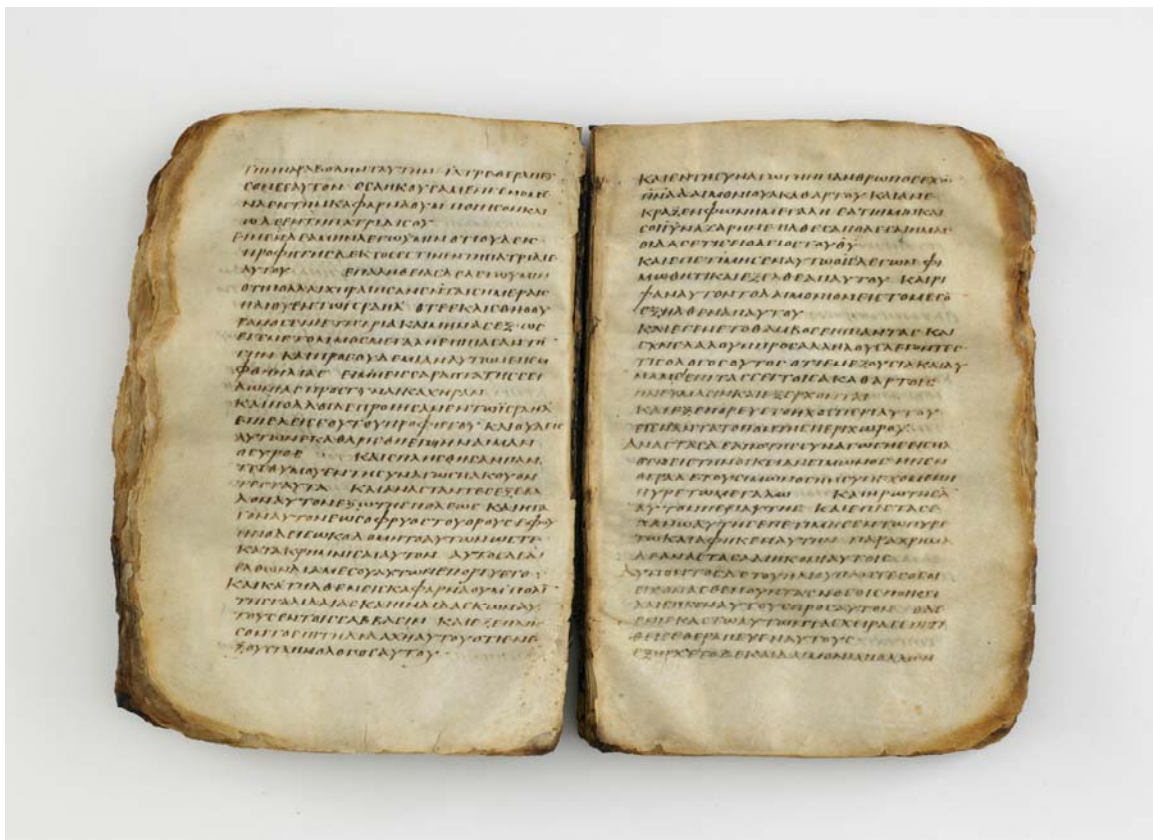


*The Experience of Scholars and the Public  
at  
In the Beginning: Bibles Before the Year 1000*

**The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery**



Smithsonian Institution

**Office of Policy and Analysis  
July 2007**

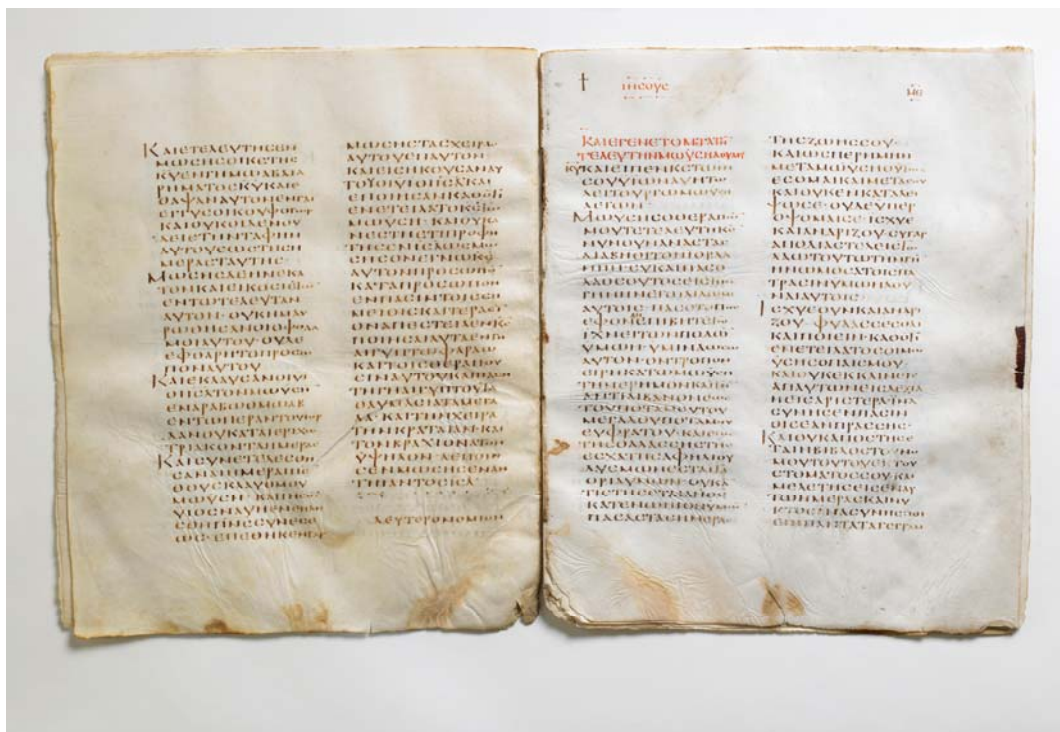
**Picture credits:** **Front cover**, Washington Ms. III - The Four Gospels (Codex Washingtonensis), Egypt, late 4th - early 5th century, bound manuscript; ink on parchment, 20.8 x 14.3 cm, Freer Gallery of Art, F1906.274; **Page ii**: Washington Ms. I - Deuteronomy and Joshua (Codex Washingtonensis), Egypt, early 5th century, bound manuscript, ink on parchment, 30.6 x 25.8 cm, Freer Gallery of Art; **Page iv**: Codex Aureus Holmiensis, Siglum: Sabatier aur, mid-8th century folio; parchment, 39.5 x 31.4 cm, The National Library of Sweden, Kungl. Biblioteket, ELS2006.3.25; **Page viii**, Greek/Arabic Diglot of the Psalms and Odes, 8th - 9th century, quire of 8 leaves (ff. 35-42), 20.5 x 15.6 cm, script is majuscule Greek and pointed Kufic Arabic; language Greek and Latin, Holy Monastery of St. Catherine at Mt Sinai, ELS2006.3.68; **Page 6**: Karaite Bible 10th century, bound manuscript, chartac (1900 cat says paper), 22.5 x 17.5 cm, The British Library, ELS2006.3.37; **Page 18**: Harleianus, Siglum: Z, Italy, 6th century, bound manuscript; parchment, 17.7 x 12 cm, ELS2006.3.20; **Page 20**: Codex Aureus Holmiensis, Siglum: Sabatier aur, mid-8th Century, unbound folio, parchment, 39.5 x 31.4 cm, The National Library of Sweden, Kungl. Biblioteket, ELS2006.3.64; and **Back cover**: book cover with a cross flanked by cypress trees, from the "Sion Treasure," Istanbul, Turkey, mid- 6th century, silver and gilding, 37.2 x 30 cm, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC, ELS2006.3.51.1.

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## *Preface*

The Office of Policy and Analysis (OP&A) was pleased to undertake this study of *In the Beginning: Bibles Before the Year 1000* for the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. The excitement that preceded the exhibition's opening was matched by the enthusiasm of visitors to the exhibition. Between October 2006 and January 2007, scholars came to Washington in advance of scheduled conferences, and the public lined up – with disregard to inclement weather – to marvel at the manuscripts. OP&A staff frequently encountered individuals who saw a survey in progress and volunteered to share their thoughts and opinions.

