

***Center for New Testament Restoration
Project Overview***

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Preface

I first learned Greek in 1991 at the Kensington Theological Academy under the tutelage of Dr. David R. Dilling, Th.D., Ph.D. I had heard about his Greek class from a coworker who said I could tag along. Dr. Dilling recalls that I pretty much just sat there unassumingly and said almost nothing. After completing the course, I eventually became aware of various debates over variant readings and different text-type theories. I naively thought it should be fairly simply to collect some of the modern Greek critical texts and compare them to see how they differed. To start with, I went to the Internet and downloaded a copy of Westcott and Hort. Just to be safe, I decided to download a second copy of it and to make sure they were the same. To my surprise they were different. So I downloaded yet another copy, and it was different still. I eventually obtained six different copies of Westcott and Hort and all of them were different! But which one of them was correct? To answer that question, I made a master list of all the differences between those texts and took a trip to the Taylor University library to examine an actual copy of Westcott and Hort. Again to my surprise, *none of the texts obtained from the Internet were correct!* So I painstakingly went through over 1000 different verses to determine what the correct readings should be and finally created an accurate electronic copy of Westcott and Hort. Okay, but that was only one text.

I then proceeded to do the same thing with the 1550 Stephanus text, the 1894 Scrivener text, and the Nestle-Aland 27th text and again found that *every one* of those electronic texts contained errors and needed to be corrected through the exact same process. It was through that experience that I founded the Scientific Greek New Testament Interlinear (SGNTI) project in 2003 with the goal of providing accurate Greek texts in an interlinear fashion to enhance the study of the New Testament. But after I had finally created accurate copies of eight different Greek texts, I realized that I was no closer to knowing what the original text of the New Testament was than when I started. Those were merely critical texts created by men over a thousand years later, and of course, they all disagree with each other in thousands of places. That eventually led to my introduction to the world of textual criticism where I began to discover so many suspect theories and misguided efforts that have absolutely no scientific basis.^{§3}

I realized that the only way to get an accurate picture of the Greek New Testament would be to obtain transcriptions of all the extant Greek manuscripts themselves and then compare them. With all of the seminaries and Bible societies working on this problem for hundreds of years, you might think that it would be relatively simple to obtain this data, right? Again, it was to my surprise to find that not only was the data unavailable,^{§4.2} but worse, nobody really seemed to be working on this problem. Here I am constantly reminded of the analogy from the book of Haggai where the temple laid in ruins while everyone was occupied with their own houses (Hag. 1:2-11). Thus, I knew that in order to tackle the problem properly, there could be no other course of action than to acquire the actual raw data by making transcriptions for all of the earliest manuscripts myself. This was obviously a major undertaking that would take over a decade to complete. But as William Carey once said, "I can plod."

As this process neared completion, I founded the Center for New Testament Restoration (CNTR) and created a new website in 2013 to display all the data in a collation, which was the first of its kind. The momentum of the project began snowballing from there. I have now received many requests regarding my project because there are so many new opportunities for research that have never been possible before. Several organizations have expressed interest in receiving further enhancements to the data, but please be patient, for I am working as fast as I can to continue this work. Obviously, I have stood on the shoulders of giants to reach this point, but I want to give glory to God who has given me perseverance for all that has been accomplished. This work is freely given as a gift to the Body of Christ, with nothing expected in return. Enjoy!

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1. Introduction

Perhaps one of the first things you may be wondering from the title is, “What exactly about the New Testament needs to be restored?” Obviously, there are billions of copies of the New Testament offered in multiple versions and languages throughout the world, and it seems to be doing just fine, thank you! While occasionally there are debates about which version has the best translation, most any of them seem to be proficient enough to lead people into a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, there are several significant differences between the various versions of the New Testament. For example, did you ever wonder about the footnotes in some Bibles that indicate a passage was not contained in the “most early reliable manuscripts”? Or when alternate readings are cited that are only contained in “some manuscripts”? Most do not realize that these footnotes really only represent the tip of the iceberg regarding textual variants in the New Testament. There are actually over 5,700 different Greek manuscripts¹ which disagree with each other about 15% of the time. That doesn’t sound too bad until you consider that this represents over 20,000 word differences. Now before anyone becomes too unsettled, let it be stated that no major Christian doctrine is subverted by any of these differences. Indeed, most of the textual variants are minor and do not even make a translatable difference, and the remaining few result in little theological significance. But still it raises the question of why there are so many differences in the first place?

1.1 Textual Corruption

Most Christians begin with the position that the Bible is the inspired word of God and inerrant in the *original autographs* meaning that what the apostles originally wrote was without error. But that does not necessarily apply to the subsequent transcription, copying, and printing which may have introduced errors. The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy states:

“We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.”²

C.S. Lewis gives the analogy that just as natural biological processes took over after the immaculate conception, and normal digestive processes took over after eating manna from heaven, so also “inspired books will suffer all the ordinary processes of textual corruption”.³ The original autographs of the New Testament no longer exist, and all of the texts we possess are either copies, or copies of copies made by fallible men, which indeed have led to many textual variations. There is no authoritative copy of the New Testament that can be identified as being handed down from the beginning. None of the early extant manuscripts we possess comes with a detailed explanation as to why it was copied, who copied it, or what it was copied from. External clues such as where a manuscript was found or how neatly the text was copied shed little light on how accurate the text might be. Comments from the church fathers do not describe any lineage of a pure text that can be traced, for they were fully aware that scribal errors had been introduced into their texts. Origen stated, “But it is a recognized fact that there is much diversity in our copies, whether by the carelessness of certain scribes, or by some culpable rashness in the correction of the text, or by some people making arbitrary additions or omissions in their corrections.”⁴ Jerome also commented, “...why not go back to the original Greek and correct the mistakes introduced by inaccurate translators, and the blundering alterations of confident but ignorant critics, and, further, all that has been inserted or changed by copyists more asleep than awake?”⁵ Such alterations are readily evident in various manuscripts where the scribes tried to improve the authors’ grammar, harmonized passages from the gospels, added words of

clarification, or performed their own attempts at textual criticism. And sometimes they simply made errors in copying the text!

1.2 Translation Differences

In spite of these variations, scholars today are confident that the original reading of every verse in the New Testament is contained among the Greek texts within our possession. But the problem is that it is often debatable as to which textual variants are the correct ones. Thus, at various times throughout our history, scholars have attempted to reconstruct the original autographs by choosing variant readings from a subset of the Greek manuscripts to produce an eclectic text through some form of textual criticism.^{§3} Unfortunately, these New Testament texts reconstructed by the experts still disagree with each other about 11% of the time, representing over 15,000 word differences. Translators then have relied upon one of these eclectic texts to produce the major versions of the Bible such as the KJV, RSV, NASB, NIV, ESV, etc. Thus, when Christians today read their English Bibles, they have had to rely upon fallible men to complete several steps:

1. Obtain valid transcriptions of manuscripts of the New Testament.
2. Select the correct variant readings to produce an eclectic text.
3. Parse the text into sentences since there were no spaces, punctuation, or capitalization.
4. Ascertain the meanings of the words of Koine Greek which is a dead language.
5. Translate the text into English.

Unfortunately, most of this process has been entirely obscured to the general public who possess little to no ability to evaluate their work. So did they do it right? How would you know? Notice that none of these compilers, editors, or translators ever claimed that their work was divinely inspired (including the editors of the 1611 KJV⁶). Most people only consider step 5 when they select a particular version of the Bible. Is it a literal translation? Does it use modern English? Is it endorsed by their church leaders? But they are oblivious to steps 1-4 and merely rely upon the men who translated their Bibles. Those who want greater accuracy and comprehension may buy a Greek/English interlinear Bible which allows them to examine the Greek text in a more literal fashion. Coupled with reference books such as a lexicon, an interlinear can be a powerful tool even for those without any knowledge of Greek. This essentially opens up a whole new realm to the average Christian, because they are allowed to get closer to the Greek and scrutinize steps 3-4 for the first time. While this is a great improvement, most of the hotly contested issues reside all the way back at step 2, which is perhaps the most important step that remains completely obscured from most people. These problems have nothing to do with *how* the Greek text is translated, but rather *which* Greek text is translated. For example, consider the Lord's Prayer contained in Luke 11:2-4:

“Our Father **which art in heaven**, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. **Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth**. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; **but deliver us from evil**.”
(KJV)

Notice that the phrases in the bold font are missing from the NASB, NIV, ESV, and other modern versions of the Bible. Why is that? It is not because the translators did not translate properly, it is because they were translating from a Greek text that did not contain those phrases! The Greek text used to translate the KJV was radically different than the Greek text used to translate the NASB, NIV, and ESV. So which Greek text has the correct readings? Obviously, Bible translations will vary from each other greatly if they are not even translating from the same underlying Greek text!

2. Textual Authority

One practical question that follows then is, “How can the Bible be authoritative with all of these differences in the Greek manuscripts?” It seems that new critical texts of the Greek New Testament are being released almost every year now, and they do not agree with each other any more than they did before. Some have looked to the Nestle-Aland text as a standard, but they are now on their 28th edition, which differs from all their previous editions, with more revisions to come in the future. When are they ever going to get it right? Considering all of the misguided efforts done in the name of textual criticism,^{§3} it is quite understandable that many have desired to identify a single Greek New Testament text that can be used as a definitive authoritative source. How else can the Church hold Christians accountable to follow the authority of a single standard, when there are so many divergent texts?

While such a goal may indeed be desirable, it should be pointed out that there are no significant variants for the vast majority on the New Testament, *so there already is sufficient textual authority for any practical need*. Most experts place the accuracy of the New Testament at over 99.5%.⁷ Most of the variants that exist are so minor that they are not even translatable, and the rest have little theological significance – nothing that is not already covered elsewhere in Scripture. Consequently, “not one fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith rests on a disputed reading.”⁸ The authors of the King James Bible put it this way:

“Now to the latter we answer, that we do not deny, nay, we affirm and avow, that the very meanest translation of the Bible in English, set forth by men of our profession...containeth the Word of God, nay, is the Word of God....No cause therefore why the Word translated should be denied to be the Word, or forbidden to be current, notwithstanding that some imperfections and blemishes may be noted in the setting forth of it.”⁹

Obviously, the current efforts of Biblical scholarship have been good enough that people are being born again into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ despite all of the different variants in the Greek texts. So is it possible that the spirit of the meaning is more important than nitpicking over the individual words used to convey that meaning? Scripture admonishes us “not to wrangle about words, which is useless and ruins those hearing them.” (2Tim. 2:14) Unfortunately, some have fallen into a form of Bible-idolatry where they “strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!” (Matt. 23:24). They may think that the Bible is the Word of God, but the Bible actually teaches that Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1,14, Heb. 4:12-13, Rev. 19:11-13). Christianity can certainly survive without the Bible as it existed before the New Testament was written, and exists in many people groups that have never had a Bible, and exists among people who are illiterate and cannot read the Bible, but it cannot survive without Jesus who is the living Word of God!

Notice that Jesus wrote no books during his ministry, nor is there any evidence that he made dictations to ensure that they got his words right. What was he thinking? Was this by design? The New Testament authors were not necessarily concerned about letter-perfect accuracy either as evident by the way that they quoted the Old Testament; and neither was the early Church considering the number of spelling and grammatical variations that were transmitted. Indeed, the very warning in Revelation 22:18-19 to anyone who adds or removes words of the prophecy itself contains over 20 variant readings! Wouldn't you think that they would at least be careful enough to get that wording right! Perhaps the Holy Spirit is leading the Church into all truth (John 16:13), but not necessarily in the manner that some scholars would expect, particular those who have never personally met the Word of God.^{§4.4} Don't get me wrong, *the accuracy of the Bible is extremely important*, but all the textual criticism in the world will not enable you to experience a better personal relationship with Jesus Christ than has already been available. Clearly, there is no definitive authoritative New Testament text that is universally recognized throughout all of Christianity today. But is there a possibility that a single authoritative Greek New Testament text could be established in the Church?

