Why Another
Greek New Testament?

Rick Brannan
Logos Bible Software[1]

BibleTech:2011
Bible Technologies Conference
March 26, 2011

Version: 2011-03-31

ABSTRACT

In November 2010, the Society of Biblical Literature and Logos Bible Software published *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition* (SBLGNT, also known as the *SBL Greek New Testament*), edited by Michael W. Holmes. It was released not only for Logos Bible Software users, but also under a free license at http://sblgnt.com. The SBL and Logos have also published a high quality print edition.

But where did this new edition of the Greek New Testament come from? Why was it done? And more importantly for the BibleTech audience, how was it done? This talk walks through how Logos and the SBL understood the need for a new, critically edited yet freely available Greek New Testament. Then it gives an overview of the processes (formal and informal) that led to the production of this new edition of the Greek New Testament.

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[1] Author email: rick@logos.com

INTRODUCTION

In October 2010, Logos Bible Software and the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) released a new critical edition of the Greek New Testament called *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition* (SBLGNT), edited by Michael W. Holmes.[2] In November, at its 2010 National Meeting in Atlanta, the SBL distributed 2,000 print copies of the SBLGNT, for free, to its members. The SBLGNT is freely downloadable in a variety of formats (plain text, XML, PDF, OSIS, SWORD Project) from http://sblgnt.com. It is also freely available to users of Logos Bible Software, whether on Windows, Macintosh or iOS platforms,[3] as well as being generally available on Logos Bible Sofware's Biblia.com. A license also allows for free distribution and use within all sorts of contexts.[4]

But why did Logos and the SBL see fit to create a new edition of the Greek New Testament?

WHY ANOTHER GREEK NEW TESTAMENT?

For the SBL, the primary question was one of access for its members and for others interested in Biblical studies.

> Why a new edition? The many benefits and features of the widely used "standard text" of the Greek New Testament (i.e., the Nestle-Aland and United Bible Societies editions) are well known and widely appreciated, but it does not meet the needs of all users. For example, many scholars and students, especially those living in underresourced regions, do not have easy access to an up-to-date, critically edited Greek New Testament in electronic form. Thus, teachers who wish to include portions of the Greek New Testament in class assignments or use the Greek New Testament in their own scholarly research and publications often must input the Greek text letter by letter, which is both tedious and subject to error. Students writing exegetical papers face similar obstacles and challenges.[5]

Additionally, there has been a sort of stasis as regards the text of the New Testament in the realm of commentary and discussion of the text. That is, serious discussion and evaluation of all but a few areas of the text is fleeting. Again, from the Preface to the SBLGNT:

> … the exegetical habits of some scholars and students seem to reflect a belief that all the important text-critical work has already been completed, that one can more or less equate the standard Greek New Testament with the "original" text. With a mindset such as this, it is not surprising that entire

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[2] Brannan, Rick, "Introducing the SBL Greek New Testament," n.p. [cited 25 February 2011]. Online: http://blog.logos.com/archives/2010/10/introducing_the_sbl_greek_new_testament.html.

[3] Logos Bible Software, "The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition," n.p. [cited 25 February 2011]. Online: http://www.logos.com/product/8486/the-greek-new-testament-sbl-edition.

[4] Michael W. Holmes, ed. *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition* (Society of Biblical Literature and Logos Bible Software, 2010), iv.

[5] ibid vii.

commentaries have been written that simply take the standard text as printed and scarcely discuss textual matters.[6]

Providing an easily accessible yet reputable second opinion (in a variety of formats and media) has the potential to re-invigorate the text-critical discussion. And that fits hand-in-glove with the SBL's purpose of fostering biblical scholarship.

But why would Logos Bible Software be involved in this? Isn't Logos just about Bible software?

While Logos republishes over 10,000 titles licensed from various publishers, we also create original content and undertake analysis of Greek and Hebrew texts (and others). This started in 2004 when we commissioned the *Lexham Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible* and created the "Lexham Bible Reference Series" imprint.[7] Since then, other projects have included the *Lexham Greek-English Interlinear New Testament* and the *Lexham Greek-English Interlinear Septuagint*, and we are even working on an interlinear of the Greek portions of the Apostolic Fathers.

We have pursued different analyses of original language texts, including transcriptions, morphological analysis and translations of Semitic inscriptions (*Semitic Inscriptions: Analyzed Texts and English Translations*), a clausal analysis of the Greek New Testament (*Lexham Clausal Outlines of the Greek New Testament*), and our own morphological analyses of several editions of the Greek New Testament, the Septuagint, the Hebrew Bible, the Apostolic Fathers, the Works of Josephus, and a collection of Greek Old Testament Pseudepigraphal texts.

