

The Mother of all Forgeries? Who wrote Jer. Ep. 19?¹

The letter of Damasus, *Commentaria cum legerem*, Ep. 19 in modern editions, is a very short letter to Jerome asking for an explanation of the Hebrew word *hosanna*. *Multi super hoc* (Ep. 20) is Jerome's more lengthy reply. The letters appear to have been written between 382 and 384 during Jerome's sojourn in Rome. Their authenticity has never been widely questioned. In recent years, however, the authenticity of all the other extant epistolary exchanges between Damasus and Jerome have been shown to be questionable at best. Pierre Nautin argued convincingly that Damasus' letter to Jerome on various Old Testament questions (Ep. 35) and Jerome's response (Ep. 36) were not written before Damasus' death in late 384, but that both were written by Jerome some years later.² The Jerome-Damasus connection later became a popular venue for forgeries, especially from the 6th to 8th centuries when numerous documents were passed off as exchanges between the two.³ Although the two early letters which Jerome wrote to Damasus from Syria (Ep. 15 and 16) are still unquestioned, Ep. 19 and 20 remain as the only authentic

¹ This article is humbly dedicated to the late Pierre Nautin whose work provided the inspiration and laid the foundation for it. The following system is used to refer to Jerome's letters: Genuine and false letters contained in the modern editions are referred to by *Ep.* and the number in the edition of I. Hilberg (*CSEL* 54-55) and J. Labourt, *Saint Jérôme. Lettres*, Tom. 1-8 (Paris, 1949-1951). *Falsae* are referred to either by the number in *Clavis Patrum Latinorum* (*CPL*) or the reference in B. Lambert, *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana Manuscripta*, (Steenbrugge, 1970; hereafter *BHM*), especially vol. 3a.

² P. Nautin, 'Le premier échange épistolaire entre Jérôme et Damase: lettres réelles ou fictives?' *FZThPh* 30 (1983), pp. 331-334. He further showed that Ep. 18 (sometimes referred to as 18a) of c. 380 had the address to Damasus added later, and that 18b *ad Damasum* was probably composed in 387, just like Ep. 35 and 36. Cf. 'Le 'De Seraphim' de Jérôme et son appendice 'Ad Damasum', *Roma renascens: Beiträge zur Spätantike und Rezeptionsgeschichte. Ilona Opelt von ihren Freunden und Schülern zum 9.7.1988 in Verehrung gewidmet*, ed. M. Wissermann (Frankfort, 1988), pp. 257-293. Nautin also implied that Ep. 21, another answer to an enquiry from Damasus, was written after Damasus' death.

³ *Dum multa corpora* (*BHM* 346) and [*Supplex*] *legi litteras* (*BHM* 347), both 5th- 6th century documents later included in the Pseudo-Isidorean collection. *Quid tibi uideatur* (in revised versions as *Dirigimus uestrae/sanctitatis*) and *Tibi ueritas minime* (also appearing as *Veritas [in] nobis minime*) are a pair from the late 6th century that appear in a variety of later incarnations (*BHM* 355; cf. however the complete study, with additional listing of manuscripts, by R. Reynolds, 'A South Italian Liturgico-Canonical Mass Commentary,' *Medieval Studies* 50 [1988], pp. 626-670). In addition, we have numerous letters that do not appear in pairs: *Gloriam sanctitatis tuae* (*BHM* 344) included in Pseudo-Isidorean Decretals; *Gaudet ecclesia* (*BHM* 345) from the *Liber Pontificalis*; *Sufficere quidem* (*BHM* 312); *Nouerit sancta* (*BHM* 343); *Petistis a me* (*BHM* 354); *Desiderii mei ardor* (*BHM* 363); *Decanus qui sit* (*BHM* 373) and others.

exchange between the two men, and Nautin questioned these as well.⁴ While Jerome's authorship of *Ep.20* has not been seriously doubted, the work of Nautin and others should make us look again at *Ep.19*.

Damasus' letter is so brief that it provides little historical, stylistic or lexical help in judging authenticity. We are thus forced to focus our attention on its mate, *Ep. 20*. The author obviously meant it to be a response to a question from Damasus, and he assumes Damasus is still living. Determining the date of *Ep. 20* may thus help us elucidate the date and authorship of *Ep. 19*. We will examine both the internal and external evidence that has bearing on the issue at hand.

I. Internal Evidence

A. Hilary's *Commentary on Matthew*

Ep. 19 states that orthodox commentaries on the Gospels give "not only differing, but contradictory interpretations" of the meaning of the Hebrew word *hosanna*. While it does not specify which commentaries, Jerome's reply quotes Hilary of Poitiers' *Commentary on Matthew* to the effect that *hosanna* means "the redemption of the house of David."⁵ Although we know that Jerome became acquainted with some of Hilary's works already in the late 360's or early 370's,⁶ we are not able to identify when he first had access to this particular work. However, it would certainly have been easier for him to find a copy in Rome than in the East. In the end, this reference gives us little help.