2.1 Preservation Theories

Scripture contains several verses regarding the preservation of God's Word such as, "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isa. 40:8; see also Psa. 12:6-7, Matt. 5:18, 24:35). Such verses have traditionally been interpreted to mean that God's Word is firmly established *in Heaven* (Psa. 119:89) and will be accomplished in spite of the schemes of men (Isa. 55:11). But some splinter groups have interpreted them to mean that God must have supernaturally preserved a letter-perfect Bible *on earth* which has been carefully handed down from generation to generation through the Church. They point out that the Westminster Confession of Faith¹⁰ affirms the Bible has been "kept pure in all ages" by God's providence, assuming that "pure" here means "letter-perfect".¹¹ Certainly, the New Testament has been providentially preserved though thousands of copies we have in our possession, but with all of the variations between manuscripts, it is incumbent for these splinter groups to identify which manuscript contains the exact letter-perfect word of God. Most of these groups simply start with the assumption that whatever Bible they have been using must be correct and then look for evidence after the fact to try to justify why their text is right and all of the other texts are wrong. But here they are faced with a number of insurmountable problems.

First of all, these verses in the Bible do not guarantee that *all people from every generation* will possess a letter-perfect text, or if they do possess it, that they will even know what it is. For example, the Bible itself records that the Book of the Law had been lost for several years before the reign of Josiah (2Kings 22:8-13, 23:1-3). Indeed, these various splinter groups cannot agree on exactly which text is the correct one. Is it the Textus Receptus text or the Byzantine Majority text (or perhaps even the King James Bible¹²)? How could anyone know for certain? There is nothing in the Bible that specifies which of these texts is without error. Should it be the earliest text? Or the text used by the majority? Or perhaps it could be a minority text preserved by God's remnant (Gen. 45:7, Hag. 1:14, Zech. 8:11-12)? If someone became a Christian apart from the dictates of one of these groups, how could they independently determine which Bible is the true word of God? What *Biblical criteria* could another Christian use to know which version is correct? Is there any reason to accept one text over another besides the splinter group's authoritarian argument, "Believe our text is the true inspired word of God because we said so"?

Secondly, there is no evidence that any of those texts were passed down in a letter-perfect form to anyone. As previously stated, there is no definitive copy of the New Testament that can be identified as being handed down from the beginning. The church fathers were not aware of any pure text that had been passed down, but instead pointed out that errors had been introduced into their texts.^{§1.1} As previously alluded to, the early scribes were not especially trying to make letter-perfect copies of the manuscripts as evidenced by the fact that out of all of the thousands of extant manuscripts we possess, "no two of them are exactly alike in their wording. They all differ."¹³ Thus, there is no letter-perfect textual tradition between even two manuscripts! Accordingly, none of these splinter groups can offer any textual evidence of a letter-perfect lineage of textual transmission for their definitive text. The Textus Receptus and Byzantine Majority texts disagree with each other in thousands of places, and there are different Textus Receptus versions and different Byzantine Majority versions which all differ from each other. Consequently, every Textus Receptus text and Byzantine Majority text used by these splinter groups was created through the process of *textual criticism*. Ironically, this would mean that no one who lived before these later critical texts were created ever had a letter-perfect text that was preserved for them!

Thirdly, perhaps the biggest fallacy is the idea that only "Byzantine" manuscripts were preserved through the Church. This authoritarian argument of the splinter groups claims that all the texts used by the Church followed the "Byzantine" tradition which just happens to agree with their predetermined text. But what about the ecclesiastical authority of the churches that followed the "Alexandrian" tradition, and can factually demonstrate an even earlier text? Were the Christians in Egypt and Caesarea not also part of the Church with similar lineages of apostolic authority, and were the Scriptures not also supernaturally preserved for them? *The facts of the matter is, virtually all of the manuscripts we have were created and used by the Church, and thus carried the authority of the word of God to the Christians that read and used*

them. Each one of those manuscripts was someone's Bible! Certainly, mistakes were made in copying as there are many textual variations, but as far as we know, most manuscripts represented a sincere effort to transmit the words of God accurately without evil conspiratorial motives.

One variation of this argument claims we should only consider texts that are found within certain "apostolic" churches with the belief that whatever text they are using today must have been handed down by apostolic authority. But there is no trail of evidence with a lineage of extant manuscripts to verify that claim, so you are supposed to simply believe them because they said so. On the contrary, *all* of the texts of those apostolic churches disagree with each other, and the textual alterations between them were accepted without objections. As a case in point, the 1904 Antoniades Patriarchal Greek Text was not handed down within the Greek Orthodox Church by anyone, but was created through eclectic textual criticism from later manuscripts dated from the 10th through the 14th centuries.¹⁴ And that text contains the Johannine Comma (1John 5:7-8), which didn't appear in Greek until the 13th century,¹⁵ was absent from all of the writings of the Greek church fathers, and was not in any of the early Ethiopic, Aramaic, Syriac, Slavic, Armenian, Georgian, or Arabic "apostolic" textual traditions. Using their own argument, shouldn't the Greek Orthodox Church have vehemently objected when someone later tried to insert these *new* words into their Bible? It is irrelevant if *some* churches later agreed to adopt a similar text after the fact, for if they can do that then they could also adopt the Nestle-Aland critical text which was agreed upon by all of the major Bible Societies as well as the Roman Catholic church! They often quote the church fathers on "apostolic polity" except that the New Testament text that those same church fathers quoted from differs greatly from their texts today that they claim were handed down to them! This preservation theory is another example of *historical revisionism* which would be no different than going to nearest the Baptist church and seeing what version of the Bible they use, and then simply choosing to believe that it had been passed down to them like that in a letter-perfect lineage from the beginning.

If we were to really accept these splinter group's premises, then you are allowed to pick almost any text and declare it to be the inspired word of God, for there is no criteria specified in the Bible. And in this case, much to their chagrin, a better argument can be made that Codex Vaticanus would represent the true letter-perfect word of God. That is because it *is* an early manuscript that *was* handed down from generation to generation for 1700 years, and we know that for a fact that it was preserved *because we still have it!* Codex Vaticanus is believed to have been carefully produced under *apostolic* authority in a scriptorium in Caesarea using the most elaborate scribal hand and attention to detail. It could be argued that its special preservation from antiquity by the *apostolic* Church in Rome in the Vatican Library must speak to its incredible value, whereas no comparable "Byzantine" manuscript was preserved by the Church in that manner. And its text agrees very closely with manuscript P75 which is an even earlier text carefully produced presumably under *apostolic* authority at the Saint Pachomius Monastery located in a different geographical region. It could also be argued that Codex Vaticanus still carries the most ecclesiastical authority because its text still serves as the influential basis for the most popular Bible translations used by the Church today.¹⁶ Why aren't the authoritarian traditionalist splinter groups interested in this ecclesiastical tradition?

Aside from this, if God truly meant to supernaturally preserve the text, why didn't He simply preserve the original autographs? Or why didn't He supernaturally prevent others from introducing variants? And why aren't there *any* extant manuscripts from different generations that are exact copies of each other? The Textus Receptus and Byzantine Majority texts are still valid textual traditions that are worthy of study, but they should be evaluated on their own merits based on the evidence, not on faulty arguments based on unsubstantiated conspiracy theories.

2.2 Ecclesiastical Pronouncement

Since a single pure textual lineage cannot be found through the Church, why doesn't the Church today simply make a pronouncement and declare which text is authoritative? That is, the authority of the Church which recognized the books to include in the New Testament in the first place, is the same Church which

could recognize which variant readings in those books are valid. For example, some have suggested that whether or not the long ending of Mark (Mark 16:9-20) or the *pericope adulterae* (John 7:52-8:11) were part of the original autographs, they could still be regarded as Scripture because the Church has historically accepted the message of these passages. After all, the Church of the living God is “the pillar and foundation of truth” (1Tim. 3:15). This approach has nothing to do with textual criticism, weighing internal and external evidence to determine the most “likely” reading, but merely to receive revelation from God through the Holy Spirit as to what *is* the correct reading. The same Holy Spirit which inspired the Scriptures (2Tim. 3:16), is the same Holy Spirit that could just as easily specify the correct readings of those Scriptures today.

While such a notion would be possible in theory, it is apparently no longer possible in practice, as it would depend largely on two presumptions. The first presumption is that the Church at large could be assembled again to address this issue. Perhaps someone could imagine a modern ecumenical gathering like the Council of Nicea, but it would never be universally accepted today. Some denominations now consider other denominations to be apostate and therefore no longer part of the Church today. Thus, they would only want those who represent the “true” Church (i.e. those who agree with their theology) to consider these issues and translate their Bibles appropriately. Of course, this is what some groups think that they have been doing. (And if you are a true Christian you should automatically recognize that their group is the right one! 😊) Making subjective textual criticism decisions based on what someone thinks the text ought to read or which readings make the most theological sense might seem like a more “spiritual” approach, but it has resolved nothing because not everyone agrees on the same theology. Thus, no definitive textual authority can be obtained from a divided Body of Christ.

The second presumption is that the Holy Spirit would disclose to the Church which variant readings are the correct ones. If the Holy Spirit has been leading Christian scholars up to now, then why are so many of them coming to different conclusions?^{§4.4} And if the Holy Spirit has already led some scholar to divinely select the correct variant readings, the rest of Christendom has certainly not recognized it, which then again leads us back to the first presumption. The Church as a whole would need to authorize such a process, or the resulting text would still lack the desired ecclesiastical authority. As a result, an ecclesiastical solution will remain elusive in practice because there is no agreement over the subjective determinations of what is the true Church and who is being led by the Holy Spirit. Obviously, various groups can make such authoritative pronouncements concerning the text of their choice, and some of them have, but that will not carry the desired authority from the united testimony of the Church.

3. Textual Criticism

Even if a single authoritative text cannot be established through an ecclesiastical approach, Christians would still want to know the wording of the Scriptures as precisely as possible, because they contain the authoritative written words inspired by God. Thus, the normal way to go about answering questions about the original autographs usually involves the use of textual criticism. The field of textual criticism is not unique to the Bible, but is a generic *science* that can be used to determine the original form of any text (apparently any text other than the New Testament that is 😊). For example, consider what would happen if the Declaration of Independence were lost for two thousand years.¹⁷ How would you go about reconstructing the original text? Most people would simply compare a list of the earliest known copies and then recreate the original – any mistake that appeared in one copy would presumably be obvious when compared with all of the other copies. Simple enough? This approach would indeed lend itself quite nicely to the New Testament, which has numerous early textual sources from multiple geographical regions, and as far as we know, most scribes were not intentionally trying to alter the text. And yet this straight-forward approach has rarely been applied in the field of New Testament textual criticism! Instead, it has been replaced by all manner of unscientific methodologies,^{§3.1} subjective storytelling,^{§3.2} and conjectural emendation,^{§3.3} resulting in a wide range of questionable results.^{§3.4}

3.1 Unscientific Methodologies

Over the centuries, much of the field of New Testament textual criticism has had little to do with science, resulting in a complicated mess including many absurd theories and misguided efforts. Some textual critics seem to have trouble even understanding what a scientific approach would be as they certainly have not been applying it when it comes to the New Testament.¹⁸ That is because many textual critics have now settled on the often-quoted mantra that “textual criticism is both a science and an art.”¹⁹ But it is this added “art” part that has proven to be problematic as it apparently has given the textual critics cover to do whatever they want in the name of textual criticism, at least as it has been applied to the New Testament. It should be noted that most of what are being called “textual criticism theories” are not scientific theories, nor are they really even theories per se. Instead, most of them are *unscientific methodologies* that have been used to reconstruct the New Testament. If we were to let the New Testament scholars today apply their modern textual criticism theories to reconstruct the Declaration of Independence, we would have to endure countless absurdities:

- Only examine seven copies of the text that just happened to be at your local library which are all over nine centuries old. When you realize that all of them are missing the Bill of Rights, back-translate the missing portion from a copy written in French. (*1516 Erasmus Textus Receptus*)
- Depend almost exclusively on only two early copies and then whenever they disagree, use the version contained in a modern history book to break the tie. (*1885 Westcott and Hort*)
- Claim that all of the copies are wrong except one that was translated 15 centuries later into Chinese, and then declare that the only correct versions of the Declaration of Independence must be translated from this Chinese version. (*King James Only*)
- Claim that there were so many other similar documents like the Declaration of Independence that we cannot be sure what the “original text” was. (*E. Jay Epp*)
- Form a committee to look at the variant readings and then *vote* on which ones they think belong in the text of the Declaration of Independence. Then copyright the text and restrict its access so that others cannot use it freely. (*Nestle-Aland 28th*)
- Claim that there was a vast government conspiracy to intentionally alter the Declaration of Independence so that now it is impossible to reconstruct the original. (*Bart D. Ehrman*)
- Ignore most of the earliest copies and instead focus on a later text that started appearing in some of the history books over four centuries later. (*Byzantine Majority*)
- Choose four modern history books and wherever they agree must be right, but whenever they disagree, simply make a choice from among them. (*2010 Society of Biblical Literature*)

And that is just the tip of the iceberg. No rational person would accept any of those methodologies for reconstruction the Declaration of Independence, and yet this is what has been done with the text of the New Testament in the name of textual criticism! Notice that what is missing in all of these oversimplified caricatures is that none of them seem to properly weigh the earliest evidence to determine what the original text was in a scientific manner. Why is that? Well, in the case of the New Testament, it was partly because none of them had sufficient access to all of the earliest materials.^{§4.1} Notice that there has never been an exhaustive apparatus that shows all of the variant readings among all the earliest manuscripts. But that is not the only reason...

