Disturbing Dittographies: A Second Take on Scribal Corrections

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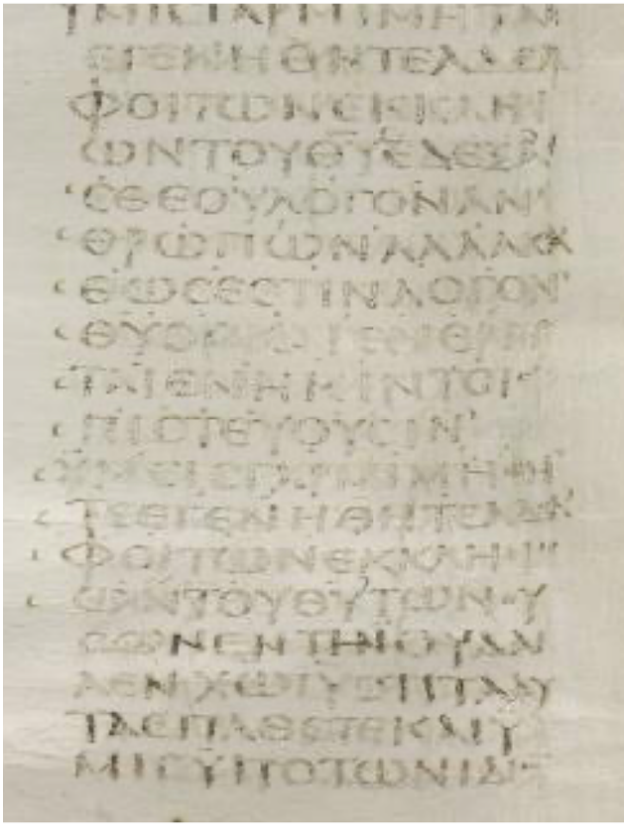
Dittographies in manuscripts are ubiquitous. Their frequency is inversely proportional to the ink spilled on them in text-critical handbooks. So, what is there to say?] My interest in dittographies was piqued nearly forty years ago when I first taught a course on NT textual criticism. An early assignment was a collation of Sinaiticus against the Majority Text in **1 Thess 2**. When the students came to **v. 14**, they did not know what to do. The scribe had made a backward leap *eleven* lines to του θεου in **v. 13**[1] and proceeded to copy 26 words before realizing his mistake (up to του θεου in v. 14). In the process, he[2] made two orthographic changes and even created a nonsense reading (μιμηται→μιμηθητε[3]).



… εδεξα
σθε ου λογον αν
θρωπων αλλα κα
θωσ εστιν λογον
θ̄υ οσ και ενεργι
ται εν ημιν τοισ
πιστευουσιν
υμεισ γαρ μιμηθη
τε εγενηθητε αδελ
φοι των εκκλησι
ων του θ̄υ …

1 Thess 2:13–14 Dittography in Codex Sinaiticus

[1] *Nomina sacra* are usually written out in full for Greek MSS in this paper.
[2] Although female scribes certainly copied NT MSS, we will use the masculine pronoun generically.
[3] The μιμηθητε is itself a partial dittograph of the *following* εγενηθητε.

This blunder raises a host of questions. Were Aleph's scribes always so careless? If they could not even copy the dittographs correctly, what might this tell us about their general accuracy—especially when dealing with homoioteleuta? Thus began our inquiry into an overlooked aspect of internal evidence. We started with Sinaiticus but soon found that many dittographies in other MSS suffered from unwarranted neglect, and not just related to accuracy.

1. Dittographies in General

1.1 Definition

Introductory works on NT textual criticism are generally agreed: A dittography is, in the words of George Milligan, the "wrong repetition of word or syllable."[4] Vincent Taylor calls it the "mistake of writing a word or phrase twice when it should be copied once."[5] Metzger and Ehrman elaborate, "Sometimes the eye of the scribe picked up the same word or group of words a second time and, as a result, copied twice what should have appeared only once…"[6] The essential definition—treating dittographs as *accidental* repetitions—is found in the standard textbooks. Nestle, Vaganay, Robertson, Vogels, Finegan, Aland and Aland, Anderson and Widder, and a host of others.

