5

PRINCIPLES OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Carl W. Griffin and Frank F. Judd Jr.

Most Latter-day Saints would sympathize with the primary goal of New Testament textual criticism: to reconstruct the original text of the New Testament.[1] Both Latter-day Saints and textual critics believe that the Greek text of the New Testament we have today does not faithfully reproduce the original text at all points. The New Testament has not always been transmitted accurately. As scribes in antiquity copied documents, often under difficult conditions, errors of eye and mind inevitably occurred. The damage of these accidental errors was compounded when ambitious scribes undertook to improve upon the exemplar from which they copied, either to correct perceived errors of spelling and grammar or to improve style and content. The result is that no two complete manuscripts of any book from antiquity are exactly alike.[2] This would not be a problem were it not for the fact that thousands of New Testament manuscripts (or fragments of manuscripts) have survived from antiquity, displaying a wide variety of divergent readings.

Carl W. Griffin is a research scholar at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University.

Frank F. Judd Jr. is an assistant professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University.

Even scribes who took particular care committed errors. The Masoretes, a group of Jewish scribes, for example, took every pain to ensure the uniformity of their work, even down to counting the letters contained in the books of the Old Testament which they copied. Yet even they were prone to common errors.[3] Usually the variation is slight, at least by lay standards, but a text to the textual critic is like a ledger to the accountant—no variation from an absolute norm is acceptable. For an accountant, the books must balance. For the textual critic, the text must be that which the original authors penned, neither jot nor tittle varying. The task of the textual critic is to discover and remove as many transmissional errors as possible. Latter-day Saint scholars can readily agree with and promote such an effort, finding it has the potential to better our understanding of the sacred text.

New Testament textual criticism is unfortunately a technical discipline that nonspecialists may find difficult to negotiate. Accordingly, this chapter will describe and illustrate the suppositions and methodologies of the field with a Latter-day Saint audience in mind.

THE PRACTICE OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM

The work of textual criticism involves several steps. First, the scholar must analyze and describe all the surviving manuscripts of a given work. This involves not only cataloging and dating the manuscripts but also comparing their texts to determine if they agree with one another in content—in wording, spelling, punctuation, and other scribal characteristics—and noting all variations between them. This process of comparison is called *collation.* When collation is complete, the real job of the textual critic begins. All the variations, or *variant readings,* are examined to determine which most likely represent the original readings; that is, those the original document possessed. While a variant reading may be anything from a difference in spelling to the presence or absence of an entire paragraph, normally the term refers to a variant word or phrase.

When scholars first began to produce scholarly editions of classical texts in the sixteenth century, they used very rudimentary methods. They would often have access to only two or three manuscripts of a work for study. When an obvious corruption was encountered, it was

usually corrected by *conjectural emendation.* That is, the scholar simply changed the corrupted reading to how he thought it originally read.[4] Eventually, more than two or three manuscripts became available for comparison at a time, and scholars began to formulate rules for determining which of the variant readings in the manuscripts of a work were most likely original. These rules became the "canons" of textual criticism. As this methodology developed, scholars moved away from conjectural emendation toward selecting the most plausible original reading from among the *existing* variant readings. Thus, scholars have relied chiefly on selection to solve textual problems in determining the original text of the Greek New Testament.[5]

This process of selection is very complex. How does a textual critic determine which of these variant readings is the original reading? It is done as any good detective would do it—on the basis of evidence. Textual critics since the late nineteenth century often distinguish between *external* and *internal evidence* for variant readings. External evidence concerns manuscripts, and internal evidence concerns individual variant readings. These two bodies of evidence work together.

Scholars sometimes call this approach *reasoned eclecticism,* and it is broadly employed.[6] Most scholars today believe that both external and internal evidence must be weighed together because the evidence of either category alone is rarely conclusive. This would seem reasonable. But the method is eclectic because, from instance to instance, critics give more weight to one or the other form of evidence according to the nature of the textual difficulty and the available evidence.

