Dan Batovici

The Apostolic Fathers in Codex Sinaiticus
and Codex Alexandrinus
### Commentationes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D.J. Fuller</td>
<td>Towards a New Translation of הָזֵן in Genesis 37,2</td>
<td>481-491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.R. Yoder</td>
<td>The Silence of the (Spotted) Lambs: Ovine Otherness in the Hebrew Bible</td>
<td>492-502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. Sergi</td>
<td>The Omride Dynasty and the Reshaping of the Judahite Historical Memory</td>
<td>503-526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Banister</td>
<td>“I feared” or “I saw” in Habakkuk 3,2?</td>
<td>527-536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.C. Jones</td>
<td>Psalm 1 and the Hermeneutics of Torah</td>
<td>537-551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Mathew</td>
<td>The Syntax of John 13,1 Revisited</td>
<td>552-563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.-N. Aletti</td>
<td>Exegesis of the Ecclesiology of the Pauline Letters in the XX\textsuperscript{th} Century: A Status Quaestionis and a Changing Paradigm</td>
<td>564-580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Batovici</td>
<td>The Apostolic Fathers in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus</td>
<td>581-605</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Recensiones

**Vetus Testamentum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. Deiana</td>
<td>Thomas HIEKE, Levitikus 1–15; Levitikus 16–27</td>
<td>606-611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Poser</td>
<td>Tobias HäNER, Bleibendes Nachwirken des Exils. Untersuchungen zur kanonischen Endgestalt des Ezechielbuches</td>
<td>613-617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Schmitz</td>
<td>Anne-Mareike WETTER, “On Her Account”. Reconfiguring Israel in Ruth, Ester and Judith</td>
<td>617-619</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Novum Testamentum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Gerard</td>
<td>Carlos Raúl SOSA SILIEZAR, Creation Imagery in the Gospel of John</td>
<td>620-622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Gil Arbiol</td>
<td>Loïc BERGE, Faiblesse et force, présidence et collégialité chez Paul de Tarse</td>
<td>622-625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.J. Matera</td>
<td>Orrey McFARLAND, God and Grace in Philo and Paul</td>
<td>626-628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Lambrecht</td>
<td>Jeff HUBING, Crucifixion and New Creation. The Strategic Purpose of Galatians 6,11-17</td>
<td>628-630</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Varia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E. Schuller</td>
<td>Trine Bjørnungen HASSELBALCH, Meaning and Context in the Thanksgiving Hymns</td>
<td>630-633</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Nuntii personarum et rerum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Libri ad Directionem missi</td>
<td>634-638</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Apostolic Fathers in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus

Is there any canonical significance to the presence of the works of the Apostolic Fathers in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus? To state the facts briefly, there are today only four codices from Late Antiquity that put together the Greek Old Testament and the New Testament: Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and Ephraemi Rescriptus, all on parchment, spanning from the mid fourth to the fifth century. Up to this time, biblical books seem to have circulated individually or in partial collections and on papyrus, and it is not until several centuries later that we start having surviving Greek biblical pandects.

Two of the four codices include writings which later were clearly non-biblical. This raises the question of whether they would have been regarded as canonical by those who ordered the codices. This question — which has proved to be recurrent in modern scholarship, although it has been answered in quite different ways — is addressed here by focusing on the four Apostolic Fathers (AF) found at the end of two of the great codices: the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas in Codex Sinaiticus, and 1 and 2 Clement in Codex Alexandrinus. We do not know whether there were other texts at the end of Sinaiticus. The later index attached to Alexandrinus, however, mentions that 2 Clement was followed by the Psalms of Solomon, which is now lost. It is sometimes suggested that Codex Vaticanus might have had at the end the Didache, but this remains a speculation.

1 I would like to thank Joseph Verheyden, Tobias Nicklas, Matthew Crawford and the reviewer of Biblica for their comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this article. This research was made possible through the generous help of a FLOF grant from the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at KU Leuven.

2 This designation is used here for the sake of convenience, and it is not intended to imply that the whole collection was known under this name (or another) in antiquity. As it stands today, it is a modern construct; see D. Lincicum, “The Paratextual Invention of the Term ‘Apostolic Fathers’”, JTS 66.1 (2015) 139-148.


A straight answer is hindered primarily by uncertainties regarding their provenance (and, to a lesser extent, their dating), which remain a matter of dispute. Following a generally well-received argument for the Caesarean provenance of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, T.C. Skeat famously proposed, in a somewhat more speculative vein, that they were produced by Eusebius in response to Constantine’s order of fifty copies of the Bible. This proposal did not gain acceptance. In fact, the alternative provenance — Egypt, probably Alexandria — seems to be still on the table. As far as dating goes, their current dating is established on palaeographical grounds by G. Cavallo: around 350 for Vaticanus, around 360 for Sinaiticus. Alexandrinus is dated palaeographically to the first half of the fifth century; the provenance, however, is even less clear, with various theories favouring Alexandria (the traditional view), Caesarea, Constantinople, or Ephesus.

I. Past Solutions, Terminological Considerations, and the Present Proposal

What, then, are we to make of the presence of the AF in the two codices? Even a brief survey of past research not only confirms that


8 Parker, Codex Sinaiticus, 7.

9 G. Cavallo, Ricerche sulla maiuscola biblica (STP 2; Florence 1967) 52-56 and 60-61.

10 McKendrick, “Codex Alexandrinus”, 1-16.
this remains a germane and persistent question but also shows that modern scholarship tends to oscillate between two opposing answers to this question.

1. Lines of Interpretation

A line of prominent scholars maintains that the presence in Codex Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus indicates in some way a canonical standing for the AF they contain. A recent example would be C. Tuckett, who, in a note to his presidential address at the 2013 meeting of the Studio-rum Novi Testamenti Societas, writes: “Some of these were evidently regarded as canonical by some by being included within biblical/NT codices [...] as are Barnabas and Hermas in Sinaiticus” 11. Similar views are held by J.K. Elliott 12 and B. Ehrman 13. This position seems to follow a rather venerable tradition. F. Madden records its existence a whole century before the authors cited above: “In the opinion of Bishop Beveridge, indeed, the latter statement [viz. that from the Apostolic Canons it would appear that 1 and 2 Clement were reckoned among the canonical books] receives some confirmation from the fact of their being found annexed to the books of the New Testament in so ancient and authentic a manuscript as the Codex Alexandrinus” 14. It is also the view held by Tischendorf, who seems to consider Codex Sinaiticus to be an actual canon and not merely a collection of authoritative texts 15.

