

JUAN HERNÁNDEZ JR.

Scribal Habits and
Theological Influences
in the Apocalypse

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Juan Hernández Jr.

Scribal Habits and Theological Influences in the Apocalypse

The Singular Readings of Sinaiticus,
Alexandrinus, and Ephraemi

Mohr Siebeck

JUAN HERNÁNDEZ JR., born 1968; 1998 M.Div.; 2000 Th.M.; 2006 Ph.D. Emory University;
Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies at Bethel University, MN, USA.

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*A Melissa DeJesús Hernández
por su amor y apoyo*

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Abbreviations

<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i>
<i>BHT</i>	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CSCO</i>	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientaliu
<i>CSEL</i>	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>Gn</i>	<i>Gnomon</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>HSCP</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
<i>ICC</i>	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LQ</i>	<i>Lutheran Quarterly</i>
<i>NHS</i>	Nag Hammadi Studies
<i>NovTSup</i>	Novum Testamentum Supplements
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>NTTS</i>	New Testament Tools and Studies
<i>OrChr</i>	<i>Oriens christianus</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
<i>SD</i>	Studies and Documents
<i>SNTSMS</i>	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>SO</i>	Symbolae osloenses
<i>TRu</i>	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
<i>TU</i>	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
<i>WBC</i>	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

Chapter 1

Prolegomena to the Study of the Greek Text of the Apocalypse

1.1. Introduction

Scribes have left their indelible mark upon the Scriptures everywhere. Whether introducing careless changes or deliberately altering the words of the text, the MS tradition of the NT bears consistent witness to this pervasive tendency. Often, the very language of Scripture offended scribes' cultural and linguistic sensibilities, prompting efforts to save the Holy Writ from its own embarrassing colloquialisms. Such infelicitous expressions were not worthy of God; moreover, they could easily become fodder for the enemies of the church. The language of the Apocalypse was especially prone to such dangers, as its numerous Semitisms and solecisms spurred style-conscious scribes to improve upon its diction. However, not everyone felt indebted to the scribes on this score. Writing in the seventh century, Andrew of Caesarea condemned those literati who preferred syllogisms and the Attic style to the peculiar language of Scripture.¹ In his commentary on the Apocalypse, this otherwise allegorical interpreter of Scripture offers a literal application to the words of Rev 22:18–19:

Dreadful is the curse upon those counterfeiters of the divine words, capable of depriving the arrogant of the good things of the coming age, since their rashness is bold indeed. Therefore, to keep us from suffering, [John] warns us hearers, lest we add or take something away. But those who regard writing in the Attic style and the language of syllogisms more reliable and more dignified are rejected.²

Judging by the persistence of variants well after the seventh century, it would appear that few took the Bishop's threats seriously.

Concerns over the Apocalypse's peculiar language and the scribal activity it generated are amply attested throughout antiquity. What our sources do not

¹ Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (4th ed.; New York; Oxford University Press, 2005), 261.

² Josef Schmid. *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes: Der Apokalypse-Kommentar des Andreas von Kaisareia, Text* (Munich: Zink, 1955), 1:262; my translation.

report, however, is whether scribes occupied themselves with editorial activity *beyond* the improvement of the work's grammar and style.³ That we might expect scribes to direct their attention to issues other than the linguistic variety is suggested by some of the early literature on the Apocalypse, which uncovers a cornucopia of interpretive problems specific to the work. Apart from doubts raised over its authorship and apostolic status, critics impugn the Apocalypse for its millennial teaching, its Jewish character, its depiction of angels, its putative historical inaccuracies, and its association with rogue prophetic movements. Yet, scribal activity is never mentioned in connection with such problems. Judging from our available sources, it would appear that the Apocalypse was either rejected or accepted; and if accepted, its hermeneutical challenges handled through a variety of reading strategies. Tampering with its text, however, does not appear to be one of these.

I claim the contrary in this dissertation: the scribes of the Apocalypse were *most certainly* involved in addressing contemporary interpretive concerns through textual changes, though these changes occur neither *where* nor *how* nor *to the degree* that we might expect. But that they do occur will be shown to be indisputable. However, before I lay out the particulars of my case, some attention must be paid to the distinctive and difficult character of the Apocalypse's MS tradition. We cannot begin to assess scribal copying practices in this work – much less articulate a convincing thesis – without first giving due attention to its fragmentary and complex MS tradition.

