# The *Solid Rock Greek New Testament*: Theory and Practice

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**Abstract**

The *Solid Rock Greek New Testament: Scholar's Edition* offers a reconstructed text of the New Testament based on Byzantine priority theory and expands upon the work of the SBL Greek New Testament by comparing the readings of over 10 major critical editions at nearly 8000 units of textual variation. In this survey, we will discuss the goals, principles, and processes underlying the development of this edition, focusing especially on the design and use of the apparatus. As we will show, the resources available in this work make it a valuable addition to the library of anyone involved in the teaching, translation, or study of the Greek New Testament.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 New Testament Textual Criticism

For nearly as long as the Church has recognized the scriptures of the New Testament (NT) as authoritative, it has also understood that not all copies of these scriptures agree with one another.[1] If we assume that each book of the NT originated in a single inspired autograph, then any two manuscripts cannot both be right where they disagree.[2] More to the point, where any difference

1. The early church fathers occasionally took note of such differences in the manuscripts known to them. For this reason, their notes serve as crucial evidence for variant readings, sometimes in cases when the reading in the patristic citation has not survived in any NT manuscript. A comprehensive study can be found in Amy M. Donaldson, "Explicit References to New Testament Variant Readings among Greek and Latin Church Fathers" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2009).

2. While the editors of the *Solid Rock Greek New Testament* both accept this assumption, it is necessary to point out that not all textual scholars do; the idea that some NT authors published multiple editions of their writings, for instance, is becoming more common. Even among the scholars who hold to the singularity of the NT autographs, there is disagreement over what is meant by *autograph*. This discussion is far beyond the scope of this article, but we can offer

is significant to the interpretation of the passage, it will likely affect how one translates or preaches the passage.

To summarize the scope of the situation, over 5700 Greek manuscripts that contain at least part of the NT have survived and are known to us today.[3] The variation found in the evidence has grown proportionally: a recent estimate places the number of variant readings among all NT manuscripts at about 500000.[4] Given the sheer size of the textual landscape, one could easily despair of even approximating the original text of the NT.

Thankfully, text-critical scholars over the past few centuries have developed tools and approaches to render this otherwise daunting problem tractable. The first step is to focus our attention on genealogically significant variants. Roughly thirty percent of the variant readings mentioned above are *defective* (i.e., nonsensical and obviously the result of scribal error) and can be considered secondary; around half of the total number of variants readings are *singular* (i.e., found in only one manuscript), which in most cases is an easy indicator of scribal innovation.[5] We can further reduce the remaining readings by setting aside changes in spelling, transpositions in word order, and other minor omissions, expansions, and clarifications that scribes might commonly make.[6]

Once we have reduced our set of variants to those that are most likely to partition manuscripts into their historical families, the next step is to determine how competing readings in each unit of variation relate to one another: which reading did the author most likely write, and which readings are the sources of

several references to interested readers. For a broader treatment of the multiplicity of NT texts, a classic text is D. C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); more recent work along these lines from a variety of scholars can be found in H. A. G. Houghton, ed., *Liturgy and the Living Text of the New Testament: Papers from the Tenth Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament,* TextsS 16 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2018). Recent perspectives on how to view the autographs in light of ancient publication practices can be found in Timothy N. Mitchell, "What are the NT Autographs? An Examination of the Doctrine of Inspiration and Inerrancy in Light of Greco-Roman Publication," *JETS* 59.2 (2016) and Matthew D. C. Larsen, "Accidental Publication, Unfinished Texts and the Traditional Goals of New Testament Textual Criticism," *JSNT* 39.4 (2017). For a survey of challenges to the idea of an "original text" from textual data, see Gregory R. Lanier, "Scriptural Inspiration and the Authorial 'Original' amid Textual Complexity: The Sequences of the Murder-Adultery-Steal Commands as a Case Study," *JETS* 61.1 (2018).

3. Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration,* 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 52.

4. Peter J. Gurry, "The Number of Variants in the Greek New Testament: A Proposed Estimate," *NTS* 62.1 (2016): 97–121.

5. Gurry, "Number of Variants," 9.

6. Such variants are called *polygenetic* and are typically uninformative regarding textual history; see Paolo Trovato, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lachmann's Method: A Non-Standard Handbook of Genealogical Textual Criticism in the Age of Post-Structuralism, Cladistics, and Copy-Text,* SL 7 (Padova: libreriauniversitaria.it Edizioni, 2014).

other readings? To answer the first question, we consider matters of *intrinsic probability*, such as the author's style, the purpose and audience of the writing, and the context surrounding the variation unit in question. To answer the second question, we employ canons of *transcriptional probability* based on the habits of most scribes. In many cases, scribal mistakes can easily explain one reading as arising from another. In other cases, the variant readings are so distinct that deliberate emendation must have occurred, and to determine which reading has priority, we have to consider stylistic, theological, and other motivations for change in both directions. Finally, we can shed light on both questions using *external evidence* related to the manuscripts supporting each reading, including their age, geographical provenance, and general copying quality.

The rules described above are well-known to textual critics and have been fruitfully applied in many critical editions of the NT, but scholars have historically grappled with fitting both types of evidence into a cohesive framework. Internal and external evidence sometimes point in opposite directions, so more consistency on one front inevitably leads to less on the other. Various methodologies have been developed to address this issue.

The most common approach in recent years has been *eclecticism*, which considers each variation unit independently and applies textual decisions at each point using internal and external evidence. The question of how internal and external factors should be relatively weighed has resulted in further refinements to this approach. *Thoroughgoing eclecticism* gives priority to internal evidence, while *reasoned eclecticism* attemps to balance both types of evidence.[7] The most obvious benefit of this approach is its simplicity, but it comes at the cost of rigor: eclecticism by its nature typically yields a "piecemeal" text, and it does not adequately address the underlying history of the text.[8]

The simplest way to depart from eclecticism is to assume the priority of a single manuscript or group of manuscripts and follow the readings of these witnesses everywhere except where obvious scribal errors have occurred. In the case of a single manuscript or a closely-related family of manuscripts, this is

7. For more details on both types of eclecticism, see J. K. Elliott, "The Case for Thoroughgoing Eclecticism," in *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism,* ed. David Alan Black (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 101–124 and Michael W. Holmes, "The Case for Reasoned Eclecticism," in *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism,* ed. David Alan Black (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 77–100.

