

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for the *Journal of Theological Studies* (old series) can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jts-os_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[1st page of article]

THE USE OF γράφειν.

IN his note on ὁ γράψας ταῦτα, John xxi 24, Dr Bernard (*I. C. C. St John* ii p. 713) said: '*Prima facie*, this indicates that the Beloved Disciple actually wrote the Gospel with his own hand, including the Appendix, and not only that his reminiscences are behind it.' But γράφειν is sometimes used when *dictation* only is intended. E.g. "Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross" (xix 19) means that Pilate was responsible for the wording of the *titulus*, but hardly that he wrote himself on the wooden board. So Paul says: "I write the more boldly to you" (Rom. xv 15), while it appears from Rom. xvi 22 that the scribe of the Epistle was one *Tertius*. Cf. Gal. vi 11 and Pet. v 12. The employment of scribes was very common. Further, in Judges viii 14 the LXX has ἔγραψεν πρὸς αὐτόν (v. l. ἀπεγράψατο) where the meaning is "he described", i. e. "he caused to be written down", not necessarily that the young prisoner wrote down the list of names *sua manu*. This is the meaning which I attach to ἔγραψεν in the present passage. The elders of the Church certified that the Beloved Disciple *caused these things to be written*. They were put into shape by the writer who took them down, and afterwards published them, not as his own, but as 'the Gospel according to John'. See Dr Bernard's *Introd.* p. lxiv. There he

says: 'Hence we conclude that . . . John the Presbyter was the writer and editor of the Fourth Gospel, although he derived his narrative material from John the son of Zebedee.' On p. xlvii he refers to Irenaeus III i 1. In this passage 'John the disciple of the Lord is he who "lay on His breast" and gave out' the gospel at Ephesus, the verb *ἐξέδωκε* being used rather than *ἔγραψε*.

We note that Dr Bernard assumes for his theory, based on Harnack's, an even wider meaning of *γράφειν* than that of 'dictating', for which he pleads in these notes. Of course we cannot prove that *γράφειν* never means anything but to write with one's own hand. But we may examine the instances before us, and say that they do not appear to mean 'dictate', if we find they do not, and ask for instances where the meaning 'dictate' is more apparent, and also for an instance where *γράφειν* can mean 'put into shape' what another has passed on to you. To take the passage in Judges viii 14 first, *ἔγραψε πρὸς αὐτόν*. This is the literal rendering by LXX of the Hebrew *וְיָצַק בְּחֶזֶק*. This verb *בָּחַק* can mean 'describe', e. g. Joshua xviii 4, where LXX has *διαγραφάτωσαν αὐτήν (τὴν γῆν)*; v. 6 where LXX renders it *μερίσσετε τὴν γῆν*; v. 8 where LXX has *χωροβατήσασαι*; v. 9 where it means 'write', *ἔγραψαν . . . εἰς βιβλίον*. In the only passage where the Hebrew means 'write' it is rendered by *γράφω*. The v. l. *ἀπεγράψατο* is probably the correct reading, for while *ἔγραψεν πρὸς αὐτόν* is hardly Greek, *ἀπεγράψατο πρὸς αὐτόν* is good Greek. See Polybius x 17. 10 where Scipio ordered 2,000 artisans of New Carthage to give in their names to the quaestor, *ἀπογράφεσθαι πρὸς τὸν ταμίαν* (cf. *εἰς τοὺς ἀγῶνας ἀπογραφάμενος*, Polyb. xl 6. 8, having entered for the sports).

Does the verb 'describe' mean 'to cause to be written down'? See L. & S.⁸ under *γράφειν* II 5, 'write as an author does, describe', with an instance from Polyb. ii. 56. 4 *οἱ δὲ ἡμῶν γραφόμενοι καιροί*, 'the times of which we have written'. The passage in *Troades* 1189 *τί . . . γράψειν ἂν σε μουσοποιὸς ἐν τάφῳ* means 'What inscription would he write on your tomb?' Hecuba supplies the inscription. *Phoenissae* 574 *σκόλα γράψεις πῶς*; is 'how will you inscribe the spoils?' The inscription is suggested in the following lines.

