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Punctuation in Early Greek New Testament Texts
With a Special Look at Romans 9:5

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Over one hundred and fifty years ago Ezra Abbot wrote the following about punctuation in the (then) oldest Greek New Testament (NT) manuscripts, "Incorrect statements are often made in regard to the extreme rarity of punctuation in our oldest N. T. MSS."[1] Writing over one hundred and twenty years after Abbot, Phillip Comfort spoke of the "common myth" that "the early manuscripts had no punctuation marks." While Abbot described statements about punctuation being 'extremely rare' as "incorrect," Comfort goes further calling it, "far from the truth."[2]

But why do we have such incorrect statements about punctuation which are "far from the truth" over such a long period? If incorrect statements about punctuation in early Greek texts were being made in 1881, why have we not advanced very much, if at all, since then? Because comments like Comfort's over the past twenty years, about a still "common myth," namely, "the early manuscripts had no punctuation marks," prove we have not. While the primary cause of this lack of progress directly involves Greek scholars, others have contributed to the problem as well.

Anti-Cult and Theological Works on Punctuation in Ancient Greek NT Texts

In addition to well-known Greek grammatical works over the past century plus which are considered in the next sections, some non-grammatical, apologetic books related to theology, specifically, the Trinity doctrine, have also misinformed people for decades. One of these works is by Robert M. Bowman, Jr., and the other is by Dr. James White, two Trinitarian scholars. In his 1991 book about Jehovah's Witnesses, Robert Bowman writes:

* This article is an October 4, 2026, revision and update to the February 7, 2011, version of the original September 4, 2010, article. The title also has been revised to be more specific to Romans 9:5, as this is the primary text discussed in relation to the punctuation of ancient Greek texts. After 2013 the old Elihu Books site which had been hosting this and other Elihu Online Papers (EOPs) was replaced, with the EOPs no longer accessible until recently. Previously published EOPs have been updated and are now or soon will be available through this link to the new Elihu Books & Media EOP page: https://elihubooks.com/elihu-online-papers.

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[1] Ezra Abbot, "On the Construction of Romans ix. 5," *JBL* 1 (1881), page 151.

[2] Philip Comfort, *Encountering the Manuscripts: An Introduction to New Testament Paleography & Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), page 53.

> In ancient Greek there were no punctuation marks; indeed, all words were run together with no spaces between them and using all capital letters.[3]

Now Dr. White:

> We should remember that punctuation did not exist in the most primitive manuscripts of the New Testament.[4]

As Comfort wrote in 2005, "This is far from the truth."[5] If Bowman had simply reviewed some of the very Greek grammars he cited two years earlier in 1989,[6] he might not have so wrongly spoke about punctuation marks in ancient Greek. In his earlier publication Bowman references the shorter grammar by A.T. Robertson and W. Hersey Davis, which wrongly states:

> Our present system of punctuation is purely modern. Punctuation is the result of interpretation.[7]

The fact is, our "present system of punctuation" is not "purely modern." There are many marks of punctuation in early Greek New Testament and other ancient Greek texts, marks which not only disprove claims to the contrary, but which also show how these same Greek texts were understood by different scribes or copyists of the same different periods. The dates of all such copying from earlier, or even the original NT texts, disqualifies them from a "purely modern… interpretation." Robertson and Davis's short grammar, which Bowman cites, refers its readers to "Robertson's [larger] *Grammar* … pp. 241-245" for a "full discussion" of punctuation.[8] Beginning on page 241 of Robertson's larger *Grammar*,[9] there is a discussion on "Punctuation" in which Robertson states the matter far more correctly than in his short grammar with Davis (with underlining added):

> The oldest inscriptions and papyri show few signs of punctuation between sentences or clauses in a sentence, though punctuation by points does appear on some of the ancient inscriptions.… Some of the oldest N.T. MSS. show these marks to some extent. B [Vaticanus] has the higher point as a period, the lower point for a shorter pause.[10]

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[3] Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *Understanding Jehovah's Witnesses: Why They Read the Bible the Way They Do* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), page 98 (underlining added).

[4] James White, *The Forgotten Trinity: Recovering the Heart of Christian Belief* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany, 1998), pages 72-73 (underlining added).

[5] Comfort, *Encountering the Manuscripts*, page 53.

[6] On page 15 of his *Understanding Jehovah's Witnesses*, Bowman recommends his book, *Jehovah's Witnesses, Jesus Christ, and the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), as first among other books for further reading concerning the same subject (Jehovah's Witnesses).

[7] See Bowman, *Jehovah Witnesses, Jesus Christ, and the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989 [1991 printing]), page 149, note 54.

[8] See A.T. Robertson and W. Hersey Davis, *A New Short Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 10th ed. (Grand Raids: Baker, 1977), page 48.

[9] A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), which is referred to by Bowman concerning other issues in his *Jehovah Witnesses, Jesus Christ, and the Gospel of John*, page 145, note 13; page 149, note 53; and on page 152, note 6.

[10] Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, page 242. See also W.H.P. Hatch, *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), page 24, note 4; J.H. Moulton and W.F. Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. II, *Accidence and Word-Formation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1919), pages 46-47. As Robertson also indicates (large *Grammar*, page 242, note 5), some view the full point on the line (ὑποστιγμή, *hypostigme*) as "our comma" rather than as a semicolon.

Robertson's remarks are in direct contradiction to both Bowman and White, quoted earlier, as well as against what we read from Robertson and Davis's short grammar. However, unless Bowman did not have access to volume I of Robert Funk's beginning-intermediate Greek grammar (which appears unlikely since he does reference Funk's volume II[11]), Bowman failed to fully consider yet another of his cited authorities about the punctuation of ancient Greek texts (underlining added):

> Greek manuscripts of the New Testament books were written for the most part without benefit of punctuation or even separation of words (s. Bl-D §16). ... However, some peculiarities of punctuation are old. The period, comma, dash and parenthesis are employed as in English.[12]

Funk here refers to section 16 in the "Bl-D" grammar, which is Funk's translation of F. Blass and A. Debrunner's grammar,[13] which is also referenced by Bowman.[14] That Bowman failed to consider the BI-D grammar on punctuation as well in his work on Jehovah's Witnesses is clear. Simply compare Bowman's earlier claim about there being no punctuation marks in ancient Greek (quoted at the top of page 2) with the following from Funk's reference to "Bl-D §16" in the above quotation of Funk's beginning-intermediate grammar:

> It is certain that the authors of the NT could have used punctuation just as other people did at that time, not only in MSS, but sometimes also in letters and documents. ... The earliest MSS of the NT, P^{45}, P^{46} (not P^{47}), P^{66}, S [Codex Sinaiticus] and B [Codex Vaticanus], have already received some punctuation by the first hand ... In B, among other marks, the point above the line (στιγμή [*stigma*]) is used for a full stop, the lower point (ὑποστιγμή [*hypostigme*]...) for pauses after thoughts which are as yet incomplete.[15]

Returning to Abbot's time in the latter part of the 19th century, and to his discussion with other scholars about the use of punctuation in early New Testament texts, Abbot wrote in response to Edwin Hamilton Gifford (1820–1905), a well-known 19th century theologian and archdeacon of London. First Abbot quotes Hamilton's claim that "'it is universally acknowledged that no marks of punctuation or division were in use till long after the days of St. Paul.'"[16] Then Abbot responds by first noting that if Hamilton's remarks are "intended to apply to Greek MSS. in general," they are "inaccurate" and indicate "that Dr. Gifford has been misled by untrustworthy authorities."[17]

Next Abbot responds to Hamilton's remarks, if in reference to the New Testament, by writing, "I do not see how the fact can be proved, as we [in Abbot's time] possess no MSS. of the New Testament of earlier date than the fourth century."[18] Abbot also notes several marks of punctuation

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[11] Bowman, *Jehovah Witnesses, Jesus Christ, and the Gospel of John*, page 153, note 10.

[12] Robert W. Funk, *A Beginning-Intermediate Grammar of Hellenistic Greek*, Vol. I: Sight and Sound, Nominal and Verbal System (Missoula, MO: Scholar's Press, 1973), page 45, section 076, under *"Punctuation."*

[13] F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), section 16, page 10.

[14] Bowman, *Jehovah's Witnesses, Jesus Christ, and the Gospel of John*, page 153, note 15.

[15] Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, page 10, under, "Punctuation and Colometry" (underlining added).

[16] Ezra Abbot, "Recent Discussions of Romans ix. 5," *JBL* 3 (1883), page 107.

[17] Abbot, "Recent Discussions of Romans ix. 5," page 107.

[18] Abbot, "Recent Discussions of Romans ix. 5," page 107.

in some of the earliest and highest regarded Greek NT manuscripts available in his day, including A (Alexandrinus), B (Vaticanus), and C (Ephraemi Rescriptus), all of which are relevant to the discussion of Romans 9:5 at the end of this paper.[19] However, as correct as Abbot's above-quoted remarks are on the use of punctuation in ancient Greek texts, Abbot fails to see the obvious value in the use of punctuation marks in NT texts when he writes:

> The truth is, that this whole matter of punctuation in the ancient MSS. is of exceedingly small importance, which might be shown more fully, had not this paper already extended to an excessive length. In the first place, we cannot infer with confidence the construction given to the passage by the punctuator, the distribution of points even in the oldest MSS. is so abnormal; in the second place, if we could, to how much would this authority amount?[20]

Though Abbot was clearly fighting against a wave of punctuation misuses, his reaction to them appears to have made him less convinced of the value of punctuation than he may have been if he had been able to consider the evidence more fully, apart from addressing errors by Trinitarians. This could also be why Abbot fails to appreciate that the value of punctuation in early Greek texts is that it shows us how scribe(s) responsible for the copying of earlier texts either chose to punctuate them as they were then understood, or copied the punctuation from earlier texts, thereby preserving an earlier (perhaps even the earliest) understanding. This is extremely valuable, since to ignore or to go against such punctuation marks is to reject the understanding of the texts we are reading and which contain punctuation to assist others with understanding the texts in question.

Whether the understanding expressed by punctuation in early Greek New Testament texts is correct is another question. But the presence of punctuation in any early Greek text should be noted and evaluated for what it tells use about how the texts were understood at the time manuscript was written or corrected. As John Bodel rightly observes, punctuation "can reflect the oral intonation or articulation of units both large and small, and the conventions of the way a text is disposed within its field, which have their own parallel and at times related development, would seem also to form an essential element of a writing system" (underling added).[21]

Indeed, even Abbot concludes his section on the punctuation of the New Testament text of Romans 9:5 in ancient manuscripts by providing what is one of the most obvious explanations for the use of such marks, namely, because "a pause after that word was felt by ancient scribes to be natural."[22] We will return to the punctuation of Romans 9:5 in Greek New Testament texts later. First, we must look closer at more significant causes for the misunderstanding about punctuation in ancient Greek texts than Bowman's or White's, but similar to some we have considered already, namely, statements made in Greek grammatical works over the past 150 years, from 1875 to the present. This will be preceded by a look at early Greek grammar and the punctuation of ancient Greek texts, followed by a concluding but detailed examination of Romans 9:5, including how it has been punctuated in ancient Greek texts, in modern translations, as well as highlight and address arguments presented by Bruce Metzger, Murray J. Harris, and others.

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[19] Abbot, "Recent Discussions of Romans ix. 5," page 107.

[20] Abbot, "On the Construction of Romans ix. 5," page 152; see also Abbot, "Recent Discussions of Romans ix. 5," page 107.

[21] John Bodel, "Paragrams, Punctuation, and System in Ancient Roman Script," in *The Shape of Script: How and Why Writing Systems Change*, Stephen Houston, ed. (Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 2015), page 67.

[22] Abbot, "On the Construction of Romans ix. 5," page 152.

Ancient Greek Grammar and the Punctuation of Ancient Greek Texts

Defining and establishing the existing punctuation marks which could have been used in ancient Greek texts is necessary According to Edwin Hatch, "This system of punctuation… is commonly ascribed to Aristophanes of Byzantium. The comma (,) came into use in the ninth century, and the interrogation point (;) was introduced in the eighth or ninth century."[23] Similarly, A. T. Robertson wrote about 'gradual changes' which occurred until "the top point was equal to our colon, the bottom point became the full stop, the middle point vanished, and about the ninth century A.D. the comma (,) took its place. About this time also the question-mark (;) or ἐρωτηματικόν [*erotematikon*] appeared."[24]

The Aristophanes of Byzantium mentioned by Hatch is the former head of the library at Alexandria who lived from around 257 to 180 BCE. Dionysius Thrax, also from Alexandria, lived from around 170 to 90 BCE, shortly after Aristophanes died. Dionysius wrote what is considered the oldest known Greek grammar. Here is what it says about punctuation in ancient Greek from at least the second to the first centuries BCE, which would also have been known to educated Greeks and, to a lesser extent, by non-educated Greeks in the periods which followed:

> **στιγμαί** εἰσι τρεῖς· τελεία, μέση, ὑποστιγμή. +καὶ+ ἡ μὲν στιγμή ἐστι διανοίας ἀπηρτισμένης σημεῖον, μέση δὲ σημεῖον πνεύματος ἕνεκεν παραλαμβανόμενον, ὑποστιγμή δὲ διανοίας μηδέπω ἀπηρτισμένης ἀλλ' ἔτι ἐνδεούσης σημεῖον.[25]

Here is my translation:

> There are three marks, a period, a semi-colon/colon, and a comma. On the one hand, the period mark is a sign for a complete expression, but a semi-colon/colon sign is breathed according to those who use it, while a comma is for what is not yet completely expressed; unlike the other marks, it [the comma] is a sign for what is still unfinished.[26]

Here is another translation:

> There are three punctuation marks: the full stop, the semi-colon, and the comma. The full stop denotes that the sense is complete, the semi-colon is a sign of where to take breath; the comma shows that the sense is not yet complete, but that something further must be added.[27]

Clearly, punctuation including full stops (periods) and pauses (commas) was well-known and defined by Greek grammarians since at least the late 2nd or early 1st centuries BCE. Though this paper will focus primarily on early Greek New Testament manuscripts and texts, there plenty of non-biblical Greek texts from the 1st century BCE to the 3rd century CE which use marks of

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[23] W. H. P. Hatch, *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), page 24 (compare also Hatch's note 2).

[24] Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, page 242.