8. Detailed criticisms of these shortcomings can be found in Maurice A. Robinson, "Rule 9, Isolated Variants, and the 'Test-Tube' Nature of the NA[27] / UBS[4] Text," in *Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology,* ed. Stanley E. Porter and Mark J. Boda (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 27–61 and Eldon Jay Epp, "The Twentieth Century Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism," *JBL* 93.3 386–414. Some responses are outlined in Gregory R. Lanier, "Taking Inventory on the 'Age of the Minuscules': Later Manuscripts and the Byzantine Tradition within the Field of Textual Criticism," *CBR* 16.3 (2018).

called the *copy-text* approach. If, at each variation unit, priority is given to the most-widely-attested reading, it is called the *majority-text* approach.[9] The benefit of these two methods is their consistency on external grounds, which eclectic texts often lack. This comes at a cost to consistency on internal grounds, as internal evidence has little or no say in these approaches. A bigger problem is that these solutions, like eclecticism, either ignore or oversimplify the textual history in the choices they make.[10]

Transmissionally-oriented methods such as *Alexandrian priority*, *Byzantine priority*, and classical Lachmannian stemmatics, begin by establishing a putative textual history, usually on the basis of internal evidence or external historical factors, and then allow the established textual history to dictate how manuscript evidence should be weighed.[11] At each variation unit, the reading supported by the weightiest manuscripts is taken to be the earliest. By filling the historical gap left by eclecticism, these methods allow the textual critic to understand individual variation units as part of a fuller, more cohesive picture. Of course, the explanatory power of the transmissional approach relies heavily on the knowledge of the scholars implementing it, and, as the number of distinct aproaches of this type shows, such knowledge is inevitably incomplete and therefore somewhat informed by subjective assumptions.[12]

The Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (CBGM),[13] which underlies parts of the Nestle-Aland critical text starting with the twenty-eighth edition (NA$^{28}$),[14] improves on the basic eclectic approach by tracing textual flows through the texts represented by individual manuscripts, actively accommodating contamination

9. For a text constructed on majority-text principles and a defense of these principles, see Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad, eds., *The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text,* 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984).

10. Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament,* 220–221.

11. For more technical justifications of these methods, see Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek,* vol. 2: Introduction and Appendix (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1882), Maurice A. Robinson, "The Case for Byzantine Priority," in *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism,* ed. David Alan Black (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 125–139, and Trovato, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lachmann's Method.*

12. For an excellent survey of Byzantine priority, including a summary of arguments for and against it, see Lanier, "Taking Inventory on the 'Age of the Minuscules'."

13. See Gerd Mink, "Problems of a Highly Contaminated Tradition: The New Testament. Stemmata of Variants as a Source of a Genealogy for Witnesses," in *Studies in Stemmatology,* ed. Pieter van Reenen, August den Hollander, and Margot van Mulken, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2004), 13–85; for a gentler introduction, see Tommy Wasserman and Peter J. Gurry, *A New Approach to Textual Criticism: An Introduction to the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method,* SBLRBS 80 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017).

14. Barbara Aland et al., eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece,* 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

or mixture in the tradition and attempting to reconstruct the shortest paths of influence from a presumed initial text to later states of the text. Despite a superficial similarity to classical stemmatics, the CBGM limits its consideration of textual states to only those preserved by extant manuscripts, and therefore its power and suitability to infer textual history are disputed.[15]

## 1.2 Why This Edition?

The *Solid Rock Greek New Testament: Scholar's Edition*,[16] hereafter abbreviated SRS, was developed with the purpose of offering a comparative overview of prominent NT editions based on the various methodologies outlined above. Because it does not collate the readings of individual manuscripts directly, it is not a critical edition in the strict sense. Rather, it is a digest of other critical editions intended to give pastors, translators, and researchers a compact and accessible snapshot of trends in scholarly opinion over the last few centuries.

While a similar effort has already been undertaken in the Society of Biblical Literature's Greek NT (SBL GNT),[17] that edition only covers the differences of five other critical texts throughout the NT, and it fails to capture the full spectrum of variation that has resulted from methodological changes throughout the history of NT textual criticism. For example, the SBL GNT admirably includes the Robinson-Pierpont (RP) Byzantine text in its apparatus,[18] but because it does not include data from other Byzantine or majority-text editions, it may give the impression that the predominant stream of textual transmission is more homogeneous than it actually is. In another respect, the SBL GNT has already, in the course of less than a decade, become outdated: the Greek texts of Nestle-Aland and the New International Version have both been revised since its publication.[19] In addition, the notation of the SBL GNT's apparatus leaves some clarity to be desired, and the markings in its text often divide up variation

15. For differing opinions, see Klaus Wachtel, "The Coherence Method and History," *TC* 20 (2015) and Peter J. Gurry, "The Harklean Syriac and the Development of the Byzantine Text: A Historical Test for the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (CBGM)," *NovT* 60.2 (2018): 358–375.

16. Joey McCollum and Stephen L. Brown, eds., *Solid Rock Greek New Testament: Scholar's Edition* (North Conway, NH: Solid Rock Publications, 2018).

17. Michael W. Holmes, ed., *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010).

18. Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont, eds., *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform* (Southborough, MA: Chilton Book Publishing, 2005).

19. In fairness, developments in NT textual criticism have been accelerating so rapidly that even SRS could not incorporate an important new edition of the Greek NT released shortly before its publication (Dirk Jongkind and Peter J. Williams, eds., *The Greek New Testament, Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017]).

units in seemingly arbitrary ways. The SRS Greek NT seeks to rectify all of these issues in the interest of improved readability and greater text-critical precision.

# 2 Design

## 2.1 The Text

The specific goals defined above enabled the SRS editorial team to make deliberate design choices in every aspect of the publishing process, including the typesetting of the text. To begin, we divided the page to ensure plenty of room in the edge and bottom margins for notes and readers' thumbs. We set English and Greek text in 11-point and 11.5-point Linux Libertine, respectively, with titles in the companion sans-serif face, Linux Biolinum; we chose these typefaces for their combination of legibility, economy, and Greek character coverage. On each page of the Greek text, the header contains the name of the current book and a chapter-verse range for easy reference. We set the text in paragraphs and chose to print chapter and verse numbers in a minimally-intrusive manner, to facilitate uninterrupted reading and exegesis.[20]

Because we agreed that eclecticism was lacking in historical justification, we decided to construct our text according to an alternative methodology in the camp of transmissionalism. In our estimation, the best-developed approach in this area was Byzantine-priority. It seemed natural, then, for us to begin with the (then-)current electronic edition of the RP Greek NT as a base.[21] We evaluated the inter-Byzantine variants noted in RP and adopted alternate Byzantine readings where we felt internal and external evidence warranted the change. While our reasons for following Byzantine-priority and our justifications for departing from the RP base text are beyond the scope of this presentation, full discussions of these matters can be found in the SRS appendix.