I would like to thank Arthur M. Sackler Gallery staff for their assistance and guidance in the course of the study. Theresa Esterlund, manager of in-gallery interpretation, and Ann C. Gunter, curator, were especially helpful. Within OP&A, Zahava D. Doering and David Karns were responsible for the data collection, analysis and report preparation. Andrew Pekarik analyzed the open-ended comments made by scholars. Other staff members – Whitney Watriss, James Smith and I – helped administer the survey. Special thanks are due the over 200 scholars and nearly 500 general visitors who participated in the study. Their insights and criticism were very much appreciated by the study team, which also enjoyed the richness, comprehensiveness and rarity of this extraordinary exhibition. Finally, I would like to thank Julian Raby, director of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, for presenting this exhibition and asking our office to think deeply about the roles of museums and the conveyance of these roles to both general and specialized publics.

*Carole M. P. Neves*  
*Director, Office of Policy and Analysis*





## *Executive Summary*

*In the Beginning: Bibles Before the Year 1000* presented rare, early bibles, many of which were on public view for the first time. Since the exhibition took place at the same time as several important conferences of Biblical scholars, it was well-attended by the academic community, as well as by local visitors who often came in groups. Because the subject matter is unusual for this museum, the exhibition drew a higher percentage of first-time visitors to the Sackler Gallery than is usual.

### **VISITORS**

The survey was conducted in two parts – one for scholars and one for the public. Some of the questions were identical to allow comparison. The scholars were mostly researchers and academics. Most of the public (76%) came to the museum specifically to see *In the Beginning*. About half of them (49%) had been to the Sackler Gallery before.

For the purposes of analysis, it was useful to divide the public audience into four groups:

- First-time visitors to the Sackler Gallery who did not come to the museum specifically to see *In the Beginning*. (First-time general visitors – 11% of all public visitors)
- First-time visitors to the Sackler Gallery who came specifically to see this exhibition. (First-time Bible visitors – 39%)
- Repeat visitors to the Sackler Gallery who did not come specifically for this exhibition. (Repeat general visitors – 13%)
- Repeat Sackler visitors who came again to see this exhibition. (Repeat Bible visitors – 37%)

These four groups first became aware of the exhibition by different means:

- First-time general visitors – after they entered the museum (97%)
- First-time Bible visitors – family, friends and acquaintances (43%)
- Repeat general visitors – no dominant source
- Repeat Bible visitors – newspapers and magazines (50%)

The public audience was demographically similar to other special exhibition audiences at the Sackler Gallery, except that it was older (average age 48) and had more females (62%).

Over half of the visitors were very interested in Bible manuscripts as religious documents (56%), historic documents (60%), or art objects (63%), but only about one third (36%) were interested in manuscripts in general. Repeat general visitors were less interested than the other three groups in all of these areas.

## **OVERALL ASSESSMENT**

Respondents were asked to rate the exhibition using a scale of Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent and Superior.

Scholars gave a slightly higher rating (48% Superior) than the public (40% Superior), although both of these scores are the second highest measured for a Sackler Gallery exhibition and among the highest Smithsonian-wide.

Visitors who had not come to see the exhibition gave the lowest scores (22% Superior), while those who came specifically to see it gave it a high score (45% Superior). Repeat Bible visitors gave the highest scores (61% Superior).

When asked how the exhibition compared to what they expected, three out of five visitors (58%) said that it was better than they expected.

## **INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT**

Scholars were asked about the exhibition in greater detail than the public. They were virtually unanimous in their opinion that the exhibition was an opportunity to see high quality manuscripts in one place (98%) and manuscripts they had not seen before (96%). When asked what was most significant about the exhibition, they discussed the age, rarity, quality and importance of the objects on view; the fact that they were brought together in one place; the variety of the texts; and the inclusion of historical and social context. They talked about the manuscripts both as texts and as objects.

The public was also impressed by the extraordinary collection (79%), and most engaged by seeing the historical development of the Bible (72%).

## **EXPERIENCES IN THE EXHIBITION**

The public indicated which experiences in the exhibition, from a set of seven, were very satisfying. Most (85%) selected *Seeing rare/valuable art objects*. Four out of five (79%) selected at least one learning experience (either *Gaining information/knowledge*, *Enriching my understanding* or *Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw*). Three out of five (57%) selected at least one emotional



experience as very satisfying (either *Being moved by beauty* or *Feeling a spiritual connection*). Repeat general visitors had many fewer very satisfying experiences than did the other visitor groups (on average about half as many as first-time general visitors).

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

Scholars voted for more information on historical context (60%), materials and technology of manuscript production (58%) and history of each manuscript (54%).

The public was most likely to want translations of important manuscripts (67%), information on historical context (63%), information on religious context (58%) and more photographs (52%). First-time general visitors were most likely to have asked for improvements.

### **CONCLUSION**

*In the Beginning* drew a new audience that was very pleased with what it found, especially the rare, important manuscripts and the opportunities to learn and understand more about the history of the Bible.

The exhibition is an example of the way that the Sackler audience – due to the broad range of subject matter and cultures that it encompasses – expands, sorts and re-sorts itself according to the topics presented in special exhibitions. This pattern is substantially different from the one found at the largest Smithsonian museums (and perhaps at the Freer Gallery), where the audience is dominated by general visitors.

ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΤΕΛΟΣ ΤΩ **هز هو ذ او ذ سعة**  
 ΠΑΙΔΙ ΚΥ ΤΩ ΔΑΔ **اعشر والة تسعة**  
 Α ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΤΩ **في اليهود الك في**  
 ΚΩ ΤΟΥ ΣΛΟΓΟΣ **تعا الوب حريك**  
 ΤΗΣ ΩΔΗΣ ΤΑΥ **اعداد كلهم**  
 ΤΗΣ ΕΗΗΜΕΡΑ **وحريك شاوول**  
 Η ΕΡΥΣΑ ΤΟΥΤΟ **واله**  
 ΚΣ ΕΧΥΡΟΣΤΙΑΝ **عاشما لله دكها**  
 Σ ΤΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΕΧΘ **اله ب والاس والروح القدس**  
 ΡΩΝ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ **واله واحده حبر اسما بس**  
 ΕΚ ΧΕΙΡΟΣ ΕΑΟΥΛ **احس**  
 ΚΑΙ ΕΙΠΕΝ **بادب جيلي**  
 ΑΓΑΠΗΣ ΩΣ ΕΚΕ **مرسد بطور سقا قارهدا**  
 Η ΕΧΥΣ ΜΟΥ **الوب تما في وحيا**  
 ΚΣ Τ ΕΡΕΩ ΜΑ **له و ختا في**  
 ΚΑΙ ΚΑΤΑΦΥ **اسما بسند بشخ منا دن فر شتم و ذيو**  
 ΓΗ ΜΟΥ. ΚΑΙ ΡΥ **مشتاق تضاع حاو بر في قلبه خستع**  
 ΣΤΗΣ ΜΟΥ **الاهي معني فا**  
 Ο ΘΣ ΜΟΥ ΒΟΗΘΟΣ **كطال ع**  
 ΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΕΛΠΙΩ **الفضائل والو في زمانه برع**  
 ΕΓΓΑΥΤΟΝ **عش المنز الوب بسلم حنايه**  
 ΥΠΕΡΑΣΠΙΣΤΗΣ **في الدين والباقي في القلاني**

## *Introduction*

*For me books are portals into past lives. And books of all things give you that “in” to the way people thought about things, sometimes even the way in which they felt about things, how they made things, the relationships of who actually starts the ball rolling on a commission, who are the people who actually pick up the quill pen and write or who pick up the brush and paint. And who are the people who are then actually receiving their work and how might it have impacted on their lives. So for me the book opens up the whole vast range of human activity and achievement.*

*The Bible, of course, is the best selling book of all time. And I think to actually have the excitement as a curator of bringing together materials from all around the world that actually show how something that to us now seems straightforward and iconic – “The Bible” – as if it's always been there, just as one thing, to actually see that it is the result of many, many different societies that have worked together, collaborated together, sometimes even conflicted with one another over the ages, and that gradually it's our perception that changes and that helps to bring the idea of an iconic thing, like the Bible, into creation.*

So began the audio tour, narrated by Michelle P. Brown, curator of *In the Beginning: Bibles Before the Year 1000* and professor of medieval manuscript studies at the University of London. The exhibition was on view at the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery from October 21, 2006 through January 7, 2007. The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the Freer Gallery of Art (FSG) organized the exhibition in association with the University of Oxford's Bodleian Library. It was planned to coincide with the 100th anniversary of Charles Lang Freer's gift of Asian and American art to the United States, now housed in the Freer Gallery of Art, which was built for the collection and was inspired by Biblical manuscripts in Freer's collection. The exhibition presented some of the earliest biblical artifacts in existence, including pages and fragments written in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Armenian, Ethiopian and Coptic – many on display for the first time in the United States. The Introduction to the exhibition's website tells us:

*The Bible has been called the best-selling book of all time, though the term itself comes from biblia, Greek for a collection of books. The Bible developed gradually, over many centuries, as the result of cultural interaction and exchange among many different societies. Over time, some texts were accepted as part of the canon of belief, while others*

*were excluded as apocryphal and heretical. Out of this rich diversity and cultural complexity emerged the modern Bible.*

*In the Beginning: Bibles Before the Year 1000 tells the story of this formative period. The exhibition brings together a rare assemblage of several important early Hebrew and Christian bibles – the first time many of these fragile treasures have been shown to the public. This exploration of the Bible's first thousand years also reveals the parallel development of the book – one of the world's great technological revolutions.*

*From fragile fragments of papyrus and humble early parchment codices to resplendent illuminated manuscripts, In the Beginning presents the physical evidence of the earliest versions of both Bible and book. Some of these manuscripts have remained in ancient monastic libraries or cathedral treasuries since they were written. Others have languished, concealed in desert caves, sealed up in long-forgotten rooms, or buried to await resurrection by archaeologists. Each has its own distinctive tale to tell.*

In the eleven weeks that the exhibition was on view, about 59,000 visits were made to *In the Beginning*<sup>1</sup> by individuals from all walks of life, including Sunday school classes escorted by parents and teachers from Havre de Grace (Maryland); a couple who had hiked in the Sinai and visited the Monastery of St. Catherine; regional and international tourists who happened to stumble upon the exhibition; and clergy and biblical scholars in Washington, DC for a two-day symposium that preceded the opening of the exhibition. Especially on weekends, lines of visitors waited patiently to enter the exhibition, which was generally filled to maximum capacity.

In order to capture this “happening,” the Director and staff of the FSG asked the Office of Policy and Analysis (OP&A) to conduct a study of visitors to the exhibition. This report presents the results.

## **APPROACH**

From the FSG's perspective, two audiences were of interest: the scholarly community, especially biblical scholars, and the public. In order to maximize the presence of scholars, the study was conducted between November 17 and December 1, 2006. During this period, two academic conferences were scheduled for the Washington, DC area. The first, the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, held sessions in the FSG Meyer Auditorium on November 17 and arranged for a special evening viewing of the exhibition on November 19, 2006; the second, the Dumbarton Oaks Symposium, was held at

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<sup>1</sup> A larger number of people visited the Freer and Sackler Galleries; not all of them went to *In the Beginning*.



the FSG Meyer Auditorium, December 1-3, 2006. Organizers of both conferences informed their membership of the exhibition. Given the media interest in the exhibition and positive reviews, it was also clear that the public would be in attendance.

Separate, interrelated questionnaires were developed, one for each audience type. While some of the questions were specifically designed for scholars or the public, a core set of questions was common to both. Also available for analysis were personal interviews with visitors. These took place as part of a separate assessment of the audio tour. Altogether, a total of 238 individuals were identified as scholars, and all but a few participated, for a cooperation rate of 95%. Among the public, 521 individuals were asked to participate, and 472 elected to do so (91%).

In the next section, we first introduce the visitors, followed by a discussion of their experiences. Where possible we make comparisons between scholars and the public and, within the latter, between specific subsets (first-time visitors compared to those who had visited FSG previously and visitors who came specifically to see the exhibition compared to those who did not). The appendices contain additional information: the questionnaires are in Appendix A, the frequency of response to the questionnaires are in Appendix B, and additional analysis on the use of didactic materials in Appendix C.

## *Visitors*

### **SCHOLARS**

Visitors exiting the exhibition were intercepted and asked if they were a member of the clergy or an individual who worked as an academic/researcher in Bible studies or related disciplines (e.g., medieval history) so that they could fill out the correct questionnaire. In many instances, identification was facilitated by conference tags or printed programs.

Eight of every ten (82%) scholars indicated that they lived in the United States. The remainder came from 17 different countries. Although gender and age were not asked, we observed that the scholars were overwhelmingly men and over age 50. About half of the scholars reported that they worked in institutions affiliated with religious denominations, and most (92%) indicated that they were researchers or academics rather than clergy (8%). Their specialties were quite diverse and included archaeology, ancient history, Buddhism, bible studies, Byzantine art, early Christianity, contemporary Christianity, Medieval history, various languages (Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, etc.), Old and/or New Testament, as well as paper conservation and library science.



Nearly two out of three (65%) scholars were visiting the Sackler Gallery for the first time, and another quarter were coming back after a lapse of more than a year. One in ten (10%), generally a local resident, was a regular visitor at the Sackler Gallery, having come at least once in the previous year.

## **PUBLIC**

While the scholars had all come to the FSG to view *In the Beginning*, public visits included those who had come specifically to see the exhibition (76%) and those who had encountered it while visiting for other reasons (24%).<sup>2</sup>

Unlike the scholars, the public was about evenly divided between those who were first-time visitors (51%) and repeat visitors (49%). The repeat visitors included those who were coming back after a lapse of more than a year (19%) and more recent visitors (30%). This percentage of first-time visitors is unusually high for a Sackler special exhibition (ordinarily about one third of visitors are new to the Sackler).

Looking at these two classifications jointly gives us four groups, as shown in Figure 1. The group that came specifically to see *In the Beginning* is equally divided among new and repeat visitors; similarly, those who did not come specifically to see the exhibition are equally divided between new and repeat visitors.

The visit to *In the Beginning* was a singular destination at the FSG for many visitors. Nearly half of those who came specifically to see it indicated that they had not seen, and would not see, other exhibitions at the FSG on that visit (45% for first-time visitors and 46% for repeat).

Among these four groups there are marked differences in how they first became aware of the exhibition.<sup>3</sup>

- First-time visitors who did not come specifically to see *In the Beginning* first learned about the exhibition after they entered the museum (97% of them first learned after they entered, compared to 5% of all other visitors who first learned that way).

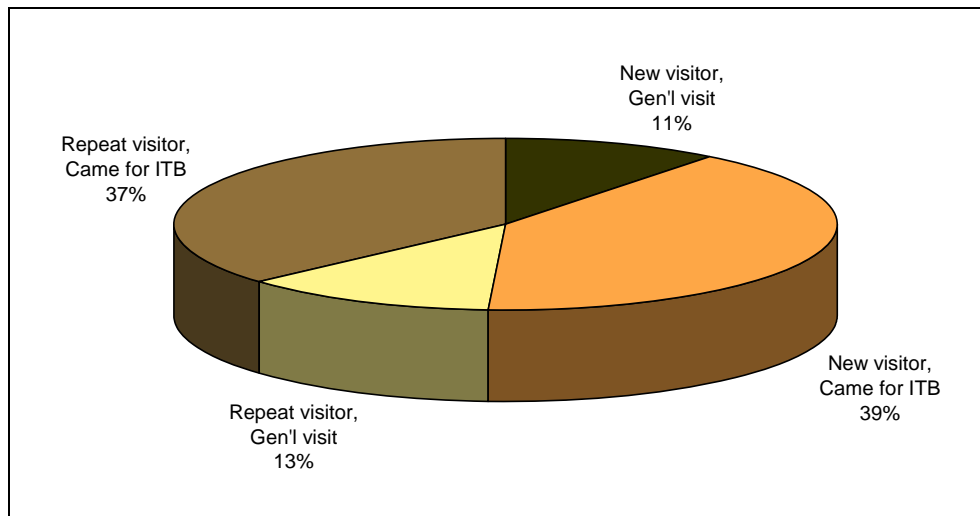
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<sup>2</sup> Since this survey was limited to the exhibition exit, these figures do not necessarily represent the distribution of visitors in FSG during the exhibition. At least a few casual visitors probably turned away rather than coping with the lines. Therefore, the percentage of destination visitors is biased upwards.

<sup>3</sup> In comments made in the margins of the questionnaire, some visitors also indicated that they saw advertisements in the Metro and on buses.