This seems simple enough. But the nomenclature has some curious inconsistencies. Milligan offers two variants in wording: the one in his glossary, quoted above ("wrong repetition of word or syllable"), but when he first mentions "dittography" he speaks only of the same *word* written twice.[7] Neither Taylor nor Metzger and Ehrman include *syllable* in their definition. Kirsopp Lake says a dittography is "where a word or phrase is senselessly repeated *twice*…"[8] By adding "twice" to "repeated" he is unwittingly defining a *trittography*![9] Others offer confusing definitions of homoioteleuton in relation to dittography: some define it as an *error* with two subcategories, haplography and dittography;[10] others claim that homoioteleuton refers to the same endings (in the exemplar) that are the *occasion* for a dittography or haplography in the copy.[11]

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[4] George Milligan, *The New Testament and Its Transmission* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 184.

[5] Vincent Taylor, *The Text of the New Testament: A Short Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 1961), 2.

[6] Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: It Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 254.

[7] Milligan, *Transmission*, 20.

[8] K. Lake, *The Text of the New Testament*, 6th ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1928), 3 [italics added].

[9] This exact statement is found in all of Lake's editions, including the revision by Silva New. Perhaps "twice" was an accidental ditto-synonym.

[10] See Heinrich Joseph Vogels, *Handbuch der Textkritik des Neuen Testaments*, 2nd ed. (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1955), 165; Taylor, *Text*, 3; David Alan Black, *New Testament Textual Criticism: A Concise Guide* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 59–60; J. Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 56.

[11] See Eberhard Nestle, *Einführung in das Griechische Neue Testament*, 3rd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909), 258; Metzger-Ehrman, *Text*, 253; Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 2nd ed., trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 285; Amy Anderson and Wendy Widder, *Textual Criticism of the Bible*, rev. ed. (Bellingham, WA, 2018), 19.

What qualifies as a dittography? Repetition of a word or words? What about syllables or even individual letters? Is a dittographic writing the exact *same* text again, or can it also involve writing a *similar* text the second time?

Vaganay offers the most comprehensive definition: "The most common [scribal] error is dittography, that is[,] the repetition by mistake of a letter, a syllable, a word, a group of words or even part of a sentence. Usually this type of error hits the reader in the eye for it spoils the meaning."[12]

One constant is seen in the various definitions: dittography is a scribal error, an *accidental* repeating of what was initially written. And because of this assumption, dittographies are routinely dismissed, deserving no other consideration than as textbook illustrations of scribal gaffes.

There is some pushback, however, against dividing textual alterations into intentional and unintentional. In Colwell's pioneering foray into scribal habits, he claims, "To base a primary classification of readings upon the presence or absence of intention is to anticipate the establishment of probabilities which must be established in other ways."[13] David Parker adds, "Only the production of complete nonsense can safely be called accidental."[14] Consequently, what may appear to be an unintentional repetition might be a conscious scribal addition to the text. By attaching scribal inattentiveness to the definition of dittography, critics might be prejudging a text that needs a closer look.

In light of these issues and our examination of the primary sources, we define dittography as follows:

> *A dittography is the repetition of what was initially written, encompassing anything from a single letter to several lines, and perhaps even a whole book.*[15] *The repeated wording may be the same as or similar to the initial wording.*

This expands on previous definitions in two key ways: the dittography is not necessarily identical to the initial wording, and the nature of the reading is not restricted to an unintentional mistake. The reason for the repetition needs to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, without prejudice as to scribal motive.

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[12] Léon Vaganay, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, 2nd ed. Christian-Bernard Amphoux, trans. Jenny Heimerdinger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 53. The definition did not change from the original French version, *Initiation à la critique textuelle neótestamentaire* (Paris: Librairie Bloud & Gay, 1934), 47. Anderson and Widder also note that a dittography may "involve a single letter or several words" (Anderson and Widder, *Textual Criticism*, 23).

[13] Ernest C. Colwell, *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, NTTS 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1969), "Method in Evaluating Scribal Habits: A Study of P^{45}, P^{46}, P^{66}, P^{75}," 109–110.

[14] David Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 37. James Royse (*Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* [Leiden: Brill, 2008], 96–97) echoes this sentiment.

[15] We have found just one example of a whole book being duplicated, though there are potentially others. But because of its anomalous nature, this part of the definition may not be necessary.

1.2. Illustrations in NT MSS

1.2.1. Dittographies and haplographies are often played off against each other as explanations of the variants.[16] The problem in **1 John 2:23** is a case in point: "No one who denies the Son *has the Father* (τὸν πατέρα ἔχει); everyone who confesses (ὁ ὁμολογῶν) the Son *has the Father* also (τὸν πατέρα ἔχει)."[17]

πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει,
ο ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει.