## 2.2 Cited Editions

In an effort to give the reader a more comprehensive picture of different critical methodologies and their development over time, we extended the collation of the SBL GNT by five critical editions of the entire NT, along with four critical texts

20. For instance, in places where modern chapter numbers occur in the middle of a traditional paragraph, SRS will not break the paragraph at the chapter number; see John 8:1.

21. The 2018 edition of RP (Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont, eds., *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform* [Nürnberg: VTR Publications, 2018]) has since been released. All of the substantial changes introduced in 2018, including updates to the text in John 18:11, 32 and a correction to Rev 2:17, are already incorporated in SRS.

of parts of the NT. The following list contains the sigla of all editions collated, along with their descriptions:

- RP—The latest electronic version of the Robinson-Pierpont Byzantine NT. The text is derived from principles of *reasoned transmissionalism* that favor the predominant $K^x$ Byzantine group on the grounds of historical and scribal trends. It was included in the SBL GNT apparatus.

- $f^{35}$—Pickering's consensus text of the $K^r$ majority subgroup, also called Family 35.[22] Given the high degree of cohesion this group possesses throughout the NT and the editor's confidence in its antiquity, this edition can be considered a copy-text of the family's archetype. It is new to the SRS apparatus.

- TR—The Stephanus *Textus Receptus* published in 1550. The edition, which derives its readings primarily from a handful of Byzantine manuscripts on what would now be considered eclectic principles, is of value not only because it represents one of the earliest text-critical endeavors in NT scholarship, but also because it underlies the King James Version. It is effectively new to the SRS apparatus, as the SBL GNT only sporadically cited its readings.

- $TNT^2$—Tyndale House's transcribed and corrected edition of Tregelles's Greek NT.[23] Tregelles constructed his text on principles that are closest in spirit to reasoned eclecticism with a balanced use of internal and external evidence. He eschewed conjectures about textual history and preferred to let the manuscript data speak for itself. The original edition of his text was included in the SBL GNT apparatus.

- WH—The Westcott-Hort Greek NT, considered a milestone in NT scholarship's shift away from the dominance of the TR.[24] The editors justified their textual choices on the basis of a conjectured transmissional history

22. Wilbur N. Pickering, ed., *The Greek New Testament According to Family 35,* 2nd ed. (Wilbur N. Pickering, 2015).

23. Samuel P. Tregelles, *The Greek New Testament, Edited from Ancient Authorities, with their Various Readings in Full, and the Latin Version of Jerome,* transcribed and corrected by Dirk Jongkind, in collaboration with Julie Woodson, Natacha Pfister, and Robert Crellin. Consultant editor: P. J. Williams. (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1857–1879; repr., Cambridge: Tyndale House, 2009).

24. Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek,* vol. 1: Text (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1881).

that today would be best described as Alexandrian priority.[25] In practice, their text almost always follows the readings of the fourth-century codices Sinaiticus (א / 01) and Vaticanus (B / 03). It was included in the SBL GNT apparatus.

- NA[25]—The twenty-fifth edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek NT.[26] This edition is not quite a critical edition, as it derives its readings from the majority vote of three other printed editions. Nevertheless, it is worth including as a summary of nineteenth-century textual scholarship and as a basis of comparison against later Nestle-Aland editions. It is new to the SRS apparatus.

- NA[27]—The twenty-seventh edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek NT, whose text is identical to that of the twenty-sixth edition.[27] The underlying methodology is reasoned eclecticism, with more weight given to the earliest manuscripts, but not as often as is the case in Westcott-Hort. This edition was included in the SBL GNT apparatus.

- NA[28]—The twenty-eighth edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek NT. Its text is identical to that of NA[27] up to orthographic factors everywhere except in the general epistles, where it features a new text derived from the CBGM. It is new to the SRS apparatus.

- NIV[73]—The Greek text behind the 1973 New International Version.[28] Its methodology is best described as reasoned eclecticism in a similar vein to that employed in NA[27], as the two texts are very close. The fewer than 300 differences between the two editions may be attributed to the Committee on Bible Translation's interests in producing a Greek text suitable for rendering in other languages. This edition was included in the SBL GNT apparatus.

25. The editors describe their favored manuscripts as representing the "neutral text" (Westcott and Hort, *New Testament, vol. 2,* 126–130) reserving the Alexandrian label for other, less pure manuscripts (Westcott and Hort, *New Testament, vol. 2,* 130–132), but later scholars would classify these witnesses as simply primary and secondary witnesses, respectively, to the Alexandrian texttype.

26. Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece cum apparatu critico curavit Eberhard Nestle novis curis elaboravit Erwin Nestle,* 25th ed. (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1963).

27. Kurt Aland et al., eds., *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece,* 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993).

28. Richard J. Goodrich and Albert L. Lukaszewski, *A Reader's Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003).

- NIV[11]—The Greek text behind the 2011 New International Version.[29] The underlying approach is still eclectic, but a number of changes have been made to the NIV[73] text to incorporate new readings found in NA[28] and to reflect new editorial decisions made by the Committee on Bible Translation. It is new to the SRS apparatus.

- SBL—The SBL GNT. Like the Nestle-Aland editions, its textual choices are eclectic, but with considerable weight given to internal evidence in some places. As a result, its text features a number of more sparsely-attested readings.

- Ead—The Greek text of Eadie's commentaries on Galatians through Second Thessalonians.[30] Since the focus of his work was exegesis, he was less concerned with the history of the text. Nevertheless, his decision to discuss variants at all and the detail in which he does so are admirable. His is a more balanced eclecticism, like that of Tregelles, and in some cases he prefers the reading found in the TR over that found in the earliest manuscripts. His text is new to the SRS apparatus.

- Carl—Carlson's critical text of Galatians.[31] It is the first study of its scope based on Lachmannian principles for an entire book of the NT. Carlson's work covers 1624 variation units between 92 witnesses to Galatians. It is new to the SRS apparatus.