Figure 1

### Familiarity with FSG and Reason for Visit



- First-time visitors who came specifically to see the exhibition were most likely to have first learned of the exhibition from family, friends and acquaintances (43% of them compared to 17% of all other visitors).
- Repeat visitors who did not come specifically to see *In the Beginning* did not have a single dominant source of information. They mainly cited newspapers and magazines (30%), word-of-mouth (24%), banners (18%) and after they entered (18%).
- Repeat visitors who came to see the exhibition were most likely to have first learned about the exhibition through newspapers and magazines (50% of them, compared to 12% of all other visitors.)

Visiting this exhibition was a social experience, with three fifths (61%) of visitors coming in groups of three or more adults. The rest were about equally divided among adults coming alone, as couples, or with young people (12%, 12% and 15%, respectively). First-time visitors who came specifically for *In the Beginning* were most likely to come in groups of three or more adults (72%).

Unlike the scholars, almost all (98%) of the public visitors lived in the United States, with over half (52%) in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.

The public visitors were slightly older than in previously studied FSG audiences (median age of 51 and an average age of 48).<sup>4</sup> Strong age differences arise, however, when we consider why they are visiting:

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<sup>4</sup> Across all the survey studies done at the Sackler Gallery before this one, the average age of visitors is 45.

- Visitors who came to see *In the Beginning* were considerably older, with an average age of 53.
- General visitors (i.e., those who did not come to the museum to see the exhibition) were younger, with an average age of 37.<sup>5</sup>

Almost two in three visitors were women (62%). Compared to other FSG exhibitions, *In the Beginning* had a larger proportion of women among public visitors, primarily because women predominated among larger visit groups.<sup>6</sup>

In several other studies of FSG audiences, OP&A has asked about the visitors' interest in the subject matter. In this study, visitor interest in manuscripts in general and in manuscripts as religious, historic or art objects was asked. Figure 2 shows the results for the public.

**Figure 2**

### Interest of Public Visitors in Manuscripts

	Percent Very Interested
Manuscripts in general	36
Bible manuscripts as <i>religious</i> documents	56
Bible manuscripts as <i>historic</i> documents	60
Bible manuscripts as <i>art</i> objects	63

The visitor group least interested in manuscripts in general was repeat visitors who did not come specifically for *In the Beginning* (8% very interested). This group, however, was more interested in Bible manuscripts as *historic* objects (33% very interested) and as *art objects* (54% very interested).



<sup>5</sup> For all other studies at the Sackler, the difference is smaller, with an average age of 40 for general visitors and 48 for those coming to a specific exhibition.

<sup>6</sup> Across all the survey studies done at the Sackler Gallery before this one, the average percentage of females was 54%.

## Overall Assessment

*No other opportunity like this has ever been afforded to scholars or the public.* (Scholar visitor)

Over the past few years, studies conducted by OP&A at the Freer-Sackler Galleries indicated high levels of visitor satisfaction with its exhibitions. Visitors tend to rate the exhibitions very highly. Since OP&A has been using the same rating scale for several years, data across exhibitions are comparable. Ratings were collected with a single question (“How would you rate this exhibition of manuscripts, *In the Beginning?*”) and five response categories (Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent and Superior). Empirically, we find that Poor and Fair can be combined with Good, as they are infrequently used. Three related questions provide the context for the rating: experience with the Sackler Gallery, reason for the visit, and whether the exhibition met their expectations (i.e., it was not as good, it was about what they expected, or it was better).

### SCHOLARS

None of the scholars rated *In the Beginning* as Poor or Fair, and only seven percent rated it as Good. The rest were divided between Excellent (44%) and Superior (48%).<sup>7</sup> Scholars who were making a first visit to the Sackler Gallery rated the exhibition much the same way as those who were making repeat visits, while scholars who found it better than expected gave it the highest ratings (61% Superior).

### PUBLIC

Overall, the public rated *In the Beginning* slightly lower than the scholars. About one sixth rated it as Good, and the rest were equally divided between Excellent (41%) and Superior (40%). Visitors who did not come to the FSG specifically to see the exhibition, whether first-time or repeat visitors, rated it the lowest (22% Superior). First-time visitors who came specifically for the exhibition were somewhat more pleased (30% Superior). Overall, those who specifically came to see the exhibition gave it a much higher rating (45% Superior).<sup>8</sup> Most enthusiastic were the repeat visitors who came specifically to see *In the Beginning* (61% Superior).

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<sup>7</sup> The percentages do not add to 100% because of rounding.

<sup>8</sup> This is a common pattern in Sackler exhibitions. Across all the exhibitions surveyed before this one, the average rating for general visitors is 17% Superior, and the average rating for those who specifically came to see a particular exhibition is 42% Superior.

When asked to compare their experience and their expectations, a few members of the public indicated that *In the Beginning* was not as good as expected (5%). Another two fifths (37%) felt it met their expectations, and nearly three fifths (58%) felt it was better than expected. Visitors who had not come specifically to see it, both first-time and repeat visitors, were genuinely surprised. These two groups contained the highest percentage of visitors who felt that it was better than expected (73% and 66%, respectively.)

*In the Beginning* ranks second among FSG exhibitions for which ratings are available, as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

**Visitor Rating of Selected FSG Exhibitions, 2004-06**  
(in decreasing order of *Superior*)

Poor/Fair/Good	Rating Excellent	Superior	Exhibition Title and Date
7	41	52	<i>Hokusai</i> March 4 - May 14, 2006
19	41	40	<i>In the Beginning: Bibles Before the Year 1000</i> October 21, 2006 - January 7, 2007
11	54	35	<i>Style and Status: Imperial Costumes from Ottoman Turkey</i> October 29, 2005 - January 22, 2006
23	54	23	<i>Return of the Buddha: The Qingzhou Discoveries</i> March 20 - August 8, 2004
24	57	20	<i>Caravan Kingdoms: Yemen and the Ancient Incense Trade</i> June 26 - September 11, 2005
37	47	16	<i>Facing East: Portraits from Asia</i> July 1 - September 4, 2006
38	52	10	<i>Views of Chinese Art from the Indianapolis Museum of Art</i> September 18, 2004 - March 20, 2005

## *Interest and Engagement*

In addition to ratings, visitors were asked to indicate their interest in specific aspects of the exhibition. The question took two different forms, one for scholars and one for the public.

### **SCHOLARS**

The enthusiasm of the scholars for *In the Beginning* is evident in their responses to questions about what they found especially interesting, as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4

**Scholar Agreement with Statements about the Exhibition**  
(percent of scholars marking Yes)

<i>The opportunity to see these high quality manuscripts in one place</i>	98
<i>The opportunity to see manuscripts that I have not seen before</i>	96
<i>The presentation of the objects that highlighted their artistic aspects</i>	82
<i>The recognition given to the importance of biblical scholarship</i>	85
<i>The value of the exhibition to future generations of scholars</i>	80
<i>The opportunity to view the manuscripts presented as objects (rather than as texts)</i>	70

In order to allow scholars to elaborate on some of these statements, as well as express their opinions about other aspects of the exhibition, the questionnaire included several open-ended questions:

- *From your perspective, what was the most significant aspect of the exhibition?*
- *Was it important to assemble these high quality manuscripts in one place?*
- *Was it important to present the manuscripts as objects (rather than as texts)?*

Their answers are reported below by question.

**Question: From your perspective, what was the most significant aspect of the exhibition?**

**The selection of objects**

The most common answer to this question (from 61 scholars) was the selection of objects for display. In particular, respondents appreciated their **age, rarity, quality** and **importance**. Specific items singled out for praise included the Aleppo Codex, Codex Sinaiticus, Cairo Genizah, Chester Beatty Papyrii, Rabbula Gospel, Freer Codex, Cloromontanus and Dead Sea scroll. As one researcher specializing in the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament said, the exhibition was “a manuscript ‘dream team.’” The difficulty of assembling such fine examples was also appreciated – one scholar, a specialist in New Testament textual criticism, raved that it was “unbelievable [that] you could convince Bodleian and British Museum to participate.”