Again, there was no need for Pilate to write anything on a board. The *titulus* was the label or bill which was sometimes attached to a *tabella*, but it has various meanings. It is not necessary to hold with Dr Bernard (p. 627) that 'the *titulus* is the technical name for the board bearing the name of the criminal'. The *titulus* is often the inscription itself. Columella (9) has '*scribere titulum*'. Martial used *titulus* for epitaphs, and often for the title of his books, e. g. i 93. 4, '*titulo quod brevior legis*, "Iunctus uterque sacro laudatae foedere vitae"; x 71. 2 '*brevem titulum marmoris huius ama*'. Cf. Ovid *R. Am. I.* '*titulus*

nomenque libelli'; Pliny, *Ep.* vii 27, 'domus proscibebatur . . . venit A . . . legit titulum'; Plautus *Trin.* i 2. 131, 'aedes inscripsit *litteris*' of a similar bill of sale. The labels carried on necks by slaves for sale were *tituli*, 'Aut quorum titulus per barbara colla pependit', Prop. v 5. 51, where *paper* meets all requirements. A similar label was carried before the condemned on his way to death. Suetonius *Calig.* 32, 'praecedente *titulo* qui causam poenae indicaret'. Domitian (Sueton. *Dom.* x) threw a spectator to the dogs 'cum hoc titulo, "impie locutus parmularius"', drafted probably by himself. Tacitus, *Ann.* ii 22, gives one by Germanicus who raised a pile of arms 'superbo cum *titulo* "debellatis nationibus"'; adding 'de se nihil addidit'. There is no reason, therefore, why Pilate, who had already shewn a dramatic turn in calling for water and a towel and washing his hands in a literal manner before the crowd, should not also have demanded writing materials, and in the same dramatic manner written on the *charta* with his own hand, 'Jesus Nazareus Rex Judaeorum', and handed it to his secretary to be translated into Greek and Hebrew, ordering it to be placed above the head of the condemned on the cross. In view of all that had taken place, it would have given him intense satisfaction to write out that *titulus* with his own hand, and more still to avow it and refuse to alter it. 'Ο γέγραφα γέγραφα, as who should say 'mea litera scripta manet'. The *titulus* might then be attached to a *tabella* to be carried before the condemned, or on his own breast. Cf. Euseb. *H. E.* v i. 44 (of Attalus) *πίνακος αὐτὸν προόγοντος*.

As regards 1 Pet. v 11 *διὰ Σιλουανῶ ὑμῖν δι' ὀλίγων ἔγραψα*. This does not necessarily imply that Silvanus was anything more than the bearer of the letter. See Acts xv 23 *γράψαντες διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν* of the letters of the Apostles, which were surely not written by Barsabbas and Silas (Silvanus), but of which they and Paul and Barnabas were given the charge. Bengel's note 'sermo concisus, scripserunt et διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν *per manum eorum miserunt*' is adequate. Gal. vi 11 *πηλίκους γράμμασι ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ* refers probably to the whole letter. There is no distinction made between what goes before and what follows. Cato Uticensis made a similar remark towards the end of his letter to Cicero (*Fam.* xv 5), 'Atque haec ad te contra consuetudinem pluribus *scripsi* (*sc. verbis*)'. Cicero *Rep.* i 7, 'Haec pluribus a me verbis dicta sunt'. The Galatians would have known Paul's handwriting. They would also have been flattered, and touched by the letter written by a sick man. Atticus, even when in fever, adhered to his custom of writing to Cicero. The result, however, was a *σύγχυσις litterularum* (*Att.* vi 9). Dictation no doubt was common. Cicero dictated his letters occasionally: but he preferred to write them himself. He frequently apologizes for using a scribe, alleging *lippitudo* and *occupationes*, and denying that it was from