A second line of authors no less prominent, however, regards these texts as mere appendices to the NT instead. This stance, too, stands on

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12 J.K. ELLIOT, “Manuscripts, the Codex and the Canon”, JSNT 63 (1996) 105-123, here 111.
14 F. MADDEN, Photographic Facsimiles of the Remains of the Epistles of Clement of Rome Made from the Unique Copy Preserved in the Codex Alexandrinus (London 1856) iii.
an old tradition: J.B. Lightfoot speaks of “the famous Alexandrinus [...] to which it [1 Clement] is added as a sort of appendix together with the spurious so-called Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians” 16, and he speaks elsewhere in similar terms of Barnabas and Hermas in Sinaiticus 17. F. Madden should probably also be added here, since his quote above is rather disapproving of the view he is reporting. This is also the view of C.H. Turner, of H.J. Milne and T.C. Skeat 18, and, some decades later, of L.W. Barnard 19. One should add here also authors who do not use the word appendix, yet nonetheless regard the AF as separate from the NT. Such a group includes B. Metzger: “In codex Sinaiticus ... the Shepherd (with the Epistle of Barnabas) stands after the close of the New Testament” 20. N. Brox considers Hermas’ presence in Sinaiticus as indicative of the authority of the book, yet he does not think that this evidence is enough to indicate that it is thereby part of the NT 21; similarly, sceptical considerations are offered by J. Carleton Paget regarding Barnabas 22.

This polarisation invites further investigation, especially since the one thing the positions cited above have in common is that they tend to be expressed in an assertive manner rather than as the result of an argument.

21 N. BROX, Der Hirt des Hermas (KA V 7; Göttingen 1991) 71.
22 J. CARLETON PAGET, The Epistle of Barnabas. Outlook and Background (WUNT 2/64; Tübingen 1994) 252-253.
2. Terminological Considerations

The question as to whether the AF were considered canonical by those who decided to include them in the codices depends, of course, on how strictly one defines canonical. It is important, therefore, to place the present discussion within the ongoing conversation on the terminology regarding the biblical canon. There are several proposals available that aim to classify books that seem to have been associated with the biblical canon. Probably the best known is A. Sundberg’s category of “scripture”, denoting “writings regarded as in some sense authoritative”, which is to be distinguished from “canon”, denoting “a closed collection of scripture to which nothing can be added, nothing subtracted”. If one understands “canonical” to denote Sundberg’s “scripture”, then it is clear that the AF are made canonical by the mere inclusion in the codices, since they are not explicitly signaled as something else. The same would apply when working within the framework of an “open canon”, to which books are still added and from which books can still be taken out. Yet the notion of an open canon tends to be used in relation to authors who were earlier than our codices — for instance, in accounting for references to early Christian books as “authoritative” by Clement of Alexandria (who does not offer explicit lists). But both these views run the risk of oversimplifying matters. The question is how we can further qualify and better understand the data in a meaningful way that allows us to go beyond the obvious fact that the four AF are included in the codices. What is needed is a way of understanding the evidence that allows us to verify whether or not they can be construed as, in some way, secondary.

Seeking to refine Sundberg’s distinction, G.T. Sheppard proposes two distinct categories: “Canon 1”, used “to refer to a rule, standard,
ideal, norm, or authoritative office or literature” that displays “internal signs of elevated status”; and “Canon 2”, used “to signify a temporary or perpetual fixation, standardization, enumeration, listing, chronology, register, or catalogue of exemplary or normative persons, places or things” 26. K.W. Folkert retains the terminology of “Canon 1” and “Canon 2”, but he re-sets it on a more functional level, emphasizing the dual way in which scripture works in a community: “Canon I’s place in a tradition is largely due to its ‘being carried’ by some other form of religious activity,” and its significance “cannot be grasped fully without reference to its carrier and to the relationship between the two […] Canon II most commonly serves as a vector of religious authority;” of the two, only the latter is “normative, true, and binding” 27.

Categories such as “scripture” or “Canon 1” go a long way to accommodate books that seem to be on the fringes of the canon. The scripture/canon terminology seems particularly suggestive, given that these terms do convey by themselves the open character of the former, as well as the closed character of the latter. The question about the status the AF in Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus would then translate into the question of whether the two codices are meant to offer a scriptural collection, or a canonical one. Yet the scripture/canon distinction is arguably less helpful in addressing the status of a selection of books within the same collection (as this article does), as it is not meant to assess such differences. The least we can say, however, is that the inclusion in the two codices indicates at least scriptural status for the four AF.

Mostly without interaction with previous terminological efforts in the field, F. Bovon notably proposed the category of “books useful for the soul”, as distinguished from “canonical books” (and from completely rejected ones). The four AF are mentioned as possible examples of this category 28. This manner of indicating what is, in fact, a secondary class of books finds a parallel in some ancient testimonies.

Bovon mentions Origen, Eusebius and Athanasius, among others. However, it would be inexact to equate Eusebius’ secondary books (ἀντιλεγόμενα) with “books useful for the soul”, since they are categories of a different nature: the primary function and meaning of the term ἀντιλεγόμενα is to describe books according to their status as writings rejected from the first tier of books (ὁμολογόμενα). They may well be useful for the soul, but that is not how Eusebius describes them primarily. In any event, the category is not necessarily a novelty in modern scholarship. Since his first category of books would certainly overlap with that of canon, the same would be true, at least to some extent, for his category of “books useful for the soul”, as paralleled in the scripture of other authors, or perhaps whatever remains when subtracting the books in the canon from the scriptural books. The question would be, in this case, whether the four AF are included in the two codices as canonical or as “books useful for the soul”, and this designation may seem to make sense of non-canonical yet authoritative works. It is, however, equally problematic when inquiring into whether a selection of books is distinguishable in this way from other books in the same manuscript, if only for the inherent ambiguity in such a designation: canonical books would certainly be “books useful for the soul” as well. Bovon does present several characteristics of “books useful for the soul”, but they are rather general and are not meant — and nor would they work — as clear-cut criteria for establishing whether any one book is canonical or just “useful for the soul” in any given context. In fact, to produce his description, he offers as examples for the latter category only works which are clearly non-canonical. At any rate, just as with the scripture designation, the AF are clearly at least “books useful for the soul” in the two codices, but it is still to be determined whether they are canonical as well. The problem would be then to see whether the available evidence — beyond the mere inclusion in the codices, which by itself is indicative of at least a scriptural, or “useful for the soul”, status for the four AF — suggests canonical status as well.

