

ALAN TAYLOR FARNES

# Simply Come Copying

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

481

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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Alan Taylor Farnes

# Simply Come Copying

Direct Copies as Test Cases in the Quest  
for Scribal Habits

Mohr Siebeck

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*To my Sons of Thunder, John and James,  
and their loving mother, Erin, my wife.*



## Preface

This project, which is an extension of my PhD dissertation at the University of Birmingham, would not have been possible without the valuable contribution, assistance, and support from many people. I not only stand on the shoulders of giants but I am constantly being lifted and supported by many who enable me to stand on said shoulders.

I most prominently must thank my wife, Erin Farnes, for providing me the space and the time and the peace of mind in order to research and write. She not only protected my time and shielded me from distraction but also served as an invaluable conversation partner with which to discuss my ideas. Her perceptive insights and discussions helped clear my head, organize my thoughts, and propel the work forward.

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I am also grateful for the Dissertation Grant at Brigham Young University Religious Education for funding a portion of this project.

It is hoped that this dissertation can advance the quest for scribal habits in some small way and provide ideas for future research opportunities.



## Table of Contents

Preface .....	VII
List of Tables .....	XIII
List of Abbreviations .....	XV
Chapter 1: The Quest for Scribal Habits .....	1
1.1 Lectio Brevior Potior .....	7
1.2 Royse's Criticism of Griesbach's First Canon .....	9
1.3 Royse's Reception .....	17
1.4 Other Methods for Determining Scribal Habits .....	21
1.4.1 Barbara Aland .....	21
1.4.2 Peter Malik .....	22
1.5 Conclusion .....	22
1.6 On English Pronouns .....	22
Chapter 2: Scribal Habits of Greek New Testament <i>Abschriften</i> .....	24
2.1 Limitations of the Abschrift Method .....	29
2.2 Previous Work on Abschriften .....	30
2.2.1 Greek New Testament <i>Abschriften</i> .....	30
2.2.2 <i>Abschriften</i> of Texts other than the Greek New Testament .....	35
2.3 The Prevailing Attitude Toward Abschriften .....	41
2.4 Methods for Identifying an Abschrift .....	42
2.5 Methodology of the Present Project .....	49
Chapter 3: Scribal Habits in P <sup>127</sup> .....	51
3.1 Methodology .....	52
3.2 The Manuscript .....	52
3.3 Scribal Habits in P <sup>127</sup> .....	53
3.3.1 Corrections .....	53

3.3.2 Insignificant Singulars .....	56
3.3.3 Accuracy and Copying Technique .....	59
3.4 Conclusion .....	62

## Chapter 4: Codex Claromontanus and the Scribal Habits of its *Abschriften* .....

4.1 Order of Pauline Epistles.....	66
4.2 Codex Claromontanus and its Relatives .....	67
4.3 Methodology .....	68
4.4 Codex Claromontanus (06) and Codex Sangermanensis (0319).....	70
4.4.1 Codex Sangermanensis as a copy of Codex Claromontanus .....	72
4.4.2 Notable Attributes of 0319.....	77
4.4.3 Peculiar Dual Agreements between 06 and 0319A/B .....	78
4.4.4 Scribal Habits of Codex Sangermanensis (Greek) Scribe A .....	78
4.4.5 Scribal Habits of Codex Sangermanensis (Greek) Scribe B.....	90
4.4.6 Conclusions concerning the Greek Text.....	93
4.5 Codex Claromontanus (VL75) and Codex Sangermanensis (VL76).....	97
4.5.1 Codex Sangermanensis as a copy of Codex Claromontanus .....	97
4.5.2 Notable Attributes of VL76.....	98
4.5.3 Scribal Habits of VL76A .....	99
4.5.4 Scribal Habits of VL76B.....	102
4.5.5 Conclusions concerning the whole of Codex Sangermanensis	104
4.6 Codex Claromontanus (06) and Codex Waldeccensis (0320) .....	106
4.6.1 Codex Waldeccensis as a Copy of Codex Claromontanus .....	110
4.6.2 Notable Attributes of Codex Waldeccensis .....	112
4.6.3 Scribal Habits of Codex Waldeccensis (Greek).....	113
4.7 Codex Claromontanus (VL75) and Codex Waldeccensis (VL83) ...	120
4.7.1 Scribal Habits of Codex Waldeccensis (Latin) .....	120
4.7.2 Conclusions concerning VL83 .....	122
4.8 Conclusion .....	123

## Chapter 5: The Scribal Habits of Minuscule 205.....

5.1 Cardinal Bessarion .....	127
5.2 John Rhosus (1430s–1498): Cretan, Priest, and Scribe.....	128
5.3 The Identity of 205's Copyist.....	129
5.4 John Plusiadenos (1429–1500): Cretan, Priest, and Scribe .....	133
5.5 The Historical View of 2886 as a copy of 205 .....	138
5.6 205 as a copy of 2886 according to Welsby.....	139

5.7 Order of Books.....	146
5.8 Scribal Habits of Minuscule 205 .....	150
5.8.1 Insignificant Variant Readings.....	152
5.8.2 Accuracy and Copying Technique .....	154
5.9 Conclusion .....	161
5.9.1 205 a copy of 2886?.....	162
<b>Chapter 6: The Scribal Habits of Camillus Venetus in Minuscule 821.....</b>	<b>166</b>
6.1 Camillus Venetus.....	167
6.2 Notable Attributes of 0141 .....	171
6.2.1 Peculiar Dual Agreements between 0141 and 821.....	173
6.3 Notable Attributes of 821 .....	178
6.4 Scribal Habits of 821.....	178
6.4.1 Insignificant Variant Readings.....	179
6.4.2 Accuracy and Copying Technique .....	181
6.5 Conclusion.....	182
<b>Chapter 7: Conclusions .....</b>	<b>185</b>
7.1 The Puzzling Paradox of the Growing Text.....	188
7.1.1 How Do Scribes Treat Singular Readings in their <i>Vorlage</i> ?...	190
7.2 The Stability of Textual Transmission throughout the Centuries ....	194
7.3 The Singular Readings Method against the Abschrift Method .....	201
7.4 <i>Lectio Brevior Potior</i> .....	202
7.5 Broader Applications of this Study.....	203
7.6 Rate of Transcriptional Error in Each Copying Event.....	206
7.7 On Patrons and Their Influence.....	207
7.8 P <sup>127</sup> in light of the Abschrift Method .....	208
7.9 Future Research Possibilities.....	209
7.10 On <i>Catena Abschriften</i> .....	209
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>211</b>
List of Singular Readings of P <sup>127</sup> .....	212
List of Variant Readings between 0319A and 06.....	217
List of Variant Readings between 0319B and 06.....	218
List of Singular Readings of 0319A .....	218
List of Singular Readings of 0319B .....	219
List of Peculiar Dual Agreements between 06 and 0319A.....	220

List of Peculiar Dual Agreements between 06 and 0319B.....	220
List of Variant Readings between VL76A and VL75 .....	220
List of Variant Readings between VL76B and VL75 .....	221
List of Singular Readings of VL76A.....	221
List of Singular Readings of VL76B .....	221
List of Variant Readings between 0320 and 06 .....	221
List of Singular Readings of 0320.....	223
List of Variant Readings between 205 and 2886 .....	224
List of Singular Readings of 205.....	226
List of Peculiar Dual Agreements between 205 and 2886.....	227
List of Variant Readings between 821 and 0141 .....	228
List of Singular Readings of 821 .....	228
List of Peculiar Dual Agreements between 0141 and 821.....	228
 Bibliography.....	 231
Subject Index .....	243
Author Index .....	246
Manuscript Index .....	249