1 John 2:23 in NA28

Most MSS lack the second clause—often cited as a textbook example of haplography on the part of the Byzantine witnesses, occasioned by the doubled τὸν πατέρα ἔχει. For some critics, however, the longer reading is an instance of a dittography. But if it is a dittography, as it stands it is hardly accidental since an accident could not explain the addition of ὁ ὁμολογῶν.

In **Acts 4:17**, did Luke describe the Sanhedrin's decision to "threaten" Peter and John not to speak in Jesus's name with just ἀπειλησώμεθα, as NA28 and *ECM Acts* have it, or did he emphasize the threat with the cognate dative (ἀπειλῇ ἀπειλησώμεθα)?[18]

An error involving a single letter is found in **1 Thess 2:7**. Paul either said, "We became *little children* among you" or "we became *gentle* among you." The difference is between νήπιοι and ἤπιοι. Did the apostle write (or, rather, dictate) ἐγενήθημεν νήπιοι or ἐγενήθημεν ἤπιοι? Is this a case of haplography or dittography? [19]

1.2.2. Most dittographies, however, are palpable mistakes, with no possibility of a haplographic alternative. **Washingtonianus** has an uncorrected 24-word dittograph occupying five complete lines beginning with αιμα in **John 6:56**. This was occasioned by the same 10-word sequence that begins both v. 54 and v. 56. The copyist looked back at **v. 54** and proceeded to duplicate the text up to the αιμα of v. 56.[20]

Codex 365 duplicates νυν κατακριμα in **Rom 8:1a**, so that it reads the nonsensical ουδεν αρα νυν κατακριμα *νυν κατακριμα* ("There is therefore now no condemnation *now condemnation*").

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[16] See examples in Vogels, *Handbuch*, 171.

[17] NRSV, italics added.

[18] The verb alone is attested in $\mathfrak{P}^{74vid}$ א A B D 323. 945*. 1175. 1739 lat; the additional απειλη in Ψ 33. 614. 945^{c}. 1241. 1505 $\mathfrak{M}$ sy^{h}. Although the external evidence clearly seems to affirm the verb-only reading, intrinsic probabilities need to be explored as well, viz., how frequently and in what contexts the cognate dative is used in Luke-Acts.

[19] If νήπιοι is the reading of the *Ausgangstext*, the dropping of the *nu* may have been intentional because of the harshness of the metaphor, since immediately afterward we read "like a nursing mother…" For an extended discussion of this problem, see J. A. D. Weima, "'But We Became Infants Among You': The Case for NHPIOI in 1 Thess 2.7," *NTS* 46 (2000): 547–64; T. B. Sailors, "Wedding Textual and Rhetorical Criticism to Understand the Text of 1 Thessalonians 2.7," *JSNT* 80 (2000): 81–98; Jennifer Houston McNeel, *Paul as Infant and Nursing Mother: Metaphor, Rhetoric, and Identity in 1 Thessalonians 2:5–8*, Early Christianity and Its Literature (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).

[20] αιμα εχει ζωην αιωνιον καγω αναστησω αυτον τη εσχατη ημερα. η γαρ σα[ρ]ξ μου αληθης εστιν βρωσις και το αιμα μου αληθης εστιν ποσις ο τρωγων μου την σαρκα και πινων μου το.

GA 1 has a duplication in **Rom 6:20** that makes acceptable grammatical sense but horrible theological sense: οτε γαρ δουλοι ητε της αμαρτιας, ελευθεροι *ητε της αμαρτιας* ("For when you were slaves of sin you were free from sin")![21]

The relatively few dittographies in **Vaticanus**, throughout the pandect, are evident in several places where a later scribe did not retrace the original letters.[22] What makes Codex B's corrections unusual is that the first-hand errors are "corrected" by the later scribe doing *nothing*.