3.2 Subjective Storytelling

Much of textual criticism has degenerated into nothing more than the *art* of subjective storytelling, which again has nothing to do with science. One expert examines all of the variant readings for a particular

passage and then chooses the reading that he thinks best explains how the other readings may have occurred.²⁰ But the problem is that another expert does the exact same thing and comes up with a different explanation that results in a completely different conclusion. These experts may think they are doing scientific textual criticism because they use “reasoning” to justify their opinions, but that is not science (observable, testable, repeatable)! There is nothing scientific about two different people looking at a cloud, one sees a flower and the other sees a clown, and both can give explanations to justify why they see it that way. These experts may base their stories on any number of speculative textual criticism canons to justify their reasoning in the selection of a variant reading:

- *Lectio difficilior potior* – prefer the harder reading. (But what if the scribe simply lost his place and accidentally added some extraneous words or letters?)
- *Lectio brevior* – prefer the shorter reading. (But what if the scribe simply lost his place and accidentally left out some words or letters?)²¹
- *Lectio maioris* – prefer the majority reading. (But what if the majority reading from later dates is different from the majority reading from earlier dates?)
- *Lectio theologicas* – prefer the best theological reading. (But what if everyone does not have the same theology.)

This is likened to the analogy of a student who doesn’t know the answer to a multiple-choice question, so he looks at the length of the answers, common words of the answers, or tries to imagine the intent of the teacher to help him guess which answer might be right. (And then the teacher marks it wrong. ☺) Without the aid of computers and statistical analysis, textual critics of the past may have not been able to do any better than to rely on such canons to guide them. Some of the canons were pseudo-scientific in nature based on the probabilities that they observed through experience. But the biggest problem is that they are *inconsistently* and *subjectively* applied. And some of them are just plain wrong! For example, the long-standing mantra to prefer the shorter reading has greatly influenced the critical texts for centuries, and yet now it has been shown to be unfounded as the shorter reading is actually less probable than the longer reading.²²

In reality, these canons have little practical value because they are only considered to be *guidelines* that don’t have to necessarily be followed. Consequently, any of those canons can be applied to justify any desired explanation in any given situation. For every story that claims a scribe inserted extra words to embellish the text, there is another story that a scribe simply lost his place and accidentally omitted those words. For every story that prefers the more difficult reading, there is another story that a scribe simply made an error and later scribes mechanically continued to copy it. For every story that claims a scribe changed the words of a passage to harmonize it with another gospel, there is another story that the passage originally was harmonized and one of the gospels was later miscopied. For every story that claims there was a factual error in the Bible, there is another story that chooses the more theological satisfying reading. One story might seem plausible, but then later another story is told. Armed with these canons, many of these experts look at textual criticism as a form of “detective work”, but they actually just doing sophisticated form of “guesswork”. If one is looking for textual authority, *no consensus is ever reached by the storytellers* because they have different theories, methods, and conjectures and thus they tell different stories.

For example, consider the very last verse in the New Testament (Rev. 22:21), which is right after the threat of plagues and eternal damnation for adding or subtracting words from the book – the Nestle Aland text disagrees with the Westcott and Hort text which disagrees with the Robertson-Pierpont text which disagrees with the Textus Receptus text:

WH 1885	Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου	Ἰησοῦ [Χριστοῦ]	μετὰ	τῶν	ἀγίων.
NA28 2012	Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου	Ἰησοῦ	μετὰ	πάντων.	
RP 2005	Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου	Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ	μετὰ	πάντων	τῶν ἀγίων. Ἀμήν.
KJTR 2014	Ἡ χάρις τοῦ Κυρίου ημῶν	Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ	μετὰ	πάντων ὑμῶν.	Ἀμήν.

So which experts should you believe? Does this mean that all of those editors will be burning in Hell except for one who got it right? ☺ The “Alexandrian” text storytellers don’t agree with the “Byzantine” text storytellers, and as you can see, sometimes the storytellers within those camps don’t agree with each other either.²³ *Each textual critic simply thinks their judgement in weighing of the evidence is better than the other storytellers’ judgement.* And of course, there is no way ever to know for sure which subjective story is correct and thus there is no end to the storytelling method. New critical texts seem to come out almost every year now with the editors’ own personal *bias* for readings, and you are simply supposed to accept their explanations over the other experts. Forming a committee to vote on each reading is not a valid scientific method either, especially when the next committee that is formed votes the opposite way.

The basic problem with this storytelling approach is that *an explanation is not evidence!* An explanation of what might have happened is not necessarily evidence of what did happen. They are merely subjective assertions, not substantiated by data-driven scientific analysis. In the realm of science, these are referred to as “just-so stories”. As a result of this mindset, each person now feels entitled to challenge any critical text at any reading as long as they like their own subjective story better than some other “expert’s” subjective story. Ironically, some textual critics now incorporate some of the exact same elements into their texts that they criticize the ancient scribes for doing, such as harmonizing parallel passages, making adjustments to the grammar, or worse yet, inserting their own conjectural emendations! Consequently, little has been accomplished using the storytelling method as many experts would rather sit around and argue about their stories in online groups and blogs, while overwhelming amounts of important scientific textual criticism work involving data compilation and statistical analysis is left undone.

3.3 Conjectural Emendation

When confronted with a difficult passage, some storytellers resort to conjectural emendation where they *add their own new words or phrases that were not in any previous text* in an attempt to “iron out” the passage. Here they are no longer choosing between existing variant readings, but making up their own variant readings to explain what might have happened! They suppose that multiple scribes must have already messed up the text so that *every existing reading is wrong*, and so now it is up to them to alter the text again back to what *they think* the original should have been. Ironically, the experts often accuse the ancient scribes of changing words to fix the apostle’s grammar, but this is exactly what these modern textual critics are doing! Whenever a new conjectural emendation is added to the text, it effectively means that every scribe for nearly 2000 years had the discipline to maintain the “harder reading” and resist the urge to tamper with the text, while the modern textual critics clearly did not! Thus, these modern textual critics presume to have better knowledge than *all* the ancient scribes who were closer to the source. Conjectural emendation begins to border on a dangerous form of *higher criticism* because the textual critic is no longer choosing between existing variants, but is sitting over the text and making up their own readings (Rev. 22:18-19). This is not an isolated practice as there is currently a large database of conjectural emendations.²⁴

One classic example of a related form of conjectural emendation was introduced for the first time in the Nestle-Aland 28th edition produced by the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung (INTF). Here the editors chose to disregard *all* Greek manuscripts and added the word “ΟΥΧ” to 2nd Peter 3:10, which stands against *every* Greek manuscript throughout history as well as *every* other major critical text, including all their previous Nestle-Aland editions! Ironically, in their attempt to reconstruct the Greek New Testament, they somehow managed to ignore the readings of *every* Greek manuscript of the New

Testament! Instead they *back-translated* the word “ΟΥΧ” from only two minor foreign manuscripts from later centuries.²⁵ This tragedy is somewhat reminiscent of when Erasmus back-translated the last part of Revelation from Latin, but at least in his case, the Greek readings actually did exist!²⁶ Astonishingly, the INTF disregarded most of their normal storytelling principles and did not choose the harder reading, did not prefer the shorter reading, ignored the early readings of Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, and instead made up a new reading simply because it made more “sense” to them.²⁷ Should they be allowed to alter the apostle’s grammar if it makes more sense to them? Ironically, not one scribe throughout history in any geographical region was compelled to add the word “ΟΥΧ” to any Greek manuscript to “fix” this passage, and yet the modern textual critics at the INTF did! Not only did they add a word to the text, but they added the word “ΟΥΧ” meaning “not”, so that now the passage in the Nestle-Aland 28th edition reads the *opposite* of the Nestle-Aland 27th edition. To put this in perspective, the Church is being asked to accept that every Greek manuscript and every Bible translation made from the original Greek language was in *error* until the INTF invented a new conjectural emendation in 2015, which now makes the verse carry the opposite sense!²⁸ Again, the problem is not their story is impossible, but that they are practicing the art of storytelling instead of using science. Notice that the manuscript evidence for 2nd Peter 3:10 did not change between the Nestle-Aland 27th and 28th editions, *but only their story changed*. A base text should only be changed when there is new evidence, not when there is a change in bias from the makeup of new committee members. Perhaps one day another committee will come up with a different story and be convinced to “change it back”.

Of course, this type of “tinkering” with God’s Word is not acceptable to most Christians, and when they find out that this has been occurring, they are beginning to move away from the Nestle-Aland text as it is becoming apparent that their committee members can no longer be trusted.^{§4.4} But this is nothing new, for consider Tregelles’ admonition back in the 1800’s:

“[Critical conjecture] can hardly now be discussed without at least a feeling that it is connected with very irreverent treatment of Holy Scripture...For we possess of the Greek New Testament so many MSS., and we are aided by so many versions, that we are never left to the need of conjecture as a means of removing errata...but they have too often sought to *improve* the text in accordance with *their own* views and feelings; that is therefore setting themselves as judges of what Holy Scriptures *ought* or ought not to contain.”²⁹ (no emphasis added)

Making up new variant readings that did not previously exist does not make the text of the New Testament more reliable! Such use of conjectural emendation should be a wake-up call to anyone who cares about the integrity of the New Testament text.