## List of Tables

Table 1.1 – Statistics of Previous Scribal Habits Studies .....	12
Table 1.2 – Orthographic Phenomena in Previous Scribal Habits Studies.....	13
Table 1.3 – Error Rate in Royse’s Scribal Habit Study .....	13
Table 2 – <i>Abschriften</i> of the Greek New Testament Ordered by Date of the <i>Abschrift</i> .....	25
Table 3.1 – P <sup>127</sup> ’s Omissions and Additions .....	55
Table 3.2 – P <sup>127</sup> ’s Orthographic Phenomena .....	55
Table 3.3 – P <sup>127</sup> ’s Error Rate .....	56
Table 4.1 – Variants in 0319A and 0319B against 06 by Test Passage .....	78
Table 4.2 – Variants in 0320 against 06 by Test Passage.....	78
Table 4.3 – Significant Variant Readings in the Greek <i>Abschriften</i> of Codex Claromontanus .....	79
Table 4.4 – Total Variants in the Greek <i>Abschriften</i> of Codex Claromontanus .....	80
Table 4.5 – Error Rates in the Greek <i>Abschriften</i> of Codex Claromontanus...	81
Table 4.6 – Variants in VL76A and VL76B against VL75 by Test Passage ...	99
Table 4.7 – Significant Variant Readings in the Latin <i>Abschriften</i> of Codex Claromontanus .....	100
Table 4.8 – Total Variants in the Latin <i>Abschriften</i> of Codex Claromontanus .....	100
Table 4.9 – Error Rates in the Latin <i>Abschriften</i> of Codex Claromontanus...	101
Table 5.1 – Order of Books in Manuscripts from the Venice Group, 1, and 1582 .....	150
Table 5.2 – Variants in 205 against 2886 by Test Passage.....	151
Table 5.3 – Significant Variant Readings in Minuscule 205.....	151
Table 5.4 – Total Variants in Minuscule 205 .....	151
Table 5.5 – Error Rates in Minuscule 205.....	152
Table 6.1 – Variants in 821 against 0141 by Test Passage.....	178
Table 6.2 – Significant Variant Readings in Minuscule 821 .....	179
Table 6.3 – Total Variants in Minuscule 821 .....	179
Table 6.4 – Error Rates in Minuscule 821.....	179
Table 7.1 – Error Rates and Net Words Lost Per Significant Variant in All Scribes of This Study.....	195
Table 7.2 – Graph of Error Rates of All Scribes in this Study and Royse’s Scribe’s by NA Page .....	198

Table 7.3 – Singular Reading Error Rates Contrasted with Actual  
Error Rates ..... 198

## List of Abbreviations

ANTF	Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung
BASP	Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists
BASPSup	Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists Supplements
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>J ECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>J SNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
NTTSD	New Testament Tools, Studies, and Documents
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
<i>SBL</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature</i>
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SD	Studies and Documents
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
TCSt	Text-Critical Studies
TENTS	Texts and Editions for New Testament Study
TS	Texts and Studies
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
UBS	United Bible Society
VLB	Vetus Latina Beuron
VLBSup	Vetus Latina Beuron Supplements
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>



## Chapter 1

### The Quest for Scribal Habits

Within New Testament textual criticism<sup>1</sup> there seem to be two main entrenched theories concerning how scribes went about their work.<sup>2</sup> One theory claims that scribes intentionally altered the text to make it say what they wanted while another claims that scribes simply copied their texts as best as humanly possible. A paragraph from a recent article in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* illustrates one side of this bifurcation within the field:

Textual scholars have long recognized that the wording of their manuscripts contain residues of scribal practices and attitudes. The popular caricature of the scribe as automaton, aiming only at the flawless reproduction of an autograph, is wholly inappropriate in light of the textual evidence provided by the early Greek manuscript record of the New Testament. Evidence suggests that copyists were also, at times, careful readers who altered the wording of their *Vorlagen* to convey more explicitly a work's meaning (deep structure).<sup>3</sup>

The author, Garrick V. Allen, cites as support for his claim articles by Barbara Aland and Kim Haines-Eitzen. Allen cites Aland's eight page article but not a specific passage or page so it is difficult to know exactly where Aland argues that scribes were "careful readers who altered the wording of their *Vorlagen*" especially in light of the rest of Barbara Aland's body of work which seems to repeatedly emphasize the opposite. Indeed Aland's first paragraph of the article cited by Allen reads

Hat die Arbeit im Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung gezeigt (und jedermann kann es an einem guten kritischen Apparat überprüfen), dass insbesondere frühe Handschriften zwar von Schreibfehlern übersät sind, dass aber wirklich ernsthafte Fehler, die einen Gestaltungswillen des Schreibers erkennen lassen, relativ selten sind. *Schreiber, so*

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<sup>1</sup> I use this term, New Testament textual criticism, with full knowledge of its problematic nature as explained by David C. Parker in his *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 6, because the scribal habits which I discuss bridge multiple books of the canonical New Testament corpus. Had my comment focused solely on one book of the New Testament, then I would have used a different term.

<sup>2</sup> See Ulrich Schmid, "Conceptualizing 'Scribal' Performances: Reader's Notes," in *The Textual History of the Greek New Testament: Changing Views in Contemporary Research* (K. Wachtel and M. W. Holmes, eds; TCS 8; Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 50–52 for another way of thinking about this division in the field.

<sup>3</sup> Garrick V. Allen, "The Apocalypse in Codex Alexandrinus: Exegetical Reasoning and Singular Readings in New Testament Greek Manuscripts," *JBL* 135.4 (2016): 859–60.

kann man daraus entnehmen, wollen kopieren und damit ihre handwerkliche Berufsaufgabe erfüllen.<sup>4</sup>

Aland's article was an attempt to show that harmonizations offer a rare glimpse into scribal habits because, since harmonizing one passage to another takes a good amount of intellectual effort, harmonizations are most likely scribally created. She continues, immediately following the above quote, that *only* in the "narrow framework"<sup>5</sup> of harmonizations can we find traces of intentional changes by the scribe. She repeats this caution again later in the same article.<sup>6</sup> She concludes that it is possible that scribes can indeed be seen as interpreters of the text since they do at times harmonize but emphasizes in her concluding paragraph that it must first be known that the main goal of *all* scribes (aller Schreiber) was to reproduce their *Vorlage* correctly.<sup>7</sup>

Aland's belief that scribes do their best to faithfully transcribe their *Vorlage* is well known and thus it was surprising to see Allen enlist Aland in defending his argument of the opposite. Elsewhere she has repeated her claim. In a 2003 article analyzing the scribal habits of papyri of John she writes that, as a principle, it is important to remember that the scribes of the papyri do not interpret their *Vorlage* but they copy it. She also notes that scribes are not authorized to make such changes.<sup>8</sup>

Allen is technically not incorrect in saying that, according to Aland, "copyists were also, at times, careful readers who altered the wording of their *Vorlagen*" since Aland did indeed argue that we can see intentional changes in scribal harmonizations. But using her article to support his claim presents only part of her argument and misrepresents her long-held philosophy.

Allen also cites Kim Haines-Eitzen (who in turn cites David Parker, Wayne Kannaday, Juan Hernández, and Eldon Jay Epp) saying "We are

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<sup>4</sup> Barbara Aland, "Sind Schreiber früher neutestamentlicher Handschriften Interpreten des Textes?" in *Transmission and Reception: New Testament Text-critical and Exegetical Studies* (Jeff W. Childers and D. C. Parker eds; TS 3.4; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006), 114, emphasis added.

<sup>5</sup> Aland, "Schreiber," 114: engen Rahmen.

<sup>6</sup> Aland, "Schreiber," 116: "Nur in den damit gesteckten *engen Grenzen* kann man daher nach Spuren der Rezeption des Textes durch den Schreiber fragen," emphasis added.

<sup>7</sup> Aland, "Schreiber," 122: "dass es das Hauptziel aller Schreiber bleibt, ihre Vorlage zuverlässig wiederzugeben."