1.2.3. Even when dittographies are clearly unintentional, they may contain noteworthy information that is often overlooked.[23] A case in point is a dittography in **P45**. **Acts 15:2–8** is found on folio 28 ↓ . All that is left on the first line is the last word and a half in v. 2: ζητημ]ᾰτος τουτου. Verse 7 begins midway on line 11. As the copyist wrote ζητησεως, he glanced back to the same word in v. 2 and proceeded to copy a 23-word dittograph from that verse.[24] Yet *ECM Acts* does not appear to record the dittograph in v. 7.[25] In reality, *ECM* does record the dittograph but in a rather cryptic manner. The apparatus at v. 7/9a has "om. …P45f." The "f" indicates *Fehler* (mistake), though without indicating what kind of mistake it is. No other information is supplied. One has to consult the supplementary volume at 15:2 to see the dittography,[26] yet even here nothing is mentioned about this being a duplication from v. 2. This seems to be an opaque and cumbersome way of listing the duplication. Although INTF is to be applauded for its long history of packing maximum information into minimum space, the significance of this dittography warrants clarity over efficiency.

More than ninety Pauline MSS, especially early witnesses,[27] locate **Hebrews** immediately after 2 Thessalonians. As far as we know, **Gregory-Aland 794** is the only MS that has first and *second* Hebrews: the first after 2 Thessalonians and the second after Philemon. There was a change in scribes at 1 Tim 5:4b (after μανθανετωσαν), beginning with a new folio. The second scribe, writing much later, penned 1 Tim 5:4b-end, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and *then* Hebrews.

What is the reason for the second Hebrews? Is it possible that the scribe considered the first Hebrews to be inadequate textually? That is hardly likely. First, the numbers are against it.

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[21] Thanks to Denis Salgado for bringing to our attention the readings of 365 and 1.

[22] See, e.g., the trittography of το ευαγγελιον in Gal 1:11. Here, scribe B marked for deletion the first two instances but kept the third.

[23] For a lengthy Greek Old Testament dittography—the repetition of an entire paragraph with some notable differences—see P.Beatty VI Numbers and Deuteronomy at Num 7.56–57 and the discussion in Zachary J. Cole, "The Chester Beatty Old Testament Papyri and the Communal Reading of Christian Scripture," *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 24 (2019): 17–18 (whole article, 1–19).

[24] Its reading is identical to that of NA28. See https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/Group/GA_P45.

[25] NA28 does record the dittography, even labeling it as from v. 2.

[26] Indeed, we were unaware that P45's repetition of v. 2 in v. 7 was referenced in the *Supplement*, as the apparatus gave little indication that this was so. Thanks to Gregory Paulson for pointing out the *Supplement*'s recording of the duplication. The dittography is curiously omitted in David P. Barrett and Philip W. Comfort, *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts*, vol. 1: *Papyri 1–72*, 179 (vv. 2 and 7 are both recorded, *sans* the dittography).

[27] Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994), 591.

Far more MSS have Hebrews at the end of the *corpus Paulinum* than right after 2 Thessalonians. Second, although there are scores of differences between the two copies of Hebrews, all but a very small number of *meaningful* variants in either copy break from the Majority text. Both are well within the Byzantine tradition. Further, it would be significantly more economical for the second scribe to correct the text of the initial Hebrews than to rewrite the whole letter because the scribes differ from one another in only *sixteen* meaningful variants (which, nevertheless, point to two different exemplars). Third, the second scribe initially showed that his concern was to complete the MS due to missing leaves. Writing Hebrews in its normal order in the tradition fits naturally with this motive. Finally, Occam's razor is strongly against such an explanation, which is neither simple nor elegant. The greater probability, therefore, is that the second scribe was unaware that Hebrews had already been penned.

In one sense, the second Hebrews is a massive dittography—it is a text written twice that should have been written once. This dittography, paradoxically both intentional and unintentional, and written by a later scribe,[28] should not be cast aside since it bears witness to a slightly different text. It deserves its place among the late medieval witnesses to the NT text.

1.2.4. Dittographies in diglot MSS may offer insights into the relation between the two languages. In **GA 629**, the Latin and Greek texts occur in parallel columns on each page, with the Latin on the left and the Greek on the right. Houghton notes, "the Greek is secondary to the Latin."[29] Wasserman adds that 629 is an "unusual manuscript, one in which the text of the Latin column has heavily influenced the Greek column."[30] This codex's dittographs add further evidence of the Latin's priority over the Greek.

Five long dittographs occur in the Latin column that are absent in the Greek (Acts 19:13 [f. 52v], Jude 9 [f. 109v], Rom 7:2 [f. 121v], Rom 15:4 [f. 135r], 2 Cor 1:6 [f. 245v]).[31]

In **Rom 7:2** (folio 121v), a dittography reads *alligata est legi. si autem mortuus fuerit vir eius soluta est a lege viri igitur vivente viro* ("...is bound by the law; but if her husband has died, she is released from the law of the husband. Therefore, while the husband is living...") and leaves a distinct three-line gap in the Greek column. The cause of the dittography is *vivente viro* in Rom 7:2 which parallels *vivente viro* in **7:3a**. The scribe recopied the latter half of v. 2 and the first three words of v. 3.