Even though scholars sometimes use canon and scripture interchangeably, the distinction will be maintained here in view of the terminological scholarship mentioned above: “scriptural” designates the writings which are authoritative in some way, and so should be regarded as


as a more inclusive category than “canonical”, which in turn can only describe a limited (and normally explicit) list of writings. In establishing whether the AF are canonical or just scriptural in this context, the question remains: how can we verify if the evidence points in any way to the AF being secondary in the two codices. Finally, in applying this terminology to the survey of past solutions sketched above, I wish to point out — at the risk of being presumptuous — that I take the affirmations of the first group of scholars above to mean that they would see the four AF in the two codices as, in some way, canonical. Conversely, I would take the statements of the latter group of scholars to mean that they would see them as scriptural or “useful for the soul”, but not canonical.

3. Present Proposal

We can now turn to the outline of the present proposal. In the following, I will first revisit the larger context of the reception of these AF, arguing that the hypothesis that they are canonical here fails to have any clear external support in the rest of their reception history. I will show that in some cases it is not possible to ascertain that they are canonical as opposed to scriptural, whereas in the remaining instances — the majority — they clearly have a secondary status. As such, the indirect evidence rather points in the other direction. Indeed, they can be commended for reading — and implicitly for being copied — for one reason or another (hence not being completely rejected as dangerous), while at the same time not being included explicitly in the first class of books.

I will then turn to the manuscripts themselves, giving due attention to the fact that the two codices are the only direct evidence available. The analysis will show that the AF are treated like other books in these manuscripts in all respects except two: they are placed, in both cases, toward the end of the codex, and they are not grouped with the books of the same genre. Barnabas and 1 and 2 Clement are conspicuously not grouped with the rest of the letters; and neither is Hermas grouped with Revelation. They are clearly worthy of inclusion and circulation with the rest of the books in the two codices, but there is also reason to regard them as, in some way, secondary. I argue that the fact that they are treated in the same manner as other books supports the possibility that they are recommended, secondary books (as are, for instance, the Apocalypse of Peter and especially the Shepherd in the so-called Muratorian Fragment), even without excluding the possibility that they are canonical. The mentioned separation, however, points more to the former than to the latter.
Summing up, while recognizing that the available evidence does not preclude the possibility that the AF are included in Codex Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus as canonical, it can be argued nonetheless cumulatively that, so far as the evidence allows it, it is more likely that they are secondary.

II. A Context for the Two Codices

In that they gather the OT and the NT, these codices are paralleled by a number of canonical lists from late Antiquity 30, such as those found in the Muratorian Fragment, Eusebius of Caesarea (Historia ecclesiastica 3.25.1-7), Athanasius of Alexandria (Festal Letter 39), Rufinus of Aquileia (Exposition of the Creed 37-38), and Pseudo-Athanasius (Synopsis scripturæ sacrae 74-76). Such lists have in common the fact that they seem to account for, and organise, the whole of Christian literature with the help of three basic categories: generally accepted books, then books that are secondary to, or rejected from, the first group but which are still useful for one reason or another, and finally writings completely rejected as dangerous or heretical.

The Muratorian Fragment 31, for instance, after listing accepted (OT and NT) books, mentions completely rejected books (the Epistle to the Laodiceans and the Epistle to the Alexandrians), and then two other early Christian books, the Apocalypse of Peter and the Shepherd, which belong to neither of the two previous categories. The former is accepted, even though some (quidam) would not read it in the church (legi in ecclesia nolunt). Concerning the latter, the Fragment says that it cannot be proclaimed to the people in the church (se publicare uero

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In *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.25.1-7, Eusebius of Caesarea notably presents his views about which books are to be accepted and which are to be rejected. Having presented the generally accepted books (the ὄμολογοιμενα), he lists the *Acts of Paul*, the *Shepherd*, *Barnabas*, and the *Didache* as ἄντιλεκγομενα νόθα, a designation that separates them from the first category. Other early Christian books, in contrast, are completely rejected as dangerous: e.g., the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Gospel of Thomas*, and the *Acts of John*. The second group is described as “not canonical but disputed, yet familiar to most churchmen”, and as not to be confused with the third group, containing books which are proclaimed or published (προφερομένα) by the heretics under the names of the apostles (3.25.6). Even if the exact shape of the secondary group of book is interpreted in various ways, it is generally acknowledged that writings such as the *Shepherd* and *Barnabas* are not rejected in the same way as “heretical books” are rejected.