[25] The text of Dionysios Thrax as cited in *Grammatici Graeci* I,1, ed. G. Uhlig. Lipsiae (1883), which is available online at http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/graeca/Chronologia/S_ante02/DionysiosThrax/dio_tech.html#04 (last accessed October 4, 2026).

[27] Thomas Davidson, *The Grammar of Dionysios Thrax* (St. Louis, MO.: R.P. Studley Co., 1874), page 4.

punctuation.[28] Differences between the above translations of Dionysius' words include the meaning of μέση (*mese*), that is, whether it should be understood as a colon or as a semi-colon. My translation, "a semi-colon/colon sign is breathed according to those who use it," is consistent with Davidson's "a sign of where to take breath." According to Eleanor Dickey,

> [S]ome scholars maintain that the entire treatise is a compilation of the third or fourth century AD. While others defend its complete authenticity and date it to the end of the second century BC. … some portion of the beginning of the work could go back to Dionysius, while the rest of it was written later.[29]

While there has been and continues to be debate over the originality of Thrax's work, and about when it was written, all views place the origin of this Greek grammar to between the 2nd century BCE and the 3rd century CE, even if it comes with revisions or changes during the period in

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[28] For examples, see **2883** (mid-3rd century CE) which has "three or four accents, all prima facie written by the original hand as are two or three apostrophes" and "also a number of stops," and **2889** (early 3rd century CE) which has "a few high stops" (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. XXXIX, E. Lobel, ed. [Egypt Exploration Society, London, 1972], page 17 for **2883** [see Plate III] and page 48 for **2889** [see Plate IV]); **3151** (2nd to 3rd centuries CE) has "fairly plentiful" accents, breathing marks, and high stops "applied with discrimination" and "all are by the first hand," and **3156** (2nd century CE) which has "a few clear stops in middle position" with "no trace of a second hand," and **3157** (2nd century CE) has "a number of rough breathings" and "stops in the middle position" (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. XLIV, A.K. Bowman, *et al*., eds. [Egypt Exploration Society, London, 1976], page 2 for **3151** [see Plates I and II], page 41 for **3156** [see Plate V], and page 44 for **3157** [see Plate V]); **3368** (3rd century CE) which, though the scribe "rarely inserts punctuation," has "four high stops," and **3369** (3rd century CE) for "punctuation the scribe occasionally uses a high stop" (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. XLVIII, M. Chambers, *et al*., eds. [Egypt Exploration Society, London, 1981], page 2 for **3368** [see Plate I] and page 5 for **3369** [see Plate II]); **1** (2nd century CE) has "high stops at line-ends" which "seem to be the work of the original scribe," and **3** (late 2nd century CE) in which "both a high and middle stop occur" (*Papyri Greek & Egyptian Edited by Various Hands in Honour of Eric Garder Turner on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* [Greco-Roman Memoirs No. 68; Egypt Exploration Society, London, 1981], page 2 for **1** [Plates I-III], and page 23 for **3** [Plate III]); **3547** (2nd century CE) in which the original scribe "himself wrote the punctuation and some of the lectional signs" (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. L, A.K. Bowman, *et al.*, eds. [Egypt Exploration Society, London, 1983], page 104 [transcription shows middle and high points]); **3659** (2nd /3rd century CE) has "punctuation by paragraphus and high stop, and by middle stop for lesser breaks," **3668** (2nd century CE) has a "middle point… and a high point," **3681** (2nd/3rd century CE) "punctuates by high stop, and by double point for change of speaker," **3682** (2nd century CE) has "punctuation by middle point, and by paragraphus," and **3684** (3rd century CE) has, "Punctuation, a breathing…, and an accent… by the first hand" (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. L, Helen M. Cockle, ed. [Egypt Exploration Society, London, 1984], page 60 for **3659**, page 91 for **3668**, page 111 for **3681**, page 111 for **3682**, and page 117 for **3684**); **5296** (3rd century CE) has "acute… and grave… accents and a high stop" with "no evidence that more than one hand has contributed" (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. LXXXII, N. Gonis, *et al*., eds. [Egypt Exploration Society, London, 2016], page 20 [Plate VI]); in **5410** (middle 2nd century CE) "the scribe punctuates with a high point" with "no indication that more than one hand has contributed," the signs in **5419** (1st century BCE to 1st century CE) "include high stops and a smooth breathing" which "may be due to the hand, probably not much later than the first, which added a variant between dots above the line," and **5428** (late 1st / early 2nd century CE) has "all three accents and rough breathings" as well as stops "in the mid-line" which "are written above the letter-tops with no space" (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. LXXXIV, N. Gonis, *et al*., eds. [Egypt Exploration Society, London, 2019], page 22 for **5410** [Plate I], page 78 for **5419** [Plate V]), and page 112 for **5428** (Plate V); in **5535** (1st century CE) there are numerous "middle or high stops" (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. LXXXVI, A. Benaissa, M. Zellmann-Rohrer, eds. [Egypt Exploration Society, London, 2021], page 16 [Plate V-VI]); in **5575** (2nd century CE) punctuation "is indicated by a raised stop" with "an ample space," though at times "the stop is a short horizontal stroke rather than a point," **5585** (2nd / 3rd century CE) has "high" stops, and in **5887** (2nd / 3rd century CE) "high stops are preserved" (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. LXXXVII, P.J. Parsons, N. Gonis, eds. [Egypt Exploration Society, London, 2023], see page 6 for **5575** [Plate I], page 79 for **5585** [Plate IX], and page 87 for **5887**). Many other examples could be cited.

[29] Eleanor Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship: A Guide to Finding, Reading, and Understanding Scholia, Commentaries, Lexica, and Grammatical Treatises, from Their Beginnings to the Byzantine Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), page 78, item 98.

between. Therefore, as we now proceed into our evaluation of more modern Greek grammatical works, keep in mind Thrax's grammar and his discussion about punctuation marks. Though many more modern Greek grammatical works since Dionysius Thrax do their best to confuse the use of punctuation in ancient Greek texts, evidence from Thrax's grammar and ancient Greek texts written during and after his time will help clarify the issue.

Greek Grammatical Works from 1875 to 1925 on Punctuation

Despite early Greek grammarians like Dionysius Thrax who outlined various marks and uses for punctuation in ancient Greek, more modern grammars in use during the past century and a half tell a different story or, in some cases, no story at all. As an example of the latter, A.N. Jannaris' grammar from the last part of the 19th century provides a detailed historical survey of Greek covering our subject period and more.[30] Yet, not once does Jannaris discuss punctuation in ancient Greek texts, nor is there a listing for it as a subject in his contents or in his indexes.[31]

In the same year (1897) Jannaris' grammar was published, Thackery published his English translation of G.B. Winer's New Testament grammar which, though containing an excellent discussion of punctuation in general and, specifically, as it has been or should be (from Winer's perspective) used in printed editions of the New Testament.[32] There is no discussion of punctuation in Greek New Testament or other ancient Greek texts. By contrast, we have the following from Thackery's English translation of F. Blass' grammar:

> As regards **punctuation**, it is certain that the writers of the N.T. were acquainted with it, inasmuch as other writers of that time made use of it, not only in MSS., but frequently also in letters and documents; but whether they practised [*sic*] it, no one knows, and certainly not how and where they employed it, since no authentic information has come down to us on the subject. The oldest witnesses (א and B) have some punctuation as early as the first hand; in B the higher point on the line (στιγμή) is, as a rule, employed for the conclusion of an idea, the lower point (ὑποστιγμή...) where the idea is still left in suspense.[33]

If the position on punctuation underlined above had been continued, it would still be true today! Yet, just three years later in 1901 we get the following from E. Nestle, "Marks of punctuation are hardly to be found in the earliest times," and that Greek texts from these "earliest times" show a "general absence of punctuation."[34] In 1913 George Milligan claimed that in New Testament Greek texts "there would be no punctuation, unless it might be the occasional insertion of a dot

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[30] A. N. Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar Chiefly of the Attic Dialect as Written and Spoken from Classical Antiquity Down to the Present Time* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1897).

[31] Similarly, both William W. Goodwin, *Greek Grammar* (London: MacMillian and Co., 1879 [1963]), page 33, and Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1920 [1980]), page 43, discuss marks of punctuation but without commenting on their use in ancient Greek texts.

[32] George Benedict Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament*, Seventh Edition, E. Mason, trans., Revised and Enlarged by J.H. Thayer (London: Warren F. Draper, 1897), pages 55-60.

[33] Friedrich Blass, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, First Edition, Henry St. John Thackery, trans. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1898), page 17 (underlining added).

[34] E. Nestle, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament* (New York: G.P. Putman's Sons, 1901), page 38.

above the line."[35] Sir Frederic Kenyon put the matter a bit differently, deemphasizing but not eliminating original marks of punctuation from the first hand of Codex B with the words: "Unfortunately its appearance has been spoilt by a corrector, who thought it necessary to trace over every letter afresh, only sparing those which he regarded as incorrect and therefore better allowed to fade away. ... There appear to be no accents, breathings, or stops by the first hand."[36]

A student of these Greek grammatical works during this time might conclude punctuation in early Greek texts are "hardly to be found in the earliest times" (Nestle), or at involve only an "occasional insertion of a dot above the line" (Milligan), or there would be no information at all (Jannaris, Crosby and Schaeffer), or they may simply note the various marks of Greek punctuation without commenting on when or how frequently they were used in ancient times (Goodwin, Smyth). None of these claims are correct, and they have helped further confusion where it concerns marks of punctuation in ancient Greek texts. However, a person who studied Blass's Greek grammar when it was published, or since, would be well-informed on the subject.

Greek Grammatical Works from 1926 to 1975 on Punctuation

Moving into the second fifty-year period, in 1928 Henry Crosby and John Schaeffer's beginning Greek grammar was published, but with no discussion about punctuation.[37] Then in 1934 A.T. Robertson's large Greek Grammar was published. Here are Robertson's extended remarks on punctuation in early Greek texts, which are far more correct than Nestle, Milligan, or Kenyon:

> The oldest inscriptions and papyri show few signs of punctuation between sentences or clauses in a sentence, though punctuation by points does appear on some of the ancient inscriptions. In the Artemisia papyrus the double point (:) occasionally ends the sentence. It was Aristophanes of Byzantium (260 B.C.) who is credited with inventing a more regular system of sentence punctuation which was further developed by the Alexandrian grammarians. As a rule all the sentences, like the words, ran into one another in an unbroken line (*scriptura continua*), but finally three stops were provided for the sentence by the use of the full point. The point at the top of the line (·) (στιγμή τελεία, 'high point') was a full stop; that on the line (.) (ὑποστιγμή) was equal to our semicolon, while a middle point (στιγμή μέση) was equivalent to our comma. But gradually changes came over these stops till the top point was equal to our colon, the bottom point became the full stop, the middle point vanished, and about the ninth century A.D. the comma (,) took its place. About this time also the question-mark (;) or ἐρωτηματικόν appeared. These marks differed from the στίχοι in that they concerned the sense of the sentence. Some of the oldest N.T. MSS. show these marks to some extent. B [Codex Vaticanus] has the higher point as a period, the lower point for a shorter pause.[38]

Like Blass, Robertson's comments are more connected to the evidence, as he notes "punctuation by points does appear on some of the ancient inscriptions," that the system was "further developed by the Alexandrian grammarians," and, "Some of the oldest N.T. MSS. show these marks to some extent."

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[35] George Milligan, *The New Testament Documents: Their Origin and Early History* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1913), page 25.

[36] Frederic G. Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1901), page 65 (underlining added).

[37] Henry Lamar Crosby and John Nevin Schaeffer, *An Introduction to Greek* (Boston, Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1928).

[38] Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, page 242 (underlining added).

Robertson also notes that some view the full point on the line (ὑποστιγμή, *hypostigme*) as "our comma" rather than as a semicolon,[39] referring in his note to the earlier Greek grammar by Blass (cited previously). In 1961 Funk's translation of F. Blass and A. Debrunner's Greek grammar was published. Under the section titled, "Punctuation and Colometry," we are told, "It is certain that the authors of the NT could have used punctuation just as other people did at that time, not only in MSS, but sometimes also in letters and documents."[40] As quoted earlier (page 3), Blass and Debrunner also note the "earliest MSS of the NT, P^{45}, P^{46} (not P^{47}), P^{66}, S [Codex Sinaiticus] and B [Codex Vaticanus], have already received some punctuation by the first hand."

In Codex Vaticanus punctuation, "among other marks," involves "the point above the line (στιγμή [*stigme*])" used "for a full stop," and "the lower point (ὑποστιγμή, [*hypostigme*]...) for pauses after thoughts which are as yet incomplete."[41] Despite the readily available analyses on punctuation in early Greek texts by Blass and by Robertson, as well as the 1961 Blass-Debrunner grammar, in 1965 Eugene Goetchius wrote, "The oldest New Testament manuscripts have few marks of punctuation of any kind."[42] This is similar to Jack Finegan's claims in 1974 that "the earliest NT manuscripts" contain "little or no punctuation," and, "there is almost no punctuation."[43]

One of the most well-known New Testament textual critics of the past century is Bruce M. Metzger, who in 1973 wrote, "As is well known, during the earlier centuries of the transmission of the New Testament, scribes used marks of punctuation rather sporadically, not to say haphazardly."[44] While this is certainly an improvement from "few marks of punctuation of any kind" (Goetchius), and "almost no punctuation" (Finegan), Metzger would have more to say about punctuation in early Greek texts in the next decade. But, in this period, though Robertson brings some clarity to the use of punctuation in early Greek texts during this period by noting it "does appear on some of the ancient inscriptions" and that some of the "oldest" manuscripts have punctuation to "some extent," Blass (see quote on page 7) provides what is perhaps the most accurate assessment of punctuation in ancient Greek texts during this period, noting "the writers of the N.T. were acquainted with it," that "other writers of that time made use of it, not only in MSS., but frequently also in letters and documents," and, "The oldest witnesses (א and B) have some punctuation as early as the first hand."

It is basically the same with the Blass and Debrunner Greek grammar as well, as it uses comments similar to Blass in his grammar, which is clear from the quote in the paragraph at the top of this page (9). However, after this both Goetchius and Finnegan wrote that the "oldest New Testament manuscripts have few marks of punctuation of any kind," and that the "earliest NT manuscripts" contain "little or no punctuation" or "almost no punctuation." Clearly, then, though we have some grammars presenting accurate information about punctuation as in the third and final fifty-year

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[39] Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, page 242, note 5.

