

Erasmus and the Text of Revelation 22:19

A Critique of Thomas Holland's *Crowned With Glory*¹

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Abstract: With Thomas Holland's lengthy discussion of a reading in Rev 22:19 as an example, this article shows how Holland's way of doing New Testament textual criticism falls short on all academic standards. With respect to the main issue, Erasmus' retranslation of the final verses of Revelation, Holland fails to properly find, address and evaluate both primary and secondary sources.

1. Introduction

The story of Erasmus' retranslation of the final verses of Revelation from the Vulgate into Greek is well-known and discussed in every textbook on New Testament textual criticism. The basic elements or facts are the following. The first edition of the New Testament with a Greek text was prepared by Erasmus and published in 1516. For Revelation, he based his Greek text on a single manuscript, minuscule 1^r (now numbered 2814 according to the new Gregory-Aland number).² This manuscript, however, lacks the final verses of the book, and in order to have a complete text, Erasmus retranslated these verses into Greek from the Latin. Elements of his retranslation survive in every edition of the so-called *Textus Receptus*, the standard text of the printed Greek New Testament until the nineteenth century.³

Obviously, for those who try to defend the *Textus Receptus* as the original text of the Greek New Testament, this story poses something of a problem. Here is one text in which the presu-

¹ Thomas Holland, *Crowned With Glory. The Bible from Ancient Text to Authorized Version* (San Jose etc.: Writers Club Press, 2000). The chapter discussed here was formerly also found on Holland's homepage at <http://members.aol.com/DrTHolland/Chapter8.html> (consulted 20 October 2008; as of 31 October 2008, AOL hometown has been taken down). The part on Rev 22:19, with an additional footnote, is also found separately at http://av1611.com/kjbp/faq/holland_re22_19.html (consulted 20 December 2010). In the rapidly changing world of internet forums and blogs, URL references are almost doomed to change or die; any reader of this article will however be able to gauge the influence of Holland's book from a rapid search on some key terms or phrases. In the self-published book, a section "about the author" (p. 223) provides some basic information on Holland. As his Th.D. is from "Immanuel Baptist Theological Seminary", it can probably not be considered academic. I will therefore refrain from using the title "Dr." which he himself consistently uses.

² See Kurt Aland et al., *Kurzgefaßte Liste der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments* (ANTF 1), Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994 (also online: <http://intf.uni-muenster.de/vmr/NTVMR/ListeHandschriften.php>).

³ For more information on Erasmus and the final verses of Revelation, see Martin Heide, *Der einzig wahre Bibeltext? Erasmus von Rotterdam und die Frage nach dem Urtext*, Nürnberg: VTR, 2005, pp. 80-82; 94-104; 242-46 (on ms. 2049 see also p. 85 and pp. 238-41). See also my *Beyond What Is Written. Erasmus and Beza as Conjectural Critics of the New Testament* (New Testament Tools and Studies 35), Leiden etc.: Brill, 2006, pp. 54-58.

ably uninterrupted line of transmission is demonstrably broken. Only a miracle could have made Erasmus produce exactly the same text as the original Greek, and such a miracle did not happen.

Let me state from the start that the entire enterprise of trying to defend the Greek *Textus Receptus* is pointless. Sometimes even the obvious has to be stated, unfortunately. Well then, even if the leaf with the final verses of Revelation had still been part of the manuscript that was used for that part of the New Testament, or if Erasmus had had a far better manuscript for Revelation as a whole, the character of the *Textus Receptus* in general would not have been different. The circumstances under which it was produced are known only too well: the manuscripts that were used, the working conditions of editors, copyists and typesetters, the knowledge and skills in (Greek) textual criticism at that time, and finally the aims the editors, beginning with Erasmus, had. Not much historical insight and knowledge is needed to see that this combination of factors, partly coincidental and partly historically determined, could never produce a scholarly good Greek text of the New Testament, let alone the best attainable Greek text. The defence of the sixteenth-century text can only be inspired by an—unfortunate—*theological a priori*, not by the historical facts. It could be mentioned in passing that Erasmus never presented the Greek text of his editions as God's bible itself. It was simply the underlying text of his own translation. Moreover, there are historical questions far more interesting than the text-critical value of this text. For instance, why did Erasmus' text become "received" so rapidly? Why were Erasmus' decisions and practice hardly challenged?

The issue addressed in this article, however, is far more limited. Some misinformation is spreading, especially on the Internet, according to which the traditional story of Erasmus and the final verses of Revelation is challenged. The most important source of this misinformation, as one rapidly finds out, is Thomas Holland's book *Crowned With Glory*, parts of which are also accessible on the Internet.⁴ Holland's prominent source in turn is Hoskier's work on the Greek text of Revelation.⁵ It is unclear whether he consulted Hoskier directly, or used an intermediate source such as Hills.⁶

In the following paragraphs, I will discuss what Holland writes on Erasmus' dealing with the final verses of Revelation, by quoting exactly what he writes and commenting on it, at the same time providing some background information and some occasional random thoughts.

2. Holland and Revelation 22:19

The issue Holland takes on in order to address Erasmus' work on the final verses is an interesting variant reading in Rev 22:19: "... and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book" (NRSV). He writes:

While the focus of this verse deals with the phrase "*book of life*," as opposed to "*tree of life*," the issue is deeper. (p. 168)

Why this reading "book of life" is important to him will be explained later. First he tackles the question of the reading's source.

⁴ See the first footnote; I will only discuss the relevant parts of chapter eight, "Textual Considerations" (pp. 143-72); the section on Rev 22:19 is found on pp. 168-72.

⁵ Herman 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 volumes, London: Bernard Quaritch, 1929.

⁶ Edward Freer Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, Des Moines: CRP, 1984.

3. What Erasmus Himself Wrote on the Issue of the Final Verses

Holland continues:

The manuscript Codex 1r used by Desiderius Erasmus in the production of his Greek New Testament is missing the last six verses of Revelation chapter twenty-two. It is thought that Erasmus took the Latin Vulgate and retranslated these verses back into Greek. (p. 168)

The minuscule manuscript is now known under two numbers, the old one being 1^r and the new one 2814. It is also named Codex Reuchlini (or Capnionis after Reuchlin's latinized name), for Erasmus borrowed it from Reuchlin.⁷ It is one of the many manuscripts in which Andreas' commentary is put between the text. It is often stated that the problem concerns the final leaf that is missing, but it actually concerns the leaf with, besides part of the commentary, the final verses of the text, to wit Rev 22:16-21, from the words ὁ ἄσπῆρ at the end of verse 16 onwards.

Note that Holland here already qualifies the story of Erasmus' retranslation as a "thought". In a footnote, he indicates and discusses only one source for it:

Erika Rummel, *Erasmus' Annotations on the New Testament: From Philologist to Theologian* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 93. (p. 168 n. 256)

The passage referred to by Holland is found on p. 193 (not 93) in Rummel's book,⁸ where in n. 15 to p. 38 she writes:

... In Reuchlin's manuscript [2814] the last six verses were missing and Erasmus retranslated the Vulgate into Greek. He made no secret of this: *ex Latinis adiecimus* (*Annotationes* of 1516 page 675); *ex nostris Latinis supplevimus Graeca* (LB IX 246C); and he countered Lee's indignant remarks by declaring nonchalantly that he had merely wished to avoid a "gaping lacuna" in the text (*ne hiaret lacuna*, LB IX 246C).

This is important information, and Holland uses it in his own footnote. Let us however see how he does that; he writes:

It is claimed that Erasmus openly declares in the *Annotations* of his 1516 edition (page 675) that he "ex nostris Latinis supplevimus Graeca" (supplied the Greek from the Latin). Thus the claim that the last six verses of Revelation chapter twenty-two were retranslated from the Vulgate into Greek. However, the reprint of the 1516 edition of Erasmus does not contain this phrase on page 675 of his *Annotations*, which is the conclusion of his notes on the book of Revelation, nor is such a phrase found elsewhere in that edition. (p. 168 n. 256)

As this is still part of Holland's footnote, it suggests that the "claim" is derived from Rummel's book. If so, it is based on an astonishing misreading of Rummel's remarks, for she refers to Erasmus' *Annotationes* for the words "ex Latinis adiecimus", not for the ones Holland looks for there. For the latter, "ex nostris Latinis supplevimus Graeca", she refers to LB IX, but one gets the impression that Holland does not even know that among Erasmus scholars LB stands for the old Leiden edition of the *Opera omnia* edited by Clericus.⁹

⁷ As such to be distinguished from another Codex Reuchlini, min. 1 (1^{cap}).