B. *Ex Hebraeis codicibus veritas*

Jerome also states that the Greek and Latin codices are of little help in this discussion, and

⁴ He concluded his study of *Ep. 35-36* with this comment: "Le reste de la correspondance entre Jérôme et Damase me paraît être de même genre, comme j'espère le montrer plus tard" (p. 344). Unfortunately, after correspondence with Mme. Nautin, I have concluded that Prof. Nautin never was able to complete a study of *Ep. 19-20*.

⁵ *Ep.20.1* Hilary's commentary is edited and translated in *SCh* 254 and 258. Hilary's comment comes while discussing Matt. 21:39 (*SCh* 258: 124/126).

⁶ In *Ep. 5.2*, Jerome says he transcribed Hilary's *On the Synods* and *Tractates on the Psalms* during his stay at Trier.

therefore, he must return to the source itself (*ad ipsum fontem recurramus*) and examine the Hebrew text (*ex Hebraeis codicibus ueritas exprimenda est*).⁷ This terminology would fit very well in the Bethlehem years, but it is also similar to expressions in *Ep.* 34, a letter of Jerome to Marcella which is dated to the last half of Jerome's Roman period (AD 384 or early 385). This letter was also written to answer questions about Hebrew words, leading Jerome to return to the Hebrew text (*ad Hebraeum recurrens*) as the "font" (*rursum ad fontem sermonis recurramus Hebraei*). It also refers to differences among the Hexaplaric translations (including Quinta and Sexta, cf. section E below), and respectfully disagrees with the interpretation of *Hilarius noster*. In the preface to his translation of the Gospels (AD 384), Jerome also refers to the Hexaplaric material and to the various streams flowing from the original fountain.⁸

In *Ep.* 32, dated to 384, Jerome tells Marcella that he was busy comparing Aquila's text of various Old Testament books, including the Psalms, to the Hebrew scrolls (*cum uoluminibus Hebraeorum*). This was done to ascertain whether the text had been tampered with by the Jews. While this implies that Jerome still had some doubts about the *ueritas* of the Hebrew text, it does confirm that he was actively using Hebrew codices of the Psalms, not just the Hebrew text supplied by Origen. Thus, if we accept the evidence of *Ep.* 32 and 34, *Ep.* 20's reference to seeking truth at the source, namely the Hebrew text, would seem to fit well in a composition during Jerome's stay in Rome.

C. Matthew wrote in Hebrew

Jerome's comment that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew is of little help.⁹ Jerome

⁷ *Ep.* 20.2.

⁸ He refers to the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodosius. He further says: *...diversos rivulorum tramites ducit unio, de fonte quaerendum est.*

⁹ *Ep.* 20.5.

mentions seeing a copy of Matthew's Hebrew Gospel already during his first stay in the desert. What exactly he saw is still debated. However, he repeats his belief that Matthew wrote in Hebrew on numerous occasions, as early as the preface to his translation of the Gospels (AD 384), and as late as his commentary on Isaiah (408-410).

D. Forms of address

More instructive than the previous items is a consideration of the forms of address between Jerome and the Bishop of Rome. Excluding the heading, *ad Damasum episcopum*, the bishop is not addressed formally for the first 100 lines of the letter. Then, in the concluding lines he is addressed as *beatitudo tua*, the same phrase used thrice in *Ep.* 15 and once in *Ep.* 16, the two desert letters to Damasus written in 375-376.¹⁰ Yet, the earlier letters were almost fawning in their praise of the Roman bishop:

...I thought to consult the chair of Peter.... Now the sun of righteousness has arisen in the West.... You are the light of the world, you are the salt of the earth, you are vessels of gold and silver.... Therefore, although your greatness frightens me, your compassion encourages me to approach you. I, a sacrificial victim, implore safety from the priest. I, a sheep, implore protection from the shepherd. Let envy of the preeminence of Rome depart; let flattery subside. I speak with the successor of the fisherman and a disciple of the cross. I, following no leader except Christ, associate myself with the fellowship of your blessedness, namely the seat of Peter. I know the church is built upon that rock. Whoever eats the lamb outside of this house is polluted. (*Ep.* 15.1 and 2)

....that you, a great man, might look down upon an insignificant one; and that you, the rich shepherd, might not disregard a sickly sheep. (*Ep.* 16. 1)

Nothing similar is found in our letter. It is true that Jerome was by now an intimate acquaintance with the pope. Yet, in preparing a letter for publication addressed to such a highly placed person, one would expect a more reverential tone.