## Bringing the objects together in one place

This answer was given by 46 scholars. The advantages scholars noted in having these objects together were **convenient access** and **range of cultures and time** (as one scholar put it, *“encompassing vast time and geography”*). One scholar noted, *“I had seen many [of these] before, but had to travel overseas several times to do so,”* and another said,

*“Putting in one place material which would take YEARS to see otherwise.”*

Respondents also appreciated the display itself in conjunction with the assemblage:

*Being able to see all these important documents in one location with information on historical context.*

*The collection itself – seeing this many in one place and emphasis on text as icon.*

## History and variety of objects

Smaller numbers of scholars cited history (27) and the variety of texts (22) as the most significant aspect of the exhibition. With respect to history, scholars cited **preservation of texts**, **artistic development**, **place in history**, **social context** and **chronology**. One scholar of Syriac manuscripts noted, *“The broad historical coverage, showing development over time and showing the manuscripts as historical objects, not just texts.”* Another scholar described this as *“Putting sacred works in cultural/social/political/historical context.”* Yet another wrote, *“The opportunity to SEE the development of the textual tradition of biblical texts...the movement toward ornamentation of the word.”* The display of change over time seems to have played a major role in this reaction, as suggested in the comment, *“Presentation of development from scroll to codex to ‘icon.’”*

## Other comments

There were about 50 other responses that did not fall into these main categories. They included **seeing originals** (e.g., *“Being able to view originals of manuscripts I’ve only seen photocopies of before”*); **number of objects** (e.g., *“Lots of objects – no wall-size photos that often mask a deficiency of ‘meat’”*); **Bible as subject** (e.g., *“The importance of the Bible in the formation of the culture of many nations all over the world”*); and **exhibition themes** (e.g., *“The way that the process of rethinking and reusing the texts...is influenced by the process of production from the earliest period”* and *“The recognition of Christianity as a book [codex] rather than a scroll community”*).

**Question: Was it important to assemble these high quality manuscripts in one place?**

Many scholars noted that they had already discussed this in their response to the previous question. Others wrote about aspects already discussed, such as **access** (e.g., *"It's almost impossible to travel to all the places that are home to these manuscripts"*); **history** (e.g., *"Tracing the progression of the Biblical texts would not have been viable without this sort of gathering"*); and **variety** (e.g., *"It's an array hardly to be found in any one place – certainly not in North America"*).

Some scholars noted a benefit that went beyond these obvious points. As one scholar of the Talmud put it, *"The whole is much greater than the sum of the parts."* Being able to see these manuscripts all at once made it possible to see them in new ways (e.g., *"I have personally worked on numerous of these manuscripts and appreciated seeing them in context with others," "Putting together information helps one integrate previous pieces of knowledge" and "I've read about them for years, but to see them and group their relationship to each other gave extraordinary insight"*).

Several scholars experienced strong emotions. One noted that he had worked with facsimiles but had never had the privilege of seeing the original documents. When he thanked the interviewer, he had tears in his eyes.

Several also noted the importance of this exhibition for the **public**. *"No other opportunity like this has ever been afforded to scholars or the public"* and *"We need more exhibits of this kind and quality to educate the public about the Bible as a foundational document of the Western World."*

**Question: Was it important to present the manuscripts as objects (rather than as texts)?**

Scholars were divided on this question. Thirty of them felt that the manuscripts were obviously **both** objects and texts, e.g., *"The two are inseparable," "Both aspects are important," "I think both ways of viewing the manuscripts is [sic] both enjoyable and useful," and "These are manuscripts which ARE objects."*

Among those who emphasized the importance of the manuscripts as **texts**, the comments included: *"They are texts at heart," "But as object they take second place to the text," "It would be great to study the TEXTS!" and "Texts, by their nature, were never meant to be seen as objects."*

The comments of those scholars who emphasized their presentation as **objects**, included:

*The texts will be studied in books that are readily available. But the physical qualities of the objects are much less easily acquired.*  
*Understanding the artistic and technological aspects is important*  
*People are familiar with texts, but think nothing of their production and the great difficulty of such art.*  
*Seeing how they functioned as objects was enlightening.*  
*Yes, allows those of faith and non-faith to see how talent and dedication create works of beauty and inspiration.*

## **PUBLIC**

The public was also asked to express agreement or disagreement with a series of statements about the exhibition. As shown in Figure 5, the public picked up the extraordinary aspect of the exhibition – the mere assembly of the materials. The public was also more interested in the historical, rather than religious, development of the Bible.

**Figure 5**

### **Agreement of Public Visitors with Statements about the Exhibition (percent of public visitors marking Yes)**

<i>I saw an extraordinary collection of Biblical material never before assembled in one place</i>	79
<i>I was most engaged by seeing the historical development of the Bible</i>	72
<i>I was most engaged by seeing the religious development of the Bible</i>	33
<i>It is an exhibition for Biblical scholars and less for non-scholars</i>	13
<i>I was disappointed that it did not contain objects and artworks related to the manuscripts</i>	10
<i>I was disappointed to find that the exhibition dealt with only the Christian Bible</i>	7

Understandably, visitors who had come specifically to see *In the Beginning* were more likely to agree that the exhibition was an extraordinary collection and to be engaged by it. Those who did not come specifically for the exhibition, especially first-time visitors, were most disappointed that it did not contain objects and artworks (31%) and was restricted to the Christian Bible (17%).

## Experiences in the Exhibition

As in several other FSG exhibition studies, visitors were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with a list of specific experiences. In this study, they were asked: *How satisfying were the following experiences to you in this manuscript exhibition?* and given the following response options: *Not at all*, *Somewhat* and *Very Much*. The percentage of visitors indicating *Very Much* for each item is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6

### Experiences in the Exhibition, All General Public Visitors (percent reporting *Very Much*)

Seeing rare/valuable art objects	85
Gaining information/knowledge	62
Enriching my understanding	62
Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw	59
Being moved by beauty	49
Feeling a spiritual connection	41
Spending time with friends/family (accompanied visitors only)	33

Overall, and echoing what we have reported thus far, 85 percent of visitors recognized the uniqueness of the exhibition – the opportunity it provided to see rare/valuable art objects. Four out of five visitors (79%) reported at least one very satisfying learning experience (either *Gaining information/knowledge* or *Enriching my understanding* or *Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw*). Nearly three out of five visitors (57%) reported at least one very satisfying emotional experience (*Being moved by beauty* or *Feeling a spiritual connection*).

All four of the visitor groups described earlier (first or repeat, specific visit to *In the Beginning* or not) marked one of these experiences, *Spending time with friends/family*, at the same level.

Among first-time visitors, those who had come specifically to see the exhibition were more likely to be very satisfied by *Seeing rare/valuable art objects* (89% of those who came to see the exhibition compared to 70% of those who did not). For all other experiences there were no differences between first-time visitors who came to see the exhibition and first-time visitors who came for other reasons.



By contrast, among repeat visitors, there were differences with all of the experiences between those who came specifically to see the exhibition and those who did not. *Seeing rare/valuable art* was chosen less often by repeat visitors who came specifically to see *In the Beginning*. Across all the remaining experiences, repeat visitors who came to the museum for other reasons had far fewer very satisfying experiences, as shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 7**

**Experiences of Repeat Visitors in the Exhibition**  
(percent reporting *Very Much*)

<b>Came for the exhibition</b>	<b>Came for other reasons</b>	<b>Experience</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	
82	93	Seeing rare/valuable art
67	41	Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw
67	35	Gaining information/knowledge
67	20	Enriching my understanding
57	29	Being moved by beauty
34	12	Feeling a spiritual connection

The difference in experiences between repeat visitors who did not come to see the exhibition and all other visitors can be highlighted by comparing the average number of experiences (excluding *Spending time with friends/family*) that were marked “Very Much.” For repeat visitors who came to the museum for other reasons, the average number of experiences was 2.2 out of six. For all other visitors it was 3.8 out of six.<sup>9</sup>

## *Suggestions for Improvement*

Although Sackler exhibitions overall, like *In the Beginning*, are well-received, FSG continues to look for improvement. In these surveys, scholars and the public were asked to indicate what would have improved their visit to the exhibition. Results are shown in Figure 8.

The differences in the responses between scholars and the public reflect differences in skills, interest and training. The top-ranked items for the scholars

<sup>9</sup> The differences among the averages for the other three sub-groups are not statistically significant.

Figure 8

### Scholar and Public Visitor Suggestions for Improvement

<i>Scholars</i>		<i>Public</i>		<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>
<i>%</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Rank</i>	
60	1	63	2	More information on the historical context/environment
58	2	39	7	More information on the materials and technology of manuscript production
54	3	46	5	More information about the history of each manuscript
50	4	58	3	More information on the religious context/environment
48	5	67	1	Translations of important manuscripts
47	6	52	4	More photographs (e.g., people, places, churches, etc.)
39	7	45	6	Places to sit and discuss the manuscripts
31	8	29	8	More information about the organization of the exhibition (floor plans, signs, etc.)
21	9	19	9	Other (see below)

all indicate a desire for more information. The public first asked for translations and next for historical and religious context, followed by more photographs. (Differences among the public sub-groups are discussed below.)