- Sol—Solomon's critical text of Philemon.[32] His text is based on his collation of 572 non-lectionary manuscripts, which is largest collation currently available for a Pauline epistle. His text is eclectic and largely agrees with the NA[27] / NA[28] text. It is new to the SRS apparatus.

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29. Richard J. Goodrich and Albert L. Lukaszewski, *A Reader's Greek New Testament,* 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015).

30. John Eadie, *Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1869); John Eadie, *Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians,* ed. William Young, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1883); John Eadie, *Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians,* ed. William Young, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1884); John Eadie, *Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians,* ed. William Young, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1884); John Eadie, *Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians,* ed. William Young (London: Macmillan and Co., 1877).

31. Stephen C. Carlson, *The Text of Galatians and Its History,* WUNT II 385 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), based on Stephen C. Carlson, "The Text of Galatians and Its History" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2012).

32. S. Matthew Solomon, "The Textual History of Philemon" (PhD diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014).

Table 1: Notation found in the SRS text and apparatus.

| | |
|---|---|
| ⊤ | Some witnesses add text that SRS does not include. |
| ▫ ◝ | Some witnesses omit the enclosed word(s). |
| ◟ ◞ | Some witnesses transpose the enclosed words. Orthographic sub-variants may occur in the apparatus. |
| ◜ ◝ | Some witnesses substitute another reading for the enclosed word(s). Orthographic sub-variants may occur in the apparatus. |
| ] | Separates the text reading and its support from alternate readings and their support. |
| ¦ | Separates multiple variant readings within the same unit. |
| ⟦ ⟧ | The enclosed witness provides a reading, but marks it as doubtful. This edition does not mark any text as doubtful, so this notation only occurs in the apparatus. |
| … | Represents words that are identical or only orthographically different among all witnesses at the given variation unit. |

- Wass—Wasserman's critical text of Jude.[33] His text is based on his own collation of 560 manuscripts including lectionaries, which is largest collation currently available for a general epistle. His text is eclectic, but it differs from that of NA[28] in some significant places. It is new to the SRS apparatus.

## 2.3 Overview of Variation Units

For the notation used to mark places of textual variation, we extended the markings of the SBL GNT to adhere more closely to the standard notation found in the Nestle-Aland editions. We have departed from this notation in only a few respects: we do not use single brackets to mark uncertain readings, and our markings do not distinguish between single-word and multi-word variations. Our notation is listed in Table 1.

With regard to the notation for the cited editions, ours differs from the SBL GNT's in only a couple respects. First, we employ the siglum TNT² in place of Treg to clarify that our text of Tregelles is the corrected transcription by Tyndale House. Second, and more importantly, we distinguish between the NIV and Nestle-Aland editions at all units through the use of separate sigla; the SBL

33. Tommy Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission,* ConBNT 43 (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 2006)

Table 2: Percentage of variation units in the SRS collation. Note that the categories overlap, so their percentages will not total 100%.

| | |
|---|---|
| Orthographic | 38% |
| Conjugation / Declension | 14% |
| Transposition | 10% |
| Addition, omission, or substitution of a conjunction, a disjunction, or the particle μὲν | 10% |
| Addition or omission of an article | 7% |
| Addition, omission, or substitution (beyond change in declension) of pronouns | 6% |
| Clarification or obfuscation of referent | 1% |
| Expansion or contraction of *nomina sacra* | 1% |
| Addition, omission, or substitution of verbs of communication | 1% |
| Other (potentially significant) | 16% |

GNT grouped both editions under the NIV siglum where they agreed and used NIV and NA where they disagreed, which was a potential cause of confusion.

Where we were able, we checked all differences between SRS and other editions by computer to ensure maximum accuracy.[34] Our collation of the editions listed above contains over 12000 places of variation. We have classified these instances to get a better sample of the types of textual variation found in the NT text. Our classifications can be found in Table 2.

For the sake of space, we have excluded orthographic variants from the printed apparatus, but our entire collation with our classifications for all variants can be viewed freely online.[35]

In the course of our expanding the collation behind the SBL GNT, we also redrew the boundaries of variation units to present textual differences with better contextual clarity and genealogical accuracy. In particular, we aimed to separate variation units whose contents were likely independent and to merge all reasonably close variation units whose contents were likely dependent. A simple, but instructive example can be found in Mark 7:14, where the SBL GNT marks the variation units in the second half of the verse as follows:

34. At the time of this writing, we have only found a couple errors in the SRS apparatus. In 1 Cor 12:8, the SBL GNT reading is incorrect due to a mistake we made when abbreviating it. In 1 John 5:10, the $NA^{25}$ and $NA^{28}$ readings erroneously have hard breathing marks instead of soft breathing marks; we missed these because the difference check we made by computer ignored accents and other marks.

35. https://github.com/jjmccollum/solid-rock-gnt.

ˊἈκούσατέˋ μου πάντες καὶ ˊσύνετε.ˋ

As the SBL GNT and SRS apparatuses both show, each of the editions collated has either the present imperative or the aorist imperative in both places consistently. Moreover, on transcriptional grounds, it seems probable that scribes changing the tense of one verb would change the tense of the other to agree with it. For this reason, SRS marks the entire phrase as a single variation unit.

A more complicated example is Paul's chain of scriptural quotations in Rom 3:10–12, where the SBL GNT marks the text as follows:

> Οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς, **11** οὐκ ἔστιν ▫ὁˋ συνίων, οὐκ ἔστιν ▫ὁˋ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν· **12** πάντες ἐξέκλιναν, ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν· οὐκ ἔστιν ⊤ ποιῶν χρηστότητα, οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἑνός.

Scribes would have no trouble detecting the repetition of the phrase οὐκ ἔστιν ("there is none"), so the potential of assimilation to the near context is obvious. For this reason, SRS merges these variation units. What complicates this example is that there seem to be layers of variation reflected in the cited editions. Notably, SRS, RP, $f^{35}$, TR, TNT$^2$, and SBL preserve the inconsistent (and therefore more transcriptionally compelling) pattern Οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος … οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνιῶν, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν … οὐκ ἔστιν ποιῶν. NA and NIV have an additional article before ποιῶν but not before δίκαιος. Finally, WH assimilates entirely in the opposite direction, dropping the article in each phrase.

While there clearly remains much fruitful work to be done in this area, we feel that our present efforts in SRS will serve as a good starting point for future improvement.