pigritia (*Att.* viii 12; xiii 9; x 17. 2; *Ad. Q. F.* iii 3; *Att.* xvi 15). Dictated letters were not thought so highly of. In *Fam.* iii 6, a lengthy epistle, he is careful to tell the pompous Appius Claudius that he writes with his own hand, 'Ad te mea manu scriptas litteras misi'. He tells Atticus that his letter would have been longer had he written it himself: *Att.* vii 13, 'Si scriberem ipse, longior epistola fuisset, sed dictavi propter lippitudinem'. He had to dictate when he had no leisure, or was walking (*Att.* ii 23), or when dining (*Att.* xiv 21), 'haec scripsi seu dictavi apposita secunda mensa'. The careless *seu* for *sive potius* shews haste. He could not use *scribere* of his dictated letters. In *Att.* x 3. 1 he says 'hanc epistolam dictavi, pridie dederam mea manu longiorem'. When coming to private matters he would take the pen from the scribe: 'Sed ad meam manum redibo, sunt enim haec occultius agenda' (xi 24). Pompey did the same when dictating to Cicero: 'Sed in ea Pompeii epistola erat in extremo ipsius manu: *Tu censeo Luceriam venias*' (viii 1). These were the most valued and important parts of the letters. But *Gal.* vi 11 introduces no special subject. It is the old case of the circumcision-party already discussed. The expression rather relates to what has preceded, *Gal.* i-vi 10. Cicero's explanations of his dictating in *Att.* vii 13 and xiv 21 are at the end of the letters.

Paul did write himself, *ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ* Philem. 19. The expression in *Rom.* xv 15 *τολμηροτέρως δὲ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν*, is more in keeping with writing than with dictation. One can hardly dictate 'with more boldness', but one can write with more or less timidity or courage. Cicero (*Att.* ii 19) says 'haec scripsi *properans et timide*', I am writing hurriedly and nervously. But he dictated either *κατὰ περιοχάς* or *syllabatim* (*Att.* xiii 25), in the former manner to Tiro, who had a good memory and a system of shorthand, and in the latter way to Spintharus. Cicero draws a marked line between his dictated and his written correspondence. The Latin *scribere* in prose does not appear to be patient of the meaning 'describe'. It is a poetical use. See Wickham's note on 'Scriberis Vario fortis', *Hor. Od.* i 6. 1. Also cf. *Ep.* i 16. 4, 'Scribetur tibi forma . . . agri', where the description follows. Again, the argument that Tertius of *Rom.* xvi 22 is the author of the whole epistle *Rom.* i-xvi may be found to be based on a weak foundation, if Spitta's view that *Rom.* xvi is a distinct letter with the beginning lost is correct, and it has much to commend it.

Finally, we have to consider the use of *ἐκδιδόναι* in *Iren.* iii 1. 1 to which Dr Bernard appealed. It is the word used by authors of their own compositions: e. g. Isocrates v 85, 'If I fail to write in the same grand style as my former publications (the Panegyricus), τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον γράψαι τοῖς πρότερον ἐκδιδόμενοις', cf. Polyb. ii 27. 6 τὴν ἱστορίαν ὑπὸ πλειόνων ἐκδεδόσθαι, and xvi 26. 3, of the request to Attalus to write

a letter to the Romans, *γράψαντα αὐτὸν ἡξιὸν ἐκδοῦναι*. When he wrote they took the letter. Irenaeus did not use *γράφειν* of any of the evangelists in this passage, *γράφην ἐξήνεγκεν* (Mt.), *ἐγγράφως παραδέδωκε* (Mk.), *ἐν βιβλίῳ κατέθετο* (Lk.). If *ἔγραψε* is rendered 'dictated' or 'put into shape' in John xxi 24, it might be so rendered in Rom. xv 15 and Rom. xvi 22. It must be remembered that Dr Bernard treated John the Presbyter as more than the scribe of the Fourth Gospel, as in fact the *ἐρμηνευτής* or interpreter, what Mark was for St Peter. It seems evident that Papias knew nothing of this literary connexion. Although we cannot assert that *γράφειν* always means the personal act of writing and never means 'dictate', we may say that the instances given do not appear to support 'the latter meaning'; much less do they mean 'put into shape.'

F. R. MONTGOMERY HITCHCOCK.