

The Earliest Corrections in Codex Sinaiticus

Further Evidence from the Apocalypse¹

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Abstract: Previous research into the scribal corrections of Codex Sinaiticus—also labelled as “S1”—has yielded fruitful results, especially regarding distribution of the scribal correcting activity and the textual affinities of corrections. The present article extends our knowledge of this aspect of Sinaiticus by examining scribal corrections in the book of Revelation, especially with regard to their nature, authorship, and textual affinities. It is argued that the palaeographical and textual evidence suggests that, unlike other previously studied portions of Sinaiticus, the text of Revelation was most likely never subjected to a secondary review in the scriptorium.

Keywords: Codex Sinaiticus, Corrections, Scribal Habits, Apocalypse, Textual Criticism

Since its modern discovery by Constantine Tischendorf, Codex Sinaiticus has been recognised as one of the most important witnesses to the text of the Greek Bible. Under the guise of calligraphic grandeur, however, this exquisite manuscript conceals complexities of all kinds: complicated distribution of scribal tasks, varying quality of scribal performance, a vast amount of corrections made at various stages—to name but a few. It is the last of these that will occupy our attention here.

In general, manuscript corrections constitute a particularly interesting dataset for further scrutiny: If made at the copying stage, they may betray a scribe’s awareness of his or her liability to error as well as the intention correctly to reproduce the reading of the exemplar. If later and/or made against another exemplar, they may be a token of the editorial activity and, potentially, of another early textual witness, now lost. And yet, it is not always easy to establish the use of a second exemplar behind corrections, and the reliance on a critical apparatus may lead to misleading results. As Juan Hernández Jr. has recently shown,² such a confusion surprisingly made its way even into Josef Schmid’s seminal study of the textual history of Revelation.³ Perhaps based on his misreading of the secondary literature⁴—but perhaps also because of his reliance on collations—Schmid mistook the later C-group to be the earliest corrections made in the scriptorium, thus wrongly using them to date the Andreas text-type into

¹ I would like to thank Peter M. Head, James R. Royse, Juan Hernández Jr., Elijah Hixson, and the anonymous reviewer for reading through the initial draft of this article and providing many helpful comments and corrections.

² Juan Hernández Jr., “The Creation of a Fourth-Century Witness to the Andreas Text Type: A Misreading in the Apocalypse’s Textual History,” *NTS* (2014): 106–20.

³ Josef Schmid, *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes* (Münchener theologische Studien 4; München: Karl Zink, 1955–1956).

⁴ So Hernández, “Creation of a Fourth-Century Witness,” 110–113.

the fourth century.⁵ Naturally, Hernández's discovery calls for reappraisal of Sinaiticus's later corrections and their place in Revelation's textual history.⁶ At the same time, however, it also poses important questions concerning the *bona fide* scriptorium corrections in this portion of the codex: At what stages of production were they made and by whom? Are they textually significant? What is their extent and nature?

In this vein, Hernández had earlier observed that a large number of singular readings were still present in the manuscript before it reached later correctors. He observes:

One cannot help but wonder what this tells us about the scriptorium's ἀντιβάλλον who was responsible for proofreading the MS. Why is it that so many departures from the tradition escaped his notice? Was the ἀντιβάλλον simply as careless as the scribes? Did the process of “checks and balances” somehow break down? Was the MS sent out without being proofread?⁷

Though subsequent research has, in fact, addressed some of these problems in other portions of Sinaiticus,⁸ the sheer complexity of this manuscript ought to make one wary of hasty generalisations. In other words, the fact that the work of an ἀντιβάλλον was spotted in, say, Luke need not mean that he also checked Revelation. Ideally, of course, one would work through the entire manuscript and study all the corrections systematically, but since such a mammoth task seems unfeasible at this point, the present essay will seek to tackle the issues raised above with respect to the book of Revelation, thus extending our knowledge of scribal behaviour and editorial activity therein. Before we do so, however, let us first review the previous scholarship on scribal corrections in Sinaiticus.

1. Scribes as Correctors in Codex Sinaiticus

The history of research into the scribes and correctors of Sinaiticus has been recounted in several recent publications and need not be rehearsed here.⁹ We shall thus limit our discussion only to the works that are most consequential for the task at hand. Arguably, the most important study of this kind is the seminal monograph by H. J. M. Milne and T. C. Skeat, based on their inspection of the manuscript upon its acquisition by the British Museum in 1934.¹⁰ This work is, as D. C. Parker puts it, “the ‘bible’ for users of Sinaiticus,”¹¹ as it constitutes a point of departure for the study of just about every aspect of this manuscript, especially matters codicological and palaeographical. Importantly for our purposes, Milne and Skeat have convincingly shown that the three scribes (A, B, and D) who penned the main text—not four, as

⁵ Ibid., 113–14.

⁶ On this, see my “The Corrections of Codex Sinaiticus and the Textual Transmission of Revelation: Josef Schmid Revisited,” *NTS* 61 (forthcoming).

⁷ Juan Hernández Jr., *Scribal Habits and Theological Influences in the Apocalypse: The Singular Readings of Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and Ephraemi* (WUNT 2/218; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 95.