¹⁰ *Ep.* 15.2, 4 and 5; 16.2.

A comparison might be made with other works of Jerome dedicated to Damasus, such as the aforementioned preface to the Gospels. There he only refers to Damasus once in the course of preface, referring to him as "the supreme bishop" who commanded Jerome to undertake his revision. The preface to a translation of two of Origen's homilies on the Song of Songs (383 or 384) does not specifically address Damasus at all after the *ad Damasum*. Note also that at the end of section two of *Ep. 20* Jerome explains how the Hebrew word must be considered along with the explanations of all previous interpreters so that "the reader (*lector*) will discover more easily for himself...how this expression is to be understood." This turn of phrase seems to indicate a wider audience than just Damasus. Thus, this letter seems closer in character to Jerome's other prefaces and tracts which were written in the form of personal letters but were meant to be read by wider audiences. G. Bardy might well have cited these letters as another example of the *Quaestiones et responsiones* genre of patristic writings, but this also helps little in solving the question of authenticity of *Ep. 19*.¹¹

In *Ep. 19*, Damasus addresses Jerome as "dilectionis tuae." Damasus used the same expression in two of the other 11 of his letters which are extant in Latin, once when addressing Eastern bishops about AD 375, and twice when addressing the bishops of Macedonia in a letter of AD 380.¹² Thus this form of address, used by Damasus in addressing other bishops, may

¹¹G. Bardy, "La littérature patristique des « Quaestiones et Responsiones » sur l'Écriture sainte," *Revue Biblique* 41 (1932): 210-236, 341-369, 515-537 and 42 (1933): 14-20, 211-229 and 328-352. On Jerome, see 41: 356-369.

¹²*Dilectionis uestrae* appears at the end of the fragmentary letter *Ea gratia fratres*, preserved in *cod. Veronensis LX*. Cf. the edition of E. Schwarz, "Über die Sammlung des Cod. Veronensis LX," 257-259.

The same expression appears three times in *Decursis litteris*. This letter is preserved in the so-called *Collection of Thessalonica*, ed. C. Silva-Tarouca, *Epistolarum Romanorum Pontificum ad Vicarios per Illyricum aliosque episcopos Collectio Thessalonicensis* (Rome, 1937), pp. 16-18.

This may have also been the expression which was translated as ἡ ὀμ in the opening line of Damasus' letter to the Eastern bishops preserved in Greek translation in Theodoret's *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.10.

also have been deemed appropriate for addressing the biblical scholar Jerome. Damasus also speaks of himself as "cura nostra." Nowhere else does he do this in his extant writings.

Thus, while the evidence is not conclusive, it certainly does not exclude a date of 383-384 for *Ep.20*, nor does it militate against the authenticity of *Ep. 19*.

E. Access to the *Hexapla* of the Psalms

In the course of Jerome's discourse on *hosanna*, Jerome discusses the Hebrew text of Psalm 118 (117):25-26 and six Greek translations: the Septuagint, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, Quinta and Sexta. The first four of these made up columns 3-6 of Origen's Hexapla, while Quinta and Sexta were additional translations which, as the names given them by Origen imply, were added (where extant) as fifth and sixth Greek columns. The obvious implication is that Jerome had access to the Hexaplaric version of the Psalms at the time this letter was written, or sometime previously.

Throughout the course of the fourth century, Origen's copy of the Hexapla remained in Caesarea. It was such a massive work that complete copies were, as far as we know, never made. There is also little evidence even for the circulation of partial copies.¹³ While Jerome was in Bethlehem, he periodically traveled to Caesarea to consult the autograph. Did he have access to it previously?

Jerome mentions all six Greek translations already in the preface to his translation of Eusebius' *Chronicon*, completed during his stay in Constantinople (AD 381). While in Rome, Jerome mentions to Marcella that he was comparing Aquila to the Hebrew of various books, including Psalms.¹⁴ He mentions all but Sexta in the preface to his translation of Origen's *Two Homilies on the Song of Songs*, also dedicated to Damasus.¹⁵ After leaving Rome, Jerome mentions the various translations, including Quinta and Sexta in his commentary on Titus (AD 388), his *Commentarioli on the Psalms* (c.390), his second series of tracts on Psalms (c.390) and

¹³ Augustine (in the *City of God*), Isidore of Seville, and Bede are among the few writers that are familiar enough with it to mention the Quinta and Sexta versions.

¹⁴ *Ep. 32.1*, where he speaks of "having exactly revised...the Psalms." Cf. also *Ep. 28.6* and note 16 below.

¹⁵ This is where Jerome reports that Quinta was found by Origen near Actium.

numerous other later works.¹⁶ In these works, when he cites Quinta and Sexta, it is almost always in connection with the text of Psalms, understandably since the manuscripts Origen found did cover most of the Psalms but only limited sections of the rest of the Old Testament.

