

THE USE OF γράφω AND ITS COMPOUNDS IN EUSEBIUS

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I. INTRODUCTION

In his article "Who Wrote Hebrews? The External and Internal Evidence Reconsidered," David Alan Black advances the view that Origen, as cited in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* (hereafter *HE*), believed Paul was the author of Hebrews. Acknowledging that the style of Hebrews differs significantly from the Pauline epistles, Origen writes that only God knows who functioned as Paul's amanuensis: it may have been Clement, or it may have been Luke. Black's understanding of Origen's view has recently come under fire. Alan Mitchell writes:

Black's suggestion that Eusebius' agnosticism over the authorship of Hebrews refers only to someone who acted as Paul's amanuensis is . . . complicated by the fact that there are clear instances in Eusebius where the verb *graphein*, "to write," refers both to authorship and to actual penning (*Church History* 2.13.2; 2.17.16, 23; 2.22.6; 3.4.2; 3.4.7; 3.36.6, 11; 3.39.15; 4.7.9; 4.8.3, 5; 4.18.8). There are also places in the *Church History* where Eusebius prefers a compound of *graphein*, when he refers to actual writing alone (2.5.6; 2.8.1; 2.13.5; 2.16.1; 2.17.22; 2.22.6; 2.23.20; 3.3.3; 3.24.7; 3.38.2; 4.7.15). Black's distinction between author and amanuensis cannot be maintained in light of this evidence.¹

The purpose of this article is not to prove the Pauline authorship of Hebrews, or to prove Black's theory that Origen distinguishes between author and amanuensis. Rather, the purpose of this article is to explore Mitchell's thesis. Does Eusebius use γράφω (*graphō*) when referring both to author and to penman and a compound form of the word when focusing on actual writing alone? Or is the semantic range of these words broader than Mitchell's assessment allows? The results of this study will demonstrate that the semantic range of γράφω (*graphō*) is capable of functioning in accordance with Black's thesis, and that Eusebius exhibits no clear preference when denoting the act of writing alone.

II. γράφω

The semantic range of the Greek word γράφω (*graphō*) has a greater flexibility than Mitchell's brief analysis allows. Bauer Danker Arndt and Gingrich's (BDAG) lexicon, *A Greek - English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, offers two basic definitions in its entry for γράφω (*graphō*): "to inscribe characters on a surface" and "to express thought in writing." Mitchell's citations only include instances where the author and the act of penning are conceived as a singular and indivisible act. Though there are certainly instances where this nuance holds true, this is not always the case. Eusebius' use of the uncompounded form of γράφω (*graphō*) includes instances where 1) the author and penman are not distinguished; 2) the author is in view though the penman is different; and 3) the penman is in view though the author is different.² Let us turn to some examples of each nuance.

¹ Alan Mitchell, *Hebrews*, Sacra Pagina, (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007), 3-4.

² These are not the only nuances present in Eusebius' use of γράφω (*graphō*). Eusebius regularly uses the perfect passive form of the word γέγραπται (*gegraptai*, "it has been written") as a formulaic introduction of Scripture (*HE* 1.2.12; 1.13.10; 2.23.15; 3.39.14). The three uses listed above are the most pertinent to our discussion.

1. *The author and penman are not distinguished.* Mitchell lists thirteen instances "where the verb *graphein*, 'to write,' refers both to authorship and to actual penning (*Church History* 2.13.2; 2.17.16, 23; 2.22.6; 3.4.2; 3.4.7; 3.36.6, 11; 3.39.15; 4.7.9; 4.8.3, 5; 4.18.8)."³ An example from Mitchell's citations should make this usage evident: *HE* 4.8.3 says, "And he [Justin] indicates this time in the Apology to Antonine γράφω (*graphōn*, "writing") thus" There is no inherent distinction between the author of the Apology and its penman. Of Mitchell's thirteen citations, eight do support his position when pressed under closer scrutiny.⁴ In these eight instances, Eusebius introduces the works of Justin Martyr in *HE* 2.13.2; 4.8.3, 5; 4.18.8, the works of Philo in 2.17.16 [sic],⁵ 23, the work of Irenaeus in 4.7.9, and Polycarp in 3.36.6, using γράφω (*graphō*). We could add to Mitchell's citations more instances where Eusebius uses γράφω (*graphō*) in this manner: he also cites the works of Justin Martyr in 4.7.3, 5; 4.11.8, Philo in 2.6.1; 2.17.13, 24; 2.18.8, and Irenaeus in 3.18.2; 4.7.9; 4.10.1; 4.29.1. This use of γράφω (*graphō*) is the dominant way Eusebius introduces a citation from another author.