⁸ See esp. P. Malik, “The Earliest Corrections in Codex Sinaiticus: A Test Case from the Gospel of Mark,” *BASP* 50 (2013): 207–54. Scribal corrections also played a part in Dirk Jongkind's analyses of singular readings; see further his *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus* (TS 3.5; Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2007), 144–64, 167–69, 203–4, 221–22.

⁹ See esp. Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*, 9–18. See also *ibid.*, 57–59; Malik, “Earliest Corrections in Codex Sinaiticus,” 208–11.

¹⁰ H. J. M. Milne and T. C. Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors of the Codex Sinaiticus* (London: British Museum, 1938).

¹¹ D. C. Parker, *Codex Sinaiticus: The Story of the World's Oldest Bible* (London: British Library; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010), 10.

Tischendorf and Lake had argued previously¹²—were, *inter alia*, also responsible for correcting their work.¹³ This seems clear from the fact that the peculiarities, mannerisms, and other characteristic features observable in their copying work may also be observed in their corrections. On the basis of their thorough examination of Sinaiticus, Milne and Skeat concluded that scribe A and scribe B each corrected their own work, whereas scribe D corrected his own work as well as that of scribe A.¹⁴ Notably, the NT portion was copied and corrected solely by scribes A and D. Specifically in Revelation, scribe D copied the first 34.5 lines, at which point scribe A took over and copied the rest of the book. However, Milne and Skeat provide no further information regarding the scribe's correction activity in this part of the manuscript.

The results of Milne and Skeat have been recently applied—and in several respects substantiated—by the Codex Sinaiticus Project (CSP). Most importantly, CSP launched a website with, effectively, a digital interactive edition of the manuscript wherein all the corrections are marked up and assigned according to the respective correcting hands.¹⁵ As for the scriptorium corrections, CSP mostly assign a generic S1 label that, incidentally, goes back to Skeat.¹⁶ As has been shown in previous study of the Marcan portion of Sinaiticus, these S1 corrections can often, even if not always, be assigned still more specifically on the basis of Milne and Skeat's researches, supplemented with Dirk Jongkind's study of scribal habits.¹⁷

With these considerations in mind, we now turn to our analysis.

2. Overview of the Corrections

In what follows, I give a brief overview of the corrections grouped according to the types of readings corrected. At the outset of each section, I list the initial as well as the corrected reading as it appears on the CSP website,¹⁸ and, where applicable, textual evidence in their support,¹⁹

¹² For further discussion, see Milne and Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors*, 18–29, 40–45.

¹³ See *ibid.*, 41–44. Milne and Skeat's assignment has been recently called into question by researchers of the Codex Sinaiticus Project. See A. Myshrall, "The Presence of a Fourth Scribe?" in *Codex Sinaiticus: New Perspectives on the Ancient Biblical Manuscript* (ed. S. McKendrick, D. Parker, A. Myshrall, and C. O'Hogan; London: British Library, 2015), 139–48, who adduces various features of palaeography and scribal practice to argue that, in fact, two hands (termed B1 and B2) were responsible for the work of scribe B.

¹⁴ Milne and Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors*, 43–44.

¹⁵ "Codex Sinaiticus Project," <http://codexsinaiticus.org/en/>. Notably, CSP differ from Milne and Skeat in identification of a fourth scribe, responsible for copying some portions of the work previously attributed solely to scribe B.

¹⁶ I am grateful to Amy C. Myshrall for this information (personal correspondence, May 2012).

¹⁷ See Malik, "Earliest Corrections in Codex Sinaiticus," 211–13.

¹⁸ Since identification of S1 corrections is relatively uncontroversial, I follow CSP's assignment at each point. Moreover, in keeping with the CSP transcription practice, I use lunate *sigmas* and no accentuation throughout.

¹⁹ The evidence cited is limited to the Greek witnesses listed in Holger Strutwolf, ed., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013); and H.C. Hoskier, *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse: Collations of All Existing Available Greek Documents with the Standard Text of Stephen's Third Edition, together with the Testimony of Versions, Commentaries and Fathers; A Complete Conspectus of All Authorities* (2 vols.; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1929). Since Hoskier's collations are exhaustive and often include even slightest orthographical detail, I only cited those variants which seemed relevant to the variation-units under consideration. The manuscript numbers in Hoskier's collations were then converted to the Gregory-Aland enumeration based on J. K. Elliott, "Manuscripts of the Book of Revelation Collated by H. C. Hoskier," *JTS*, n.s. 40 (1989): 100–11.

followed by a siglum indicating my assignment of the corrector.²⁰ The presentation of data is followed, at each point, by a brief analysis.²¹

2.1. Orthography

17:4 χρουκουv *solus* χρυκουv *rell* (χρυκουv 2057 2091 | *om.* χρουκουv ??
385 1728 2196)

The initial reading χρουκουv was an error most likely occasioned by phonetic confusion.²²

2.2. Nonsense

Eighteen of our corrections involve nonsense readings.²³ Twelve of these treat readings that may be classified as “strictly nonsense”:

1:9	ιανηc <i>solus</i>	ιωανηc <i>rell</i>	??
2:8	ε <i>solus</i>	εν <i>rell</i>	A
5:1	πτα <i>solus</i>	επτα <i>rell</i>	A
6:13	με μειγαλου <i>solus</i>	μεγαλου <i>rell</i> (<i>om.</i> μεγαλου 181 467 2059*)	A
7:13	τολαc <i>solus</i>	cτολαc <i>rell</i>	A
9:3	οι κορπιοι 2056*	οι σκορπιοι <i>rell</i>	A
13:13	πυρι πη <i>solus</i>	πυρ ποιη <i>rell</i> (ποιηcη P47 172 250 424 616 1678 1773 1828 1862 1888 2018 2032 2080 2084 [2329] καταβαινη M ^K)	A
14:2?	“unreadable ραιc” <i>solus</i> ?	κιθαραιc <i>rell</i>	A
14:7	π̄ρι ησαντι <i>solus</i>	ποιησαντι <i>rell</i> (τον ποιησαντα [046] M ^K)	A
16:13	ειωκει <i>solus</i>	ωκει P47 1678 1778 2051 2055 2064 2067 2080 (ωc <i>rell</i> ομοια 1* 181 743* ^{txt} 2038 2057 2059 ^{txt} 2060 2081 2091 ^{txt} 2186 ^{txt} 2286 ^{txt} 2302 ^{txt} 2595 ^{txt})	A
19:2	πορυν <i>solus</i>	πορνην <i>rell</i> (πολιν 69 94 205 209 241 792 632 ^{com} 986 1384 1611 1678 1732 2023 2029 2045 2071)	A

²⁰ The siglum “A” signifies scribe A; “A?” appears where the assignment of scribe A was more tentative; and “??” appears where the assignment was impossible.

²¹ In the course of my analysis, I mainly used the high-resolution images available at the Virtual Manuscript Room (http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/en_GB/), as well as the aforementioned CSP website.

²² On the interchange of *ou* and *υ*, see F. T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (2 vols.; Testi e documenti per lo studio dell’antichità 55; Milano: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino-La Goliardica, 1976–1981), 1:214–15.

²³ See E. C. Colwell, “Method in Evaluating Scribal Habits: A Study of P⁴⁵, P⁶⁶, P⁷⁵,” in *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (ed. E. C. Colwell; Leiden: Brill, 1969), 111, who defines this class as “words unknown to grammar or lexicon, words that cannot be construed syntactically, or words that do not make sense in the context.” I follow J. R. Royse in further discriminating between “strictly nonsense” readings (i.e., nonsensical word forms) and readings that are “nonsense in context.” See J. R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (NTTSD 36; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 91.

20:7	οταν τελεσθησε <i>solus</i>	οταν τελεσθη <i>rell</i> (οταν τελεσθωσιν 792 οτε ετελεσθη 2059 2081 οτε ετελεσθησαν 1 296 2028 2029 2033 2044 2049 2054 2068 2069 2083 2186 οτε τελεσθη 181 743 1678 2051 2055 2064 2067 2080 οταν παντελεσθη 2034 μετα <i>pro</i> οταν τελεσθη \mathfrak{M}^k)	A
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Six of the strictly nonsense readings result from the loss of a letter: 1:9, 2:8,²⁴ 5:1, 7:13, 9:3, 19:2.²⁵ At 14:7 and 16:13 (and perhaps also 13:13), the errors likely arose because of visual confusion.²⁶ The initial reading at 14:2 is virtually impossible to reconstruct fully; in all likelihood, the scribe committed some egregious blunder that required erasure. At 20:7, the scribe created a nonexistent verb form by supplying the original aorist passive subjunctive form (τελεσθη) with a superfluous third person aorist indicative ending (-σε).²⁷ The reading at 6:13 is more complex: the CSP transcription reads με μεγαλου, giving the impression that the scribe completed this bizarre reading and then corrected it. It seems more likely that, when copying μεγαλου, the scribe initially made a dittography (μεμε); however, upon writing the left stroke of the following *gamma*,²⁸ he caught his error and decided to cancel μεγ, thus beginning the next line with a consonant.²⁹

At seven places, the initial reading is nonsense in context:

13:3	θανατου θανατου <i>solus</i>	θανατου αυτου <i>rell</i> (<i>om.</i> θανατου 2329* <i>om.</i> αυτου 046* 205 209 792 808 1719 1893 2025 2031 2045 2056 2065)	A
13:10	ῦ(πομονη?) <i>solus</i>	η πιςτις <i>rell</i> (<i>om.</i> η 141 1719)	A
17:12	βασιλεις βα(σιλεις?) <i>solus</i>	βασιλεις <i>rell</i>	A
18:3a	μετα της <i>solus</i>	μετ αυτης <i>solus</i>	A
18:18	λεγο̄ τες (= λεγοντες) 2017* 2065 2070 2305	βλεπο̄ τες (= βλεποντες) <i>pm</i> (λεγοντες βλεπον 792 κλαιοντες 459*)	A
20:13	ο̄ τα (= οντα) <i>solus</i>	ο <i>rell</i> (<i>om.</i> 42 205 209 325 336 517 582 620 1918)	??
22:7	προφητας <i>solus</i>	προφητιας <i>rell</i>	A?

²⁴ Hypothetically, the scribe may at first have misread $\bar{\epsilon}$ at the line ending in his exemplar.

²⁵ The nonword πορνν may have been occasioned by a visual confusion of N/H in the exemplar. On nonsense errors due to loss of a letter or syllable in Sinaiticus, see Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*, 206, 227. Incidentally, none of the nonsense singulars (counted after correction) discussed in Hernández, *Scribal Habits*, 62–63, involve the loss of one letter.

