

Preface

This inaugural volume of *Text and Canon of the New Testament* includes essays by six authors. All of the chapters focus on issues in textual criticism—in particular, how badly the scribes, who copied their exemplars by hand, corrupted the text. All but one of the chapters deals specifically with NT textual criticism; one addresses textual issues related to an early apocryphal text, the *Gospel of Thomas*.

The writing of each essay tells its own story. Chapter 1 is an expansion of a paper I delivered at the Fourth Annual Greer-Heard Forum, held at New Orleans Baptist Seminary, in April 2008. Dr. Bart Ehrman and I dialogued over the issue of corruption of the NT manuscripts. Four other scholars joined the debate: David Parker (Birmingham University), Dale Martin (Yale University); Michael Holmes (Bethel College and Seminary), and William Warren (New Orleans Baptist Seminary). The text of all the presentations, along with a few others, was published by Fortress Press, as *The Reliability of the New Testament: Bart Ehrman and Daniel B. Wallace in Dialogue*, edited by Robert Stewart. I express my gratitude to Fortress Press for allowing me to publish an expansion of my paper in this book. This first chapter, because it was delivered to a non-specialist and, to a large degree, lay audience, in some ways is out of sync with the rest of the chapters in this book. But it frames the discussion that the rest of the book addresses and is thus considered appropriate as the entrée to the topic of this volume.

The other five chapters were written by former interns of mine in the Th.M. program at Dallas Theological Seminary. I am immensely grateful to DTS for having an academic intern program, which allows faculty to help develop scholars-in-the-making. Since the early 1990s, I have had multiple interns every year. To date, I have enjoyed the privilege of mentoring more than fifty students through this *δοῦλος* program—an apt nickname because each student is required to put in 400 hours of work without pay. Each professor shapes the internship how he or she wants. My own approach has been to spend between sixty and one hundred hours with the interns during the school year: we usually meet in my home for several hours each week. Each intern is required to write a paper that he or she will present at a regional scholarly conference. That paper is read to the intern group in rough draft and later, final draft, before it is read at the conference. The greatest joy of my academic career has been to work closely with these future

professors, pastors, priests, missionaries, and leaders of the church, and to see them mature through the rigors of our year together. Most have gone on for doctoral work, and collectively they have published dozens of articles in theological journals, as well as an increasing number of scholarly monographs. Many, if not most, of these publications were expansions on these students' intern papers.

The chapters in this volume went through multiple layers of peer review. These five men all read their papers first at the Southwestern Regional Evangelical Theological Society conference. I was impressed with each of these papers sufficiently that I requested that these ThM students be allowed to read them at the national Evangelical Theological Society conference in November 2008, held in Providence, Rhode Island. Normally, master's students are not permitted to read papers at the annual ETS conference, but these essays were so good that permission was granted. Several textual critics interacted with the papers—both before the conference and at it. Valuable feedback thus came from the intern group initially, then the regional conference, individual scholars, and finally the national conference of the ETS.

When I proposed to Dr. Bruce Ware, the program chair of the 2008 ETS conference, that these papers be considered for the conference, I soon realized that they should get even wider exposure. Jim Weaver, Director of Academic & Ministry Resources at Kregel, was enthusiastic about the possibility of these essays comprising the bulk of the inaugural volume of *Text and Canon of the New Testament*.

All five chapters, directly or indirectly, address issues raised in Bart Ehrman's *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, a monumental work that has raised numerous questions about intentional corruption of the NT in the early centuries by proto-orthodox scribes. Two of the essays deal with a single verse (Matt 24.36 and John 1.1), one addresses a methodological issue (whether the least orthodox reading is to be preferred), one an analogous matter (the textual transmission of the *Gospel of Thomas*), and one a foundational theological issue (whether the autographic text ever spoke of Jesus as θεός). Another way to look at them is this: three of the essays deal with global issues (i.e., not focused on a single verse or textual problem), while two deal with an individual textual problem; one of these latter two focuses on patristic interactions over Matt 24.36, while another examines the texts of two manuscripts in John 1.1. The chapter on the text of *Thomas* may seem out of place in this volume, but it is both ground-breaking in its treatment and highly relevant for the transmission of the NT text: The text of *Thomas* has undergone significant changes that made it more compatible with the rest of the Nag Hammadi codices.

As this manuscript was going to the publisher, I received an email from Dr. Ehrman requesting critical input on his *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*. Oxford University Press had requested that he update the

Preface

work that was now eighteen years old. In response, I sent Dr. Ehrman the drafts of most of the chapters of this manuscript. Because of where our respective manuscripts are in the publishing pipeline, although this volume might have some impact on the second edition of *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, regrettably the reverse will not be the case.

We offer up these essays in the spirit of collegial dialogue and bring them as offerings of the mind to our Lord Jesus Christ. May he be pleased and magnified by our efforts.

—Daniel B. Wallace, editor