Athanasius of Alexandria, in his famous *Festal Letter* 39, also presents the literature used by Christians on three levels: the canonized

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32 At least not as part of the prophets or the apostles; cf. R. ROUKEMA, “La tradition apostolique et le canon du Nouveau Testament”, *The Apostolic Age in Patristic Thought* (ed. A. HILHORST) (VCS 70; Leiden 2004) 86-103, at 97.


books (κανονιζόμενα) of the Old and New Testament, presented as “the spring of salvation”; a secondary category of books — including the Shepherd and the Didache — which have been used for instruction; and finally apocryphal books (τὰ λεγόμενα ἀπόκρυφα), understood as writings that bear names similar to those of genuine books. These have been written and published “as if they were ancient”, but, according to Athanasius, they are to be completely rejected. Therefore, the secondary category, containing books that to Athanasius are unambiguously not canonized (οὐ κανονιζόμενα), is destined for catechetical use. E. Junod suggests that these books are added to the list as a concession, which would presuppose that such secondary books are already in use around him 36. While it is set in contrast with the κανονιζόμενα, this group is mentioned again in Festal Letter 39.20 not only “for the sake of greater accuracy”, but also “by necessity” (ἀναγκαίως), and, what is more, these books are said to be prescribed (τετυπομένα) by the ancestors (παρὰ τῶν πατέρων) to be read. Some scholars suggest that, despite this distinction, in practice there is no difference between Athanasius’ use of ἀναγινωσκόμενα books and that of κανονιζόμενα. For instance, J. Leemans argues that this is the case for Σοφία Σολομώντος, mentioned by Athanasius in the second category. A. Camplani agrees with Leemans’ assessment, but he notes that Athanasius is noticeably cautious when quoting from the Shepherd, reflecting therefore that the secondary status is still preserved 37.

Rufinus of Aquileia also presents a general list, describing in the Exposition of the Creed 38 the OT and the NT, after which he mentions (37-38) the Shepherd, and possibly the Didache and the Apocalypse of Peter 39 as ecclesiastical books. These are clearly not canonical, but past authorities wanted them to be read in churches (legi in ecclesiis voluerunt), even though not for the purpose of discussing matters of faith. Then a third group is mentioned, namely apocryphal books, which are not to be read in churches (quas in Ecclesiis legi noluerunt). A final example is drawn from Pseudo-Athanasius, Synopsis scripturae sacrae 74-76 40, where, after the list of OT and NT writings, the author

40 Greek text in PG 28, 432.
lists the ἀντιλεγόμενα of the latter: the Journeys of Peter, the Journeys of John, the Journeys of Thomas, the Gospel of Thomas, the Teaching of the Apostles, and the Clementines. These writings are clearly not in the New Testament, but they are at least in part divinely inspired (θεόπνευσθα), read (ἀναγινώσκομενα), and approved by the ancients; they are different from the completely rejected ἀπόκρυφα, which should be thrown away.

Returning now to our codices, the question remains: are they similar to such lists, hence containing canonical or universally accepted books followed by select recommended secondary books, or, on the contrary, do they display collections of writings which are all ὁμολογοῦμενα or κανονιζόμενα? That the former is possible is indicated by the fact that in the lists presented above — except for that of Eusebius, which is unclear in this regard — the secondary books are not just tolerated; on the contrary, their reading is prescribed. This is expressed in various ways: legi eum oportet in the Muratorian Fragment; τετυπωμένα δὲ παρὰ τῶν πατέρων ἀναγινώσκεσθαι in Athanasius’ Festal letter 39.20; legi in ecclesiis vouterunt in Rufinus’ account; and θεόπνευσθα and ἀναγινωσκόμενα in that of Pseudo-Athanasius. Eusebius simply notes that they are known and used by ancient authors. They are to be read, and thus a hypothetical pandect codex containing, after the New Testament, the Shepherd and the Didache would have been congruent with Athanasius’ account, just as one with the Shepherd and the Apocalypse of Peter after the New Testament would have been a way of putting into practice what the Muratorian Fragment seems to prescribe. This matter will be picked up in the next section of the paper.

The other possibility — that all books in the two codices are ὁμολογοῦμενα or κανονιζόμενα for those who ordered them — raises the question of whether there are other instances in the reception history of the four AF where they are clearly canonical and not secondary. In the remainder of this section, I will argue that in all cases where the four AF are treated as authoritative writings, either they are clearly secondary, or it is impossible to establish with certainty that they are canonical and not secondary; hence, such instances do not support the hypothesis that they are canonical in the two codices.
III. Insights from the Reception History of the Four Apostolic Fathers

The authoritative reception of *Barnabas* by Patristic authors seems to have started — and to have reached a peak — with Clement of Alexandria. From Eusebius we know that Clement’s now lost *Hypotyposeis* included abridged accounts of the Scripture and also of the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Apocalypse of Peter*; this fact by itself suggests that the epistle is in some way authoritative for Clement. The other apparent indicator of *Barnabas*’ authority in Clement — which might account for its inclusion in the biblical commentary that may have been offered in the *Hypotyposeis* — is the fact that the Alexandrian considers it an apostolic writing. Several quotations from the latter (e.g. in *Strom.* 2.6.31) are explicitly attributed to Ἐφραίμας ὁ ἀπόστολος. Even more explicitly, in *Strom.* 2.20.116.3, one quotation is introduced as belonging to the “apostolic” (ἀποστολικός) Barnabas, “who was one of the seventy and a fellow-worker of Paul” 41.

According to J. Carleton Paget, Zahn held that *Barnabas* was canonical to Clement (“i.e. placed the letter in class 1”), whereas Lightfoot held the opposite view, presumably on the grounds that in *Paed.* 2.84:3 Clement seems to disagree with an interpretation found in *Barnabas* (without an explicit reference to the latter). From this evidence, Lightfoot concludes: “notwithstanding his profuse and deferential quotations he (Clement) does not treat the book as final and authoritative”. While suggesting that “in the final analysis we must suspend judgement,” the author eventually holds that for Clement — as well as for other Egyptian witnesses, such as Origen and Codex Sinaiticus — *Barnabas* “seems to have had the status of a group 2 book (on the fringes of the canon)” 42. Indeed, when using any variant of the canon/scripture — or canon 1/canon 2 — distinction, it becomes clear that the data only point to scriptural status, given that Clement does not offer a closed list, which alone would have pointed to canon in a clear manner.

42 Quotations from J. CARLETON PAGET, Barnabas, 249, 250, 256. Pace J.A. BROOKS, “Clement of Alexandria as a Witness to the Development of the New Testament Canon,” Second Century 9 (1992) 41-55, who notes at 47: “The fact that Clement included the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Apocalypse of Peter* in a biblical commentary may indicate that he regarded them as scripture”.