2. *The author is in view though the penman is distinguished.* This use of γράφω (*graphō*), though similar in nature to the previous usage, has one very important difference: the author of the work cited by Eusebius used an amanuensis. Three of Mitchell's citations and all instances where Eusebius refers to the works of Origen fall into this category. Let us look at some examples below:

- *HE* 3.4.2 says, "It is clear from what we have said confessing his epistle [as undisputed], in which [Peter] γράφει (*graphei*, "writes") to those who are from the Hebrews in the dispersion from Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." Eusebius' reference is to Peter's first epistle wherein we find one of the clear instances of a New Testament author's use of an amanuensis. 1 Peter 5:12 says, "By [the hand of] Silvanus, the faithful brother as I consider him to be, I briefly ἔγραψα (*egrapsa*, "wrote") to you"
- *HE* 3.4.7: "And they say how Paul was accustomed to remember the Gospel according to him [Luke] whenever γράφω (*graphōn*, "writing") as if a certain Gospel is of his own, he says, κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου (*kata to euangelion mou*, "according to my Gospel")." This phrase occurs in Romans 2:16 and Romans 16:25. It is a well-known fact that Paul uses Tertius as his amanuensis when he wrote the epistle to the Romans: "I, Tertius, ὁ γράψας (*ho grapsas*, "the one who wrote") this letter, greet you in the Lord" (Rom. 16:22).
- *HE* 3.36.11: "And the same man [Ignatius] γράφω (*graphōn*, "writing") to the Smyrnaeans . . . used the following words concerning Christ" Here Eusebius cites Ignatius' epistle *To the Smyrnaeans*. Though Ignatius is the author of the letter, the penman is Burrhus: ". . . γράφω (*graphō*, "I am writing") to you through Burrhus" (Ign. *Smyrn.* 12:1).
- Finally, all instances where Eusebius uses γράφω (*graphō*) to introduce the words of Origen refer only to the act of authoring a text and not to the physical act of penning its words (cf. *HE* 6.14.10; 6.19.9; 6.24.3; 6.25.3; 6.36.4). Eusebius' comments in *HE* 6.23.2 provide justification for this position: "For he had more than seven amanuenses to whom he dictated, who replaced one another at the appointed times."⁶ That Eusebius regularly uses γράφω

³ Alan Mitchell, *Hebrews*, Sacra Pagina, 3-4.

⁴ The five citations not included in this section will be discussed in due course.

⁵ This citation should be 2.17.15 and not 2.17.16.

⁶ Within the context of *HE* 6.23.2 Ambrose furnished the requisite expenses for the employ of these stenographers in the writing of Origen's commentaries. Origen's epistle to Africanus, however, demonstrates that he used an amanuensis to pen more than his commentaries. *Origen to Africanus* 15 says, "My lord and dear brother Ambrosius, who has written at my dictation, and has, in looking over corrected as he pleased, salutes you."

(*graphō*) acknowledging Origen's use of stenographers is clear evidence that the semantic range of the word is capable of encompassing the concept of an author who has not penned his own work.

3. *The penman is in view though the author is different.* The final use of γράφω (*graphō*) in *HE* refers to a penman who writes down what is dictated by an author. *HE* 3.39.15 offers two clear instances where the word is used to describe the work of a penman:

And the presbyter said this, 'Mark, being the interpreter of Peter, in as much as he remembered, ἔγραψεν (*egrapsen*, "wrote") accurately, though not in order, the things which had been said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord, nor followed him, but later, as I said, [he followed] Peter, who made his teaching according to the needs [of his hearers], but not as to make an orderly account of the words of the Lord, so that Mark did not err γράψας (*grapsas*, "writing") as he remembered. For he was careful of one thing, that he not omit the things he heard, or state anything falsely in them.