# 3 Use

We will now present a series of examples demonstrating the use of the SRS apparatus for various purposes. The figures shown in this section will print only the relevant text for presentation purposes, but the typesetting and notation are the same as they are in the print edition.

Our first example (see Fig. 1) demonstrates the value of validating our collation data by computer. Tregelles's Greek NT features a unique transposition of Matt 5:4 and 5:5 in their entirety. This order was not accidental, but was based on textual witnesses, as the NA$^{28}$ apparatus demonstrates.[36] Given the extent of this variation unit, it is surprising that the SBL GNT apparatus does not mention it.

36. The witnesses in favor of Tregelles's adopted order are D, 33, the Latin versions, the Curetonian Syriac, one Coptic manuscript, Origen, and Eusebius.

**4** ˹Μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες· ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
**5** Μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς· ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.˺

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**5:4** ˹Μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες … Μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς … RP $f^{35}$ TR WH NA NIV SBL ] Μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς … Μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες … TNT²

Figure 1: Example of an extensive variant not covered in the SBL GNT apparatus (Matt 5:4–5).

**9** Ἀλλὰ ˹τί ἐξήλθετε ἰδεῖν; Προφήτην;˺

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**11:9** ˹τί ἐξήλθετε ἰδεῖν; Προφήτην; RP $f^{35}$ TR ] τί ἐξήλθατε ἰδεῖν; Προφήτην; TNT² NA$^{27+28}$ NIV ¦ τί ἐξήλθατε; Προφήτην ἰδεῖν; WH NA$^{25}$ SBL

Figure 2: Example of variation affecting punctuation (Matt 11:9a); note that the SRS reading and the first variant reading are the same up to orthography.

Fig. 2 illustrates another useful feature of the SRS apparatus: where textual variation might meaningfully affect the punctuation of the passage in which it occurs, the variations in punctuation will also be printed. In Matt 11:9, a transposition in word order gives rise to two potential punctuations of the passage. One choice reads Jesus' statement as, "What did you come to see? A prophet?" The other reads it as, "Why did you come? To see a prophet?" We note that while SRS does not collate differences in punctuation everywhere, it does so where textual variation occurs and where we have deemed such differences to be significant.

**5:1** Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως, εἰρήνην ˹ἔχομεν˺ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ,

---

**5:1** ˹ἔχομεν RP TR NA NIV SBL ] ἔχωμεν $f^{35}$ TNT² WH

Figure 3: Example of a variation unit where scholarly consensus has fluctuated throughout text-critical history (Rom 5:1).

Fig. 3 depicts a well-known textual variant in Rom 5:1. While the difference consists of a single vowel interchange, it has crucial semantic, if not theological, ramifications: is Paul making a positional statement about the believer's status with God ("we have peace with God") or a practical statement about a goal that believers should pursue ("let us have peace")? While recent scholarship has

gone back and forth on this variant largely on internal grounds,[37] the external evidence is also notoriously divided. As the attestation of $f^{35}$ shows, the majority of manuscript evidence is divided on this variant. The TR likely adopted ἔχομεν because its limited collation base happened to support the reading. Later, the discovery of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus furnished Tregelles and Westcott-Hort with sufficient early evidence to favor ἔχωμεν. In the last century, however, internal and external considerations have encouraged more scholars to return to ἔχομεν. Indeed, we preferred this reading for SRS for these reasons, but the case was so close that we still consider our choice a tentative one.

> **33** τοῦ ⸂Ἀμιναδάβ, τοῦ Ἀράμ,⸃ τοῦ Ἑσρώμ, τοῦ Φαρές, τοῦ Ἰούδα,

---

3:33 ⸂Ἀμιναδάβ τοῦ Ἀράμ RP TR TNT² NIV ] Ἀμιναδάβ τοῦ Ἀράμ τοῦ Ἰωράμ $f^{35}$ ¦ Ἀδμείν τοῦ Ἀρνεί WH ¦ Ἀμιναδάβ τοῦ Ἀδμίν τοῦ Ἀρνί NA SBL

Figure 4: Another example of division among Byzantine and majority texts (Luke 3:33).

> **25** Βαρνάβας δὲ καὶ Σαῦλος ὑπέστρεψαν ⸂εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ,⸃

---

12:25 ⸂εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ RP WH NA²⁷⁺²⁸ SBL ] εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν $f^{35}$ ¦ ἐξ Ἰερουσαλήμ TR TNT² NA²⁵ NIV¹¹ ¦ ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλήμ NIV⁷³

Figure 5: Another example of division among Byzantine and majority texts (Acts 12:25a).

A major distinguishing feature of the SRS apparatus is its comparison of important Byzantine and majority texts. Readers may be surprised to find that there are well over 1000 non-orthographic differences between the RP, $f^{35}$, and TR editions. Figs. 4–7 highlight some of these. In Luke 3:33, for instance, the two common texts represented by the RP and $f^{35}$ editions disagree over whether or not Joram's generation was skipped in the Lukan genealogy. Note that in this case, some confusion seems to have spread throughout the manuscript tradition,

37. Stanley E. Porter, "The Argument of Romans 5: Can a Rhetorical Question Make a Difference?" *JBL* 110.4 (1991): 655–677; Verlyn D. Verbrugge, "The Grammatical Internal Evidence for ᾽EXOMEN in Romans 5:1," *JETS* 54.3 (2011): 559–572; Stanley E. Porter, "Not Only That (οὐ μόνον), but It Has Been Said Before: A Response to Verlyn Verbrugge, or Why Reading Previous Scholarship Can Avoid Scholarly Misunderstanding," *JETS* 56.3 (2013): 577–583; and Verlyn D. Verbrugge, "Response to Stanley E. Porter," *JETS* 56.3 (2013): 585–587.

**6** ὅπως ἡ κοινωνία τῆς πίστεώς σου ἐνεργὴς γένηται ἐν ἐπιγνώσει παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ ⁻τοῦ˪ ἐν ˹ἡμῖν˺ εἰς ˹²χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν.˺

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**1:6** ⁻τοῦ RP $f^{35}$ TR WH NA NIV SBL Sol ] – TNT²
˹ἡμῖν RP TNT² WH NA NIV SBL ] ὑμῖν $f^{35}$ TR Sol
˹²χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν RP $f^{35}$ TR ] χριστὸν TNT² WH NA NIV SBL Sol

Figure 6: Another example of division among Byzantine and majority texts (Phlm 1:6); note, as well, the reading adopted by Solomon.