[40] Blass and Debrunner, *A Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, section 16, page 10.

[41] Blass and Debrunner, *A Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, section 16, page 10.

[42] Eugene Van Ness Goetchius, *The Language of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), page 12.

[43] Jack Finegan, *Encountering New Testament Manuscripts: A Working Introduction to Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), pages 32, 128.

[44] Bruce M. Metzger, "The Punctuation of Rom. 9:5," in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament*, *In Honour of Charles Francis Digby Moule*, Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley, eds. (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), page 97.

period, there is still not a clear picture of what types of punctuation marks are used in early Greek texts, whether they are original of by later scribes, how often they are used, or of their potential significance.

Greek Grammatical Works from 1976 to 2026 on Punctuation

Using nearly the exact same language and wording as Kenyon did in 1901, but with a conclusion concerning the "first hand" of Codex B (Vaticanus) that is more in agreement with Blass-Debrunner from 1961, Metzger wrote the following in 1981:

> Unfortunately the beauty of the original has been spoiled by a later scribe who found the ink faded and traced over every letter afresh, omitting only those letters and words that he believed to be incorrect. A few passages therefore remain to show the original appearance of the first hand. There appear to have been two scribes of the Old Testament and one of the New Testament, and two correctors, one (B^2) about contemporary with the scribes, and the other (B^3) of about the tenth or eleventh century. ... Accent and breathing marks, as well as punctuation, have been added by a later hand.[45]

This still does not tell us much about the punctuation used by the first or second hand in B. In fact, on their face, Metzger's words appear to exclude punctuation by the first hand since he says it has been "*added* by a later hand." Less than a decade later Metzger writes about a "high point... equivalent to a full stop," a "point on the line," and a "point in a middle position" which "were used with different values by different scribes."[46] Metzger concludes similar to how he did in 1973, but with less apparent conviction, "Marks of punctuation occur only sporadically or not at all in the most ancient manuscripts."[47] After another decade had passed, Metzger wrote something similar to his 1981 remarks about punctuation in early Greek texts, here in regards to texts from the 3rd century BCE to the 8th century CE:

> [U]ntil about the eighth century punctuation was used only sporadically ... however ... scattered examples of punctuation, by point or spacing or a combination of both, are preserved in papyri from the third century B.C. onward. ... the earliest manuscripts have very little punctuation. The Bodmer papyri and the Chester Beatty papyri ... have only an occasional mark of punctuation, as do also the uncial manuscripts.[48]

Metzger here again does not accurately describe the use of punctuation in early Greek NT texts. For example, in the above quote Metzger claims the Bodmer and Chester Beatty papyri "have only an occasional mark of punctuation." In fact, there are numerous examples from the Bodmer and Chester Beatty papyri which show obvious marks of punctuation. Images of these and other early Greek New Testament texts will be presented later in this paper. In partial response to Metzger here I will note that in Bodmer P^{66} (see image on page 17) there is a middle point after ἐγένετο

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[45] Bruce M. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Palaeography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), page 74 (underlining added). Compare John McClintock and James Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. X (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981 [repr. of 1867-1887]), page 731, "It has been doubted whether any of the stops are by the first hand; and the breathings and accents are now generally allowed to have been added by a second hand."

[46] Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible*, pages 31-32 (emphasis added).

[47] Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible,* pages 31-32.

[48] Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, Third, Enlarged Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pages 13, 26-27.

(*egeneto*) and before καὶ (*kai*) in John 1:3. There is a middle point after Φαρισαίων (*Pharisaion*) at the end of John 1:24 and before *kai* in verse 25. There is also a middle point after λέγων (*legon*) and before ἐγώ (*ego*) in John 1:26 and a middle point after βαπτίζων (*baptizon*) at the end of 1:28 and before *Tei* at the start of verse 9.

In John 10, Chester Beatty papyri P^{45} (see image on page 16) has a low point indicating a stop after προβάτων (*probaton*) in verse 7 and before πάντες (*pantes*) at the start of verse 8, as well as a low point in verse 10 after ἔχωσι (*echosi*) and before καὶ (*kai*). After ἔχωσιν (*echosin*) there is a middle or low point creating a stop before ἐγώ (*ego*) at the beginning of verse 11. There is also a middle point indicating a pause before *kai* in verse 9 three times when enumerating consequences and which, together with *kai*, provide natural pausing points. Finally, there is a middle point after the *nomina sacra* form for "Father" and before *kai* in verse 15, a middle point after *probaton* at the end of verse 15 and before *kai* at the start of our verse 16, as well as a middle or a lower point after the natural pause following ταύτης (*tautes*) and before κἀκεῖνα (*kakeina*) in verse 16. Other punctuation marks in P^{45} are shown in the image of the text with the points highlighted on page 16. This is not "very little" punctuation or even an "occasional" mark!

In 1989 the English translation of Kurt and Barbara Aland's well-known work on New Testament textual criticism was published. In it, the Alands ignoring and contradict correct statements about punctuation in ancient Greek texts, including early Greek NT texts, published by Blass, Robertson, Debrunner, and even some of Metzger's more accurate comments. The Alands do this by alleging "the earliest manuscripts… are written continuously and <u>without punctuation</u> (characteristically B^2, a later hand in Codex Vaticanus, clarifies the interpretation by <u>a mark that was not available to the first scribe</u>)."[49] Several pages later the Alands write, "The scriptio continua of <u>the original texts</u> not only ignored the division of words, but naturally also <u>lacked any punctuation</u>."[50]

Yet, on pages 88-92 of their book the Alands reproduce parts of P^{46}, P^{66}, P^{47}, P^{72}, and P^{75}, at least two of which (P^{66} and P^{75}) *do* contain marks of punctuation as the images of these texts on pages 16 and 17 of this paper clearly show. These texts, and others, contain marks of punctuation indicating pauses, and stops, or what Comfort calls "thought separations."[51] In his 2007 book on *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri*, Royse ignores "breathings, accents, punctuation, iota adscript or subscript, and other clear forms of abbreviations or writing conventions" due to considerations over publication size.[52] In 2009 Dan Wallace of Dallas Theological Seminary wrote about the need for an "analysis of scribal habits" in early Greek texts, but he makes no mention of punctuation or about its relationship to scribal habits:

> What is particularly needed is an analysis of the scribal habits of our more important MSS. Only a few have been so analyzed. If we could know the predilections and habits of every scribe, we would have a good sense of their contribution to any given textual problem. Until

[49] Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, Revised and Enlarged, Erroll F. Rhodes, trans. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), page 282 (underlining added).

[50] Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, page 287 (underlining added).

[51] Comfort, *Encountering the Manuscripts*, page 53.

[52] James R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (NTTSD 36; Leiden: Brill, 2007), page 81.

> we have an analysis of individual scribal habits, we do not have a comprehensive "knowledge of documents."[53]

At the end of the final fifty-year period, punctuation in early Greek texts is relegated to a second hand or was considered "sporadic," or not used at all, or perhaps just an "occasional mark of punctuation" as "the earliest manuscripts have very little punctuation" (Metzger). or you may have been told the earliest manuscripts are written "without punctuation" while showing images of early Greek papyri *with* punctuation in the same text (Alands)! Or we might have encountered no mention or discussion of punctuation at all in a text titled, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (Royse). This is why we have Comfort (2005) writing just two years before Royse (2007) about the "common myth" that "the early manuscripts had no punctuation marks,"[54] which "myth" continues to spread among scholars and others despite the evidence.

But how has the question of punctuation in such an ill-informed environment affected, or not affected, the translation of New Testament texts? To illustrate the impact a lack of appreciation for punctuation in early Greek texts has had on the interpretation of certain NT texts, we will consider the text history, grammar, and modern translations of Romans 9:5.

Romans 9:5 in Early Greek New Testament Texts and in Modern Translations

In his discussion of the *New World Translation* and its punctuation of Luke 23:43, Bowman cites the article by Bruce Metzger on, "The Punctuation of Rom. 9:5" (see note 44). Yet, if Bowman read Metzger's article, it is difficult to understand how he could have subsequently claimed that in "ancient Greek there were no punctuation marks," as is quoted at the top of page 2. Indeed, in the very article in which Bowman cites, Metzger expressly states: "As is well known, during the earlier centuries of the transmission of the New Testament, scribes used marks of punctuation rather sporadically, not to say haphazardly."[55]

Strangely, despite here providing a somewhat accurate assessment of the "marks of punctuation" used "during the earlier centuries of the transmission of the New Testament," Metzger had previously written:

> [U]ntil about the eighth century punctuation was used only sporadically [meaning it occurs occasionally or irregularly] ... however ... scattered examples of punctuation, by point or spacing or a combination of both, are preserved in papyri from the third century B.C. onward. ... the earliest manuscripts have very little punctuation. The Bodmer papyri and the Chester Beatty papyri ... have only an occasional mark of punctuation, as do also the uncial manuscripts.[56]

Though contradicting Bowman's claim concerning punctuation marks in ancient Greek texts, Metzger also does not accurately describe the use of punctuation in early Greek NT texts. For example, Metzger claims the Bodmer and Chester Beatty papyri "have only an occasional mark of

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[53] Daniel B. Wallace, "Challenges in New Testament Textual Criticism for the Twenty-First Century," *JETS* 51.2 (March 2009), page 97.

[54] See page 1, paragraph 1, of this paper for the Comfort quote and source.

[55] Metzger, "The Punctuation of Rom. 9:5," page 97. Referenced in Bowman, *Jehovah Witnesses, Jesus Christ, and the Gospel of John*, page 146, note 3.

[56] Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, Third, Enlarged Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pages 13, 26-27 (underlining added).

punctuation." In fact, there are numerous examples from the Bodmer and Chester Beatty papyri which show obvious marks of punctuation, as shown on pages 15-18 of this paper. Elsewhere Metzger acknowledges a "high point... equivalent to a full stop" and a "point on the line" and a "point in a middle position ... were used with different values by different scribes."[57] Yet, Metzger concludes as he did previously, though with less apparent conviction, "Marks of punctuation occur only sporadically or not at all in the most ancient manuscripts."[58]

As Comfort had noted and as I have and will show in this paper, Metzger's assessments are inaccurate and at points misleading. But at least Metzger does not go as far in misrepresenting the use of punctuation in ancient Greek as have Bowman and others. Indeed, the matter involving the use of punctuation marks in ancient Greek texts has been so badly misrepresented over more than a century that some of the most well-known New Testament textual critics (in addition to Metzger) have helped further the misunderstanding. I am speaking here about Kurt and Barbara Aland, who in 1989 wrote the following about the use of punctuation marks in early Greek NT texts:

> As the plates in this volume show (e.g., pp. 88-92), the earliest manuscripts were written in **scriptio continua**, i.e., the uncial letters were written continuously, word after word and sentence after sentence, without a break and with extremely few reading aids. ... [In the uncials] the letters are written continuously and without punctuation (characteristically B^2, a later hand in Codex Vaticanus, clarifies the interpretation by a mark that was not available to the first scribe).[59]

The Alands repeat this inaccurate view of punctuation in relation to what may have been possible with the "original" texts, that is, based on the copies we have today. They go so far as to say the original New Testament texts "naturally also lacked any punctuation."[60] While no one (including the Alands) can say what the original New Testament texts contained, the copies we have of those original writings provide us with insight into how many New Testament texts were understood. Ironically, after furthering an incorrect view of the use of punctuation in the "original texts," the Alands rightly note, "Occasionally this [the alleged lack of 'any' punctuation] can be critical for the interpretation of a sentence."[61]

This observation should have persisted in the Alands' assessment of punctuation in some of the earliest copies of the original texts. If so, it might have prevented some of their inaccurate statements and prevented them from presenting evidence in their publication which contradicts their stated claims about marks of punctuation (see pages 11-12). Punctuation marks in early Greek NT texts of Romans 9:5 might also have gained more attention if the value of punctuation had been properly consistently presented over the past century and a half. According to Wallace:

> What is particularly needed is an analysis of the scribal habits of our more important MSS. Only a few have been so analyzed. If we could know the predilections and habits of every scribe, we would have a good sense of their contribution to any given textual problem. Until

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[57] Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible*, pages 31-32.

[58] Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible*, page 31 (underlining added).

[59] Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, page 282 (underlining added).

[60] Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, page 287.

[61] Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, page 287.

> we have an analysis of individual scribal habits, we do not have a comprehensive "knowledge of documents."[62]

Still, nowhere does Wallace speak to the importance, or even the potential importance, of marks of punctuation which are in the "more important MSS." Though Wallace does rightly note the need for "an analysis of individual scribal habits," he does not define this analysis as clearly inclusive of a study of punctuation marks used by these scribes, according to their "habits." Perhaps some may think Wallace implicitly includes punctuation by what he writes above, but Wallace says that the differences being noted by the INTF [Münster Institute for New Testament Textual Research] and CSNTM [Wallace's non-profit institution] are limited to "the individual letters." Punctuation is nowhere mentioned as of any specific interest or import.

Yet, how can that be the case if until we "have an analysis of individual scribal habits, we do not have a comprehensive 'knowledge of documents'"? Not to include the use of punctuation marks in a study of early scribal habits is to remove from the discussion of relevant textual material what could amount to a very helpful "contribution to any [or to many] given textual problem[s]."[63] Wallace is not the only one who has highlighted the subject of early scribal habits but without significantly involving or highlighting these same early scribes' habits when it comes to their use of punctuation. Indeed, one of the largest works recently completed about early scribal habits, James Royse's *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (2007), despite its title, openly accepts the near complete omission of the occurrence of punctuation marks in its discussion! From Royse's page 81 (underlining added):

> [I]n order to reduce the material involved in the present study to a more manageable level, I have decided to ignore certain common orthographic variations throughout the collation ... as well as breathings, accents, punctuation, iota adscript or subscript, and other clear forms of abbreviations or writing conventions.

Despite the above, Royse comments on the occurrence and the non-occurrence of marks of punctuation in several places throughout his large volume.[64] However, at times the information presented is not always as accurate as it could be considering the evidence from the texts in question. For example, on page 106, writing about the scribe of P^{45}, Royse notes that "the use of breathings and punctuation is, as would be expected in a papyrus of such antiquity, sparse" (underlining added). But P^{45} is dated to the first part of the third century CE, and so it is quite within the time since Thrax for punctuation of ancient Greek texts. In fact, P^{45} contains regular use of punctuation marks as the discussion on pages 15-16 and the image of P^{45} on page 16 make plain.

