

**A review of
Jack A Moorman's
“Was Codex Sinaiticus Written In 1840!”**

Dr Trevor R Allin

www.livingwater-spain.com

Review of “Was Codex Sinaiticus Written In 1840!” by Jack A Moorman

First published 9th August 2021

© Trevor R Allin 2021

This revision: 10th August 2021

About the Author

Dr Trevor R Allin graduated from the University of Leeds with a 1st Class Honours degree in Phonetics, French, Spanish and Philosophy and History of Religion. Following studies in linguistics, he undertook original research on a South American indigenous language, for which purpose he lived within the indigenous community and studied the language with native speakers over a period of more than a year. The University of St Andrews subsequently awarded him a Ph.D. for his thesis “A Grammar of Resigaró”.

For many years he taught a range of languages up to “Advanced” level standard in state schools in England and in Germany, and in state-recognised schools in Scotland and Spain. He also worked full time over a period of many years supporting and inspecting qualified Modern Language teachers and giving them professional development training. Teaching and examination materials written by him for French, German and Spanish at a wide range of levels, up to and including “A” Level, have been published by mainstream U.K. educational publishers and examination boards, for whom he has written and marked examination question papers.

He is also the published translator of books from Spanish and German into English and is the author of “Curso de Griego Bíblico: Los elementos del Griego del N.T.”¹, the Spanish edition of the leading textbook on New Testament Greek, Jeremy Duff’s “The Elements of New Testament Greek”.² He has taught New Testament (Koiné) Greek to Spanish-speaking adult students in Spain and has delivered lectures in Spain and England on the important early Greek manuscript of the Bible, Codex Sinaiticus.

¹ CLIE, 2019 See <https://www.clie.es/curso-de-griego-biblico>

² Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005

Codex Sinaiticus

In 1862 the German expert in Biblical manuscripts Constantin Tischendorf handed over to Tsar Alexander II of Russia a manuscript that had been donated to the Tsar by St Catharine’s Monastery, which was located on Mount Sinai. Tischendorf had given this manuscript the name “Codex Sinaiticus”. It has been called “The World’s Oldest Bible” and it had originally contained the whole Bible in Greek, although large sections of the Old Testament have been lost. Its production has been dated at 320 – 340 AD and this dating is not disputed by palaeologists (experts in ancient texts). For more information, see “Codex Sinaiticus: The Story of the World’s Oldest Bible” by D. C. Parker, who is Edward Cadbury Professor of Theology and Director of the Institute for Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing at the University of Birmingham, U.K.³

However, a small group of conspiracy theorists who promote the English language “Authorised Version” translation of 1611 as being based on “the original text” attack ancient manuscripts of the Bible. Moorman’s book reviewed here is a typical example of such attacks.

The Greek Text of the New Testament

For a brief introduction to some aspects of the Greek text of the New Testament, I refer readers to other articles on this website, in particular to the introduction to the review of Cooper’s book, here: http://livingwater-spain.com/Cooper_Review.pdf

The article on 1 Timothy 3:16 also gives some good background information on the handwriting conventions used in the production of the New Testament and the materials used for the manuscripts. It can be found here: http://livingwater-spain.com/1Tim3_16.pdf

To those who wish to learn New Testament Greek, I recommend Jeremy Duff’s “The Elements of New Testament Greek”.⁴

Brief review of “Was Codex Sinaiticus Written In 1840!” by Jack A Moorman⁵

Moorman’s Writing Style

Reading Moorman’s book was painful. It was like having the author sitting next to me and shouting at me non-stop from beginning to end. The first exclamation mark is on the front cover – where the text actually requires a question mark. From the Preface on, one is confronted with bold text, capital letters, italics, underlinings and exclamation marks, often combined with each other and sometimes in larger font sizes. So this book is an assault on the reader from beginning to end. It is also a self-published book, so we should not be surprised by the many typing, spelling and formatting errors.

Any writer whose argument is supported by facts does not need to shout or to try to intimidate the reader, but throughout the whole of this book Moorman seeks to intimidate and bully those who don’t support his views. These tactics do no credit to Moorman nor to the arguments that he promotes and I found finishing the book difficult, but I persevered, as I believe that one is not justified in reviewing a book if one has not read the whole of it.