As a way to illustrate these principles of modern New Testament textual criticism, we will examine a phrase used by Paul in a farewell speech addressed to church leaders assembled at Miletus. The King James Version (KJV) of Acts 20:28 reports Paul as saying, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed *the church of God,* which he hath purchased with his own blood" (emphasis added).[7] "The church of God" is one particular phrase for which many variant readings exist in ancient manuscripts. Each variant reading answers differently the (hypothetical) question, to whom does the church belong? Various manuscripts read:

1. "the church of God" (*tēn ekklēsian tou theou*)
2. "the church of the Lord" (*tēn ekklēsian tou kyriou*)
3. "the church of the Lord and God" (*tēn ekklēsian tou kyriou kai* [*tou*] *theou*)
4. "the church of God and the Lord" (*tēn ekklēsian theou kai kyriou*)
5. "the church of the Lord God" (*tēn ekklēsian kyriou theou*)
6. "the church of Christ" (*tēn ekklēsian Christou*)
7. "the church of Jesus Christ" (*tēn ekklēsian Iēsou Christou*)

We will use reasoned eclecticism to examine the external and internal evidence associated with these variant readings in order that we may answer a fundamental question of textual criticism: Which reading best explains the origin of all other readings?

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

When weighing the external evidence for a reading, one asks, How many manuscripts contain this reading? When were they written? How were they distributed geographically? Do they all come from a certain region or from several different regions? What are the scribal characteristics of the various manuscripts? For example, were the scribes sloppy and nonprofessional or neat and professional? Which manuscripts, in general, regularly contain good readings? Are all the manuscripts that contain the reading related textually (or *genealogically*)?

The *genealogical method* of textual criticism is important when considering external evidence. It employs a rather complex process of elimination for determining how the many manuscripts and readings relate to each other and which variants are most likely original. Unfortunately, because of the vast number of manuscripts of the New Testament, the genealogical method of comparing and eliminating readings quickly becomes impossibly complex. As a result, scholars have simplified the manuscript tradition by dividing all manuscripts of the New Testament into manuscript *families,* or *text types,* according to the distinctive readings they share.[8] When genealogical analysis is applied to a text type, its relative value can be determined. If a text type contains a larger number of manuscripts that more frequently display readings likely to be original, that text type is considered superior on the whole and is assumed to stand closest to the original documents. There is a bit of circularity in

this argument. However, when a manuscript (or a text type) is determined to have more superior readings when the choice between variant readings is fairly obvious, then the readings in that manuscript (or text type) carry greater weight when the selection is not so obvious.

The Alexandrian text type, according to a majority of scholars, most often represents the original text.[9] Modern Greek New Testaments and translations are normally based on the Alexandrian text type. Its chief witnesses—the earliest and most complete manuscripts containing this text type—are two Greek manuscripts, distinctively magnificent in appearance, called Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, usually referred to by the letters Aleph (Hebrew) and B.[10] In general, the Alexandrian text type contains shorter readings than any of the other text types.

A second text type is the Western, whose defining characteristic has been described as "a love of paraphrase."[11] This text type often contains readings which exhibit various kinds of secondary scribal improvements such as additions, omissions, and substitutions.[12] Consequently, the Western text type stands far from the original. A third text type is the Caesarean, which often contains a mixture of Western and Alexandrian readings as well as harmonizations and paraphrases found in Western readings.[13] A fourth is the Byzantine (or Syrian), which often combines the readings of the Western, Caesarean, and Alexandrian into a single text. The Byzantine text type is characteristically smooth and full, removing ambiguous constructions, introducing numerous interpolations, conflating readings from two of the traditions (so that nothing would be omitted), and harmonizing the synoptic Gospels in several places to remove conflicts between them.[14] The Byzantine text type first appeared in the fourth century and is found in the vast majority of Greek manuscripts. Both a printed edition known as the Textus Receptus[15] as well as the King James Version often contain readings from the Byzantine text type.