Contra Mitchell, who argues that both uses of γράφω (*graphō*) refer to author and penman, the context clearly reveals that Mark's work is that of an amanuensis. He followed Peter around recording the words and actions of Jesus as preached by Peter. The result of Mark's note-taking was the accurate but unordered Gospel that we call Mark.⁷

Our analysis of γράφω (*graphō*) in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* demonstrates that the word's semantic range includes the act of authoring and/or penning a text. How, then, does γράφω (*graphō*) relate to its various compound forms? Do these forms specify the act of penning a text in ways that γράφω (*graphō*) does not? Does Eusebius prefer these forms to γράφω (*graphō*) when denoting the physical act of writing? We now turn to address Mitchell's thesis that "Eusebius prefers a compound of *graphein*, when he refers to actual writing alone."⁸

III. COMPOUND FORMS OF γράφω

Mitchell lists five compound forms of γράφω that he believes Eusebius prefers when his focus is on the act of penning a document. These forms are συγγράφω (*sungraphō*), ὑπογράφω (*hupographō*), ἀναγράφω (*anagraphō*), περιγράφω (*perigraphō*), and ἐγγράφω (*engraphō*). Below, we will take a look at how these compound words are used within Eusebius' *HE* and demonstrate that Eusebius regularly uses these words synonymously with γράφω (*anagraphō*).

Definition and Use

- συγγράφω (*sungraphō*) appears eleven times in *HE* with the following nuances: the act of writing (2.16.1), recording history (3.10.3; 3.10.8; 3.24.6), composing a work (3.10.7; 4.1.0; 4.27.1; 4.30.2; 5.16.3); and *pass.* the things which were written (5.27.1).
- ὑπογράφω (*hupographō*): Eusebius uses ὑπογράφω (*hupographō*) four times in his work. In two instances the word indicates how Moses and Daniel wrote under the inspiration of the Spirit or took down the dictation of the Spirit (1.2.4; 1.2.24). No discernible difference exists

⁷ *HE* 3.39.15 is a quotation from the presbyter and does not contain the actual words of Eusebius. Within the context of this discussion, however, this should be no cause for alarm. Mitchell bases his argument on the assumption that *Origen* could not have referred to an amanuensis because *Eusebius* prefers a compound form of γράφω (*graphō*) when denoting the physical act of writing. If Mitchell's assumption is allowed to stand, then anything written in Eusebius' *HE* is relevant to the discussion.

⁸ Alan Mitchell, *Hebrews*, Sacra Pagina, 4.

between γράφω (*graphō*) and ὑπογράφω (*hupographō*) in *HE* 2.13.5; 5.7.1 (cf. 5.7.1 with 5.7.8).

- ἀναγράφω (*anagraphō*) occurs eighteen times in *HE*: *pass.* that which is recorded or written (1.2.10; 1.11.3; 5.0.4; 5.2.1; 7.24.4; 8.13.7); of a historian recording events (1.9.1; 2.7.1; 17.22; 2.22.7; 3.4.10; 3.30.2; 5.13.1; 6.32.3; 8.13.6); and to write down (6.14.6).
- περιγράφω (*perigraphō*), occurring six times, delimits a timeframe covered in a work (2.22.6; 6.6.1; 6.22.1; 6.32.32); or to trace out (8.1.0; 8.8.12).
- ἐγγράφω (*engraphō*) appears four times with these two nuances: to inscribe (6.6.1); or to put into writing (5.28.17; 7.25.23; 9.1.6)

The closest we come to finding a compound form of γράφω (*graphō*) that *predominately* focuses on the act of writing alone is with the words ὑπογράφω (*hupographō*) and ἐγγράφω (*engraphō*).⁹ Other than the two instances where Moses and Daniel write under the inspiration of the Spirit, however, ὑπογράφω (*hupographō*) does not bear out that nuance. *HE* 6.6.1, where Paul omits the inscription of his name in the book of Hebrews, is the closest ἐγγράφω (*engraphō*) comes to matching Mitchell's thesis. The remaining three uses in *HE* carry the connotation of expressing thought in writing. In no way does this eliminate the nuance of "writing down" from the semantic range of the compound forms of γράφω (*graphō*). It is apparent, however, that the context in which these words occur do not, with any degree of frequency, explicitly signify this nuance to the reader.

