

with them. This is an imperative for a context-dependent, multireligious future of dialogue for critical theology's discourse. It is curious that rather than contribute to the volume, they provide this dense and zealous epilogue. Perhaps it is a signpost for what is to come.

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***The Collected Biblical Writings of T.C. Skeat.* Edited and with an introduction by J.K. Elliott. Leiden: Brill, 2004. ISBN 90-04-13920-6. Pp. 299.**

Theodore Cressy Skeat passed away June 25, 2003 at the ripe old age of ninety-six; the fact that this book is copyrighted 2004 demonstrates that plans for publication were already underway. Skeat was a distinguished palaeographer, papyrologist and codicologist who spent forty-one years of his career at the British Museum. The present volume is a select collection of Skeat's articles, especially those related to biblical studies, although Skeat equally distinguished himself in Classical Papyrology.

Out of some ninety-nine works cited within the bibliography, twenty-four are reproduced here (the dates of the articles ranging from 1938–2000, fourteen of which post-date 1980). Readers are introduced to the work of Skeat by an informative introduction prepared by J.K. Elliott. Here Elliott often describes the “behind the scenes” aspect of Skeat's research and publication. The remainder of the book is a thematic collection of Skeat's articles, clearly illustrating Skeat's outstanding scholarship.

Section A, “Ancient Book Production,” includes Skeat's papers on matters codicological. These include essays on early papyri-book production; the use, popularization and influence of the codex in Christian writings; the length and cost of papyrus books, etc. Section B, “New Testament Manuscripts,” contains his discussions of individual New Testament manuscripts. Of primary interest here is Skeat's work on P⁴⁵ and the major uncials. Questions regarding their provenance, history and scribal copying are given full attention. Included in this section is an extended article arguing that manuscripts P⁴, ⁶⁴, ⁶⁷ should all be seen as belonging to one and the same manuscript. Section C, “Textual Variants,” gathers together his papers dealing with text-critical variation within the New Testament. These seven articles resemble brief notes more than full-length articles, and generally deal with scribal errors at the earliest stage of composition and copying.

There are three appendices. The first is Skeat's hitherto unpublished dramatized account of the possible origins of the first century collection of Gospels in codex form. Readers will no doubt be surprised to learn that the first-century church already knew for a fact (!) that Mark was the first Gospel written, and that Luke borrowed heavily from Mark—this imaginative work nonetheless makes for interesting reading. Appendix B presents Skeat's main

arguments regarding historical and palaeographical arguments for which codices were among the fifty Bibles ordered by Constantine, while Appendix 3 is Elliott's careful examination of these arguments.

It has fallen into the capable hands of J.K. Elliott, a friend of Skeat's for some thirty years, to edit this work. This collection is timely and important for a number of reasons. First, the value of Skeat's work and the significance of his contribution in this field have long been recognized. Second, the conclusions of Skeat's palaeographical and codicological work within the history and transmission of New Testament documents are impressive. Third, the collection fills a niche by offering a collection of Skeat's biblically-oriented articles under one cover. Any student wishing to engage in palaeographical work would do well to study these articles carefully, not only for their attention to detail but for proper methodology as well.

Skeat was painstaking, productive and meticulous in his scholarship. With no picture and little biographical information provided, Elliott remains rather discreet regarding Skeat's personal life, perhaps as Skeat himself would have wanted. Not everyone will agree with all of Skeat's interpretations and conjectures, but his grappling with difficult issues and problems is nonetheless admirable. This collection will undoubtedly find a place on the shelves of anyone who works on New Testament texts.

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