

# Fashioning Mark: Early Christian Discussions about the Scribe and Status of the Second Gospel\*

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**This article examines early Christian theories about the identity and role of Mark as transmitter of Petrine tradition. Building upon recent work in classics, it argues that the identification of Mark as Peter’s interpreter, the description of his composition as lacking order and his reported excellent memory would have led ancient readers of Papias to conclude that Mark was performing literate servile work. The positioning of Mark in this way strengthened claims about the accuracy of Mark’s text.**

**Keywords:** Mark, Papias, Irenaeus, slavery, ancient literacy

## 1. Introduction

On a seventh-century ivory relief housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London the evangelist Mark sits opposite the apostle Peter, dutifully recording Peter’s words as the latter reminisces about his time as a disciple.<sup>1</sup> The

\* I am grateful to Iveta Adams, Stephen Carlson, Robert Coote, Meghan Henning, Chris Keith, Mark Letteney, David Lincicum, Margaret Mitchell, Liane Marquis, Brent Nongbri, Robyn Walsh, Simon Gathercole and participants in the Biblical and Early Christian Studies Seminar at Australian Catholic University for their feedback and comments on this piece. Special thanks are due to Joseph Howley, whose work on enslaved scribes and readers has shaped so much of my own thinking on this subject and inspired this piece, and to Jeremiah Coogan, who was an insightful reader and tireless dialogue partner throughout.

1 Inv. No. 270-1867. The ivory is the first of the so-called Grado-Chair ivories, a sequence of fourteen stylistically coherent ivories which have been dated any time between the sixth and twelfth centuries. They were first discussed in H. Graeven, ‘Der heilige Markus in Rom und in der Pentapolis’, *Römische Quartalschrift* 13 (1899) 45–91, which argued that they should be dated to 610–41 CE. W. F. Volbach’s theory that they are an eleventh-century Southern Italian collection related to the Salerno ivories has found favour with New Testament scholars but carbon-dating of the Mark plaque revealed that it should be dated to 440–670 CE with a 95.4% probability (with a 68.2% probability that it they were made

piece is unusual inasmuch as it is one of the rare occasions in which an evangelist looks to another person for direction, rather than to the heavens for inspiration. It captures a traditional understanding of the circumstances of the Second Gospel's composition: Peter dictates the gospel to Mark, the evangelist.<sup>2</sup> The characterisation of this literary process as one of dictation glosses over the various ways in which early Christian writers describe Mark's work, but it also reflects an ancient understanding of the social dynamics between Mark and Peter. All of our ancient sources agree that the importance of Mark's text rests not only on its association with Peter, but on its accurate replication of Peter's testimony. Mark is not a composer or an author; he is the conduit of Petrine tradition.

Academic treatments of the composition of Mark regularly discuss the context of the text's composition,<sup>3</sup> the audience(s) of his account<sup>4</sup> and the genre of his textual product.<sup>5</sup> If Mark's identity is discussed at all, it is in the context of debating whether the evangelist should be identified with the John Mark of Acts (12.12, 25; 15.37, 39), the Mark of 1 Peter (5.13) or some potential combination of both.<sup>6</sup>

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between 550 and 650). See W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz: Von Zabern, 1976), and discussion in P. Williamson, 'On the Date of the Symmachi Panel and the So-Called Grado-Chair Ivories', *Through a Glass Brightly: Studies in Byzantine and Medieval Art and Archaeology Presented to David Buckton* (ed. C. Entwistle; Oxford: Oxbow, 2003) 47–50, at 48–9.

- 2 This understanding of the literary relationship between the two figures is captured in both the way the relief has traditionally been titled and scholarly descriptions of it.
- 3 For example, on the relationship of the composition of Mark to the First Jewish War with Rome, see A. Yarbro Collins, *Mark* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) 14; R. H. Stein, *Mark* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008) 14–15.
- 4 See R. Bauckham, 'For Whom Were Gospels Written?', *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (ed. R. Bauckham; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 9–49; M. M. Mitchell's 'Patristic Counter-Evidence to the Claim that "The Gospels Were Written for All Christians"', *NTS* 51 (2005) 39–79; R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) and 'Is There Patristic Counter-Evidence? A Response to Margaret Mitchell', *The Audience of the Gospels: The Original Function of the Gospels in Early Christianity* (ed. E. W. Klink III; LNTS 353; London: T&T Clark, 2010) 68–110.
- 5 Generic analysis has tended towards the view that Mark is a species of ancient biography. This argument was first made by J. Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markus-Evangeliums und der ältesten Evangelien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903) and revived by R. A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). On generic analysis, see now H. K. Bond, *The First Biography of Jesus: Genre and Meaning in Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020).
- 6 Cf. the Mark of Phlm 24; Col 4.10; 2 Tim 4.11. Inasmuch as those treatments of the question want to probe Mark's identity further, it is on the basis of Acts and 1 Peter, rather than the scene envisioned by Papias, that this conversation proceeds. See discussion in Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus', 178–83; C. Clifton Black, *Mark: Images of an Apostolic*

Yet these studies rarely touch upon the way in which ancient audiences would have understood the nature of the relationship between Peter and Mark, the status of Mark and the character of his work as it is described in the writings of Papias, 1 Clement and Irenaeus.<sup>7</sup> How would Mark's role as 'interpreter' and conveyor of Petrine memories have been understood by second-century audiences?<sup>8</sup> What kind of person performs this work in antiquity?<sup>9</sup> And how does his status serve to support the idea that he accurately replicates Petrine tradition?

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*Interpreter* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2001) 67; J. Marcus, *Mark 1-8* (Anchor Yale Commentary; New York: Doubleday, 2002) 19-21; Bauckham (*Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 206), who describes John Mark as coming 'from a Jewish Diaspora family and ... presumably educated in Jerusalem'. On the relationship between Mark and Paul, see M. M. Mitchell, 'Epiphanic Evolutions in Earliest Christianity', *ICS* 29 (2004) 183-201 and M. Kok, 'Does Mark Narrate the Pauline Kerygma of Christ Crucified? Challenging an Emerging Consensus on Mark as a Pauline Gospel', *JSNT* 37 (2014) 139-60.

- 7 Examinations of the presentation of Mark in early Christian literature have rightly stressed the way Mark is framed as an acolyte of Peter and the manner in which Peter serves to authenticate and authorise the Gospel of Mark, perhaps even ensuring its survival. Overlooked, however, is how the second-century framing of the Second Gospel as disordered and the presentation of Mark himself as the mere conveyor of Petrine tradition mutually reinforce one another. See, for example, Kok's excellent *Gospel on the Margins*, 185-227. A rare exception to this rule is A. Yadin-Israel, "'For Mark Was Peter's *Tanna*": Tradition and Transmission in Papias and the Early Rabbis', *JCS* 23 (2015) 337-62.
- 8 This article takes its lead from an often-overlooked 1984 article by philologist Günther Zuntz, which examined the way that gentile readers of the Gospel of Mark would have understood the text. Among his many interesting insights, he noted that for gentiles the appellation 'Jesus Christ' in the opening titular sentence of the Gospel would either have meant 'Jesus-ointment' or something along the lines of 'Jesus the painted one'. More probably, he argued, gentiles might have assumed that a typographical or pronunciation error had taken place and that the copyist or lector had intended to write 'Chrestos' rather than 'Christos' (cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44). On this assumption, the 'reader' would assume that the Gospel was about a Semitic slave (Jesus) who had been given the new name Chrestos. Zuntz's article was an elegant articulation of the ways in which descriptions of identity and status vary according to the cultural positionality of the reader. G. Zuntz, 'Ein Heide las das Markusevangelium', *Markus-Philologie. Historische, literargeschichtliche und stilistische Untersuchungen zum zweiten Evangelium* (ed. H. Cancik; WUNT 33; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984) 205-22, at 205.
- 9 Even Matthew Larsen's thesis that Mark was incomplete and functioned as a 'rough draft' only grazes the question of how Mark himself is constructed. M. D. C. Larsen, *Gospels before the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) and 'Accidental Publication, Unfinished Texts and the Traditional Goals of New Testament Textual Criticism', *JSNT* 39 (2017) 362-87. Moreover, Larsen is sceptical about the existence of 'Mark' at all, see his 'Correcting Gospel: Putting the Titles of the Gospels in Historical Context', *Rethinking 'Authority' in Late Antiquity: Authorship, Law, and Transmission in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (ed. M. D. Letteney and A. J. Berkovitz; London: Routledge, 2018) 78-103. See also the earlier important work of Kok, who uses similar language arguing that Clement views Mark as

Building upon recent studies on the composition of the Gospels in the eyes of early church writers, this article will argue that the representation of Mark as Peter's interpreter, the description of his composition as lacking order and his reported excellent memory would have led ancient readers of Papias to conclude that Mark was performing literate servile work, even if he were not actually a slave himself. This would place Mark among the thousands of largely anonymous servile literary workers that made Roman literary and documentary culture possible by transcribing, taking dictation, writing on behalf of, polishing, correcting and proofreading the textual output of those designated as authors. That modern scholars tend to describe those performing such functions as scribes or secretaries only obscures the reality that the vast majority of Roman scribes were enslaved or formerly enslaved people.<sup>10</sup> Paul used secretaries to write his letters (Rom 16.22) and Origen's copious literary output owes a great deal to the slave secretaries supplied to him by his patron Ambrose of Alexandria.<sup>11</sup> The focus here is not on by whom and for whom the gospel was originally written – on these points we will remain agnostic – but on how and for what purposes early Christian authors shaped Mark's identity, status and work.