1.2. The Distinctive Character of the Apocalypse's MS Tradition

The Apocalypse's poor preservation, the conspicuous presence of non-canonical works alongside it in many MSS, and the book's notable absence among the lectionary material combine to make the Apocalypse's MS tradition the most peculiar and elusive of all NT writings. The fragmentary character of its early witnesses testifies to its poor attestation – the poorest of any NT writing.⁴ Currently, only 7 papyri and 11 majuscules preserve the

³ One notable exception is Birdsall's argument that 616 in Rev 13:18 is original and that 666 is a deliberate alteration. See J. N. Birdsall, "Irenaeus and the Number of the Beast (Rev 13,18)" in *New Testament Textual Criticism and Exegesis: Festschrift J. Delobel* (ed. A. Denaux; Leuven University Press, 2002), 349–59.

⁴ Every pre-fourth century MS contains only portions of the book of Revelation. For example, P⁹⁸ (2d cent.) contains only 1:13–20; P⁴⁷ (3d cent.) contains 9:10–11:3; 11:5–16:15; 16:17–17:2; P¹⁸ (3d cent.) contains 1:4–7; and P¹¹⁵ (3d/4th cent.). The three MSS that are contemporary with the fourth century \aleph are also fragmentary: P²⁴, contains only 5:5–8; 6:5–8; 0169 contains 3:19–4:3; and 0207 contains 9:2–15. The next full-length MS is A in the fifth century. C was also originally a full-length MS, but is incredibly lacunose due to its

work.⁵ The bulk of its witnesses consists of later minuscules,⁶ most of them dating after the tenth century.⁷ Some MSS containing both the Apocalypse and another portion of the NT record the Apocalypse in a different hand, suggesting that the decision to expand a codex by adding Revelation was an afterthought, perhaps undertaken once the work gained widespread acceptance.⁸

Second, the frequent addition of commentary to the text of the Apocalypse is another distinctive feature of its MS tradition – understandable given the work's esoteric language and bizarre symbolism. However, the accompanying literature is not limited to commentaries on the Apocalypse. More often than not Revelation stands in the middle of MSS that record no other biblical content, but rather house a variety of non-canonical writings.⁹ At the very least such a phenomenon indicates that the Apocalypse enjoyed a history quite independent of the church's *institutional* usage of it.¹⁰

Finally, no Greek lectionaries exist for the Apocalypse.¹¹ The consequences of this are threefold. First, textual critics possess less evidence for tracing the history of its MSS.¹² Second, since lectionaries played a critical

status as a palimpsest. One other fifth century MS, 0163, contains only 16:17–20.

⁵ The papyri are: P¹⁸, P²⁴, P⁴³, P⁴⁷, P⁸⁵, P⁹⁸, and P¹¹⁵. The majuscules are: N, A, C, P, 046, 051, 052, 0163, 0169, 0207, and 0229.

⁶ 293 are currently on record.

⁷ "Later" does not necessarily mean unreliable as some of these minuscules preserve an ancient form of the text (i.e. they agree with earlier witnesses). For example, 2057 2062 2344 agree with A C, which textual critics consider the best witnesses for the Apocalypse. See J. K. Elliott, "The Distinctiveness of the Greek Manuscripts of the Book of Revelation," *JTS* 48 (1997): 116–17.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁹ These include the works of a number of illustrious figures such as Dionysius the Areopagite (MS 2059), Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, and Peter of Alexandria (MS 2030), the homilies of Chrysostom on the Gospel of John (MS 2060). For a full listing of individual MSS of the Apocalypse that are accompanied by non-canonical works, see Bruce M. Metzger, "The Future of New Testament Textual Studies," in *The Bible As Book: The Transmission of the Greek Text* (ed. Scot McKendrick and Orlaith A. O'Sullivan; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll, 2003), 205–6.

¹⁰ Metzger, "The Future of New Testament," 206.

¹¹ Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 49, 307 n. 12. See also, Carroll D. Osburn, "The Greek Lectionaries of the New Testament," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis* (ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes; SD 46; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), 61–74.