Let us return to our example from Acts 20:28. External considerations would probably rule out two of the readings and cast doubt on three others. Readings 6 and 7 ("of Christ," "of Jesus Christ") are found in some "versions"[16] (early translations) but not in a single Greek manuscript. Readings 3, 4, and 5 ("of the Lord and God," "of God and the Lord," "of the Lord God") are found in Greek manuscripts of the

Byzantine text type, and none date earlier than the ninth century AD. Reading 4 ("of God and the Lord") is found in a single fifteenth-century Greek "minuscule."[17] That leaves readings 1 and 2 ("of God," "of the Lord") in first place. Both are attested in early, independent manuscripts of the Alexandrian text type. Thus, the external evidence is equally good for readings 1 and 2, while the evidence for the other readings strongly suggests they are not original.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE

Internal evidence is divided into two subcategories: those of intrinsic probability and those of transcriptional probability. Here the considerations become much more complex. When considering *intrinsic probability,* we ask such questions as, Does this reading complement the author's vocabulary and style? Does it fit his thought and theology? Does it fit the immediate context and the reasoning of its thought unit? The answers to these questions are necessarily more subjectively grounded than the external considerations.

Setting aside, for the moment, readings 3, 4, and 5 ("of the Lord and God," "of God and the Lord," "of the Lord God"), let us consider the intrinsic probability of 1 and 2. Reading 2, "the church of the Lord," does not appear elsewhere in the New Testament, which counts against its originality, though it appears seven times in the Septuagint,[18] referring to the assembly of God. Its appearance in the Septuagint could favor its originality in Acts 20:28, since the language of the Greek Old Testament often influenced that of the New Testament. Reading 1, "the church of God," appears numerous times in the Epistles of Paul (at least eight occurrences), though not once in Luke or elsewhere in Acts.[19] These evidences, however, are essentially inconclusive.

With respect to context, one might suppose at first blush that the phrase "the church of the Lord" would fit the context better than "the church of God," for immediately following it we read, "which he hath purchased with his own blood." Would Luke have written that God (the Father) purchased the church with his own blood? Probably not. Unfortunately, the Greek of this text does not allow us to solve the problem so easily. This same line could also be translated "the church of God, which he hath redeemed through the blood of his Own"

(*dia tou haimatos tou idiou*), meaning "through the blood of his own [son, Jesus Christ]." This makes either reading possible on the grounds of intrinsic probability.

Perhaps a consideration of *transcriptional probability* would help. Here we begin to explore textual changes effected by scribes. We must ask ourselves: If I were a scribe, what mistakes, common or extraordinary, might I make if I were copying this work? What infelicity of grammar or style might I be tempted to improve upon? Would I have any theological motivation to alter an original reading? With readings 1 and 2 ("of God," "of the Lord"), it would take a very slight error indeed to exchange one word for the other, since "God" and "Lord" were similarly abbreviated in Greek manuscripts: $\overline{\Theta Y}$ and $\overline{KY}$.[20] Note that we are dealing with the change of just one letter.

When considered together with the external evidence, readings 3, 4, and 5 ("of the Lord and God," "of God and the Lord," "of the Lord God") appear to be conflations, or combinations, of 1 and 2, which means the scribes of those texts probably copied from two (or more) different manuscripts, one of which attested reading 1 and the other reading 2. Possibly they felt it was better to include them both rather than risk omitting the reading that might be the original. This is one of the reasons why textual critics have adopted the maxim *brevior lectio potior,* "the shorter reading is better" (although universal applicability of this rule is questionable). Thus, again we are left with readings 1 and 2 as the most likely candidates.