We have created several word to word alignments, which we call "reverse interlinears" between the Hebrew Bible and Greek New Testament and modern translations of the OT and NT (in English, Spanish and even Japanese).

We have done analysis of the Old and New Testaments building databases to describe relationships between people, places and things mentioned in the Bible. We are presently expanding this to include referent information, to be able to know where people, places or things are referred to either explicitly (by name) or implicitly (by some referring structure).

We have undertaken syntactic analyses of the Greek New Testament, including the *Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament* and the *Cascadia Syntax Graphs of the New Testament*. In 2009 we released a discourse-level analysis of the Greek New Testament, the *Lexham Discourse Greek New Testament*, along with a counterpart applied to the ESV New Testament, the *Lexham High-Definition New Testament: ESV Edition*.

We are creating our own Bible translation, the *Lexham English Bible* (LEB). We presently have the New Testament completed and are working on the Old Testament.

We are working on two different commentary series, one geared toward Pastors preaching through a Bible book (the *High Definition Commentary* series) and the other a technical/critical commentary series

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[6] *ibid.*

[7] Logos Bible Software, "Logos Research Systems Commissions New Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible," n.p. [cited 25 February 2011]. Online: http://www.logos.com/press/releases/fairhaven04-04

called the *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*. And we're working on our own Bible Dictionary, the *Lexham Bible Dictionary*.

We have been active in developing content, much of it centered on analysis and translation of original language editions of the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and Greek New Testament. Whenever we have a new idea for textual analysis or something else, the first question is invariably "which text do we analyze/translate?" Part of the reason for asking the question is so that we do not constrain ourselves by limiting what we can do with future and derivative development of the analysis/translation/whatever.

One of our interests in pursuing a new critical edition of the Greek New Testament is to provide a textual base for analysis and translation projects that does not constrain us if we want to offer the result of the translation or analysis in different contexts (different products, different platforms, in print or other media, etc.) or derivative products. The SBLGNT allows us to do this.

HOW WAS THE SBLGNT MADE?

The SBLGNT did not happen overnight; we began discussing this internally at Logos in late 2005.

The Beginning

The SBL Greek New Testament began with a discussion about English Bibles.

Most recently published English Bibles (e.g., ESV, NET, NLT, NIV84, TNIV, NIV2011), while largely based on the UBS/NA critical edition current at time of publication, take divergent readings. Each of the New Testaments in these Bibles represents an independent take on the text of the New Testament, marked largely through the use of ambiguous footnotes (e.g., "some early and important manuscripts have …"). Some have actually published the Greek edition behind the New Testament.[8] Others (ESV, NLT) have exposed the Greek text concordances and textual alignment projects.[9]

In other words, the "standard" text (the UBS4/NA27 edition) isn't so standard when it comes to translating the New Testament. Textual criticism's first task, that of establishing the text, is still done, and there are several areas of difference among scholars today. To us, this opened the door for a new edition of the Greek New Testament.

The Brain Sparkle

My Aunt Carol (well, my wife's Aunt Carol, but she's my Aunt Carol too) is an incredible woman. One thing I love about Aunt Carol is that she doesn't have ideas or even inspirations. She has "brain sparkles."

After realizing it isn't true that people simply abdicate to the standard text, and seeing there was a need and an opportunity for a new Greek New Testament to use for comparison and study, we had a problem of where to start. We needed a brain sparkle.

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[8] NIV84 in the *Reader's Greek New Testament*; TNIV in the *Reader's Greek New Testament, Second Edition*; also the New English Bible in R.V.G. Tasker's *The Greek New Testament*.

[9] In Logos Bible Software 4, the reverse interlinear alignments of the ESV and the NLT each use textual bases slightly different from the UBS/NA text.

After all, the excellent work of the IGNTP[10] goes back to at least 1926 (eighty-five years ago) and to date has released an edition of the gospel of Luke and an edition of the gospel of John. There is much work involved in this project, all of it necessary, but the timeline is a bit glacial from our perspective.

There is also the INTF,[11] based in Münster, which is responsible for the text-critical work represented by the Nestle-Aland and United Bible Societies editions of the Greek New Testament. They have also produced and published fascicles of the *Editio Critica Maior* (ECM) for portions of the catholic/general epistles. But these as well (particularly the ECM) represent a tremendous amount of transcription, collation and comparison that precludes the sort of time frame in which we desired to release an edition of our still-nascent Greek New Testament.

So what to do? Herein lies the brain sparkle.