<sup>8</sup> See Barbara Aland, "Der textkritische und textgeschichtliche Nutzen früher Papyri, demonstriert am Johannesevangelium," in *Recent Developments in Textual Criticism: New Testament, Other Early Christian and Jewish Literature: Papers Read at a Noster Conference in Münster, January 4–6, 2001* (W. Weren and D-A. Koch, eds; Studies in Theology and Religion 8; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 36: "Grundsätzlich muß jedoch festgehalten werden, daß frühe Papyri nicht erfinden und auch nicht ihre Vorlage interpretieren, sondern kopieren. Das entspricht der Berufsauffassung ihrer Schreiber, die zum großen Teil Dokumentenschreiber sind. Sie sind nicht befugt und auch ohne Interesse daran zu verändern."

forced now to recognize that ancient scribes were not simply copyists – at times (and possibly even frequently) they were interested readers, exegetes, and writers who left their mark on the copies they made.”<sup>9</sup>

I do not disagree with Allen’s summary claim that “textual history functions as a medium for reception history.”<sup>10</sup> I do think that scribal changes can be a way to trace reception and interpretation throughout time. Such a methodology has been popularized by David C. Parker’s *The Living Text*.<sup>11</sup> But I differ from Allen in how often and aggressively scribes changed their text. I will argue in Chapters Four and Seven that it is often not the scribes themselves who make decisions to change the text. Textual scholars have *not* “long recognized” that scribes were “careful readers who altered the wording of their *Vorlagen*.” This is a relatively new concept held by a few scholars who have successfully marketed their ideas to a larger audience.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the most recognizable name in the same camp as Allen is Bart Ehrman whose influential book *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* argued that “Proto-orthodox scribes of the second and third centuries occasionally modified their texts of Scripture in order to make them coincide more closely with the christological views embraced by the party that would seal its victory at Nicea and Chalcedon.”<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that Ehrman restricts his study to the scribes of the second and third centuries but later commentators have mistakenly broadened his findings to include all scribes of all times and all places. Such scholarly laziness on the part of later commentators has a long history. It is the root of the misuse of Griesbach’s *Lectio Brevior* which we will discuss below. Similarly, in the short time since Royse’s 2008 *oeuvre* many have already forgotten that his study applied only to the six scribes included in his study who lived in the second and third centuries (or perhaps also into

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<sup>9</sup> Kim Haines-Eitzen, “The Social History of Early Christian Scribes,” in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis: Second Edition* (NTTSD 42; eds. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 489.

<sup>10</sup> Allen, “Codex Alexandrinus,” 860.

<sup>11</sup> David C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> It must be conceded that this concept can also be found in the work of Kenneth W. Clark, “The Theological Relevance of Textual Criticism in Current Criticism of the Greek New Testament,” *JBL* 85.1 (1966): 1–16.

<sup>13</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 321. See also his other summarizing statements: “Theological disputes, specifically disputes over Christology, prompted Christian scribes to alter the words of Scripture in order to make them more serviceable for the polemical task. Scribes modified their manuscripts to make them more patently ‘orthodox’ and less susceptible to ‘abuse’ by the opponents of orthodoxy,” and “Scribes altered their sacred texts to make them ‘say’ what they were already known to ‘mean.’” Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 4, 322.

the fourth century). We must be vigilant to apply conclusions only to the times and places in which they were originally intended. And so we can place Allen and Haines-Eitzen (a student of Ehrman's) in the camp of those who believe that scribes frequently intentionally altered their texts for their own purposes.

I fall into the other camp and will argue that the scribes whom I studied did their best at a difficult job to faithfully reproduce the text from their *Vorlage*. I, of course, accept that at times scribes did indeed make intentional changes, even perhaps changes that were dogmatically motivated, but in my findings this is very rare. I would also argue, against Allen, that the most current tide of text critical scholarship seems to be moving the other way – that scribes did their best to faithfully reproduce their text. This is apparent in the “basic assumptions” of the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (CBGM), one of which states: “A scribe wants to copy the *Vorlage* with fidelity.”<sup>14</sup> Gerd Mink explains: “Most variants do not result from intentional tampering with the text. In most cases they simply reflect the human factor in copying, and the scribe himself would probably have considered them errors. This does not mean that deliberate interpolations and even redactional reworking of whole texts never occurred.”<sup>15</sup>

Many text critics believe that most intentional changes actually were not made by a scribe at all but rather by later readers. Michael Holmes has stated: “We must not forget that [NT manuscripts] were copied and read by *individuals*, with widely varying levels of skill, taste, ability, and scruples.”<sup>16</sup> He continues, “A well-educated, well-informed, conscientious but unscholarly anonymous *reader* is much more likely to have been responsible than any ‘important personality.’”<sup>17</sup> He quotes Zetzel saying: “‘It is amateur bibliophiles,’ writes Zetzel, ‘... who had the most direct effect on the transmission of Latin literature.’ I would like to suggest that for the second century, and perhaps the first half of the third, the same holds true for the New Testament as well.”<sup>18</sup> Elsewhere Holmes has written that the origin of many of the substantive deliberate variants “are due to the activity of educated, thoughtful,

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<sup>14</sup> Gerd Mink, “Contamination, Coherence, and Coincidence in Textual Transmission: The Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (CBGM) as a Complement and Corrective to Existing Approaches,” in *The Textual History of the Greek New Testament: Changing Views and Contemporary Research* (eds. Klaus Wachtel and Michael W. Holmes; TCS 8; Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 151–52.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Michael W. Holmes, “Codex Bezae as a Recension of the Gospels,” in *Codex Bezae: Studies from the Lunel Colloquium, June 1994* (eds. D. C. Parker and C.-B. Amphoux; NTS 22; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 148, emphasis in original.

<sup>17</sup> Holmes, “Codex Bezae,” 149, emphasis in original.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* Zetzel’s quote can be found in James E. G. Zetzel, *Latin Textual Criticism in Antiquity* (New York: Arno, 1981), 6.

usually conscientious but unscholarly *readers* (as distinguished from pure copyists as such).<sup>19</sup> Larry Hurtado agrees and writes that he has been persuaded that “We should view most *intentional* changes to the text as more likely made by readers, not copyists.”<sup>20</sup> Parker adds: “Where we may compare a manuscript and its antigraph, the few examples presented suggest that there is no evidence whatsoever of mass intentional alteration by scribes or even by readers.”<sup>21</sup> Peter Malik’s recent monograph on the earliest and most extensive manuscript of the book of Revelation, P<sup>47</sup>, concludes that its scribe “attempts to copy his exemplar accurately, but frequently lacks the adequate skill and/or discipline to do so.”<sup>22</sup> I could continue to cite studies *ad nauseam* which conclude that most scribal errors were not theologically motivated and that scribes did their best to copy their *Vorlage*.<sup>23</sup>

Ulrich Schmid vehemently argues against the Ehrmanian view that scribes were authors and editors arguing directly against Ehrman and Kannaday (the very authors to whom Kim Haines-Eitzen appealed):

In the work of Ehrman, and even more so in the work of Kannaday, scribes are effectively portrayed as performing the roles of authors or editors. It is important to note that they arrive at this result by looking only at variants. They do not try to back up this new and rather eccentric perception of scribes by seeking for supporting evidence either from New Testament manuscripts themselves (scribal hands, layout, corrections, marginalia etc.) or from other ancient sources. In other words, the concept of scribes as authors is entirely built on the interpretation of variants in almost complete isolation from their physical

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<sup>19</sup> Michael W. Holmes, “The Text of P<sup>46</sup>: Evidence of the Earliest ‘Commentary’ on Romans?” in *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World* (TENTS 2; eds. Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 201, emphasis in original.

<sup>20</sup> Larry W. Hurtado, “God or Jesus? Textual Ambiguity and Textual Variants in Acts of the Apostles,” in *Texts and Traditions: Essays in Honour of J. Keith Elliott* (NTTSD 47; eds. Jeffrey J. Kloha and Peter Doble; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 239, emphasis in original.

<sup>21</sup> David C. Parker, “Scribal Tendencies and the Mechanics of Book Production,” in *Textual Variation: Theological and Social Tendencies? Papers from the Fifth Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (TS 3:5; eds. H. A. G. Houghton and David C. Parker; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2008), 183.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Malik, *P. Beatty III (P<sup>47</sup>): The Codex, Its Scribe, and Its Text* (NTTSD 52; Leiden: Brill, 2017), 172.