³ Parker, David C, “Codex Sinaiticus : The Story of the World’s Oldest Bible”, London and Peabody, Massachusetts: The British Library and Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2010

⁴ Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005

⁵ Moorman, Jack A, “Was Codex Sinaiticus Written In 1840!”, Cleveland, Georgia, USA: The Old Paths Publications, Inc, 2018

Moorman’s Starting Point and his Attitude to the Biblical Text

The impact on the reader of Moorman’s angry, aggressive style cannot be ignored, but more important is the *content*. Is the book factual? Is it accurate? Does it fairly present all relevant evidence? Does Moorman give *reasoned responses* to information that undermines his position?

It is greatly to be regretted that the answers to all these questions are in the negative: Moorman starts with his conclusion and then picks and chooses information and statements that he claims support his position, ignoring facts that demonstrate the falseness of his argument and denigrating those with whom he disagrees.

He dedicates his book to “A fervent defender of the King James Bible and its underlying Text” and adds, “May God continue to bless his gifted ministry”. We thus see that Moorman’s position is that the King James Bible is the “true” Bible and that anything else is a “corruption” (p. 125, etc). His use of the title “King James Bible” betrays that he is an American, as in the UK this translation is normally referred to as the “Authorised Version” and it is a strange fact that the United States is the place where the advocates of the “King James Version Only” are most active and aggressive in their attacks on those who do not accept their claims.

Sources quoted by Moorman

Moorman recommends other conspiracy theorists who are active on-line (see p. 17) and repeatedly quotes from them. This is the ultimate demonstration of a circular argument, especially as he suppresses or misrepresents all evidence that undermines his claims.

However, he is only likely to convince people who demonstrate two characteristics:

1. A fanatical devotion to the King James Version of the Bible;
2. A total lack of awareness of the facts concerning Codex Sinaiticus and other ancient manuscripts of the Bible.

Moorman’s Assumptions

Moorman bases his claims on two assumptions:

1. That everything claimed by Greek convicted fraudster and con-man Constantine Simonides is true;
2. That everything written by the highly-respected German academic Constantine Tischendorf is false and a deception. Yet Tischendorf received his Ph.D. from a leading German university, throughout the decades of his professional activity he was the leading expert on the text of the Greek Bible and in recognition of this he was awarded further degrees and honours by leading universities throughout Europe, including both Oxford and Cambridge (Porter, p. 76⁶).

Constantine Simonides

In the 1850s a Greek known as Constantine Simonides was arrested in Germany for fraudulently selling fake Greek manuscripts to German universities. He was found guilty and imprisoned. One of the leading academics whose expert knowledge unmasked his forgeries was Constantine Tischendorf. (These facts are not mentioned by Mr Moorman.)

⁶ Porter, Stanley E., “Constantine Tischendorf”, London, New York, etc: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015

Review of “Was Codex Sinaiticus Written In 1840!” by Jack A Moorman

On his release from prison in Germany, Simonides travelled to the U.K., where he continued offering allegedly-ancient Greek manuscripts for sale and making remarkable claims about these items. When, in 1862, Tischendorf published the text of Codex Sinaiticus, Simonides saw a chance to get revenge. He claimed that Sinaiticus was not ancient, because he himself had copied it out in 1840, working from an ancient manuscript. For a while this caused a frenzy in sections of the English press, until Simonides was again revealed to be lying. So the only person who denied the authenticity of Codex Sinaiticus was the person who had a score to settle with Tischendorf.

Whenever obvious untruths in Simonides’ story were uncovered, he would either claim that he had been mistranslated or create new details which he said explained why his previous statements had been misunderstood.

Information on Simonides that confirms the accuracy of the above brief summary is available both from contemporary accounts and from sources referred to in this article.

A large part of Moorman’s book consists of lengthy quotations from letters by Simonides and from translations into English of letters in Greek purportedly from a famous leading Greek Orthodox monk in Alexandria that Simonides declared supported his claims – although contemporaries who knew Simonides and saw the letters concluded that these letters were in fact written in Simonides’ own handwriting! The British Consul in Alexandria carried out investigations and reached the conclusion that no such monk existed. Naturally, Moorman does not mention this. Simonides was supported by a 19th-century Englishman who was concerned that the rejection by British academics of Simonides’ claims was “un-English”, and so he sought to defend him.