The Nestle-Aland edition of the Greek New Testament is in its 27th edition. Anyone who has read either the Alands' or Metzger's *Text of the New Testament* knows how the first edition of Nestle came about:

> What Eberhard Nestle did was actually quite simple (a radical breakthrough is always simple in retrospect): he compared the texts of Tischendorf (Gebhardt's stereotype edition of 1895) and of Westcott-Hort. Where the two differed he consulted a third edition for a deciding vote (at first Richard Francis Weymouth's second edition of 1892, and after 1901 Bernhard Weiss' 1894–1900 edition).[12]

Essentially, Nestle bootstrapped his Greek New Testament. He took as consensus the text where Tischendorf and Westcott-Hort agreed; where they disagreed he further consulted Weymouth's edition (and later Weiss' edition) as the tie-breaker.[13]

The brain sparkle: Why couldn't we bootstrap a new Greek New Testament? Only instead of using multiple editions to establish consensus, use the editions to establish areas of disagreement that needed to be re-evaluated using the latest available textual sources?

The Wait

After the brain sparkle, it was time to sketch out some of the details. We isolated a number of editions of the Greek New Testament that could perhaps be consulted in such a project, and sketched out some of the details that would need to be addressed (orthography, punctuation, paragraphs, etc.).

But at this point, it was largely a waiting game until we found the right editor for the project. So we waited. And waited. We (Logos and the SBL) discussed some potential editors, and even approached a few, but the timing wasn't right. Until 2009, that is.

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[10] International Greek New Testament Project. http://www.igntp.org

[11] Instituts für Neutestamentliche Textforschung. http://egora.uni-muenster.de/intf/

[12] Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament, Revised and Enlarged* (trans. Erroll F. Rhodes, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989). 19.

[13] Bruce Manning Metzger The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration (2nd ed) (London: Oxford University Press, 1968). 144.

The Editor

In the spring of 2009, Michael W. Holmes was asked to be the project editor. He is a seasoned textual critic[14] and has edited editions of other Greek texts.[15] In this case, the timing was perfect. He was about to begin a year-long sabbatical and could commit a significant portion of his available time to serious, prolonged work on the project. Now, with an editor actively interested and ready to begin the project, things started happening.

The Process

At this point, with Holmes as the editor and me as the technical lead, we (Mike and I) had some decisions to make, both procedural and technical. These included:

- Which Greek New Testament editions to use as basis

- How to share information and collations

- How to produce the data that would become the SBLGNT (print and electronic)

Selecting the Editions for Comparison

The selection of editions was largely pragmatic and initially based on available data. Logos already had high-quality and well-proofed editions of Westcott and Hort's edition, Robinson and Peirpont's 2005 edition of the Byzantine text,[16] Tregelles' edition,[17] Tischendorf's eighth edition,[18] and Scrivener's edition.

Of these editions, Westcott and Hort (WH), Robinson and Peirpont (RP) and Tregelles (Treg) were selected as representative. "Representative" because they represent three points on a larger spectrum. WH is remarkably similar to the UBS/NA text,[19] RP represents the opposite end of the spectrum in the Byzantine text, and Tregelles, though older than WH, represents a sort of middle-point between the two, "a discerning alternative perspective alongside Westcott and Hort."[20]

Tischendorf was not included because in Holmes' judgment it is overly-influenced by Siniaticus and too idiosyncratic to be useful.[21] And Scrivener would largely duplicate the information from RP without much additional benefit.

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[14] On Holmes' text-critical theory and method, and its interaction with views on textual transmission, see his 2006 SBL Presentation "Westcott & Hort at 125 (& Zuntz at 60): Their Legacies & Our Challenges," available online: http://michaelwholmes.files.wordpress.com/2010/11/holmes-2006-sbl-revised-paper-2010-edition-24-nov.pdf. Accessed March 1, 2011

[15] Holmes, Michael W. *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*. 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

[16] From http://www.byztxt.com/; thanks to Dr. Maurice Robinson for his work on this source.

[17] From http://www.tyndalehouse.com/tregelles/; thanks to Dirk Jongkind for his work on this source.

[18] From http://files.morphgnt.org/tischendorf/, thanks to Dr. Ulrik Sandborg-Petersen for his work on this source.

[19] Aland and Aland, *Text*, 26–28.

[20] Holmes, SBLGNT, x.

[21] Michael W. Holmes, personal communication to Rick Brannan, April 8, 2009.