<sup>23</sup> See Peter M. Head, “Scribal Behaviour and Theological Tendencies in Singular Readings in P. Bodmer II (P<sup>66</sup>),” in *Textual Variation: Theological and Social Tendencies? Papers from the Fifth Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (TS 3:5; eds. H. A. G. Houghton and David C. Parker; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2008), 74; David C. Parker, “Variants and Variance,” in *Texts and Traditions: Essays in Honour of J. Keith Elliott* (NTTSD 47; eds. Jeffrey J. Kloha and Peter Doble; Leiden: Brill, 2014), 25–34.

containers (the manuscripts) and their sociological environment (the professional setting of those who produced them).<sup>24</sup>

Schmid then provides an example from P<sup>75</sup> with evidence that an addition is made by a reader rather than a scribe due to the documentary hand used as opposed to a literary book hand. He shows that these types of readers' notes could be incorporated into a copy as part of the actual text. Schmid concludes: "Not everything we find in our manuscripts is the product of scribes. Some material is derived from readers and has been at times clumsily picked up by a scribe, thereby entering part of the tradition. ... What actually reaches us is a complex editorial decision mediated by the scribes but not inaugurated by them in the course of the copying process."<sup>25</sup> Schmid rejects the idea that all scribes everywhere can be categorized as authors who intentionally change the text to fit their own desires.

In a later essay on the same subject Schmid reinforced his previous conclusions arguing that there are four stages of literary production and during only two of those stages could a scribe influence the resulting text.<sup>26</sup> The editorial stage, which involves "acquiring copies of texts and selecting and preparing them for publication – a stage that could include adding titles and prefaces, subdividing longer texts into books or chapters, even reworking the texts to fit the needs of a certain targeted audience,"<sup>27</sup> is a stage that could possibly involve many people in many different times and places. This editorial stage could include the patron of the text, readers of a text, and the scribe themselves. Schmid concludes his article stating definitively: "I hardly see much theological/ideological creativity at work" by the scribe and: "I am clearly with those who argue for scribes as copyists"<sup>28</sup> as opposed to those who believe scribes to be authors and alterers of the text.

Allen makes the broad statement that "copyists were also, at times, careful readers who altered the wording of their *Vorlagen*." Which scribes? When? And where? Such a grouping of scribal habits flattens all scribes into one, disconnected from time and place. Eldon Epp's book (which was used as support by Haines-Eitzen) concerns "one New Testament book in one manu-

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<sup>24</sup> Ulrich Schmid, "Scribes and Variants – Sociology and Typology," in *Textual Variation: Theological and Social Tendencies? Papers from the Fifth Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (TS 3:5; eds. H. A. G. Houghton and David C. Parker; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2008), 8–9.

<sup>25</sup> Schmid, "Scribes and Variants," 23.

<sup>26</sup> Schmid, "Reader's Notes," 62–63.

<sup>27</sup> Schmid, "Reader's Notes," 63.

<sup>28</sup> Schmid, "Reader's Notes," 64.

script ... with one specific tendency.”<sup>29</sup> Aland’s article refers to specific scribes in papyri of John. This present project concerns specific scribes whose exemplar survives to the present day. Allen’s and Haines-Eitzen’s statements on scribal habits refer to “scribes” or “ancient scribes” in general without respect to time or place.

My aim in arguing against Allen’s recent statement is not to pick on or be overly tedious about a certain phrase. Allen’s article is a fine article which makes many good points which I agree with – except the section I have quoted. My aim in using this quote is to illustrate a philosophical and conceptual divide within the field of textual criticism and larger biblical studies. This divide can only be bridged by a thorough understanding of how scribes actually acted with firm data as evidence. This is the quest for scribal habits. The quest for scribal habits is an attempt to understand better how specific individual scribes acted. Only when we understand how a good number of individual scribes within the same time and place acted can we tentatively extend their scribal habits to other scribes; *but only* to other scribes who also fit within the same time and place. Such a requirement to attribute scribal habits only to scribes within a certain time and place effectively eliminates the possibility of following textual canons such as *lectio brevior potior* since we should never assume that all scribes everywhere acted similarly. Parker admonishes: “Even if we restrict our discussions to theological debates and extant manuscripts from the period down to about 500, we must avoid assuming that scribal customs and attitudes to textual alteration were constant throughout the period.”<sup>30</sup>

## 1.1 *Lectio Brevior Potior*

For over two hundred years, one of the most firmly entrenched, most easily remembered, and most oft-cited text-critical canons has been *lectio brevior potior* (the shorter reading is to be preferred to the more verbose).<sup>31</sup> Text

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<sup>29</sup> Schmid, “Scribes and Variants,” 3 concerning Eldon Jay Epp, *The Theological Tendency of Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis in Acts* (SNTSMS 3; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966).

<sup>30</sup> Parker, “Scribal Tendencies,” 176.

<sup>31</sup> As found in Johann Jakob Griesbach, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (London: Mackinlay and Martin, 1809), I.lxiv. Metzger and Ehrman provide an English translation: “The shorter reading (unless it lacks entirely the authority of the ancient and weighty witnesses) is to be preferred to the more verbose, for scribes were much more prone to add than to omit. They scarcely ever deliberately omitted anything, but they added many things; certainly they omitted some things by accident, but likewise not a few things have been added to the text by scribes through errors of the eye, ear, memory, imagination, and judgement. Particularly the shorter reading is to be preferred, even though according to the authority of

critics have long employed this canon as a means of evaluating the earlier reading of a New Testament text. Johann Jakob Griesbach formulated fifteen canons of criticism in 1796 of which this canon was the first and, since then, countless text critics over four centuries have passed down Griesbach's canon with little to no variation. Until only recently, very few text critics have offered any objection to his first canon and many today still praise his genius.<sup>32</sup> Griesbach's canons were, essentially, an attempt to codify scribal habits. The quest for scribal habits is an attempt to do away with unspoken assumptions concerning whether scribes altered their texts or if they did their best to reproduce their *Vorlage* faithfully. The quest for scribal habits is an attempt to base our judgment of transcriptional probability on firmly rooted observed evidence.

Our goal, however monumental, is to analyze all Greek New Testament manuscripts according to their scribal habits so at each point of variation we

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the witnesses it may appear to be inferior to the other, – a. if at the same time it is more difficult, more obscure, ambiguous, elliptical, hebraizing, or solecistic; b. if the same thing is expressed with different phrases in various manuscripts; c. if the order of words varies; d. if at the beginning of pericopes; e. if the longer reading savours of a gloss or interpretation, or agrees with the wording of parallel passages, or seems to have come from lectionaries. But on the other hand the longer is to be preferred to the shorter (unless the latter appears in many good witnesses), – a. if the occasion of the omission can be attributed to homoeoteleuton; b. if that which was omitted could have seemed to the scribe to be obscure, harsh, superfluous, unusual, paradoxical, offensive to pious ears, erroneous, or in opposition to parallel passages; c. if that which is lacking could be lacking without harming the sense or the structure of the sentence, as for example incidental, brief prepositions, and other matter the absence of which would be scarcely noticed by the scribe when re-reading what he had written; d. if the shorter reading is less in accord with the character, style, or scope of the author; e. if the shorter reading utterly lacks sense; f. if it is probable that the shorter reading has crept in from parallel passages or from lectionaries,” Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 166–67.

<sup>32</sup> Zuntz refers to Griesbach's canons as “a series of carefully worded rules which gave the essence of his vast experience,” Günther Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum* (London: British Library, 1953), 6; “The canon states that ‘the shorter reading...is preferable to the more verbose;’ this, says Griesbach – quite correctly, is based on the principle that scribes are for more prone to add to their texts than to omit,” Eldon Jay Epp, “The Eclectic Method in New Testament Textual Criticism: Solution or Symptom?” *HTR* 69.3/4 (July–Oct. 1976): 225–26; “The venerable maxim *lectio brevior lectio potior* (‘the shorter reading is the more probable reading’) is certainly right in many instances,” Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; trans. Errol F. Rhodes; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 281; “In general the shorter reading is to be preferred,” Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Stuttgart: UBS, 1994), 13\* (see also 10\*–14\*); “Griesbach showed great skill and tact in evaluating the evidence of variant readings....The importance of Griesbach for New Testament textual criticism can scarcely be overestimated,” Metzger and Ehrman, *Text*, 167.

can appeal to the specific scribe's habits rather than general transcriptional probability or the canons of New Testament textual criticism. While this goal is indeed monumental in scope and we cannot feasibly hope to analyze all witnesses of the New Testament within our lifetimes, achieving our goal is still not as simple as it sounds because we must first agree on a suitable method for determining scribal habits. We must first create a reliable method for determining when a variant was scribally created. One such method is offered by James R. Royse.