We have already noted that Luke, if reading 1 is original to him, may have meant to say that "the church of God" was "redeemed through the blood of his Own." Actually, he may have written, "the church of God, which he hath redeemed through the blood of his own Son," because the Greek word for "son" (genitive *huiou*) would have had the same last three letters as the phrase "his own" (genitive *tou idiou*). If such were the case, the eye of an early scribe might have accidentally skipped from the ending of one word to that of the next, obliterating this explicit reference to the Son from all manuscripts copied thereafter! This type of scribal mistake "is called *parablepsis* (a looking by the side) and is facilitated by *homoeoteleuton* (a similar ending of lines)."[21]

Admitting these possibilities, are there any motivations which

would cause a scribe to change "of God" (1) to "of the Lord" (2) or vice versa? A scribe who interpreted reading 1 to mean that God the Father redeemed the church with His own blood may have changed it to the more theologically sensible reading 2, which was in any event defensible due to its scriptural use in the Septuagint. On the other hand, if 2 were the original reading, what would prompt a scribe to change it, the theologically acceptable reading, into the theologically problematic reading 1? From this type of circumstance, textual critics have derived the maxim *difficilior lectio potior,* "the more difficult reading is better," thus favoring 1, though as with our other maxim, one must be cautious in its application. The overall evidence thus far would seem to favor reading 1 "the church of God."

A further theological motive may have prompted a scribe to change 1, the idea of redemption through the blood of God (the Father), to 2, the idea of redemption through the blood of His Son.[22] At the turn of the fourth century AD, a movement arose called Arianism, named after its chief author, Arius. Arius and his followers held that Christ was created by the Father, and therefore, though Christ was the Creator of all within the material cosmos, He was nevertheless Himself a creature as well. As a creation of the Uncreated, the Son was inferior to the Father. The Arians were opposed by the orthodox, who held that Christ was begotten, not made (or created), and therefore equal to and one with the Father in every respect.[23] One could imagine that a scribe with Arian leanings might have changed the strong wording of 1 ("the church of God"), which could be seen to emphasize the oneness of God the Father and God the Son, to 2 ("the church of the Lord"), which did not imply any particular theological stance with respect to the Godhead. Because of a belief in the oneness of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, an orthodox scribe would have no real cause to exchange 2 for 1, since the theological overtones of both readings would have been perfectly acceptable.[24] Thus, transcriptional probability, like most all other evidence, favors reading here "the church of God," and this would seem to be the original text. This is also the text that stands in the King James Version of the Bible.

The example of Acts 20:28 teaches us much about the limits of textual criticism. A lack of critical information often prevents the New

Testament textual critic from reaching definite conclusions. Regarding the two textual maxims mentioned above ("the shorter reading is better" and "the more difficult reading is better"), there are numerous exceptions to both of these rules. Textual critics have found that certain general guidelines aid in determining correct readings but that each case is unique. What scholars now regard as a correct reading may change tomorrow in the light of new documentary evidence or further analysis of evidence now available. A. E. Housman, the English poet and textual critic, once observed: "A textual critic engaged upon his business is not at all like Newton investigating the motions of the planets: he is much more like a dog hunting for fleas. If a dog hunted for fleas on mathematical principles, basing his researches on statistics of area and population, he would never catch a flea except by accident. They require to be treated as individuals; and every problem which presents itself to the textual critic must be regarded as possibly unique."[25]

Thus, in spite of its advances, the conclusions of textual criticism regarding many readings will always remain tentative because, for all its methodology, textual criticism is more art than science.[26]

CONCLUSION

The debates and uncertainties raised by textual critics might cause concern to those who regard the Bible as scripture. Approximately 5,700 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament are extant,[27] many times that number of manuscripts for early versions in other languages, and there are innumerable citations of the New Testament in the writings of the Church Fathers, much of which could be said to disagree textually. One study has concluded that "it would be difficult to find a sentence, even part of a sentence, for which the rendering is consistent in every single manuscript."[28] But lest one begin to worry about the foundations of the Bible, it should be noted that of the estimated three hundred thousand New Testament textual variants (no one has actually been able to count them all),[29] only a small fraction of these are significant, either in translating the text or for the doctrine they express. Westcott and Hort suggested that "the amount of what can in any sense be called substantial variation . . . can hardly form more than a

thousandth part of the entire text."[30] And of these substantial variations, only a small percentage of that thousandth part involves readings of doctrinal import to Latter-day Saints.[31] Textual critics would consider the variant in the above example a rather significant one, and a thorny one to deal with. But, to most Latter-day Saints, the doctrinal difference between the various attested readings of Acts 20:28 is very slight.