3.4 Questionable Results

As alluded to above, the failure to examine the earliest manuscript evidence in a straightforward scientific manner has produced some highly questionable results. This becomes quite evident when the critical texts are compared to the CNTR collation of early manuscripts. The readings above the line represent the earliest manuscript data available, the readings below the line represent the later critical texts, and the circled text shows the questionable reading. For example, the Textus Receptus (KJTR) text was primarily based on late manuscripts, so it should not be surprising that it deviates from all the earliest manuscripts in thousands of places. Consider how the Textus Receptus text compares to the earliest manuscripts in Matthew 5:27:

GA P64+	150-199	ΗΚΟΥΣΑΤΕ ΟΤΙ ΕΡΡΕΘΗ	ΟΥ ΜΟΙΧΕΥΣΕΙΣ
GA 01	325-360	ΗΚΟΥΣΑΤΕ ΟΤΙ ΕΡΡΕΘΗ	ΟΥ ΜΟΙΧΕΥΣΙΣ
GA 03*	325-349	ΗΚΟΥΣΑΤΕ ΟΤΙ ΕΡΡΕΘΗ	ΟΥ ΜΟΙΧΕΥΣΕΙΣ
GA 03	325-349	ΗΚΟΥΣΑΤΕ ΟΤΙ ΕΡΡΗΘΗ	ΟΥ ΜΟΙΧΕΥΣΕΙΣ
GA 05	375-499	ΗΚΟΥΣΑΤΕ ΟΤΙ ΕΡΡΗΘΗ	ΟΥ ΜΟΙΧΕΥΣΕΙΣ
GA 032	375-499	ΗΚΟΥΣΑΤΕ ΟΤΙ ΕΡΡΕΘΗ	ΟΥ ΜΟΙΧΕΥΣΕΙΣ
WH	1885	ΗΚΟΥΣΑΤΕ ΟΤΙ ΕΡΡΕΘΗ	ΟΥ ΜΟΙΧΕΥΣΕΙΣ
NA28	2012	ΗΚΟΥΣΑΤΕ ΟΤΙ ΕΡΡΕΘΗ	ΟΥ ΜΟΙΧΕΥΣΕΙΣ
SBL	2010	ΗΚΟΥΣΑΤΕ ΟΤΙ ΕΡΡΕΘΗ	ΟΥ ΜΟΙΧΕΥΣΕΙΣ
RP	2005	ΗΚΟΥΣΑΤΕ ΟΤΙ ΕΡΡΕΘΗ	ΟΥ ΜΟΙΧΕΥΣΕΙΣ
KJTR	2014	ΗΚΟΥΣΑΤΕ ΟΤΙ ΕΡΡΕΘΗ ΤΟΙΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΙΣ	ΟΥ ΜΟΙΧΕΥΣΕΙΣ

Do you think you can determine what the original Greek text was? And yet, the Textus Receptus text, which often borrows readings from Codex Bezae (GA 05) and Codex Washingtonianus (GA 032), has departed from *all* of the earliest manuscripts and inserted the words “ΤΟΙΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΙΣ”. In order to defend themselves, many Textus Receptus supporters base their arguments on *what they think the text should have read* and have come up with various conspiracy theories as justifications.³⁰ But on what rational basis would you depart from the united testimony of all the available texts read and copied by the early Church for the first four centuries? The Textus Receptus text was later used in translating many older Bible versions such as the Tyndale New Testament, Geneva Bible, and the King James Version (KJV).

In a radical departure from the Textus Receptus tradition, the 1885 Westcott and Hort (WH) text³¹ heavily relied on Codex Sinaiticus (GA 01) and Codex Vaticanus (GA 03) which were two of the earliest most complete manuscripts. But their methodology did not always fare very well when those two manuscripts disagreed with each other. Consider this passage in Matthew 7:13:

GA 01*	325-360	ΕΙΣΕΛΘΑΤΕ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΣΤΕΝΗΣ ΠΥΛΗΣ ΟΤΙ ΠΛΑΤΙΑ	ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΥΧΩΡΟΣ ...
GA 01	325-360	ΕΙΣΕΛΘΑΤΕ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΣΤΕΝΗΣ ΠΥΛΗΣ ΟΤΙ ΠΛΑΤΙΑ	Η ΠΥΛΗ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΥΧΩΡΟΣ ...
GA 03	325-349	ΕΙΣΕΛΘΑΤΕ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΣΤΕΝΗΣ ΠΥΛΗΣ ΟΤΙ ΠΛΑΤΕΙΑ	Η ΠΥΛΗ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΥΧΩΡΟΣ ...
GA 04	375-499	ΕΙΣΕΛΘΑΤΕ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΣΤΕΝΗΣ ΠΥΛΗΣ ΟΤΙ ΠΛΑΤΕΙΑ	Η ΠΥΛΗ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΥΧΩΡΟΣ ...
GA 032	375-499	ΕΙΣΕΛΘΑΤΕ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΣΤΕΝΗΣ ΠΥΛΗΣ ΟΤΙ ΠΛΑΤΙΑ	Η ΠΥΛΗ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΥΧΩΡΟΣ ...
WH	1885	ΕΙΣΕΛΘΑΤΕ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΣΤΕΝΗΣ ΠΥΛΗΣ ΟΤΙ ΠΛΑΤΕΙΑ	ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΥΧΩΡΟΣ ...
NA28	2012	ΕΙΣΕΛΘΑΤΕ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΣΤΕΝΗΣ ΠΥΛΗΣ ΟΤΙ ΠΛΑΤΕΙΑ	Η ΠΥΛΗ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΥΧΩΡΟΣ ...
SBL	2010	ΕΙΣΕΛΘΑΤΕ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΣΤΕΝΗΣ ΠΥΛΗΣ ΟΤΙ ΠΛΑΤΕΙΑ	Η ΠΥΛΗ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΥΧΩΡΟΣ ...
RP	2005	ΕΙΣΕΛΘΕΤΕ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΣΤΕΝΗΣ ΠΥΛΗΣ ΟΤΙ ΠΛΑΤΕΙΑ	Η ΠΥΛΗ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΥΧΩΡΟΣ ...
KJTR	2014	ΕΙΣΕΛΘΕΤΕ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΣΤΕΝΗΣ ΠΥΛΗΣ ΟΤΙ ΠΛΑΤΕΙΑ	Η ΠΥΛΗ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΥΧΩΡΟΣ ...

In this case, the original scribe of Codex Sinaiticus (GA 01) had accidentally left off “Η ΠΥΛΗ” and then corrected himself, but Westcott and Hort went with his uncorrected reading against the united testimony all of the other early manuscripts. How is that a rational decision? Shouldn’t the original scribe be allowed to make corrections to his own work? The Westcott and Hort text was later used in translating Bibles such as the Revised Version (RV) and American Standard Version (ASV).

While some recent critical texts fare much better with the evidence, many of them still ignore all of the earliest texts in places. Consider this reading from 2nd Peter 3:6 in the Nestle-Aland 28th edition (NA28) text³² (which contains the same text as the United Bible Societies 5th edition³³):

GA P72*	275-324	ΔΙ ΩΝ Ο ΤΟΤΕ ΚΟΚΜΟC	ΥΔΑΤΙ ΚΑΤΑΚΛΥCΘΕΙC ΑΠΩΛΕΤΟ
GA P72	275-324	ΔΙ ΩΝ Ο ΤΟΤΕ ΚΟCΜΟC	ΥΔΑΤΙ ΚΑΤΑΚΛΥCΘΕΙC ΑΠΩΛΕΤΟ
GA 01	325-360	ΔΙ ΩΝ Ο ΤΟΤΕ ΚΟCΜΟC	ΥΔΑΤΙ ΚΑΤΑΚΛΥCΘΕΙC ΑΠΩΛΕΤΟ
GA 03	325-349	ΔΙ ΩΝ Ο ΤΟΤΕ ΚΟCΜΟC	ΥΔΑΤΙ ΚΑΤΑΚΛΥCΘΕΙC ΑΠΩΛΕΤΟ
GA 02	375-499	ΔΙ ΩΝ Ο ΤΟΤΕ ΚΟCΜΟC	ΥΔΑΤΙ ΚΑΤΑΚΛΥCΘΕΙC ΑΠΩΛΕΤΟ
GA 04	375-499	ΔΙ ΩΝ Ο ΤΟΤΕ ΚΟCΜΟC	ΥΔΑΤΙ ΚΑΤΑΚΛΥCΘΕΙC ΑΠΩΛΕΤΟ
WH	1885	ΔΙ ΩΝ Ο ΤΟΤΕ ΚΟCΜΟC	ΥΔΑΤΙ ΚΑΤΑΚΛΥCΘΕΙC ΑΠΩΛΕΤΟ
NA28	2012	ΔΙ(ON) Ο ΤΟΤΕ ΚΟCΜΟC	ΥΔΑΤΙ ΚΑΤΑΚΛΥCΘΕΙC ΑΠΩΛΕΤΟ
SBL	2010	ΔΙ ΩΝ Ο ΤΟΤΕ ΚΟCΜΟC	ΥΔΑΤΙ ΚΑΤΑΚΛΥCΘΕΙC ΑΠΩΛΕΤΟ
RP	2005	ΔΙ ΩΝ Ο ΤΟΤΕ ΚΟCΜΟC	ΥΔΑΤΙ ΚΑΤΑΚΛΥCΘΕΙC ΑΠΩΛΕΤΟ
KJTR	2016	ΔΙ ΩΝ Ο ΤΟΤΕ ΚΟCΜΟC	ΥΔΑΤΙ ΚΑΤΑΚΛΥCΘΕΙC ΑΠΩΛΕΤΟ

Is the reading of “ON” justified against all of the other early manuscript evidence and every other major critical text? Because each variant reading was subject to a committee vote, there are dozens of places where the chosen reading seems inconsistent given the exact same conditions. Various editions of the Nestle-Aland text were later consulted in translating Bibles such as the New American Standard (NASB), New International Version (NIV), and the English Standard Version (ESV).

In reaction to the eclectic nature of the Nestle-Aland text, the Byzantine Majority (BYZ) text proponents aspire to follow the majority consensus of the later Greek texts. But since the majority of these texts usually have later dates, the earliest manuscript evidence tends to be ignored and thus the text ends up being very similar to the Textus Receptus texts, although not always. Consider this passage from Matthew 3:11:

GA P101	200-299	... ΒΑCΤΑCΑΙ ΑΥΤΟC ΥΜΑC ΒΑΠΤΙCΕΙ ΕΝ ΠΝΙ	ΑΓΙΩ ΚΑΙ ΠΥΡΙ
GA 01*	325-360	... ΒΑCΤΑCΑΙ ΑΥΤΟC ΥΜΑC ΒΑΠΤΙCΙ ΕΝ ΠΝΙ	ΑΓΙΩ ΚΑΙ ΠΥΡΙ
GA 01	325-360	... ΒΑCΤΑCΑΙ ΑΥΤΟC ΥΜΑC ΒΑΠΤΙCΙ ΕΝ ΠΝΙ	ΑΓΙΩ ΚΑΙ ΠΥΡΙ
GA 03	325-349	... ΒΑCΤΑCΑΙ ΑΥΤΟC ΥΜΑC ΒΑΠΤΙCΕΙ ΕΝ ΠΝΙ	ΑΓΙΩ ΚΑΙ ΠΥΡΙ
GA 04	375-499	... ΒΑCΤΑCΑΙ ΑΥΤΟC ΥΜΑC ΒΑΠΤΙCΕΙ ΕΝ ΠΝΙ	ΑΓΙΩ ΚΑΙ ΠΥΡΙ
GA 032	375-499	... ΒΑCΤΑCΑΙ ΑΥΤΟC ΥΜΑC ΒΑΠΤΙCΕΙ ΕΝ ΠΝΙ	ΑΓΙΩ ΚΑΙ ΠΥΡΙ
WH	1885	... ΒΑCΤΑCΑΙ ΑΥΤΟC ΥΜΑC ΒΑΠΤΙCΕΙ ΕΝ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ	ΑΓΙΩ ΚΑΙ ΠΥΡΙ
NA28	2012	... ΒΑCΤΑCΑΙ ΑΥΤΟC ΥΜΑC ΒΑΠΤΙCΕΙ ΕΝ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ	ΑΓΙΩ ΚΑΙ ΠΥΡΙ
SBL	2010	... ΒΑCΤΑCΑΙ ΑΥΤΟC ΥΜΑC ΒΑΠΤΙCΕΙ ΕΝ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ	ΑΓΙΩ ΚΑΙ ΠΥΡΙ
RP	2005	... ΒΑCΤΑCΑΙ ΑΥΤΟC ΥΜΑC ΒΑΠΤΙCΕΙ ΕΝ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ	ΑΓΙΩ
KJTR	2016	... ΒΑCΤΑCΑΙ ΑΥΤΟC ΥΜΑC ΒΑΠΤΙCΕΙ ΕΝ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ	ΑΓΙΩ ΚΑΙ ΠΥΡΙ

Notice that “ΚΑΙ ΠΥΡΙ” is missing from the Robinson-Pierpont³⁴ and Hodges-Farstad³⁵ and Pickering³⁶ texts as representatives of the Byzantine Majority. While the modern eclectic texts are often accused of deleting passages, here the Byzantine Majority texts have chosen the “shorter reader” even though it is present in all of the earliest manuscripts as well as the other critical texts. There is no popular Bible translation so far based on a Byzantine Majority text, although several lesser-known translations are now available online.³⁷

And then there is the Society for Biblical Literature (SBL) text³⁸ which was primarily based on four other critical texts. Of course, that methodology seems suspect to begin with, so there are numerous places where it seemingly ignores the earliest manuscript evidence. For example, consider this passage in Hebrews 2:9:

GA P46	175-224	...	ΟΠΩΣ ΧΑΡΙΤΙ ΘΥ	ΥΠΕΡ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΓΕΥΧΗΤΑΙ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ
GA P116	300-349	...	ΟΠΩΣ ΧΑΡΙΤΙ ΘΥ	ΥΠΕΡ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΓΕΥΧΗΤΑΙ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ
GA 01	325-360	...	ΟΠΩΣ ΧΑΡΙΤΙ ΘΥ	ΥΠΕΡ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΓΕΥΧΗΤΑΙ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ
GA 03	325-349	...	ΟΠΩΣ ΧΑΡΙΤΙ ΘΥ	ΥΠΕΡ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΓΕΥΧΗΤΑΙ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ
GA 02	375-499	...	ΟΠΩΣ ΧΑΡΙΤΙ ΘΥ	ΥΠΕΡ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΓΕΥΧΗΤΑΙ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ
GA 04	375-499	...	ΟΠΩΣ ΧΑΡΙΤΙ ΘΥ	ΥΠΕΡ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΓΕΥΧΗΤΑΙ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ
WH	1885	...	ΟΠΩΣ ΧΑΡΙΤΙ ΘΕΟΥ	ΥΠΕΡ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΓΕΥΧΗΤΑΙ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ
NA28	2012	...	ΟΠΩΣ ΧΑΡΙΤΙ ΘΕΟΥ	ΥΠΕΡ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΓΕΥΧΗΤΑΙ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ
SBL	2010	...	ΟΠΩΣ ΧΩΡΙC ΘΕΟΥ	ΥΠΕΡ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΓΕΥΧΗΤΑΙ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ
RP	2005	...	ΟΠΩΣ ΧΑΡΙΤΙ ΘΕΟΥ	ΥΠΕΡ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΓΕΥΧΗΤΑΙ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ
KJTR	2014	...	ΟΠΩΣ ΧΑΡΙΤΙ ΘΕΟΥ	ΥΠΕΡ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΓΕΥΧΗΤΑΙ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ

Notice again that the reading “ΧΩΡΙC” goes against the united testimony of all early manuscripts. The SBL text has not been used for any Bible translation yet, but it is popular because it is offered as a free download on the Internet.

That is not to say that someone couldn’t attempt to make up a story to justify these types of textual decisions, but the more important point to consider is whether such justifications offer the best *scientific* approach given all of the available evidence. Notice that these *oddball* readings not only contradict the earliest manuscripts, but they usually contradict all of the other critical texts as well! One reason that so many ridiculous theories have been allowed to persist is that the public has not had access to all the earliest manuscripts so they could not see how absurd some of them are. No theory of textual criticism can be valid if it does not take into account the earliest manuscript evidence! Some textual critics may continue to espouse all of the bizarre theories they want, but rational people will not accept them when exposed to the hard evidence. It does not matter how competent the Bible translators are, if the Greek text they are translating from is not a good reflection of the original autographs of the New Testament.

Don’t get me wrong, many of those who have made these critical texts were doing cutting-edge scholarship for their times using the best resources at their disposal and should be commended for their efforts. The criticisms expressed here are not meant to be overly harsh and are directed at no one in particular, but are intended to focus on ongoing problems that need to be taken seriously and addressed by textual criticism community. Without a doubt, *there have been a lot of brilliant scholars who have paved the way for scientific textual criticism providing excellent research based on firm scientific principles*. The CNTR project owes a great deal of gratitude to such men and would not exist without them.

3.5 Scientific Textual Criticism

As Christians become weary of the confusion caused by the creation of an endless number of contradictory subjective texts, more and more are beginning to consider a scientific approach to textual criticism. Concepts involving subjective explanations and conjectures are now replaced with data-driven statistical analysis and algorithms which are observable, testable, and repeatable. Indeed, a scientific approach based on data analysis which can be openly scrutinized by all remains the most rational approach, *and perhaps the only approach that could ever be universally accepted*. It is perhaps more fitting that Christians use such a rational approach as God encourages us to use our minds in accomplishing His purposes (Matt. 22:37, Rom. 12:2, 1Cor. 2:12-13). It is no longer satisfactory to let various groups of “experts” mysteriously hammer out subjective critical texts behind closed doors in smoke filled rooms.³⁹ Indeed, textual critics never have and *never will* come to agreement using unscientific methodologies, subjective storytelling, or conjectural emendation, and their questionable results speak for themselves!⁸³ Any number of subjective texts could be similarly produced in the future, but they will not be able to demonstrate that they contain the *most likely* reading of the original autographs without a rational scientific approach based

on evidence. In spite of all of the gobbledygook that has transpired in the name of textual criticism, textual criticism should still be properly thought of as a *science* that can be used to determine the original form of any text...including the New Testament!

In pursuit of the original autographs of the New Testament, textual critics have invented several terms along the way such as archetypal text, initial text, authorial text, etc. But there is really only one text of interest here and the average person already intuitively knows what that is – the original text that was written by the authors of the New Testament.⁴⁰ Obviously, the original autographs no longer exist, so no one can *prove* what the original text was. Instead, what we are interested in is the text that scientifically reconstructs the *most likely* reading of the original autographs. The New Testament has been thoroughly preserved through thousands of copies which agree with each other in the vast majority of cases, and where there are variant readings, the text can be established by weighing the preponderance of manuscript evidence. *The text that can be objectively shown to contain the most probable reconstruction of the original autographs would therefore be the most authoritative text.*⁸² And this lends itself quite nicely to scientific textual criticism which incorporates methods from data science and statistical analysis of existing copies to reconstruct the most probable form of the original text. This technique is predicated on the assumption that most copyists get most of it right most of the time. In the case of the New Testament, the total amount of variation across all texts is only around 15% and thus the amount of variation introduced by an individual scribe is significantly less than that, and all scribes don't make the same mistakes in the same places. Scientific textual criticism distinguishes itself from the subjective storytelling approach in that it is based on objective verifiable evidence with methods that are observable, testable, and repeatable. The *prima facie* existence of raw data is neither a theory nor a story.

The reactions of the old-school textual critics towards scientific textual criticism are usually mixed. Many of them are warming up to the idea and like the emphasis on the statistical analysis of earliest textual evidence, but some are hostile to the concept for their very careers based on the art of storytelling are on the line. Some of them are clearly agitated that a computer program could already spit out a text that is only about 500 words different than the Nestle-Aland text based only on the earliest data up to 400 AD without their superior human judgement, and which also better accounts for the earliest data.⁴¹ (What were those stories needed for again?) Some of them are simply unaware of the capabilities of computer science and data science and are *sure* that no computer could ever select the right reading based on the unique explanation they have crafted. But surprise, other experts may not agree with their explanation either, and instead agree with the computer's selected reading! No attempt will be made to try to convert the skeptics, but simply to put out accessible data in scientific manner that will speak for itself. Those who understand the benefits of science know that the truth is its own reward.

Of course, there is no way to *prove* that the most statistically probable reading is always “right” either, but unlike the storytelling approach, the most probable reading remains the most probable reading based on the evidence. A base text should not be changed due to the biases of *new* editors or committee members, but only if there is actually new textual evidence to warrant a change! Any reading chosen through scientific textual criticism is certainly no worse off than the subjective storytelling approach, since there is usually at least one storyteller that already supports the scientific based reading in their critical texts. It might be the shorter reading, the harder reading, the majority reading, etc., *but that was not the grounds for its selection.* In contrast to storytelling method, the “story” that science tells would be more along these lines: “The preponderance of the evidence weighing the earliest and most statistically reliable manuscripts across multiple geographical regions support this as the most probable reading.” Or to put it in terms for the preservationist splinter groups: “Considering all of the extant manuscripts produced under the authority of the Church in multiple geographical regions by sincere scribes who occasionally made mistakes, this is the most plausible representation of the reading handed down in the Church and therefore the most authoritative.” Since a consensus of textual authority will never come through unscientific methodologies, subjective storytelling, or conjectural emendation, nor through spurious claims of divine revelation, conspiracy theories, or history revisionism, *scientific textual criticism represents the most viable rational alternative moving forward.*

4. Systemic Obstacles

While the tasks involved with restoring the New Testament using scientific textual criticism might seem fairly straightforward, it seems that little progress has actually been made over the centuries. In order to tackle this problem in an authentic transparent manner, all the early Greek manuscript evidence *must* be made available for public inspection so that everyone can examine these issues for themselves. No matter how many committees deliberate on this issue, there will always be suspicion and thus the only logical approach is to provide the public with the actual raw data. Then Christians will no longer have to rely solely upon the subjective editorial decisions of men, but can examine the evidence themselves as they are presented with all the Greek variants and allowed to inspect the process all the way back to step 1.^{§1.2} Such a straightforward goal, however, has been hindered for years because of several systemic obstacles that first needed to be overcome: incomplete data, restricted access, financial barriers, biased scholarship, and educational inaccuracies.

4.1 Incomplete Data

As discussed in the examples above, no theory of textual criticism will produce correct results with incomplete information! The long-sought-after “holy grail” of textual criticism has been to obtain electronic access to all early extant Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Until the creation of the CNTR collation of early manuscripts, the field of textual criticism had been operating without even a complete set of the earliest manuscript data.⁴² For centuries, researchers could only base their works only on the limited number of manuscripts that they had access to. The materials they were working from (apparatuses, lexicons, concordances, collations, etc.) were usually done by hand, often introducing numerous errors along the way. And then many of these errors would appear in subsequent editions as they were passed on to subsequent generations.

The use of apparatuses in particular is one of the main tools in the textual critic’s toolbox, but have proven to be woefully inadequate for reliable textual critical work:

- They only show some of the variants while others are completely ignored.
- They only show a selection of manuscript sources, not a complete list.
- They do not indicate the coverage of where a text starts and or where a text stops.
- They do not disclose the condition of the characters or the extent of scribal corrections.
- They do not adequately display any orthographical differences.
- They make no distinction between the importance or reliability of the manuscripts.

And on top of this, they usually contain errors! Some apparatuses are merely derived from previous apparatuses and the same errors continue to be passed down without ever being checked for accuracy against the actual extant manuscripts. Apparatuses cannot be used to reverse engineer the text of the extant manuscripts, and they are no substitute for examining the extant manuscripts themselves. Sadly, some examples of modern scholarship today consist of nothing more than selecting variants based on these apparatuses rather than consulting the original source materials.

Continued reliance on these faulty apparatuses leads to distorted views of the text as they fail to provide a complete picture of the textual variation. As a result, the number of sources in a list are usually just counted without being properly weighed according to their earliness or reliability! Thomas Greer states:

“Few are able to evaluate carefully the external evidence for variant readings in the NA or UBS because there is insufficient information given for the MSS presented. As a result, MS citations end up being little more than a group of letters or numbers at the bottom of the page.”⁴³

Consider the apparatuses shown for the variant “ΤΟΙΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΙΣ” in Matthew 5:27 that was previously discussed:^{§3.4}

United Bible Society 5th Edition⁴⁴

None

Nestle Aland 28th Edition⁴⁵

τοῖς ἀρχαίοις L Δ Θ f¹³ 33 579 892 *pm lat syr^c h^{**}*; Ir^{lat} Or^{lat} Eus

LaParola⁴⁶

ἐρρέθη] WH NR CEI Riv TILC Nv NM

ἐρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις] L Δ Θ 0233 f13 33 892 1010 Byz vg syr^c syr^{h*} Irenaeus Origen Eusebius^{pt} Cyril ζ ND Dio

If you read the United Bible Society 5th edition, you would not even be aware that a variant reading exists in that verse. Whether or not you agree with the Textus Receptus text, many people would still want know about the existence of that variant reading. If you read the Nestle-Aland 28th edition, you would be made aware that the variant exists and then given a list of witnesses that support that reading. Thus, you might conclude that the variant reading is preferred given such a long list of witnesses. But what you are not given is a list of all the early manuscripts which clearly do not support that reading! If you consulted the apparatus at LaParola, you would be presented with a longer list of witnesses that support each reading. With a longer list of witnesses in favor of the variant reading compared to the smaller list, perhaps you again might conclude that the variant reading should be preferred. (And if you bothered to look up the symbols listed in the smaller list, you would note that they are not actually manuscripts at all, but merely modern critical texts and translations.)