Therefore, it does seem that Jerome was well acquainted with the Hexaplaric versions, and those of the Psalms in particular, already while in Rome. One possibility would be that he obtained a copy of that section of the Hexapla while in the East, previous to writing his preface to the *Chronicon*. Another possibility is that he obtained access to a copy in Rome itself. Because of its liturgical uses, the book of Psalms held a special interest for the church and this may have led to that section of the Hexapla being singled out for copying. Unfortunately, we have no other evidence to support either of these hypotheses.

¹⁶ Especially in his commentaries on the Minor Prophets and *Ep.* 65, 106 and 140.

Pierre Nautin, however, has supplied us with a third option -- access to the Hexapla through the works of Origen. Nautin demonstrated that Jerome's *Excerpta de psalterio*, or *Commentarioli* as it is also called, was heavily dependant on Origen's *Excerpta in totum psalterium*, now mostly lost.¹⁷ Further, Nautin showed that numerous references in letters of Jerome during the Roman period closely reflect the text of his *Commentarioli*.¹⁸ Since the latter was not composed until the early 390s, the citations in the Roman letters probably come directly from Origen's work. If this is so, the references to the Hexaplaric material could also come from Origen's work on Psalms. This would also explain why nearly all his references to the less available Greek versions are to passages in the Psalter. Thus, here again, a Roman date for *Ep. 20* is very plausible.

Our examination of the internal evidence can be summarized as follows. Access to Hilary's *Commentary on Matthew*, Jerome's seeking truth in the Hebrew text and his ability to do so, comments on Matthew having written in Hebrew, the forms of address used between Damasus and Jerome, and the references to six Greek translations of a Psalm verse -- all these fit just as well or even better into Jerome's stay in Rome (382-385) as they do into his later life. None of the internal evidence found in *Ep. 19* or *20* speaks decisively for a date of composition after Damasus' death.

II. External Evidence

A. Jerome's description of his early letters.

¹⁷ P. Nautin, *Origène -- Sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris, 1977), pp. 280-292.

¹⁸ In *Ep. 28.6* Jerome gives a long citation on the meaning of "diapsalma," citing various readings from the Hexapla translations, including Quinta and Sexta. Nautin argues convincingly that this comes from Origen's *Excerpta*. He gives further examples from *Ep. 20, 23, 25, 26, 30, 34, and 37*, all from Jerome's Roman period (Nautin, *Origène*, 282-8).

In the last section of *De Viris Illustribus* (AD 393), Jerome describes his own literary works up to that point in time and among them mentions:

*epistularum ad diuersos librum unum, ..., ad Heliodorum exhortatoriam, ..., de Seraphim, de Osanna, de frugi et luxurioso filiis, de tribus quaestionibus legis ueteris, ..., ad Eustochium quia cottidie scribuntur, incertus est numerus...*¹⁹

M. Hilberg and J. Labourt, the two chief twentieth-century editors of the letters, have assumed that these references are to *Ep.* 1-46 and that they were published as four volumes and three *libelli* by scribes under Jerome's own direction by AD 392. From a sixth-century addition to this part of the *De viris*, Labourt concludes that Jerome did not oversee similar editions of his later letters but that his *corpus* was still "virtually established" by the sixth century.²⁰ In support of this, he cites Cassiodorus' use of *Ep.* 7, 14, 62, 71, 78 and 125 in his *De institutione*.²¹

When others have noted the use of some of Jerome's letters by late antique authors, they have usually accepted this conclusion. A. Chastagnol, based on the passage in *De viris* and on the comments of Hilberg and Labourt, repeats the claim that the first 45 letters were published under Jerome's own supervision, and then goes on to say that this collection was used by the *Scriptoria Historia Augusta* editor already in 392. In addition, he proposes that the following 20 letters were published by 397²². He supports these statements by showing that *Ep.* 1 was a principal source used by the *SHA* author of Avidius Cassius to compose 4.3-5 and 7-8. J. Schwartz also sees evidence that the authors of the *SHA* used *Ep.* 3, 29, 36, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 50, 53, 107, 108, 121, 130, 143.²³ While all of these studies do indicate that *some* of Jerome's letters were available to some late antique authors, in no way do they support the claim that *Ep.* 1-46 were

¹⁹ *De viris illustribus* 135.

²⁰ J. Labourt, *Saint Jérôme. Lettres, Tom. I* (Paris, 1949): xlviii.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. xlix.

²² André Chastagnol, 'Le supplice inventé par Avidius Cassius: Remarques sur l'Histoire Auguste et la lettre 1 de Saint Jérôme,' *Bonner Historia-Augusta Colloquium 1970* (Bonn, 1972), pp. 95-107. On p. 95 he quotes J. Schwartz, *Historia* 15 (1966), p. 464; see also A. Chastagnol, *Recherches sur l'Histoire Auguste* [Antiquitas, Reihe 4, Band 6](Bonn, 1970), pp. 12-16.