This being the case, then, is textual criticism really that significant for Latter-day Saints? Does it illuminate the scriptures, destroy faith in them, or neither? It does seem like a lot of fuss over details of little practical consequence. Latter-day Saints have long understood that the Bible contains errors, but as Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin taught: "The fragmentary nature of the biblical record and the errors in it, resulting from multiple transcriptions, translations, and interpretations, do not diminish our belief in it as the word of God 'as far as it is translated correctly.' We read and study the Bible, we teach and preach from it, and we strive to live according to the eternal truths it contains. We love this collection of holy writ."[32]

Nephi foresaw the removal of "plain and precious" truths from the Bible (see 1 Nephi 13:20–29), but it is unlikely that textual criticism will restore them.[33] Manuscript variants can at times be substantial, and at times very illuminating, but none would appear to preserve lost plain and precious truths.

This is not to say that textual criticism holds no significance at all for Latter-day Saints.[34] All means, both spiritual and intellectual, whereby we may better understand the Bible are worthy of our attention, even if all are not of equal importance and value. President Brigham Young explained:

> Take the Bible just as it reads; and if it be translated incorrectly, and there is a scholar on the earth who professes to be a Christian, and he can translate it any better than King James's translators did it, he is under obligation to do so, or the curse is upon him. If I understood Greek and Hebrew as some may profess to do, and I knew the Bible was not correctly translated, I should feel myself bound by the law of justice to the

> inhabitants of the earth to translate that which is incorrect and give it just as it was spoken anciently. Is that proper? Yes, I would be under obligation to do it.[35]

President Young's statement concerning the translation of the Bible may have broader application. We know that when the Prophet Joseph Smith used the word "translation," he also had the concept of transmission in mind. Robert J. Matthews concluded: "Joseph Smith also stated that the Bible had not been preserved in its original purity: 'We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly' (A of F 8). The word *translated* as it is used here must be understood to include the idea of *transmission.* That is, error has occurred not only in the translation from one language to another, but also in the transcription of the text from manuscript to manuscript, even in the same language."[36]

Thus, what Brigham Young taught concerning errors in the *translation* of the Bible can also be applied to errors in its *transmission.* If there are passages in the Bible that have been transmitted to us incorrectly, and if we have the resources to determine the original readings "better than King James's translators did it, [we are] under obligation to do so."

NOTES

1. In older works, textual criticism is sometimes called "lower criticism," and the various branches of literary criticism are termed "higher criticism." By the designation "lower criticism," the fundamental task of establishing the text itself was emphasized, as opposed to the "higher" task of literary analysis that is performed secondarily. These terms are generally avoided today because they imply a qualitative difference between the two tasks, are not sufficiently precise, and the term "lower," especially when coupled with the term "criticism," carries pejorative connotations.

2. On the transmission of ancient texts, see L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature,* 3d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991). On the types of scribal errors, see Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament,* 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 250–71. For a recent popular introduction to New Testament textual criticism, see Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005).

3. For examples, see J. Weingreen, *Introduction to the Critical Study of the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 21–23, and throughout. The differences between Jewish and Christian scribes were considerable, the typical early Christian scribe being nonprofessional, more error prone, and seemingly less reticent to emend the text. Even the work of professional scribes in the Greco-Roman world was typically laden with errors (see Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995], 83–93).

4. While modern manuscript discoveries and editorial methods have rendered the majority of early emendations highly improbable, some remain quite viable, or at least intriguing. For example, in 1574 J. Camerarius suggested that in John 19:29 the sponge soaked with vinegar was placed on a javelin (*hyssos*) and raised up to Jesus rather than on a hyssop stalk (*hyssopos*), since hyssop is a small shrub that would hardly have served that purpose. Camerarius's proposed emendation was later discovered in a Greek manuscript (476), and it has been accepted as original by several scholars and the editors of the New English Bible (see Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* [New York: Doubleday, 1970], 2:909–10).