Apparently, a proper study and presentation of punctuation marks in early Greek NT texts is destined still to suffer where it concerns attempts to define or to explain identifiable marks used according to early scribal habits. Perhaps this is because of the significance punctuation in early Greek NT texts has if followed according to the earliest and best available copies. Many NT texts

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[62] Daniel B. Wallace, "Challenges in New Testament Textual Criticism for the Twenty-First Century," *JETS* 51.2 (March 2009), page 97.

[63] Wallace, "Challenges in New Testament Textual Criticism for the Twenty-First Century," page 97.

[64] For examples, see Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri*, pages 31, note 102, page 110 note 35, page 137, note 170, page 147 (regarding P^{45} [quoting Zuntz]), page 156, note 256, page 247 (on P^{46}, Royse notes "breathings and punctuation occur occasionally"), page 353, note 849, page 361 (regarding P^{47}), page 420 (regarding P^{66} [Royse's item 3.]), page 616 (regarding P^{75}, Royse notes the scribe "fairly frequently uses marks of punctuation and rough breathings"), and page 745.

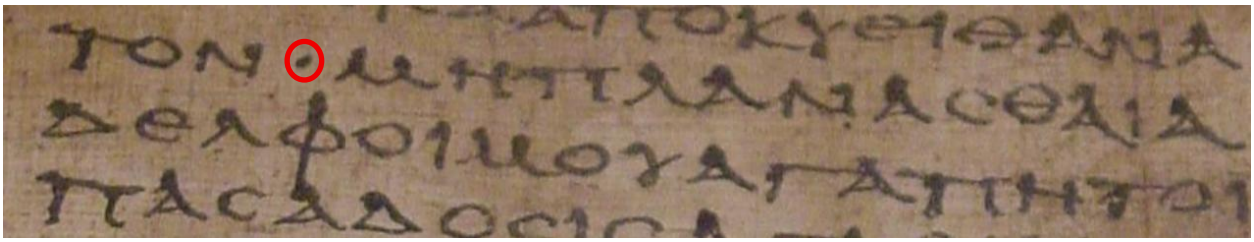
are greatly impacted by how they are punctuated, including Luke 23:43, John 1:3-4, and Romans 9:5. Before going further into what this means for Romans 9:5, note what Omanson claims in his revision to Metzger's textual commentary on punctuation in early Greek texts of John 1:3-4:

> The oldest manuscripts have no punctuation here [in John 1:3-4]; and, in any case, the presence of punctuation in Greek manuscripts, as well as in versional and Patristic sources, cannot be regarded as more than the reflection of current exegetical understanding of the meaning of the passage.[65]

But why make the "current exegetical understanding of the meaning of [a] passage" seem so insignificant? Not only does P^{66} contain punctuation in John 1:3, but so does the other earliest text of John 1:3-4 (P^{75}), contrary to Omanson! Metzger's earlier comments in the pre-Omanson editions put the matter even worse as it relates to punctuation in early Greek texts of John 1:3-4. For while Omanson borrows some of Metzger's language, he *omits* Metzger's erroneous parenthetical references. Note the underlined part, which is the part Omanson omitted from Metzger's prior comments on these texts in the earlier volumes of this textual commentary, "The oldest manuscripts ($P^{66, 75*}$ ℵ A B) have no punctuation here."[66] Omanson's omission of these texts in his more recent edition does not change the fact that in the forty (40) years since Metzger's first edition of this *Textual Commentary* in 1971, the United Bible Societies has failed to get the matter right on the use of punctuation in John 1:3-4.

Punctuation marks in some of our earliest NT and other Greek texts should be understood in "its syntactic function," serving "like other aspects of orthography, to convey meaning ... by identifying lexical elements and clausal, phrasal, and sentential structure."[67] By contrast, Omanson downgrades the importance of punctuation in ancient Greek texts and misstates facts about John 1:3-4. Correct or not, punctuation marks used in early Greek NT texts should be evaluated to determine how the texts were understood by different scribes and for what potential reasons. Consider the use of punctuation marks in the following early Greek New Testament texts:

P^{23}/P.Oxy. 1229 (3rd century CE): In James 1:15 there is a middle point placed after *thanaton* ("death") at the end of our verse 15, creating a full stop before *me* ("not") at the start of verse 16:



P^{45} (3rd century CE): John 10:7-8 has a middle point after *probaton* and before *pantes*, a middle point between *sothesetai* and *kai* in 10:9, a middle point after *eiseleusetai* and *kai* in 10:9, and a middle point in 10:10 after *echosi* and before *kai*. There is a middle point after *probation* in 10:13-

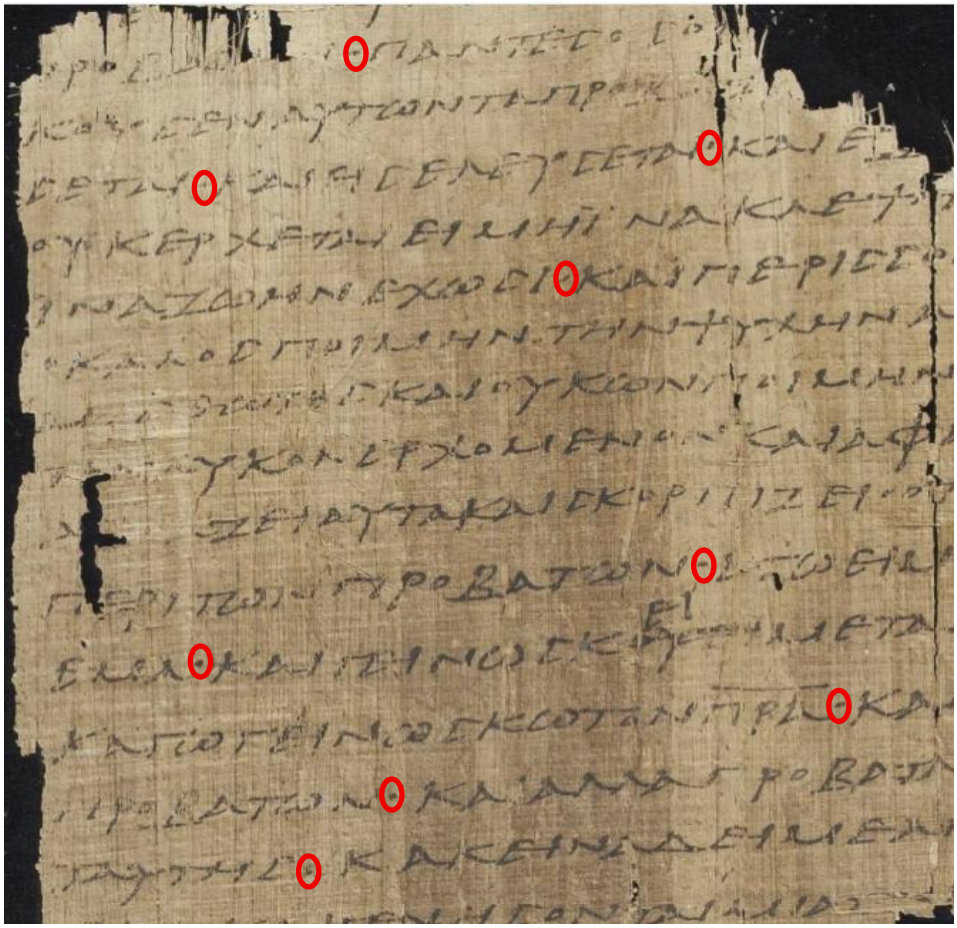
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[65] Roger L. Omanson, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 2006), page 163 (underlining added).

[66] See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (1971), page 195 and (1994) page 167, for the full sentence here quoted from these editions, quoted in part by Omanson.

[67] Robert J. Scholes, "Prosodic and Syntactic Functions of Punctuation: A Contribution to the Study of Orality and Literacy," *Interchange* 21.3 (Fall 1990), page 13. After this quotation, Scholes immediately discusses the use of punctuation marks in ancient Greek texts from the 4th century BC to Aristophanes in the 1st century BC.

14 and before *Ego*, a middle point between *ema* and *kai* in 10:14, a middle point after the abbreviation for "Father" and before *kago* in 10:15, and a middle point after *probation* and before *kai* in 10:15-16:

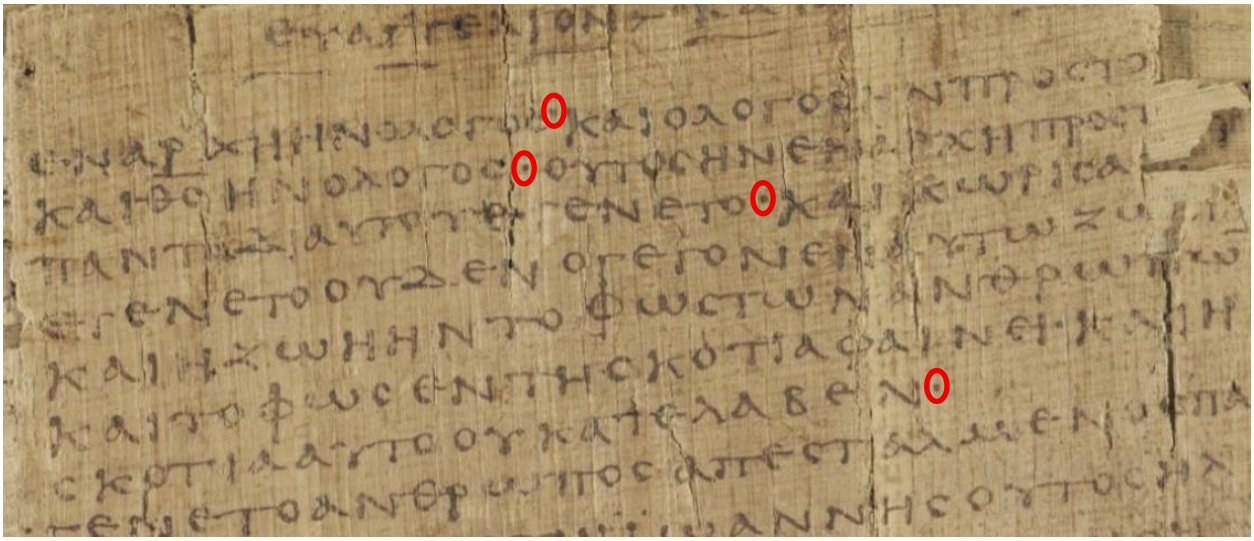


See also the discussion of P^{45} on page 11 for additional examples from this text. P^{45} can be viewed online at The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts to view images of this text and its punctuation marks here: https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/Group/GA_P45.

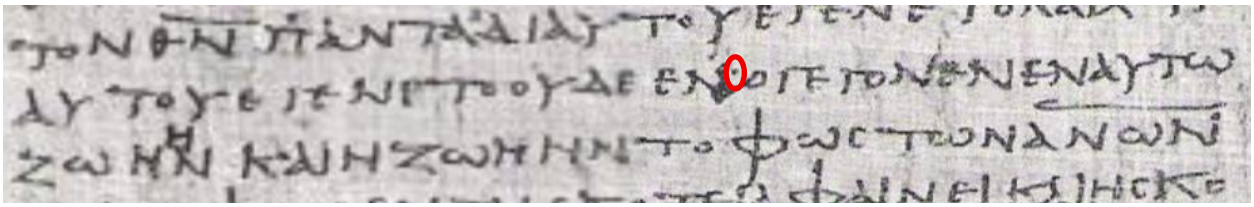
P^{66} (around 200 CE): In addition to the discussion of marks in this text on pages 10-11, there is a high point after *logos* in John 1:1a and before *kai* in John 1:1b, a middle point after *logos* in John 1:1c and before *houtos* at the start of John 1:2, both indicating a pause or a full stop. There is a high point after *egeneto* and before *kai* in John 1:3 indicating a pause, as well as a middle point after *katelaben* at the end of verse 5 for a full stop.

Before showing examples of punctuation marks in P^{66}, recall Omanson's claim that the "oldest manuscripts have no punctuation here" in John 1:3-4.[68] P^{66} can be viewed online at The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts for an image of John 1:1-5, with the punctuation marks indicated in red, here: https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_P66_Bodmer.

[68] Omanson, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament,* page 163 (underlining added).



Not only is John 1:3 punctuated in P^{66}, according to Comfort P^{75} also has a "midpoint" added by a corrector after *hen* ("one") in verse 3.[69] Here is an image of the punctuation mark after *hen* in $P^{75,}$ which Comfort says is by a "corrector" who Comfort, quoting Royse, says did not attempt to revise the text nor was there a "systematic correction at all"[70]:



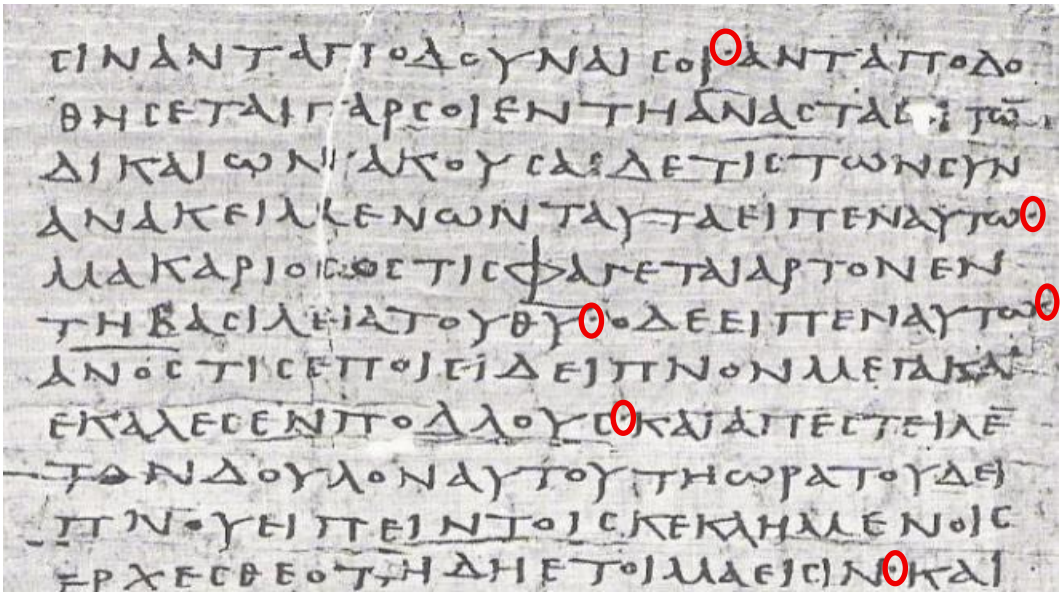
Returning to P^{66}, there is also a middle point after *Pharisaion* and before *kai* in what is now our John 1:24-25, a middle point after *Elias* and before *oude* in verse 25, a middle point after *legon* and before *ego* in 1:26, a middle point *oidate*[*i*] at the end of verse 26 and before *ho* at the start of verse 27, and there is a middle point after *baptizon* at the end of verse 28 and before *tei* at the start of verse 29. All these marks are consistent with how we read and punctuate these texts today.