²³ Jacques Schwartz, 'La Vita Marci 17,4 et ses Développements (Problèmes de composition et de polémique anti-chrétienne),' in *Historia-Augusta Colloquium 1970* (Bonn, 1972), pp. 249-269, especially pages.254-5. *Ep.* 3, 22, 43, 47, 48, 49, 107 and 108 are also used in other sections, according to Schwartz, as cited in Chastagnol, *Recherches sur l'Histoire-Auguste* [Antiquitas, Reihe 4, Band 6] (Bonn, 1970), pp.12-16.

published as one or more volumes by Jerome himself.

In fact, the order of the letters in our modern editions goes back to the 18th c. editor Vallarsi who arranged and numbered the letters chronologically. In this he was following *De viris*, for Jerome himself listed his works, including the letters, in rough chronological order (Chart 1). He placed all the Damasus correspondence in the Roman period. For our purposes, it must also be noted that, while the reference in *De viris* does imply the existence of *Ep.* 20 by about 392, it does not necessarily imply the existence of *Ep.* 19 even at that date.

Chart 1. Arrangement of *Ep.* 1-46 in accord with Jerome's description in *De viris*

Jerome's description	Letter numbers in modern editions	Dates
Epistularum ad diuersos librum unum	1-13, 15-17 (45?) ²⁴	374-379
Ad Heliodorum exhortatoriam	14	375-376
De Seraphim	18a-b	(382-384, according to Jerome)
De Osanna	19-20	
De frugi et luxurioso filiis	21	
De tribus quaestionibus legis ueteris	35-36	
Ad Eustochium de uirginitate seruanda	22	384
Ad Marcellam epistularum librum unum	23-29, 32, 34, 37-38, 40-44, (46)	384-385 (389)
Consolatoriam de morte filiae ad Paulam	39	384
Epistularum autem ad Paulam et Eustochium, quia cottidie scribuntur, incertus est numerus	30-31, 33, etc.	384-385

B. Evidence for the gradual collection of Jerome's early letters

²⁴Vallarsi's dating of *Ep.* 45 to Asella to A.D. 385 has not been questioned, but it does not fit neatly into his chronological arrangement. We include it with the *ad diuersos liber unum*, but its presence or absence does not effect the argumentation or conclusions.

If Jerome did indeed oversee the publication of these letters, one would expect to see some evidence of this in at least some of the earliest surviving manuscripts.²⁵ Some fifty extant manuscripts, dating from the 6th to early 9th c., contain parts of Jerome's correspondence. Only at the very end of that period, however, is there indication that Jerome's letters were beginning to

²⁵In the following pages 25 manuscripts will be referred to. For the sake of convenience the full city, library and shelf marks are listed here:

Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Phillips 1674 [lat. 17], 9th c.; Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliothek, GKS.28.fol., 9-10th c.; El Escorial, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo, &.I.14, late 8th c.; Epinal, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 68, A.D. 744-745; Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. Perg. 105, 8-9th c.; Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe, Aug. Perg. 197, 9th c.; K ln, Erzbischoflichen Di zesan-Bibliothek, Dombibl. 35, 8-9th c.; K ln, Erzbischoflichen Di zesan-Bibliothek, Dombibl. 60, 9th c.; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 3730, 10-11th c.; Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, VI.D.59, 6-7th c.; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud. misc. 252, late 9th c.; Paris, Biblioth que Nationale, lat. 1868, 9th c.; Paris, Biblioth que Nationale, lat. 1869, 9th c.; Paris, Biblioth que Nationale, lat. 1870, 9th c., 11th c.; Paris, Biblioth que Nationale, lat. 1871, 10th c.; Paris, Biblioth que Nationale, lat. 12163, 9th c.; Paris, Biblioth que Nationale, lat. 14805, 9th c.; Stuttgart, W rttembergische Landesbibliothek, HB.VII.12, A.D. 838-842; Tours, Biblioth que municipale, ms. 279, 9-10 c.; Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat. lat. 341, 10-11th c.; Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Vat. lat. 355-356, 10th c.; Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, ms. 15, early 8th c. Vienna, Esterreichische Nationalbibliothek, lat. 690, 8-9th c.; Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, Rheinau 41, 9-10th c.; Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, Rheinau 49, 9-10th c.

circulate in large groups.²⁶ What the manuscripts do indicate is that the letters first circulated in miscellaneous groups and were only gradually gathered into the larger collections now extant. Chart 2 sets out the data for the nine manuscripts which are the largest extant collections in their respective periods.²⁷

The three earliest collections would indicate that before the late ninth century there was little in common among the extant collections. By about A.D. 800 the size of the collections had doubled, but, of the 101 different letters found in three 8-9th c. manuscripts, there were still only 17 that were present in all three collections. A century later there is finally some substantial uniformity, with a common core of 69 letters being found in all three manuscripts of that period.