The earliest bibliographic discourse on the origins of the gospel known as Mark comes to us from Papias, by way of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*.<sup>12</sup>

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'rough notes' in contrast to 'the polished texts of Matthew and Luke' (M. J. Kok, *The Gospel on the Margins* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015) 210–11).

- 10 For further discussion on literate slaves, see below. There is a tendency among scholars of early Christianity to overlook the presence of slaves in early Christian communities. On this, see R. A. Horsley, 'The Slave Systems of Classical Antiquity and their Reluctant Recognition by Modern Scholars', *Semeia* 83–4 (1998) 19–66. There is now, finally, a wealth of literature on slavery in general; in particular, see the important work of J. A. Harrill, *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995); J. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); J. A. Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007); B. J. Brooten, ed., *Beyond Slavery: Overcoming its Religious and Sexual Legacies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); K. A. Shaner, *Enslaved Leadership in Early Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).
- 11 On Paul's use of secretaries, see E. R. Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004) and *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (WUNT 11.42; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck: 2019). On Paul's literacy, see the discussion in C. Keith, "'In My Own Hand': Grapho-Literacy and the Apostle Paul', *Bib* 89 (2008) 39–58. On Origen's use of secretaries, see Jerome, *On Illustrious Men* 3.61 and Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.18.1–2, 23.1–2.
- 12 On the fragments of Papias, see J. Kürzinger, *Papias von Hierapolis und die Evangelien des Neuen Testaments* (Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1983); D. A. Baum, 'Der Presbyter des Papias über einen "Hermeneuten" des Petrus: Zu Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3,39,15', *TZ* 56 (2000) 21–35; E. Norelli, *Papia di Hierapolis, Esposizione degli oracoli del Signore. I frammenti* (Milan: Paoline, 2005); D. R. MacDonald, *Two Shipwrecked Gospels: The Logoi of Jesus and Papias's*

Writing around 130 CE, the bishop of Hierapolis includes his remarks on Mark as part of his five-volume *Narrative of Dominical Sayings*.<sup>13</sup> Papias cites a presbyter named John the Elder who relayed the following literary biography:

And this is what the elder used to say, ‘When Mark was the interpreter [or “translator”] of Peter, he wrote down accurately everything that he recalled of the of the Lord’s words and deeds – but not in order. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied Peter, who used to adapt his teachings for the needs at hand, not arranging, as it were, an orderly composition of the Lord’s sayings. And so Mark did nothing wrong by writing some of the matters as he remembered them. For he was intent on just one purpose: to leave out nothing that he heard or to include any falsehood among them.’<sup>14</sup>

Papias’ description of Mark here accomplishes a number of goals: in the first place it connects the Gospel of Mark to the figure and *authoritas* of the apostle Peter.<sup>15</sup> The text now has an apostolic imprimatur from one of the leading figures of the Jesus movement.<sup>16</sup> In the second, it explains what some early Christians considered deficiencies in the composition and structure of Mark itself.<sup>17</sup> Mark was writing the memories of Peter as they were presented: in an ad hoc style that

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*Exposition of Logia about the Lord* (Atlanta: SBL, 2012); Stephen Carlson, *Papias of Hierapolis, Expositions of Dominican Oracles: The Fragments, Testimonia, and Reception of a Second-Century Christian Commentator* (Oxford Early Christian Texts; Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). For the rare view that this section of Papias is a forgery, see A. Loisy, *Les évangiles synoptiques*, vol. 1 (Paris: Ceffonds, 1907) 243.

13 On the title of Papias’ work and its relevance to his authorial project, see A. D. Baum, ‘Papias als Kommentator evangelischer Aussprüche Jesu: Erwägungen zur Art seines Werkes’, *NT* 38 (1996) 257–76. The dating of Papias’ writing to 130 CE, as Bauckham has discussed, rests on statements made by the fifth-century Philip of Side (Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 13–14). This has led others to suggest that he wrote as early as 110 CE (or even earlier). See, for example, U. H. J. Körtner, *Papias von Hierapolis* (FRLANT 133; Göttingen, 1983) 89–94.

14 καὶ τοῦθ’ ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἔλεγεν· Μάρκος μὲν ἐρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου γενόμενος, ὅσα ἐμνημόνευσεν, ἀκριβῶς ἔγραψεν, οὐ μέντοι τάξει τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου ἢ λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα. οὔτε γὰρ ἤκουσεν τοῦ κυρίου οὔτε παρηκολούθησεν αὐτῷ, ὕστερον δὲ, ὡς ἔφην, Πέτρῳ· ὃς πρὸς τὰς χρείας ἐποιεῖτο τὰς διδασκαλίας, ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὡσπερ σύνταξιν τῶν κυριακῶν ποιοῦμενος λογίων, ὥστε οὐδὲν ἤμαρτεν Μάρκος οὕτως ἔνια γράψας ὡς ἀπεμνημόνευσεν. ἐνὸς γὰρ ἐποιήσατο πρόνοιαν, τοῦ μηδὲν ὧν ἤκουσεν παραλιπεῖν ἢ ψεύσασθαί τι ἐν αὐτοῖς. (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.15; trans. Ehrman, LCL 25, 103).

15 See Kok, *Gospel on the Margins*, 12.

16 So K. Niederwimmer, ‘Johannes Markus und die Frage nach dem Verfasser des zweiten Evangeliums’, *ZNW* 58 (1967) 172–88, at 185–8.

17 See F. H. Colson, ‘Τάξει in Papias (the Gospels and the Rhetorical Schools)’, *JTS* 14 (1912) 62–9. See also the summary statement of Kok: ‘The purpose of the apologetic was that Mark’s fidelity to Peter compensates for the defects of the Gospel’ (*Gospel on the Margins*, 187). I agree with many others that the Prologue to Luke may house an implicit critique of Mark.

was without arrangement or order.<sup>18</sup> We, thus, learn certain related details about Mark: (1) he was formerly Peter's interpreter, though we do not know for how long; (2) he wrote accurately (ἀκριβῶς), from memory, without falsifying anything; (3) the document he produced was accurate but without order (τάξις).

## 2. Translation and the Interpreter

Mark is introduced as the 'one who wrote out the gospel', but also as the interpreter (ἑρμηνευτής) of Peter.<sup>19</sup> What does Papias mean here? At least three possibilities present themselves. First, Mark is acting as an oral linguistic interpreter who translated Peter's Aramaic into Greek (or, in the view of some, his Greek into Latin) just as translators function in the Septuagint (Gen 42.23) and Pauline epistles (1 Cor 12.10; 14.23).<sup>20</sup> Second, perhaps Mark is explaining or expounding the words of Peter and in this way interpreting them to a wider community.<sup>21</sup> Finally, it is possible that Mark acted as a literary translator who set the written words of Peter into Greek.<sup>22</sup> The majority of scholars favour the first explanation. Against the second, it seems unlikely that, given Papias' stress on Mark's fidelity to Petrine tradition, we are supposed to understand him as an expositor of some kind. Further, if Peter was literate enough to have written Mark in Aramaic it is strange that Papias would have omitted this detail, especially in light of his description of the translation of the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>23</sup> If Mark is

18 Rigg, who discerns no lack of order in Mark, argues that Papias has 'garbled' the tradition here and that the phrase should not be 'οὐ μέντοι τάξει' but rather 'οὐ μέντοι ταχύς' ('not at all hastily'). This conjecture is based entirely on Rigg's own sense that Mark has structure. See H. A. Rigg, 'Papias on Mark', *NT 1* (1956) 161–83, at 171.

19 Intriguingly there is at least one other candidate for the role. Clement of Alexandria writes that Basilides claims to have been taught by Glaucias, 'the interpreter of Peter' (*Stromateis* 7.106.4). The description prompted Niederwimmer to argue that Papias' statements were motivated by anti-gnostic apologetic. See Niederwimmer, 'Johannes Markus', 186 and W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (ed. R. A. Kraft and G. Krodel; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 184–9. Martin Hengel reversed the lines of influence, positing that Basilides developed his claim from reading Papias, in *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 2000) 58.