<u>P^{75} (early 3rd century CE)</u>: In addition to the punctuation by the corrector to P^{75} in John 1:3 shown above in relation to P^{66}, Luke 14:14 has a high point indicating a pause like a comma after *soi* and before *antapodothesetai* in P^{75}. There is another high point indicting a pause after *auto* and before *makarios* in Luke 14:15. Luke 14:16 has a similar high point indicating a pause like a comma after auto and before the abbreviated form of *anthropos*, as well as another high point after *pollous* at the end of verse 16 and before *kai* at the start of verse 17. There is also a high point after *eisin* at the end of verse 17 and before *kai* at start of verse 18.

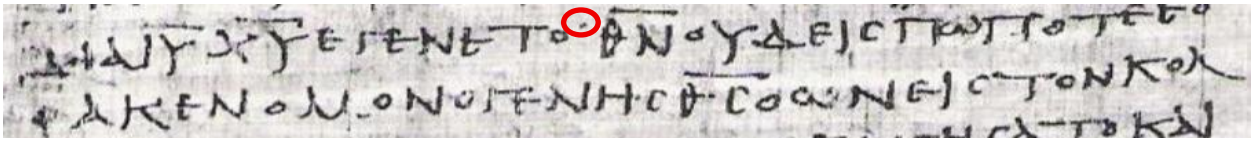
Those interested can review P^{75}online at The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts here: https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_P75. An image of Luke 14:14-18 with the punctuation marks just indicated, and circled in red, is shown on the next page:

[69] Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett, *The Text of the Earliest Greek Manuscripts* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale, 2001), page 567.

[70] Comfort and Barrett, *The Text of the Earliest Greek Manuscripts*, page 506.

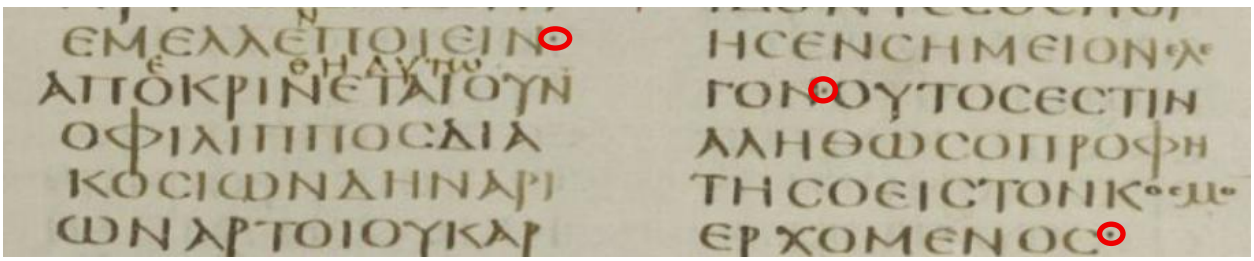


In P^{75} there is also a high point after the sacred name abbreviation for the genitive *theou* ("God") to end verse 15 and before the article to start verse 16. Similarly, P^{75} uses a high point after *egeneto* at the end of John 1:17 and before the sacred name abbreviation for the accusative *theon* at the start of verse 18, shown here:

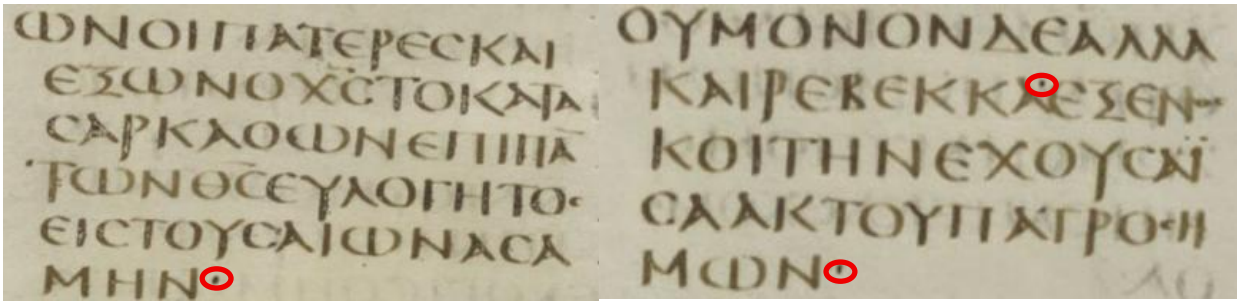


Other marks of punctuation in P^{75} include a high point after the contracted form of the words for "Israel" and "man" but before *apekrithe* in John 1:49-50, as well as a point for a full stop before "man" at the end of 1:51 and before *kai* at the start of John 2:1. There are other obvious and explainable marks of punctuation throughout this text consistent with modern punctuation.

<u>Codex א / Sinaiticus (4th century CE)</u>: Examples from the image below from John 6 show a middle point after *poiein* to end verse 6 and before *apokrinetai* to start verse 7. In verse 14 there is a middle point for a pause after *elegon* and before *houtos* on the second full line of the far-right column. The middle point is used here rather than *hoti* (used in B and in P^{75}), which also indicates a pause. Differing from B and P^{75}, Sinaiticus uses a high point after *erchomenos* to end John 6:14. Those interested can review these marks from John 6 in Codex א at the Codex Sinaiticus site here: https://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/. Below is an image of John 6:6-7, 14 with the punctuation marks just indicated circled in red:



Now consider two texts in Codex א from Romans Chapter 9. The first (on the left) is Romans 9:5 and the second (on the right) is Romans 9:10. They are on the same page, with Romans 9:5 on the far-left column and Romans 9:10 in the column to the right of it on a four-columns page:



Here is each text according to modern printed editions, with key terms highlighted in bold and underlined, follow by my translation:

Romans 9:5:

καὶ ἐξ ὧν **ὁ χριστὸς** τὸ κατὰ σάρκα ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων **θεὸς** εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας ἀμήν·

"and from whom [is] **the Christ** according to the flesh the one who is over all **God** blessed into the ages."

Romans 9:10:

οὐ μόνον δέ ἀλλὰ καὶ **Ῥεβέκκα**· ἐξ ἑνὸς κοίτην ἔχουσα **Ἰσαὰκ** τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν·

"and not only but even **Rebekah**, having conceived from one the father of us **Isaac**."

The English below each verse has the comma for the point after "Rebekah" in 9:10 and periods at the end, all three of which are present in Codex א and circled in red in the above images. I have removed all other punctuation from the printed texts above, and from my translations below them. Both Romans 9:5 and 9:10 are similar in length. They are on the same page, and they both appear to have two subjects, "Christ" and "God" in Romans 9:5, and "Rebekah" and "Isaac" in 9:10. The high point after "Rebekah" in the above image appears to indicate a pause, and what follows the mark after her name is also about *her*, namely that (Rebekah) "having conceived from one" (from Isaac). There is no second point to close off the description about her conception, or to separate her from "Isaac" in the same verse.

This means that in Sinaiticus a point for a pause or the lack of a point for a pause does not by itself confirm whether what follows applies to the preceding subject, or introduces a different one. In Romans 9:10 Paul goes immediately from writing about Rebekah as the one "having conceived" to "Isaac our father" without any intervening punctuation. Similarly, in Romans 9:5 there is also no point in Codex א separating "Christ" from "God." But if punctuation in these texts is not conclusive for identifying the number of subjects, how do we know "Rebekah" is not "Isaac" or whether "Christ" is "God"?

In Romans 9:10 we know Rebekah and Isaac are different because of contextual descriptions and, apart from anything else, by their proper names ("Rebekah" and "Isaac"). We also have unique contextual descriptions which separate Christ and God in Romans 9. Specifically, in the lead up to Romans 9:5 we have Romans 8:34 and 8:39. Here are both verse in printed text with the key terms highlighted in bold and underlined, along with my translations:

Romans 8:34:
Χριστὸς ὁ ἀποθανών, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐγερθείς, ὅς καί ἐστιν ἐν δεξιᾷ **τοῦ θεοῦ**

"**Christ** is the one who died but now having been resurrected, and who is at the right hand of **God**"

Romans 8:39:
ἑτέρα δυνήσεται ἡμᾶς χωρίσαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης **τοῦ θεοῦ** τῆς ἐν **Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ** τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν.

"will be able to divide us from the love of **God** which is in **Christ Jesus** our Lord."

The above text (8:39) is the last verse of Romans Chapter 8. Taking these texts just a few verses into Chapter 9 and we again meet with the proper nouns "Christ" and "God" in verse 5, seemingly used for the same individuals as in the last part of Romans 8. Why, then, has there ever been any confusion in Romans 9:5? In part because, grammatically, Romans 9:5 can be translated as either calling Christ "God," or with the verse ending as a blessing to God. Yet, it is clear we have an immediate context which distinguishes between "Christ" and "God" in Romans 8:34 and 8:39, together with the overall teaching of Paul about God and Jesus in Romans, namely, the Father is the God of the Christ.—Romans 15:6; compare Micah 5:1-4.

There is also the question of whether "Christ" and "God" are proper names for Jesus and for the Father, respectively, in Paul's writing. If they are, it points away from applying "God" to "Christ" in Romans 9:5. But it is also important to note that if "Christ" is a proper name for Jesus or if "God" or even "Father" are proper names, this does not mean these three terms cannot be applied in a relative sense to others and retain their proper name significance for specific individuals. Take for example, "Christ." Even in contexts where the term is understood to have a proper application to Jesus, in both the singular and plural form, "C-christ" is used of people other than Jesus in the Bible,[71] and in the New Testament,[72] all without affecting, let alone compromising, the distinct sense in which is it reserved for Jesus as the promised Messiah, the "Son of Man."—See Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 26:63-64; Luke 22:67-70; 23:39; 24:26, 46; John 4:25-26, 29; 7:26-27.[73]

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[71] Psalm 2:2 uses "his christ / anointed one" (*tou christou autou*) for David when translating a form of the Hebrew word *mashiach*, used here without the article. *Mashiach* is without the article and translated by a form of *christos* with the article in Psalm 18(17):51(50), 20(19):7(6), 28(27):8, 84(83):10(9), 89(88):39(38), and 89(88):52(51). In Psalm 105(104):15 *mashiach* is plural without the article and used for God's prophets, as it is in 1 Chronicles 16:22. In both texts the Greek uses the plural *ton christon mou*. Psalm 132(131):10 and 132(131):17 use *mashiach* without the article, which the Greek translates by a form of *christos* with the article. Isaiah 45:1 has *mashiach* without the article for Cyrus, which the Greek translates by a form of *christos* with the article.

[72] The plural *pseudochristoi* ("false christs") is used of "false" messiahs or "anointed ones" in Mark 13:22 and Matthew 24:24. In Hebrews 11:26 *christos* is used with the article for Moses, whom the author says regarded "the reproach" (*ton oneidismon*) "of the anointed one" or "of the christ" (*tou christou*), both from his own people and from Pharoah (Exodus 5:4, 9, 20-23; 6:9; 7:4, 13-14, 22-23; 10:27-28; 14:9-12), as "more valuable than the treasures of Egypt."

[73] Robert W. Funk, "The Syntax of the Greek Article: Its Importance for Critical Pauline Problems" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1953), page 192 agrees, "the messianic designation [Χριστός, *Christos*] comes to be a personal name." Even Wallace admits, "one would be hard-pressed to view this ['Christ'] as less than a proper name in the epistles" ("The Article with Multiple Substantives Connected by Καί in the New Testament: Semantics and Significance" [Ph.D. dissertation: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1995], page 247). Paul also differentiates "God" from "Christ" in Ephesians 1:1, 2, 3, 17; 2:4-5, 10, 19-20; 3:10-11; 4:32; 5:2, 20; 6:23. See my "Another Exception to *Granville Sharp's Canon and Its Kin*," *Elihu Online Papers* 3 (July 16, 2010; rev. January 30, 2012), pages 14-21 for more on Ephesians 5:5. An updated version of *Elihu Online Papers* 3 on Sharp's rule, Wallace's "Sharper rule," and my "Sharpest rule" will soon be available on this page: https://elihubooks.com/elihu-online-papers.

The same is true for the terms "Father" and "God" in the New Testament. "Father" regularly applies as a proper name to one specific person, though others including the promised child is spoken of as a "father" (Isaiah 9:6). The Jews in John Chapter 8 tell Jesus they have "one Father, God" (John 8:41) right after they said, "Our father is Abraham" (John 8:39). Even in Romans 9:10 Paul calls Isaac "our father"! None of these uses of "father" change the use of "Father" as a proper name for the "one God."—1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5.

It is similar with the use of terms for "G-god" in the Bible. While "G-god" is used in the singular and in the plural for beings other than the "one God," this does not change its use as a proper name for the Father. In fact, in Paul's writings the use of "God" is frequent but very limited in its application. Though he uses the plural "gods" for those who are called such "whether in heaven or on earth, even as there are many gods" (1 Corinthians 8:5), and for "those are by nature not gods" (Galatians 4:8), in undisputed texts Paul always uses the singular "God" for the Father, not for Jesus or the "Christ." To show this clearly, I will here reproduce a chart showing all uses of "G-god" in Paul's writings which I completed as part of an extended discussion of the Granville Sharp "rule" and Wallace's "Sharper" rule:

The Use of θεός ("G-god") in Paul's Writings

Book	Frequency	The Father	Jesus	Others	Grammatically Ambiguous
Rom	153[74]	152	0	0	1[75]
1Co	106[76]	104	0	2[77]	0
2Co	79	78	0	1[78]	0
Gal	31[79]	30	0	1[80]	0
Eph	31	30	0	0	1[81]

[74] In Romans 15:19 *theos* occurs in P^{46} א D^1 but not in B. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, page 537, for an explanation about UBS3's use of *theos* in brackets (the same reading is found in NA26).