Early in the process, it was also decided that we would not use the UBS/NA edition as a basis for comparison, but would instead list differences with the UBS/NA edition when complete. However, a modern edition of the Greek New Testament was considered valuable to include. So the decision was made to include the Greek text behind the NIV as represented in *A Reader's Greek New Testament*[22] in the comparisons.

Establishing the Orthography

Orthography (how words are spelled) was a large question because the standard orthography used in editions of the Greek New Testament has changed over time, and particularly from the late 1800s (WH and Treg) through the late 1900s (RP and NIV). Differences in orthography would make evaluating comparisons more involved. For example, many personal names are spelled differently when comparing WH to a modern edition like NA/UBS or the NIV. WH Δαυείδ is Δαυὶδ in NIV and NA/UBS. WH Ἐλιακείμ is Ἐλιακίμ in NIV and NA/UBS. And other words are problematic, for instance WH κερέα is κεραία in NA/UBS. Different editions have different policies on moveable nu, and on elision and crasis.

Holmes' desire for the final edition was to represent the orthography of the Bauer-Danker-Arndt-Gingrich lexicon,[23] which is representative of modern orthography, not that from the 1800s.

As a side effect of the way we encode morphological data and provide direct links to lexicons at Logos, I was able to do some comparisons to isolate the majority of these sorts of issues in WH. The result was to generate a text-only version of WH with possible orthographic differences noted. An example of Mt 1.2–6 from WH, with possible orthographic variations noted:

> 2 Ἀβραὰμ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰσαάκ, Ἰσαὰκ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰακώβ, Ἰακὼβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰούδαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ, 3 Ἰούδας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν {{Φαρὲς | Φάρες}} καὶ τὸν {{Ζαρὰ | Ζάρα}} ἐκ τῆς {{Θάμαρ | Θαμάρ}}, {{Φαρὲς | Φάρες}} δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐσρώμ, Ἐσρὼμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀράμ, 4 Ἀρὰμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀμιναδάβ, Ἀμιναδὰβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ναασσών, Ναασσὼν δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαλμών, 5 Σαλμὼν δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν {{Βοὲς | Βόες}} ἐκ τῆς Ῥαχάβ, {{Βοὲς | Βόες}} δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωβὴδ ἐκ τῆς Ῥούθ, Ἰωβὴδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰεσσαί, 6 Ἰεσσαὶ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν {{Δαυείδ | Δαυὶδ}} τὸν βασιλέα.

Possible variations are inside {{double braces}}; the left item is from WH, the right item is based on modern orthography. Holmes then reviewed the entire text, not simply the {{double braced}} items, and corrected the orthography. The result was an edition of WH, with revised orthography, casing, accentuation, paragraphing and punctuation.[24] This revised WH became the comparison basis for WH in establishing the SBLGNT.

Comparing the Editions

At this point, we have four editions (WH with revised orthography, Treg, NIV and RP) to compare to each other and then produce some method to convey the differences between all of the texts. But how to do this?

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

[23] Holmes, SBLGNT, xii–xiii.

[24] On practices regarding paragraphing, casing and punctuation, see Holmes, SBLGNT, xiii–xiv.

The first step was to deem the revised WH as the primary comparison editon. One of them had to be primary, and WH is the obvious choice. From here, each of the three remaining comparison editions was compared to the revised WH.[25] These sets of differences were then analyzed, and a listing of texts and variations was produced. This is simple, static HTML, viewable in almost any web browser or HTML-aware application. Here is an example of Mark 1.39–41:

Mk 1:39

WHR: καὶ ¹ἦλθεν κηρύσσων ²εἰς ²τὰς ²συναγωγὰς αὐτῶν εἰς ὅλην τὴν Γαλιλαίαν καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια ἐκβάλλων

BYZ: Καὶ ¹ἦν κηρύσσων ²ἐν ²ταῖς ²συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν εἰς ὅλην τὴν Γαλιλαίαν καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια ἐκβάλλων

    1. ἦλθεν] ἦν BYZ
    2. εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς] ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς BYZ

Mk 1:40

WHR: Καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτὸν λεπρὸς παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν καὶ γονυπετῶν ¹[omit] λέγων αὐτῷ ὅτι Ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι

BYZ: Καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτὸν λεπρός παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν καὶ γονυπετῶν ¹αὐτόν ¹καὶ λέγων αὐτῷ ὅτι Ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι

TREG: Καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτὸν λεπρὸς παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν καὶ γονυπετῶν ¹αὐτόν ¹καὶ λέγων αὐτῷ ὅτι Ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι

NIV: Καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτὸν λεπρὸς παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν καὶ γονυπετῶν ¹καὶ λέγων αὐτῷ ὅτι Ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι

    1. omitted] αὐτόν καὶ BYZ, TREG; καὶ NIV

Mk 1:41

WHR: ¹καὶ σπλαγχνισθεὶς ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ²αὐτοῦ ἥψατο ³[omit] καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ Θέλω καθαρίσθητι

BYZ: ¹Ὁ ¹δὲ ¹Ἰησοῦς σπλαγχνισθεὶς ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ²[omit] ἥψατο ³αὐτοῦ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ Θέλω καθαρίσθητι

    1. καὶ] Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς BYZ
    2. αὐτοῦ] omitted BYZ
    3. omitted] αὐτοῦ BYZ

There are a few items to notice. First, for each verse with variations, the variation units are numbered. A brief apparatus, with numbered items matching the variation unit numbers, is provided. Consolidated information for all editions is given in the brief apparatus, which also accounts for different variations at the same unit (as shown in Mk 1.40 above).

These comparisons, in HTML, were provided to Holmes. He used them along with the text files of the revised WH, as he worked through the whole New Testament.

Editing the Text

We took a decidedly low-tech approach on editing. Rather than dream up a tough-to-code and tougher to maintain editor, particulary for a special use case like this; and rather than use some XML editor in an attempt to produce structured data, we decided it was probably easiest for Holmes to use the editor he was

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[25] Using a standard implementation of the diff algorithm.

most familiar with: Microsoft Word. He loaded the plain-text revised WH files into Word, and he also loaded the comparison HTML files into a separate instance of Word. He also had access to his personal library, his institutional library, and many technical commentaries (ICC, WBC, etc.) and other volumes of text-critical interest through Logos Bible Software. Using all of this information, he was able to work through the text of the New Testament, evaluating the issues brought to light by the comparisons, as well as other issues brought to light by editions, commentaries, monographs and journal articles from his own sources.

Holmes would edit the text proper in Word, inserting apparatus symbols and using color highlighting on variation units to indicate the comparison source ratio of agreement/disagreement. Below is an example of a portion of Mark 1:

In the above, cyan indicates three comparison sources agree with Holmes' reading, yellow indicates a single source agrees with Holmes against the other three sources, and the dark blue indicates a reading unique to Holmes (none of the four comparison sources agree with Holmes' reading).

Additionally, Holmes took notes in the comparison HTML, specifying which reading he preferred and at times providing further discussion or instruction:

Here Holmes highlights a note indicating that he added a variation unit (now item 2 in the brief apparatus). The green indicates the preference of Holmes. His note on items 3 and 4 indicates it is actually a single variation and is a word order variant (the 2+3 referring to item numbering previous to adding the variation unit above). Note also the bracketed information by item 2 listing some of the sources consulted in determining to add the variation unit.

Some items have even further discussion, though this is the exception and not the rule. Here is some information provided while working through the issues in Mk 1.40:

Mk 1:40

WHR: Καὶ₁ ἔρχεται₂ πρὸς₃ αὐτὸν₄ λεπρὸς₅ παρακαλῶν₆ αὐτὸν₇ καὶ₈ γονυπετῶν₉ *1[omit]* λέγων₁₀ αὐτῷ₁₁ ὅτι₁₂ Ἐάν₁₃ θέλῃς₁₄ δύνασαί₁₅ με₁₆ καθαρίσαι₁₇

    BYZ: Καὶ₁ ἔρχεται₂ πρὸς₃ αὐτὸν₄ λεπρός₅ παρακαλῶν₆ αὐτὸν₇ καὶ₈ γονυπετῶν₉ **1αὐτόν₁₀ 1καὶ₁₁** λέγων₁₂ αὐτῷ₁₃ ὅτι₁₄ Ἐὰν₁₅ θέλῃς₁₆ δύνασαί₁₇ με₁₈ καθαρίσαι₁₉

    TREG: Καὶ₁ ἔρχεται₂ πρὸς₃ αὐτὸν₄ λεπρός₅ παρακαλῶν₆ αὐτὸν₇ καὶ₈ γονυπετῶν₉ **1αὐτόν₁₀ 1καὶ₁₁** λέγων₁₂ αὐτῷ₁₃ ὅτι₁₄ Ἐὰν₁₅ θέλῃς₁₆ δύνασαί₁₇ με₁₈ καθαρίσαι₁₉