**19** καὶ ἐάν τις ˹ἀφέλῃ˺ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων ⁻τοῦ˪ βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης, ˹²ἀφέλοι˺ ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ ⁻²τοῦ˪ ˹³ξύλου˺ τῆς ζωῆς, καὶ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἁγίας, ⊤ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν ⁻³τῷ˪ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ.

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**22:19** ˹ἀφέλῃ RP $f^{35}$ TNT² WH NA NIV SBL ] ἀφαιρῇ TR
⁻τοῦ RP $f^{35}$ TNT² WH NA NIV SBL ] – TR
˹²ἀφέλοι RP $f^{35}$ ] ἀφαιρήσει TR ¦ ἀφελεῖ TNT² WH NA NIV SBL
⁻²τοῦ RP $f^{35}$ TNT² WH NA NIV SBL ] – TR
˹³ξύλου RP $f^{35}$ TNT² WH NA NIV SBL ] βίβλου TR
⊤ – RP $f^{35}$ TNT² WH NA NIV SBL ] καὶ TR
⁻³τῷ RP $f^{35}$ TNT² WH NA NIV SBL ] – TR

Figure 7: Another example of division among Byzantine and majority texts (Rev 22:19).

as the non-Byzantine editions also have a similar disagreement concerning a different set of names. Acts 12:25 features one of the most scattered divisions of the majority in the NT, and one's preferred reading here will affect how one interprets the narrative. The variant in Phlm 1:6, while not having high theological stakes, does have an influence on translation, and it is a point of departure between the RP text and the other majority-text representatives. It is also a rare case where Solomon's extensive collation data compels him to side with a reading less popular in the major critical editions. Meanwhile, the many variants cataloged at the end of Revelation amply testify to Erasmus's lack of manuscript evidence there. In all of the variation units found in Rev 22:19, the TR is isolated, and all of its readings can be explained as retroversions from a Latin text that Erasmus had to use to supplement his collation base. The most

significant one alters “God will take his portion from the *Tree* of Life” to “God will take his portion from the *Book* of Life,” a difference that is theologically non-trivial.

By far, the most extensive example of division in the majority is the *pericope adulterae* (PA), found in John 7:53–8:11. Given the scope of this variation, we cannot display the passage in its entirety here, but we will discuss it briefly. Because many of the earliest manuscripts omit the passage entirely, most critical editions either excise it or mark it as doubtful in double brackets. The rest of the manuscript tradition is split across several distinct textual profiles, so much so that the editions that do include the PA generally do not agree on which profile is the best. Using von Soden’s notation, SRS follows the $\mu^{6}$ profile, while RP and the TR primarily follow $\mu^{5}$ and $f^{35}$ follows $\mu^{7}$. A fuller justification of our choice to follow $\mu^{6}$ is found in the SRS appendix.[38]

**41** ⸂Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς⸃ ⸂2 σπλαγχνισθείς,⸃ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα,

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**1:41** ⸂Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς RP $f^{35}$ TR ] Καὶ TNT$^{2}$ WH NA NIV SBL
⸂2 σπλαγχνισθείς RP $f^{35}$ TR TNT$^{2}$ WH NA NIV$^{73}$ ] ὀργισθεὶς NIV$^{11}$ SBL

Figure 8: Example of thoroughgoing eclectic trends in recent editions (Mark 1:41a).

**34** Κἀγὼ ἑώρακα, καὶ μεμαρτύρηκα ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ⸂υἱὸς⸃ τοῦ θεοῦ.

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**1:34** ⸂υἱὸς RP $f^{35}$ TR TNT$^{2}$ WH NA NIV$^{73}$ ] ἐκλεκτὸς NIV$^{11}$ SBL

Figure 9: Another example of thoroughgoing eclectic trends in recent editions (John 1:34).

If we were interested in seeing variants where recent editions have ventured to adopt readings with strong internal probability, but little external support, we might find examples like those in Figs. 8 and 9. In the first case, we observe a growing trend among critical texts to say that Jesus was “angered” at rather than “moved with compassion” for the leper in Mark 1:41. This reading certainly has a harsher sense, but it also has sparse and isolated manuscript support, being

38. McCollum and Brown, *Solid Rock Greek New Testament,* 771–773.

found in only one Greek witness—the fifth-century Codex Bezae (D / 05)—and a handful of Old Latin witnesses.[39]

Turning to Fig. 9, we find a similar example in John 1:34. Most witnesses quote John the Baptist as calling Jesus "the son of God," but the first hand of א, a few Old Latin witnesses, and the Curetonian and Sinaitic Syriac versions read "the chosen one of God." Again, the surviving evidence favors the common reading by a wide margin, but the 2011 NIV and the SBL GNT adopt the minority reading, perhaps because the common reading may have arisen from the minority reading for anti-adoptionistic reasons[40] and perhaps also because the common reading could be explained as an assimilation to the style and themes found throughout John's gospel.

**4** τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν ⸂περὶ⸃ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν,

---

**1:4** ⸂περὶ RP $f^{35}$ TNT$^{2}$ Ead Carl ] ὑπὲρ TR WH NA NIV SBL

Figure 10: Example of Carlson's stemmatic approach in Galatians (Gal 1:4a); note as well the divided majority support on this variant and the preference of Eadie.

**12** Πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἐλθεῖν τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου, μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν συνήσθιεν· ὅτε δὲ ⸂ἦλθον,⸃ ὑπέστελλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτόν, φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς.

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**2:12** ⸂ἦλθον RP $f^{35}$ TR WH NA NIV SBL Ead ] ἦλθεν TNT$^{2}$ Carl

Figure 11: Another example of Carlson's stemmatic approach in Galatians (Gal 2:12).

Some particularly instructive differences in methodology can be found in Galatians (see Figs. 10–13), where Carlson offers a critical text based on Lachmannian stemmatic principles. A nearly even split in scholarly opinion can be

39. Arguments on internal grounds can also be made in favor of the common reading here; see P. J. Williams, "An Examination of Ehrman's Case for ὀργισθεὶς in Mark 1:41," *NovT* 54.1 (2012): 1–12. For more on the external evidence in this variant, see Peter E. Lorenz, "Counting Witnesses for the Angry Jesus in Mark 1:41: Independence and Insularity in the Latin Tradition," *TynBul* 67.2 (2016): 183–216.