In all these cases, *you are presented with an incomplete and distorted view of the text* that suppresses the fact that this variant is absent in all of the earliest manuscripts (and all of the other major critical texts as well). Yet this is precisely the type of inadequate data that researchers have been using for centuries to make textual critical decisions. This is far from an isolated case as the major apparatuses typically show less than 10 percent of all variants.⁴⁷ The problem is not necessarily the use of an apparatus per se, but that they are grossly incomplete and therefore misleading.

4.2 Restricted Access

One of the reasons for the incomplete data is that many simply have not had access to the data. The Gospel was meant to be freely preached to all nations (Mark 13:10, 16:15, Matt. 24:14, Col. 1:23) and the authors of the New Testament clearly wanted their writings be made available to everyone (1Thes. 5:27; cf. Acts 15:30, Col. 4:16). Yet contrary to the Spirit of Christ, many Bibles are not freely available as they are restricted by copyrights. The greed, politics, and egos of those involved in attempting to control access to various Biblical manuscripts over the centuries have been appalling. The original Greek manuscripts themselves were not copyrighted and indeed cannot be copyrighted. The New Testament is almost 2000 years old and thus any copyright claims by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have long since expired! Likewise, all ancient copies of their work also possess no copyright restrictions.

The fact of the matter is that no copyright can ever be enforced solely on the text of the Greek New Testament. This is not only intuitively obvious, but is also supported by U.S. copyright law.⁴⁸ Consider a similar example concerning the public data contained in a phonebook. The publication of a particular

phonebook itself, its layout, choice of cover, formatting, and arrangement of the data, is a copyrightable work in its entirety. The public data contained within it, however, is not! Another company may take a copyrighted phonebook and transcribe all the phone numbers and then publish their own copyrighted phonebook quite legally.⁴⁹ Likewise, while a publication of Greek manuscript may be copyrighted in its entirety, the text itself is not copyrightable: "...copyright is not a tool by which a compilation author may keep others from using the facts or data he or she has collected."⁵⁰ Transcriptions of the extant Greek manuscripts therefore cannot be copyrighted for the same reasons. "A work that merely copies uncopyrighted material is wholly unoriginal and the making of such a work is therefore not an infringement of copyright."⁵¹ Two independent transcriptions of the same text could even turn out to be identical, but one cannot claim that the other's text is a copyright infringement.⁵² Again, the reduplication of a modern published work may be protected by copyright, but the ancient Greek text that is contained within it is not copyrightable!

For similar reasons, the public domain Greek New Testament that is reconstructed by modern critical texts also cannot be copyrighted. The amount of effort that went into its reconstruction does not matter at all. Consider again the example of the phonebook, but this time lets imagine that the original phonebook were completely lost. By digging through the city dump and collecting fragments, examining phonebooks from adjacent years, and finding quotations from other sources, the *public domain data* contained in that phonebook is painstakingly reconstructed. The incredible amount of "sweat of the brow" employed to obtain the reconstruction, however, still would *not* provide a basis for establishing a copyright claim.⁵³ Regardless of the amount of effort, others would still be allowed to copy this non-copyrightable *public domain data*, including any errors that were made in the process!⁵⁴ Of course, any particular publication of this work could still be copyrightable *in its entirety*, but the data contained in the publication was and will always remain in the public domain. In line with these principles, Maurice A. Robinson copyrighted his 2005 Byzantine Textform publication, but then stated that the text could be copied without restriction: "Copyright is not claimed nor asserted for the new and revised form of the Greek NT text of this edition..."⁵⁵

In contrast, the motives of the publishers of the Nestle-Aland 28th edition have been questionable as they have tried to prevent others from copying their base text.^{56,57} Such copyright claims, however, are highly dubious for if they assert that their reconstructed text represents the Greek New Testament, then by their own admission that text itself is not copyrightable (at least in the United States).⁵⁸ The result of restoring the *public domain* Greek New Testament is a public domain Greek New Testament! Indeed, as researchers achieve their goal of restoring the public domain text to its original form, their texts begin to closely match each other. Consider that the copyrighted Nestle-Aland 28th edition is 98.5% identical to the public domain Westcott and Hort text, and if spelling differences are ignored they are 99.3% identical. Does a .7% change represent a new creative work or should that rather be considered *plagiarism*? "To be copyrightable, a derivative work must be different enough from the original to be regarded as a 'new work' or must contain a substantial amount of new material....The new material must be original and copyrightable in itself."⁵⁹ Of course, other unique features that are added to a published text such as apparatuses, punctuation, diacritical marks, formatting, etc., may indeed be copyrightable, but the representation of the ancient Greek text alone is not.

Since copyrights do not apply to ancient manuscripts, some museums, libraries, and even Christian organizations, have attempted to control them by limiting access to their materials. Suppressing scholars' access to view the source materials has been often been an impediment to the field of textual criticism. Many of these institutions want to make a profit from their artifacts, so they refuse to let others examine their manuscripts unless they agree to contractually abide by their restrictions on publication. In this regard, some of them have allowed others to take photographs to be taken of their manuscripts as long as they remain restricted by contractual terms. However, such claims are no longer enforceable in the United States due to a landmark court decision which ruled that faithful reproductions of two-dimensional public domain works are considered to be in the public domain.⁶⁰ Again, the amount of effort or quality of the image are irrelevant to making a copyright claim: "...a photograph which is no more than a copy of the work of another as exact as science and technology permit lacks originality. That is not to say such a feat is trivial, simply not original."⁶¹ It also does not matter at all if the images come from foreign countries not under the United

States jurisdiction⁶² (but copyright claims may apply in other jurisdictions). In keeping with these principles:

“Facsimile copies are simply reproductions that do not create a new copyright in the work. So, a microform copy of a public domain work is also in the public domain. If, however, the facsimile copy has new material that was added, such as a new preface or an index, that new material may be protected by copyright. The material that is in the public domain work remains in the public domain...”⁶³

Ironically, people have not exactly been beating down the doors of these museums to see their manuscripts, but after their images have been released online, many more become aware of them which actually increases the number who pay the entrance fee and go to see them.⁶⁴

4.3 Financial Barriers

The authors of the New Testament offered their teachings to others free of charge: “For we are not like many who peddle the word of God.” (2Cor. 2:17). Certainly the worker is worthy of his wages (1Tim. 5:18), but the Scripture itself is to be offered “free of charge” (1Cor. 9:18, 2Cor. 11:7, 1Thes. 2:9). Yet today, it is common for Bibles and related reference materials to be sold at Christian bookstores for profit. While many organizations should be applauded for offering their materials for free, many of the most important scholarly works and software for studying the Greek New Testament are still only available for purchase, often costing hundreds of dollars. Obviously, the very reason why most organizations copyright their works is so that they can make money off others. While some may debate the merits of selling other types of Christian literature, any organization that charges money for the Greek New Testament is quite literally selling the Gospel! Indeed, such “Christian” organizations are not *ministries* that freely serve the Body of Christ, but are *businesses* that self-perpetuate themselves by making money off the Body of Christ. Can you image Jesus charging an admission fee to hear the Sermon on the Mount? Ironically, the *secular* open source movement today puts these “Christian” organizations to shame as they understand the greater benefits of freely sharing their work.

In times past, there were considerable costs associated with the publication and distribution of Scripture that some organizations sought to offset by charging money. But now that materials can easily be placed on the Internet for almost no cost and downloaded for free, the greed of these organizations is blatantly obvious for they no longer have to bear any printing costs to distribute their materials. Such organizations have been deceived into thinking that “godliness is a means of financial gain” (1Tim. 6:5; cf. Tit. 1:7). They are conducting their business under a worldly materialistic mindset, but that is not how God’s economy is to function in the Church. Jesus said, “Do not make the house of My Father a house of merchandise.” (John 2:16). Those who are selling the Scripture should consider this similar warning: “May your money perish with you...You have no part or share in this matter for your heart is not right before God. Therefore repent of your wickedness and pray to the Lord that perhaps you may be forgiven of this thought in your heart.” (Acts 8:20-22). It is understandable that secular publishers would want to make a profit from the Scriptures, but that is not really a valid option for those who claim to be Christian organizations and ministries.

4.4 Biased Scholarship

Much of the New Testament scholarship over the years has been directed by non-Christians and liberal Christians who do not believe in the inerrancy of Scripture. Many of the leading experts in textual criticism over the centuries have not been “born-again” Christians, nor did they claim to be. This is also true of many of the members of the editorial committee that produced the Nestle-Aland 28th edition.⁶⁵ Because of this,

the care and respect of the scholarship of the New Testament has often been suspect. It is inexplicable as to why so many atheists and agnostics want to become Biblical experts so they can tell Christians what they think their text means! Failing to believe in God is not a prerequisite for being an objective scholar. On the contrary, it seems that those who do not hold a high view of the Scripture tend to produce the most dishonest scholarship by exaggerating and sensationalizing their anti-Biblical claims and by purposely omitting the evidence that contradicts their position.⁶⁶ (Of course, Christians are not helping themselves either when they do the same things and exaggerate the facts to make the Bible look more reliable than it already is.) If these experts were truly rational, then they would apply the teachings of the very text they are examining and accept Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives!⁶⁷ Jesus said, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, but these are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you will not come to me that you may have life.” (John 5:39-40) Indeed, “...unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3).

Christians and atheists alike should both have no objection to adopting a rational approach to textual criticism based on scientific principles instead of subjective biases.^{§3.5} Unfortunately, many evangelical Christians seem to shy away from issues in textual criticism involving variant readings for fear that it may somehow lessen the authority of Scripture.^{§2} But that is not the case at all. Christians should not fear the scrutiny of the text, but are to love the truth (Prov. 23:23, John 3:19-21, John 8:32, 2Thes. 2:10), for after all, Jesus is the Truth (John 14:6). Most Christians hold to a statement of faith which states something like this: “The Bible, in the original autographs, is divinely inspired, infallible, inerrant, and authoritative in all matters of faith and conduct.” Christians should obviously therefore want to know as accurately as possible what the original autographs contained! The same Holy Spirit who inspired men to write the original autographs can also inspire men in their efforts to reconstruct those original autographs. Wouldn't it make sense for those who believe the Scriptures to be at the cutting edge of Biblical scholarship? If you really love Jesus, shouldn't you want to know more precisely what He said? Atheists and agnostics can argue about the words of the Bible all they want, but Christians have all the more reason to “get it right” because they are the ones who are actually trying to put the words into practice!

4.5 Educational Inaccuracies

The prospect of learning Greek is no easy task and only a small number of Christians ever attempt to study the New Testament in its original language. Although it is not necessary to learn Greek in order to understand the New Testament, it is certainly advantageous. Most students of Greek, however, are not being taught Koine Greek, but a form of Medieval Greek which is slightly more complicated and unnecessarily biases the text. As the Greek language continued to evolve up through the Middle Ages, the Greek New Testament was likewise altered to incorporate these changes such as diacritical marks, capitalization, and punctuation marks.⁶⁸ Such embellishments, however, bias the text by imposing meanings with diacritical marks that did not exist, referencing deity with capitalization that did not exist, and parsing sentences with punctuation that did not exist. Granted, such editorial interpretations are unavoidable when translating Greek into another language, but there is no reason to apply *external interpretation* to the Greek text for those who are reading the Greek text!