¹² Textual critics value the lectionaries because they assist in tracing the history of the NT text during the Byzantine period. This does not mean, however, that their text-types date only from the Byzantine period. Metzger and Ehrman note: "Inasmuch as the form of the citation of the Scriptures in official liturgical books always tends to be conservative and almost archaic, lectionaries are valuable in preserving a type of text that is frequently much older than the actual age of the manuscript might lead one to suspect." Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 46–47. For more information on the study of NT Greek lectionaries, see

role in stabilizing the Byzantine text elsewhere in the NT, the lack of a lectionary results in a less homogeneous Byzantine text for the book of Revelation (a state of affairs partially mirrored in Acts). The Apocalypse's MS tradition contains two recensions of the Byzantine text-type: Koine and Andreas.¹³ Third, the absence of lectionaries *may* suggest that the text of the Apocalypse was excluded from liturgical usage.¹⁴ Most scholars attribute the Apocalypse's peculiar fate in this regard to early disputes over its canonicity, though few offer detailed causal arguments to support their claim.¹⁵

The distinctive character of the Apocalypse's MS tradition is not limited to the documentary evidence, but extends even to its text-types. The Apocalypse's principal text-types are arranged differently and accorded different weight in contrast to the rest of the NT.¹⁶ Hort put it best when he wrote: "familiar documents assume a new position."¹⁷ Today textual critics have identified four main text-types for Revelation, represented by the following witnesses: a) AC Oecumenius 2057. 2062. 2344; b) \aleph^a Andreas; c) the Koine; and d) \mathfrak{P}^{47} \aleph^* . According to Schmid, all four can be traced back at least to the fourth century and, unlike the rest of the NT, no "ecclesiastically approved" text exists.¹⁸

Several ironies result from this peculiar state of affairs. First, although the Apocalypse's MS tradition is regarded as "ausserordentlich unsicher,"¹⁹ most of its variants appear to be either "touch-ups" that do not significantly alter the meaning of the text²⁰ or clearly late, and therefore, unhelpful for reconstructing the *Urtext*. Thus, despite the complexities of the tradition, modern critical editions of the Apocalypse hardly differ from one another.²¹ Second, as Elliott points out, "the main differences in methodology and even ideology

the valuable study of Ernest C. Colwell and Donald W. Riddle, *Prolegomena to the Study of the Lectionary Text of the Gospels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933).

¹³ Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 307 n. 12.

¹⁴ So Schmid, *Studien*, 2:31. It is important to recognize, however, that the Apocalypse's absence from the lectionary material does not preclude its role or influence upon the early church's liturgy in other ways.

¹⁵ Elliott, "Distinctiveness," 122. Particularly revealing is the fact that the lectionaries are a product of the Eastern churches, where the Apocalypse encountered some difficulties. See Donald W. Riddle, "The Use of Lectionaries in Critical Editions and Studies of the New Testament Text" in *Prolegomena*, 67–77.

¹⁶ Schmid, *Studien*, 2:146–50; Elliott, "Distinctiveness," 120.

¹⁷ F. J. A. Hort, *Introduction and Appendix* (vol. 2 of *The New Testament in the Original Greek*; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1882), 260.

¹⁸ Schmid, *Studien*, 2:146.

¹⁹ B. Weiss, *Die Johannes-Apokalypse: Textkritische Untersuchungen und Textherstellung* (TU 7.1; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1891), 1.

²⁰ Schmid lists a few exceptions to this general rule. *Studien*, 2:1 n. 4.

²¹ Perhaps the sole exception to this is Tischendorf, who preferred Sinaiticus.

between editions favoring the *Textus Receptus* and those favoring Westcott and Hort are less clear-cut in Revelation.”²²

Anyone investigating the Apocalypse’s MSS must exercise considerable caution, as few of the assumptions generally true about the rest of the NT text hold true here. More than ever Hort’s oft-quoted *dictum* is critical: “knowledge of documents should precede final judgment upon readings.”²³ Thus, the textual critic must know the tradition well. (This is true whether the variants are used to restore the text or to examine scribal tendencies.)