20 For the view that Mark translated (spoken) Greek into Latin, see J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1.2 (New York: MacMillan, 1889) 494. For the view that Peter grew up speaking both Aramaic and Greek, see M. Bockmuehl, *The Remembered Peter in Ancient Reception and Modern Debate* (WUNT 1.262; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) 155.

21 Kürzinger adopts this perspective when he describes Mark as an expositor or 'Mittelsmann' (*Papias*, 16).

22 For this view, see T. Y. Mullins, 'Papias on Mark's Gospel', *VC 14* (1960) 216–24 and Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 210–11. In this final possibility, it is more probable that Mark acted as a scribe recording the oral words of Peter than as someone who translated an Aramaic or Hebrew document into Greek.

23 An enormous amount of material has been devoted to the question of Peter's literacy. On traditions of Peter's literacy in early Christianity, see S. A. Adams, 'The Tradition of Peter's Literacy: Acts, 1 Peter, and Petrine Literature', *Peter in Early Christianity* (ed. H. K. Bond

presented as a literary translator, however, this would alter our understanding of the account's relationship to the hypothetical Petrine original. Ancient Roman translation theory preferred 'translating freely' over verbatim fidelity to the original and embraced the paradoxical ways in which translation altered meaning.<sup>24</sup> This would seem to run counter to Papias' efforts to cement the relationship between the two figures.

Our interest, however, lies not in what Papias claims Mark did, but rather in how ancient readers would have understood this kind of work. The precise connotations of the social status and role of the 'interpreter' are less clear in broader Hellenistic and Roman society than we might expect. The ambiguity that surrounds the vocabulary used to refer to translation and interpretation, together with a lack of discussion of the identity and socio-economic function of these interpreters, makes it difficult to speak definitively about them.<sup>25</sup> To be sure,

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and L. W. Hurtado; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015) 130–45. I depart from Adams, who argues that there was no such thing as an illiterate text broker in the ancient world; on the contrary, there were illiterate 'scribes' and 'translators' in the ancient world. See H. C. Youtie, 'Υπογραφεύς: The Social Impact of Illiteracy in Graeco-Roman Egypt', *ZPE* 17 (1975) 201–21. It is worth noting that Papias describes Matthew as having been written in Hebrew (or Aramaic?) and subsequently translated into Greek. Several scholars have seen here an implicit critique in the way that the pristinely ordered Matthew was translated into Greek as 'each was able' (ὡς ἦν δυνατὸς ἕκαστος). For example, see M. Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 47–8 and Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 225. What is missed here is the way in which the phrase 'as far as possible' is not an admission of intellectual impoverishment, but rather a standard legal disclaimer. See R. Mairs, 'Hermēneis in the Documentary Record from Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: Interpreters, Translators and Mediators in Bilingual Society', *Journal of Ancient History* 7.2 (2019) 1–53, at 8. The phrase appears in thirteen papyri dated to between 149 BCE and 11 CE: *UPZ* II.175 (146 BCE, Thebes); *UPZ* II.177 (136 BCE, Thebes); *P.Giss.* 1.36 (134 BCE, Pathyris); *P.Tebt.* 1.164 (112 BCE, Kerkeosiris); *BGU* III.1002 (55 BCE, Hermopolis Magna); *PSI* V.549 (41 BCE, Oxyrhynchus); *BGU* XVI.2594 (8 BCE, Chennis); *CPR* XV.1 (3 BCE, Soknopaiou Nesos); *CPR* XV.2, *CPR* XV.3, *CPR* XV.4, *SB* 1.5231, *SB* 1.5275 (11 CE, Soknopaiou Neso).

24 See Cicero, *De or.* 1.155: 'Afterwards I resolved . . . to translate freely Greek speeches of the most eminent orators. The result of reading these was that, rendering into Latin what I had read in Greek, I not only found myself using the best words . . . but also coining by analogy certain words such as would be new to our people, provided only they were appropriate' (trans. Sutton and Rackham, LCL) and also Plautus, *Asin.* 11; *Poen.* 984; Jerome, *Ep.* 57. For criticisms of *interpretari* or literal translation, see Cicero, *Fin.* 3.15, 3.35; Jerome, *Ep.* 57. Cf. Jewish translational fidelity in Philo, *Mos.* 2.25–44. For discussion of translation theory and its colonialistic impulses, see C. Moatti, 'Translation, Migration, and Communication in the Roman Empire: Three Aspects of Movement in History', *ClAnt* 25 (2006) 109–40.

25 Only one hundred papyri, ostraca and inscriptions from Egypt contain references to the world of interpreters (*hermēneis*), leading many papyrologists to note their poor attestation in the documentary record. See, for example, Roger Bagnall's statement that *P.Coll. Zen.* II.63 is 'a good example of the reticence of the documents', in R. S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*

the work of an interpreter could be a formal one in ancient society, but in these cases it rarely exclusively involved linguistic translation.<sup>26</sup> In some cases the person described as the interpreter is also labelled illiterate, thus suggesting that some other person performed the actual work of translation under their aegis.<sup>27</sup> Translators and interpreters played an important role in military strategy and commercial transactions,<sup>28</sup> but they were equally necessary for legal affairs, both for oral interpretation and the translation of written documents, especially from the second century onward when Roman law demanded Latin translations of legal texts.<sup>29</sup> In her survey of the extant Egyptian papyri, Rachel Mairs writes

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(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 233–5, at 233. See also R. S. Bagnall, C. Helms and A. M. F. W. Verhoogt, *Documents from Berenike*, vol. II: *Texts from the 1999–2001 seasons* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 2005) 27. For a survey of the epigraphic and inscriptional evidence, see C. Wiotte-Franz, *Hermeneus und Interpres: Zum Dolmetscherwesen in der Antike* (Saarbrücker Studien zu Archäologie und alten Geschichte 16; Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 2001). For the most recent analysis of the variety of uses of the technical terminology in the documentary records, see Mairs, ‘*Hermēneis*’, 1–53.

26 The 2007 publication of an inscription on a limestone pedestal from Colossae referring to ‘Markos, son of Markos, chief interpreter and translator for the Colossians’ attracted a great deal of attention when it first appeared. See A. H. Cadwallader, ‘A New Inscription, A Correction and a Confirmed Sighting’, *EA* 40 (2007) 112–18. Cadwallader suggested that Markos was the head of a formal bureau of interpreters. Chaniotis suggested that Markos was an interpreter of oracles (A. Chaniotis, ‘Epigraphic Bulletin for Greek Religion’, *Kernos* 23 (2010) 285–6), while Bornkamm argues that the title was honorific and that the specific translational needs were primarily legal. See L. Bormann, ‘Barbaren und Skythen im Lykostal? Epigraphischer Kommentar zu Kol 3:11’, *Epigraphical Evidence Illustrating Paul’s Letter to the Colossians* (ed. J. Verheyden, M. Öhler and T. Corsten; WUNT 411; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 193–6. Similar discussions involve the identity of the named *hermēneis* Apollonos, who appears in a cluster of Egyptian papyri (*P.Cair.Zen.* 1.59065, *P.Ryl.* IV.563, *PSI* IV.409), in which he is called illiterate and appears to have acted as a broker.

27 See Apollonos in *P.Cair.Zen.* 1.59065, *P.Ryl.* IV.563, *PSI* IV.409.

28 R. Mairs, “‘Interpreting’ at Vindolanda”, *Britannia* 43 (2012) 1–12.

29 See, for example, *P.Oxy.* II.237, in which the Greek-named Dionysia, daughter of Chaeremon, requires an interpreter in order to participate in a legal dispute over a will. Eleven documentary papyri refer to the fact that one party or another spoke ‘through an interpreter’ (ὄτι ἐρμηνεύσας) in a legal case. The earliest extant example is *SB* XVIII.13156, which dates to the second century CE (at the earliest). The most remarked-upon examples are *P.Oxy.* II.237 (above) and *P.Coll.* VII.175. A number of these examples involve the verbal translation of Greek letters into spoken Egyptian, discussed in B. Kelly, *Petitions, Litigations, and Social Control in Roman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 179–80. Women seem to be over-represented in these sources, so it is worth noting that the groups of monks in *P.Oxy.* LXIII.4397 ‘do not know letters’. Compare here the Sayings of the Desert Fathers, in which the Syriac monk Apa Poimen does ‘not know Greek and no interpreter could be found’. Text in M. Chaîne, *Le manuscrit de la version copte en dialecte sahidique des ‘Apophthegmata Patrum’* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale,



that legal texts that were translated into Greek are ‘relatively literal translation[s]’ that are not ‘of a high standard, but [are] perfectly functional’.<sup>30</sup>

There is, therefore, a disjunction between the documentary record, which only occasionally mentions the work of the ‘interpreter’ and uses the title to refer to higher-status brokers and legal experts, and the uncredited but substantial amounts of oral and written translation that was necessary for travel, trade, diplomacy and legal affairs in the Roman world. Most of this uncredited work was performed by slaves or servile figures whose competence in more than one language made them assets to their owners, but whose social status meant that both their identities and their work are generally omitted from the historical record.<sup>31</sup> The ways in which translation work is rendered invisible, often replicated by some modern scholarship, obscures those actors who did the translation work.<sup>32</sup> The fact that this work is obscured only further supports the idea that it was servile labour. We might compare here the frequency with which ancient elite authors fail to note the editorial work of slave-secretaries, while at the same time noting the advice they received from friends.<sup>33</sup> Interpreters were by and large literate enslaved people, freedmen performing paid labour, civic notaries (who were themselves often slaves) or junior officials pressed into service on the basis of their own particular language abilities.