²⁶ On 13:3, see C. Tischendorf, ed., *Novum Testamentum Sinaiticum sive Novum Testamentum cum epistula Barnabae et fragmentis Pastoris* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1863), lxxv: “librarius videtur v pro oi scriptus fuisse, sed statim oi reposuit.” In that case, the confusion would be phonetic.

²⁷ Note that the superfluous -σε occurs immediately after a line break.

²⁸ It is even possible that the scribe had completed the letter, but, when making the correction, erased the horizontal bar.

²⁹ See further F. G. Kenyon, *The Palaeography of Greek Papyri* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), 31–32; B. M. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Palaeography* (2nd corrected ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 31; E. G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 19–20; W. Crönert, *Memoria Graeca Herculanensis: Cum titulorum Aegypti papyrorum codicum denique testimoniis comparatam* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903), 10–18; Royle, *Scribal Habits*, 756–57.

Amongst the nonsense in context readings, there appear to be two instances of dittography (13:3, 17:12), although the one at 17:12 was never completed, as the scribe caught it *in scribendo* (i.e., in the course of copying).³⁰ Three further readings result from substitution: 18:18, 20:13, 22:7. At 18:18, the substitution may have arisen due to anticipation of the λεγοντες later in the verse, but was corrected immediately. Notably, both 18:18 and 20:13 occur at a line break.³¹ The shift of case at 22:7 was most likely orthographically conditioned, resulting from the loss of a vowel. Although the initial reading at 13:10 could easily be a simple orthographical error, the fact that the cancelled *upsilon* has an inorganic trema—just as the previous ὑπομονη does—probably indicates that the scribe lost his place and began to copy υπομονη instead. The loss of a vowel at 18:3a occurs within another larger scribal error; in the process of creating the singular addition (our 18:3b, discussed below), the scribe omitted an *upsilon* in ME|TAYTHC (= μετ αυτης), thus writing ME|TATHC (= μετα της).

2.3. Omissions

3:13	<i>om.</i> 2014	ο <i>rell</i>	A
6:1	<i>om.</i> 367 468 1957 2070	εκ <i>rell</i>	A
11:9	<i>om.</i> <i>solus</i>	κ(αι) <i>rell</i>	A
14:1	<i>om.</i> 025 1 296 2049 2053 2065	το ονομα αυτου και <i>pm</i> (ονοματα 1894)	A
14:3	<i>om.</i> <i>rell</i>	ην <i>solus</i>	A
16:5	<i>om.</i> 1728	του αγγελου <i>rell</i>	A
16:21	<i>om.</i> 94 141 1719	ωc <i>rell</i>	??
21:8b	<i>om.</i> <i>solus</i>	και φονευει <i>pm</i> (<i>om.</i> και φονευει και πορνοις 2044 2054 2083 <i>om.</i> και πορνοις 2029)	A
21:24	<i>om.</i> <i>solus</i>	τα εθνη <i>rell</i>	A

The scribe's tendency to omit small words can be observed at four of the above readings: 3:13, 6:1, 11:9, 16:21.³² Two words were dropped at 16:5 and 21:24, though in each case the scribe caught his error *in scribendo*: at 16:5, the scribe made the correction upon writing των (υδατων) and, at 21:24, after writing the initial *delta* of the following δια του φωτος.³³ A scribal leap is most likely responsible for omissions at 14:1 and 21:8b, though neither of these was actually completed.³⁴ The leap at 14:1 (εχουσαι το ονομα αυτου και το ονομα του π̄rc αυτου) was most likely corrected immediately after writing του, as evidenced by the consistent ink flow between the main text and the correction. In the same vein, at 21:8b, rather than postulating a nonsense reading, it seems more likely that the scribe initially leapt forwards (και φονευει και πορνοις) and corrected himself immediately after writing the *pi*. Finally, the universally attested reading at 21:8b was changed to a singular reading. It is difficult to account for this addition of ην. Besides the absolute lack of external attestation, it does not make much sense in the context. Possibly the correction could somehow be related—perhaps due to visual confusion?—to the preceding KAINHN in the exemplar.

³⁰ Alternatively, the reading could also be classified as strictly nonsense.

³¹ On this, see further Malik, "Earliest Corrections in Codex Sinaiticus," 249 (and n. 149).

³² See Schmid, *Studien*, 2:225–26, who notes this omission in relation to the use of ωc in Revelation, though he does not mention that the omission received an early correction.

³³ Alternatively, 21:24 could also be classified as strictly nonsense.

³⁴ Alternatively, 14:1 could also be classified as nonsense in context and 21:8b as strictly nonsense.

2.4. Additions

7:16	ετι 469 1006	<i>om. rell</i>	A
18:3b	μετ α' υ' της επορνευσᾱ <i>solus</i>	<i>om. rell</i>	A?
21:8a	ωc <i>solus</i>	<i>om. rell</i>	A?
22:10	τουτους 2053 ^{com}	<i>om. rell</i>	A?

Three of the above additions probably arose as harmonisations to the context: 7:16 (ουδε διψαουσιν ετι), 18:3b (οι βασιλειc της γης μετ αυτης επορνευσαν),³⁵ 22:10 (βιβλιου τουτου).³⁶ The addition of ωc at 21:8a, although perhaps not nonsensical, is rather awkward and in any case difficult to explain; perhaps scribal confusion at the line ending may have been a contributing factor.