    NIV: Καὶ₁ ἔρχεται₂ πρὸς₃ αὐτὸν₄ λεπρός₅ παρακαλῶν₆ αὐτὸν₇ καὶ₈ γονυπετῶν₉ **1καὶ₁₀** λέγων₁₁ αὐτῷ₁₂ ὅτι₁₃ Ἐὰν₁₄ θέλῃς₁₅ δύνασαί₁₆ με₁₇ καθαρίσαι₁₈

        1. omitted] αὐτόν₁₀ καὶ₁₁ BYZ, TREG; καὶ₁₀ NIV
              Set-up: γονυπετῶν WH] + καὶ NIV; αὐτὸν καὶ TREG BYZ

WH (Gre):	αὐτὸν καὶ γονυπετῶν	λέγων	א	Turner (quoted in Greeven)
Treg, Byz	αὐτὸν καὶ γονυπετῶν αὐτὸν καὶ λέγων		A C f¹³ 33 Maj	[So AYC, apparently]
NIV, NA²⁷	αὐτὸν καὶ γονυπετῶν	καὶ λέγων	א² L Θ f¹ 565.579.892.1241.*pc*	[TNIV]
WH^marg	αὐτὸν	λέγων	B 2427 sa^mss	
?	αὐτὸν	καὶ λέγων D W *pc* it		

    [AYC follows TCGNT; Guelich ignores]

In this way, Holmes worked through the entire text of the New Testament, treating every unit brought to light by the comparisons and adding over 50 units of his own. The Word docs of the text became the source for creating the edition; his notes became the roadmap from which the apparatus was created.

Version Control

Once two people begin to edit and exchange files, there is a version control problem. As with editing, our approach to version control was low-tech. It's all in the file name. The base of each file name is a book number (61-87 for the books of the NT, in the Logos scheme) and a short abbreviation (e.g., Mk). So any files having to do with Mark have the base name of "62-Mk". We have three additional identifiers, "TEXT" (for the docs representing the text of the edition), "NOTES" (for the HTML files with comparison data and further notes) and "APP" (for the apparatus files, discussed below). On top of this, we would append the ISO YYYY-MM-DD date stamp to the filename while saving. This allows for a simple directory sort to reveal the latest file for any TEXT, NOTES or APP file. We exchanged files by email (though some large NOTE files were exchanged by FTP). Whenever I received a new file, I would enter it into a local subversion repository at Logos. Thus copies of files were available in a number of places: Holmes' hard drive, my hard drive, Holmes' email, my email, and in the subversion repository.

Again, this was a decidedly low-tech approach, and with only two participants (both relatively rigorous about backing things up) it worked fairly well.

Creating the Apparatus

At the beginning of the project, we were not sure if we would include an apparatus or not. It seemed like a complex venture, and we knew we would not be able to create an apparatus such as those in other hand-editions (NA27/UBS4). And if we weren't able to create an apparatus with information like that, what sort of use could possibly come from a lesser apparatus? So when we started the project, an apparatus was not on the drawing board.

Only after Holmes had worked through a few smaller books was it possible to consider what sort of apparatus could be developed based on the data and notations collected in the NOTES and TEXT files. In reviewing his notes for Colossians, I realized that it would not be too difficult to use his notes to create an

apparatus listing the witnesses of the four comparison editions. So I decided to test the theory and see if it would be possible and useful.

And here is where one of the myths of a critical apparatus exploded, at least for me. An apparatus, properly constructed, is much more than a report of a simple "diff" between texts. There are times when what appears to be a grouped variant unit is really better represented as multiple single variant unit, in particular to convey information about shared (or separate) witnesses in the primary sources. There are times where casing differences and inclusion (or exclusion) of punctuation are necessary. Some units cross verse boundaries.

For all of these reasons, and more, it was necessary to create the apparatus data files by hand (again, low-tech) using Word as the editor. Using the NOTES files for guidance, cutting and pasting the edition text where necessary, I created a sample for Colossians. Holmes and I discussed it for a bit, decided it would be best to use an apparatus style like that of his edition of the Apostolic Fathers.[26] So I revised the sample, and then presented it to a larger group (people at Logos and SBL) to determine whether or not to include it.

Against including the apparatus are the common complaints that have been heard since the SBLGNT was released in October 2010. When the SBLGNT apparatus is viewed as filling the same role as the NA27 apparatus (a common and improper assumption), it looks as if Holmes is citing editions as the rationale for including or excluding a reading in the text of the edition.

But this is not the case, as the edition comparisons only isolated the variation units. They do not dictate the text of the edition; that is the responsibility of the editor. Realizing this, the purpose of the SBLGNT apparatus is twofold.