Semantic overlap

Semantic overlap occurs when the range of meaning that one word possesses overlaps, or shares similarities, with the range of meaning of another word (i.e. "to cut" and "to sever" or "to write" and "to author"). While each word retains its unique connotation, authors have the freedom to use them interchangeably in certain contexts. Eusebius does exactly this in the examples below.

συγγράφω (*sungraphō*) and γράφω (*graphō*):

- *HE* 2.16.1: "And they said that this Mark was the first to journey to Egypt proclaiming the Gospel which συνεγράψατο (*sunegrapsato*, "he had written")" According to tradition, Mark's work was not that of an author but a penman. He faithfully, and without error, wrote down Peter's lectures, which served as the basis of his Gospel (*HE* 3.39.15). This fact seems to lend support to Mitchell's contention that Eusebius prefers a compound form of γράφω (*graphō*) when he speaks of the physical act of writing. In *HE* 3.39.15, however, Eusebius uses γράφω (*graphō*) in order to describe the same act.
- *HE* 3.10.3-4: "And from the death of Moses until the death of Artaxerxes . . . the prophets after Moses συνέγραψαν (*sunegrapsan*, "recorded") in thirteen books the things that were done during their time And from Artaxerxes until our time, all events γέγραπται (*gegraptai*, "have been written"), but they are not worthy of the same confidence which is reserved for those accounts which came before them, because there was not a precise succession of prophets." In this passage, both συγγράφω (*sungraphō*) and γράφω (*graphō*) are used to describe the same activity in the same context. Eusebius clearly

⁹ Eusebius' use of συγγράφω (*sungraphō*) in *HE* 2.16.1 and ἀναγράφω (*anagraphō*) in 6.14.6 are the only exceptions. These two uses explicitly refer to the act of writing down. They have been excluded at this juncture as they will be discussed within the section "semantic overlap."

switches between the two forms for the purpose of lexical variance. This is made possible due to the fact that the two words share a similar semantic domain.

ἀναγράφω (*anagraphō*) and γράφω (*graphō*):

- HE 5.13.1: ". . . Tatian, whom we formerly came to know, composed many books. Along with many others, he published one against the heresies of Marcion, which he claims was divided into many opinions during his time, ἀναγράφων (*anagraphōn*, "writing") with accuracy he disputed the falsehoods thought up by each of these. Hear him, therefore, γράφοντος (*graphontos*, "writing") these things." Again, we find Eusebius using γράφω (*graphō*) and a compound form within the same context with little to no variance in meaning.
- HE 6.14.6: "And the Gospel according to Mark had this occasion. When Peter preached the word publicly and declared the Gospel by the Spirit, many who were present encouraged Mark, who followed Peter for a long time and remembered the things he had said, ἀναγράψαι (*anagrapσαι*, "to record") the things which Peter said." Here we have a third reference to the tradition that Mark, remembering Peter's words, penned the Gospel that bears his name. Eusebius describes Mark's activity with the verbs συγγράφω (*sungraphō*; HE 2.16.1), γράφω (*graphō*; HE 3.39.15 [2x]), and now ἀναγράφω (*anagraphō*; HE 6.14.6). Mark's work as penman remains unchanged throughout these passages; Eusebius simply uses three words that are capable of being used as synonyms to describe the same activity (cf. HE 2.17.22-23).