[75] Romans 9:5.

[76] The use of *theos* in 1 Corinthians 1:14 is textually uncertain. א* B and others have *theos*, and א² C D F G and others do not. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, page 544, for an explanation about UBS3's use of *theos* in brackets. The same reading is given in NA26.

[77] 1 Corinthians 8:5.

[78] 2 Corinthians 4:4 (Satan).

[79] In Galatians 1:15 *theos* is found in P^{46} and B, but not in א A or D. In Galatians 3:21 *theos* is in א A D, but not in P^{46} or B. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, pages 590, 594-595.

[80] Galatians 4:8 refers to "those who by nature are not gods."

[81] Ephesians 5:5 is listed as ambiguous here, though it appears clearly to use "Christ" as a proper name for Jesus, and "God" for the Father. See page 20 and note 73 of this paper for additional information and references.

Php	23[82]	22	0	1[83]	0
Col	21	21	0	0	0
1Th	36[84]	36	0	0	0
2Th	18	16	0	2[85]	0[86]
1Ti	22	22	0	0	0[87]
2Ti	13	13	0	0	0[88]
Tit	13	12	0	0	1[89]
Phm	2	2	0	0	0
Heb	68	67	0	0	1[90]
Totals	**616**	**605**	**0**	**7**	**4**

[82] In Philippians 1:14 *tou theou* occurs in א A B D* the Vulgate, Syriac and Coptic witnesses; P^{46} and D^2 omit.

[83] Philippians 3:19, "their god is their belly."

[84] The variant reading *tou theou* in 1 Thessalonians 2:16 (found in D F G 629) is not included in this total.

[85] In 2 Thessalonians 2:4 the first *theos* is generic, and the third is in reference to "the man of lawlessness" (verse 3).

[86] The use of the proper name "Jesus Christ" specifies the "Lord" in 2 Thessalonians 1:12. Given the overwhelming use of "God" for the Father in Paul's writings as the above totals reveal, there is no reason to translate or to understand this verse as indicating anything other than two individuals, God and Jesus. As Wallace notes, "'Lord Jesus Christ' is a compound proper name and therefore outside the pale of Sharp's principle" (Wallace, "Multiple Substantives," page 250, note 211). Compare Wallace, *Granville Sharp's Canon and Its Kin: Semantics and Significance*, ed., D.A. Carson, *Studies in Biblical Greek*, Vol. 14 (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), page 243, note 21, in which the matter is put more carefully, "'Lord Jesus Christ' is almost always a compound proper name" (my underlining). According to Middleton, "[Lord Jesus Christ] is a common title of Christ, and is often used independently of all that precedes it" and, therefore, 2 Thessalonians 1:12 "affords no certain evidence in favor of Mr. Sharp."— Thomas Fanshaw Middleton, *The Doctrine of the Greek Article Applied to the Criticism and Illustration of the New Testament*, New ed., Revised by Hugh J. Rose (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1833), pages 381, 382.

[87] 1 Timothy 5:21 and 6:13 are ambiguous only if one does not see *Christou Iesou* as a proper name, which it is.

[88] In 2 Timothy 2:14 *theos* is not in A D, the Vulgate, nor supported by Syriac evidence. If *theos* is used in 2 Timothy 4:1, there is no reason to apply it to anyone but to the Father, especially since the compound name "Christ Jesus" (Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ) follows *kai*.

[89] Titus 2:13 is ambiguous only if neither "the great God" or "Savior Jesus Christ" are compound proper names, which they are, and so like the other texts which use fixed expressions for specific individuals Titus 2:13 should be translated showing two individuals, not one. See my Excursus on the Granville Sharp rule in my Second Edition of *Jehovah's Witnesses Defended: An Answer to Scholars and Critics* (Huntington Beach, CA: Elihu Books, 2000), pages 388-402; see also my "Another Exception to *Granville Sharp's Canon and Its Kin*," *Elihu Online Papers* 3 (2012), pages 16-21. An updated version of this paper will be made available at https://elihubooks.com/elihu-online-papers.

[90] Hebrews 1:8. Even if this verse uses "God" for Jesus, it is again relative as it is not only applied contextually from a wedding song for the human king Solomon (Psalm 45), but also qualified in the next verse (Hebrews 1:9) in a manner paralleling John 20:17, 28 by calling another being (the Father) Jesus' God.

According to my tabulation,[91] of these six hundred and sixteen (616) instances of "God" in Paul's writings, six hundred and five (605) of them refer to the Father, seven (7) refer to beings or to things other than God or Jesus, four (4) are grammatically uncertain, and zero (0) unambiguously apply "G-god" to Jesus. This is a massive disparity, and ultimately requires any honest translator to decide whether this usage is to be overridden and, if so, for what reason(s)? Clearly, punctuation is not decisive in Codex Sinaiticus. There is no grammatical requirement to apply "G-god" to "the Christ" in Romans 9:5. Therefore, absent any textual or grammatical reasons we should follow the consistent use of "G-god" by Paul and apply "the one who is over all God be bless into the ages" in Romans 9:5 in Codex א to "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Romans 15:6.

While it is possible to apply "G-god" to "Christ" in the sense in which Jesus himself defined it, namely, as being one of the "sons of the Most High" who are called "gods" by God in Psalm 82. Jesus uses a first-class conditional response in John 10:35-36, citing this text (Psalm 82:6) as *his evidence* he is not blaspheming "by saying [he is] God's Son," not God, which is exactly what the Jews were accusing him of claiming according to most English translations. Either that, or the Jews in John 10 were accusing him of claiming to be "a god" (*theos*), to which Jesus' answer perfectly responds and defeats by *his evidence*, again, the fact that God calls other "sons" of his "gods" (*theoi*). Jesus responds to their accusation about him in the singular by using a plural of the same word, because he knows that God in Psalm 82 is speaking about "sons" there, too, those he "came against." Therefore, as Jesus argues, how can it be blaspheme to call himself *theos* when the other "sons" are called *theoi*, as they are all "S-sons" of God (compare Job 1:6; 21: 38:7)? Exactly. It cannot. That is why Jesus cited Psalm 82 as his evidence.

Jesus' words in a Greek translation of John 10:35-36 are in a grammatical form which requires this meaning of Psalm 82, since it is the only meaning which is *evidence* they accept from the text and which shows Jesus is *not* blaspheming by calling himself *theos*, meaning "God's Son." Jesus proves this by responding to their accusation about *theos* in the singular by using a text with *theos* in the plural (*theoi*), namely, the Greek text of Psalm 82. Jesus parallels the use of *theos* with *theoi* as his evidence in John 10:35-36, *proving* a relative meaning for any application of "G-od" to him in John 10, or elsewhere. The same is shown in John 20:17, 28 where Jesus teaches the truth about God, namely, who is God to him and to us, while openly accepting the very thing he had been teaching about him and God, that if you see him you are seeing the Father.

John 20:17, 28 therefore mirrors John 14:8-11 by presenting the same relative relationship between Jesus and the Father in response to doubts about them both. When you see Jesus you are seeing God the Father in everything he says, does, and teaches. In fact, a bit earlier than John 14 Jesus said the following in front of everyone in John 12:44-45 (my translation):

> ***"But Jesus cried out and said: 'The one believing in me does not believe in me, but in the one who sent me, and the one who looks upon me, looks upon the one who sent me.'"***

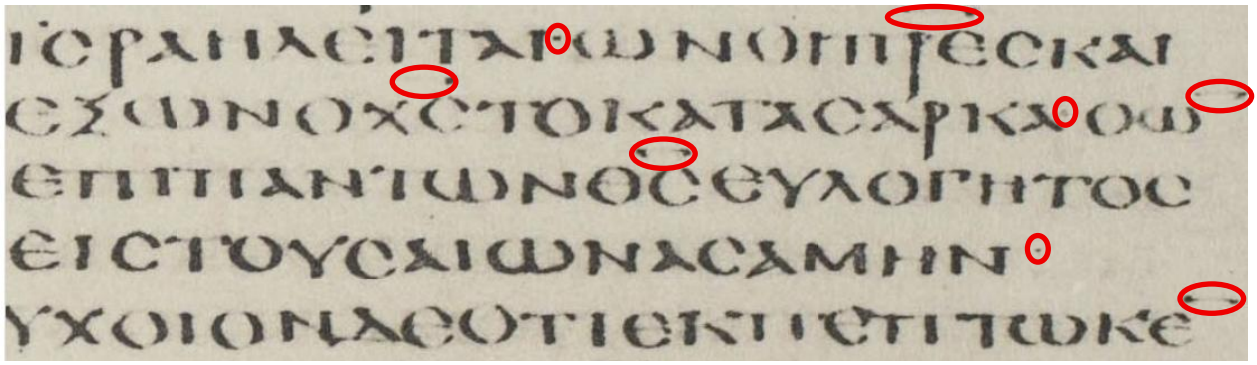
Obviously, Jesus in John 12, 14, and 20 is not telling people they are really beholding the Father as God, for the same book (John) with all of these statements makes it plain from the start what God already made clear to Moses in Exodus 33:18-23, namely, "**no one** has **ever** seen God" (John 1:18; compare 6:46). In John 1:18 this is followed by yet another relative use of "G-god" proven

[91] This information was originally presented on pages 390-392 of my Excursus on the Granville Sharp rule in my Second Edition of *Jehovah's Witnesses Defended*. Though I am no longer associated with Watchtower Society of Jehovah's Witnesses since writing the 2000 edition of this book, this has not changed my views on Sharp's rule or on the use of terms for "G-god" in the Bible.

by "begotten/created" (*monogenes*) and "G-god" or "Son" for Jesus in 1:18 (compare 1:14). These descriptions for Jesus in a context where no one has "ever" see God prove a separation of being or nature between the Father and the Son as spirits, with one "born" from the other just like humans have the same nature but exist as separate human beings who are "born" one from the other, like spirits according to Jesus.—John 1:14; 3:6, 16; 4:24.

"Christ" and "God" are both proper names in Romans 9:5 based on the use of the terms in Paul's writings. This means Jesus is only ever "God" to anyone because he is never telling us his words, nor his teachings, nor doing his will. Rather, he is always and only presenting "one God, the Father" when we see him (John 14:8-10). Jesus is only showing and telling us what is *not* from him, what are *not* his words, *not* his teaching, and what he *learned* to be the will of his and our God, the Father (Luke 22:42; John 6:38; 7:16, 17; 8:26-29; 12:48-50; Revelation 3:2, 12). Now we will finish this paper by further highlighting the punctuation in some additional Greek New Testament texts, and by responding to claims made by Trinitarian scholars Bruce Metzger, Murray Harris, and others on Romans 9:5.

Codex A / Alexandrinus (5th century CE): In Romans 9:5 Codex A not only has a high point for a pause or a stop after *sarka* ("flesh"), it also has a noticeable space after the point. Both the point and the space are apparent in the British Museum's facsimile edition.[92] An image of Romans 9:5 in Codex A, in its surrounding context, can be viewed online at The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts: https://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/. The images at the Center are also from the British Museum's edition, as is this one with items circled in red that are explained below:



The point after *sarka* in Romans 9:5 is lighter than the point after the final *iota* of *epangeliai* at the end of verse 4, but it is the same size and as light as the point after *amen* in verse 5 and the larger part of the line over the missing *nun* of *on* at the end of line 2. Compare the faintness of the line over the abbreviation of "fathers" (line 1), the line over the abbreviation for "Christ" (line 2), the line over the abbreviation for "God" (line 3), and the faint line over the missing *nu* at the end of *ekpeptoke* in verse 6 at the end of the above image. In response to some (including W. Sanday) who appeared to express doubt about the use of punctuation in Codex A after "flesh" in Romans 9:5, G.V. Smith wrote:

> May I beg the two doubters (if they are such) to take the first opportunity of going to the British Museum to look at the Manuscript for themselves? They will easily gain access to it; and, if their eyesight be tolerably good, I venture to say they will be perfectly satisfied (from the colour of the ink and from the existence of the space) that the stop is a real stop, and from the first hand.[93]

[92] *The Codex Alexandrinus (Royal MS. 1 D V-VIII) New Testament and Clementine Epistles* (London, 1909).

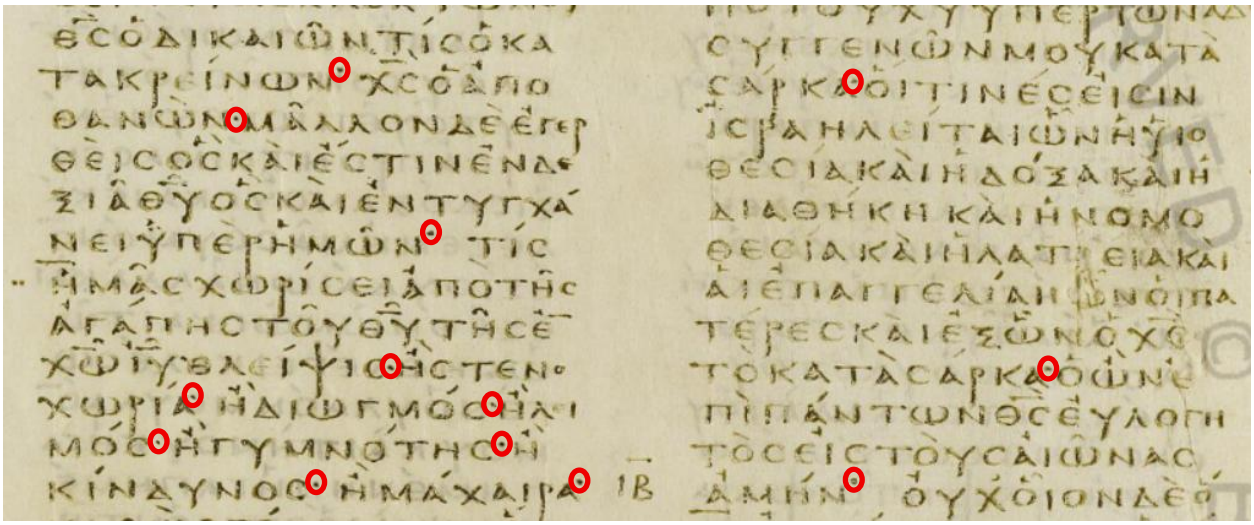
[93] G. Vance Smith, "Additional Note on Romans IX. 5," *The Expositor* 10 (July 1879), page 233 (underlining added).