## 1.2 Royse's Criticism of Griesbach's First Canon

James R. Royse expresses his doubt in *lectio brevior potior* by first introducing us to Griesbach:

One of the most detailed and influential statements of the canons of textual criticism has been that of Griesbach. If we look at, say, his first canon, that of *lectio brevior potior* ('the shorter reading is to be preferred'), we will gain the impression that Griesbach had the wide-ranging knowledge of documents necessary to delineate precisely when scribes were likely to add and when, as exceptions, they were likely to omit. We may, of course, be sure that Griesbach *did* have such knowledge, and may well regard his distillation of this knowledge into various rules as having sound authority. Nevertheless, it is significant that no specific reading of a manuscript is cited as a foundation for this first canon. And in fact, no specific reading of a manuscript is cited *anywhere* within Griesbach's [canons].<sup>33</sup>

Royse argues that Griesbach's canon originally lacked evidence and that subsequent studies have simply perpetuated Griesbach's canon in spite of its lack of manuscript evidence for its claims.

Dirk Jongkind has questioned whether Royse misrepresented Griesbach's canon.<sup>34</sup> Jongkind argues that while Griesbach's canon has perhaps been received and wielded improperly by text critics since its original formulation by Griesbach, Griesbach himself did originally qualify his canon with caveats and conditions for when the canon may apply. So Royse's critique of Griesbach may not be warranted as a critique of Griesbach himself but rather a critique of how his canon has been used through the ages. But Royse's critique that Griesbach does not provide evidence for how he came about his canons still stands.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> James R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (NTTSD 36; Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 4–5, see also 705–36.

<sup>34</sup> See Dirk Jongkind, *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus* (TS 3.5; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007), 139.

<sup>35</sup> Holger Strutwolf agrees with Royse that Griesbach does not provide evidence for his canons. See Holger Strutwolf, "Scribal Practices and the Transmission of Biblical Texts: New Insights from the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method," in *Editing the Bible:*

Griesbach's canons have been followed for over two hundred years even though, in addition to Roysse's critique that this canon lacks evidence, Griesbach's logic is problematic. Roysse argues that it is logically difficult to balance Griesbach's first canon with his second: *lectio difficilior potior* (the more difficult reading is preferable). Roysse critiques Griesbach's canons, saying,

Among the general rules that critics have formulated, two of the most common are to prefer the shorter reading (*lectio brevior potior*) and to prefer the harder reading (*lectio difficilior potior*). The justification for the former is that scribes tended to add to the text, and for the latter that scribes tended to simplify the text. The use of these two principles, however, must be circumspect. As Edward Hobbs has pointed out, "if you have enough variations, these two rules will inevitably lead to the following absurd results: if you follow the shorter readings, you will end up with no text at all; and if you follow the harder readings, you will end up with an unintelligible text." Consequently, more elaborate statements of textual principles will usually qualify these principles.<sup>36</sup>

Elsewhere, Roysse has added that at times "the different canons conflict with one another."<sup>37</sup>

Roysse rejects the notion that anything can be known about scribal habits in general. Roysse cites Ernest C. Colwell's pioneering study<sup>38</sup> concerning the scribal habits of P<sup>45</sup>, P<sup>66</sup>, and P<sup>75</sup> and synthesizes Colwell's findings saying,

The three scribes studied have quite different profiles of errors. The implications of this point for the usual presentation of the criteria are profound. Instead of saying that scribes tend to do something, *one should rather say that some scribes tend to do one thing, and other scribes tend to do something else*. Yet such precision in the evaluation of particular readings rarely occurs in the literature.<sup>39</sup>

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*Assessing the Task Past and Present* (eds. John S. Kloppenborg and Judith H. Newman; RBS 69; Atlanta: SBL, 2012), 141.

<sup>36</sup> James R. Roysse, "Scribal Tendencies in the Transmission of the Text of the New Testament," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis, Second Edition*, (NTTSD 42; eds. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 465. See also James R. Roysse, "Scribal Tendencies in the Transmission of the Text of the New Testament," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis* (SD 46; eds. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 242. Roysse is here quoting Edward Hobbs, "An Introduction to Methods of Textual Criticism," in *The Critical Study of Sacred Texts* (ed. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty; Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union, 1979), 19.

<sup>37</sup> Roysse, *Scribal Habits*, 5.

<sup>38</sup> Ernest C. Colwell, "Method in Evaluating Scribal Habits: Study of P<sup>45</sup>, P<sup>66</sup>, and P<sup>75</sup>," in *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (NTTS 9; Leiden: Brill, 1969), 106–24.

<sup>39</sup> Roysse, "Scribal Tendencies," NTTSD 42, 469–70; Roysse, "Scribal Tendencies," SD 46, 245–46; emphasis added.

## Subject Index

### *Abschriften*

- as catena manuscripts, 209–10
- defined, 24
- future research possibilities concerning, 209
- of Greek New Testament ordered by date of *Abschrift*, 25–28*t*
- methods for identifying, 39, 42–49, 143–45
- prevailing attitude toward, 41–42
- previous work on, 30–41
- Abschrift* method, 24–30, 201–2, 208
- Adalard of Corbie, 109
- additions
  - in 0319A/B, 202
  - in 0320, 202
  - in 205, 156–58, 202
  - in 821, 181
  - length of, 192–93
  - and omissions in test studies, 202–3
  - in P<sup>127</sup>, 55*t*, 59
  - and paradox of growing Greek New Testament tradition, 188–89
  - scribal treatment of, 193
- Ammonius, 174
- asterisked readings, 52, 155
  
- Bessarion, Cardinal, 124, 125, 127–28, 129, 137, 139–40, 148–49, 163–64, 183, 207
- Beza, Theodore, 65–66
- Bible, injunctions against altering, 185–88
  
- catena manuscripts. *See also* Gregory-Aland 0141; Gregory-Aland 821
  - *Abschriften* of, 209–10
  - of Nicetas, 33–34

- purpose of, 176
- repetition in, 175–76
- Type F, 172, 178, 209
- Choniate, Nicolas, 133
- Chrysostom, John, 174–75
- codicological affinity, and identification of *Abschriften*, 46–47, 146
- Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (CBGM), 4
- Colwell method, 14
- complex scribe, 20n80
- corrections
  - in 0141, 172
  - in 205, 152
  - in 0319A, 81–82
  - in 0319B, 90
  - in 0320, 113
  - in 2886, 144–46
  - in Codex Claromontanus, 65, 68, 74, 76
  - errors due to, in 0319B, 90–91
  - and identification of *Abschriften*, 45
  - in P<sup>127</sup>, 53–54
  - scribal treatment of, in *Vorlage*, 204–5
  - in VL76B, 102
- Cyril of Alexandria, 174, 175
  
- dual agreements, 43, 44, 78, 143
- Dubrowski, Peter, 70
- Dupuy, Claude, 66
  
- e* caudata, 120
- editorial stage, 6
- ektheses, 111
- Ephraem, 185
- errors and error rates
  - in 0319A/B, 82–84, 90–91, 199

- in 0320, 113–14, 199
- in 06, 81*t*
- in 205, 152*t*, 199–200
- in 821, 179*t*, 200
- and calculating number of copying events between manuscripts, 206–7
- error rates contrasted with actual error rates, 198*t*
- in P<sup>127</sup>, 56*t*, 208
- in Royse’s study, 13*t*, 199
- in VL76, 101*t*
- in VL83, 101*t*
- Eusebius, 185
  
