The evidence that Christians wrote biblical texts on various materials for personal use in Late Antiquity is abundant and manifold. We find biblical texts on papyrus, parchment, wooden tablets, pottery fragments, metal foil, gems, stone, and other materials. It is usually easy to distinguish materials that were written with biblical texts for personal use from those that were written with biblical texts for institutional or public use as, for example, biblical codices or liturgical books. More difficult to ascertain is the particular purpose for which biblical texts written for personal use were intended. Sometimes this difficulty is reflected in the hesitations of an editor, who may offer several suggestions as to the purpose of an item: an amulet, an aide-mémoire, or a writing exercise. Sometimes the difficulty manifests itself in the divergent views of editors and other scholars on the purpose of an
item. And sometimes the difficulty is overlooked, and an item is classified as one thing when other possibilities should be considered.

Since I have been studying the Christianization of the production and the use of amulets in Late Antique Egypt, my particular interest concerning this body of material is in amulets. Amulets are, evidently, only one of several possible personal uses of biblical texts that a New Testament scholar must consider. Nevertheless, as a category of analysis, criticism, and theorizing, amulets continue to intrude into the world of New Testament textual criticism. The series *Texts and Editions for New Testament Study* has published several exemplary papers that carefully interrogate the classification of several New Testament texts as amulets.3 “Amulets” is also one of several categories of non-continuous New Testament manuscripts suggested by Stanley Porter in his proposal to organize the extant witnesses to the text of the New Testament into two major groups: continuous and non-continuous manuscripts.4 Although amulets may be of peripheral interest when one establishes the text of the New Testament—a scholarly habit that some are questioning5—they loom larger when one focuses on the reception of Scripture—Jewish and Christian, canonical and deuterocanonical—by Christians.6

When one ventures into the study of amulets as an aspect of the reception of Scripture, however, one encounters the difficulty, mentioned above, of distinguishing amulets from other biblical texts written for personal use. What criteria should be used to identify a biblical text that was written in

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