1.3. Status Quaestionis: The Greek Text of the Apocalypse

Two areas currently in need of scholarly attention are the Apocalypse’s textual history and transcriptional probabilities (i.e. scribal tendencies) within its MS tradition.²⁴ While the former received critical scrutiny in the first half of the twentieth century, the latter has hardly received any.

1.3.1. Textual History

Schmid’s *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes* represents the high-water mark of studies on Revelation’s MS tradition. No work of the scope and significance of Schmid’s on the textual history of the Greek text of the Apocalypse has appeared since his contribution in the mid-fifties. Occasional refinements have surfaced but for the most part Schmid’s reconstruction of the Greek text of the Apocalypse and his explanation of how its MSS relate to one another remain unchanged and unchallenged. Recently, J. K. Elliott observed that “[a] comprehensive history of the text of Revelation and the patristic commentaries waits to be written” and that “the updating of Schmid’s pioneering work is a desideratum in textual criticism.”²⁵

²² Elliott, “Distinctiveness,” 120. See also J. Delobel, “Le texte de l’Apocalypse: Problèmes de méthode,” in *L’Apocalypse johannique et l’Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament* (ed. J. Lambrecht; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979), 156.

²³ Hort, *Introduction*, 2:31.

²⁴ It is perhaps ironic that two recent volumes devoted to the *Status Quaestionis* of the field of textual criticism say nothing at all about the Apocalypse. To be sure, most, if not all, of the topics discussed therein have far-reaching implications transcending any single NT writing. (In fact, a few of their articles prompted my own thinking about the Apocalypse’s text.) However, as I indicate above, the Apocalypse’s distinctive MS tradition calls for specialized attention. See Ehrman and Holmes, *The Text of the New Testament*, and David A. Black, *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2002).

²⁵ By “comprehensive” Elliott appears to mean not simply a history of the Greek text, but one that makes use of the numerous versions as well. Schmid received criticism for not relating them to the Greek text of the Apocalypse. Elliott, “Distinctiveness,” 122. See also Bruce

Two implications are clear from Schmid's dominance even into the twenty-first century. First, any study of the Apocalypse's MS tradition must engage Schmid's expert treatment. Second, the researcher must read Schmid's monograph in light of new questions, methods and discoveries, as more than fifty years have passed since his original and groundbreaking work appeared.²⁶

1.3.2. *Transcriptional Probabilities*

The second problem, falling under the rubric "transcriptional probabilities," is a subcategory of transmission history. Scholars often trace the transmission of a NT text by sifting through its variants and determining the direction of influence in an attempt to arrive at the *Urtext*. Part of the process of identifying the *Urtext* involves locating the reading that gave rise to all others. The results are bi-directional: they reach *back* to the presumed original and they reach *forward* by tracing subsequent development. However, in recent years textual critics have diverted their attention from this retrogressive quest for the *Urtext* to an appreciation of variants on their own terms, for what they reveal about copying practices in the early church. This has resulted in a proliferation of studies dedicated solely to scribal activity, with forays into their education, training, broad socio-historical context, ideologies, and gender.²⁷ Yet, despite the recent reorientation, discussions of scribal practices in the Apocalypse's MSS have continued along the prior lines. Apart from two references in Ehr-

M. Metzger, "Schmid, Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes," *Gnomon* 29 (1957): 289; G. D. Kilpatrick, "Professor J. Schmid on the Greek Text of the Apokalypse," *Vigiliae Christianae* 13 (1959): 2, 12; J. Neville Birdsall, "The Text of the Revelation of Saint John: A Review of its Materials and Problems With Special Reference to the Work of Josef Schmid," *EvQ* 33 (1961): 228–37.

²⁶ For example, Schmid makes considerable use of the early church fathers in his investigation of the Greek text of the Apocalypse. Today there is an entire series, *The New Testament in the Greek Fathers* (currently under the editorship of Michael W. Holmes) devoted to such research, using newer methods pioneered by Gordon D. Fee. As far as I know, Schmid's work has not been reassessed in light of these newer approaches. Another avenue of research involves applying the quantitative method of textual analysis to the question of the Apocalypse's text-types. Specifically, \aleph has long been recognized as an Alexandrian text with a mixture of Western readings. However, recent statistical analyses have shown that, at least in the case of John 1–8, the text is not Alexandrian with Western readings. Instead John 1–8 contains a Western form of the text while John 9–21 contains an Alexandrian text. Such statistical analyses have yet to be applied to the Apocalypse's text in \aleph . See Gordon D. Fee, "Codex Sinaiticus in the Gospel of John: A Contribution to Methodology in Establishing Textual Relationships," in *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism* (ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Gordon D. Fee; SD 45; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), 221–43.