Diacritical marks in particular add an unnecessary level of complexity to learning Greek and the rules to correctly place an accent mark are often misapplied even by the experts. Such diacritical marks needlessly clutter the Greek text hindering the reader's natural fluency. Students are often slowed down as they strain to see whether a tiny mark is turned one way or the other and sometimes mistake it to be part of the letter. That is as unnatural as trying to read English with syllable and vowel markings: Īs thĭs sĕn-'tĕnce ēas-'ī-ĕr tō rĕad? It is quite unnatural to encumber readers with the “training wheels” of pronunciation by *embedding them within the language itself*. For those who believe in the inerrancy of the Scriptures, adding diacritical marks unnecessarily biases the text because if there is a heteronym that could have several meanings, the application of the diacritical mark necessarily forces a specific interpretation, which may not be what the

original author intended. Consider this ambiguous phrase in English, “The invalid drawer bowed.” Does this refer to a warped part of a dresser, or a crippled architect taking credit? Normally, the reader is trusted to interpret such a sentence by the surrounding context, *but not by adding phonetic markings from the dictionary*. Likewise, numerous ambiguous heteronyms exist in Greek which have different meanings depending on the context (ΑΥΤΗ, ΕΝ, ΤΙΣ, ΒΑΛΩΝ, etc.). Do students recognize the differences between ἦ, ἦ, and ἦ? Students should be taught to distinguish a definite article from a relative pronoun, a present from a liquid future, and a nominative from a dative by the *context*, not by straining over an editor’s choice of extraneous marks. This is how the ancient Greeks understood their own language since these diacritical marks did not exist!

Likewise, the Greek pronunciation system that is traditionally taught today does not sound anything like the original Koine Greek language, but was a system contrived by Erasmus at the end of the Middle Ages.⁶⁹ The original *tonal accents* of Koine Greek were also changed into *stress accents* many centuries later.⁷⁰ Although a wide variety of dialects were spoken at that time, the pronunciation of most of the letters are not in dispute.⁷¹ In short, *Greek educators have applied diacritical marks that didn’t exist to pronounce the text in a way that it wasn’t pronounced!*⁷² (The phonetics of modern Greek is actually closer to the pronunciation of Koine Greek than this contrived system and some have begun teaching students using the modern Greek pronunciation.)⁷³

The orthography was also changed so that words are no longer spelled in a manner that they were spelled. In fact, there are over 35 places where every early manuscript is in agreement with how a word is spelled, but every modern critical text has changed that spelling to another form. They also have removed references to the *nomina sacra* which often give clear indication to the deity of Christ. As a result, students today are now learning to read and pronounce Medieval Greek that is almost unrecognizable from its earlier form. Indeed, many who have learned Greek at a university have trouble reading the extant manuscripts of the New Testament because they look completely unfamiliar to them:

Koine Greek	Medieval Greek
ΟΥΤΩΣΓΑΡΗΓΑΠΗΣΕΝΟΘ̄ΣΤΟΝΚΟΣΜΟ̄ ΩΣΤΕΤΟΝῩΝ̄ΤΟΝΜΟΝΟΓΕΝΗΕΔΩΚΕ̄ ΙΝΑΠΑΣΟΠΙΣΤΕΥΩΝΕΙΣΑΥΤΟΝΜΗΑΠΟ ΛΗΤΑΙΑΛΛΕΧΗΖΩΗΝΑΙΩΝΙΟΝ	Οὔτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ’ ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

Those who endeavored to learn Greek in order read the New Testament with greater accuracy are often disappointed when they find out that they have not actually been learning Koine Greek. This information has largely been obfuscated by the educational establishment as they continue to promote a form of Greek developed in the Middle Ages. Ironically, modern Greeks have now abandoned the diacritical marks of the complex polytonic system in favor of a simpler monotonic system,⁷⁴ so will the Greek New Testament be revised to keep in step or will they continue to be stuck in the Middle Ages? While some experts today are now beginning to extol the virtues of returning to the origins of Koine Greek for Biblical studies, few educational materials currently exist to support this endeavor.

5. Implementation

The Center for New Testament Restoration (CNTR) was founded to address all these obstacles by providing free, accessible, accurate electronic materials using a data-driven scientific approach to textual criticism. Not merely for the sake of academic head knowledge, but that many would ultimately apply this knowledge and be born again of the Spirit (John 3:3) by repenting of their sins (Acts 2:38) and receiving Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives (Rom. 10:9-10). The CNTR ascribes to an evangelical statement of faith which affirms: “The Bible, in the original autographs, is divinely inspired, infallible, inerrant, and authoritative in all matters of faith and conduct.” While the CNTR primarily endeavors to promote scholarly research

among evangelical Christians, this does not mean that non-Christians will not also benefit from a scientific approach to textual criticism. As a result of the CNTR project, the systemic obstacles hindering the advancement of scientific textual criticism have been addressed in the following ways:

- *Incomplete Data* – this obstacle has been addressed with the CNTR’s first major milestone which provided the first complete set of electronic transcriptions of all references made to the Greek New Testament up to the *terminus ad quem* of 400 AD. For the first time in history, the CNTR collation provides a comprehensive view of all of the variant readings in the earliest extant manuscripts, avoiding the problems with apparatuses previously mentioned above.^{§4.1} It is planned that other classes of data will be added in the future.
- *Restricted Access* – this obstacle has been addressed by making CNTR materials such as the collation, transcriptions, and images available on the Internet. All CNTR transcriptions have been made available for download under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-SA 4.0).
- *Financial Barriers* – this obstacle has been addressed by providing all of the CNTR resources free of charge. Unlike some “Christian” organizations which literally sell the gospel for a profit,^{§4.3} the services of the CNTR are humbly provided as a free gift to the Body of Christ, with nothing expected in return. “Freely you have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:8).
- *Biased Scholarship* – this obstacle has been addressed by the CNTR by using scientific textual criticism which analyzes data according to objective and consistent methods. Statistical research can now be conducted into the nature of variant readings, textual transmission theories, orthographical patterns, and scribal tendencies that were never possible before.
- *Educational Inaccuracies* – this obstacle has been addressed by utilizing Koine Greek instead of Medieval Greek for reasons previously discussed.^{§4.5} For those who learned Medieval Greek at a university, the differences between Koine Greek are not insurmountable and can be mastered very quickly. Since few educational materials exist for Koine Greek at this time, the CNTR has provided the New Testament Greek Reference Guide to help facilitate the transition.⁷⁵ The CNTR also promotes the phonetics of reconstructed Koine Greek which is necessary in order to understand the orthographical differences of that time period.⁷⁶

But this was just the beginning. With most of the major impediments now removed, the CNTR is making many new advancements in the field of textual criticism. The data from the CNTR collation of early manuscripts has already been used in the creation of two new critical texts - the Tyndale House Greek New Testament (THGNT) and the Bunning Heuristic Prototype (BHP) which serves as the basis for the unfolding Word Greek New Testament (UGNT). With the achievement of the CNTR’s second major milestone, all of the most important variants of the New Testament have now been parsed and made into an interlinear view on the collation showing morphology, Enhanced Strong’s Numbers (ESN), and English glosses so that for the first time the average user can understand the meaning of those variants without any previous knowledge of Greek.

All of this data from years of painstaking research has been compiled in the CNTR relational database which contains a number of advanced features that were designed specifically for research in textual criticism that are not available on any other platform. Various types of data such as collations, transcriptions, concordances, and apparatuses can now be accurately generated by the computer from the database in seconds without introducing new errors. This database has also enabled new types of statistical data analysis that were never before possible, resulting in the publication of several different papers. This idea was envisioned by E.C. Colwell and E.W. Tune way back in the 1960s:

“We are working in a period when the data for textual criticism will inevitably be translated into mathematics. In fact it is doubtful that NT textual critics can really hope to relate all of the data now available to them without the aid of computers.”⁷⁷

A detailed description of the technical features and standards of the CNTR database are contained in the CNTR Technical Reference which documents how the principles of scientific textual criticism have been implemented in the CNTR project.⁷⁸ Perhaps the biggest form of flattery is that other textual critics are beginning to mimic various aspect of the CNTR project as more and more are beginning to accept a scientific approach to textual criticism.

Just as the clergy argued centuries ago that the “ignorant” public should not be allowed to read the Bible, some have argued that the public should not be exposed to the ideas of textual criticism and allowed to see the textual variants in the Greek texts. Too bad! Providing this information to the public is no more “dangerous” than when people use different Bible translations in the same Bible study, except that now they can see the underlying basis for those differences. It is hoped that more people will become engaged with this wealth of information and reap the benefits from interacting with the Bible in its original languages. If you also would like to donate time or finances to this project, or if you have any corrections or suggestions, please contact the CNTR through its website (<https://greekcntr.org>).

¹ This estimate is made from the number of manuscripts catalogued by the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung (INTF); <http://egora.uni-muenster.de/intf>, accessed May 11, 2016.

² International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy”, 1978.

³ C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*, p. 95, Touch-Stone: New York, 1996.

⁴ Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*, 15.14; R. B. Tollinton, *Selections from the Commentaries and Homilies of Origen*, p. 109-110, SPCK Publishing: London, 1929.

⁵ Jerome, *Preface to the Four Gospels; Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, series 2, vol. 6, p. 488, Christian Literature: New York, 1886-1889.

⁶ Alan Bunning, *King James Textus Receptus*, p. v, Center for New Testament Restoration: 2020.

⁷ Normal L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, p. 367, Moody Press: Chicago, 1980. Normal Geisler later defends his figure by citing Westcott & Hort, Ezra Abbott, and A.T. Robertson, among others. Normal Geisler, “A Note on the Percent of Accuracy of the New Testament Text”, 2005; <http://normangeisler.com/a-note-on-the-percent-of-accuracy-of-the-new-testament-text>, accessed January 13, 2018.

⁸ David S. Dockery, et. al., *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation*, p.182, Broadman & Holman Publishers: Nashville, 1994.

⁹ King James Bible translators, “The Translators to the Reader”, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old Testament and the New: Newly translated out of the original tongues: and with the former translations diligently compared and revised, by His Majestie's special commandment*, Imprinted by Robert Baker: London, England, 1611.

¹⁰ Westminster Assembly, *The Humble Advice of the Assembly of Divines, now by Authority of Parliament sitting at Westminster, concerning a Confession of Faith*, ch. 1, sect. 8, London, 1647.

¹¹ The word “pure” here more likely refers to doctrinal purity, as the reformers were well aware of minor textual variants at that time.

¹² Alan Bunning, *King James Textus Receptus*, Center for New Testament Restoration: 2020.

¹³ Bart Ehrman, “Is the Original New Testament Lost?”, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, February 1, 2012; <http://www.credocourses.com/blog/2016/original-new-testament-lost-ehрман-vs-wallace-debate-transcript>, accessed January 17, 2018.

¹⁴ I. D. Karavidopoulos, *The 1904 New Testament Edition of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Future Perspectives*, vol. 10 no. 1, p7-14, Sacra Scripta. 2012.

¹⁵ Its earliest appearance found so far in Greek is translated from a Latin version of the Acts of the Lateran Council in 1215 AD.

¹⁶ Popular English Bible translations such as the NIV, ESV, NASB, and HCSB were translated from modern critical texts that are more “Alexandrian” in nature, with Codex Vaticanus being considered one of the most early and reliable witnesses.

¹⁷ Ironically, several years after this was originally written in 2013, the Document Resources Project was established to locate and examine the various copies of the Declaration of Independence, and indeed there were some differences! <http://declaration.fas.harvard.edu>, accessed April 26, 2017.

¹⁸ Speculations here as to why this field has largely been dominated by “touchy-feely” liberal arts majors instead of scientists will not be touched with a ten-foot pole. 😊

¹⁹ This mantra was derived from Housman’s quote: “Textual criticism is a science, and, since it comprises recension and emendation, it is also an art. It is the science of discovering error in texts and the art of removing it.” A. E. Housman, “The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism”, Proceedings of the Classical Association, vol XVIII, August 1921.

²⁰ Johann Jakob Griesbach has been credited with the rule followed by many textual critics: “The reading is to be preferred as the original which best explains the existence of all other.” Eldon J. Epp and Gordon D. Fee, *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 181, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.: Grand Rapids, MI, 1993.

²¹ Once consider a canon of textual criticism established by Griesbach (Johann Jakob Griesbach, *Novum Testamentum Graece, Textum ad fidem Codicum Versionem*, Halae Saxonum: London, 1796), *lectio brevior* is now falling out of favor based on factual research regarding scribal habits. James R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri*, p. 719-720, Society of Biblical Literature: Atlanta, 2007. Stephen C. Carlson, *The Text of Galatians and its History*, p. 90, Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 2015. Peter Malik, *P. Beatty III (P47): The Codex, Its Scribe, and Its Text*, p. 144-115, Brill: Leiden, 2017. Alan Taylor Farnes, “Scribal Habits in Selected New Testament Manuscripts Including those with Surviving Exemplars”, p. 268, University of Birmingham, April 2017.