⁸ Erika Rummel, *Erasmus' Annotations on the New Testament. From Philologist to Theologian* (Erasmus Studies 8), Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986.

⁹ See e.g. Rummel, *Annotations*, p. 221. The Leiden edition was published in 1703-1706 and republished by Olms in Hildesheim in 1961-1962. It can be found online at the Erasmus Center for Early Modern Studies (<http://www.erasmus.org>). LB stands for "Lugdunum Batavorum", the Renaissance name for Leiden (the real Roman Lugdunum in the Low Countries was near present-day Katwijk).

Even without Rummel's information, which is correct, Erasmus' retranslation is common knowledge, and exact indications are not hard to find. What then is found on page 675 in the 1516 *Annotationes*? Rummel says it and Holland ignores it: "ex latinis adiecimus" ("we added [them] from the Latin"). In full:¹⁰

Quamquam in calce huius libri nonnulla verba reperi apud nostros quae aberant in Graecis exemplaribus; ea tamen ex latinis adiecimus.	However, at the end of this book, I found some words in our versions which were lacking in the Greek copies, but we added them from the Latin.
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Holland, who probably consulted Holeczek's facsimile edition,¹¹ did not find the words he was looking for after having misread Rummel's note, or the words that were actually indicated by Rummel. He obviously did not even read Erasmus' final annotation (on the words "etiam venio cito" of Rev 22:20) attentively enough to find in its third line Erasmus' statement cited above, which in itself is clear enough to show *in his own words* what Erasmus did.¹² The most puzzling is actually his remark "nor is such a phrase found elsewhere in that edition". Do we really have to assume that Holland read all of Erasmus' *Annotationes*?

And what about the other words cited by Rummel, and looked for in vain by Holland? These words, "ex nostris Latinis supplevimus Graeca",¹³ do not come from the *Annotationes*, but, as Rummel indicates, from his apology against Lee. The common abbreviation for this work is *Resp. ad annot. Ed. Lei*.¹⁴ Herein, Erasmus counters a large number of criticisms levelled against his New Testament project. Before 2004, it was only available in the ninth volume of the Leiden edition (LB IX),¹⁵ but recently ASD IX-4 was published, the fourth volume of the ninth "ordo" of the Amsterdam edition, edited by none other than Rummel.¹⁶ There now even is an English translation, also by Rummel, as part of the Toronto *Collected Works of Erasmus*.

¹⁰ English translations are my own unless otherwise stated. The sentence is omitted from Erasmus' second edition (1519) onwards, probably because he erroneously thought that the text had been corrected. The relevant part is reproduced and marked here in appendix 3. Note there the correction of the page number; 675 is indeed an error for 625, but in early printed books, such errors are very common; it seems that in some copies actually the correct 625 is printed.

¹¹ *Novum instrumentum. Faksimile-Neudruck mit einer historischen, textkritischen und bibliographischen Einleitung* by H. Holeczek, Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1986. To call this edition a "reprint" betrays a somewhat strange choice of words in this context, though one could speak about a "photomechanic reprint".

¹² Interestingly, Hoskier, an important source for Holland in his case against the retranslation story, quotes the same words ("ea ... adiecimus") in his *Apocalypse 2*, p. 637.

¹³ They mean: "we supplied the Greek [words] from our Latin [text]"; the way Holland puts the words in his text is somewhat odd.

¹⁴ In full: *Responsio ad annotationes Eduardi Lei* ("Answer to Edward Lee's Annotations").

¹⁵ And of course in the original edition, if one could find a copy in a library; the 1520 Basle edition is now available on the Internet, as part of the *Digitale Bibliothek* of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (see <http://mdz10.bib-bvb.de/~db/0002/bsb00021857/images/>, consulted 15 October 2008). Erasmus' discussion of the final verses can be found on pp. 226-32 (esp. pp. 226-27). In the original edition, one can also find Lee's annotations (*Annotationes Edouardi Leei in annotationes Novi Testamenti Desiderii Erasmi*, pp. 141-42). Lee quotes Erasmus' 1516 note, and asks why Erasmus did not do the same more often throughout the New Testament. Lee's interest, of course, is that the procedure demonstrates the authority and value of the Vulgate against the corrupted Greek manuscripts. This polemic context is also the background of Erasmus' reaction.

¹⁶ The Amsterdam edition of Erasmus' *Opera omnia* (ASD) is a work in progress, which started in 1969. Volumes from 1999 onwards are published by Elsevier. Simultaneously, the Toronto edition of the *Collected Works of Erasmus* (CWE) contains English translations and annotations for a wider audience.

In ASD IX-4, the passage on Revelation is found at p. 278, as follows (with the CWE translation alongside):¹⁷

Dubium non erat quin essent ommissa, et erant perpauca. Proinde nos, ne hiaret lacuna, ex nostris Latinis supplevimus Graeca. Quod ipsum tamen nolimus latere lectorem, fassi in annotationibus quid a nobis esset factum ut, si quid dissiderent verba nostra ab his quae posuisset autor huius operis, lector nactus exemplar restitueret. ... Et tamen hoc ipsum non eramus ausuri in Euangeliis, quod hic fecimus, ac ne in epistolis quidem apostolicis. Huius libri sermo simplicissimus est, et argumentum fere historicum, ne quid dicam, de autore olim incerto. Postremo locus hic coronis tantum est operis.

There was no doubt that the words had been omitted, and they were only a few. To avoid leaving a lacuna in my text, I supplied the Greek out of our Latin version. I did not want to conceal this from the reader, however, and admitted in the annotations what I had done. My thought was that the reader, if he had access to a manuscript, could correct anything in our words that differed from those put by the author of this work. ... And yet I would not have dared to do in the Gospels or even in the apostolic Epistles what I have done here. The language of this book is very simple, and the content has mostly a historical sense, not to mention that the authorship was once uncertain. Finally, this passage is merely the conclusion of the work.

Not knowing what LB is or who Lee was, Holland did not consult this passage, but tried to find the words indicated in Rummel's footnote in the 1516 *Annotationes*. Ironically, Erasmus himself refers to the *Annotationes* just a few lines below the very words quoted by Rummel, as we see.

There is even a third place in Erasmus' works where the issue is discussed, already mentioned by Delitzsch.¹⁸ The passage, from another, earlier writing against Lee, is as follows:¹⁹

In calce Apocalypsis in exemplari quod tum nobis erat unicum (nam is liber apud Graecos rarus est inventu), deerat unus atque alter versus. Eos nos addidimus, secuti Latinos codices. Et erant eiusmodi ut ex his quae praecesserant possent reponi. Cum igitur Basileam mitterem recognitum exemplar, scripsi amicis ut ex aeditione Aldina restituerunt eum locum. Nam mihi nondum emptum erat hoc opus. Id ita, ut iussi, factum est. Queso, quid hic debetur Leo? An ipse quod deerat restituit? Atqui nullum habebat exemplar nisi meum. Sed admonuit. Quasi vero non hoc testatus sim in prioribus annotationibus, quid illic egissem et quid desyderarem.

At the end of the Apocalypse, the manuscript I used (I had only one, for the book is rarely found in Greek) was lacking one or two lines. I added them, following the Latin codices. They were of the kind that could be restored out of the preceding text. Thus, when I sent the revised copy to Basel, I wrote to my friends to restore the place out of the Aldine edition; for I had not yet bought that work. They did as I instructed them. What, I ask you, do I owe to Lee in this case? Did he himself restore what was missing? But he had no text except mine. Ah, but he warned me! As if I had not stated in the annotations of the first edition what I had done and what was missing.