- frame catenae, repetition in, 175–76
  
- Göttingen Septuagint, 35–39, 48
- graphical affinity, 33, 43
- Greek speaking scribes, 94–95, 170–71, 183, 196
  
- harmonizations, 2, 14, 17, 21
  
- intentional textual alterations, 1–5
- Irenaeus, 185
- itacism, 85n68, 86, 153n110
  
- Kurzgefasste Liste*, 24
  
- lectio brevior potior*, 7–9
  - and omissions in test studies, 202–3
  - reception of Royce’s theory concerning, 17–20
  - Royse’s criticism of, 9–17
  - and study of 0319A/B, 94
  - and study of VL76, 104
- lectio difficilior potior*, 10
- lectio longior potior*, 13–15
  
- Mendoza, Francisco de, 169–70
  
- names, in P<sup>127</sup>, 56, 58–59
- Nicetas, manuscript and catena of, 33–34, 209
- non-Greek speaking scribes, 94–95, 105–6, 170–71, 183, 196, 204
- nonsense singular readings
  - in Codex Claromontanus, 76
  - in P<sup>127</sup>, 57–58
- nonsense variant readings
  - in 0319A, 87–88, 94
  - in 0319B, 92–93, 94
  - in 0320, 117–18
  - in 205, 153–54
  - in 821, 180–81
  
- omission(s)
  - in 0319A/B, 94
  - in 205, 154–56
  - in 821, 181–82
  - *lectio brevior potior* and, in test studies, 202–3
  - length of, 192–93
  - in P<sup>127</sup>, 55*t*, 59–60, 60–61, 63
  - and paradox of growing Greek New Testament tradition, 188–89
  - scribal tendency toward, 7–8nn31–32, 11, 13–14, 16–20
  - scribal treatment of, 193
  - in VL76A, 102
  - in VL76B, 103
- orthographic variants
  - in 0319A, 84–87, 197
  - in 0319B, 92
  - in 0320, 114–17
  - in 205, 152–53
  - in 821, 180
  - in P<sup>127</sup>, 56–59
  - in VL76, 101, 102
  - in VL83, 120–21
  
- paleographical affinity, and identification of *Abschriften*, 45, 46–47, 144
- patrons, influence of, 207–8. *See also* Bessarion, Cardinal *Pericope Adulterae*, 32
- Plusiadenos, John, 130, 133–37
- printed editions, 34, 57
- proper names, in P<sup>127</sup>, 56, 58–59
  
- Rhosus, John, 128–34, 137, 183
  
- scribal habits. *See also* *Abschrift* method
  - error rate in Royse’s study of, 13*t*
  - and *lectio brevior potior*, 7–20
  - methods for determining, 21–22

- orthographic phenomena in previous, 13*t*
- statistics of previous studies, 12*t*
- theories regarding approach to, 1–7
- understanding, 7, 10
- scribes, punishments for wrongdoing of, 185–88
- Septuagint, 35–39, 48
- sibling manuscripts, and identification of *Abschriften*, 47–48
- Silas, 58–59
- singular readings
  - in 0319, 190–93, 218–19
  - in 0320, 192, 223–24
  - in 06, 190–93
  - in 205, 192–93, 226–27
  - in 2886, 192–93
  - in 821, 228
  - in Codex Bezae, 97
  - in Codex Claromontanus, 190–93
  - error rates contrasted with actual error rates, 198*t*
  - in P<sup>127</sup>, 48, 212–17
  - Royse on, 43–44n95, 96, 97
  - scribal treatment of, in *Vorlage*, 190–93
  - in VL76, 221
- singular readings method, 14–15, 17–20, 96, 201–2
- singular variants
  - in Codex Bezae, 57n22
  - in P<sup>127</sup>, 56–59
- Strategos, Caesar, 133
- substitutions
  - in 0319, 89–90, 93
  - in 0320, 118–19
  - in 205, 159–60
  - in P<sup>127</sup>, 60–62
- Royse on, 60
- in VL76B, 103
- in VL83, 121
- textual affinity
  - between 1884 and 08, 33
  - between 423 and 333, 33–34
  - identifying, in *Abschriften*, 44–45, 46–47, 48
  - between 2886 and 205, 45, 124–27
- textual alterations. *See also* additions; omission(s)
  - as intentional, 1–5
  - as unintentional, 5–7, 205–6
- textual transmission
  - patron’s influence on, 207–8
  - stability of, 194–200
- Theodore the Studite, 185–88
- Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG)*, 105–6
- transcriptional probability, 8, 11, 15n54, 202–3
- transposition
  - in 0319, 83, 88
  - in 06, 79*t*
  - in P<sup>127</sup>, 55*t*, 60
- Trapezuntius, Cosmas, 125
- Tribizius, George, 133
- Type F catenae, 172, 178, 209
- Tzangaropoulos, George, 130
- “uncial,” 69–70n31
- unintentional textual alterations, 5–7, 205–6
- Venetus, Camillus, 166, 167–71, 178, 179, 180–82, 182–83, 193, 200

## Author Index

- Aland, Barbara, 1–2, 7, 21, 34–35, 205  
Aland, Kurt, 34–35  
Allen, Garrick V., 1–4, 6–7  
Anderson, Amy, 32, 42, 129, 138  
de Andres, Gregorio, 169
- Barbour, Ruth, 69–70n31  
Becker, Gustav, 109  
Bischoff, Bernhard, 120  
Bongiovanni, Antonio, 130  
Bredehorn, Karin, 107, 108, 109, 112, 119, 120
- Canart, Paul, 133  
Caragounis, Chrys C., 85n68, 153nn109–110  
Carlson, Stephen C., 16, 34, 202–3  
Choat, Malcolm, 40–41  
Christ, Karl, 109–10  
Clark, Albert C., 13n49  
Clark, Michael Allen, 33–34, 209  
Colwell, Ernest C., 10, 173n38
- Ehrman, Bart, 3, 5, 13n49  
Elliott, J. K., 24n1  
Elliott, W. J., 32–33  
Epp, Eldon Jay, 6–7, 16–17  
Eymann, Hugo S., 71
- Featherstone, Jeffrey, 186–88  
Fernández Marcos, Natalio, 38–39  
Foertsch, Julie, 23n89  
Frede, H. J., 65, 66, 72–73, 98, 108, 109  
Fröhlich, Uwe, 70n34
- Gäbel, Georg, 51, 61n35, 63n42  
Gamillscheg, Ernst, 168  
Gernsbacher, Morton Ann, 23n89  
Gignac, Francis Thomas, 57n21, 73n52, 86, 114, 115, 153nn109–110  
Gregory, Caspar René, 72, 138  
Grein, C. W. M., 40  
Griesbach, Johann Jakob, 7n31, 8, 71, 95n79. See also *lectio brevior potior*  
Gryson, Roger, 71, 109  
Gugel, Klaus, 109
- Haines-Eitzen, Kim, 4, 15n57  
Harlfinger, Dieter, 130, 133, 136, 168  
Head, Peter M., 18, 51  
Hernández, Juan Jr., 17–18  
Hobbs, Edward, 10  
Hoffmann, Hartmut, 107, 109  
Holland, Meridel, 186–88  
Holmes, Michael, 4–5, 18  
Hort, Fenton James Anthony, 41–42, 71  
Houghton, H. A. G., 30–31, 72, 94, 110–11, 120, 175  
Hurtado, Larry, 5, 54n15
- Irigoin, Jean, 64–65
- Jackson, Donald F., 133  
Jongkind, Dirk, 9, 19–20
- Kannaday, Wayne, 5  
Kenyon, Frederic G., 65n2, 72
- Labowsky, Lotte, 139–40  
Lake, Kirsopp, 42, 138
- Malik, Peter, 5, 16, 20n78, 22, 203  
Mandelbrote, Scott, 168  
Manoussacas, M., 127  
Martini, Carlo, 35  
Metzger, Bruce M., 13n49  
de Meyier, K. A., 129n31, 133  
Mink, Gerd, 4