²⁶One major exception is a series of 10 letters (101-102-103-111-110-56-105-67-104-112) which appear in this same order in 13 of the earliest two dozen manuscripts (Escorial &.I.14, Karlsruhe 105, Köln 35 and 60, Paris 1869, 1870 and 1871, Tours 279, Vat. lat. 341 and 355-356, Zurich Rh. 41, Vienna 690, Munich clm 3730.

²⁷The author has personally collated Eps. 15, 16, 19 and 20 in most of the manuscripts cited. Most of the information on the other letters contained and the order in which they appear is taken from BHM. Since Lambert depended heavily on printed descriptions of varying quality, errors are frequent. While first-hand examination of the manuscripts will be necessary before making detailed conclusions about the relationship between the manuscripts, the conclusions about the growth of the corpus made in the present study should not be affected.

Chart 2. Gradual Collection of Jerome's Letters: Largest collections in 3 early periods

Ms.	Date	# of letters	diff. letters in the mss.	# of letters in all 3 mss.	# of letters in just 2 mss.
Naples VI.D.59	6-7	21	53	2	17
Verona 15	early 8	23			
Epinal 68	mid 8	30			
Escorial &.I.14	late 8	42	101	17	42
Köln 35	8-9	62			
Karlsruhe 105	8-9	73			
Paris 1869	9	97	117	69	37
Zurich Rh. 41	9-10	85			
Vat. lat 355-356	10	110			

Thus, it appears that only at the end of the 9th century, almost five centuries after Jerome's death, were manuscripts being produced containing a large proportion of Jerome's extant letters and with substantial commonality in the letters each contained..

The same is true if we look only at *Ep.* 1-46, those which Jerome supposedly published by A.D. 392. Chart 3 gives the data for 13 early manuscripts, those containing the largest number of these letters from each period. Again we see that the majority did not appear in the same manuscript until about A.D. 900. Those that did appear are found in different combinations and contexts within the manuscript tradition, giving little evidence for any early publication as a group.

Chart 3: The Appearance of *Ep.* 1-46 in 13 Early Manuscripts

Ms.	date	# found	numbers
Naples VI.D.59	6-7	6	10, 14, 30, 39, 45, 46
Verona 15	early 8	8	2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 17
Epinal 68	mid 8	16	1-3, 14, 16-17, 22, 25-29, 37, 39, 45, 46
Escorial &.I.14	late 8	6	2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12,
Köln 35	8-9	26	1, 3-6, 8-9, 11-17, 18a-b, 20-25, 27, 38-40, 44, 45
Karlsruhe 105	8-9	31	2, 4-17, 19-25, 27-28, 35-36, 38-40, 43, 45
Berlin 17	9	17	2, 3, 7, 11, 19, 25, 27-30, 32-36, 41-42, 46
Paris 12163	9	20	2, 4-10, 12, 14-16, 18a-22, 35-36
Paris 1869	9	34	1-2, 4-14, 17, 21-30, 32, 34, 38-39, 41-46
Stuttgart HB.VII.12	mid 9	24	11, 13, 17, 21, 23-34, 38, 40-46
Zurich Rh. 41	9-10	34	1-2, 4-6, 8-27, 31, 38-44, 46
Zurich Rh. 49	9-10	17	11, 23-30, 32, 34, 38, 40-44, 46
Vat. lat. 355-356	10	43	1-2, 4-6, 8-30, 32-46

C. Evidence for smaller collections

Although there is no evidence for the early circulation of *Ep.* 1-46, it might be postulated that Jerome oversaw the publication of his letters in the small groups listed in *De viris illustribus*. If so, this also should be reflected in the manuscript tradition.

1. *Epistularum ad diuersos librum unum*

As we pointed out above, Hilberg and Labourt's organization of the letters would indicate that they have seen Jerome's *epistularum ad diuersos librum unum* as consisting in letters 1-13 and 15-17, all dating from 374-376. Chart 4 shows how many of these letters are found in the more important early manuscripts, and the order in which they appear.

While there are eleven manuscripts that date to the early ninth century or before and which contain at least one of these letters, only Köln 35 and Karlsruhe 105, two manuscripts whose collections are closely related, have more than half of them.

Twenty-two 9th century mss. have at least one of these letters, but it is the early 10th century before we find a collection missing only 1 of the 16 letters (number 7), and even a cursory look at the order in which they appear shows they still did not form an integral sub-collection within the corpus. Thus while some of the related manuscripts show common groupings of letters, such as the combination 6-8-9-12,²⁸ there is no sign of even a late-developing collection consisting in 1-13 and 14-17.