5. Erasmus compiled the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament in 1515. Several other editions followed during the sixteenth century, including that of the great reformer Theodore Beza, which was used extensively by King James's translators. For a brief overview of these first printed editions of the Greek New Testament, see Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus,* 75–83.

6. For an overview of reasoned eclecticism, see Michael W. Holmes, "Reasoned Eclecticism in New Testament Textual Criticism," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research,* ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 336–60.

7. For the following analysis of Acts 20:28, we rely heavily on the work of Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament,* 331–33, and B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek,* vol. 2 (Introduction and Appendix), 2d ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1896; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), (Appendix), 98–100.

8. B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, two Cambridge scholars in the late nineteenth century, adapted the genealogical method and proposed four basic text types. On Westcott and Hort and the development of text types, see Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament,* 174–82, 305–13.

9. Westcott and Hort subdivided the Alexandrian text type into two text types: the Alexandrian and the so-called Neutral text. They felt that the Alexandrian text, though corrupt, stood closer to the original, and its changes "have usually more to do with language than matter" (see Westcott and Hort, *New Testament in the Original Greek,* [Introduction], 130–32). They also felt that the Neutral text had somehow escaped corruption and most faithfully represented the original text. Many scholars now feel that Westcott and Hort's Alexandrian and Neutral texts are not "distinct" text types but, rather, "represent perhaps slightly differing degrees of fidelity to the same text" (see J. Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Criticism,* 2d ed. [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995], 81–82).

10. Most uncial manuscripts (that is, Greek manuscripts written in all capital letters) are given a proper name, like Sinaiticus, and a siglum (a scribal abbreviation), like *aleph* (the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet), by which they are designated in the margins of Greek New Testaments and scholarly works. For the names, sigla, and descriptions of the most important uncials, see Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament,* 62–86.

11. Westcott and Hort, *New Testament in the Original Greek,* (Introduction), 122.

12. See Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament,* 307–10; Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Criticism,* 82–85.

13. See Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament,* 310–12; Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Criticism,* 85–86.

14. See Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament,* 306–10; Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Criticism,* 86–87.

15. In 1649 the brothers Bonaventure published an edition of the Greek New Testament that became known as "the received text" (*textus receptus*) from an advertising blurb printed in the front of their edition: "Therefore you [the reader] have the *text* now *received* by all, in which we give nothing altered or corrupted" (*Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum: in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus*) (see Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament,* 152n36). Although it and the other early editions differed little from the initial edition of Erasmus, which was based on late manuscripts and was rather hastily done, the Textus Receptus came to be viewed the same way as the King James Version, which was based on its type of text—as sacrosanct and inviolable. Those who did publish texts that varied from the Textus Receptus were either attacked or ignored.

16. What scholars call the "versions" of the New Testament are early translations (Latin *versiones*) of the New Testament into other languages from the original Greek. These include the early translations into Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and numerous other languages. Most introductions to textual criticism include a solid review of the versions and their importance, for example, Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament,* 94–134, and Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament,* 2d ed., trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 185–221. For the fullest treatment in English, see Bruce M. Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977).

17. A "minuscule" is a Greek manuscript written in lower-case, or minuscule, script (from Latin *minusculus,* "rather little"). This practice was broadly adopted in the late eighth century because minuscule script was faster to write and allowed more text to be crammed onto a precious piece of parchment. Until this time, Greek writing was typically all capitals. The older script is called "majuscule," or "uncial" (Latin *uncus,* "rounded"), and the older manuscripts written in this hand are often called "uncials." On the rise of minuscule script, see Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars,* 59–61.

18. The Septuagint (Latin *septuaginta,* seventy), or LXX (the Roman numeral 70), is a translation of the Old Testament into Greek and was used among hellenized Jews and early Christians in antiquity. According to the famous letter of Ps.-Aristeas, the Pentateuch (or first five books) of the Septuagint was translated

during the reign of Ptolemy II (285–247 BC) by seventy scholars (hence the name), though "unofficial" versions of the Greek Old Testament surely must have been current among Greek-speaking Jews somewhat earlier than this. For an overview, see Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 29–44.