What then, does this mean for Papias’ presentation of Mark? It seems inconceivable that Papias wants us to believe that Mark acted as a commercial or legal

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1960) no. 188. See also M. Choat and R. Yuen-Collingridge, ‘A Church with No Books and a Reader Who Cannot Write: The Strange Case of P.Oxy. 33.2673’, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 46 (2009) 109–38.

30 Mairs, ‘*Hermēneis*’, 8–9.

31 *P.Kell.* 1.53 (4th cent.) provides a list of expenses for the production of at least one written document. Among those elements referenced are the relatively low costs of making a translation. Here we should understand that a slave was contracted from their owner for the work.

32 I draw here upon L. Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London/New York: Routledge, 1995), in which Venuti describes the way that the power-laden act of translation renders itself invisible in order to obscure the ways in which it interprets and colonises other texts. In the case of ancient constructions of translation, it would seem that the translators themselves, as part of a class of enslaved or servile literary workers, are eliminated. This is not to say that ancient people did not worry about the slippage between translation/interpretation/misinterpretation. Not only is there considerable linguistic overlap between interpretation and translation, but original documents were sometimes produced in court order to mitigate fears of ‘misinterpretation/mistranslation’ in translated texts. See, for example, *P.Oxy.* xviii.2187.

33 On reading culture, see the groundbreaking W. A. Johnson, *Reading and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

broker. On the contrary, Papias' 'Mark' serves as a linguistic translator, akin to the anonymous interpreter at the court of the Pharaoh in Genesis 42 or the servile interpreter who accompanied Egeria on her pilgrimage.<sup>34</sup> In some cases, ancient translation work was performed by those who also served as secretaries, so perhaps we should understand Mark in this kind of role.<sup>35</sup> In general it is safe to say that interpreters 'were freedmen or slaves, and the language which they interpreted, especially into Greek or Latin, was their own vernacular'.<sup>36</sup> As someone capable of orally translating Peter's speeches and transcribing his words, Mark was put to work.<sup>37</sup> In either instance, the work that Mark was performing was of comparatively low status. For modern readers the next question might be, 'If Mark was a slave, who enslaved him?' That Papias does not pose or answer this question should not necessarily surprise us. Paul regularly used secretaries, but we do not know who owned them.

34 See A. Palmer, 'Egeria the Voyager', *Travel Fact and Travel Fiction: Studies on Fiction, Literary Tradition, Scholarly Discovery and Observation in Travel Writing* (ed. Z. von Martels; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 39–53, at 49. Mark does not seem to have served the kind of quasi-touristic function of the interpreter who translated inscriptions on monuments for Herodotus.

35 *O. Berenike* II.121, 113–17 CE: 'On behalf of the fortune of Emperor Caesar Nerva Trajan Augustus Germanicus Dacicus and all his house, to Isis the very great goddess ... (son of?) Papis, interpreter and secretary (Παπίρειος ἑρμηνεύς καὶ γραμματεύς) ... under Marcus Rutilius Lupus, prefect of Egypt' (trans. Bagnall, Helms and Verhoogt, *Documents from Berenike*, no. 121).

36 H. S. Gehman, *The Interpreters of Foreign Languages among the Ancients: A Study Based on Greek and Latin Sources* (Lancaster: Intelligensia, 1914) 17–18. As with other slave professions such as wet-nursing, there was a suspicion of foreigners and a preference for home-grown translators (see, for example, the story in Plutarch, *Sertorius* in which Sertorius decrees that children of good birth be trained as translators) but this discourse was probably a response to the practice. That interpreters, even those sent on diplomatic missions, were sometimes subjected to violence, even by those who dispatched them, is more understandable if the interpreters were of low status. On one occasion the Greek translator at the Persian embassy in Athens was put to death for daring to put the demands of barbarians into the Greek language (Plutarch, *Themistocles* 6.2). Among Roman examples, the names of most official diplomatic interpreters are lost to us. Seneca distinguishes between translators and authors writing when he remarks that those who carry around the work of others are 'never *auctores*, but always *interpretes*, in the shadow of others' (*Ep.* 33.8).

37 T. Y. Mullins, 'Papias on Mark's Gospel', *VC* 14 (1960) 216–24. Mullins' argument is unpersuasive because it is highly unlikely that Peter was literate. His solution that the Gospel was part literary translation and part recollection does solve the problem of the strange use of ἔντιον in the passage, which might be read as suggesting that only some of Mark was written in order or was dependent on Peter. Westcott interpreted it as meaning that Mark was a 'memoir of "some events"' in the life of Jesus (B. F. Westcott, *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament During the First Four Centuries* (London: MacMillan, 1875) 75) while Zahn reasoned that Mark was dependent on Peter only for some portions of the Gospel (T. Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909) 440–1).

### 3. Committing Pen to Paper

What is clear in early Christian descriptions is that Mark records the teachings of Peter. Though Irenaeus and Clement would later envision this as taking place after the death of Peter, Papias is vague about the timing of Mark's work as interpreter and textualiser so it is possible that both practices happen concurrently.<sup>38</sup> The vast majority of ancient literature was dictated by one person (the higher-status 'author') to another (a lower-status *librarius*, *secretarius* or *notarius*).<sup>39</sup> As research in book studies has recently demonstrated, slaves were an integral part of reading, writing and book production, and the majority of 'writing' and 'reading' was performed by servile actors.<sup>40</sup> Social elites could and did read and write, but in most circumstances they preferred to delegate that kind of work to suitably trained slaves.<sup>41</sup>

Collaboration between peers, on the other hand, was anomalous. While Roman authors constantly collaborated with their slaves in the production of texts for which they claimed sole responsibility, they did not self-consciously co-author literature with their peers or inferiors.<sup>42</sup> While scholars regularly adjudge, for example, the majority of the speeches of Lysias to be the products

38 As Kok puts it: 'Grammatically, Papias is unclear about whether the aorist participle γενόμενος (having become) is to be read as prior to, or concurrent with, the aorist verb ἔγραψε (he wrote) (Hist. Eccl. 3.39.15). Either the evangelist was Peter's interpreter before beginning to write what he (Mark) remembered of Peter's words or he acted as Peter's interpreter and scribe simultaneously, transcribing what he (Peter) remembered' (Kok, *Gospel on the Margins*, 117).

39 Following Howley, I do not distinguish between the work of the *secretarius* or *amanuensis* from the *notarius* because the work of these literary slaves often overlapped: Cicero refers to Diphilus as the *scriptor et lector* of Crassus (Cicero, *De or.* 1.136). See discussion in J. Howley, 'In Ancient Rome', *Further Reading* (ed. M. Rubery and L. Price; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020) 15–27.

40 See R. Darnton, 'What is the History of Books?', *Daedalus* 111 (1982) 65–84; R. J. Starr, 'Reading Aloud: *Lectores* and Roman Reading', *CJ* 86 (1991) 337–43; T. Habinek, 'Slavery and Class', *A Companion to Latin Literature* (ed. S. Harrison; Oxford: Blackwell, 2005) 385–93; R. Winsbury, *The Roman Book* (London: Duckworth, 2009) 79–85; J. Howley, 'In Ancient Rome', 15–27.

41 See N. Horsfall, 'Rome without Spectacles', *G&R* 42 (1995) 49–56; M. McDonnell, 'Writing, Copying, and Autograph Manuscripts in Rome', *CQ* 46 (1996) 469–91. At a certain point in their lives diminished eyesight would have made most elites unable to read without the aid of a *lector*.