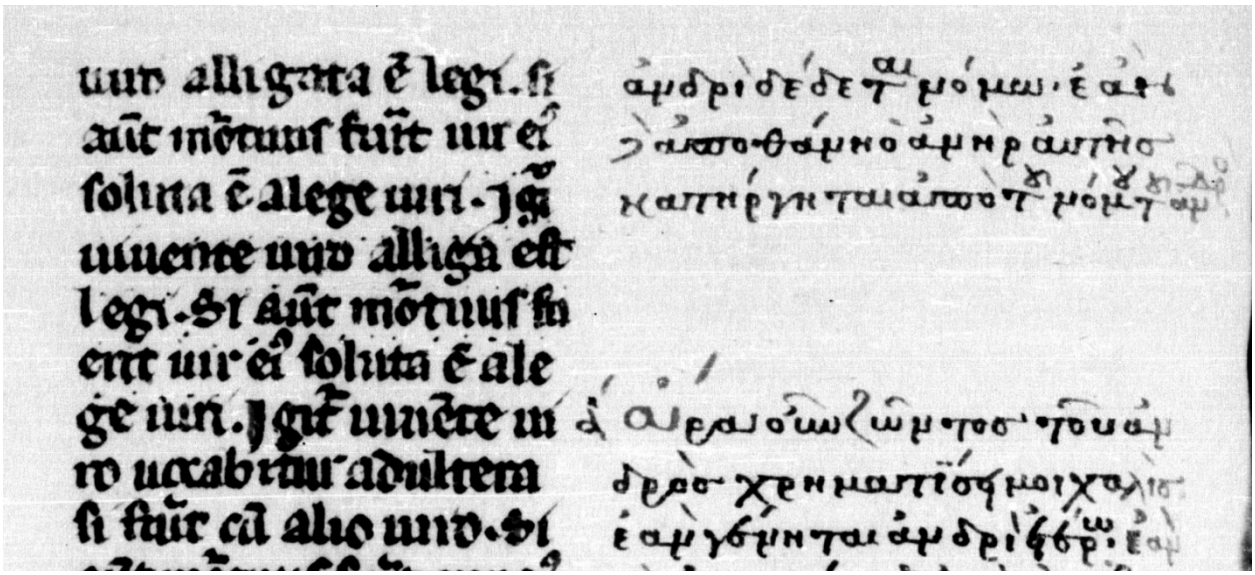
[28] For another, though *much* briefer example of a second hand writing a dittograph, see the duplicated αμην at the end of Romans in Codex 1739 (thanks to Denis Salgado for providing this example).

[29] H.A.G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to its Early History, Texts, and Manuscripts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 181.

[30] Tommy Wasserman, "Methods of Evaluating Textual Relationships: From Bengel to the CBGM and Beyond," in *The Future of New Testament Textual Scholarship: From H.C. Hoskier to the* Editio Critica Maior *and Beyond*, ed. Garrick V. Allen (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 358.

[31] There is one example of a long dittography that is the exception to the rule. In folio 167v (2Cor 1:6), a 7-word Latin/8-word Greek dittograph occurs in both columns with neither one marked for deletion by a corrector.

The corrector did not mark the dittography where it technically begins or ends. Instead, the first three words of Rom 7:3 are incorrectly marked for deletion (*igitur vivente viro*) *alligata est legi. si autem mortuus fuerit vir eius soluta est a lege viri* (lines 3–7), while their repetition as the last three words of the actual dittography (*igitur vivente viro*) is not. Such mislabeling of the end points of these dittographs is a relatively common phenomenon in 629.[32] Some scenarios are more straightforward to delineate, while in others, deciding where the dittography begins could result in two different readings.



