also states that the saints returned to their tombs after worshipping Jesus.[64] This probably implies knowledge and acceptance of the prepositional phrase in Matt 27:53. The scribe who produced the Latin text may have had the saints return to their tombs, because he interpreted Matthew as having the saints exit the tombs and enter Jerusalem only after Jesus's resurrection.

Conclusion

The external evidence for the presence of the phrase μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ in the original text of Matt 27:53 is very strong, significantly stronger than those who dismiss the phrase have suggested.[65] The only extant texts that lack the prepositional phrase are the Palestinian Syriac Gospel lectionaries, and their late date and general character makes it doubtful that they reflect a state of the text earlier than that of the extant uncials. Their reading more likely reflects a scribal error. Arguments based on rare vocabulary or supposed chronological tensions are found to be fallacious after an examination of Matthean style. Consequently, modern editions of the Greek New Testament are correct in including the prepositional phrase in Matt 27:53.

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text, the only complete text) to the sixth or seventh century, but assessed the Latin text as "exceedingly incorrect, and there are many corruptions, and interpolations which extend to whole pages of closely printed text" (*The Apocryphal New Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1955], 166). Scheidweiler agreed with this assessment stating that the Latin text was "in a very corrupt form full of extensive interpolations." Jean-Daniel Kaestli has objected that scholars have neglected the value of C and exaggerated the value of H in reconstructing the original text. See Jean-Daniel Kaestli, "Où en est l'étude de l'Évangile de Barthélemy'?," *RB* 95 (1988): 5–33.

[63] The Greek text of 1.20 reads: Τότε εἰσῆλθον καὶ ἐμάστιζα αὐτὸν καὶ ἐδέσμησα αὐτὸν δεσμοῖς ἀλύτοις καὶ ἐξέδαλον πάντας τοὺς πατριάρχας καὶ ἦλθον πάλιν ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ. The Latin text adds to 1.21: *Domine vidi te iterum in cruce pendentem et angelos stantes ante te et mortuos resurgentes et prosternentes se*. For the Greek and Latin texts, see André Wilmart and Eugène Tisserant, "Fragments Grecs et Latins de l'Evangile de Barthélemy," *RB* 10 (1913):161–90, here 187. Scheidweiler and James disagree on whether the Slavonic recension contained the sentence that was absent from the Greek text but present in the Latin text. James claimed that it did not. Scheidweiler claims that the sentence appears in manuscripts C P and V. James appears to have misread the apparatus developed by Wilmart and Tisserant. Compare James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 165, 168–69 and *NTA* 1:490, n. 4.

[64] L (Vaticanus Reginensis 1050; L1 in James and R in Scheidweiler): *iterum ascendentes in memorias*.

[65] After discussing claims that the prepositional phrase was omitted in the Diatessaron, Egerton Papyrus 3, and the Palestinian Syriac Lectionary, Luz still concluded: "The existing text is well attested" (*Matthew*, 3:568–69). If, as argued here, the only textual witnesses to the absence of the prepositional phrase are the late manuscripts of the Palestinian Syriac Lectionary, the existing text is very well attested.