- Mioni, Elpidio, 130, 133  
 Morelli, Jacob, 129, 130  
 Morrill, Bruce, 143, 166, 167  
 Moulton, James Hope, 73n52  
 Müller, Darius, 34
- Nestle, Eberhard, 41, 68–69, 108–9  
 Nielsen, Bruce E., 173–74  
 Nongbri, Brent, 35
- Panella, Theodora, 25–26n3–5, 30–31, 42–43, 209  
 Parker, David C.  
 – on *Abschriften*, 28–29  
 – on application of findings to textual criticism, 204  
 – on Bessarion, 148  
 – on classification of manuscripts, 30–31  
 – on Codex Sangermanensis, 77  
 – on complexity of scribes, 2–3  
 – on copying in Byzantine period, 72n50  
 – on corrections made to *Vorlage*, 95  
 – on Greek manuscripts containing entire New Testament, 126  
 – on identification of *Abschriften*, 45, 46  
 – on P<sup>66</sup>, 82–83  
 – on partial copies of manuscripts, 36, 141, 164  
 – on readings of P<sup>127</sup>, 51  
 – on repetition in frame catenae, 175  
 – on scribe of 205, 129  
 – on scribes of Codex Sangermanensis, 71  
 – on singular readings method, 19  
 – on substitutions in P<sup>127</sup>, 60–61  
 – on textual alteration, 5, 7  
 – on textual criticism, 15  
 – on 2886 as copy of 205, 138
- work on Codex Mediolanensis and Codex Bezae, 39–40  
 Parpulov, Georgi, 126–27, 128  
 Pickering, S. R., 15, 51, 60–61  
 Porter, Calvin, 34–35
- Reuss, Joseph, 172
- Rinck, G. F., 138  
 Robinson, Maurice A., 139  
 Royse, James R.. *See also* singular readings method  
 – on asterisked readings, 52n9, 155n112  
 – on Codices Claromontanus and Sangermanensis, 72  
 – on complex scribe, 20n80  
 – on corrections, 53  
 – criticism of *lectio brevior potior*, 9–17  
 – error rates in study of, 199  
 – on generalizations, 200  
 – on orthographic variants, 56, 84n66, 86n70  
 – reception of theory of, 17–20  
 – on singular readings, 43–44n95, 96, 97  
 – and stability of textual transmission, 194–200  
 – on studying *Abschriften*, 28  
 – on studying scribal habits, 15nn54–55  
 – on substitutions, 60
- Scherbenske, Eric W., 201n22  
 Schmid, Josef, 47, 138, 162  
 Schmid, Ulrich, 5–6, 40  
 Schultze, Viktor, 108, 110, 112n122  
 Scrivener, F. H. A., 65, 68, 72, 75, 129, 138  
 Shanor, Jay, 105–6  
 Shao, Jessica, 162n117  
 Shipley, Frederick William, 41, 68  
 Sickenberger, Joseph, 33, 209  
 Sosower, Mark L., 168, 169  
 Souter, Alexander, 65  
 Strutwolf, Holger, 20
- Tischendorf, Constantin, 65, 67–68, 75, 84, 155  
 Tov, Emmanuel, 18–19  
 Treu, Kurt, 84  
 Trollope, Thomas Adolphus, 127n20  
 Turner, Eric, 28, 81–82
- van der Bergh, Ronald H., 33
- Warena, Amy, 22–23n89  
 Wasserman, Tommy, 32  
 Welsby, Alison

- on appearance of 205, 126
  - on appearance of 2886, 125
  - on corrections in 205, 152
  - on scribes of 205, 129–30
  - and textual affinity between 2886 and 205, 45, 124
  - on 205 as copy of 2886, 139–46
  - work of, on Greek New Testament  
*Abschriften*, 31–32
- Wisse, Frederick, 42, 138

Yuen-Collingridge, Rachel, 40–41

Zanetti, Antonio Maria, 130, 140

Zanetti, Bartholomeus, 168

Zetzel, James E. G., 4

Zuntz, Günther, 8n3

## Manuscript Index

- Codex Alexandrinus, 146  
Codex Bezae, 39–40, 48, 57n22, 61–62  
Codex Boernerianus, 76  
Codex Cassellanus, 40  
Codex Claromontanus. *See also* Gregory-Aland 06; Vetus Latina 75  
– author’s analysis of *Abschriften* of, 24  
– graphical affinity in *Abschriften* of, 43  
– relatives of, 67–68  
– significant variant readings in Greek *Abschriften* of, 79*t*  
– total variants in Greek *Abschriften* of, 80*t*  
Codex Medicus, 41  
Codex Mediolanensis, 39–40  
Codex Puteanus, 41  
Codex Reginensis, 41  
Codex Sangermanensis. *See also* Gregory-Aland 0319; Gregory-Aland 0319A; Gregory-Aland 0319B; Vetus Latina 76  
– conclusions concerning whole of, 104–6  
– scribal habits of, 90–93  
Codex Sinaiticus, 146–47  
Codex Vaticanus, 34–35, 61–62, 146  
Codex Waldeccensis. *See* Gregory-Aland 0320; Vetus Latina 83
- Gregory-Aland 03, 34–35  
Gregory-Aland 06  
– Codex Sangermanensis as copy of, 71–77  
– Codex Waldeccensis as copy of, 110–12  
– corrections in, 81–82  
– error rates in, 81*t*  
– errors in 0319 due to corrections in, 82–84, 90–91  
– errors in 0320 due to corrections in, 113–14  
– list of variant readings between 0319 and, 217–18, 218  
– list of variant readings between 0320 and, 221–23  
– methodology for analysis of, 67–69  
– notable attributes of, 112–13  
– order of Pauline epistles in, 66–67  
– origins and location of, 106–10  
– overview of, 64–66  
– peculiar dual agreements between 0319 and, 78, 219, 220  
– problem of singular readings in, 190–93  
– and substitutions in 0319, 93  
– variants in, against 0319 by test passage, 78*t*  
– variants in, against 0320 by test passage, 78*t*  
– *Vorlage* of, for Hebrews, 98–99  
Gregory-Aland 017, 154–55  
Gregory-Aland 039, 155  
Gregory-Aland 044, 159  
Gregory-Aland 0141  
– conclusions concerning 821 and, 182–84  
– corrections in, 172  
– list of peculiar dual agreements between 821 and, 228–30  
– list of variant readings between 821 and, 228  
– notable attributes of, 171–77  
– and omissions in 821, 181–82  
– overview of 821 and, 166–67

- peculiar dual agreements between 821 and, 173–77
- purpose of, 176
- variants in 821 against, by test passage, 178*t*
- Gregory-Aland 0319
  - attention given to, 41–42
  - comparison of, to 06, 67–69
  - conclusions concerning, 93–97, 104–6
  - as copy of 06, 71–77
  - errors in, due to corrections in 06, 82–84
  - and identification of *Abschriften*, 45
  - notable attributes of, 77–78
  - order of Pauline epistles in, 66–67
  - overview of, 69–71
  - peculiar dual agreements between 06 and, 78
  - problem of singular readings in, 190–93
- Gregory-Aland 0319A
  - accuracy and copying technique in, 88–90
  - additions and omissions in, 202
  - corrections in, 81–82
  - errors due to graphical confusion in, 84
  - list of singular readings of, 218–19
  - list of variant readings between 06 and, 217–18
  - nonsense variant readings of, 87–88
  - orthographic variant readings of, 84–87
  - patron's influence on, 207–8
  - peculiar dual agreements between 06 and, 78, 219
  - problem of singular readings in, 190–93
  - scribal habits of, 78
  - significant error rate of, 199
  - and stability of textual transmission, 196–97
  - total error rate of, 199
  - variants in, against 06 by test passage, 78*t*
- Gregory-Aland 0319B
  - additions and omissions in, 202
  - list of singular readings of, 219
- list of variant readings between 06 and, 218
- patron's influence on, 207–8
- peculiar dual agreements between 06 and, 78, 220
- problem of singular readings in, 190–93
- scribal habits of, 90–93
- and stability of textual transmission, 196–97
- total error rate of, 199
- variants in, against 06 by test passage, 78*t*
- Gregory-Aland 0320. *See also* Codex Waldeccensis; *Vetus Latina* 83
  - additions and omissions in, 202
  - attention given to, 42
  - comparison of, to 06, 67–69
  - conclusions concerning, 119
  - as copy of 06, 110–12
  - corrections in, 113
  - errors in, due to corrections in 06, 113–14
  - list of singular readings of, 223–24
  - list of variant readings between 06 and, 221–23
  - nonsense variant readings in, 117–18
  - notable attributes of, 112–13
  - origins and location of, 106–10
  - orthographic variant readings in, 114–17
  - problem of singular readings in, 192
  - scribal habits of, 113–22
  - substitutions in, 118–19
  - total error rate of, 199
  - variants in, against 06 by test passage, 78*t*
- Gregory-Aland 1, 148–49, 150*t*, 155–56
- Gregory-Aland 69, 154–55
- Gregory-Aland 118, 150*t*
- Gregory-Aland 124, 154–55
- Gregory-Aland 205. *See also* Rahlfs 68
  - additions in, 156–58, 202
  - appearance of, 126
  - attention given to, 42
  - Bessarion's influence on, 207
  - conclusions concerning, 161–65
  - corrections in, 152
  - and corrections in 2886, 144–46