2.5. Substitutions

1:5	βασειλιων <i>solus</i>	βασειλεων <i>rell</i>	A?
9:2	καμινoc <i>solus</i>	καπnoc <i>rell</i> (<i>om.</i> καπnoc 2029)	??
9:21	φωνων 468 517 522 1019 1852 1948* 2018 2026 2043 2047* 2048 2053 2059 2081* 2082 2196 2256	φονων <i>rell</i>	??
14:19	cου <i>solus</i>	του <i>rell</i> (<i>om.</i> 935)	A
16:15	ερχεται 241 1678 1778 2020 2080	ερχομαι <i>rell</i>	A
17:15	ειδε <i>solus</i>	ειδεc <i>pm</i>	A
19:9	λεγε 2081*	λεγει <i>rell</i>	A
20:4	ουν προσεκυνησᾱ (= προσεκυνησαν) <i>solus</i>	ουν ου προσεκυνησᾱ (= προσεκυνησαν) <i>solus</i>	A
21:4	ετι <i>solus</i>	οτι (<i>om.</i> A P 051 ^s 1006 1611 1841 2030 2053 2062 2329 2377 M ^A)	A
21:20	ο ε <i>solus</i>	ο θ̄ (= ενατοc/εννατοc) <i>rell</i>	A

It is noteworthy that, in each of the above instances, the substitution involves visually similar words. At 1:5, for instance, the peculiar reading “the ruler of the kingdoms” results from the addition of a single vowel (ο αρχων των βασιλειων). The loss of a final letter accounts for 17:15 and 19:9. Three further substitutions are probably due to visual confusion: 14:19 (του > cou), 20:4 (ου > ουν), 21:20 (ο θ̄ > ο ε). Remarkably, the correction at 20:4 results in another singular reading, as the superfluous particle ουν is left uncorrected. The reading at 9:21 is, despite

³⁵ It is also possible that we have a backward leap (οι βασιλειc της γης μετ αυτης επορνευσαν και οι εμποροι της γης), resulting in the repetition of the phrase μετ αυτης επορνευσαν after οι εμποροι της γης. On that view, the scribe would have realised his error *in scribendo*, as the dittography was never completed.

³⁶ Note a similar addition at 1:3 in Codex Ephraemi where the phrase βιβλιου τουτου is not present. Hence, Hernández, *Scribal Habits*, 144, posits that the addition is a “deliberate attempt at removing ambiguity,” further arguing (n. 71) that “such a change naturally serves to distinguish the content of the prophecy of the Apocalypse from others and may point to the scribe’s awareness of competing prophetic utterances.” In view of the immediate context of the passage (esp. vv. 1–2) and the definite articles in the phrase τους λογους της προφητειας, however, I fail to see the ambiguity. However, Hernández’s reference to B. Weiss, *Die Johannes-Apokalypse: Textkritische Untersuchungen und Textherstellung* (TU 7.1; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1891), 82, who refers to the addition as “emphatic,” seems appropriate. In the absence of more compelling evidence to the contrary, therefore, harmonisation still seems a likely scenario at 22:10.

some external attestation, most likely due to the phonetic confusion of \omicron/ω .³⁷ The influence of context is obvious at 9:2 (καπνος καμινου) and 21:4 (ο θανατος ουκ εσται ετι).³⁸ At 16:15, the scribe initially wrote ἴδου ερχεται ως κλεπτης. This shift from ερχομαι to ερχεται might have been influenced by several parallel texts that may have stuck in the scribe’s memory, especially Rev 1:7 (ιδου ερχεται μετα των νεφελων κτλ) and 1 Thess 5:2 (ημερα κυριου ως κλεπτης εν νυκτι ουτως ερχεται) and perhaps also Matt 24:43 // Luke 12:39 (ει ηδει ο οικοδεσποτης ποια φυλακη/ωρα ο κλεπτης ερχεται).

2.6. Summary

The initial errors amended by these forty-three corrections may be classified as follows:

Orthographical Errors	1
Nonsense Readings	19
(Strictly Nonsense)	(12)
(Nonsense in Context)	(7)
Omissions	9
Additions	4
Substitutions	10

Unsurprisingly, almost half of our corrections dealt with nonsense readings—by far the most frequently corrected error in this portion of Sinaiticus. This is not unexpected, as such readings were the ones most likely to strike the scribe as erroneous, either during the copying process or later. More remarkable—though, again, not unexpected—is the low overall proportion of the corrected orthographical readings.³⁹ The second highest rate belongs to the substitutions, which—like nonsensical readings—probably caught the corrector’s attention, because their effect on the meaning of the copied text was *prima facie* most apparent. The rate of omissions is almost twice as high as that of additions, which, more than anything, reflects the scribe’s tendency to omit more than to add.⁴⁰

Having briefly reviewed the results of scribal correcting activity, we are now in a position to discuss the identity of the corrector(s) and the nature of the correction activity as such.

3. The Corrector(s)

Assignment of a specific corrector is *ipso facto* a tentative procedure, as reflected in the generic S1 assignment by CSP of all the hitherto discussed corrections. Yet, as has been demonstrated previously,⁴¹ a more specific assignment is often possible, especially based on the known peculiarities and habits of each hand.⁴² Unfortunately, most S1 corrections in Revelation are con-

³⁷ See Gignac, *Grammar*, 1:275–77 (esp. 277). Incidentally, a Greek *Vorlage* with this reading must have stood behind the text of Codex Gigas, which reads *de vocibus suis*.