First, the SBLGNT apparatus is documentary. It provides a key to understanding how some of the major editions of the Greek New Testament of the last 150 years handled the text, contrasted against how Holmes handles the text. This is useful stuff, particularly for pastors and others who routinely need to know when English translations may be based on different underlying texts.

Second, the SBLGNT apparatus provides transparency. Instead of wondering why a variation unit is included (or, due to the comprehensive nature of the underlying comparisons, not included), the apparatus details which of the original comparison editions was different. From here, if necessary, an edition with manuscript material in its apparatus (NA27, UBS4, ECM, Tischendorf, Swanson, etc.) or perhaps technical commentaries (ICC, WBC, Hermeneia, AYBC, NICNT, etc.) could be consulted for further guidance.[27]

In the end, as is now known, we decided to create and include the apparatus. Below is an example from the APP Word docs, again from Mark 1.39–41:

> **39 ἦλθεν** WH Treg NIV] ἦν RP • **εἰς τὰς συναγωγὰς** WH Treg NIV] ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς RP
>
> **40 γονυπετῶν** WH] + καὶ NIV; αὐτὸν καὶ Treg RP

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[26] The SBLGNT apparatus is discussed in full in Holmes, SBLGNT, xv–xxiii.

[27] Some further discussion and rationale is available on the SBLGNT web site: http://sblgnt.com/about/introduction/apparatus/

41 *καὶ* WH Treg NIV] Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς RP • *ὀργισθεὶς* Holmes WH^{marg}] σπλαγχνισθεὶς WH Treg NIV RP
• *αὐτοῦ ἥψατο* WH Treg NIV] ἥψατο αὐτοῦ RP

Developing the Electronic Editions

With the TEXT files representing the text of the SBLGNT, and the APP files representing the apparatus, it was time to begin processing the data. The formatting of the SBLGNT is not complex (largely simple paragraphs) so the easiest path, for me at least, was to begin with the TEXT files. I wrote a C# program that used MSWord to export the data from the TEXT files, doing some rudimentary tagging based on formatting, into an intermediate plain-text format. The same was done for the APP files.

Checking for Errors

We were able to use the text of the SBLGNT and the comparison editions as checks on the apparatus entries. Using this data, we were able to verify that the primary text in the apparatus actually existed in the SBLGNT; we were also able to correct some single-word variant vs. grouped variant issues.

In this period, Holmes also reviewed all of the NIV variations and, using data from a comparison with the NA27, was able to review and verify areas where NA27 differed from both NIV and the SBLGNT.

Morphology, Interlinear, Translation, Reverse Interlinear, and Syntactic Analysis

From here, with the text in relatively solid shape, I wrote a separate C# program to compare the text of the SBLGNT with the text of WH. The purpose was to use Logos' WH morphological analysis as initial basis for the analysis of the SBLGNT. From here we analyzed the differences as well.

With a new Greek New Testament in hand, we (Logos) also wanted to provide editions of Logos-created resources to use the SBLGNT as basis. So my task became one of data conversion and migration. We created a new version of the *Lexham Greek-English Interlinear New Testament* with SBLGNT as text, supplying it plus a list of differences to review to the original editor, Hall Harris. This is now available as the *Lexham Greek-English Interlinear New Testament: SBL Edition*. We also asked Hall to review the *Lexham English Bible* (LEB),[28] and adjust it where necessary as well. This was released as a second edition to the LEB.

Once the LEB was updated to be a translation of the SBLGNT, we were able to adjust the reverse-interlinear alignment as well.[29] We also decided to make a high-quality PDF version of the reverse interlinear available on the SBLGNT web site.[30]

As well, once the text of the SBLGNT was firm, we were able to supply the text and morphology to Randall Tan and Andi Wu so they could create a syntactic analysis of the text; this is available to users of select packages of Logos Bible Software as the *Cascadia Syntax Graphs of the New Testament: SBL Edition*.

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[28] http://LexhamEnglishBible.com

[29] In Logos Bible Software, a "reverse interlinear" is a set of data that aligns a translation with its underlying source. In this way one is able to access the original language translated by the translator(s) and understand the different ways different words and phrases are rendered in the translation.

[30] http://www.sblgnt.com/download/, the very bottom of the page.

The SBLGNT, as with just about any publication, was not error-free. There have been corrections made to the apparatus and to the introduction, and two corrections to the text itself. These corrections have already been implemented in the electronic editions of the files and the derivative versions available from Logos Bible Software. They are also listed on the SBLGNT web site at http://www.sblgnt.com/about/corrections/.