Erasmus' words, as always, raise interesting questions, which cannot be addressed here. However the conclusion is obvious: from Erasmus' own writings, at at least three different occa-

¹⁷ *Resp. ad annot. Ed. Lei*, ASD IX-4, p. 278 ll. 35-39 and 39-43; cf. p. 120 ll. 303-304: "... quod in fine Apocalypsis paucula verba adiecerim Graeco codici ex nostris Latinis" ("... that at the end of Revelation I added some words to the Greek book on the basis of our Latin ones"). Translation Erika Rummel, CWE 72, p. 344. Instead of "the authorship was once uncertain", I would prefer, with another nuance of "olim", "the authorship has long since been uncertain".

¹⁸ Franz Delitzsch, *Handschriftliche Funde. Erstes Heft: Die Erasmischen Entstellungen des Textes der Apokalypse, nachgewiesen aus dem verloren geglaubten Codex Reuchlins*, Leipzig: Dörffling und Francke, 1861, p. 14.

¹⁹ *Apolog. resp. inuect. Ed. Lei (Apologia qua respondet duabis inuectiuis Eduardi Lei)*, ASD IX-4, pp. 54-55 ll. 894-914. Translation Erika Rummel in CWE 72, p. 44.

sions, it is proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that he retranslated the final verses of Revelation from the Vulgate into Greek. The exact scope of the retranslation is not indicated by Erasmus, but it obviously concerns the lacuna in min. 2814: Rev 22:16-21, from 16 ὁ ἀστὴρ onwards.²⁰

The only conclusion, so far, can be that Holland did not do his homework. There are simply too many articles on the issue and the primary sources are not too difficult to deal with. We are actually presented with a rather nasty choice here: either Holland knows better and knowingly obscures the issue, or he really thought that his failure to corroborate one piece of information settles the issue. Perhaps the latter is to be preferred: his eagerness to demonstrate the correctness of the *Textus Receptus* obscured his better judgement. This problem, in my view, constitutes a pattern throughout Holland's book.

4. Two Lines of Defence

And this sloppy (lack of) scholarship is only what Holland produces when he investigates Erasmus' own statements on the issue. Let us see what happens when he looks at the biblical texts themselves. He writes:

Assuming this hypothesis is true we must ask ourselves the following questions. First, if Erasmus did make use of the Latin Vulgate to supply these last six verses, has the usage of the Latin corrupted the text? Second, was Codex 1r really the only Greek manuscript used by Erasmus for this passage? (p. 168)

Min. 2814 (1^r) was of course *not* used for these verses, otherwise there would have been no problem to start with. More importantly, the story has now become an "hypothesis", which in good Popperian tradition cannot wait to be falsified. Interestingly as well, Holland's two lines of defence are clear by now. According to the first, retranslation from the Latin does not pose a problem, and can even result in a reliable text. According to the second, there were other Greek sources Erasmus could use, and therefore no retranslation took place.

If either one of these lines is correct, the other becomes unnecessary. Pursuing the second line—there was no retranslation—actually implies that the first line—retranslation is not a problem—is not perceived as sufficient defence of the *Textus Receptus*.

5. The Character of Erasmus' Greek Text

Having ignored the "external evidence" (i.e., Erasmus' own statements), Holland tries to produce some "internal evidence", that is, evidence derived from the Greek text itself. He introduces this part of his argument as follows:

Certainly the Latin Vulgate and the Greek Textus Receptus are similar in these last six verses. This, of course, would be natural if the Latin was based on early Greek manuscripts that correspond with the Textus Receptus. We must remember that most of the Greek manuscripts of the second, third, and fourth centuries have not survived the passage of time. (p. 168)

²⁰ Even without having recourse to min. 2814, for the manuscript was lost at that period, Wettstein in the first half of the eighteenth century correctly analysed the scope of Erasmus' retranslation as Rev 22:16-21 (see Johann Jacob Wettstein, *Prolegomena ad Novi Testamenti Graeci editionem accuratissimam* ..., Amsterdam: Wetstenii & Smith, 1730, pp. 139-40, and idem, *Novum Testamentum Graecum*, 2 vols., Amsterdam: Officina Dommeriana, 1751-1752 (photomechanical reprint, Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1962), 1, pp. 126-27). In the 1730 *Prolegomena*, Wettstein cites Erasmus' 1516 annotation and his 1520 *Responsio*; in his *NTG*, he cites also the *Apologia*.

This is a description of what he imagines: the final verses were taken from a Greek manuscript; similarity with the Vulgate text can be explained simply by the fact that the Vulgate itself depends on a Greek text. Holland continues:

However, the Vulgate and the Textus Receptus are not identical either. For example, the conclusion of Revelation 22:20 reads in the Receptus, *Amen. Nai, erchou, kurie Iesou* (Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus). The Latin reads, *amen veni Domine Iesu* (Amen come Lord Jesus). The Textus Receptus includes an additional affirmation *nai* (even so), an addition not found in either the Greek Critical Text or the Latin Vulgate. (pp. 168-69)

Holland, in other words, finds an unexplainable difference between Erasmus' (according to Holland presumed) *Vorlage*, the Vulgate text, and the Greek retranslation Erasmus produced (again as others presume according to Holland). For this piece of information Holland depends on Hoskier, either directly or indirectly. The difference itself is used as a counter-example, falsifying the retranslation hypothesis. There is however an easy explanation of this $\nu\alpha\acute{\iota}$, which Holland could have known if he had consulted some more sources: this part of verse 20 is cited by Valla.²¹ The fact is indicated already by Delitzsch, but not mentioned by Hoskier.²² Thus, in a way, Erasmus' own statements on the retranslation are not entirely correct: he also used whatever (indirect) Greek sources he knew. Unfortunately for him, this part of verse 20 is all Valla cites. By the way, the presence of $\epsilon\rho\chi\omicron\upsilon$ here instead of $\epsilon\lambda\theta\acute{\epsilon}$ also derives from Valla; it did not make Erasmus think over the other instances of "veni" in the Vulgate text.

Besides this single difference with the Vulgate, Holland observes a remarkable quality in the Greek text in general:

If Erasmus did translate back into Greek from the Latin text, he did an astounding job. These six verses consist of one hundred thirty-six Greek words in the *Textus Receptus*, and one hundred thirty-two Greek words in the Critical Text. There are only eighteen textual variants found within these verses when the two texts are compared. Such textual variants, both in number and nature, are common throughout the New Testament between these two Greek texts. For example, the preceding six verses, Revelation 22:10-15, have fourteen textual variants which are of the same nature, and in Revelation 21:3-8 we find no fewer than twenty textual variants. One would expect, therefore, a greater number of textual variants if Erasmus was translating from the Latin back into Greek, and yet the two texts are extremely close. (pp. 169-70)

It depends somewhat on the way one delimits variant readings, but I count 37 differences with the modern critical text. If one takes the Byzantine text instead, the number of differences is similar. A total of 37 differences in five to six verses is not "extremely close"; it is not even "close". Neither would be eighteen, by the way. My number of differences is much higher than Holland's for two reasons.²³ In the first place and most importantly, Holland did not look at Erasmus' first edition (1516) itself, but took a later form of the *Textus Receptus*. In the latter, several Erasmian readings were already corrected, partly by Erasmus himself, partly by

²¹ More than a decade before the publication of his own first edition, Erasmus found a manuscript of Lorenzo Valla's annotations on the New Testament and had it published in Paris; that edition can even be found [online](http://hardenberg.jalb.de/image/the-ol20095/00000093.jpg) as part of the [the Hardenberg collection of the Johannes a Lasco Library \(JALB\)](http://hardenberg.jalb.de/), Emden; the page with Valla's remarks on Rev 22 is <http://hardenberg.jalb.de/image/the-ol20095/00000093.jpg> (consulted 19 December 2008).

²² Delitzsch, *Handschriftliche Funde* 1, p. 57. Hoskier discusses the reading in *Apocalypse* 1, p. 474.