περιγράφω (*perigraphō*) and γράφω (*graphō*):

HE 2.22.6: "Now, then, in his second epistle to Timothy, it is clear that only Luke was present with him γράφοντι (*graphonti*, "when he wrote"), but at his first defense, not even him. During this time it is probable that Luke περιέγραψε (*periegrapse*, "wrote") the Acts of the Apostles in that place, narrating the history until when he was with Paul." Mitchell cites HE 2.22.6 as support for his theory that γράφω (*graphō*) refers to both author and penman, and he uses the same citation as evidence that a compound form, περιγράφω (*perigraphō*) in this instance, focuses on the act of writing alone. As we have seen above, Eusebius' primary use of περιγράφω (*perigraphō*) delineates the timeframe covered in that writer's work. Luke narrates the history of the Acts of the Apostles up until the point when he was with Paul. Herein lies the only difference between Luke's act of composition and Paul's.

ἐγγράφω (*engraphō*) and γράφω (*graphō*):

Eusebius' use of ἐγγράφω (*engraphō*) and γράφω (*graphō*) cannot be distinguished in HE 5.28.17-18. He charges those of Asclepiades, Theodotus, Hermophilus, and Apollonides with the crime of altering the words of Scripture. They have "diligently ἐγγεγράφθαι (*eggegraphthai*, "inscribed") the corrections, as they call them, that is, corruptions . . ." and cannot deny this charge because "γεγραμμένα (*gegrammena*, "they have been written") by their own hand."

Mitchell's Remaining Uses

Mitchell cites five other occurrences where a compounded form of γράφω* (*graph**) appears in Eusebius (2.8.1; 2.23.20; 3.3.3; 3.38.2; 4.7.15). In no way, however, can these references support his position. Eusebius uses the noun συγγράφεις (*sungrapheus*) in HE 2.8.1 and 3.3.3. In both instances, the word bears the meaning, "historian." The συγγράφεις (*sungrapheus*, "historians") of HE 2.8.1 παρέδωσαν (*paredosan*, "handed down") their histories.

The ecclesiastical historians in *HE* 3.3.3 κέχρηνται (*kechrēntai*, "made use") of the disputed writings from time to time. Eusebius' focus is on the work of the historians, not on whether or not these historians penned their compositions.

Eusebius uses the adverb ἐγγράφως (*engraphōs*, "in written form") in the remaining three citations: "Josephus does not hesitate to testify to this *in written form* . . ." (2.23.20); "For Paul communicated to the Hebrews *in written form* through his native tongue . . ." (3.38.2); and "Nevertheless, in those times the truth again called forth many champions who fought in its defense against the godless heresies, refuting them not only with oral arguments, but also with arguments *in written form* . . ." (4.7.15). There is no indication in Eusebius' text as to whether Josephus, Paul, and the champions of orthodoxy authored and/or penned that which is recorded *in written form*. Eusebius only cares to relate that the material has been passed down *in written form*, not how it came to be inscribed.

IV. CONCLUSION

Navigating Eusebius' use of γράφω (*graphō*) and its compounds is a journey fraught with hardships. Mitchell's shortest path is appealing. There are no loose ends: Eusebius uses γράφω (*graphō*) when he has both author and penman in mind; he uses a compound form when the act of writing is in view. Therefore, according to Mitchell, it is unlikely that Origen had an amanuensis in mind when he said, "Only God knows who wrote the book of Hebrews." But our study demonstrates that γράφω (*graphō*) has a greater semantic range allowing for the following uses: 1) the author and penman are not distinguished; 2) the author is in view though the penman is different; and 3) the penman is in view though the author is different. Furthermore, a thorough analysis of *Ecclesiastical History* points to the fact that each compound form of γράφω (*graphō*) is capable of expressing a certain nuance not inherent in its uncompounded form. This nuance, however, is not as Mitchell contends. The focus is rarely on the act of penning a document; it is on the type of composition under consideration (put in official record, record history, compose a work, delimit a timeframe covered in a work, trace out, or put into writing). Finally, γράφω (*graphō*) and its compound forms share a greater degree of semantic overlap than Mitchell's theory permits. Origen's words, therefore, must be interpreted within the immediate context of the quotation under consideration and in light of his unequivocal commitment to Pauline authorship elsewhere.