42 A rare exception to this rule might be the relationship between Epictetus, a freedman, and his student Arrian, a future consul, whose notes on Epictetus' lectures form the basis for the *Dissertationes* and *Encheiridion*. Some have challenged the extent to which the *Dissertationes* is based on Epictetus' actual teachings, but in either case Arrian claims a scribal relationship to Epictetus. See T. Wirth, 'Arrians Erinnerungen an Epiktet', *MH* 24 (1967) 149–89, at 172 and P. A. Brunt, 'From Epictetus to Arrian', *Athenaeum* 55 (1977) 19–48.

of collaboration, this was not how they would later circulate.<sup>43</sup> A similar phenomenon emerges in the attribution of pseudepigraphic literature and the handling of the Pauline epistles. Texts on papyri reveal joint production through the presence of multiple hands, but these were not intended for broader circulation in the same way as ‘authored’ literature. Letters, too, could be jointly dispatched by more than one person, even if these were still dictated to unnamed secretaries.<sup>44</sup> *Commentarii* are not usually ‘authored’ literary texts even though there are some examples of jointly produced *commentarii* – for example, Caesar’s *Gallic Wars* – that would later circulate as literature.<sup>45</sup> It is also worth noting how Papias presents the collaboration between Peter and Mark. Mark is not an ‘author’, he is the textualiser of the memories of Peter.<sup>46</sup> That he is later perceived as an author rather than a hander-down of tradition does not mean that he was originally regarded as such.

If Mark’s interpretation took place in the context of textualising Peter’s memories, then the arrangement between them is akin to that of a person who dictates a text and the scribe to whom the text is dictated.<sup>47</sup> While Richard Bauckham envisions that Peter and Mark were collaborators and co-authors who ‘[were] engaged in a process of setting [Peter’s memories] down in writing’, this is not the way in which ancient readers would have interpreted this practice.<sup>48</sup> If Mark is understood here as rendering Peter’s words into a particular textual form, then his role would not have been seen as that of an equal.<sup>49</sup> Mark’s involvement would

43 Attributing a particular speech to Lysias made collections of speeches more valuable to fourth-century booksellers. On the matter of authorship in Lysias, see T. N. Winter, ‘On the Corpus of Lysias’, *CJ* 69 (1973) 34–40. Rare counter-examples of collaborative authorship might include the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* but in examples such as this the authors do not collaborate with one another but, rather, the redactor links his texts to those of his subjects.

44 E.g. Cicero, *Fam.* 16.3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11. Cicero refers to co-operative letters in *Att.* 14.5.1 and there are, of course, Christian examples (e.g. Acts 15; 1 Clement; Polycarp, *Phil.*; *Martyrdom of Polycarp*). Murphy-O’Connor reports that ‘only 6 out of the 645 papyrus letters from Oxyrynchus, Tebtunis, and Zenon had a plurality of senders’ (J. Murphy-O’Connor, ‘Co-Authorship in the Corinthian Correspondence’, *RB* 100 (1993) 562–79, at 564).

45 See discussion in A. M. Riggsby, *Caesar in Gaul and Rome: War in Words* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2006) 134–5. In some instances, the self-description of a text as unpolished could easily have functioned as a form of faux humility and a means of accounting for the presence of errors in a text.

46 Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 11–36.

47 Compare, for example, the arrangement between Jesus and Thomas in the preface to the Gospel of Thomas in which Jesus ‘speaks’ and Thomas ‘writes’.

48 Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 211. The extent to which a *secretarius* acted (in modern but not ancient constructions of authorship and textual production) as a collaborator is worth discussing, but this is not in Bauckham’s purview.

49 There are rare references to elites taking dictation or editing the work of friends, but this seems to have happened in exceptional circumstances; see discussion in McDonnell, ‘Writing,

mirror that of other capable secretaries such as Tiro, the secretary of Cicero.<sup>50</sup> As highly regarded as Tiro was by Cicero and subsequent generations of Roman elites, there was never any doubt that he was the subordinate party.<sup>51</sup> In New Testament scholarship the social status of ancient slave-writers is often unconsciously elevated to that of an 'associate' or volunteer, but the ordinary way for an ancient reader to understand the character of Mark's work was as that of a slave.<sup>52</sup>

The second element emphasised by Papias is Mark's accurate recollection of Peter's anecdotes.<sup>53</sup> For both Papias and modern scholarship, Mark's memory is tied both to the idea that Mark truly was Peter's translator and also to a commitment to the accuracy of the Gospels. Within scholarship on the Synoptics it is the accuracy of Mark that guarantees the accuracy of Matthew and Luke. The difference between Papias and modern scholarship, however, is that for the latter, Mark's memory is secured by the imagined friendship between Peter and Mark.<sup>54</sup> By contrast, in the ancient world accurate memories were not simply the natural by-product of familiarity. They were cultivated and shaped.<sup>55</sup> As is

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Copying, and Autograph Manuscripts', 477. The example he cites is Cicero recruiting senatorial scribes during the Catilinarian conspiracy, a situation in which secrecy was required.

50 Tiro is something of a celebrity, but the vast majority of scribal figures go unnamed and uncredited. For hints of other important slave-workers, see Isocrates, *Panath.* 231; Horace, *Sat.* 1.4.9–13; Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.3.

51 Cicero, *Fam.* 16.10.2 and 16.4.3.

52 We might compare here the treatment of Tertius who is named in Rom 16.12 as the one who wrote the letter to the Romans. Scholars go to great lengths to avoid describing him as enslaved. See, for example, Deissmann, who describes him as an 'associate' (A. Deissmann, *St Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History* (London and New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913) 225). Others call him a 'scribe', a term that, in the context of Judeo-Christian religion, confers intimations of both liberty and education. See, for example, the brilliant K. Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmission of Early Christian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 79.

53 There is a debate about precisely whose memories are being recorded in this passage. Grammatically the person who is doing the remembering could be either Peter or Mark. I follow here C. Keith, *The Gospel as Manuscript: An Early History of the Jesus Tradition as Material Artifact* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020) 52–3.

54 Goodspeed, for example, writes that 'when Peter preached in his native Aramaic to little companies of Roman Christians, [Mark] stood at his side to translate his words... he had become so familiar with Peter's preaching, through his practice of translating it, that it was possible for him to remember and write down much that Peter had been wont to tell about his walks and talks with Jesus' (E. J. Goodspeed, *The Story of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929) 49–50). Goodspeed's analysis reads both the habits of Jesus and Papias' description of Peter and Mark's relationship through the lens of early twentieth-century intellectual discourse.

55 I am here discussing the construction of memory in the ancient world. Some recent scholarship on the Gospels has utilised the work of social memory theorists to discuss the manner in

regularly noted in modern treatments of the subject, many people in the ancient world had excellent memories that were shaped through educational structures that encouraged memorising and repetition.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, however, the role of the *nomenclator*, the slave who served as the walking memory of his master, suggests that some in the Roman world had better memories than others.<sup>57</sup> As Pliny the Elder put it, ‘we use another person’s memory to greet people’.<sup>58</sup> The utilisation of the memory faculties of slaves was not just about the memory loss that accompanies the aging process, but also about social status.<sup>59</sup> As the well-known example of Calvisius Sabinus shows, memorising was an important aspect of the training of literate slaves. According to Seneca, Sabinus was a wealthy member of the *nouveau riche* who, in order to produce evidence of his learning, purchased a cohort of slaves whose purpose was to memorise the work of Homer and the great poets and whisper quotations from them in his ear during dinner parties.<sup>60</sup> While the aristocrats who made up the Roman

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which gospel traditions preserve accurate eyewitness traditions. See particularly Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*; M. Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study* (STI; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006) 166–78. For an excellent overview of social memory theory and argument that the theory should not be used to discuss historical accuracy or inaccuracy, see C. Keith, ‘Social Memory Theory and Gospels Research: The First Decade. Part One’, *Early Christianity* 6 (2015) 354–76 and ‘Social Memory Theory and Gospels Research: The First Decade. Part Two’, *Early Christianity* 6 (2015) 517–42. It is not the intention of this project to establish the accuracy or inaccuracy of early Christian testimony, rather I am interested here in how ancient audiences thought about memory.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Raffaella Cribiore’s statement that ‘memory was the foundation of all knowledge in a world that could not rely on easily consulted books, tables of contents and indexes, library catalogues and electronic search tools’, in her ground-breaking *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011) 166. See also T. Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 23–33, 45–6. For the view that Jesus had his disciples memorise his teachings, see B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 240–4 and *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 1961) 22. Gerhardsson’s analysis is based on rabbinic and Second Temple Jewish practices and assumes, despite considerable evidence to the contrary, that the disciples were well educated.

<sup>57</sup> Seneca, *Ep.* 27.5. See discussion in Winsbury, *The Roman Book*, 79–85.

<sup>58</sup> Pliny, *Nat.* 28.14. See discussion in O. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982) 339.

<sup>59</sup> On memory loss through aging, see Seneca, *Con.* 10. pr. 1.