²³ Holland's number even could have been one lower, because he erroneously includes the difference (in verse 16) between $\Delta\alpha\upsilon\acute{\iota}\delta$ and $\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \Delta\alpha\beta\acute{\iota}\delta$; the words belong to the part of verse 16 still found in min. 2814 and therefore not retranslated by Erasmus. See appendix 1 below for Holland's list of the eighteen differences (in his book p. 169 n. 257), and appendix 2 for my list of 37 differences,

Stephanus.²⁴ This accounts for eight readings. In the second place, Holland often counts two or more differences as only one. For instance βιβλου (verse 19) presents two differences with the modern critical text (τοῦ βιβλίου): in retranslating (1) Erasmus forgot that the Greek demands the article τοῦ and (2) he chose a word (βιβλου) which happens to disagree with the actual text (βιβλίου). This, together with the missed article before ἀκούοντι (verse 18) accounts for the remainder of the differences between my count and Holland's. In comparison to the 37 differences in Rev 22:16-21, I count only nineteen in Rev 22:10-15 and nineteen in Rev 21:3-8 as well. Therefore the numbers actually differ considerably for fifteen lines of Erasmus' text (Rev 22:16-21 and 22:10-15) or even twenty lines (Rev 21:3-8). Holland even chose passages with a relatively high number of differences; in general, Rev 22:16-21 offers three to four times as many differences as passages of comparable length.

Moreover, one cannot even derive statements such as Holland's based only on the number of variants in a certain passage. The variants themselves have to be analysed and classified. The only information Holland provides is that the variants in the two other passages he mentions are "of the same nature". Unfortunately for him, most are not. The 37 differences can be analysed as follows: eleven times, the article is omitted (mostly in error); one time, the article was added (also an error); thirteen times, Erasmus chose a different word form, five of which are differences in tense; once he erroneously omitted a word found in the Vulgate; ten times, the Vulgate used by Erasmus actually differs from the modern critical text; once, finally, he followed a reading he knew from Valla's work, which happens to differ from the modern critical text.²⁵ In sum, Erasmus' text of the final verses diverges from the modern critical text for two important reasons. First, the underlying Vulgate text already differs considerably from the Greek text (also if one compares the Byzantine text). Second, and even more importantly, Erasmus' translation choices simply fail to produce the exact wordings of the transmitted Greek text.

Moreover (again), the fact that some variants in other parts of Revelation are comparable to the ones in Rev 22:16-21 should not even be taken as comforting information. Even in Rev 22:10-15, for instance, various variant readings of the *Textus Receptus* derive from Erasmus.²⁶ In fact, min. 2814 posed a large number of problems to Erasmus throughout the book, which he mostly solved by having recourse to the Vulgate—and his own working knowledge of Greek, of course. Somewhat to my surprise, this aspect is often forgotten; most secondary sources only mention the final verses, not the many others in which Erasmus had to correct and supply the Greek text. Several Erasmusian corrections are found on every page of Revelation. Until the volume of the Amsterdam edition will be published (in 2015?), our best information remains Delitzsch' *Handschriftliche Funde* 1, combined with Hoskier's *Apocalypse*.

In conclusion, Holland's additional argument, disproving the retranslation theory, comprises two elements because of which the Greek of the final verses cannot pass off as translation Greek: (1) it is too close to other Greek texts of the same passage, for instance NA²⁷; (2)

²⁴ In 1550, Robertus Stephanus published an edition of the Greek New Testament, which was to become very influential as an authoritative form of the *Textus Receptus*.

²⁵ For details, see appendix 2 below.

²⁶ The total of nineteen differences in Rev 22:10-15 can be broken down into eleven readings directly derived from min. 2814, three readings where Erasmus retranslated the Vulgate because the manuscript was defective (ῥυπῶν, ῥυπωσάτω and δικαιοθήτω in verse 11); two errors (the omission of an article); one spelling difference (α for ἄλφα in verse 13) and two strange additions (εἶμι in verse 13 and δέ in verse 15). In Rev 21:3-8, the nineteen differences are divided as follows: fourteen derive directly from 2814, four appear to be corrections based on the Vulgate (one of which Erasmus found mentioned in Greek by Valla) and one is an error (the omission of an article).

the final verses do not differ more from these other texts than other passages of Revelation do. Some tension may be detected here, the first element being based on similarity and the second on consistency in diversity, but in any case, Holland is wrong on both points: (1) there is an astonishingly high number of differences with any other Greek text, whether manuscript, text-type or edition—provided of course these texts do not depend on Erasmus' edition—, and (2) their density is far greater in this passage than elsewhere in Revelation.²⁷ Erasmus actually did a rather mediocre job; anyone with a real academic degree in Classics nowadays would do better. Erasmus himself probably could have done better, but the work was done in a hurry, without much importance attached to it.

Holland continues with some side-remarks:

Even if he did translate from the Latin into Greek it would have no bearing on the doctrine of biblical preservation. Preservation simply demands that God has kept and preserved the words throughout the generations from the time of their inception until this present day and even beyond. It does not demand that these words be preserved in the original languages only. (p. 170)

This is—again—his first line of defence, according to which the question of retranslation does not matter. Why then should one try so laboriously to find a Greek source at all? It is unclear to me whether this small paragraph expresses some doubt concerning his own position or represents a left-over from an earlier draft of his text.

Anyhow, in these side-remarks the idea of textual preservation itself is pushed to its absurd extreme. If critics were to apply consistently the idea that original readings can be found at times in (distant) translations only, any text and any text form could be shown to have been “preserved”.²⁸ In fact, Holland is not advocating such extreme eclecticism. His remarks simply demonstrate what kind of arguments he is able to come up with when he is trying to defend singular readings of the *Textus Receptus*. Indeed, the background of such a text-critical principle demonstrates more clearly than anything how hopeless a consistent defence of the *Textus Receptus* really is.

Even more alarming, theologically speaking, is that Holland knows exactly what God did. In doing so, he creates his own God, one that corresponds with minute detail to his own human needs and demands. This constitutes a text-book example of *hubris*.

6. Greek Sources for the Final Verses?

Let me return to textual criticism proper, for Holland himself returns to his second line of defence. Having demonstrated that the Vulgate was not used and that the Greek is actually normal and good, he tries to prove that Greek sources such as the ones on which Erasmus based the final verses do exist:

However, this brings us to our second question. Did Erasmus really translate the Latin back into Greek? Textual scholar Herman C. Hoskier argued that Erasmus did not do this. Instead, he suggests that Erasmus used other Greek manuscripts such as 2049 (which Hoskier calls 141), and

²⁷ Cf. Wettstein's words, written in the eighteenth century: “In one word, this translation from the Latin into Greek turned out so infelicitously for Erasmus, that his own Greek in such a short passage deviates from the Greek manuscripts at least thirty times” (“Uno verbo, haec interpretatio ex Latino in Graecum Erasmo adeo infelicititer cessit, ut Graeca ipsius a Graecis Codicum in tam brevi pericopa minimum tricies aberrant”—*Prolegomena*, p. 140; also *NTG* 1, pp. 126-27).

²⁸ Such use of distant translations reminds me of the way Clericus' conjecture on Acts 16:12 is presented as an attested reading in UBSGNT (first to third editions) by recourse to the Provençal and the Old German translations.

the evidence seems to support this position. [H. C. Hoskier, *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse*, vol. 2 (London: Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., 1929), 644.] Manuscript 2049 contains the reading found in the Textus Receptus including the textual variant of Revelation 22:19. To this we can also add the Greek manuscript evidence of 296, and the margin of 2067. (p. 170, with n. 258)

Holland blurs the issue somewhat. Is he talking about the reading ἀπὸ βιβλίου (τῆς) ζωῆς (instead of ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς; the word τῆς was added by Erasmus in his fourth edition) in verse 19, or about the entire text of Rev 22:16-21?