Origen is also of interest here, since in *De principiis* 3.2.4 he quotes from the Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Paul, again the Psalms, again Paul, the *Shepherd*, and finally *Barnabas* to illustrate his theory about the sources of thoughts, and he starts by saying that it is confirmed by the “holy scripture” (*scripturae divinae*). It is, of course, unclear whether Origen’s expression “holy scripture” extends to include the last two texts; indeed, he introduces the *Shepherd* quotation in a somewhat adversative way (*sed et Pastoris liber declarat: “but also the Shepherd book says”*). It is also unclear whether *scripturae divinae* is a term synonymous with canonical, as opposed to scriptural 43. In *Contra Celsum* 1.63, Origen mentions “the catholic epistle of Barnabas” (*τῇ Βαρναβᾷ καθολικῇ ἐπιστολῇ*), but again it is unclear whether we can understand this as a canonical designation.

The difficulty is that *Barnabas* does not seem to appear in any of the extant lists in Origen (nor do *Hermas* or *1 Clement*), such as the one in his *Homily on Joshua* 7.1 44. Nor is it mentioned in Origen’s canonical list as preserved by Eusebius in *H.E.* 6.25.1-13 45, although I would also point out that the former does not seem to avoid mentioning opinions different from his own, as is the case with the status of the *Shepherd* in Irenaeus’ works. The first two instances above, however, show clearly enough that *Barnabas* is authoritative for Origen, but its absence from the extant lists would suggest that the former is considered scriptural and the latter canonical. This is perhaps not unexpected if one considers J. Barton’s observation that “the ‘canon’ people use when not attending to questions about scriptural authority is hardly ever the same as the ‘canon’ they explicitly acknowledge when answering a question about it” 46.

The authority of the *Shepherd* is also reflected in its use by subsequent Christian authors. Any survey on the matter 47 characteristically notes that it was highly regarded by a number of prominent Patristic authors, as it was considered to be at least scriptural in the case of Irenaeus and others.

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43 See also CARLETON PAGET, *Barnabas*, 250-251.
47 An extended survey of testimonies of the *Shepherd* up to the sixth century can be found in BROX, *Der Hirt*, 55-71. See also OSIEK, *The Shepherd*, 4-7; R.M. GRANT, “Apostolic Fathers First Thousand Years”, *CH* 31 (1962) 421-429.
naeus of Lyon 48, Clement of Alexandria 49, and, as seen above, Origen. H. Gamble notes that in Tertullian’s De oratione 16 the Shepherd is “fully acknowledged as scripture” 50, but such reading may be a bit optimistic since all that Or: 16 seems to indicate is that the Shepherd has some authority. Tertullian only says that Hermas’ practice of lying on his bed after praying should not be followed. The precise nature of Hermas’ authority — whether in any way scriptural — remains unclear.

Perhaps the most vigorous claim is that the Shepherd was canonical for Didymus the Blind:

“Not only does he use it to validate his interpretation of Scripture (a “canonical verification”), but also, in so doing, he presents it as a canonical equal to 2 Corinthians by placing the two elements in a parallel construction — one for the validation of an element of his interpretation, the other as a Scriptural amplification of a different element” 51.

This is argued along the same lines for Barnabas and 1 Clement as well, but it should be noted that B. Ehrman uses scriptural and canonical interchangeably. If one applies the scripture/canon distinction to Ehrman’s findings, they are more likely to indicate that to Didymus the Shepherd is scripture rather than canon. Given that Didymus is not in any way clear on this matter and does not provide an explicit list elsewhere, Ehrman’s analysis shows indeed that Hermas is authoritative, hence scriptural, but also that there is nothing to indicate that it would be also canonical; in fact, Ehrman himself allows for this qualification: “It must be reaffirmed that these are tentative conclusions based on fragmentary evidence” (p. 8). Indeed, there is no basis to distinguish between primary and secondary writings in this case. The same goes for Didymus’ view of Barnabas and 1 Clement. It should be

48 The discussion revolves around a quotation of the Shepherd in Adv. haer. 4.20.2 which is introduced by ἧ γραφή ἦ λεγοντος. Starting from this introductory formula, a number of authors argue that for Irenaeus the Shepherd was scriptural, while other authors argue that this is not the case; a recent survey of these stances is available in D. BATOVICI, “Hermas’ Authority in Irenaeus’ Works: A Reassessment”, Aug 55 (2015) 5-31.


50 GAMBLE, “Status Quaestionis”, 289.

noted, however, that 2 Clement does not appear in the material examined by Ehrman.

So far as 2 Clement is concerned, it does not seem to have left traces of its own, but it is mentioned only in connection with 1 Clement. There are Syriac versions of 1 and 2 Clement in a Syriac NT manuscript of the 12th century. 1 Clement was also translated — with no traces of 2 Clement — into Latin (apparently again a rather early translation), as well as Coptic (Akhmimic), the latter surviving in two Coptic papyri. Apart from the Syriac, 1 and 2 Clement are found together in Greek in Codex Hierosolymitanus and Codex Alexandrinus.

As he did for Barnabas, so Clement of Alexandria also introduces a number of quotations from 1 Clement in Strom. 4.17 as coming from the apostle Clement 52. However, as in the case of Barnabas and the Shepherd, so also in this instance there is no clear evidence indicating that Clement of Alexandria considered 1 Clement as canonical. The same goes for Origen 53 and, as seen above, for Didymus the Blind. None of the Patristic authors mentioned here seems to quote or mention 2 Clement in a similar manner. C. Tuckett discusses possible references to 2 Clement in Irenaeus and Origen, both of which are unclear. For the former, if it were indeed a reference to 2 Clement, it would show an early association with 1 Clement, but it remains uncertain whether it is a reference to this text at all. The earliest authors to explicitly acknowledge this writing are Eusebius and Jerome; both present it as a writing rejected from the first class of books 54.