### SCHOLARS

In addition to indicating preferences for improvement in the question discussed above, scholars added additional comments throughout the questionnaire. Most of the additional comments offered criticisms and suggestions for improvement. Issues included **information**, **continuity of text**, **lighting**, **design and labels**, **map**, **seating**, **magnifying glasses** and the **audio guide**.

#### Information

The largest number of remarks (36) related to the informational texts. Within this category, there was a desire for **translations** and/or transcriptions of pages on view, noting of **inaccuracies**, desire for **more contextual information** and a few **suggestions**. Sample comments on these matters are illustrative:

#### TRANSLATIONS

*It would be nice to have transcriptions and translations of each [visible page]  
If you point out common verses, translate or even translate titles*

## INACCURACIES

*Many inaccuracies in descriptions*

*Two Genesis manuscripts at the beginning of the exhibit seem to be reversed*

*There is a Bible in Latin from England labeled as one of the first Bibles written in English. A LATIN Bible rendered in English???*

*Glagolitic is NOT a language*

## MORE CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

*More background information would make it more accessible to the larger community*

*Any comments were well written but occasionally they left the reader hanging... such as indicating a manuscript cost 14 carats, but failing to indicate how much that would have equaled in 21<sup>st</sup> century dollars or the time required to earn 14 carats*

*More commentary on the evidence of scribal corrections on the manuscripts*

*More artifacts and pictures that illustrate the ways in which scribes worked and books were made*

## SUGGESTIONS

*Clarification as to where Codex Sinaiticus is, e.g., found in British Museum*

*[Provide] a printed text of ALL the legends [labels] throughout the exhibit for home study and review*

## Continuity

A few scholars felt that the exhibition could have done a better job of linking the objects: *"The display FAILED to convey the congruity of the New Testament text from the earliest texts to the current text"* and *"The COMMONALITIES are striking across the great range of geography. Sadly the texts emphasize differences."*

## Lighting

A few scholars had trouble with the lighting, although they realized the conservation problem: *"Better lighting! I know this is not easily done with old manuscripts, but it must be better!"* and *"Lighting is such that when people lean forward to read texts, their shadows obscure the lower descriptions."*

## Design and Labels

There were a few suggestions regarding label text size (*"Magnify [label] text to make it easier to see the text. Better lighting on the [label] text"*) and easier-to-find audio guide numbers (*"Put recording numbers large and high above item so it can be seen from a distance"*). One scholar referred to placement of label texts (*"It was not always clear which manuscript was being described. Descriptions were not directly under the manuscript described"*), and another would have liked a route through the exhibition (*"Signs to follow the exhibition in order"*).

## Maps

Several scholars suggested that the exhibition should have had some maps, in particular, *“An introductory chronology (like the ‘Bible Map’ in the exhibit books would be a helpful ‘freebie’”* and *“A chart of language areas.”*

## Seats

A few respondents would have liked places *“to sit and rest”* and *“to sit and discuss the manuscripts.”*

## Magnifying Glasses

One scholar suggested *“Hand-held magnifying glasses (as provided by St. Louis Art Museum) for illuminated manuscript exhibition.”*

## Audio Guide

A few scholars were critical of the audio guide, for example, *“The audio was not good! I stopped listening to it one-third of the way through...It was full of Britishisms... for instance when did Constantine extend religious freedom to his ‘kingdoms!’,”* *“Neither signage nor audio added to [the objects]”* and *“The signage and audio could have been better coordinated.”*

## Miscellaneous Suggestions

Other suggestions included: *“More manuscript traditions of Greek New Testament,”* *“More Arabic manuscripts,”* *“I missed seeing the Freer’s Armenian Toros Roslin manuscript,”* *“Where were the Coptic texts?”* *“Computerization – a chance to turn the Rabbula Gospels digitally to see its overall organization”* and *“A short film showing texts in worship would have helped contextualize.”*

## PUBLIC

As we saw earlier, categorizing visitors’ familiarity with the Sackler Gallery (new vs. repeat visitor) and the reason for their visit (*In the Beginning* or another reason) reveals differences. Agreement with the various options for improving the exhibition on the questionnaire was closely linked, for some items, with familiarity and reasons for the visit.

## Primary Suggestions

First-time visitors who did not come to the museum specifically to see *In the Beginning* were most likely to ask for exhibition improvements, compared to first-time visitors who came to see the exhibition and repeat visitors (whether or not

they came for the exhibition). Specifically, first-time general visitors were most likely to have wanted:

*More information about the history of each manuscript (83%)*

*Translations of the important manuscripts (82%)*

*More photographs (people, places, churches, etc.) (82%)*

*More information about the organization of the exhibition (floor plans, signs, etc.)(78%)*

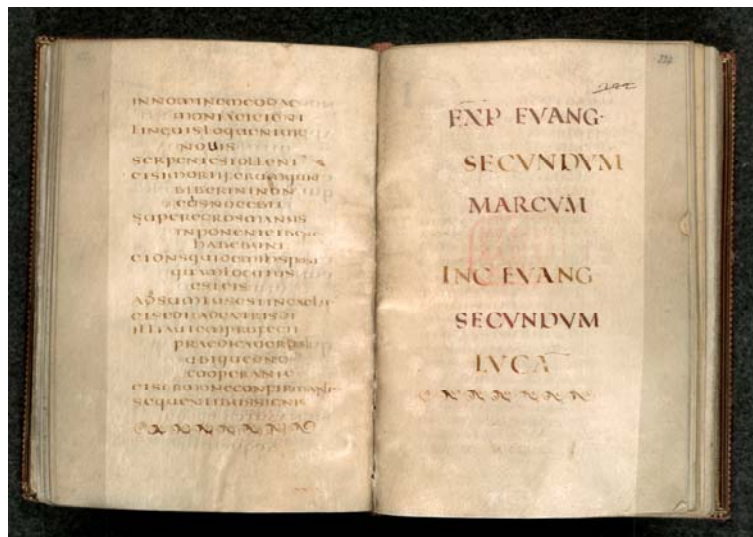
*More information on the historical context/environment (72%)*

First-time visitors who came specifically to see *In the Beginning* were more likely than the other sub-groups to want more information about the religious context/environment (72%).

Overall, repeat visitors were less likely to call for information about the organization of the exhibition (19% for all repeat visitors compared to 39% for all new visitors), and were more likely to want more photographs (46% for all repeat visitors compared to 32% for all new visitors).

### **Miscellaneous Suggestions**

In addition to specific questions, visitors made marginal comments with suggestions for improving their exhibition experience. Suggestions included a brochure to take home (both with and without photos), a glossary of terms in the exhibition and a video presentation.





## Conclusion

*In the Beginning* drew a new audience to the Sackler Gallery that included not only Biblical scholars, but also local residents drawn by its subject matter.

Most of the public visitors surveyed came to the museum specifically to see this exhibition. Those who had never been to the Sackler before first learned of it primarily through word-of-mouth; those who had been to the Sackler before read about it in the print media. The audience also included a smaller number of visitors who were in the museum for other reasons, but who stopped into the exhibition as part of their visit.

Visitors, both scholars and the public, were most impressed by the rarity and importance of the manuscripts on display, and they rated the exhibition very highly. For both scholars and the public, the exhibition was also a learning opportunity. Scholars saw some manuscripts for the first time and were engaged by seeing the historical development of the Bible in one place. The public gained information, enriched their understanding and reflected on the meaning of the objects.

While the exhibition strongly resonated with those who came specifically to see it, the overall experience had less impact on those who came to the museum for other reasons, in particular, repeat general visitors, who represent the mainstream Sackler audience. This is another example of the way that the Sackler audience – due to the broad range of subject matter and cultures that it encompasses – expands, sorts and re-sorts itself according to the topics presented in special exhibitions. This pattern is substantially different from the one found at the largest Smithsonian museums (and perhaps at the Freer Gallery), where the audience is dominated by general visitors.