40. That is, the minority reading could be interpreted to mean that Jesus was not always God's son, but became such at some time during his earthly ministry. It is supposed that an orthodox scribe changed the reading to preclude this understanding.

**20** Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι· ζῶ δέ, οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῇ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ χριστός· ὃ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ ⸂τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ,⸃ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ.

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**2:20** ⸂τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ RP $f^{35}$ TR WH NA NIV SBL Ead ] τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ χριστοῦ TNT$^{2}$ Carl

Figure 12: Another example of Carlson's stemmatic approach in Galatians (Gal 2:20).

**25** ▫ Τὸ ⸂γὰρ⸃ Ἄγαρ Σινᾶ ὄρος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Ἀραβίᾳ,

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**4:25** ▫ Τὸ … Ἀραβίᾳ RP $f^{35}$ TR TNT$^{2}$ WH NA NIV SBL Ead ] – Carl
⸂γὰρ RP $f^{35}$ TR TNT$^{2}$ Ead ] δὲ WH NA NIV SBL

Figure 13: Another example of Carlson's stemmatic approach in Galatians (Gal 4:25).

found in Gal 1:4, where the variation concerns which of two similar prepositions Paul used in the phrase, "who gave himself *for* our sins." The difference is so subtle that it likely resulted in changes at the hands of multiple scribes independently, but if we assume that Paul was being nuanced in his usage here, περὶ ("concerning") seems to be slightly harsher in sense than ὑπὲρ ("on behalf of"), especially if later scribes understood this as a reference to substitutionary atonement. Both Eadie and Carlson prefer περὶ on the basis of various internal arguments.[41]

Later, in Gal 2:12, Carlson adopts a much less popular reading, again on internal grounds. This choice has a more profound impact on our exegesis of the confrontation between Paul and Peter, as Carlson explains:

> Though the textual difference is merely that of a single letter, this variant has significant ramifications for Paul's biography. The reading with the singular ἦλθεν results in a markedly different understanding of the incident. What triggered the incident was not the coming of people from James (that happened earlier) but the coming of Cephas himself, just as Gal 2:11 explicitly states. Instead of being intimidated at Antioch into changing his mind, Cephas came

41. See Eadie, *Galatians,* 11 and Carlson, "Text of Galatians," 191–193.

to Antioch with no intention of eating with the gentiles. This is what Paul found objectionable.[42]

As Carlson points out, either reading could be explained as an assimilation to the context. For him, intrinsic probability and the testimony of what he considers the best witnesses point more decisively to the singular verb. Tregelles apparently found the same arguments compelling in establishing his text, but this appears not to have been the case with most other editors.

An extreme example of Carlson's application of Lachmann's method can be found in Gal 4:25, where Carlson proposes that the note about Sinai was a marginal gloss accidently copied into the text by a scribe.[43] No surviving manuscript evidence vindicates this claim (which is likely why no other cited edition omits the reading in question), but Carlson also makes clear that the same conjecture had already been proposed by other text-critical scholars.

**1:1** Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, ˹ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. ˺

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**1:1** ˹ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ RP $f^{35}$ TR ] υἱοῦ θεοῦ TNT$^{2}$ NA$^{27+28}$ NIV ¦ – WH NA$^{25}$ SBL

Figure 14: Example of changes in methodology over editions of Nestle-Aland (Mark 1:1).

**4:16** εἰ δὲ ὡς Χριστιανός, μὴ αἰσχυνέσθω, δοξαζέτω δὲ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ ˹ μέρει ˺ τούτῳ.

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**4:16** ˹ μέρει RP $f^{35}$ TR NA$^{28}$ ] ὀνόματι TNT$^{2}$ WH NA$^{25+27}$ NIV SBL

Figure 15: Example of changes in methodology over editions of Nestle-Aland (1 Pet 4:16).

As the Nestle-Aland critical text is the standard edition of the Greek NT used by scholars and pastors, it is particularly useful to see how the evolving methodology of the NA committee has resulted in changes to its text. Since SRS collates the readings of three recent editions of this text, its apparatus can be a useful resource for comparison. A few representative examples of changes in the NA text can be found in Figs. 14–18.

42. Carlson, "Text of Galatians," 163–164.
43. Carlson, "Text of Galatians," 222–226.

**2:18** ὙΥπέρογκα γὰρ ματαιότητος φθεγγόμενοι, δελεάζουσιν ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκός, ⸂ἀσελγείαις,⸃ τοὺς ⸂2 ὄντως⸃ ⸂3 ἀποφυγόντας⸃ τοὺς ἐν πλάνῃ ἀναστρεφομένους,

---

**2:18** ⸂ ἀσελγείαις RP TR TNT² WH NA NIV SBL ] ἀσελγείας $f^{35}$
⸂2 ὄντως RP $f^{35}$ TR NA²⁸ ] ὀλίγως TNT² WH NA²⁵⁺²⁷ NIV SBL
⸂3 ἀποφυγόντας RP $f^{35}$ TR ] ἀποφεύγοντας TNT² WH NA NIV SBL

Figure 16: Example of changes in methodology over editions of Nestle-Aland (2 Pet 2:18).

**10** Ἥξει δὲ □ ἡ ⸌ ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτης □2 ἐν νυκτί,⸍ ἐν ᾗ ⸂ οἱ οὐρανοὶ ῥοιζηδὸν παρελεύσονται, στοιχεῖα δὲ καυσούμενα ⸂2 λυθήσονται,⸃ καὶ γῆ ⸃ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα ⸂3 κατακαήσεται.⸃

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**3:10** □ ἡ RP $f^{35}$ TR ] – TNT² WH NA NIV SBL
□2 ἐν νυκτί RP $f^{35}$ TR ] – TNT² WH NA NIV SBL
⸂ οἱ οὐρανοὶ … καὶ γῆ RP TR TNT² WH NA NIV SBL ] οὐρανοὶ … καὶ γῆ $f^{35}$
⸂2 λυθήσονται RP $f^{35}$ TR ] λυθήσεται TNT² WH NA NIV SBL
⸂3 κατακαήσεται RP $f^{35}$ TR ] εὑρεθήσεται TNT² WH NA²⁵⁺²⁷ NIV SBL ¦ οὐχ εὑρεθήσεται NA²⁸

Figure 17: Another example of changes in methodology over three editions of Nestle-Aland (2 Pet 3:10).