<sup>60</sup> Seneca, *Ep.* 27.5 and T. Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery* (London: Routledge, 1988) 26. See also Lucian’s satirical diatribe *The Ignorant Book Collector*, which lampoons the efforts of the newly wealthy to acquire status by purchasing knowledge, and Petronius’ Trimalchio in the *Satyricon*.

elite would undoubtedly have received memory training as part of their formal education, they also used the memories of slaves as repositories of important information, in particular the precise command of literature and factual information such as names. Clement explicitly describes Mark's gospel as a kind of *aide memoire*, but even for Papias Mark's function was to preserve – without error or omission – the anecdotes of Peter.<sup>61</sup>

If Mark is presented as a slave, one might ask, then why does Papias not simply say so? In the first place, we should note that while Mark is performing servile work he could as easily have been a freedman as a slave. Perhaps more relevant is the fact that, while it occasionally happened, it was not customary or necessary to identify a particular domestic notary or secretary as slave. It would have been as obvious to an ancient reader that an interpreter or secretary was a servile worker as it would be to a modern one that a butler is a domestic labourer. There are exceptions in which, say, a graduate student might moonlight as a bartender. In the latter context they may well find themselves inscribed with discriminatory cultural assumptions about the intelligence of those in the service industry even though they themselves possess multiple advanced degrees. But this only proves the point: servile work colours the one performing it in a very particular way. The impulse to elevate the social status of members of the Jesus movement who performed servile work from the shackles of the 'slave' label is not emancipatory; it merely serves to co-opt and render invisible the labour of servile workers. Secretaries were by definition servile workers and their labour was categorised as servile regardless of whether or not they were technically slaves. The identification of Mark as a translator and the description of his textual labour would have communicated his status to Papias' audience.

To build on our observations from earlier, Papias presents Mark as possessing a particular set of interconnected literary skills – translation skills, literacy and an excellent memory – that are utilised in the context of the ordinary compositional relationship between author and secretary. This representation does valuable work for Papias: it allows him to present Mark's text as the unfettered memories of the apostle.

61 In an interesting article articulating the relationship between Peter and Mark as that between Rabbi and *tanna*, Yadin-Israel equates the status of the *hermēneutes* to that of the *tanna*, those responsible for preserving traditions by committing to memory. Though I do not think that Papias' text is as replete with rabbinic terminology as Yadin-Israel's article claims, the parallel is suggestive because the *tanna*, while reliable repositories of tradition, are portrayed, as Roman literate slaves are, as failing to fully understand the things that they preserve. The parallels between the lower status *tanna* and literate slaves seem ripe for exploration. See Yadin-Israel, 'For Mark was Peter's Tanna', 349.

#### 4. Unpolished Composition

What is striking about Papias' portrayal is that while he trusts Mark's memories, he openly acknowledges the literary shortcomings of his text. He describes it as written without τάξις. Scholarship on this question agrees that Papias here defends the quality of Mark's contribution, but diverges about the nature of this disorder. There are those who think that 'order' refers to the chronology of the text.<sup>62</sup> A demonstrable concern for chronological order is evident in Polybius (2.56.10), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Comp.* 9; *Pomp.* 3), Josephus (*Ant.* 1.17; *JW* 1.15) and Lucian (*How to Write History* 6, 48, 51, 55), but ancient historians tend to use the language of time (χρόνος or καιρός) for this kind of sequential order.<sup>63</sup> More probably, by τάξις Papias means rhetorical order of the kind a well-educated Roman would have learned about as part of his rhetorical education.<sup>64</sup> Lucian, for example, describes 'order' (τάξις) and 'style' as the two elements that a historian introduces into a rough draft as part of the editorial process.<sup>65</sup>

In a recent book on the textualisation of the Gospel according to Mark, Matthew Larsen has argued that for early Christian readers, Mark's text was not a polished book but rather something more akin to ὑπομνήματα (notes) or ἄπομνημονεύματα (memoirs), terms that, in modern literary taxonomies, we might equate to something like a 'rough draft'.<sup>66</sup> Many such texts lacked polish and literary style. In practice these kinds of documents were frequently the textual output of lower-status individuals – sometimes even women and children – including administrative clerks and literate slaves.<sup>67</sup> While a wide variety of ancient texts were characterised as ὑπομνήματα, some – legal notes – had the additional quality of being (imagined as) especially reliable and accurate.<sup>68</sup> This

62 Hengel, *Studies*, 48–9; Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 217–21.

63 On this, see A. Stewart-Sykes, 'Taxei in Papias: Again', *J ECS* 3 (1995) 489–90 and examples in Thucydides, *Hist.* 1.97.2; Philostatus, *Vit. Apoll.* 1.2; Polybius, *Histories* 5.33).

64 Colson, 'Τάξις in Papias', 62–9; Kürzinger, *Papias*, 13–14. Kürzinger directs us to the technical use of σύνταξις in Greek rhetoric as a term for structure and literary organisation (e.g. in Ps.-Aristotle, *Rhet. Alex.* 30–8).

65 Colson, 'Τάξις in Papias', 64. See also Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 87. Cf. Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 1.2–3.

66 Larsen, 'Accidental', 377. Larsen's theory applies to the composition of the text itself as well as its reception and construction in the second and third centuries. For our purposes we will argue only the latter; Matthew and Luke certainly treat Mark in this way.

67 Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.53 (Agrippina, mother of Nero). See Riggsby, *Caesar in Gaul and Rome*, 134 and M. D. C. Larsen and M. Letteney, 'Christians and the Codex: Generic Materiality and Early Gospel Traditions', *J ECS* 27 (2019) 383–415, at 398.

68 Larsen does not discuss legal transcripts in detail, but these kinds of documents were supposed to be especially reliable. On this, see R. A. Coles, *Reports of Proceedings in Papyri* (Papyrologica Bruxellensia 4; Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1966). On the function of legal documents in the ancient world, see Riggsby, *Caesar in Gaul and*



is certainly a characteristic of Mark's text that Papias wishes to stress. Larsen notes that Papias does not speak of Mark as an author of his textual product as either a 'book' or even as the 'gospel according to Mark'. While we should note that Papias also does not identify Mark's text as 'notes',<sup>69</sup> the fact that the work lacks 'order' could easily lead readers of Papias to the conclusion that he sees Mark as unpolished.<sup>70</sup> Whatever term he would have used to describe the text, Papias' focus is on the ways in which it serves as an accurate transcription of the things that the apostle Peter had remembered. Papias focuses on the textualised form of Mark's memory as providing 'a physical extension of Mark's memory of Peter's teaching ... [that provides] access, through Mark's notes, to the living voice of Peter, albeit through the medium of textual objects'.<sup>71</sup> It is Mark's role as conduit to the voice of Peter that is central. In this context, Mark himself recedes from view: just as he had served, while Peter was alive, as a means by which Peter's voice could bridge the language divide, his textual product now bridges a different kind of chasm and provides access to Peter himself.

We might compare this characterisation of Mark to the way in which elite Roman authors describe stenographers and scribes. Martial salaciously commends the efficient *notarius* whose hand finishes the sentences of his master.<sup>72</sup> Cicero admits that, without his *secretarius* Tiro, his work 'is silent'.<sup>73</sup> Flush with the heat of inspiration, Horace would dispatch a slave to add verses to his book-rolls, assuming that the slave would accurately recall his words.<sup>74</sup> Mark acts in a similar fashion: he serves as an extension of the traditions, memories and voice of Peter. This servile role does important work for Papias who, as is often noted, is more interested in the living voices of eyewitnesses than the corrupted and potentially forged literary texts of authors.<sup>75</sup> By positioning Mark as a servile worker he is able to explain why it is that the text lacks order (it is the unrefined text of a *secretarius* or *notarius*) while simultaneously using this lowly

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Rome, 139–40. For the way in which early Christians deliberately appropriate the court record style in order to evoke a sense of proximity to events, see F. Millar, *The Roman Republic and the Augustan Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002) 35.

69 Keith, *Gospel as Manuscript*, 52–3.

70 Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 90.

71 Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 90.

72 Martial 14.208.

73 Cicero, *Fam.* 16.10.2

74 Horace, *Sat.* 1.10.92.

75 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.3–4. L. Alexander, "'The Living Voice': Skepticism towards the Written Word in Early Christian and in Graeco-Roman Texts', *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield* (ed. D. J. A. Clines, S. E. Fowl and S. E. Porter; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990) 221–47; Keith, *Gospel as Manuscript*, 4–6.

status to defend the integrity of the content. Mark's text can be trusted to be composed without interpolation because this is what well-trained slaves do.

Slaves do not corrupt or emend the content because slaves, even literate ones, are not literary authors to ancient Romans.<sup>76</sup> They lack, in the minds of elite Roman authors, independent intellectual agency. While it is inappropriate to attempt to enter the minds of ancient Romans and make pronouncements about what they could and could not think, it is noteworthy that they do not seem to think of literature as an attainable category for non-elites. After being freed by Cicero, for example, Tiro composed a number of texts under his own aegis. The second-century writer Aulus Gellius delights in finding errors in these independently written texts while reminding his own readers of Tiro's servile origins.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, Lucian of Samosata, for example, is scandalised when lower-status individuals present their writings 'in the manner of proper books' (Lucian, *How to Write History* 16).<sup>78</sup> Mark's lack of authorial status serves as evidence for the integrity of the recorded memories.<sup>79</sup> The representation of both the text as unpolished notes, and also the textualiser as servile, reinforces Papias' overarching argument: the text is messy, but it is accurate. Its inelegance, in fact, paradoxically serves as a guarantee of its accuracy.