**F**ACTUM AUTEM QUANDO IERUSALIM  
ET IPSE ASCENDIT IN NAUICULAM  
ET DISCIPULI CUM  
ET ITA DO ILLOSTRANS PRE  
TEM USQUE TRANS TAGNULUM  
ASCENDERUNT NAUIGANTIBUS  
AUTEM ILLIS OB ORATIONEM  
ET DO ESCENDIT PROCE  
LANT IN TAGNULUM  
PLEBIS ET FLUCTIBUS NAUICULAE  
ET PERICLITABANTUR ACCEDENTES  
AUTEM SAS CITAUERUNT  
ET DICENTES PRECEPTOR  
PERICULUM SUUM ILLES  
SURGENS IN CREPUSCULUM  
AUTEM ET TEMPESTAS  
AQUAE ET CESSAUIT ET PAC  
TAE TRANQUILLITAS  
MAGNA DIXIT AUTEM ILLIS  
UBI EST FIDES VESTRA ET  
TIMENTES CIRCA ISAM  
DICENTES XPO IN AICE QUAE  
NUNC EST HIC QUI AETERN  
TIS IMPERARE

MARIE TOBIAE DIXIT  
**E**NAUIGAUERUNT AUTEM XPO  
REGIONE GERASENORUM  
QUE EST CONTRA GALILEAM  
ET CRESSUS ESSET AD TER  
RAM OCCURRIT ILLI QUI  
QUI HABEBAT DOLAMONTUM  
IN TEMPORIBUS MULTIS  
ET ESTI NON INOUEBATUR  
NEQUE IN DOCTUM DANCIBUS  
SCIO IN DOMO DENTIS  
UT AUONTHAM PROCIOTAM  
TE ILLUM ET EXCLAMANS  
UOCCAMAGNA DIXIT QUI  
DUM HIC TIBI EST ITHAM  
ILLOI ALTISSIMO OBSECRE  
TE NE DETORQUEAS PRE  
CEPTA TENISPIRITUM  
IN MUNDO UT EXTREMA  
BO MINC MULTIS ENTE  
TEMPO RIBUS ARRI  
PUERIT ILLAM  
NUNC VINCTAS CXTENIS  
ET COPEOIBUS CUSTODIE  
BANTUR ET RAPIS

## Appendix A. Questionnaires

8029520691

*In the Beginning: Bibles Before the Year 1000*

EXHIBITION ASSESSMENT FORM

1. Is today your first visit to the Freer/Sackler Galleries?  
☐ Yes   ☐ No, I last visited more than one year ago   ☐ No, I made about  visits in the last year
2. How would you rate this exhibition of manuscripts, *In the Beginning*...  
☐ Poor   ☐ Fair   ☐ Good   ☐ Excellent   ☐ Superior
3. How did your experience in this Bible exhibition compare to what you expected?  
☐ It was not as good   ☐ It was about what I expected   ☐ It was better
4. Did you find the following *especially* interesting?
 

The opportunity to see these high quality manuscripts in one place	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
The presentation of the objects which highlighted their artistic aspects	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
The recognition given to the importance of biblical scholarship	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
The value of the exhibition to future generations of scholars	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
The opportunity to see manuscripts that I have not seen before	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
The opportunity to view the manuscripts presented as objects (rather than as texts)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
5. Would the following have improved your visit to this manuscript exhibition?
 

More information on the <i>historical</i> context/ environment	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
More information on the <i>religious</i> context/ environment	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
More information about the organization of the exhibition (floor plans, signs, etc.)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
More information about the history of each manuscript	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
More photographs (e.g., people, places, churches, etc.)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
More information on the materials and technology of manuscript production	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Translations of important manuscripts	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Places to sit and discuss the manuscripts	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Other: _____	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
6. From your perspective, what was the most significant aspect of the exhibition?
7. Was it important to assemble these high quality manuscripts in one place?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No  
 Please comment.
8. Was it important to present the manuscripts as objects (rather than as texts)?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No  
 Please comment.

*About you...*

- a. Where do you live?      ☐ Other country: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Unites States, Zip Code
- b. Is the institution for which you work affiliated with a religious denomination?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
- c. Are you...  
☐ Clergy   ☐ Academic/Researcher: What is your specialty? \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your assistance! PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO INTERVIEWER or  
 TO THE INFORMATION DESK AS YOU LEAVE THE BUILDING

Ses   
 Seg   
 Int   
 Status



Is today your first visit to the Freer/Sackler Galleries?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No, I last visited more than one year ago  
☐ No, I made about  visits in the last year

Did you come specifically to see the Bible manuscript exhibition, *In the Beginning*?

- ☐ No ☐ Yes

On today's visit to the Freer/Sackler, have you seen/will you see other exhibitions?

- ☐ No ☐ Yes

How would you rate this Bible manuscript exhibition, *In the Beginning*?

- ☐ Poor ☐ Fair ☐ Good ☐ Excellent ☐ Superior

How did your experience in this Bible exhibition compare to what you expected?

- ☐ It was not as good ☐ It was better  
☐ It was about what I expected

Are you visiting by yourself or with other people?

- ☐ I am alone  
☐ I am with others:

**Other than yourself, how many people are with you? [Write down number, not ages]**

- Youth under 12  Adults 18 and over  
 Youth 12 to 17

Who in your group suggested visiting the Freer/Sackler today?

- ☐ NA/I am alone ☐ Someone with me ☐ I did

How many of the *object labels* did you read?

- ☐ None/very few ☐ Some ☐ Most ☐ Nearly all

How many of the *wall texts/explanations* did you read?

- ☐ None/very few ☐ Some ☐ Most ☐ Nearly all

How much of the *Signage audio tour* did you listen to?

- ☐ Did not use ☐ None/very little ☐ Some ☐ Most ☐ Nearly all

How did you *first* become aware of this exhibition, *In the Beginning*?

- ☐ After I entered the museum today ☐ Family/friends/acquaintances ☐ From a previous visit  
☐ Banner on the building ☐ Religious source ☐ Newspaper/magazine  
☐ Professional colleagues/publications ☐ Internet or website ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How satisfying were the following experiences to you in this manuscript exhibition?

	Not at all	Somewhat	Very much
Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeing rare/valuable art objects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gaining information/knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spending time with friends/family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being moved by beauty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enriching my understanding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling a spiritual connection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Would the following have improved your visit to this manuscript exhibition?

- More information on the *historical* context/environment ☐ Yes ☐ No  
 More information on the *religious* context/environment ☐ Yes ☐ No  
 More information about the organization of the exhibition (floor plans, signs, etc.) ☐ Yes ☐ No  
 More information about the history of each manuscript ☐ Yes ☐ No  
 Translations of important manuscripts ☐ Yes ☐ No  
 More photographs (e.g., people, places, churches, etc.) ☐ Yes ☐ No  
 More information on the materials and technology of manuscript production ☐ Yes ☐ No  
 Places to sit and discuss the manuscripts ☐ Yes ☐ No  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Yes ☐ No

Below are some statements that have been made by visitors to this exhibition.

With which do you agree? [Mark all that apply]

- ☐ I saw an extraordinary collection of Biblical material never before assembled in one place  
☐ It is an exhibition for Biblical scholars and less for non-scholars  
☐ I was most engaged by seeing the *historical* development of the Bible  
☐ I was most engaged by seeing the *religious* development of the Bible  
☐ I was disappointed that it did not contain objects and artworks related to the manuscripts  
☐ I was disappointed to find that the exhibition dealt with only the Christian Bible

Where do you live?

- ☐ United States. Zip Code:   
☐ Other country. Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your age?

What is your sex?

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

How interested are you in...