²⁷ Kim Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

man's *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*,²⁸ the Apocalypse's MS tradition has not been analyzed for its potential contribution to issues relevant to the early church,²⁹ in spite of the fact that specialists claim we have the most complete history of the text of the Apocalypse.³⁰

1.4. Scribal Tendencies in the Apocalypse: Its Singular Readings

This dissertation targets the second area of research: scribal tendencies in the Greek text of the Apocalypse. In particular, our study focuses on the Apocalypse's singular readings in its three most important full-length MSS: Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus, and Codex Ephraemi.³¹ Analyzing the Apocalypse's singular readings is the most effective method for assessing scribal tendencies within its MS tradition for three reasons. First, as the singular readings have no genetic or genealogical connections to any other readings, a study limited to the singulars avoids relying on "dated" and potentially problematic information about the Apocalypse's textual relationships for its

²⁸ 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), 163, 272 n. 42.

²⁹ To be sure, there are legitimate reasons for this investigative lacuna. Unlike the Gospels and Paul's letters, the Apocalypse's MS tradition does not lend itself easily to an inquiry into scribal tendencies. The complexity of its tradition and the exceedingly fragmentary character of its witnesses understandably dissuade such a study. Moreover, the Apocalypse's variants differ *in kind* from those used in Ehrman's study, which fit more easily into his discussions of early Christological controversies. Most of the Apocalypse's variants (found in our critical apparatuses) appear to be grammatical or stylistic in nature. They do not appear *prima facie* to be theologically motivated changes.

³⁰ All the current scholarly climate affords us are general statements about the potential link between the Apocalypse's peculiar MS tradition and its difficulties in gaining acceptance into the canon, namely, that the latter created the conditions for the former. No one appears to have attempted to *demonstrate* a historical connection between the two and to relate the data from the MS tradition with the prevailing issues that affected the Apocalypse's canonical status. More specifically, we might ask what issues led to a sector of the church's apprehension over the Apocalypse and whether those issues surface in the MS tradition in one way or another. Even here, however, "canonical issues" can only serve as a heuristic guide as the MS tradition may bear witness to concerns not represented in other historical literature. For the connection between the Apocalypse's MS tradition and canon, see Elliott, "Distinctiveness," 122; Epp, "Issues in the Interrelation of New Testament Textual Criticism and Canon," in *The Canon Debate: On the Origins and Formation of the Bible* (ed. Lee M. McDonald and James A. Sanders; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 505.

³¹ A singular reading is a reading found only in one MS and assumed to have been introduced into the textual history by a scribe. A full discussion of how I identify and use the singular readings of the Apocalypse is found in chapter two.

understanding of scribal activity. In other words, we can pursue the question of scribal tendencies without having fully addressed the concerns of the first research lacuna: the Apocalypse's textual history. Second, with only a handful of exceptions, the singular readings are most certainly "created" readings. As such, these readings serve as one of the most reliable gauges available for measuring scribal copying habits. Third, since most singular readings are generally omitted in critical apparatuses (due to their irrelevance to the larger questions of textual consanguinity), identifying and studying these provide us direct access to otherwise neglected data that are crucial for understanding scribal copying habits. Of course, the singular readings are only a small piece of the puzzle, but no less critical for studying scribal habits than the identification of those strategic puzzle pieces that serve as the borders of a whole picture.