### 5. Vestiges of an Erased Servile Body

Other early Christian interpreters – who may or may not have been familiar with the tradition we find in Papias – amplify and subdue the discourse of servile transmission in different ways.<sup>80</sup> Writing in Gaul within a few decades of Papias, and perhaps with knowledge of his work, Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon, provides a somewhat different account of the compositional history of the Gospels.<sup>81</sup>

76 Here I mean with respect to the content of dictation and transcription. There are rare examples of enslaved and formerly enslaved authors in antiquity, e.g. Aesop, Phlegon, Hyginus and the narrators of Greek romance novels, but these were usually associated with collections of sayings, paradoxography and other genres of literature deemed *déclassé*.

77 This contrasts with documentary texts, for which slaves could be responsible. Howley describes it in the following way: 'Tiro commits more obvious errors the further he moves from his patron Cicero ... Tiro's failings ... are not mere errors in interpretation, but some more fundamental flaw of character' (J. A. Howley, *Aulus Gellius and Roman Reading Culture: Text, Presence and Imperial Knowledge in the Noctes Atticae* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) 182).

78 This example is taken from Larsen and Letteney, 'Christians and the Codex', 398.

79 On Mark's lack of authorial status, see Larsen and Letteney, 'Christians and the Codex', 398.

80 For later examples of Mark as Peter's interpreter not discussed here, see Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.5; Jerome, *Com. Matt.* praef. 2; Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Top.* 5.196.

81 Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.1.1. The Greek text is preserved in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.8.2–4. The text of Irenaeus is preserved in a fragmentary form in Greek and Latin. The texts used by Larsen and followed here are from A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, *Irénée de Lyon, Contre Les*

Irenaeus clearly states (1) that Mark wrote after the death of Peter, (2) that each of the Gospels was written for a specific audience and, (3) in the case of those who were not eyewitnesses, reflects a particular line of tradition. What is of interest to us is how Mark's work is described. Larsen argues that, while Irenaeus presents John and Matthew as figures who 'published written gospels' (γραφὴν ἐξήνεγκεν Εὐαγγελίου), Mark passes on an oral proclamation in written form (ἐγγράφως ἡμῖν παραδέδωκε).<sup>82</sup> While Luke also receives his traditions second-hand, he is described as textualising the gospel in a particular way: in a 'book'.<sup>83</sup> The subtle differences here do not undermine the parallel status and role of the Gospels. In all instances, as Yoshiko Reed has argued, Irenaeus grounds the reliability of the texts in their connection to the oral preaching of the gospel.<sup>84</sup> The passage amplifies Mark's role as intermediary and conveyor of Peter's message while perpetuating the view that Mark's textual product stands alongside those of the other evangelists.

Clement of Alexandria offers two divergent narratives about the composition of Mark.<sup>85</sup> Though both versions postulate that Mark wrote in Rome, and had followed Peter, they diverge on whether or not Peter endorsed Mark's text. It was the local Christian community in Rome and, in an often-overlooked fragment from Clement's *Adumbrationes*, the *equites* in particular who requested that Mark

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*Hérésies. Livre III* (Sources Chrétiennes 211; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1974) 22–5. For the view that Irenaeus himself did not write this statement, see B. Mutschler, 'Was weiss Irenäus vom Johannesevangelium aus der Perspektive seiner Rezeption bei Irenäus von Lyon?', *Kontexte des Johannesevangeliums: Das vierte Evangelium in religions- und traditions-geschichtlicher Perspektive* (ed. J. Frey and U. Schnelle; WUNT 175; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 705–6. Thornton, the source of Mutschler's opinions, argues that this summary comes from a Roman source composed between 120 and 135 CE. For our purposes it is, however, still an example of early Christian interpretation. See C.-J. Thornton, *Der Zeuge des Zeugen: Lukas als Historiker der Paulusreisen* (WUNT 56; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991) 8–67.

82 Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 19.

83 Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.1.1: καὶ Λουκᾶς δέ, ὁ ἀκόλουθος Παύλου, τὸ ὑπ' ἐκείνου κηρυσσόμενον Εὐαγγέλιον ἐν βίβλῳ κατέθετο may well be focused upon Marcion, whom Irenaeus squarely addresses later in this section, and Marcion's claim that he is preserving 'Paul's Gospel' (cf. 2 Tim 2.8).

84 So A. Yoshiko Reed, 'ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ: Orality, Textuality, and the Christian Truth in Irenaeus' *Adversus Haeresis*, *VC* 56 (2002) 11–46, at 25. See also M. M. Mitchell, 'Mark, the Long-Form Pauline Εὐαγγέλιον', *Modern and Ancient Criticism of the Gospels: Continuing the Debate on Gospel Genre(s)* (ed. R. M. Calhoun, D. P. Moessner and T. Nicklas; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming).

85 As is the case with Papias and Irenaeus, these stories are refracted through the writings of Eusebius. Clement of Alexandria, fr. 8.4–12 = Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.14.6–7 and Clement of Alexandria, fr. 9.4–20 = Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.15.1–2.

textualise his memories of Peter's preaching for them.<sup>86</sup> In the Eusebian texts, Clement repositions Mark as Peter's 'son', under the influence of 1 Pet 5.13, in which the pseudonymous author sends greetings from the church in Rome (Babylon) and his son Mark.<sup>87</sup> The language of sonship creates an alternative genealogy for Mark's trustworthiness even as Peter's attitude to the text is, in one version of events, somewhat ambivalent. In Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.14.6–7, Mark writes, again using his remarkable memory, at the instigation of Christians in Rome; Peter neither hinders nor encourages the Gospel of Mark's circulation. Mark here writes a text for a small group, in contrast to the writing of Matthew and Luke, whose works, Clement says, were 'set forth publicly'.<sup>88</sup> Elsewhere, in the fragment of Clement preserved at *Church History* 2.15.1–2, Peter is delighted with the realisation (via supernatural revelation) that Mark had written and confirmed that the Gospel could be read in gatherings, which suggests that – at least for Clement – Mark was complete enough for liturgical use. Clement's description of the relationship between Mark and Peter in these accounts differs from that of Papias. The distinction between the audiences and functional uses of the text may also serve, however, to explain the lack of polish on it. As Michelle Kennerly puts it, editing is 'essentially, preparing written words for strangers, sometimes very distant ones'.<sup>89</sup> Texts produced for private hearings among friends require less lacquer.<sup>90</sup>

The discourse of servile authorship survives, however, in later prologues to Mark.<sup>91</sup> In one prologue, which probably depends upon Clement, Mark's

86 Clement of Alexandria, fr. 24 GCS 17.206 (PG 9.732). See discussion in M. L. Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 89–90. According to this text, which is preserved in Latin by the sixth-century monastic founder Cassiodorus, it was when Peter was preaching in Rome in front of imperial *equites* that some of these petitioned Mark to write.

87 This is explicit in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.15.2. Sonship and emancipation are not necessarily mutually incompatible: the processes of adoption and manumission resembled one another.

88 The locative translation of προγεγράφθαι as 'write before the public' or 'set forth publicly' (rather than the more usual temporal interpretation 'write first') is from S. C. Carlson, 'Clement of Alexandria on the "Order" of the Gospels', *NTS* 47 (2001) 118–25, at 122–3. Audience request traditions are also found in Clement with respect to the composition of the Gospel of John (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.14.7), in the Muratorian Canon and in gospel prologues. See Mitchell, 'Patristic Counter-Evidence', 50 n. 42.

89 M. Kennerly, *Editorial Bodies: Perfection and Rejection in Ancient Rhetoric and Politics* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2018) 6.

90 On the distinction between private and public reading, see Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture*, 55–9; Larsen, *Gospels before the Book*, 76–7; Keith, *Gospel as Manuscript*, 171–3.

91 For the Latin prologues to Mark, see J. Regul, *Die antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe* (Vetus Latina 6; Freiburg: Herder, 1969) 29–30. For the argument that these prologues serve a unified purpose and character, see D. de Bruyne, 'Les plus anciens prologues latines des évangiles', *RBén* 40 (1928) 193–214. As Regul has elegantly demonstrated, these Latin prologues are not anti-Marcionite, *Die antimarcionitischen Evangelienprologe*, 266–67.