	Not interested	Somewhat interested	Very interested
Manuscripts in general	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bible manuscripts as <i>religious</i> documents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bible manuscripts as <i>historic</i> documents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bible manuscripts as <i>art</i> objects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR  
PARTICIPATION

Session

Segment

Interviewer

Status

## *Appendix B.*

### *Frequency Distributions*

#### *of Responses to the Questionnaires*

#### *for Scholar and General Public Visitors*

*Note: All numbers refer to percent of respondents. Columns may not total 100% because of rounding.*

#### **Is today your first visit to the Freer/Sackler Galleries?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
Yes	51	65
No, last visited more than one year ago	19	24
Repeat visit, unspecified time	0	1
Visited once or twice in past year	13	7
Visited three or four times in the past year	8	0
Visited five or more times in the past year	8	3
Total	100	100

#### **Did you come specifically to see the Bible manuscript exhibition, *In the Beginning*?**

*Question not asked of Scholars*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Public</b>
No	24
Yes	76
Total	100

#### **On today's visit to the Freer/Sackler, have you seen/will you see other exhibitions?**

*Question not asked of Scholars*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Public</b>
No	36
Yes	64
Total	100

**How would you rate this Bible manuscript exhibition, *In the Beginning*?**

Responses	Public	Scholars
Poor	0	0
Fair	1	0
Good	18	7
Excellent	41	44
Superior	40	48
Total	100	100

**How did your experience in this Bible exhibition compare to what you expected?**

Responses	Public	Scholars
It was not as good	5	3
It was about what I expected	38	31
It was better	57	67
Total	100	100

**Are you visiting by yourself or with other people?**

*Question not asked of Scholars*

Responses	Public
Alone	12
Two adults	12
Multiple adults	61
Group with youth	15
Total	100

**Who in your group suggested visiting the Freer/Sackler today?**

*Question not asked of Scholars*

Responses	Public
N/A I am alone	12
Someone with me	60
I did	28
Total	100



**How many of the object labels did you read?***Question not asked of Scholars*

Responses	Public
None/very few	0
Some	29
Most	38
Nearly all	33
Total	100

**How many of the wall texts/explanations did you read?***Question not asked of Scholars*

Responses	Public
None/very few	0
Some	39
Most	30
Nearly all	31
Total	100

**How much of the SI Guide audio tour did you listen to?***Question not asked of Scholars*

Responses	Public
Did not use	71
None/very little	7
Some	3
Most	3
Nearly all	16
Total	100

**How did you first become aware of this exhibition,*****In the Beginning?****Question not asked of Scholars*

Responses	Public
After I entered the museum today	14
Banner on the building	5
Professional colleagues/publication	6
Family/friends/acquaintances	28
Religious source	9
Internet or website	3
From a previous visit	1
Newspaper/magazine	26
Other	7
Total	100

**How satisfying were the following experiences to you in this manuscript exhibition?**

*Question not asked of Scholars*

<b>Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw</b>	<b>Public</b>
Not at all	4
Somewhat	37
Very much	59
Total	100

<b>Seeing rare/valuable art objects</b>	<b>Public</b>
Not at all	1
Somewhat	14
Very much	85
Total	100

<b>Gaining information/knowledge</b>	<b>Public</b>
Not at all	4
Somewhat	34
Very much	62
Total	100

<b>Spending time with friends/family</b>	<b>Public</b>
Not at all	18
Somewhat	49
Very much	33
Total	100

<b>Being moved by the beauty</b>	<b>Public</b>
Not at all	7
Somewhat	44
Very much	49
Total	100

<b>Enriching my understanding</b>	<b>Public</b>
Not at all	1
Somewhat	37
Very much	62
Total	100

<b>Feeling a spiritual connection</b>	<b>Public</b>
Not at all	20
Somewhat	39
Very much	41
Total	100

**Would the following have improved your visit to this manuscript exhibition?**

<b>More information on the historical context/environment</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	37	40
Yes	63	60
Total	100	100

<b>More information on the religious context/environment</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	42	50
Yes	58	50
Total	100	100

<b>More information about the organization of the exhibition</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	71	69
Yes	29	31
Total	100	100

<b>More information about the history of each manuscript</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	54	46
Yes	46	54
Total	100	100

<b>Translations of important manuscripts</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	33	52
Yes	67	48
Total	100	100

<b>More photographs (e.g., people, places, churches, etc.)</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	48	53
Yes	52	47
Total	100	100

<b>More information on the materials and technology of manuscript production</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	61	42
Yes	39	58
Total	100	100

**Would the following have improved your visit to this manuscript exhibition? (Cont.)**

<b>Places to sit and discuss the manuscripts</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	55	61
Yes	45	39
Total	100	100

<b>Other</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	81	79
Yes	19	21
Total	100	100

**Below are some statements that have been made by visitors to this exhibition. With which do you agree? [Mark all that apply]**  
Question not asked of Scholars

<b>I saw an extraordinary collection of Biblical material never before assembled in one place</b>	<b>Public</b>
Not marked	21
Marked	79
Total	100

<b>It is an exhibition for Biblical scholars and less for non-scholars</b>	<b>Public</b>
Not marked	87
Marked	13
Total	100

<b>I was most engaged by seeing the <i>historical</i> development of the Bible</b>	<b>Public</b>
Not marked	28
Marked	72
Total	100

<b>I was most engaged by seeing the <i>religious</i> development of the Bible</b>	<b>Public</b>
Not marked	67
Marked	33
Total	100

**Below are some statements that have been made by visitors to this exhibition. (Cont.)**

<b>I was disappointed that it did not contain objects and artworks related to the manuscripts</b>	<b>Public</b>
Not marked	90
Marked	10
Total	100

<b>I was disappointed to find that the exhibition dealt with only the Christian Bible</b>	<b>Public</b>
Not marked	93
Marked	7
Total	100

**Where do you live?**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
United States	98	82
Other country	2	18
Total	100	100

**What is your age?**

Question not asked of Scholars

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Public</b>
12 thru 19	9
20 thru 24	4
25 thru 29	11
30 thru 34	5
35 thru 39	3
40 thru 44	5
45 thru 49	9
50 thru 54	11
55 thru 59	9
60 thru 64	11
65 thru 69	8
70 thru 99	15
Total	100

### What is your sex?

Question not asked of Scholars

Responses	Public
Male	38
Female	62
Total	100

### How interested are you in...

Question not asked of Scholars

Manuscripts in general	Public
Male	64
Female	36
Total	100

Bible manuscripts as religious documents	Public
Male	44
Female	56
Total	100

Bible manuscripts as historical documents	Public
Male	40
Female	60
Total	100

Bible manuscripts as art objects	Public
Male	37
Female	63
Total	100



**Did you find the following especially interesting?**

Question not asked of Public

<b>The opportunity to see high quality manuscripts in one place</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	2
Yes	98
Total	100

<b>The presentation of objects which highlighted their artistic aspects</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	18
Yes	82
Total	100

<b>The recognition given to the importance of biblical scholarship</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	15
Yes	85
Total	100

<b>The value of the exhibition to future generations of scholars</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	20
Yes	80
Total	100

<b>The opportunity to see manuscripts that I have not seen before</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	4
Yes	96
Total	100

<b>The opportunity to view the manuscripts presented as objects (rather than as texts)</b>	<b>Scholars</b>
No	30
Yes	70
Total	100

**Was it important to assemble these high quality manuscripts in one place?**

Question not asked of Public

Responses	Scholars
No	5
Yes	95
Total	100

**Was it important to present the manuscripts as objects (rather than as texts)?**

Question not asked of Public

Responses	Scholars
No	27
Yes	73
Total	100

**Is the institution for which you work affiliated with a religious denomination?**

Question not asked of Public

Responses	Scholars
No	49
Yes	51
Total	100

**Are you...**

Question not asked of Public

Responses	Scholars
Clergy	8
Academic/researcher	92
Total	100

## Appendix C. Use of Didactic Materials

The didactic material that accompanied the exhibition included text panels and object labels, an extensive catalogue and an audio guide using the hand-held technology that is being tested at several Smithsonian locations. The audio guide was available for a \$5 fee/person, charged to a major credit card. Michelle P. Brown, the exhibition's guest curator, narrated the tour.

In addition to questions about the experience of the exhibition, the questionnaire used with the public contained questions about use of the audio guide, the object labels and the wall texts/explanations. This Appendix presents the results and, in some instances, relates them to the experiences with the exhibition.

### AUDIO GUIDE

Overall, one in five (19%) of visitors reported using the audio guide (listening to some, most, or nearly all of it). First-time visitors who came specifically to see *In the Beginning* were most likely to report using it (31%), while first-time and repeat visitors who did not come to the FSG to see the exhibition were least likely (3% and 0%, respectively).

### OBJECT LABELS AND WALL TEXTS/EXPLANATIONS

Visitors reported that they paid considerable attention to the labels and wall texts. The pattern of responses is similar to that for the audio guide. Visitors who did not come specifically to see *In the Beginning*, whether making a first or repeat visit to the FSG, were least attentive to object labels and wall texts/explanations. Those who came specifically to see it were most attentive. Figure C1 shows the results in more detail.

Figure C1

#### Percentage of Visitors Who Made Extensive Use of Didactic Material in the Exhibition

	First-time visitors		Repeat Visitors		All Visitors
	ITB Yes	ITB No	ITB Yes	ITB No	
Object labels <sup>a</sup>	37	7	45	3	33
Wall texts <sup>a</sup>	34	0	44	11	31
Audio guide <sup>b</sup>	31	3	17	0	19

a. Read nearly all.

b. Listened to some/most/all.