³⁸ It is also possible that the exemplar read πενθος ουκ εσται ετι οτι τα πρωτα απηλθεν with 046 1854 2050 \mathfrak{M}^k . In that case, the scribe would have omitted οτι due to *homoeoteleuton* and then made an imperfect correction. On this variation-unit, see Schmid, *Studien*, 2:137. See Hernández, *Scribal Habits*, 63, who, following Hoskier, takes the reading of Sinaiticus to be θτι, hence “pure nonsense.”

³⁹ For similar results in Mark, see Malik, “Earliest Corrections in Codex Sinaiticus,” 249–50.

⁴⁰ So Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*, 246; Hernández, *Scribal Habits*, 87–88.

⁴¹ Malik, “Earliest Corrections in Codex Sinaiticus,” 212.

⁴² The obvious point of departure for such comparison is Milne and Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors*, 40–44, supplemented by Jongkind’s “‘The Lilies of the Field’ Reconsidered: *Codex Sinaiticus* and

siderably less extensive than those in Mark, where the previous study was conducted. Hence, most of the criteria applied there were not applicable in this portion of the manuscript.⁴³ One of the most obvious ways, then, to identify at least the correcting activity of the original scribe was by contrasting the colour and density of ink vis-à-vis the main text. Naturally, if a correction originated at the copying stage of the manuscript, it would be unlikely due to another correcting hand. This, in fact, proved to be the most secure criterion in assigning a scribal hand to the present corrections.

In view of these considerations, it seems that thirty-two of our corrections may be assigned to scribe A with some confidence, especially on the basis of the matching colour and density of ink. These corrections were most likely made at various points of the copying stage, although not always in the process of writing the affected word(s). At five further places (1:5, 18:3b, 21:8a, 22:7, 22:10), the assignment of scribe A still seems plausible, but is less secure due to various complicating factors such as later erasure (1:5) or retouching (21:8a),⁴⁴ faded ink (18:3b), darker ink in the superscript dots (22:10),⁴⁵ and a stain in the correction area (22:7). And at six places (1:9, 9:2, 9:21, 16:21, 17:4, 20:13), it seems impossible to assign a corrector with any degree of certainty. At 9:21, 16:21, and 17:4, the wear of the surface precluded any closer identification; at 1:9 the supralinear letter is almost invisible. At 20:13, there is an erased overline for the final *nu* coupled with two faint superscript dots, and at 9:21 the correction is comprised of two erasures (the diagonals of *mu* and the following *iota*) and a faint horizontal bar used to create a *pi*—phenomena virtually impossible to attribute to any specific hand. Even so, it needs to be noted that I have not observed any positive evidence for the work of scribe D, and so it seems more likely that even these dubious cases could well be due to scribe A.⁴⁶ As it turns out, these results broadly align with those of Tischendorf, who ascribed all but four of these corrections to the *prima manus*.⁴⁷

4. The Nature of the Corrections

It has been recently observed that the corrections made at a later review displayed the following characteristic features:

The corrections that come from the later reviewer of the manuscript consistently exhibit a different (often much lighter) ink color and much thinner strokes. One of the explanations

the Gospel of Thomas,” *NovT* 48 (2006): 209–16. In addition, the general appearance of script may still be used as the last resort, although never as a sole criterion. Although the scribes of Sinaiticus exhibit extremely similar scripts, they nonetheless have certain characteristic features that may occasionally be perceived in scribal corrections. The most typical example is scribe D’s *kappa* whose diagonals join the vertical in a relatively high position. See further *ibid.*, 214. See also Parker, *Sinaiticus*, 51, who calls *kappa* “one of the most revealing letters for distinguishing between our scribes.”

⁴³ Only one correction (11:9) involves a *kaí*-compendium, and critical signs such as carets or arrows are completely absent. To mark deletions, superscript dots and obeli are employed regularly.

⁴⁴ At both places, the deletion is marked with a superscript dot and obelised—typical correction marks of scribe A, although used by both scribes in Mark, as shown in Malik, “Earliest Corrections in Codex Sinaiticus,” 243–44 n. 134.

⁴⁵ Note, however, that the darker ink there may be due to the fact that, upon writing *τουτους*, the scribe reinked his pen. The correction could have been made at that very point.

⁴⁶ Incidentally, none of these corrections appear within the first 34.5 lines (Rev 1:1–5a) of Revelation, penned by scribe D.