Moreover, there are some serious problems with the manuscripts mentioned by him. Min. 2049 is from the sixteenth century, and regarded as a copy (*Abschrift*) of a printed edition, probably Erasmus' fourth (1527).²⁹ The information given by Hoskier on this manuscript is somewhat confusing, but even Hoskier eventually acknowledges that min. 2049 does *not* provide a *Vorlage* of Erasmus' edition.³⁰ Statements that he presents it as a manuscript that proves the existence of a Greek source for the Erasmian readings of the final versions are based on a superficial reading of his notes on this manuscript.³¹ Min. 296 (old Gregory number 57^r) is, as Hoskier himself notices, a copy (*Abschrift*) of Colinaeus' edition (1534), which often follows Erasmus' text but also introduces some readings of its own.³² The margin of min. 2067 (old Gregory number 161^r; Scrivener-Hoskier number 119) does not inspire much confidence either.³³ Often marginal annotations were entered into manuscripts long after they were writ-

²⁹ See Aland's *Kurzgefaßte Liste*, where the whole entry is put between square brackets. See also Josef Schmid, *Studien zur Geschichte des griechischen Apokalypse-Textes*. I.1: Der Apokalypse-kommentar des Andreas von Kaisereia: Text; I.2: Der Apokalypse-kommentar des Andreas von Kaisereia: Einleitung; II: Die alten Stämme (Münchener theologische Studien I, Historische Abteilung; Ergänzungsband 1), München: Zink, 1955-1956. In *Studien* 1, pp. 12-13 n. 2, Schmid remarks on min. 2049 together with mins. 296, 1668 and 2136: "Obwohl zum Andreas-Text gehörend, sind folgende vier Hss aus der Liste der handschriftlichen Zeugen zu streichen, weil auf Grund der Untersuchungen Hoskiers kein ernsthafter Zweifel daran möglich ist, daß die aus Druckausgaben abgeschrieben sind" (emphasis added). The number 141^r is the old Gregory number of min. 2049, in this case also used by Hoskier.

³⁰ Hoskier writes: "... fortunately or unfortunately Apoc. 208 [min. 2186] has now become available to give us the real ending" (*Apocalypse* 1, p. 477). With "the real ending" he means the ending min. 2814 (1^r) had before the leaf with these verses was lost. As a consequence, the Erasmian ending, found again in min. 2049, is unreal, and min. 2049 itself cannot be anything else than an *Abschrift* of Erasmus' own text. Apparently Holland did not consult Hoskier's work directly, or Josef Schmid's *Studien* (e.g. part 2, p. 20).

³¹ Holland is in line with (depends on?) Edward Hills here, who wrote: "[Rev 22:19] is one of the verses which Erasmus is said to have translated from Latin into Greek. But Hoskier seems to doubt that Erasmus did this, suggesting that he may have followed Codex 141" and "The last six verses of Codex 1r (Rev. 22:16-21) were lacking, and its text in other places was sometimes hard to distinguish from the commentary of Andreas of Caesarea in which it was embedded. According to almost all scholars, Erasmus endeavoured to supply these deficiencies in his manuscript by retranslating the Latin Vulgate into Greek. Hoskier, however, was inclined to dispute this on the evidence of manuscript 141" (*The King James Version Defended*, p. 202, referring to Hoskier, *Apocalypse* 1, pp. 474-77 and 2, pp. 454.635). Hills is partly correct, in that Hoskier was *temporarily* inclined to see min. 2049 as a source of Erasmus' final verses. Besides the misrepresentation of Hoskier's work, however, Hills and his followers are guilty of the scholarly equivalent of "cherry-picking": they choose from the secondary (!) literature only the statements that suit their own interests, and do not bother to try and understand why conflicting statements exist in the first place, let alone resolve the issue by establishing a personal, well-informed and scholarly opinion.

³² Hoskier, *Apocalypse* 1, pp. 179-80.

³³ According to Hoskier, the margin of min. 2067 actually reads βιβλίου, not βιβλου.

ten, mostly by someone who was collating its text with another sources. Chances are high that these marginal notes derive from a printed edition.

Another point deserves to be mentioned as well. Generally, Erasmus did not produce impossible Greek. Verbal forms in other tenses, omission of articles, variations such as βιβλου / βιβλίου are only too current. Therefore it comes as no surprise that many of Erasmus' readings are also found occasionally in a few manuscripts. However such coincidence is not evidence that Erasmus was familiar with Greek manuscripts with these readings. In order to prove such knowledge, one would need a pattern of agreement and not isolated instances of coincidence.

Holland presents yet another argument:

Additionally, the Greek text copied by Erasmus in Revelation 22:16-21 reflects a consistency that is found elsewhere in the Textus Receptus, suggesting that it was copied from other Greek manuscripts and not translated from the Latin back into Greek. In Revelation 22:16 we find the phrase *tou dabit* (the David) in the Textus Receptus as opposed to the Critical Text's *dauid* (David). While the English would translate the two identically, it is interesting to note that in Revelation 3:7 we find the same thing. In that passage the Textus Receptus places the definite article before the name of David just as it does in Revelation 22:16, while the Critical Text does not use the definite article before David's name in either passage. (pp. 170-71)

Note that the "fact"—Erasmus had a Greek source—is now presented as certain: "the Greek text copied by Erasmus ..." As additional proof, Holland investigates the presence or absence of the article before the name "David". Unfortunately for him, the case has no bearing whatsoever on the discussion, for the words τοῦ Δαβίδ in 22:16 are still present in the min. 2814, which breaks off just after them. Needless to say, however, the *Textus Receptus* is not consistent even here; for instance, it coincides with the modern critical text at Rev 5:5 in not having τοῦ in ἡ ρίζα Δαβίδ.

To counter this, it has been noted that within the text of Erasmus at Revelation 22:16-21 there are a few unusual spellings; for example, *elthe* (come) instead of the normal *erchou* (come). This suggests that Erasmus was copying from a Greek manuscript and not translating from the Latin. Erasmus, it should be remembered, was one of the greatest scholars and thinkers of his day. He was fluent in Greek and several other languages. He would have known that the normal New Testament word for *come* is not *elthe* but is instead *erchou*. In fact, Erasmus used *erchou* in Revelation 22:7; 22:12; and even in 22:20. There must have been a reason for Erasmus to depart from the normal form of the word and write *elthe* in 22:17. Moreover, the Latin for *come* in 22:17 is the same Latin word in 22:20, *veni*. This further suggests that Erasmus was not really translating from the Latin, but was using an additional Greek manuscript other than Codex 1r. (p. 171)

Instead of "spellings", one would rather say "forms". Holland now introduces an argument based on authority: Erasmus was too good a Greek scholar to produce such unusual, almost incorrect Greek. Hence, he concludes, they derive from his *Vorlage*, not from his retranslation skills. He is mistaken again: these unusual forms actually suggest that we have Erasmian Greek here, which can be seen when they are analysed somewhat more precisely than Holland does. It is known from other instances that Erasmus' fluency in Greek was tarnished by two errors. First, he had no good feeling for the aspectual nuances of the two tenses used in Greek for the imperative mood (and other non-indicative moods). This explains the present tense λαμβανέτω for the aorist λαβέτω (verse 17). The occurrence of the aorist tense ἐλθέ instead of the present ἔρχου and ἐλθέτω for ἐρχέσθω (verse 17) presents the inverse case.³⁴ Similarly, it explains the use of present subjunctive ἐπιτιθῆ for the aorist ἐπιθῆ (verse 18) and of ἀφαιρῆ for ἀφέλη (verse 19). The occurrence of the form ἔρχου in verse 20 is easily explained as well: as indicated above, it

³⁴ With this imperative in the aorist tense, Erasmus actually produces better Greek than the author of Revelation did.

is part of the only words of the passage which Erasmus found in Greek in Valla's annotations. Admittedly, it is somewhat surprising to have ἐλθέ in verse 17 alongside ἔρχου in verse 20 and elsewhere, but this fact simply shows that Erasmus was not doing a thoroughly reflected job.³⁵ In verse 19 Erasmus also produces a form of ἀφαιρέω which the author did not use: ἀφαιρήσει instead of ἀφελεί.³⁶ Second, Erasmus often omitted the (definite) article when writing Greek.³⁷ In Rev 22:16-22, he did so eleven times (twelve if one includes ἡ before ῥίζα in verse 16). In only one occasion, τὸ ὕδωρ in verse 17, he supplied an article the Greek does not have.