²² James R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri*, Brill: Leiden, 2007. Peter Head, “The Habits of New Testament Copyists Singular Readings in the Early Fragmentary Papyri of John”, *Biblica*, vol. 85, no. 3, 2004. Juan Hernández, *Scribal habits and theological influences in the Apocalypse*, Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, Germany, 2006. Andrew Wilson, “Scribal Habits in Greek New Testament Manuscripts”, *Filologia Neotestamentaria*, vol. 24, 2011.

²³ For example, in Romans 1:19 some textual critics support the reading “ο θεος γαρ” with the story that its unusual construction makes it the harder reading and some later “Byzantine” scribe must have corrected it, while other textual critics support “ο γαρ θεος” with the story that it is the majority reading and one “Alexandrian” scribe must have mistakenly flipped the word order and others in that region merely copied the mistake.

²⁴ J. L. H. Krans and L.J. Lietaert Peerbolte, *The Amsterdam Database of New Testament Conjectural Emendation*, 2016; <http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/nt-conjectures>, accessed January 13, 2018.

²⁵ cop^{sa} (3rd/4th) and syr^{ph} (6th).

²⁶ Erasmus back-translated the last six verses of Revelation (Rev. 22:16-21) from the Latin Vulgate which supposedly led to about a dozen words without support from any Greek manuscript. Creating the original wording of the Greek text from a foreign language is inherently flawed because translations often take the liberty to add embellishments for improved clarity, and thus back-translating from a foreign language subsequently interjects those embellishments. While it may be acceptable to add words for clarity when *translating* a text, it is not acceptable when *transmitting* a text.

²⁷ Pieter van Reenen, et al., eds., “Problems of a Highly Contaminated Tradition: the New Testament. Stemmata of Variants as a Source of a Genealogy for Witnesses”, *Studies in Stemmatology II*, p. 27, John Benjamins Publishing Co.: Amsterdam, 2004.

²⁸ At the risk of sounding presumptuous, the thought comes to mind, “The emperor has no clothes!”

²⁹ Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, p. 149-150, Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans & Roberts: London, 1856.

³⁰ Alan Bunning, *King James Textus Receptus*, Center for New Testament Restoration: 2020.

³¹ Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, The Macmillan Company, Cambridge, 1885.

³² Barbara and Kurt Aland, et al, *Nestle-Aland: Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th revised ed., Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart, Germany, 2012.

³³ Barbara Aland, et al. ed., *The Greek New Testament*, 5th revised ed., United Bible Societies: Stuttgart, 2014.

- ³⁴ Maurice A. Robinson, and William G. Pierpont, *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform 2005*. Chilton Book Publishing: Southborough, MA, December 1, 2005; <http://www.byztxt.com>, accessed November 26, 2012.
- ³⁵ Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad eds., *The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text*, 2nd ed., Thomas Nelson: Nashville, 1985.
- ³⁶ Wilbur M. Pickering, *The Greek New Testament According to Family 35*, 2nd edition, 2015.
- ³⁷ Graham G. Thomason, *FarAboveAll Translation of the Bible*, revised September 29, 2017; http://faraboveall.com/050_BibleTranslation/01_BibleTranslationIndex.html, accessed January 10, 2018. G. Allen Walker, *Modern Literal Version*, 2017 update, May 8, 2018; <http://www.modernliteralversion.org>, accessed May 26, 2018. Paul W. Esposito, *The English Majority Text Version*, n.d.; <http://www.majoritytext.com>, accessed May 26, 2018.
- ³⁸ Michael W. Holmes, *Greek New Testament: SBL Edition*, Society of Biblical Literature: Atlanta, 2010.
- ³⁹ Along similar lines: “Textual criticism is often regarded as an arcane subject that is rendered the more difficult by the impossibility of reaching final conclusions. According to this view, questions regarding the text of a classical Greek or Roman author are best left to be settled by a qualified editor....[who] will make up his mind while sipping claret in the seclusion of his study, and lesser mortals should defer to his superior judgment.” Daniel Kiss, *What Catullus Wrote*, preface, The Classical Press of Wales: Llandysul, Wales, 2015.
- ⁴⁰ Theoretically, if an author had made corrections as he was writing it down or had previously made rough drafts, the original autographs would be the writing that the author released.
- ⁴¹ Alan Bunning, *Bunning Heuristic Prototype Greek New Testament*, Center for New Testament Restoration: December 29, 2017.
- ⁴² In order to obtain a complete set of witnesses from all Greek extant manuscripts up to 400 AD, the CNTR had to create 98 electronic transcriptions which were the first ever made publicly available.
- ⁴³ Thomas C. Geer, Jr., “Analyzing and Categorizing New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Colwell Revisited”, *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, p. 253, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.: Grand Rapids, MI, 1995.
- ⁴⁴ Barbara and Kurt Aland, et al., eds., *The Greek New Testament*. 5th revised ed., United Bible Societies: Stuttgart, Germany, 2014.
- ⁴⁵ Barbara and Kurt Aland, et al, eds. *Nestle-Aland: Novum Testament Graece*, 28th revised ed., p. 11, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft: Stuttgart, Germany, 2012.
- ⁴⁶ “Greek New Testament”; <http://www.laparola.net/greco>, accessed May 11, 2016.
- ⁴⁷ Very rough estimate made by Peter Gurry, “How Many Variants Make It Into Your Greek New Testament”, May 10, 2016; <http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com>, accessed May 11, 2016.
- ⁴⁸ The information provided in this subsection is for informational purposes only and not for the purpose of providing legal advice. If you need legal advice, you should contact a professional attorney.
- ⁴⁹ *Feist Publications, Inc. v. Rural Telephone Service Co.*, 499 U.S. 340. U.S. Supreme Court, 1991; <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/499/340.html>, accessed November 26, 2012.
- ⁵⁰ *Feist Publications, Inc. v. Rural Telephone Service Co.*, 499 U.S. 340. U.S. sect. II-C, Supreme Court, 1991; <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/499/340.html> , accessed November 26, 2012.
- ⁵¹ *Assessment Technologies of WI v. WIREdata, Inc.*, 350 F.3d 640, p. 6, U.S. Court of Appeals 7th Circuit, 2003; <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-7th-circuit/1173648.html>, accessed November 26, 2012.
- ⁵² *Feist Publications, Inc. v. Rural Telephone Service Co.*, 499 U.S. 340. sect. II-A, U.S. Supreme Court, 1991; <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/499/340.html> , accessed November 26, 2012.
- ⁵³ *Feist Publications, Inc. v. Rural Telephone Service Co.*, 499 U.S. 340. sect. II-B, U.S. Supreme Court, 1991; <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/499/340.html> , accessed November 26, 2012.
- ⁵⁴ *Feist Publications, Inc. v. Rural Telephone Service Co.*, 499 U.S. 340. sect. I, U.S. Supreme Court, 1991; <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/499/340.html> , accessed November 26, 2012.
- ⁵⁵ Maurice A. Robinson, and William G. Pierpont. *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform 2005*. Chilton Book Publishing: Southborough, MA, December 1, 2005; <http://www.byztxt.com>, accessed November 26, 2012.

- ⁵⁶ Beate Schubert, German Bible Society e-mail sent to Bibledatabase.org threatening legal action, March 24, 2009; http://bibledatabase.org/Deutsche_Bibelgesellschaft.html, accessed November 26, 2012.
- ⁵⁷ Beate Schubert, “Licensing policy”, Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece; <http://www.nestle-aland.com/en/extra-navigation/licensing-policy>, accessed November 26, 2012.
- ⁵⁸ Stanley E. Porter, “Can the Text of the Greek New Testament Really be Copyrighted?” OpenText.org Project, January 11, 2001; <http://www.opentext.org/resources/articles/a2.html>, accessed November 26, 2012.
- ⁵⁹ “Circular 14: Copyright Registration for Derivative Works.” p. 1, U.S. Copyright Office, August 2011; <http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ14.pdf>, accessed November 26, 2012.
- ⁶⁰ *Bridgeman Art Library, LTD. v. Corel Corporation*, 36 F.Supp.2d 191, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, 1999. This ruling was subsequently upheld in *Meshwerks v. Toyota*, 528 F.3d 1258, U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, 2008 as well as *Schiffer Publishing, Ltd. v. Chronicle Books*, 350 F. Supp. 2d 613, U.S. District Court E.D. Pennsylvania, 2004.
- ⁶¹ *Bridgeman Art Library, LTD. v. Corel Corporation*, Supp. 2d 421, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, 1998.
- ⁶² “Thus, whether an infringement has occurred in the United States is a matter of United States law.” *Bridgeman Art Library, LTD. v. Corel Corporation*, Supp. 2d 421, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, 1998.
- ⁶³ Laura N. Gasaway, *Copyright Questions and Answers for Information Professionals*, Charleston Insights in Library, Archival, and Information Sciences, p. 5-6, Purdue University Press: West Lafayette, IN, 2013.
- ⁶⁴ At least that is what Daniel Wallace told me at the Ratio Christi Symposium Luncheon held at Purdue University on February 4, 2016.
- ⁶⁵ As one of many examples, David Trobisch was a member of the liberal “The Jesus Project” produced by the atheistic Center for Inquiry which merged with Richard Dawkins’ Foundation for Reason & Science in 2016.
- ⁶⁶ For an example see agnostic Bart D. Ehrman’s book *Misquoting Jesus: The Story behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*. HarperCollins: New York, 2005 which has been debunked by numerous publications such as Timothy Paul Jones, *Misquoting Truth: A Guide to the Fallacies of Bart Ehrman’s “Misquoting Jesus”*, IVP Books: Downers Grove, IL, 2007 and Edward D. Andrews, *Misrepresenting Jesus: Debunking Bart D. Ehrman’s “Misquoting Jesus”*, Christian Publishing House: 2019.
- ⁶⁷ Alan Bunning, *Rationality: From Ignoramus to Rationalist*, 2nd edition, Lulu Press: Raleigh, NC, December 6, 2020.
- ⁶⁸ Alan Bunning, *CNTR Technical Reference*, sect. 3, Center for New Testament Restoration: 2021.
- ⁶⁹ Chrys C. Caragounis, “The Error of Erasmus and Un-Greek Pronunciation of Greek”, *Filologia Neotestamentaria*, 8:151-185, p. 181, November 1995.
- ⁷⁰ “Greek Language – Distinctive Characteristics”, *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th ed. Columbia University Press: New York, NY, 2006. <http://www.bartleby.com/65/gr/Greeklan.html>, accessed June 8, 2007.
- ⁷¹ Chrys C. Caragounis, “The Error of Erasmus and Un-Greek Pronunciation of Greek”, *Filologia Neotestamentaria*, 8:151-185, p. 157, November 1995.
- ⁷² Biblical Language Center, 2012; <https://www.biblicallanguagecenter.com/koine-greek-pronunciation>. accessed May 10, 2016.
- ⁷³ Chrys C. Caragounis, “The Error of Erasmus and Un-Greek Pronunciation of Greek”, *Filologia Neotestamentaria*, 8:151-185, p. 183-184, November 1995.
- ⁷⁴ Yannis Haralambous, “Guidelines and Suggested Amendments to the Greek Unicode Tables”, p. 8, 21st International Unicode Conference: Dublin, Ireland, May 2002.
- ⁷⁵ Alan Bunning, *New Testament Greek Reference Guide*, Center for New Testament Restoration: 2016.
- ⁷⁶ Biblical Language Center; <https://www.biblicallanguagecenter.com/koine-greek-pronunciation>.
- ⁷⁷ E.C. Colwell and E.W. Tune, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, p. 255-256. E. C. Colwell and E. W. Tune, “Variant Readings: Classification and Use”, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 83, No. 3, p. 255-256, Sep. 1964.
- ⁷⁸ Alan Bunning, *CNTR Technical Reference*, Center for New Testament Restoration: 2021.