**Further Discussion**

Conversely, for all these texts there are late antique testimonies that state clearly that they are not received in the first level of books, as is the case with the already mentioned lists and other points of their reception. Eusebius explicitly rejects 2 Clement, as well, from the generally accepted books in Hist. eccl. 3.38.4, but he accepts it as a secondary book and not one to be rejected as dangerous or heretical. Jerome, too, mentions all four Apostolic Fathers as rejected from the canon 55. Such instances are sometimes taken to indicate a counter-re-

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52 Jaubert, Clément de Rome, 15, lists the 1 Clement quotations in Clement of Alexandria’s works.
53 Grant, “First Thousand Years”, 423.
55 Carleton Paget, Barnabas, 252; Osiek, The Shepherd, 6-7; Tuckett, 2 Clement, 9.
action to those who might have regarded such texts as canonical. Yet such mirroring is bound to be speculative, as there is no way to establish whether in the alleged mirrored views such texts imply an early form of a canon or only a loose form of scripture. In the Shepherd’s case Eusebius provides an example of an ancient author who held this text as scriptural (Irenaeus), while in the case of 2 Clement he does not, stating that “we do not even know if the primitive writers used it” (C. Tuckett’s translation of Hist. eccl. 3.38.4). What would he be reacting to, then, in the latter case? Does he mean his contemporaries who might consider 2 Clement as scriptural or canonical, or rather those who only “use it”? In his actual text Eusebius simply reports the existence of a second letter ascribed to Clement, saying that he does not know whether it is as recognised as the other, for he does not know if the primitive authors used it at all (Hist. eccl. 3.38.4); he seems more concerned with the attribution to Clement than with any alleged canonicity. All this goes to show that such mirroring is wobbly at best when there are no explicit reports of the status of a work (as there are in the Shepherd’s case, e.g. in Irenaeus as reported by Eusebius), and also that any claim of even scriptural status for 2 Clement before the time of the two codices simply falls short of the available evidence.

A possible counterexample — however, from the times of the codices, not earlier — is the testimony of the Apostolic Canons, normally dated to the end of the fourth century, where 1 and 2 Clement appear to be included in the NT (ch. 85). In order to explain this inclusion, B. Metzger, noting that the Apostolic Canons were decreed by the “authorities who were to make law in the Church” at the Trullan Council of 691 and 692, proposes that “such an extraordinary situation can be accounted for only on the supposition that the members of the council had not even read the texts thus sanctioned.” For his part, J.B. Lightfoot, doubts that the version ratified at that council mentions the two Clementine letters, suggesting then that this would be a later interpolation in the transmission of the Apostolic Canons. The SC edition of the Greek text and its apparatus, however, offer no support.
for this hypothesis 59. Moreover, Metzger’s presupposition is far from certain. A further peculiarity of this list prompts a simpler explanation: the fact that this New Testament list (which does not mention Revelation) also includes the Apostolic Constitutions, of which the Apostolic Canons are, in fact, the last part 60. To the extent that they include themselves in the canon they posit, it is obvious that what the Apostolic Canons offer is not an actual canonical list, such as the one in Athanasius’ Festal letter 39. In all probability, the aim of the Apostolic Canons is not to assemble a definite list of the biblical books, but more to put forward an ecclesial regulation — the Apostolic Constitutions — preceded, perhaps for the purpose of self-legitimization, by a list of biblical books. From this perspective, the Apostolic Canons cease to be evidence for 1 and 2 Clement as clearly canonical in the strict sense; instead they are evidence for them being scriptural, or Canon 1, or indeed Folkert’s more functional Canon I. In turn, this indicates that, at least for 2 Clement, there is no clear instance of it being regarded as canonical, either before or during the times of the codices.

What we do know from the available data, however — so far as the Patristic strand of reception is concerned — is that the four AF appear to have enjoyed authority to various degrees, with the Shepherd at one end of the spectrum (with most potent claims to being scriptural) and 2 Clement at the other end (with virtually no claim prior to the codices) 61. Moreover, this spectrum distribution is matched in the other two strands of reception: manuscripts and versions. And what is more, by the time Codex Sinaiticus was written, Patristic authors seem to have stopped mentioning the Shepherd, and for that matter also Barnabas, as being scriptural in any way 62, and this is even more so in the case of 1 Clement in Codex Alexandrinus a century later. D. Stökl Ben Ezra argues that the “the strong attestation to at least Hermas among the papyri” may well indicate that its presence in Sinaiticus indicates canonicity 63.

60 Pace Parvis and Tuckett who both take Alexandrinus and the Apostolic Canons together as evidence for 2 Clement’s canonicity: TUCKETT, 2 Clement, 9; PARVIS, “2 Clement”, 265.
61 On this see also LIGHTFOOT, Clement of Rome, 13.
His proposal might have some weight in the Shepherd's case, but the author seems to feel less secure about Barnabas on this matter, as it gets left aside; surely nothing of such a nature could be argued regarding 1 and 2 Clement in Alexandrinus.

To conclude, there are no clear instances in which any of the four AF are clearly canonical (as opposed to just scriptural), either before Codex Sinaiticus was written, or up to the time in which the Codex Alexandrinus is usually dated. This is not to say that it is impossible, for this very reason, that they were canonical in the eyes of those who ordered two codices, but only that the rest of their reception does not provide indirect evidence for the argument that they were canonical. Virtually all such evidence points to scriptural status, reflecting their circulation and transmission as authoritative, recommended secondary books during Late Antiquity.

IV. Looking for Evidence of Assigning Status of the AF in the Manuscripts

In the absence of any historical testimonies for why these works are included, the only sources are the manuscripts themselves. The first thing that needs emphasizing is that these texts are not included because some leafs of the last quire remained blank when everything was done and had to be filled with something: Barnabas extends over two quires, and the Shepherd over at least three others. And if Sinaiticus initially contained the whole of the Shepherd, the number of quires covered by the AF would be increased by one. The preserved leaves contain most of the following chapters in continuous numbering: 1-31 on its first quire which only lacks its last leaf, and 65-68, respectively 91-95 on a second quire of which only the first and the last leaf survive. The numbering of the latter quire indicates that a whole quire was lost between them (which would have contained chapters 32-64). The ending is lost, so we cannot be sure whether the initial manuscript also contained the remaining 95-114 chapters as well, but it is not unthinkable that it did, given that the writings in the manuscript tend to be complete. At the very least, this goes to show that the decision regarding the inclusion of these texts cannot be explained as filling-up empty space. The other important thing is the lack of any marker before these texts to distinguish them from the NT texts they follow. It would seem that no effort was made to mark any sort of difference, i.e., nothing by way of an explicit title, note, or separation marker.
A closer look at the AF in the two manuscripts can substantiate this claim on codicological and palaeographical grounds, by taking into account the way these texts are treated as compared to other books that are undisputedly biblical — especially those written by the same hands — on various levels: the relationship between quire structure, numbering and the distribution of scribal tasks, the disposition of titles and colophons, the use of *nomina sacra*, and the various elements involved in paragraphing throughout the four books 64.