²⁸ Escorial & I.12, Köln 35, Karlsruhe 105 and Zurich Rh. 41.

Chart 4. Evidence for *Epistularum ad diuersos librum unum* (Ep. 1-13, 15-17) within the main

Ms.	date	no. found	order
Naples VI.D.59	6-7	1	-52- 10 -14-
Verona 15	early 8	7	-74- 10 -7- also 2,3,6,7,12, 17 ²⁹
Epinal 68	mid 8	5	-25- 3 -66- 2-16-1-17 -62-
Escorial &.I.14	late 8	6	-47- 6-8-9-12 -73- -62- 2-4 -109-
Köln 35	8-9	12	-20- 15-16 -18b- -70- 6-8-9-12 -73- -109- 13 -54- - 45- 4-5-17 -124- -107- 11 -25- 121- 1 -83-
Karlsruhe 105	8-9	14	11 -75- -107- 2-20-15-16 -18b- -70- 6-8-9-12 -73-125- 10-7 -118- -109- 13 -54- -45- 4-5-17 -124
Paris 1869	9	13	-125- 10-7-9-12-2 -119- -45- 11 -130- -117- 13 -54- -24- 1 -127- -73- 17 -124- 72- 4-5 -76-68-147- 8-6
Zurich Rh. 41	9-10	14	-20- 15-16 -18b- -70- 6-8-9-12 -73- -109- 13 -54- -45- 4-5-17 -77-107- 11 -25- -121- 1 -83- -47- 2 -128- -31- 10 -43
Vat. lat 355-356	10	15	-20- 15-16 -18b- -73- 17 -124- 72- 4-5 -76-68 147- 6-8 -125- 10-7-9-12-2 -119- -45- 11 -130- -117- 13 -54- -24- 1 -127-

2. *Ad Marcellam epistularum librum unum*

The other group of letters that one might expect to appear as a group were those addressed to Marcella: 23-29, 32, 34, 37-38, 40-44, and possibly 46. Again we look in vain for signs of an early collection (Chart 5).

²⁹These latter 5 are listed in BHM Ib as being in the Verona codex, but Ia does not list them.

Chart 5. Evidence for *Ad Marcellam epistularum librum* (Ep. 23-29, 32, 34, 37-38, 40-44, 46) within the main early Jerome mss.

Ms.	date	# found	letters contained
Epinal 68	mid 8	6	123- 26-27-28-37-25 -3- -45- 25-27-28-29 -39- ³⁰
Köln 35	8-9	7	-57- 38-39-23-24 -64- 27-40 -45- -11- 25 -76- -117- 44 -121-
Karlsruhe 105	8-9	8	-57- 38-39-23-24 -64- 27-40 -45- -77- 25 -76- -117- 44 -83- -66- 43 -74-
Berlin 17	9	9	-121- 25-41-42-27-29-34-32-28 -75- -120- 46 -130-
Paris 1869	9	16	-59- 40-26-25-41-42-27-44-43-46-38-29-34-32-30-28 -60- -77- 23-24 -1-
Stuttgart HB.VII.12	mid 9	16	-59- 40-26-41-25-42-27-38-23-24-44 -11- 43-46-29-34-32-30-28 -45-
Zurich Rh. 41	9-10	10	-57- 38-39-23-24 -64- 27-40 -45- -11- 25 -76- -117- 44 -121- -72- 26 -122- -10- 43-46 .
Zurich Rh. 49	9-10	15	-59- 40-26-41-25-42-27-38-23-24-44 -11- 43-29-34-32-30-28 -123- -97.
Vat. lat 355-356	10	15	-59- 40-37-25-41-42-27-44-43-38-29-34-32-30-28 -60- -77- 23-24 -1-

³⁰According to BHM, Ep. 25, 27 and 28 appear twice.

Except for *Ep.* 46 which is contained in two manuscripts, the only pre-9th and early 9th c. manuscripts that contain any of the Marcella letters are Epinal 68, Köln 35, and Karlsruhe 105 with from six to eight of the letters. Numerous 9th c. manuscripts have some of the seventeen letters, but only three have even half of them, and even by the beginning of the 10th c. the largest collections are still lacking two of the group. While the manuscripts show the Marcella letters being grouped together within the collections at an earlier date than the *ad diuersos* group, this is only to be expected due to the common addressee. There still is no evidence that the entire collection circulated as a group from the time of Jerome.