**5** ὙΥπομνῆσαι δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, ⸂ εἰδότας ὑμᾶς ἅπαξ τοῦτο, ὅτι ὁ κύριος,⸃ λαὸν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου σώσας, τὸ δεύτερον τοὺς μὴ πιστεύσαντας ἀπώλεσεν.

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**1:5** ⸂ εἰδότας ὑμᾶς ἅπαξ τοῦτο, ὅτι ὁ κύριος RP $f^{35}$ TR ] εἰδότας ἅπαξ πάντα, ὅτι κύριος TNT² WH NA²⁵ ¦ εἰδότας ὑμᾶς πάντα, ὅτι ὁ κύριος ἅπαξ NA²⁷ NIV¹¹ ¦ εἰδότας ὑμᾶς ἅπαξ πάντα, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς NA²⁸ SBL ¦ εἰδότας ἅπαξ ὑμᾶς πάντα, ὅτι ὁ κύριος NIV⁷³ ¦ εἰδότας ὑμᾶς ἅπαξ πάντα, ὅτι κύριος Wass

Figure 18: Another example of changes in methodology over three editions of Nestle-Aland (Jude 1:5); note as well the slightly distinct reading adopted by Wasserman.

In Fig. 14 (Mark 1:1), we see one of many cases where NA²⁵ sides with Westcott-Hort on a transcriptionally-compelling Alexandrian reading and the

later editions prefer a more widely-attested reading; here, the issue at stake is whether Mark introduces Jesus as "the son of God" in the opening line of his gospel. This difference highlights the shift from following the agreement of critical editions (the approach of NA[25]) to evaluating actual manuscript evidence.

In Fig. 15 (1 Pet 4:16), we see one of several interesting cases where the application of the CBGM shifts NA[28] towards the Byzantine text rather than away from it. The variation has some bearing on how we should read the passage: Peter is encouraging his audience to rejoice either in the *matter* of suffering as Christians (drawing from the context of the previous verse) or in the *name* "Christian." Note that either case may entail a response to negative treatment: *Christian* (Χριστιανός) is not a common word in the NT, and in the two other places where we find it (Acts 11:26, 26:28), it is applied to believers not by themselves, but by the people of Antioch and by Agrippa, who may have intended it in a derogatory manner.

In Fig. 16 (2 Pet 2:18), NA[28] once again allies itself with the Byzantine text on a translatable variant. The question here is whether the targets of false teachers have *truly* (ὄντως) or *narrowly* (ὀλίγως) escaped from others living in error. While the main thrust of Peter's statement remains unchanged, his emphasis—either the influence of the false teachers or the vulnerability of their targets—changes based on which word he used here.

In Fig. 17 (2 Pet 3:10), we have an example of NA[28] adopting a reading ("the earth and the works in it will not be found") not supported by any known Greek manuscript on the internal grounds that the reading of NA[25] and NA[27] ("the earth and the works in it will be found") is too hard to have been original. Despite their preference for a reading so difficult as to be potentially nonsensical, the editors of NA[25] and NA[27] stopped short of adopting a near-conjecture to the text; the CBGM evidently gave the NA[28] editors enough confidence on internal grounds to accept such a reading. Meanwhile, the Byzantine / majority reading ("the earth and the works in it will be burned up") avoids both the internal and the external problems already described, but since it finds its earliest support from only two fifth-century majuscules and does not explain either of the NA readings transcriptionally, it is generally rejected in critical texts.

Finally, in Fig. 18, we can see a rare example in which all three cited editions of the NA text are split. The variant in question, found in Jude 1:5, is considered one of the most contentious in all of the NT.[44] The shifts in the NA committee's textual preferences are indicative of the shifts in their methodology. As an edition based on the prominent text-critical work of its day, NA[25] adopted an eclectic solution found in the editions of Westcott-Hort and Tregelles. Loosening this

44. "This is one of the textually most difficult passages in Jude, and in the whole NT" (Wasserman, *Epistle of Jude*, 255).

dependence on other editions, NA[27] followed another eclectic reading of its own construction, which would later be shared by the Greek behind the 2011 NIV. Through the use of the CBGM, NA[28] arrived at a reading that is slightly more coherent genealogically (its only cited support comes from Vaticanus) and also more compelling on certain internal grounds (the hardness of describing Ἰησοῦς as the one who saved Israel from Egypt and then destroyed those who did not believe). The SBL GNT has recently agreed with this decision. Wasserman has opposed it, arguing that Ἰησοῦς is too problematic to be original and may instead have come from the hand of a scribe, and in its place he has adopted an eclectic reading not found in any known manuscript. Surprisingly, the difficulty of this reading has not divided the Byzantine / majority editions, which all share the same reading here.

# 4 Conclusion

The *Solid Rock Greek New Testament: Scholar's Edition* attempts to improve on Holmes's work in the SBL GNT in a number of significant ways. It expands the roster of cited editions to include more editions representative of the predominant part of the manuscript tradition and more editions based on varying methodologies. It offers more carefully divided variation units to call attention to potential causes of variation. As we have demonstrated through a series of use cases in the SRS apparatus, this edition is well-suited to helping pastors, translators, and scholars identify trends in NT text-critical scholarship, which they can use as jumping-off points for deeper exploration.

Our edition is available in print from Amazon and other retailers and as a module for Logos Bible Software. We have made the raw files for our text and apparatus freely available online at GitHub,[45] where we intend to incorporate all corrections and changes to the material. There is much work still to be done on the division of variation units, and plenty of other critical texts of the Greek NT would make fine additions to our collation, so we hope to see our own work refined and extended in the future. Most importantly, we have released the text, apparatus, and appendices of SRS into the public domain to ensure that everyone in the NT text-critical community can benefit from and build on our efforts in the service of the church through the intent study of its foundational documents.

45. https://github.com/jjmccollum/solid-rock-gnt.

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| *CBR* | *Currents in Biblical Research* |
| ConBNT | Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series |
| *JBL* | *Journal of Biblical Literature* |
| *JETS* | *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* |
| *JSNT* | *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* |
| *NovT* | *Novum Testamentum* |
| *NTS* | *New Testament Studies* |
| SBLRBS | Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study |
| SL | Storie e Linguaggi |
| *TC* | *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* |
| TextsS | Texts and Studies |
| *TynBul* | *Tyndale Bulletin* |
| WUNT II | Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II |

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