In conclusion, Erasmus' explicit statements on what he did are perfectly corroborated by the Greek he actually produced.

It may be mentioned in passing that Holland exaggerates somewhat by saying that Erasmus was fluent in "several other languages"; Erasmus' works are in Latin (except for some letters (partly) in Greek), his mother tongue was Dutch, he learned Greek during his scholarly career and stated that Hebrew was too difficult for him.³⁸ There are no traces of any real fluency in other languages. Occasional references in his works to a few words in German, French and English cannot be considered as such.³⁹

7. The Meaning of Revelation 22:19

Holland now turns to the reading that interests him most. Having "proven" that Erasmus used a Greek *Vorlage*, he still has another task as well, namely to show that the reading adopted by Erasmus is in fact original.

Likewise, there is textual evidence for the reading *book of life* instead of *tree of life*. As noted above, the reading is found in a few Greek manuscripts. It is the main reading among the Latin witnesses. The phrase *book of life* is also the reading of the Old Bohairic version. Finally, it is the reading found in the writings of Ambrose (397 AD), Bachiarus (late fourth century), Primasius (552 AD) and Haymo (ninth century). (p. 171)

As noted above, some Greek manuscripts depend on Erasmus' text and have no critical value whatsoever. Only these manuscripts have ἀπὸ βιβλίου (characteristically without the article); all others have ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου.

The Church Fathers mentioned by Holland—what is his source, actually?—are all Latin, and probably depend on the Vulgate reading "libro".⁴⁰ Metzger writes on this reading:

³⁵ Some more poor choices: ὀρθρινός instead of πρωϊνός (verse 16) despite Rev 2:22 τὸν ἀστέρα τὸν πρωϊνόν (vg *stellam matutinam*) (did Erasmus know the word from the *Scholia* on Lucian?); συμμαρτυροῦμαι instead of μαρτυρῶ ἐγώ (verse 18) despite the fact that forms of *contestor* in the Vulgate more often reflect simple forms of μαρτυρέω (a point made by Wettstein already in his *NTG* 1, p. 126); βιβλίου instead of βιβλίου (verse 19; first instance), rather inconsistently compared to βιβλίου and βιβλίω in verse 18.

³⁶ Forms of the second future ἀφελῶ are "normal" and far more frequent than the "regular" first future ἀφαιρήσω (cf. LSJ and TLG).

³⁷ Probably the influence of Latin, which has no articles, and in which Erasmus wrote all his works, is felt here; I am however somewhat surprised that Erasmus did not draw on his mother tongue Dutch for an approximate feeling for the way the article functions in a language such as Greek, moreover since he is quite able to derive important exegetical details from the presence and absence of the article in Greek, as the *Annotationes* show.

³⁸ See for instance his 1504 letter to John Colet, Ep. 181 (Allen I), ll. 34-38.

³⁹ See for instance Erasmus' dialogue *De recta Latini Graecique sermonis pronuntiatione*.

⁴⁰ Ambrose cites Rev 22:18-19 in his *De paradiso*, but very freely [*]. For Primasius, see Haymo of Halberstadt cites the reading in his *Expositionis in Apocalypsin B. Joannis libri septem*, PL 117, cc.

The corruption of “tree” into “book” had occurred earlier in the transmission of the Latin text when a scribe accidentally miscopied the correct word *ligno* (“tree”) as *libro* (“book”).⁴¹

One might add to Metzger’s analysis that the direct context, with “libri” and “libro” in both verse 18 and verse 19, probably played a role in the “accident”. The conclusion on the issue of the external evidence can only be that ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου is the original reading. In such cases, discussion of internal evidence is almost unnecessary, unless of course one wants to engage in conjectural emendation. Holland nevertheless moves on:

One must also consider the internal evidence. The phrase *tree of life* appears seven times in the Old Testament and three times in the New Testament. In these verses we are told we will be able to eat of this tree, and that this tree of Eden will reappear in Eternity. The idea that one can have their share taken away from the tree of life seems abnormal to Scripture. However, the phrase *book of life* appears seven other times in the New Testament (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; and 21:27). In each case we find the book of life either contains or does not contain names, or names are blotted out of it. Therefore, the phrase, “And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life,” is extremely consistent with the biblical texts. (pp. 171-72)

Holland does not mention that the occurrences of ξύλον ζωῆς (“tree of life”) are all found in Revelation (2:7; 22:2; 22:14). If context means anything, it should be taken into account here. Moreover, both in Rev 22:2 and 22:14, there is an obvious connection with the “city”, just as here in verse 19. Especially Rev 22:2 (“the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of fruits*”—κτιν) shows that the idea expressed in verse 19, of (not) receiving one’s part (τὸ μέρος) of the tree of life, is familiar to the author of Revelation.

Perhaps the author of Revelation could have expressed somehow the idea cherished by Holland, but he did not. Moreover, if he had, he would certainly not have formulated it in the form Erasmus gave it (ἀφαιρήσει ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ βίβλου ζωῆς). The words “to take away his part” are vague and the preposition ἀπό is awkward; the use of the expression “book of life” in Revelation⁴² shows that one would rather expect “to erase his name” (cf. Rev 3:5). The expression itself is consistently accompanied by terms that fit well with the word “book”: there can be “names” in it (Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; cf. Phil 4:3); it contains things “written” (Rev 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27; 22:19); it can be “opened” (Rev 20:12). Erasmus’ reading would be the only exception to this pattern.

In conclusion, there is everything against Erasmus’ reading, even internally, and nothing against the reading ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου except the fact that it happened not to be the reading found in Erasmus’ first edition, for reasons all too well known, and that it does not provide “Scriptural proof” for one of Holland’s core convictions as aptly as the alternative reading does.

A small reflection on method may be in order here. Textual critics do not simply adopt the reading they like most, but the reading which—ideally—has both the best attestation and best

937-1220, c. 1220. It is somewhat odd to speak about the “Old Bohairic version”, for the Bohairic Coptic version is relatively late. Its reading ΠΧΩΜ in Rev 22:19 is in itself remarkable, but without much critical value. One could assume influence by the Vulgate, or even independent origin.

⁴¹ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary On the Greek New Testament. A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (Fourth Revised Edition)*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft etc., 1994, p. 690.

⁴² Rev 3:5 οὐ μὴ ἐξαλείψω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς βίβλου τῆς ζωῆς; 13:8 οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς; 17:8 οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα ἐπὶ τὸ βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς; 20:12 ἄλλο βιβλίον ἠνοίχθη, ὃ ἐστὶν τῆς ζωῆς; 20:15 εἴ τις οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν τῇ βίβλω τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος; 21:27 οἱ γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς; 22:19 τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ (cf. Phil 4:3 τὰ ὀνόματα ἐν βίβλω ζωῆς).

explains the rise of the other readings that are known. *The outcome does not matter*, only the quality of the research and the arguments that are brought forward. However Holland's options—as a textual critic?—are limited to only one: he has to defend the readings found in the *Textus Receptus*, every one of them. Ultimately this self-imposed bias means that any scholarly discussion is excluded. To paraphrase words used by Pinchas Lapide: having only one possible outcome means the end of any scholarly endeavour before it even starts. Or to put it differently: arguments in Holland's hands only resemble the arguments in the hands of serious textual critics, but they are not the same, for the aims to which they are used differ dramatically.