For instance, in Sinaiticus the text of the *Shepherd* is written by scribe B 65 and begins on the first page of a new quire, after the end of *Barnabas* (written by scribe A), leaving approximately one and a half columns empty. Throughout Sinaiticus there are seven books which start on the beginning of a new quire, with similar empty space left in the previous quire: 4 Maccabees, Isaiah, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Malachi — although they all start at the very top of a column, often with several blank lines in the previous column where needed, unlike the subtitles of the *Shepherd* which are included in the column in a continuous manner. The difference is seemingly inherent to the written text: the titles (in the case of the Minor Prophets)

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65 Since the time of Tischendorf, the scribe of *Hermas* has been designated with the letter “B”. More recently, A. Myshrall, “The Presence of a Fourth Scribe?”, *Codex Sinaiticus*. New Perspectives on the Ancient Biblical Manuscript (eds. S. McKendrick – D. Parker – A. Myshrall) (London 2015) 139-148, explores the possibility of distinguishing between B2 who would have copied the Minor Prophets and *Hermas*, and B1 who was responsible for all the other work attributed to B. However, since the validity of this proposed distinction does not affect the argument presented here, the traditional designation B is used throughout for the sake of simplicity.

66 For a discussion of the distribution of the scribes and the struggle with space in Codex Sinaiticus, and of its relevance for the production of the manuscript, see Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*, 39-59.
receive a slightly greater emphasis than the subtitles (of the Shepherd’s various sections), even though otherwise they are similarly executed.

There is also a technique of paragraphing in the text of the Shepherd in Codex Sinaiticus: a rather small ekthesis, usually accompanied by unused space in the previous line, having the function of marking either a shift of focus or a general movement from antecedent to consequent in the narrative. But this has a rather uneven distribution throughout the text. Similarly, such a paragraphing technique appears in other books written by scribe B with a similarly uneven distribution 67.

Therefore, if we pick the Shepherd as an example, it can be argued that its treatment in the codex is similar, on all levels, to the treatment of the biblical books that were written by the same scribe B: in the case of the Shepherd the B scribe aims to present a clear, readable text — without particular adornment, but with a sense of paragraphing — in the very same format in which he writes the rest of his work in the codex 68.

The situation is clearly similar in the case of the other three AF in the two manuscripts. For instance, with regard to the quire placement of the beginning of the text, Barnabas starts in the next column on the same page with the ending of Revelation (both are written by scribe A), as is the case for most of the other biblical books in the codex, save for the eight mentioned above, which start at the beginning of a new quire. In Codex Alexandrinus, 1 Clement starts on a new recto (a new scribe’s work as well, just as in the case of the Shepherd), Revelation having finished on the first column (of two) of the previous verso, quite similar to the way Acts follows John, or to the way Romans follows Jude in the same manuscript. 2 Clement starts on the same page where 1 Clement ends, only on the top of the second column, being similar to James in that sense, which starts on the top of the second column on the same page that the book of Acts ends. The same appears to be the

67 On this, see Batovici, “Less-Expected Books”, 47.

68 One further insight potentially relevant for understanding the treatment received by the AF texts in Codex Sinaiticus as compared to the rest of the texts in the manuscript is provided by the corrections made in the scriptorium: if the Old Testament books — which “remain virtually uncorrected” (Jongkind, Scribal Habits, 58; see also 48) — do stand in contrast with the New Testament books in that the latter group receives extensive correction in the scriptorium, the Shepherd together with Barnabas stand — at least in this regard — on the par with what we now call the New Testament. For a full treatment of Hermas’ correctors in Sinaiticus, see D. Batovici “Textual Revisions of the Shepherd of Hermas in Codex Sinaiticus,” ZAC/JAC 18 (2014) 443-470.
case with 1 Peter after James, and so on. So far as the execution of
titles is concerned, while the ending of the Shepherd is no longer extant,
and therefore a comparison of it with other endings of the same scribe
is out of the question, the text of Barnabas is complete, and its
colophon is clearly similar, in several ways, to that of Revelation (writ-
ten by the same scribe). There is ample space before each colophon
(six empty lines before it in the case of Revelation, four in the case of
Barnabas); both titles are of two words and are column-centred yet
stretched over three lines (one word being written on two), with addi-
tional horizontal spaces of about a line each, with the result that both
titles measure about five lines in height). In both cases, there are above-
and-below dashes at both ends of a line. Finally, a similarly executed
coronis marks the end of the two works on the left side of and under
their last line. The scribe clearly missed a good opportunity — in fact
four — to hint at any sort of difference between the two texts. The same
goes for Codex Alexandrinus: we do not have the last page of 2
Clement, but we do have that of 1 Clement which is very elaborate and
morphologically similar to those of Kings and Chronicles, and indeed
to those of all OT books written by the same scribe 69.

It seems that in none of these cases is there a formal marker to dif-
ferrat the four AF from the rest of the biblical books in the two
codices, and also that many opportunities were missed to mark a dif-
fERENCE. Not only did the scribes not write anything to say they are dif-
ferent from the rest (e.g. a title or explanation), but they seemed to have
made the effort to ensure that these works are treated the same as oth-
ers, as shown by the execution of titles and, more clearly, by the rather
elaborate colophons.