D. *Ep.* 19 and 20 in the manuscript tradition.

Where do 19 and 20 enter the ms. tradition? Chart 6 lists the 18 earliest extant manuscripts with one or both of these letters. The three 6-7th c. manuscripts cited earlier do not contain them. Of the three large collections from about AD 800, Escorial has neither, Köln 35 has *Ep.* 20, and the Karlsruhe manuscript had both 19 and 20, but separated by 3 other letters. Vienna 690 also has both letters, but 19 was inserted into the manuscript at a later date on a small strip of parchment sewed into the codex before *Ep.* 20. Of the eight collections that can definitely be dated to the 9th century, one has only *Ep.* 19, and five had only *Ep.* 20 (if we include Laud. misc. 252 which, like Vienna 690, had 19 inserted later). Only Köln 60 and Paris 12163 had both, and only the former had them following one another in order. Even in the tenth century, when both letters more regularly appear in the manuscripts, they still appear as a pair only half the time. The manuscript evidence does not give overwhelming support to any theory of *Ep.* 19 and 20 circulating as a "pair" from late antiquity on.

While one must be careful not to over-interpret codicological evidence such as the foregoing, several points seem quite clear. First of all, there is little evidence that the first 45 or 46 of Jerome's letters were published during the author's lifetime as one corpus or several. If he did oversee the production of an official copy, and that is not directly stated in the evidence, that copy seems to have been lost at an early date. Rather, Jerome's correspondence seems to have been gradually gathered into a corpus between the eighth and tenth centuries and never did assume a single shape until modern editions. Secondly, while *Ep.* 20 circulated as widely as most

other letters, it was rarely preceded by *Ep.* 19, as one might have expected. Since *Ep.* 20 is clearly referred to in *De viris*, this evidence, as the other manuscript evidence given above, speaks against any early formal publication by Jerome of letters 1-46.

Chart 6. Appearance of *Ep.* 19 and 20 in the main early Jerome mss.

Ms.	date	
Karlsruhe 105	8-9	-107-2- 20 -15-16-18b-35- 19 -36-21-14
Köln 35	8-9	18a- 20 -15-16-18b-21-14-
Vienna Lat. 690	8-9	-18a-[19 inserted later]- 20 -15-16-18b-21-14-52-53-
Berlin 17	9	35- 19 -36-111-126-
Karlsruhe 197	9	18a- 20 -15-16-18b-1-83-
Köln 60	9	35-36- 19-20 -18a-21-30-
Paris 1868	9	-54-18a- 20 -21-55-40-
Paris 1870	9, 11	35-36-62- 20 -15-16-18b-18a-21-101-
Paris 12163	9	35- 19 -36-56-67- -134-62- 20 -15-16-18b-18a-21-110-
Paris 14805	9	125-14-52-30- 20
Oxford Laud. misc. 252	late 9	-18a- 20 -[19 inserted later]-15-16-18b-21-14-
Tours 279	early 10	18a-53-58-62-84-?- 20 -21-59-55-
Copenhagen S.28	9-10	-127-36- 20 -18b
Zurich Rh. 41	9-10	18- 19-20 -15-16-18b-21-14-52-
Vat. lat. 355-356	10	35- 19 -36-62- 20 -15-16-18b-21-101-
Paris 1871	10	25- 19 -36-62- 20 -15-16-18b-18a-21-101-
Munich Clm 3730	10-11	35-36-15-16- 19-20 -21-101-102-
Vat. lat. 341	10-11	36-62- 20 -15-16-18-17-21-101-102-103

Conclusion

The internal and external evidence do not supply conclusive evidence on the date of either *Ep.* 19 or 20. A date of 383-384 still seems very likely for *Ep.* 20. The only reason to suspect that *Ep.* 19 was not the *raison d'etre* for 20 is the fact that the two letters did not circulate as a pair until quite late in the manuscript tradition. However, the letter is so short that it really adds nothing to *Ep.* 20. It may not have seemed worth copying. In that case it might well have been omitted by scribes. Later, when an active search was made to gather all of Jerome's correspondence, it may have been found and re-admitted to the collection, initially being included in several places not preceding *Ep.* 20.

There is seems no discernable reason that *Ep.* 19 should have been forged by Jerome at a later date, as Nautin argued for *Ep.* 35. One possibility is that Damasus had orally asked for an explanation of *hosanna* and later, when circulating the work, Jerome composed a brief summary of the request to indicate the origin of his tract. If so, however, one would have expected the two to circulate together from the beginning.

It is just as likely, however, that *Ep.* 19 is from the pen of Damasus and did occasion *Ep.* 20 in response. This then would have been the only genuine exchange between the two men. After Damasus' death, it provided Jerome with the idea for composing *Ep.* 35 as a preface to his *Ep.* 36.

And these, in turn, provided the inspiration for many later pairs of forgeries. Whether by Damasus or Jerome, *Ep.* 19 truly was the "mother" of all later Damasus-Jerome forgeries.

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