- error rates in, 152*t*
  - historical context of, 183–84, 205–6
  - historical view of 2886 as copy of, 138
  - identity of copyist of, 129–34
  - John Plusiadenos as possible scribe of, 133–37
  - list of peculiar dual agreements between 2886 and, 227
  - list of singular readings of, 226–27
  - list of variant readings between 2886 and, 224–26
  - nonsense variant readings in, 153–54
  - omissions in, 154–56, 202
  - order of books in 2886 and, 146–49
  - orthographic variant readings in, 152–53
  - problem of singular readings in, 192–93
  - Schmid’s analysis of 2886 and, 47
  - scribal habits of, 124–27, 150–60
  - significant variant readings in, 151*t*
  - substitutions in, 159–60
  - textual affinity between 2886 and, 45, 124–27
  - total error rate of, 199–200
  - total variants in, 151*t*
  - variants in, against 2886 by test passage, 151*t*
  - Welsby on, as copy of 2886, 139–46
  - Gregory-Aland 209, 138, 148–49, 150*t*, 162, 163
  - Gregory-Aland 448, 131
  - Gregory-Aland 565, 159
  - Gregory-Aland 821
    - additions in, 181
    - and background of Camillus Venetus, 167–71
    - conclusions concerning, 182–84
    - corrections in, 179–80
    - error rates in, 179*t*
    - historical context of, 205–6
    - list of peculiar dual agreements between 0141 and, 228–30
    - list of singular readings of, 228
    - list of variant readings between 0141 and, 228
    - nonsense variant readings in, 180–81
    - notable attributes of, 178
      - and notable attributes of 0141, 172
      - omissions in, 181–82, 202
      - orthographic variant readings in, 180
      - overview of, 166–67
      - peculiar dual agreements between 0141 and, 173–77
      - scribal habits of, 179–82
      - significant variant readings in, 179*t*
      - total error rate of, 200
      - total variants in, 179*t*
      - variants in, against 0141 by test passage, 178*t*
  - Gregory-Aland 1370, 167
  - Gregory-Aland 1424, 147–48
  - Gregory-Aland 1582, 150*t*
  - Gregory-Aland 2713, 150*t*
  - Gregory-Aland 2886. *See also* Rahlfs 122
    - and additions in 205, 156–58
    - appearance of, 125
    - Bessarion’s influence on, 207
    - conclusions concerning 205 and, 161–65
    - copy location of, 138
    - corrections in, 144–46
    - historical view of, as copy of 205, 138
    - list of peculiar dual agreements between 205 and, 227
    - list of variant readings between 205 and, 224–26
    - and nonsense variant readings in 205, 153
    - and omissions in 205, 154–56
    - order of books in 205 and, 146–49
    - problem of singular readings in, 192–93
    - Schmid’s analysis of 205 and, 47
    - and substitutions in 205, 159–60
    - textual affinity between 205 and, 45, 124–27
    - variants in 205 against, by test passage, 151*t*
    - Welsby on 25 as copy of, 139–46
- p<sup>127</sup>
- accuracy and copying technique in, 59–62
  - alterations in, 206
  - conclusion on, 62–63

- content of, 52–53
- corrections in, 53–54
- error rate in, 56*t*, 208
- and identification of *Abschriften*, 48
- in light of *Abschrift* method, 208
- list of singular readings of, 212–17
- methodology for analysis of, 52
- need for analysis of, 51
- omissions and additions in, 55*t*
- orthographic phenomena in, 55*t*
- singular variants in, 56–59
- and stability of textual transmission, 194–96
- P<sup>45</sup>, 62
- P<sup>46</sup>, 62
- P<sup>66</sup>, 82–83
- P<sup>75</sup>, 34–35, 199
- Paris gr. 136, 135
- Paris gr. 423, 135
- Paris gr. 828, 134
- Paris gr. 1235, 135
- Paris gr. 1732, 134, 135, 136
- Paris gr. 2828, 135
- Paris gr. 2992, 135
  
- Rahlfs 14, 36
- Rahlfs 17, 36
- Rahlfs 36, 36
- Rahlfs 46, 37
- Rahlfs 52, 37
- Rahlfs 68, 38–39. *See also* Gregory-Aland 205
- Rahlfs 73, 36
- Rahlfs 87, 37
- Rahlfs 97, 37
- Rahlfs 98, 37
- Rahlfs 107, 37–38
- Rahlfs 120, 38
- Rahlfs 122, 39. *See also* Gregory-Aland 2886
- Rahlfs 241, 38
- Rahlfs 248, 36
- Rahlfs 260, 38
- Rahlfs 320, 36
- Rahlfs 379, 37
- Rahlfs 420, 37
- Rahlfs 442, 38–39
- Rahlfs 471, 38
- Rahlfs 478, 36
  
- Rahlfs 483, 36
- Rahlfs 488, 38
- Rahlfs 501, 36
- Rahlfs 517, 38
- Rahlfs 550, 36
- Rahlfs 552, 36
- Rahlfs 610, 37–38
- Rahlfs 631, 37
- Rahlfs 666, 36
- Rahlfs 669, 38
- Rahlfs 671, 38
- Rahlfs 731, 38
- Rahlfs 733, 38
  
- Vetus Latina 75. *See also* Codex Claromontanus; Gregory-Aland 06
  - intended audience of, 77
  - and intricacies of *Abschriften* identification, 47–48
  - and scribal habits of VL83, 120–22
  - variants in, against VL76, 99*t*, 220–21
  - VL76 as copy of, 97–98
  - VL83 as copy of, 110–12, 122–23
- Vetus Latina 76. *See also* Codex Sangermanensis; Gregory-Aland 0319; Gregory-Aland 0319A; Gregory-Aland 0319B
  - conclusions concerning, 103–4, 106
  - as copy of Codex Claromontanus, 97–98
  - as copy of VL75, 97–98
  - differences between VL83 and, 120, 122–23
  - error rates in, 101*t*
  - intended audience of, 77
  - and intricacies of *Abschriften* identification, 47–48
  - list of singular readings of, 221
  - notable attributes of, 98–99, 112–13
  - scribal habits of Scribe A, 99–102
  - scribal habits of Scribe B, 102–4
  - significant variant readings in, 100*t*
  - total variants in, 100*t*
  - variants in, against VL75, 99*t*, 220–21
- Vetus Latina 83. *See also* Codex Waldeccensis; Gregory-Aland 0320
  - conclusions concerning, 123
  - as copy of VL75, 110–12, 122–23
  - error rates in, 101*t*

- and intricacies of *Abschriften* identification, 47–48
- notable attributes of, 112–13
- orthographic variants in, 120–21
- scribal habits of, 120–22
- significant variant readings in, 100*t*
- substitutions in, 121
- total variants in, 100*t*