19. Luke was the author of both the Gospel and Acts, which are two parts of a single work addressed to "Theophilus" (see Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1).

20. $\overline{\Theta Y}$ = ΘEOY (*theou*) = "of God"; $\overline{KY}$ = KYRIOY (*kyriou*) = "of [the] Lord."

21. Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament,* 253.

22. On the method of placing variant readings within the historical circumstances of the early Church, see Bart D. Ehrman, "The Text as Window: New Testament Manuscripts and the Social History of Early Christianity," in *Text of the New Testament,* 361–79.

23. A brief overview of Arianism may be found in Frank L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* 3d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 99–100.

24. However, see the discussion of this verse and the critical principle espoused here in F. H. A. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament,* 4th ed. rev., ed. Edward Miller (London: George Bell & Sons, 1894), 2:251–52. For other possible examples of scribal changes related to the Arian controversy, see Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 92–95.

25. A. E. Housman, "The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism," in *The Name and Nature of Poetry and Other Selected Prose,* ed. John Carter (New York: New Amsterdam, 1989), 132–33.

26. Metzger and Ehrman similarly concluded, "To teach another how to become a textual critic is like teaching another how to become a poet. The fundamental principles and criteria can be set forth and certain processes described, but the appropriate application of these in individual cases rests upon the student's own sagacity and insight" (Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament,* 305).

27. This estimate is from Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament,* 52.

28. Léon Vaganay, *An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism,* 2d ed. rev., ed. Christian-Bernard Amphoux, trans. Jenny Heimerdinger (London: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 2.

29. This estimate is from Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus,* 89.

30. Westcott and Hort, *New Testament in the Original Greek,* (Introduction), 2; see also Vaganay, *An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism,* 3.

31. On this, see Robert L. Millet, "Lessons from the Joseph Smith Translation," in *Selected Writings of Robert L. Millet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 124–25; and Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The Testimony of Luke," in *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 5: The Gospels,* ed. Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 103.

32. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Christians in Belief and Action," in *Ensign,* November 1996, 71. Note also the conclusion of Brigham Young: "I think it is translated just as correctly as the scholars could get it, although it is not correct in a great many instances. But it is no matter about that. Read it and observe it and it will not hurt any person in the world" (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86], 14:227).

33. Scholars do not generally question the basic textual integrity of the New Testament. There are no obvious holes from which text has been excised, though one can only guess at what apostolic and inspired writings might have been included in the New Testament but were lost in the early Christian era before the compilation of the canon was completed (see, for example, 1 Corinthians 5:9 and Colossians 4:16). Richard Lloyd Anderson has suggested that the greatest loss of plain and precious truths came about not through textual changes to the Bible, but rather there was an effective loss of truth through the false interpretation of the true doctrines the Bible contains. See Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The Restoration of the Sacrament, Part 1: Loss and Christian Reformations," in *Ensign,* January 1992, 40.

34. J. Reuben Clark, who was a member of the First Presidency, thought it sufficiently important to author a five-hundred-page book on the subject (see J. Reuben Clark Jr., *Why the King James Version* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1956]).

35. Young, *Journal of Discourses,* 14:226–27.

36. Robert J. Matthews, "The Bible and Its Role in the Restoration," in *Ensign,* July 1979, 41. Matthews observed elsewhere: "Joseph Smith often used the words 'translated' and 'translation,' not in the narrow sense alone of rendering a text from one language into another, but in the wider senses of 'transmission,' having reference to *copying, editing, adding to, taking from, rephrasing, and interpreting.* This is substantially beyond the usual meaning of 'translation'" (Robert J. Matthews, "Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST)," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* ed. Daniel H. Ludlow [New York: Macmillan, 1992], 2:764; emphasis added).