The main implication of the codicological and palaeographical data
is that the “appendix” terminology is, in fact, inaccurate, given that vir-
tually any addition to a collection becomes part of that collection unless
it is marked as an appendix. The four AF are therefore very much part
of these collections, clearly worthy of inclusion and circulation with
the rest of the books in the two codices, either as canonical or as rec-
ommended secondary books. Indeed, I would argue that the possibility
that they appear in the two codices as secondary is (at least) equal to
the possibility that they are canonical. My argument is based on two
facts: (1) that they are seen in other points of their reception as recom-
mended secondary books; and (2) that some of them appear in lists of

books, such as in Athanasius’ *Festal letter* 39 and the Muratorian Fragment, where they follow the OT and the NT. This would presuppose that in their milieu their secondary status would have been known from such lists, so that no special marking was needed. It would make the two codices scriptural collections, and not strictly canonical ones. In this regard, it is relevant that, at least in the case of Alexandrinus, it is fairly clear that it can include extra-canonical writings, unless one wishes to consider that the inclusion of Athanasius’ *Epistle to Marcellinus* and Eusebius’ *Hypothesis of Psalms* before the Psalms 70 makes these Patristic writings canonical 71.

Also pointing in this direction is the second implication of the above analysis, namely that only two elements remain to indicate—in the manuscripts—a clear separation: the fact that they are, in both codices, placed toward the end of the manuscript, and the fact that *Barnabas 1 and 2 Clement* are clearly separated from the other letters in the two codices, as is the *Shepherd* from the other apocalyptic text, Revelation. Perhaps different explanations could be proposed for such a separation, for instance that the exemplars used by the scribes for transcription were smaller collections, perhaps one of the NT and another with the AF, whose order they kept while still transcribing them as canonical 72. Indeed, it needs to be recognized that there is nothing in the available—direct or indirect—evidence to rule out such speculations, but also that they are precisely that. As shown here, the hypothesis that they are canonical does not have support in their reception history (which points in fact in the opposite direction) beyond their simple inclusion in the codices; and at least for Alexandrinus, it is fairly clear that it can include books that are *scriptural* at best. The contrary hypothesis—that the two codices are scriptural collections that include

70 The full list of contents in Alexandrinus is available in W.A. Smith, *A Study of the Gospels in Codex Alexandrinus*. Codicology, Palaeography, and Scribal Hands (NTTSD 48; Leiden 2014) 60.

71 This is not to say that it is impossible that they were canonical in the strict sense; in the absence of clear evidence that this is the case, it is, however, more likely that this is a scriptural or else a Canon 1 type of collection due to that.

72 Some may also object that the placement of a writing at the end of a composite codex does not indicate that the writing is secondary as compared to those that precede it: the Gospel of John, for example, is placed at the end of a four-gospel manuscript. I would, however, make the point precisely that the structure which is common to the two codices is a more complex one, paralleled not by a four-gospel or a Pauline letters manuscript, but indeed by tripartite canonical lists like that of Athanasius.
AF as secondary books — is allowed by their placement at the end of
the codices and not with the other letters, since this arrangement finds
a parallel in the tripartite lists that organise and describe Christian
literature all throughout Late Antiquity.

If the present proposal be accepted, then various parallel instances
emerge where the AF are included in biblical or NT manuscripts,
suggesting that their presence in Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus is not
an isolated event. This fact argues against the possibility that these
codices present these writings, in a bold and perhaps subversive way,
as canonical. For instance, the Shepherd still appears at the end of bib-
lical manuscripts in Latin as late as the ninth century and even into
the fifteenth 73, and one may suspect that in those manuscripts Hermas
is not canonical, while the other books are 74. Similarly, 1 Clement ap-
pears in a Syriac NT manuscript of the twelfth century 75. Granted,
these are quite late examples, but there may be some examples closer
to the time of the two codices. In the Bibliothèque Nationale de Stras-
bourg there are papyrus fragments of the Epistle of James in Coptic,
the Gospel of John in both Coptic and Greek, and 1 Clement in Coptic,
which might have belonged to the same codex 76. Potentially even more
interesting in this respect are the Akhmimic Coptic papyrus fragments
in the Centrale Bibliotheek of KU Leuven which preserve several frag-
mentary leaves of Genesis, Luke and Hermas which also might have
belonged to the same codex 77.

73 Par.lat.1153 (Sangermanensis) of Codex Dresden A47; see C. Tornauf —
Translation Vulgata (TU 173; Berlin 2014) 13 and 16.

74 Again, this is not to say that it is impossible that the Shepherd could be
canonical in those manuscripts, only that at that time it is more likely that it was,
in some way, scriptural.

75 Add. MSS 1700, University Library, Cambridge. Tuckett, 2 Clement, 5,
oberves that they are “placed (without any obvious break) after the Catholic
epistles (which appear here before the Pauline corpus)”.

76 These are P. k. 362, 379, 382 and 384 (LDAB 2806). The Coptic is
Akhmimic, and the manuscript was recently re-dated — based on the Greek frag-
ments of John (P6) — to 400-450, in P. Orsini — W. Clarysse, “Early New Tes-
tament Manuscripts and Their Dates: A Critique of Theological Palaeography”,
ETL 88 (2012) 443-474, here 469.

77 This is dated to the fourth century, but that might be problematic, given the
known difficulties in dating Coptic manuscripts. On this issue, see B. Layton,
(Rome 1985) 149-158.
To conclude, Codex Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus, as scriptural collections, would indeed provide two examples of how a rule like the one in the Muratorian Fragment could have been put into practice. All texts are to be read, and nothing apparently prevents them from being included within an authoritative collection, since the different levels of authority involved can still be observed. They illustrate the circulation of secondary books in Late Antiquity as unproblematic. In turn, lists such as the Muratorian Fragment or the one in Athanasius’ Festal letter 39 provide examples of how the implied audience of the codices might come to know that such texts are in fact of the second category, further explaining why there was no need for signalling their secondary character in the manuscript other than by grouping them at the end, as opposed to being grouped with writings of the same genre.

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Summary

The article offers a discussion of the significance of the presence of the Apostolic Fathers in two of our earliest biblical manuscripts: the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas in Codex Sinaiticus, and 1 and 2 Clement in Codex Alexandrinus. It will be argued that the reception of these works does not provide support for the hypothesis that they were canonical for those who ordered the codices, and that it is more likely that they were included as recommended secondary books.