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A FEW FRAGMENTS FOR THE WEEKEND

It's time for a miscellaneous post. Here are a few stories and notices from the last few weeks which may be of general interest.

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First up is a GitHub repository, containing an archive of open access antique Christian texts. The title is the [Patristic Text Archive](#), and it's [here](#). Created by Annette von Stockhausen, you have to click down through the directories to find content (surely there must be a better way?) So [here](#) we find Sever J. Voicu's Greek text of Severian of Gabala, *De fide et lege naturae*.

h/t [TEI Pelican](#), who also alerts me to versions of the works of Evagrius Ponticus [here](#).

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Next, we all know that medieval manuscripts use abbreviations in order to save parchment. No surprise there - if you had to make your own parchment by catching a sheep, you'd economise too! But how did medieval scribes keep up with the abbreviations that we find so difficult today?

Well, they had handbooks of them. Here's a manuscript from Reichenau, dated 1013-1054 AD, now in the library at Fulda with shelfmark 100 C 4. Folio 2r is online [here](#). (Click to expand the image)

fec fecit	fec facta		
F ecit	factus	h o	homo
fec	factus	huas	humanitas
fctu	facta	huat	humanitatis
fctm	factum	hū	haben
fctis	factis	hēn	habentur
fr	frater	hās	habens
frēs	fratres	hī	habē
frim	fratrum	hūa	habitorio
frīb	fratribus	hō	hora p honora
fies	finem	hōe	hodie
fis	finis	hōim	hominum
fem	feminiūm	hūi	huiusmodi
femū	femininum	hēi	heri
fēia	femina	hēs	heres
fēm	famulum	hēs	habes
fli	famuli	hē	habet
flime	familie	hōies	hominem
falia	familia	hō	hor' p hero
flis	fusitatem	hī	hic
f is	f emineus	hē	her
gns	genus	hō	hor
gnis	generis	hāc	hanc
gna	gnato	I hs	I esus
gla	gloria	remias	eremias
ghe	glorie	ronis	eronymus
gla	gloriatio	ihes	iohannes
glos	gloriosus	ihē	israhel
gna gna	gracia	igim	ierusalem
gras	gracias	ie	ire p xere
grō	gratus	ipm	ipsum
grus	gratuus	ipam	ipsam
g	erito	ipis	ipsis
gō	gero	ipoz	ipsorum
gis	geris	inuit	inuitatorum
gu	gra		
gū	gre		
g	gri p ger		
ghe genere			
gna genera			

Medieval abbreviations in a medieval manuscript

H/T [Stephanie J. Lahey @SJLahey](#).

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The next item that caught my eye is a strange story. Appearing in the Union of Catholic

Asian News, and dated 22 September 2020, it's headlined, [Chinese Catholics angry over book claiming Jesus killed sinner](#).

Catholics in mainland China are upset about the distortion of a Bible story in a school textbook, which claims Jesus Christ stoned to death a sinner woman in order to respect the law of the time.

The textbook, published by the government-run University of Electronic Science and Technology Press, aims to teach "professional ethics and law" to the students of secondary vocational schools.

The book quotes the story of Jesus forgiving the sins of a woman who committed adultery from the Gospel of John. But it has a changed ending.

The crowd wanted to stone the woman to death as per their law. But Jesus said, 'Let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone.' Hearing this, they slipped away one by one.

When the crowd disappeared, Jesus stoned the sinner to death saying, "I too am a sinner. But if the law could only be executed by men without blemish, the law would be dead," the textbook said.

So far, so very odd. How do we know any of this?

A parishioner who uploaded the textbook on social media said the distortion was an insult to the Catholic Church.

"I want everyone to know that the Chinese Communist Party has always tried to distort the history of the Church, to slander our Church, and to make people hate our Church," his post said.

Mathew Wang, a Christian teacher at a vocational school, confirmed the content but said the textbook content varies from place to place within China.

Wang added that the controversial textbook was reviewed by the Textbook Review Committee for Moral Education in Secondary Vocational Education.

Um. That's not very good. So where is it, then - where's the book? Let's see it.

Something about this story makes me wary. I see that the story has been repeated by various websites, clearly without further investigation. The mainstream media have ignored it.

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Finally, and continuing the theme of my previous post, here's a bronze sestertius of Trajan, struck 112-114 which shows a picture of Portus, the new port of Rome constructed by Claudius, and expanded by Trajan. This from the [auction site](#):



A bronze sestertius of emperor Trajan celebrates the completion of his harbor expansion project in A.D. 113.

The coin, in virtually uncirculated condition, was found in the basilica at Caerwent in South Wales, not far from Caerleon.

H/t [Jon Hawke](#).

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That's it for now. Have a good weekend!