In this case, Holland weighs neither external or internal evidence. He does not even try to explain how the reading τοῦ ξύλου could have arisen if βιβλου (or βιβλιου) were original. Instead, he derives a useful lesson and a fitting conclusion for his chapter from the reading he prefers and adopts:

As can be seen from this text, the warning is ominous. While one may understand this passage to apply only to the book of Revelation, it is clear from other passages that the same is true of the whole of Scripture (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6). When applied to the verses discussed in this chapter we must conclude that somewhere in the process of transmission someone either added to the text or omitted from it. *There's the rub*, and it should be taken seriously. Scholarship is a noble and honorable profession. However, it ceases to be both if it seeks to usurp the authority of the Lord God. After all, our commitment does not so much rest with our scholarship as it does with the ultimate Scholar. (p. 172)

Exegetically speaking, Rev 22:19 simply belongs to a *topos*. Especially writers of apocalyptic literature almost customarily added some kind of warning. They did so irrespectively of the question whether their book would eventually become part of the biblical canon.⁴³

There is some bitter irony in this case: the “proof text” in which Holland finds an “ominous warning” addressed to those who alter the biblical text, did not reach the great Reformation bibles unscathed; to defend nowadays the exact form it had then means supporting an altered text. In other words: if the warning itself, so cherished by Holland, means anything, it backfires. In an Internet recension of *Crowned With Glory* it is written:

The discerning reader will detect a pattern as he finds that the claims of the critics may initially sound impressive, but are in actuality shallow and ignorant.⁴⁴

Let the readers judge for themselves which pattern can be detected, and which claims are really “shallow and ignorant” here.

Conclusions

Let me summarise the many mistakes and misconceptions in Holland's few pages.

In particular, Holland makes a large number of fatal mistakes:

- he misreads Rummel's footnote;
- he fails to find relevant information on a given page of Erasmus *Annotationes*;
- he does not compare the modern critical text with Erasmus' 1516 edition, but with a later form of the *Textus Receptus*;
- he does not know where the lacuna in min. 2814 (1^r) starts;
- he fails to analyse the readings found in Erasmus' first edition.

⁴³ E.g. 1 Enoch 104:9-13. See also Irenaeus' words as quoted by Eusebius in *HE* 5.23.

⁴⁴ <http://av1611.com/kjbp/faq.html> (consulted 20 October 2008).

In general, Holland demonstrates that he is not qualified to do scholarly work:

- he fails to read accurately what is written in both primary and secondary sources;
- he more often than not depends on secondary sources instead of primary ones;
- the number of sources he consults is too small;
- he has only limited options as far as the possible outcome of text-critical investigations is concerned.

Holland's display is pseudo-scholarship, regrettably influential in some Christian circles.

I do not have the audacity to hope that I may convince anyone of the basic mistake in the theological conviction according to which a single, precisely known text and not another was "preserved". However it should not be too much to ask that the basic historical facts are not misrepresented.

Appendix 1: Holland's Footnote on the Differences⁴⁵

The following are the eighteen textual differences found in these six verses. Because of the nature of this footnote, I have not transliterated these Greek words.

[vs]	[no]	<i>Textus Receptus</i>	Critical Text
[16]	[1]	του δαβιδ (<i>the David</i>)	δαβιδ (<i>David</i>)
	[2]	και ορθρινος (<i>and morning</i>)	ο πρωινος (<i>the morning</i>)
[17]	[3]	ελθε (<i>come</i>)	ερχου (<i>come</i>)
	[4]	ελθε (<i>come</i>)	ερχου (<i>come</i>)
	[5]	ελθετω και (<i>let him come and</i>)	ερχεσθω (<i>let him come</i>)
	[6]	λαμβανετω το (<i>let him take the</i>)	λαβετω (<i>let him take</i>).
[18]	[7]	συμμαρτυρουμαι γαρ (<i>for I testify to everyone</i>)	μαρτυρω εγω (<i>I testify to everyone</i>)
	[8]	επιτιθη προς ταυτα (<i>should add to these things</i>)	επιθη επ αυτα (<i>adds to them</i>)
	[9]	βιβλιω (<i>book</i>)	τω βιβλιω (<i>the book</i>)
[19]	[10]	αφαιρη (<i>should take</i>)	αφελη (<i>takes away</i>)
	[11]	βιβλου (<i>book</i>)	του βιβλιου (<i>the book</i>)
	[12]	αφαιρησει (<i>shall take away</i>)	αφελει (<i>shall take away</i>)
	[13]	βιβλου (<i>book</i>)	του ξυλου (<i>the tree</i>)
	[14]	και των (<i>and the</i>)	των (<i>the</i>)
	[15]	εν βιβλιω (<i>in book</i>)	εν τω βιβλιω (<i>in the book</i>)
[20]	[16]	αμην ναι ερχου (<i>Amen; even so, come</i>)	αμην ερχου (<i>Amen, come</i>)
[21]	[17]	κυπιου ημων ιησου χριστου (<i>our Lord Jesus Christ</i>)	ιησου χριστου (<i>Lord Jesus</i>)
	[18]	μετα παντων υμων αμην (<i>with all you Amen</i>)	μετα των αγιων (<i>with all</i>)

⁴⁵ *Crowned With Glory*, p. 169 n. 257. Also found at http://av1611.com/kjbp/faq/holland_re22_19.html (consulted 20 October 2008). Variant numbers added by me. The Greek text does not appear in Greek on the website. Besides the Greek being without breathing marks and accents, there is a small error in no. 17 (verse 21): κυπιου should be κυριου; in the same no., the modern critical text has κυριου Ιησοϋ, not ιησου χριστου (the translation is correct). Similarly, in no. 18, the modern critical text is μετὰ πάντων, not μετα των αγιων (the translation is correct).

Appendix 2: The Text of the Retranslated Verses in Erasmus' First Edition

Erasmus' retranslation of the final verses is printed as follows in his first edition of 1516:⁴⁶

¹⁶ ... ὁ ἀστὴρ λαμπρός, καὶ ὀρθρινός. ¹⁷ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ νύμφη λέγουσιν, ἐλθέ. καὶ ὁ ἀκούων εἰπάτω, ἐλθέ. καὶ ὁ διψῶν, ἐλθέτω. καὶ ὁ θέλων, λαμβανέτω τὸ ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν, ¹⁸ συμμαρτυροῦμαι γὰρ παντὶ ἀκούοντι τοὺς λόγους προφητείας βιβλίου τούτου. εἴ τις ἐπιτιθῆ πρὸς ταῦτα ἐπιθήσει ὁ θεὸς ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς πληγὰς τὰς γεγραμμένας ἐν βιβλίῳ τούτῳ, ¹⁹ καὶ εἴ τις ἀφαιρῆ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων βίβλου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης, ἀφαιρήσει ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ βίβλου ζωῆς, καὶ πόλεως ἁγίας, καὶ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν βιβλίῳ τούτῳ. ²⁰ λέγει ὁ μαρτυρῶν ταῦτα. ναὶ ἔρχομαι ταχύ, ἀμήν. ναί, ἔρχου κύριε ΙΗΣΟΥ. ²¹ ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. Ἀμήν.

The modern critical text is as follows:

¹⁶ ... ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωῖνός. ¹⁷ Καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ νύμφη λέγουσιν· ἔρχου. καὶ ὁ ἀκούων εἰπάτω· ἔρχου. καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω, ὁ θέλων λαβέτω ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν. ¹⁸ Μαρτυρῶ ἐγὼ παντὶ τῷ ἀκούοντι τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· ἐάν τις ἐπιθῆ ἐπ' αὐτά, ἐπιθήσει ὁ θεὸς ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς πληγὰς τὰς γεγραμμένας ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ, ¹⁹ καὶ ἐάν τις ἀφέλῃ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης, ἀφελεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἁγίας τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ. ²⁰ Λέγει ὁ μαρτυρῶν ταῦτα· ναί, ἔρχομαι ταχύ. Ἀμήν, ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ. ²¹ Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων.