Many of these quotations are repeated at length twice or three times in Moorman’s book, with the frequent addition by Moorman of bold lettering, underlining, capital letters and exclamation marks.

Moorman’s Conclusions

Moorman concludes (“FACT TWO”) that “The Vatican was the source of the corruption in Sinaiticus”, (“FACT THREE”) that “someone slipped the young Simonides a rogue manuscript that would bring it in line with Vaticanus”, although he adds, “**We do not know** the identity of the Vatican “plant” or who was on the Vatican’s payroll.” (p. 125, bold in Moorman’s text)

He also states (“FACT FIVE”) that “Tischendorf, funded by a Catholic king” was “subtlety (sic) “steered” by Rome” (p. 126) and that he “was being courted directed (sic) by Rome.” (p. 99). He says that this was all part of “A VATICAN PLOT” (p. 95) and that “the Vatican conspired to remove Mark 16:9-20 from the Bible!” (p. 97, exclamation mark in the original.)

Moorman does not present any evidence in support of these claims (or “FACTS”, as he calls them), using instead capital letters, bold text, italics, underlinings and exclamation marks as substitutes for facts.

Moorman’s Qualifications

Moorman gives (p. 135) some autobiographical information that he clearly considers important. Thus we learn that he “studied for a while at the Indianapolis campus of Purdue University, attended briefly Indiana Bible College, and graduated from Tennessee Temple Bible School”. Moorman does not explain why he failed to complete the course at Purdue University or at Bible College. The Tennessee Temple Bible School appears to have been an evening Bible course that was run at one stage by a church in

Review of “Was Codex Sinaiticus Written In 1840!” by Jack A Moorman

Tennessee.⁷ Moorman reports that he has also published a series of books that he describes as “defending the King James Bible and the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words that underlie it”.

Sources of Background Information

Those who wish to obtain more facts concerning the claims made by Simonides will find “Codex Sinaiticus and the Simonides Affair” by J. K. Elliott⁸ helpful. Moorman copies Simonides’ letters from this book but on his first mention of Elliott he dismisses Elliott’s critical evaluation of Simonides as “absurd” (p. 14) and thereafter gives no indication of Elliott’s conclusions, nor any information that does not support his own claims.

McGrane’s review of the book on Codex Sinaiticus by Bill Cooper also gives a lot of relevant information on Codex Sinaiticus and on Simonides.⁹

“Constantine Tischendorf”, by Stanley E Porter (reference given above), gives information on Tischendorf’s life and academic activities and includes reprints of two works by him.

For more information on the text and translations of the Bible and on the “King James Only” proponents, I would refer readers to “The King James Only Controversy” by James R White.¹⁰

Conclusion

It is to be regretted that Moorman’s passion for the King James text of the Bible has caused him to produce this deeply misleading and unpleasant book, based on unsubstantiated claims and sources that have been demonstrated to be untrustworthy. Moorman suppresses information that demonstrates the falsity of his claims, presenting a partisan argument that will not convince anyone who is aware of the actual, relevant, historical facts.

My Qualifications and Background

A brief word is in order concerning my own qualifications for reviewing this book: I have a 1st Class Honours degree in languages and theology from Leeds University, England and a Ph.D. in Linguistics from St Andrews University, Scotland. I have taught New Testament Greek to adults in Spain and am the author of the Spanish version of the leading textbook on Koiné Greek, Jeremy Duff’s “The Essentials of New Testament Greek” (Spanish title “Curso de Griego Bíblico”, published in 2019 by Editorial CLIE). I have a particular acquaintance with Greek manuscripts of the Bible and have lectured on Codex Sinaiticus in Spain and England.

⁷ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee_Temple_University Accessed on 10.8.21.

⁸ Elliott, J. K., “Codex Sinaiticus and the Simonides Affair, *Αναλεκτα Βλαταδων*, 33, 1982, ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ, ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΙΚΟΝ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΠΑΤΕΡΙΚΩΝ ΜΕΛΕΤΩΝ (Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, number 33 in the series *Analekta Blatadōn*)

⁹ <http://protestanttruth.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Forging-of-Codex-Sinaiticus.pdf> Accessed on 10.8.21.

¹⁰ White, James R, “The King James Only Controversy”, Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House, 1995, 2009