Gospel 'was published under the aegis of Peter the chief leader of the apostles for the faithful brethren who were in Rome'.<sup>92</sup> It is here Peter, *qua* leader, who is responsible for the text's power and publication and Mark, as servile textual labourer, who produces the gospel. More suggestive, however, is the very particular way in which Mark's physical form is described. He is presented as 'Stumpfinger' (*colobodactylus*), a term that, the Latin prologue explains, connects to the fact that 'for the size of the rest of his body he had fingers that were too short'.<sup>93</sup> Some read this literally. Grant suggests that 'Stumpfinger' refers to a 'natural characteristic' similar to 'the flat-footed Justus and the graphic description of Paul' in the Acts of Paul.<sup>94</sup> Others see this description as a veiled reference to the brevity of Mark's Gospel, the conclusion to which has a certain truncated feel.<sup>95</sup>

The production of texts is a physical affair. As Carolyn Marvin has put it, the unseen body that did the physical work of writing did not only put pen to paper, 'skin is pulled and scratched, nails, lips, and mustaches are bitten, noses, ears, and faces are picked, fingernails are peeled, hair is plucked and twisted'.<sup>96</sup> As a result, textual corpora often reflect the physiognomies of their authors. If Mark's nickname is connected to the form of his textual product then it may refer to his abbreviated and inelegant sentences.<sup>97</sup> Alternatively, perhaps the stumpy fingers evoke the hasty and poorly edited work of Lucilius who, according to Horace, would 'gnaw his fingernails to the quick'.<sup>98</sup> Whether or not it is a comment on Mark's text, the description reproduces an ancient physiognomic perspective that connects physical characteristics to personality traits.<sup>99</sup> Ps.-Aristotle describes the servile body as disproportionate and the

92 H. F. von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Dunckler, 1902) 312.

93 See discussion in R. M. Grant, 'The Oldest Gospel Prologues', *ATR* 23 (1941) 231–45, at 236. See also Hippolytus, *Elenchus* 7.30, which uses the same phrase. Later traditions claim that Mark deliberately cut off one of his fingers in order to avoid being elevated either to the Jewish priesthood or to the Christian episcopate. A rich description of this tradition is provided by J. L. North, 'MARKOS HO KOLOBODAKTYLOS: Hippolytus, *Elenchus*, vii.30', *JTS* 29 (1977) 498–507. An excellent overview of various scholarly interpretations can be found in Kok, *Gospel on the Margins*, 220–6.

94 Grant, 'The Oldest Gospel Prologues', 236. Compare Harvey's suggestion that it was a nickname meaning 'clumsy-handed', *Sancti Irenaei libros quinque ad verus haereses*, vol. II (ed. W. W. Harvey; Cambridge: Typus Academicis, 1857) 4 n. 3.

95 E.g. Severian of Gabala, PG 63.541.

96 C. Marvin, 'The Body of the Text: Literacy's Corporeal Constant', *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80 (1994) 129–49, at 132. See discussion in Kennerly, *Editorial Bodies*, 13–17. Cf. *P.Oxy.* LVI.3860.

97 The individual parts of prose are regularly described as fingers and limbs. See Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1408b–1409a; Cicero, *Or. Brut.* 149–233.

98 Horace, *Sat.* 1.10.64–72.

99 A. J. Malherbe, 'A Physical Description of Paul', *HTR* 79 (1986) 170–5.

inverse of the well-proportioned bodily form of the citizen.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, the later *Physiognomy of Adamantius the Sophist* describes those with stubby and thick fingers as ‘daring, improvident, and beastlike’.<sup>101</sup> It is, arguably, not by accident that the part of Mark’s body that is most servile and disproportionate is also the part used to inscribe Peter’s words. The description of Mark as short-fingered reflects a tradition that links the quality of Mark’s text to a particular bodily form that, in turn, suggests and reflects ancient constructions of the bodies of slaves.

## 6. Conclusion

As is widely argued, the connection between Mark and Peter cements Mark’s textual product as an authoritative writing that accurately transmits the voice of Peter. What I have argued here is that ancient audiences – at least those who encountered this tradition in the forms we find in Papias, Clement and Irenaeus – would have understood the nature of that connection in servile terms. The designation of Mark as Peter’s interpreter identifies him not only as a subordinate but also as a literary worker. The role he plays in textualising Peter’s memories was one that ordinarily would have been performed by a literate slave, servile worker or local scribe for hire.<sup>102</sup> The description of Mark’s resulting text as ‘without order’, a characteristic shared with ancient notes or unpolished drafts, only further cements the idea that Mark, and thereby his text, are of lower status.

Paradoxically, however, the construction of Mark as a subordinate servile worker (an interpreter and scribe) only serves to solidify the claims of Papias that Mark’s text is accurate. The fact that he is a conduit rather than an author and produces notes rather than literature is a guarantee of the Petrine quality of the text. It is, as it were, the functional invisibility of the slave secretary that allows Petrine teaching to be passed on without Markan interference. Mark’s literary deficiencies are leveraged by Papias and others as evidence for his accuracy in preserving Petrine oral teaching. Placed in the context of non-Christian second-century literary culture that prized editions with scribal pedigree, the shaping of Mark as a capable *notarius* may explain why it is that the Second Gospel is

100 *Physiogn.* 3.807b5–12. Cf. Soranus’ *Gynaecology*, which emphasises that the body of the infant must be massaged into proportionality.

101 I. Repath, ‘The Physiognomy of Adamantius the Sophist’, *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul: Polemon’s Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Islam* (ed. S. Swain; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 487–547, at 520–1.

102 For a succinct and illuminating overview of scribal and secretarial practices in the Roman era, see Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 27–34. It seems highly unlikely that Mark is being positioned as a ‘town-square’ scribe, since he appears to have been specifically linked to Peter.

attributed to Mark.<sup>103</sup> Just as Tiro organised and collected the thoughts of Cicero after his murder so too Mark preserves and transmits the memories of Peter.<sup>104</sup>

Fragmenting the opinions of apostolic witnesses was historically troublesome for members of the Jesus movement.<sup>105</sup> For Irenaeus, who saw the gospel as a singular concept articulated in four apostolic versions, identifying this version not only as Petrine but as the one ‘according to Mark’ guaranteed the integrity of the text. As a servile figure, he was not an author but an extension of Peter’s voice. This state of affairs is similar to the circumstances that surrounded the circulation of better and worse versions of the writings of elite Romans during the second century. The best example of this is found in the acquisition and use of the writings of Cicero. As Gellius shows, it was clearly preferable to have a manuscript of Cicero’s speeches that had been copied by Tiro, his most distinguished enslaved *secretarius*. Gellius, a rough contemporary of Papias and Irenaeus, claims to have obtained a manuscript of Cicero’s *Verrines* that bore the signature of Tiro himself.<sup>106</sup>

The Tironian books demonstrate two things about second-century literary culture in Rome: (1) a Roman elite interest in the identity of the *secretarius* who produced the autograph; this interest was grounded in both antiquarian snobbery and a particular kind of culture that leveraged the physical possession of book objects; (2) the notion that the personal connection of the scribe to the author helped ensure a superior version of the text: in the case of Tiro it was his ‘meticulous’ work that made his texts preferable; in the case of Mark, one might say that it was, as so many have noted, his excellent memory and closeness to Peter that rendered his version of the gospel authoritative.

This status had both advantages and disadvantages: the trained memory and mouthpiece that was free of artifice also lacked elegance. Ironically, this status is unwittingly preserved in Christian artistic and literary tradition that pictures Mark

103 Perhaps Mark is not credited with authorship but, rather, identified as the textual worker responsible for this accurate version of the gospel. Arguably, this may be the perspective of Irenaeus, who uses the formula ‘the Gospel according to ... (τὸ κατὰ)’ to refer to the work of the evangelists. This formulation conveys, as Yoshiko Reed has so ably argued, ‘not that of a title *per se* (i.e. ‘The Gospel According to...’), but rather the more literal sense of a single Gospel *according to* various authors’. See Yoshiko Reed, ‘ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ’, 20 n. 33. For the view that the titles of the Gospels date to the time of their earliest circulation, see S. J. Gathercole, ‘The Titles of the Gospels in the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts’, *ZNW* 104 (2013) 33–76 and, ‘The Alleged Anonymity of the Canonical Gospels’, *JTS* 69 (2018) 447–76.

104 See Kennerly, *Editorial Bodies*, 205.

105 See 1 Cor 3.4.

106 Aulus Gellius, *Noct. att.* 1.7.1; 13.21.16–17. See discussion in Howley, *Aulus Gellius*, 176–7. Tironian Ciceros were sufficiently popular in the second century for forgeries to be produced. See J. Zetzel, ‘Emendavi ad Tironem: Some Notes on Scholarship in the Second Century AD’, *HSCPh* 77 (1973) 225–43, at 231–2.

taking dictation from Peter. Though the loftier language of scribes, associates or companions is used to describe Mark's relationship to Peter, this vocabulary glosses over the realities of literate work in the ancient world and imports intonations of equity into their arrangement. The seventh-century ivory with which we began is a visual depiction of this line of tradition but, to a second-century Roman, the social dynamics of such a scene are already clear: the one who dictates is the power-holder and author, the one who takes dictation is the slave.