Compare W. Sanday's reply to the use of punctuation in Codex A at Romans 9:5 in the same journal article:

> I have had an opportunity of examining the Codex Alexandrinus, and I quite agree with Dr. Vance Smith that there can be no doubt as to the punctuation. It is altogether plainer than I had expected to find it. The point is clearly marked, and it is evidently by the first hand. Future critical editors should take note of this, and the fact should be credited, so far as it goes, to Dr. Vance Smith's side of the argument. There seems now to be less danger of its importance being exaggerated.[94]

Undoubtedly, Sanday would not be too pleased with the state of punctuation and its importance today in Greek New Testament studies. Indeed, consider how modern translators have been kept uninformed by the judgments of the United Bible Societies' 4th Edition of its *Greek New Testament*,[95] which on page 543 fails to cite even one single Greek manuscript's punctuation of Romans 9:5. Instead, it references modern translations' choice of punctuation! Similarly, the 26th Edition of Nestle's *Novum Testamentum Graece*[96] fails its readers here by not providing any references to the punctuation of Romans 9:5 in any Greek manuscripts.

Codex B / Vaticanus (4th century CE): As noted earlier (page 3), the 1961 English translation of the Greek grammar by Blass and Debrunner states, "the earliest MSS of the NT, P^{45}, P^{46} (not P^{47}), P^{66}, ... and B [Codex Vaticanus], have already received some punctuation by the first hand." One of these first-hand marks is a high point after "flesh" (*sarka*) in Romans 9:5. Below is an image of Romans 9 from Codex B with the punctuation mark after "flesh" circled in red, along with several other marks. Codex B can be viewed online here: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1209:



In addition to the clear high point indicating a pause or stop between "flesh" and the article *ho* ("the") in Romans 9:5, there is another high point after, "Amen," at the end of the verse which clearly indicates a stop. Prior to the mark between "flesh" and "the" in Romans 9:5, in the same far-right column above there is a high point used after *sarka* ("flesh") at the end of verse 3 and before *hoitines* ("who") at the start of verse 4. This point provides an explanatory break with or a

[94] W. Sanday, "Additional Note on Romans IX. 5," *The Expositor* 10 (July 1879), page 235 (underling added).

[95] *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1993).

[96] *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Stuttgart, 1979), page 425.

pause, which is consistent with the use of "who" (a relative pronoun that is not used in 9:5) for Paul's *adelphon* ("brothers") or *syngenon* ("relatives"), similar to modern translations.

Directly across from the high point after "flesh" in Romans 9:3, on the far-left column at Romans 8:34 there is a high point between *katakrinon* and the abbreviated name "Christ." This point indicates a stop since a question is being asked. There is also a middle point indicating a pause or comma between *apothanon* and *mallon* in Romans 8:34, as well as a high point and a space after *hemon* at the end of Romans 8:34 before *tis* at the start of verse 35, indicating a full stop. There is a middle point after *thlipsis* and before *e* ("or") in verse 35, which is followed by a middle point after *stenochoria* ("or distress"), a middle point after *e diogmos* ("or persecution"), a middle point after *e limos* ("or famine"), a middle point after *e gymnotes* ("or nakedness"), and a middle point after *e kindynos* ("or danger") in verse 35. We also have a high point after *machaira* ("sword") at the end of Romans 8:35 and before *kathos* ("just as") at the start of 8:36 for a full stop. All these marks indicate breaks, pauses, and question marks in Codex B, consistent with our modern punctuation and reading of them today.

As noted earlier, all of these marks are in direct conflict with Frederic Kenyon, who had earlier written, "There appear to be no accents, breathings, or stops by the first hand."[97] Using nearly the exact same language and wording as Kenyon for Codex B, but with a conclusion concerning the "first hand" that is more in agreement with Blass-Debrunner, Metzger wrote:

> Unfortunately the beauty of the original has been spoiled by a later scribe who found the ink faded and traced over every letter afresh, omitting only those letters and words that he believed to be incorrect. A few passages therefore remain to show the original appearance of the first hand. There appear to have been two scribes of the Old Testament and one of the New Testament, and two correctors, one (B^2) about contemporary with the scribes, and the other (B^3) of about the tenth or eleventh century. ... Accent and breathing marks, as well as punctuation, have been added by a later hand.[98]

Though noting there are some "passages" remaining which "show the original appearance of the first hand" in B, Metzger here puts the use of punctuation in the light of what he claims was "added by a later hand." Further, in addition to noting what he calls a middle point after *sarka* in Romans 9:5 in Codex A, Metzger references the use of the same point in Romans 9:5 in B and qualifies the punctuation in B by writing, "A point standing in a middle position with respect to the line of writing (a colon [in Metzger's view]) is present after ['flesh'] in A, B (*sec. man.* [= *secundus manuscript* ('secondary manuscript')])."[99] In other words, Metzger sees the punctuation in Codex B at Romans 9:5 as "secondary," though he does not explain his position further on this point.[100]

Similarly, the Münster Institute's "report" through Metzger was apparently sufficient for Murray J. Harris to accept "the second hand" of B without noting which of the "two correctors" he believes

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[97] Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, page 65 (underlining added).

[98] Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible*, page 74.

[99] Metzger, "The Punctuation of Rom. 9:5," page 97 (underlining added).

[100] It is similar with the much earlier assessment by McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. X (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981 [repr. of 1867-1887]), page 731, "It has been doubted whether any of the stops are by the first hand; and the breathings and accents are now generally allowed to have been added by a second hand." No evidence is provided upon which this assessment should have been "generally allowed."

may be the cause of the point after *sarka* in Codex B at Romans 9:5.[101] This makes more relevant the comments by Kenyon written over a century ago, namely, "certain questions as to the distinction between the hands of correctors and the original scribe must always necessitate a reference to the original."[102] From Kenyon's comments (repeated in large part by Metzger) there is reason to believe the corrector(s) of B traced over only what was felt to be correct, leaving the incorrect marks to "fade away." According to Finegan:

> Each page is written in brown ink ... One corrector went through the manuscript very soon after the time of the original writing. A second corrector worked at a much later date, probably tenth or eleventh century. The latter traced over the pale letters with fresh ink.[103]

Compare this with the earlier assessment by McClintock and Strong:

> [A]pparently about the 8th century [a second hand] retraced, with as much care as such an operation would admit, the faint lines of the original writing (the ink whereof was, perhaps, never quite black), the remains of which can even now be seen; and, at the same time, the reviser left untouched such words or letters as he wished, for critical purposes, to reject, and these still express the original condition of the MS., being unaccented.[104]

If the punctuation in Codex B in Romans 9:5 is lighter or fading in comparison with corrected or added marks, it should be accepted as the original punctuation used in the text since the ink used by the corrector(s) is darker than the original brown ink. As with Codices A, C, L, and "at least twenty-six cursives which have a stop after σάρκα [*sarka* (in Romans 9:5)], the same in general which they have after αἰῶνας [*aionas*] or᾽Αμήν [*Amen*],"[105] Codex B uses a full point in Romans 9:5 after the word for "flesh." This may indicate a pause or a stop, for breathing or for reflection on the part of the scribe or for the reader, before proceeding with the balance of the text or with the rest of a connected thought.

There is no disputing the fact that in Codex B, one of the earliest and best witnesses to the ancient Greek text of the New Testament, there is a mark of punctuation at Romans 9:5. But is this mark original, or was it made by early or by later correctors to Codex B? That this question is not new can be seen from Smith's remarks written nearly one hundred and fifty years ago in 1879:

> In regard to the Vatican (B), I readily admit, the age of the stop may be fairly considered doubtful. Cardinal Pitra, by whom on one occasion the Manuscript was shewn to me, and to whom I pointed it out, observed at once that it might be of later date than the writing. On the other hand, Tischendorf holds that many of the stops in B are *a prima manu* [= "first hand"]; and I do not know of any good reason why this particular point [in Romans 9:5] should not be one of them.[106]

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[101] Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of* Theos *in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), page 149.

[102] Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, page 64.

[103] Finegan, *Encountering New Testament Manuscripts*, pages 127, 128.

[104] McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. X, page 731.

[105] Abbot, "Recent Discussions of Romans ix. 5," page 107. Abbot's observations on the punctuation of Romans 9:5 in these texts is accepted by Metzger almost without qualification ("The Punctuation of Rom. 9:5," page 97), and by Harris (*Jesus as God*, page 149).

[106] Smith, "Additional Note on Romans IX. 5," page 233 (underlining added).

Apparently, the ink color did not come up during the showing of B by Cardinal Pitra to Smith, or Smith would not conclude as he does above by noting he has 'no good reason' to discount the originality of the point. Now consider Abbot's remarks regarding the color of the point:

> The facts as to the Vatican MS. are these. ... The later hand, of the tenth or eleventh century, has but rarely supplied points. ... The original scribe indicates a pause, sometimes by a small space simply; sometimes by such a space with a point, and sometimes by a point with *very* small space between the letters or none at all. ... It is expressly stated by a gentlemen who recently examined the MS., and whose letter from Rome I have been permitted to see, that the point after σάρκα [in Romans 9:5] "is of lighter color than the adjoining letters," and that it was certainly much fainter than a point in the space after ημων on the same page, "which was as black as the touched letters."[107]

Nearly ninety years ago Lattey attempted to dismiss a part of the evidence against his preferred view of Romans 9:5, namely, evidence in the form of punctuation marks (and spaces) in Codex A and Codex B, writing, "in any case the *Vaticanus* presents no more difficulty than the *Alexandrinus*"![108] Lattey explains what he means:

> I have inspected carefully the Vatican phototype of 1889, and find a similar colon without a space after σάρκα at the end of Ro 9[3], after both occurrences of ᾽Ισραήλ in v.[6], after᾽Αβραάμ in v.[7], ῾Ρεβέκκα in v.[10], and αὐτοῦ in v.[22]. These instances will doubtless be judged sufficient to settle the point.[109]

What point is that? That there is really no point to all these points! Note Metzger's near complete restatement and furtherance of Lattey's above assessment fifty years later:

> In estimating the significance of the preceding data one should also take into account the quite erratic punctuation contained in early manuscripts for other verses of chap. 9. Thus, codex Vaticanus has a colon at the end of 9:3, after both occurrences of ᾽Ισραήλ in verse 6, after ᾽Αβραάμ in verse 7, ῾Ρεβέκκα in verse 10, and αὐτοῦ in verse 22! Codex Alexandrinus has a colon after μεγάλη in verse 2, one between Χριστοῦ and ὑπέρ and another after σάρκα in verse 3, and one after᾽Ισραηλῖται in verse 4.[110]

More recently Harris repeated Lattey's argument and Metzger's additions in support of Harris' own conclusion that "in the early centuries the scribes responsible for the transmission of the NT used marks of punctuation in an inconsistent and erratic fashion."[111] Yet, Lattey, Metzger, and Harris do not present a sufficient case for or against an "inconsistent and erratic" use of punctuation according to each text, according to each evident hand in each text, and according to each separate ink color which may be attributable to different scribes during earlier, the same, or later periods.

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[107] Abbot, "On the Construction of Romans ix. 5," pages 150-151 (underlining added). This provides further support for my contention that the difference in point color is essential to determine before attempting to broadly brush all marks in a particular text as if they are by the same scribe, or from the same time, or for the same reasons. Each punctuation mark should be evaluated according to each hand's date and scribal practice.

[108] Cuthbert Lattey, "The Codex Vaticanus on Romans ix. 5," *The Expository Times* 34 (1922-1923), page 331.

[109] Lattey, "The Codex Vaticanus on Romans ix. 5," page 331.

[110] Metzger, "The Punctuation of Rom. 9:5," page 99.

[111] Harris, *Jesus as God*, page 149 (underlining added).

Lattey (followed by Metzger and by Harris) refers to "a similar colon without a space after σάρκα at the end of Ro 9^3," but this is the same pausing or stopping point we find in verse 5 (ΚΔΤΔϹΔΡΚΔ·). The point in B in both places is nearer the top of Δ and also a natural place to draw a breath before continuing with the reading (or the copying for other readers) since the breath is released at the end of σάρκα (*sarka*) and drawn in again before beginning the (rough breathing) pronunciation of οἵτινες (*hoitines*) in verse 4, and before breathing out and pronouncing ὁ ὢν (*ho on*) in verse 5.

Lattey, Metzger, and Harris also consider the point "after both occurrences of ᾽Ισραήλ [*Israel*] in verse 6" to be "inconsistent and erratic" (Harris) uses of punctuation. But they are all three wrong about the use of the first mark, which is a rough breathing added to the start of *houtoi*, while the point after the second occurrence of "Israel" in verse 6 is appropriate for ending or pausing the thought. Further, Lattey, Metzger, and Harris consider the point after *Abraam* in verse 7, the point after *Rebekka* in verse 10, and the point after *autou* in verse 22 to be further examples of inconsistent/erratic punctuation in Codex B. But not one of them attempts to make sense out of their examples by considering the potentially different hands, inks, and scribal habits.

Lattey, Metzger, and Harris basically resign after citing numerous examples they do not even try to understand meaningfully, leaving it to their readers to try and figure what they basically claim is textual nonsense by Greek NT scribes. Before we consider their examples further, note Harris' astounding claim that a consistent use of punctuation marks in early Greek NT still would not motivate any confidence in him toward understanding what the scribe in question meant:

> Even if consistency were apparent, one could not move with any degree of confidence from the presence of a punctuation mark in a manuscript to the exegetical view of the scribe. Nor is there manuscript evidence of a colon after σάρκα [*sarka*] before the fifth century. At most one may say that many ancient scribes regarded a pause after σάρκα as natural or necessary.[112]

But that *is* what is alleged to be true by me and others, namely, "many ancient scribes" used such marks for "a pause" that was considered "natural or necessary." Why, then, is punctuation of ancient Greek NT not also considered "necessary" in our modern Greek NT texts and in text-critical studies about them? Further, notice that when Harris writes there is no "manuscript evidence of a colon after σάρκα [*sarka*] before the fifth century," he relies on the assumed "second hand" of Codex B when, as discussed on pages 25-29 of this paper, it is likely the point indicating a pause or a stop in Romans 9:5 in Codex B is by the *first* hand due to the color of the point in comparison with the ink color used by later scribes. Codex B of the 4th century therefore constitutes evidence "before the fifth century"!