⁴⁷ At 9:21, 21:20, and 22:10, Tischendorf (*Novum Testamentum Sinaiticum*) does not specify the corrector, and the correction at 7:13 appears in the transcription, but not in the commentary.

that come to mind is that during the later correction phase the scribes may have used pens that were sharpened differently, or perhaps they held their pens at a different angle.⁴⁸

As it is, no corrections of this kind were found in Revelation. In fact, all the (legible) occurrences exhibit the colour and density of ink akin to that of the main text. Such absence may perhaps be related to the relatively brief nature of our corrections. Indeed, the most extensive correction in Revelation is a deletion (by hooks) of three words at 18:3b; besides two further instances of somewhat more substantial cancellations (13:3, 22:10),⁴⁹ the remaining corrections almost always involve only one or two (or very rarely three) characters. As for the methods of correction, they involve intralinear (2:8, 5:1, 7:14, 9:3, 18:3a, 19:2) and supralinear (1:9, 3:13, 6:1, 11:9, 13:3, 14:1, 14:2, 14:3, 14:7, 14:19, 16:15, 16:21, 17:15, 18:18, 19:9, 20:4, 22:7) insertions, rewriting/altering of misplaced letters (9:2, 13:13, 18:18, 21:4), and overwriting (9:21, 14:2). Deletions are most often marked by superscript dots (1:5, 7:16, 13:3, 16:13, 17:2, 20:7, 20:13, 21:8a, 21:24, 22:10) and/or obelised (1:5, 7:16, 9:21, 13:10, 14:19, 16:5, 16:13, 16:15, 17:2, 20:7, 21:8b, 21:24), and there are a few erasures by scraping (9:2, 13:13, 14:2, 14:7, 19:2, 20:13, 21:20). Notably, save for the aforementioned deletion hooks,⁵⁰ the corrector never employed any critical signs or carets that may be observed in other portions of Sinaiticus where the corrections were also made at a later review of the manuscript.⁵¹ In view of these considerations, then, it seem unlikely that the folios of Sinaiticus containing Revelation were ever subjected to such a subsequent review either by scribe A or by scribe D, his “senior” colleague.⁵² This is unsurprising, as the readings discussed here exhibit precisely those characteristics that one would expect to see in the corrections made at the copying stage, not later. The answer, then, to Hernández’s initial questions⁵³ seems to be that no ἀντιβάλλον inspected this portion of Sinaiticus.

The textual affinities of the corrections provide still further evidence in this direction. While the initial reading has some external support in eleven of the forty-three variation units, nine of these readings may be classified as subsingular, as their support is extremely scanty and late (3:13, 6:1, 7:16, 9:3, 16:15, 16:21, 18:18, 19:9, 22:10) and hence most likely coincidental.⁵⁴ At 9:21, the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 212. See also Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 18: “The corrector’s work will be revealed by different handwriting, different ink (often not easy to detect in a photographic reproduction), and the ‘secondary’ placing of his work in relation to the principal handwriting.”

⁴⁹ By substantial words, I mean words comprised of several characters, not (to use Jongkind’s term) “*verba minora*” such as conjunctions, prepositions, articles, etc.

⁵⁰ It is difficult to determine the thickness and colour of the deletion hooks, inasmuch as the ink appears to have faded there. However, the one on the right side of l.34 exhibits a tinge of ink very similar to the preceding text (πορνευσα), and hence may well have been written at the time of transcription.

⁵¹ See Milne and Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors*, 40–45, for further discussion of corrections and plates with pertinent examples.

⁵² See Parker, *Sinaiticus*, 50: “It is arguable that D was in some ways senior, perhaps supervising the other two. The evidence for this is that his work is of a higher quality than theirs, and that he quite often corrects it, sometimes even writing replacement leaves.”

⁵³ See Hernández, *Scribal Habits*, 95, quoted above.

⁵⁴ On subsingular readings, see B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, eds., *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, vol. 2: *Introduction; Appendix* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: Macmillan, 1896), 230; B. Aland, “Neutestamentliche Handschriften als Interpreten des Textes? P⁷⁵ und seine Vorlagen in Joh 10,” in *Jesu Rede von Gott und ihre Nachgeschichte im frühen Christentum*, (ed. D.-A. Koch, G. Sellin, and A. Lindemann; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1989), 383; G. D. Fee, “On the Types, Classification, and Presentation of Textual Variation,” in *Studies in Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism* (ed. E. J. Epp and G. D. Fee; SD 45; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 67; E. J. Epp, “Toward the Clarification of the Term ‘Textual Variant,’” in *Perspectives of New Testament Textual Criticism: Collected Essays, 1962–2004* (ed. E. J. Epp; NovTSup 116; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 47–61.

reading $\phi\omega\upsilon\omega\nu$ is supported by seventeen minuscules, yet, as noted above, the phonetic confusion of o/ω was very common, and, moreover, the word $\phi\omega\upsilon\omega\nu$ scarcely fits the immediate context (“and they didn’t repent from their *voices* nor from their sorceries”). Hence, the somewhat more robust (though still late and scattered) external support for this reading ought to be regarded as coincidental as well. At 14:3, the initial reading is supported by all the Greek witnesses, whereas the corrected reading is singular. In fact, the very singularity of the corrected reading speaks against the use of another *Vorlage*, as the lack of external attestation casts doubt on the reading’s genetic origin. Thus, even though another exemplar has been spotted in various other NT portions of Sinaiticus,⁵⁵ we must conclude that Revelation lacks any convincing positive evidence in that direction.⁵⁶ Such absence is in itself telling and, coupled with the absence of a later review of this portion, raises important questions regarding the workings of our scribes in the production of the manuscript. Could it be that the subsequent review was conducted not upon the transcription of the entire manuscript (or the entire NT portion), but rather sequentially, upon completion of each book (or corpus)? If so, why then was the book of Revelation never subjected to such an inspection? Did the scribe(s) give up on scrutinising the manuscript in its final stages of production?⁵⁷ In Mark, for instance, it was scribe D who used another exemplar in his review of scribe A’s work. Could scribe D’s absence as a corrector stand behind the absence of another exemplar behind the corrections? Or, alternatively, did the scribes simply lack such an additional exemplar for Revelation? While it seems, at this point at least, impossible to provide any definitive answers, the issues raised nonetheless warrant further exploration.