Typesetting the Print Edition

But the project was not intended to be electronic only. The SBL wanted a printed edition, so it needed to be typeset. Holmes and I worked with the SBL, who provided the typesetter. It was set using Adobe InDesign. As errors have been found, corrections have been integrated in the source InDesign files so when a second printing is required, it will be possible to update.

RESPONSE TO THE SBLGNT

So, with all that work over the span of 18 months (and the larger span of five years), what has the result been?

Happily, the response has been largely positive. We began to roll out the electronic versions to Logos users on October 27, 2010. Our users (they're very smart) noticed immediately and started asking questions on the Logos forums.[31] Shortly thereafter, I posted a more official notice with some further details on the project.[32] Around this same time, Michael W. Holmes posted an entry to the Evangelical Textual Criticism blog with some background on the edition and its development. The post has a lengthy comment thread as well.[33] The Logos blog ran a post on October 29, 2010 officially announcing the SBLGNT.[34]

In hindsight, I've realized that this is probably the first time the release of a major new edition of the Greek New Testament has been publicized almost entirely through blog posts, forum entries, and even via Twitter.[35]

The Feedback

Since the release of the SBLGNT, there are two major areas where we have received feedback and further questions: The apparatus and the "diglot" provision/restriction in the license.

Response regarding the apparatus has been somewhat unfavorable, but this is largely because it has been misunderstood as filling the function of the apparatus in the NA27 edition. As discussed above, this is not the intent of the apparatus. And the questions regarding the diglot restriction are largely based on a

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[31] http://community.logos.com/forums/t/25245.aspx. Accessed March 1, 2011

[32] http://community.logos.com/forums/t/25258.aspx. Accessed March 1, 2011

[33] http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com/2010/10/sbl-and-logos-bible-software-announce.html. Accessed March 1, 2011

[34] http://blog.logos.com/archives/2010/10/introducing_the_sbl_greek_new_testament.html. Accessed March 1, 2011

[35] The strong contender to counter this thought is Robinson and Pierpont's 2005 release of *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform*, which was initially publicized through email lists like B-Greek.

misunderstanding of what a "diglot" is. The SBLGNT license uses "diglot" in its classic, print sense, a book with Greek on one page and translation on the other (like the NET-NA27 diglot[36]) and is not intended to limit presentation on web sites or in other software.

Outside of these questions, the feedback concerning the actual text has been positive and encouraging. As early as October 29, 2010, people were already doing substantive evaluations and responding to the SBLGNT.[37]

And the SBLGNT must be a hit because on November 30, 2010, Michael F. Bird uploaded an "Old Spice" parody commercial about the SBLGNT to YouTube,[38] to date it has had nearly 6,000 hits.[39]

POSTSCRIPT

In March of 2011, after much of this paper was written, *Journal of Theological Studies* (JTS) published an "advanced access" edition of a review of the SBLGNT by J.K. Elliott.[40] Elliott's review did a good job of restating the reasons for pursuing a new edition. Here is his first paragraph:

> A NEW hand edition of the Greek New Testament is welcome. The text of the Nestle and United Bible Society editions has been a cause for disquiet in several quarters for many years. The USA-based Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) decided that a freely available online version of a new critical edition of the Greek New Testament was a desideratum and in keeping with its 'mission' to promote biblical scholarship. Michael W. Holmes was appointed its editor and he has beavered away apparently clandestinely to produce this edition, which was launched during the annual meeting of SBL in November 2010. It is accessed on < http://sblgnt.com >. A printed version has been produced.[41]

Elliott's review was generally favorable. His last paragraph gives his view on the text:

> This newly constructed text must now take its place in the marketplace. Time, scholarly use, and one's experience will give us a lasting judgement on its value. But, for now, our first impression is highly favourable and we congratulate Michael Holmes and SBL for their fine achievement.[42]

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[36] http://bible.org/diglot. Accessed March 15, 2011.

[37] http://hypotyposeis.org/weblog/2010/10/initial-impressions-of-the-sbl-greek-new-testament.html and also http://hypotyposeis.org/weblog/2010/11/thoughts-on-the-sblgnt-apparatus.html. Accessed March 1, 2011

[38] http://euangelizomai.blogspot.com/2010/11/sbl-gk-nt-meets-old-spice.html. Accessed March 1, 2011.

[39] http://youtu.be/soh784mYpCU Accessed March 1, 2011.

[40] Elliott, J. K. "The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition. Edited By Michael W. Holmes." *The Journal Of Theological Studies* : n. pag. http://jts.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2011/03/06/jts.flr014.extract Accessed March 22, 2011.

[41] Elliott, 1.

[42] Elliott, 6–7.

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