Comparison of these two texts results in the following list:

vs	no	Erasmus 1516	MCT	category
16	1	λαμπρός	ὁ λαμπρός	article*
	2-3	καὶ ὀρθρινός	ὁ πρωῖνός	Vulgate / article
17	4	ἐλθέ	ἔρχου	tense
	5	ἐλθέ	ἔρχου	tense
	6	ἐλθέτω	ἔρχέσθω	tense
	7	καὶ ὁ θέλων	ὁ θέλων	Vulgate
	8	λαμβανέτω	λαβέτω	tense
	9	τὸ ὕδωρ	ὕδωρ	article
18	10-12	συμμαρτυροῦμαι γάρ	μαρτυρῶ ἐγὼ	translation / Vulgate / Vulgate
	13	ἀκούοντι	τῷ ἀκούοντι	article
	14	προφητείας	τῆς προφητείας	article*
	15	βιβλίου	τοῦ βιβλίου	article*
	16	εἴ τις	ἐάν τις	translation*
	17	ἐπιτιθῆ	ἐπιθῆ	tense
	18-19	πρὸς ταῦτα	ἐπ' αὐτά	translation / translation
	20	βιβλίῳ	τῷ βιβλίῳ	article
19	21	εἴ τις	ἐάν τις	translation*
	22	ἀφαιρῆ	ἀφέλῃ	translation
	23-24	βίβλου	τοῦ βιβλίου	article / translation
	25	ἀφαιρήσει	ἀφελεῖ	translation
	26-27	βίβλου	τοῦ ξύλου	article / Vulgate
	28-30	πόλεως ἁγίας	ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἁγίας	error* / article* / article*

⁴⁶ Accents are adapted to modern standards; verse numbers are added. The punctuation is not corrected. Strictly speaking, verse 20, from the first ναί, is not retranslation, but derived from Vallà's *Annotations*.

	31	καὶ τῶν	τῶν	Vulgate
	32	βιβλίῳ	τῷ βιβλίῳ	article
20	33	ναί, ἔρχου	ἔρχου	variant (Valla)
21	34-35	ἡμῶν ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ	Ἰησοῦ	Vulgate / Vulgate
	36-37	πάντων ὑμῶν. Ἀμήν.	πάντων	Vulgate / Vulgate

Eight differences, marked with an asterisk (nos. 1, 14, 15, 16, 21, 28-30), could not be noticed by Holland because he did not consult Erasmus' first edition but a later edition of the *Textus Receptus*.

Analysis of the 37 differences clearly demonstrates the character of Erasmus' retranslation Greek:

- ten differences (nos. 2, 7, 11, 12, 27, 31, 34-37) derive directly from the Vulgate; surprisingly, only two of these are common Greek variants (nos. 34-35);
- one difference (no. 33) shows a variant derived by Erasmus from Valla's *Annotationes*;
- the other twenty-six differences show how Erasmus happened to produce a Greek text different from the actual text, in various degrees of correctness:
 - eight of these differences (nos. 10, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25) show Erasmus choosing a different word or form;
 - five differences (nos. 4, 5, 6, 8, 17) show Erasmus adopting a different tense;
 - one difference (no. 28) has to be regarded as an outright translation error in that Erasmus omits a word found in the Vulgate;
 - twelve differences are due to omission (nos. 1, 3, 13, 14, 15, 20, 23, 26, 29, 30, 32) or addition (no. 9) of the article.

Appendix 3: Some Images from Erasmus' Works

1. The final verses of Revelation in the 1516 *Novum Instrumentum* (part 2, p. 224)

κλῆσίαις, ἐγὼ εἰμι ῥίζα, καὶ τὸ γένος τῶν δα
είδ', ὁ ἄσπὴρ λαμπρός, καὶ ὄρθρινός, καὶ τὸ πνεῦ
μα καὶ ἡ νύμφη λέγουσι, ἔλθε. καὶ ὁ ἀκούων
εἰπάτω, ἔλθε. καὶ ὁ διψῶν, ἔλθέτω. καὶ ὁ θέ
λων, λαμβανέτω τὴν ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν, συμ
μαρτυροῦμαι γὰρ παντὶ ἀκούοντι τοὺς λό
γους προφητείας βιβλίου τούτου. ἔτι τις ἐπιθή
πρὸς ταῦτα ἐπιθήσει ὁ θεὸς ἐπ' αὐτὰς πλη
γὰς τὰς γεγραμμένας ἐν βιβλίῳ τούτῳ, καὶ ἔ
τις ἀφαιρήσεται τὰ λόγια βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας
ταύτης, ἀφαιρήσει ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ
βιβλίου ζωῆς, καὶ πόλεως ἁγίας, καὶ τῶν γε
γραμμένων ἐν βιβλίῳ τούτῳ. λέγει ὁ μαρτυ
ρῶν ταῦτα. ναὶ ἔρχομαι ταχύ, ἀμήν. ναὶ, ἔρ
χου κύριε ΙΗΣΟΥ, ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ΙΗ
ΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. Ἀμήν.

carī uobis hæc in ecclesijs. Ego sum ge
nus & radix Dauid, stella splendida &
matutina. Et spiritus & sponsa dicunt,
ueni. Et qui audit dicat ueni. Et qui sitit
ueniat, & qui uult, accipiat aquam uitæ
gratis. Contestor enim omni audienti
uerba pphetiæ libri huius. Si quis ap
posuerit ad hæc, apponet deus super il
lum plagas scriptas in libro isto. Et si qs
diminuerit de uerbis libri pphetiæ hu
ius, auferet deus partē eius de libro ui
tæ, & de ciuitate sancta, & de his q̄ scri
pta sunt in libro isto. Dicit qui testi
moniū phibet isto. Etiā, uenio cito. A mé.
Etiā Veni dñe Iesu. Gratia dñi no
stri Iesu Christi cū oibus uobis. Amen.

Finis Testamenti totius ad græcā ueritatē uetustissimorūq; Codicum Latinoꝝ
fidem & ad pbatissimorū authorū citationē & interpretationem accu
rate recogniti, opera studioq; D. Erasmi Roterodami.

2. The annotation on Rev 22:20 in the 1516 *Annotationes* (p. 675 (= p. 625))

IN APOCALYPSIN IOANNIS

625

μακαριοι οι ποιουντες τας εντολας αυτου, id est, beati qui faciunt mandata eius. Interpres legis se uidetur, οι παλυνοντες τας σολας. Sed unde quod sequitur in sanguine agni? Nam id quidem apud Græcos prorsus non legitur. Etiam uenio cito.) *μαι ερχομαι ταχυ*. Næ est cōfirmantis. At idem aduerbiū mox repetitur græcis, *ναι ερχου κυριε ιησου*, id est, etiam ueni dñe Iesu. **Quæ in calce huius libri, nonnulla uerba reperi apud nostros, quæ aberāt in Græcis exemplaribus, ea tamen ex latinis adiecimus.** Testat diuus Hieronymus Apocalypsim, ne sua quidē atate fuisse receptam a Græcis. Ad hæc quosdā eruditissimos uiros, totū hoc argumentū, ceu fictū multis cōuicijs insectatos fuisse, quasi nihil haberet apostolicæ grauitatis, sed uulgatā tantum rerum historiam figurarum inuolucris adum

For translation and discussion of the words marked in red, see p. 4 above.

3. The note on the final verses of Revelation in the 1520 *Responsio* to Lee (p. 227)

I O A N N I S

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ret deus partem eius de libro uitæ, & de ciuitate sancta, & de his quæ scripta sunt in libro isto. Sensimus autem scribā, per eam occasionem errasse, quod cum bis ponatur in libro isto, ille ad posterius oculos deflexerit, relictis que sunt in medio. Si quidem ad nullum lapidem frequentius impingunt libra/ uij. **Dubium non erat quin essent omissa & erant perpauca.** Proinde nos ne hiaret lacuna, ex nostris latinis suppleuimus græca. **Quod ipsum tamen nolimus latere lectorem: fassi in annotationibus quid à nobis esset factum: ut si quid dissi/ derent uerba nostra ab his quæ posuisset autor huius operis: lector nactus exemplar restitueret.** Vides quæ nullius momenti sit quod *εκτραγωδησα* Leus. **Et tamē hoc ipsum nō eramus ausuri in Euāgelij, quod hic fecimus, ac ne in epistolis quidē Apostolicis. Huius libri sermo simplicissim^o est, & argumen/ tū ferè historicum, ne quid dicam, de autore olim incerto. Po/ stremo locus hic coronis tātum est operis.** Atq; hic Leus ceu campum eximium nactus, latissime expatiat, perinde decla/ mitans ac si passim græca restituissem ad latina, ac si quicquid

For translation and discussion of the words marked in red, see p. 5 above.