What we are left with, then, are forty-three corrections that were most likely made at various points of the copying stage of the manuscript. Moreover, it may be safely concluded that none of our corrections exhibit signs of recensional activity, let alone arbitrary intervention—they were simply meant to restore the reading of the exemplar. The efficacy of this correcting activity may be appraised by comparing corrected and uncorrected singular readings, as they most likely constitute genuine errors of the scribe.⁵⁸ The rates of corrected to uncorrected singulars are as follows:

⁵⁵ See Jongkind, *Scribal Habits*, 203–4, 222, who suspected the use of another exemplar in Luke and Paul, and Malik, “Earliest Corrections in Codex Sinaiticus,” 252, for further evidence from Mark. See also A. Myshrall, “Codex Sinaiticus, its Correctors, and the Caesarean Text of the Gospels” (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, Birmingham, 2005), 702.

⁵⁶ As it is, the use of another exemplar can be substantiated only when *both* initial *and* corrected readings have significant textual support, when the original reading cannot be construed as a scribal error on palaeographical grounds, and when there is sufficient cumulative evidence for it throughout the manuscript (or its respective portions). See Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 79.

⁵⁷ Interestingly, Milne and Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors*, 36–37, postulate scribe A’s “grandiose but quickly abandoned scheme for the embellishment of the manuscript” (26), a scheme which he gave up early on in Matthew, as evidenced from the cessation of Eusebian enumeration, *paragraphi*, markings of OT quotations, and accents and breathings. It would be interesting to see if there are any other, perhaps more subtle, traces of gradual deterioration of editorial performance. See Hernández, *Scribal Habits*, 95, who contemplates a possibility that the “MS was sent out without being proofread.” As noted above, there is sufficient evidence from other portions of Sinaiticus that some “proofreading” did in fact take place, but he is correct (as it seems) in observing that, in Revelation, such evidence is lacking.

⁵⁸ The above tally of singular readings was made on the basis of Hernández’s list of 201 readings (Ibid., 201–209), augmented by his list of 52 versionally supported singulars (209–11) and also the 32 corrected readings discussed here. Note also that, since Hernández does not have a separate class for substitutions, 57 readings that could be classified as such were subtracted from his list and then augmented by 14 substitutions from his versionally supported readings.

	Corrected Singulars	Total Singulars	Rate
Total	30	283	10.6%
Orthographical	1	22	4.5%
Nonsense	17	42	40.5%
(Strictly Nonsense)	(11)	(23)	(47.8%)
(Nonsense in Context)	(6)	(19)	(31.6%)
Omissions	3	70	4.3%
Additions	2	54	3.7%
Transpositions	0	17	0%
Substitutions	7	78	8.9%

As shown in the table, only 10.6 percent of the singular readings were corrected. Of these, the highest proportion belongs to the nonsense readings, which were most likely to catch the scribe's immediate attention while copying. Second in order are the substitutions, which also likely exhibited sufficient visual and semantic stimuli to catch the scribe's attention. Most striking is the extremely low number of the corrected singular omissions and additions.⁵⁹ The most plausible explanation that comes to mind is that these were perhaps less likely to attract the scribe's attention during the initial copying process. It seems that especially omissions were likely to be corrected at a later inspection.⁶⁰ It is less surprising, though, that no transpositions and only one orthographical reading received correction; these readings (especially the latter) were the most likely to escape the scribe's notice, as they had little effect on the overall meaning of the text copied.

5. Conclusion

In all likelihood, most of our corrections are due to the original scribe, as evidenced by the matching ink colour and thickness of strokes between the corrections and the main text. Moreover, they were probably effected already at the copying stage, since they are very brief in extent, rectify only obvious errors, and do not involve any marginal additions or critical signs. The correction activity was by no means thorough or systematic, considering that the scribe managed to rectify only about 10 percent of the singular readings. A striking difference between the earliest corrections in Revelation and those found in most of the other portions of Sinaiticus is a total absence of corrections made at the later inspection of the manuscript. It is these corrections that, in several other NT portions, occasionally display textual shifts suggestive of another exemplar. In view of the meagre textual evidence, however, we must conclude that we lack evidence for such significant textual shifts in Revelation. Hence, the fact that Schmid does not discuss any of these corrections is unsurprising—his concern lay in the textual history of Revelation, whereas none of these corrections are textually significant. Further, we have not noted any positive evidence for a subsequent inspection by scribe D, who, incidentally, probably used another exemplar when inspecting several other New Testament books. Interestingly, these results are strikingly different from what has been observed in other portions of Sinaiticus, confirming the impression which Sinaiticus gives in just about every respect, namely, that of irregular and erratic scribal performance. Needless to say, this manuscript has yet a lot to offer by way of further study, including its earliest layer of corrections.

⁵⁹ The low number of corrected omissions and additions may also be observed in scribe A's *in scribendo* corrections in Mark. See further Malik, "Earliest Corrections in Codex Sinaiticus," 249.

⁶⁰ See *Ibid.*, 250–51.