

ALAN TAYLOR FARNES

Simply Come Copying

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

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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

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

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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 criticism¹ there seem to be two main entrenched theories concerning how scribes went about their work.² 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).³

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*

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ 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.⁴

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"⁵ of harmonizations can we find traces of intentional changes by the scribe. She repeats this caution again later in the same article.⁶ 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.⁷

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.⁸

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

⁴ 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.

⁵ Aland, "Schreiber," 114: engen Rahmen.

⁶ 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.

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

⁸ 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.”⁹

I do not disagree with Allen’s summary claim that “textual history functions as a medium for reception history.”¹⁰ 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*.¹¹ 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.¹² 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.”¹³ 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

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Allen, “Codex Alexandrinus,” 860.

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

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.”¹⁴ 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.”¹⁵

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.”¹⁶ He continues, “A well-educated, well-informed, conscientious but unscholarly anonymous *reader* is much more likely to have been responsible than any ‘important personality.’”¹⁷ 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.”¹⁸ Elsewhere Holmes has written that the origin of many of the substantive deliberate variants “are due to the activity of educated, thoughtful,

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ Holmes, “Codex Bezae,” 149, emphasis in original.

¹⁸ *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).¹⁹ 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.”²⁰ 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.”²¹ Peter Malik’s recent monograph on the earliest and most extensive manuscript of the book of Revelation, P⁴⁷, concludes that its scribe “attempts to copy his exemplar accurately, but frequently lacks the adequate skill and/or discipline to do so.”²² 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*.²³

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

¹⁹ Michael W. Holmes, “The Text of P⁴⁶: 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.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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.

²² Peter Malik, *P. Beatty III (P⁴⁷): The Codex, Its Scribe, and Its Text* (NTTSD 52; Leiden: Brill, 2017), 172.

²³ See Peter M. Head, “Scribal Behaviour and Theological Tendencies in Singular Readings in P. Bodmer II (P⁶⁶),” 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).²⁴

Schmid then provides an example from P⁷⁵ 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."²⁵ 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.²⁶ 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,"²⁷ 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"²⁸ 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-

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ Schmid, "Scribes and Variants," 23.

²⁶ Schmid, "Reader's Notes," 62–63.

²⁷ Schmid, "Reader's Notes," 63.

²⁸ Schmid, "Reader's Notes," 64.

script ... with one specific tendency.”²⁹ 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.”³⁰

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).³¹ Text

²⁹ 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).

³⁰ Parker, “Scribal Tendencies,” 176.

³¹ 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.³² 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

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* (4th ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 166–67.

³² 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* (2nd 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* (2nd 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].³³

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.³⁴ 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.³⁵

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

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

³⁵ 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.³⁶

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

Roysse rejects the notion that anything can be known about scribal habits in general. Roysse cites Ernest C. Colwell's pioneering study³⁸ concerning the scribal habits of P⁴⁵, P⁶⁶, and P⁷⁵ 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.³⁹

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

³⁶ 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.

³⁷ Roysse, *Scribal Habits*, 5.

³⁸ Ernest C. Colwell, "Method in Evaluating Scribal Habits: Study of P⁴⁵, P⁶⁶, and P⁷⁵," in *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (NTTS 9; Leiden: Brill, 1969), 106–24.

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

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