1.5. Structure and Plan of the Dissertation

In addition to the current chapter, which functions as the prolegomenon to the entire project, there are six additional chapters to the dissertation. Chapter two recounts the research history of the Greek text of the Apocalypse and demonstrates in full detail the need for the current project. The first section of this chapter narrates the search for the Apocalypse's *Urtext*, while the second part traces the recent shift from the quest for the *Urtext* to scribal habits and practices in the NT. (It is here that the startling neglect of the Apocalypse is cast into bold relief.) Chapter two also ends with a detailed discussion of the method to be used in the analysis of the Apocalypse's MS tradition. Chapters three, four, and five form the core of the project, with each chapter respectively analyzing the singular readings of the Apocalypse in Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and Ephraemi. Chapter six relates those singular readings that appear to reflect significant hermeneutical or theological concerns to the Apocalypse's socio-historical and theological setting. Finally, chapter seven offers a summary of our results.

1.6. Thesis

My basic thesis is that the scribes of Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and Ephraemi altered the text of the Apocalypse in unexpected and surprising ways that confound almost every conceivable assumption and stereotype about scribal activity in the work. Three observations support this thesis. First, it will be shown that the scribes of the Apocalypse omitted more of the text than they added thus producing a shorter text in *all three* MSS. This challenges the en-

trenched assumption that forms the basis of the principle of *lectio brevior potior*, namely, that scribes tended to add rather than omit from their texts. Second, it will also be demonstrated that while grammatical and stylistic revisions are present in all three MSS, in every case these are outnumbered by other scribal tendencies, especially the tendency to harmonize to the immediate context. Here we document with greater specificity than has been previously available exactly what types of changes were most prevalent among our scribes. Finally, while each of the three MSS contains changes that transcend the categories of grammar and style (often reflecting the respective scribe's idiosyncrasies or interpretive sensibilities), our study will show that at least one MS contains singular readings that appear to address a larger and far more serious concern: the rise of "Arianism" in the fourth century. Several of Codex Sinaiticus's singular readings seem to reflect an anti-"Arian" polemic in their selective alteration of passages about the Son. Such changes not only reveal a theologically literate scribe engaged in the controversies of the day, but also lead us to expect related changes among the non-singular readings and therefore signal a promising new area of text-critical research on the Apocalypse. Moreover, the discovery brings to light for the first time the influence of controversies traditionally *unassociated* with the Apocalypse on its text. Apart from the singular readings of Codex Sinaiticus, there is no indication whatsoever in any of our patristic sources that the Apocalypse was susceptible to an "Arian" interpretation of its text and therefore in need of editing. Only a detailed study of this MS's singular readings has made such information available.

Chapter 2

A History of Research of the Greek Text of the Apocalypse

2.1. In Search of the Apocalypse's *Urtext*

Textual criticism's present focus on scribal habits and practices within the NT's MS tradition is a pendulum swing away from prior interests. For most of its history, text-critical research gravitated toward the goal of ascertaining the original text through a variety of investigative procedures and methods. MSS were amassed, principles articulated, text-types identified, MS families grouped together, and critical editions produced – all in the interest of reproducing the original text of the NT. Today the production of a critical edition of the NT is but one of textual criticism's many goals. To highlight this shift, I divide the history of research into two distinct parts.¹ The first major section tracks research trends that eventuated in the quest for the *Urtext* in studies of the Greek text of the Apocalypse. Although such investigative interests did not reach full maturity until the Enlightenment was well underway, they were not without their critical antecedents, particularly the growing awareness of the need to discriminate between competing variants as MSS increasingly became available and text-critical methods were refined.²

The second major section traces more recent trends that steadily move away from this quest for the *Urtext*, turning their attention instead to scribal habits and practices. These formerly ancillary interests – once marshaled in

¹ Although the history of text-critical research is characterized by more than this polarity, the division conveniently highlights the direction of my project.

² For the most part, I limit my selection to those scholars whose work has had a direct impact on the study of the Greek text of the Apocalypse. I grant special attention to the critical editions produced, their underlying MSS, and each contributor's understanding of the interrelationships among the Apocalypse's MSS. Where possible I also compare each textual critic's reconstructed edition with others. However, not every major interpreter will have produced a critical edition and even those who have done so may not have made clear the principles behind their work, or advanced the field significantly and so forth. Thus, some gaps necessarily remain. Also, since the earliest period is shrouded in obscurity, only the briefest of sketches is possible. It is not until Erasmus that we catch our first clear glimpse of the MSS containing the Apocalypse.

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