Harris even makes of little importance Codex A and Codex C (both dated to the 5th century), both of which support the reading in B. But there is nothing so obviously "inconsistent and erratic" with the placement of these marks according to the practice of the scribe(s) who used them that we should consider of little to no value. Returning to the examples given by Lattey, Metzger, and Harris, a pause or stop after *Abraam* in verse Romans 9:7 of Codex B is natural, which is why the scribe used a mark of punctuation here and elsewhere in Codex B. Indeed, the same middle or high point is used in the same place after (switching to uncial for better visual) ΔΒΡΔΔΜ in Codex A. Therefore, *both* scribes had the same or a similar thought separation or pause at the same spot in the same verse.

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[112] Harris, *Jesus as God*, page 149 (underlining added).

The mark in Romans 9:7 provides a natural pause for a complete reading of ϹΠЄΡΜΑΑΒΡΑΑΜ with heavy accent on the ultima of ΑΒΡΑΑΜ, which is then restated more expressly and reflectively on the part of the scribe by ΠΑΝΤЄϹΤЄΚΝΑ. This naturally terminates into a pause or a stop before what is also an Α-vowel beginning, superordinate conjunction (ΑΛΛ') introducing a more important but very much connected thought. Since the point after ΑΑΒΡΑΑΜ is middle or high, with the point after ΤЄΚΝΑ by contrast being low, it appears (without knowing for sure the color of each mark) Codex B separates "the seed of Abraham" in the first part of verse 7 from "the seed" in the latter part as it relates to the promise fulfilled through his descendant (Isaac).

After the scribe of B paused with a middle or a high point after ΙϹΡΑΗΛ, he used the equivalent of a colon after ϹΠЄΡΜΑΑΒΡΑΑΜ, which then makes perfect sense of the following ΠΑΝΤЄϹΤЄΚΝΑ, and which quite naturally allows for another pause indicated by the middle or high point before ΑΛΛ'. This is the first part of a separately introduced but connected thought, which is precisely what we have in verse 8![113] Similarly, in Romans 9:10 the point makes good sense as a pause after *Rebekka* and before proceeding with *ex henos* and with what follows it. Finally, the point after *autou* in Romans 9:22 is also a natural pausing point with *autou* as the last word in the first part of the sentence which sets up a contrast with what begins with *enegken* ("endured"). This becomes a natural pause (after *autou*) before pronouncing the first word of the next part of the sentence or thought.

Metzger also points to Romans Chapter 9 in Codex A and questions several marks in it, namely, the points after *megale* ("great") in verse 2, between *Christou* and *huper* and after *sarka* in verse 3, as well as after *Israelitai* in verse 4. But, again, each instance mentioned by Metzger is easily explainable according to the text and a reasonably discernable scribal practice. For example, a short pause after *megale* in verse 2 fits well with the release of breath following the final syllable and, in fact, it is quite natural here before proceeding with *kai*. The same is true when pronouncing the abbreviated genitive form of "Christ" (*Christou*) which immediately precedes the rough breathing required for *huper*. This also appears to be why there is a pause indicated after *sarka* at the end of our verse 3 in Codex A. As explained earlier, breath is released at the end of *sarka* and drawn in again before beginning the rough breathing pronunciation of *hoitines* in verse 4, as well as before breathing out while pronouncing ὁ ὢν (*ho on*) in verse 5.

Regarding Codex A's punctuation mark in verse 4 after *Israelitai*, it is not "quite erratic" (so described by Metzger, followed by Harris). A mark of punctuation in verse 4 is, again, very natural and explainable according to the release of breath which follows *Israelitai*, which is required *before* taking in breath necessary to proceed with what is in Codex A a double rough breathing in *ho on*. In addition to questioning the use and the importance of marks of punctuation found in the above examples, Metzger went even further than Lattey in attempting to dismiss other explainable uses of punctuation marks or points in early Greek NT texts. Metzger (followed by Harris) wrote:

> According to information supplied by the Münster Institut[e], F^{P} also has a point in the middle position after πατέρας after the first ὁ, after ὤν, after εὐλογοῦντες, after εἰς, after τούς, and after αἰῶνας, as well as a high point after the second ὢν, a low point after the second ὁ, and a cluster of two points and a comma after ἀμήν. G^{P}, besides having a point in the middle position after σάρκα, has a similar point after πατέρας, after the first ὁ, after ὤν, after θεός, and after αἰῶνας. K has a low point after πατέρας, two points (:) after σάρκα, followed on the next line

[113] Note the contrast here (with underlining added but with no line over the abbreviation of the *nomina sacra* [which is in the text]), ΟΥΤΑΤЄΚΝΑΤΗϹϹΑΡΚΟϹΤΑ[ΥΤΑ]ΤЄΚΝΑΤΟΥΘΥ·ΑΛΛΑΤΑΤЄΚΝΑ, which continues with, ΤΗϹЄΠΑΓΓЄΛΙΑϹΛΟΓΙΖЄΤΑΙЄΙϹϹΠЄΡΜΑ, at the end of which is a high point ending this thought.

> by commentary, and two points (:) after ἀμήν, followed by commentary. L, besides having a high point after σάρκα, has a point in the middle position after πατέρας, a comma after θεός, and a point in the middle position after ἀμήν, followed by τέλος in the next line. P has a lacuna [missing text] from 8:8 to 9:11. 056 has a high point after πατέρας and another after ἀμήν, followed by a space and commentary. 0142 has a point in the middle position after πατέρας and a high point after ἀμήν, followed by commentary. 0151 has two dots (:) after ἀμήν, followed by commentary on the next line.[114]

Neither Metzger nor Harris even attempt to make sense out of the points used in the above cited examples, even though there is a difference between them and the earliest Greek NT texts containing Romans 9:5 of over four-five hundred years![115] Indeed, *all* of the texts referred to by Metzger above as containing marks of punctuation are from a time when the system of punctuation was also, apparently, radically changing.[116] Returning to Romans 9:5, in addition to Codices A and B, note the following comments by Lattey on the use of punctuation marks in Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (5th century CE) at Romans 9:5:

> Between σάρκα and ὁ ὤν there is a space hardly greater than that between any two consecutive letters, but there is quite clearly a small cross there, without any other sign or symbol. This small cross is very often found at the end of a verse ... Père Bourdon's conclusion from the above example is that the small cross, even by itself, is a strong stop (*marque une punctuation fote*) and is equivalent to a colon, and he mentions M. Omont as an authority who agreed with him upon being shown the verse in question [Romans 9:5] and some examples.[117]

Lattey tries his best to minimize the impact of Bourdon's report, even ending his brief article by claiming (despite the likely indication he received from the report on Codex C), "In any case the evidence for the mere comma remains overwhelming."[118] This gets us back to the issue of false assumptions involved with the use and significance of punctuation marks in early Greek NT texts. The issue even brought F.C. Burkitt into the discussion as Lattey began calling for "a reliable record" of the punctuation of Codex C, which earlier Père Bourdon and M. Omont had reported contained a "small cross" as "a strong stop" after "flesh" in Romans 9:5.[119] Writing under the name of the same article as Lattey in 1928, F.C. Burkitt states:

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[114] Metzger, "The Punctuation of Rom. 9:5," page 98. Harris, *Jesus as God*, pages 148-149.

[115] All the above texts cited by Metzger are from the 9th century CE or later, and so nowhere close to the type of punctuated texts which we have in the uncials and papyri of the 4th, 5th, and earlier centuries CE. Metzger cites F^{P} (also known as F^{2} and as Codex Augiensis) and G^{P} (also known as G^{3} and as Codex Harleianus), both from the 9th century CE, and "both of them probably go back one or two generations to a common archetype" (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, page 53). Metzger's "Münster report" also refers to Codex L (though he must have meant L^{ap} [L^{2}], since L contains the four Gospels), also of the 9th century CE, and to uncial 056 of the 10th century, to uncial 0142 of the 10th century, and to uncial 0151 of the 9th century, none of which have marks in the places noted by "the Münster report" which cannot be reasonably explained by scribal practices identified with each discernable hand.

[116] Compare Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, page 242, "gradually changes came over these stops till the top point was equal to our colon, the bottom point became the full stop, the middle point vanished, and about the ninth century A.D. the comma (,) took its place."

[117] Cuthbert Lattey, "The Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus on Romans ix. 5," *The Expository Times* 35 (October 1923 – September 1924), pages 42, 43.

[118] Lattey, "The Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus on Romans ix. 5," page 43.

[119] Lattey, "The Punctuation of New Testament Manuscripts," *JTS* 29.116 (July, 1928), page 396.

> The point raised by Fr Lattey [for a "reliable record" of Codex C] is important, but it is one that raises great difficulties for an Editor of a critical apparatus. In a certain sense, the punctuation of an ancient Greek work is no part of the original tradition. ... At other places, no doubt, the dot is intentional and significant.[120]

It is unclear why Burkitt views such marks as "no part of the original tradition" when they clearly are potential indicators of the original tradition. Still, he does recognize that in "places, no doubt, the dot is intentional and significant." The NT textual tradition should always include the *entire* written tradition communicated in those texts. It should include a complete record of all relevant punctuation along with an attempt to evaluate its use in each text, according to each hand identified. Indeed, such marks along with the words *are* what the scribes represented in their texts as the then-accepted tradition of how the text was read and understood. Any accidental points can be identified and noted as well in comparison to intentional marks. Burkitt gets to this in part when he later writes, "the value, or lack of value, in the punctuation of that verse in any MS depends very greatly on the critical weight of the punctuation in that MS," adding that this "value can only be determined by a study of its punctuation elsewhere, in uncontroversial contexts."[121]

The scribe of B is clearly a professional who should be distinguished not only from other texts of less quality from around the same time, but also from texts such as F^{P} and G^{P}, texts in which the "dot is most freely used," so much so that in 1 Timothy 3:16 in "[Codex] F... <u>each word [is] divided from the next by a dot</u>"![122] But it is also possible to understand the frequency of points in a text like F (Boreelianus) of the 9th century CE as nothing more than a bi-lingual scribe writing in Greek but still using a Latin interpunct as a reading aid, rather than as punctuation marks for pauses or stops like we find in much earlier Greek texts. As Wingo points out:

> Although interpuncta used as word-dividers greatly increase the legibility of the text, they are not punctuation in the sense in which I use the term. … The regular use of the interpunct as a word-divider continued until sometime in the Second Century [CE], when it began to fall into disuse… It never entirely disappeared, and very late texts can be cited which use the interpunct regularly.[123]

The example Wingo cites in the note at the end of the above quotation is P. Oxy. VI 871 (as late as the 5th century CE), which "regularly uses interpuncta."[124] Therefore, rather than lump all punctuated Greek texts with the pattern of a 9th century text which may use of marks for reasons other than punctuation, or to ignore such a text (F) as odd or with no obvious meaning determinable due to the extent of the marks used, we should look more closely and asking better questions to help us understand rather than dismiss punctuation in early Greek NT texts. We should consider all potential reasons for using any potential mark of punctuation in any early (or late) Greek texts, including the number of hands and the professionalism of each scribe. As Head and Warren write:

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[120] F.C. Burkitt, "The Punctuation of New Testament Manuscripts," *JTS* 29.116 (July 1928), page 397.

[121] Burkitt, "The Punctuation of New Testament Manuscripts," pages 396-397.

[122] Moulton and Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. II, *Accidence and Word-Formation*, page 47, referring to 1 Timothy 3:16.

[123] E. Otha Wingo, *Latin Punctuation in the Classical Age* (Series Practica, 133; Paris: Mouton & Co. N.V., 1972) Pages 16, 17.

[124] Wingo, *Latin Punctuation in the Classical Age*, page 17, note 14. A similar but earlier practice among Greek scribes appears in a 2nd century CE text (**3533**) of Menander with "an unusual feature… of a bold oblique dash to mark clause ending," the purpose of which "is not punctuation or part division but as a divider to aid reading aloud or dramatic delivery" (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. L, page 42).

> The best scribes clearly took care that the process of re-inking their reed pen did not adversely effect the presentation of their document. Among less competent scribes, however, the gradual fading of the letters is sometimes followed by a dramatic bolder word or two. In the early period very clear examples of this can be found in P.Oxy. 657, a manuscript containing portions of Hebrews and dated to around AD 300. Various lines of evidence suggest that the scribe responsible for this manuscript should be classified as 'non-professional'. In the first place, an analysis of the manuscript reveals a distinct lack of discipline in column width and a wide variation in the number of lines per column, neither of which would characterise a professional scribe paid by the line.[125]

Clearly, P.Oxy 657 is nothing like B in its textual quality or scribal hand(s)! Yet, even in P.Oxy 657 there are a number of locations of "re-inking" which "occur at natural divisions in the text, often corresponding with punctuation marks of one form or another."[126] Again, these are hardly the types of texts with which to compare in any sense with B or with other earlier uncials and papyri of similar quality.

By not comparing the right texts, by not evaluating more closely the texts in question and the inks used, intentional marks of punctuation for far too long been ignored or undervalued by scholars and others, which has led everyone further away from the advancement of a correct appreciation for and a proper cataloging of punctuation in ancient Greek texts. This, in turn, has led to important texts like Romans 9:5 and others being misunderstood according to the terms used in the text and in their immediate and larger contexts, as well as incorrectly punctuated and mistranslated.[127]

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[125] P.M. Head and M. Warren, "Re-inking the Pen: Evidence from P. Oxy. 657 (P13) Concerning Unintentional Scribal Errors," *New Testament Studies* 43 (1997), page 469.

[126] Head and Warren, "Re-inking the Pen: Evidence from P. Oxy. 657 (P13)," page 470.

[127] For additional information on the meaning, punctuation, and translation of Romans 9:5, including discussions of other language versions of Romans 9:5 and its use by early Christian writers, see pages 143-152 of my Second Edition of *Jehovah's Witnesses Defended: An Answer to Scholars and Critics*. As with my reference to the Excursus on Sharp's rule in this book referenced earlier (see note 91 page 23), though I am no longer associated with the Watchtower Society of Jehovah's Witnesses since writing the 2000 edition of this book, this does not change any of the information related to Romans 9:5 or to most other texts discussed in my *Jehovah's Witnesses Defended* editions. A digital copy of this work can be obtained through Elihu Books & Media here: https://elihubooks.com.