GA 629, folio 121v

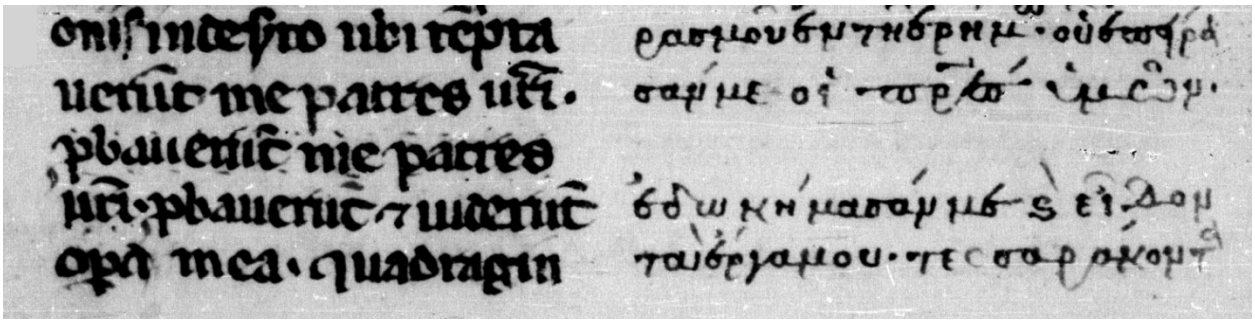
In **Heb 3:9** (folio 245v) the scribe marked a dittography, again perhaps with imprecision. There is a question as to the exemplar's wording. The issue can be seen by comparing the Vulgate with 629 (with the marked dittography underlined):

Vg: *ubi temptaverunt me patres vestri probaverunt* (+ *me* vg^{mss})
629: *ubi temptaverunt me patres vestri <u>probaverunt me patres vestri</u> probaverunt*

The corrector marked the dittography as *probaverunt me patres vestri* (lines 26–27); line 26 is blank in the Greek column. The second *probaverunt* on line 27 is not deleted. The repeated *patres vestri probaverunt* is clearly a part of the dittograph, but the second *me* is ambiguous. The dittography in 629 could result from the exemplar reading either *probaverunt me* or *probaverunt*, as evidenced by the manuscript tradition: *probaverunt me*/εδοκιμασαν με (GA 01^{c}, 06^{c}, 018, 019, 044, 0278 104, 630, 1241, 1505, 2464, 𝔐 ar vg^{mss} sy$^{(p)}$); *probaverunt* (VL 81, vg; Ambr). Depending on which reading the exemplar attests, the dittography could be *me patres vestri probaverunt* or *patres vestri probaverunt*.[33] In short, the more complex the textual tradition is, the more uncertain the decision on where the dittography begins and ends becomes.

[32] Thus, Rom 7:2 (f. 121v), Heb 3:9 (f. 245v), and Jude 9 (f. 109v).

[33] The Greek column on line 27 reads εδωκημασαν με and thus attests to *probaverunt me* as the likely reading in the exemplar, unless this is one of the few examples where the Greek and Latin text differ.



GA 629, folio 245v

The two examples discussed above show that the Latin column was likely produced first and then corrected before the Greek column was penned.[34] The priority of the Latin is of course seen by its placement on the page, but the Latin duplications that are almost always absent in the Greek give another, and more precise, strand of evidence for their relationship.

1.3 Intentional Dittographies

1.3.1. Not all dittographs are necessarily unintentional. Our broader definition does not prejudice the reader at the outset. The repetition of the verb in **Rev 14:8** (ἔπεσεν ἔπεσεν Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη) is likely the initial text's wording, while the omission of the second verb in certain witnesses may be an *intentional* haplography for economy's sake or even due to mimicking a single "fallen" (πεπτωκεν) in some witnesses in Isa 21.9a, the source for the cry in Rev 14:8.[35] But if the single verb is the wording of the *Ausgangstext*, the duplication may be intentional.

In **Rev 18:2**, an angel announces Babylon's demise and repeats the verb again, while **Codex P (025)** adds yet another ἔπεσεν—a trittography. It is doubtful that this was accidental, as the copyist almost surely wanted to underscore the fate of Babylon's damnation even more than other codices had done. Perhaps the scribe wrote the trebled ἔπεσεν as a mirrored contrast to the *trisagion* in 4:8. But since assigning intention is not entirely objective, we would argue that this should be called a trittography without adding scribal motive (or blunder) to the definition.

The heavenly choir sings ἅγιος, ἅγιος, ἅγιος in praise of the Almighty in **Rev 4:8**. This becomes a *triple trisagion* in the 𝔐^{K} MSS. Should we call this accidental? Hardly. (Yet Aleph's scribe A seems to have committed a haplographic error *within* the trittography: 01 has ἅγιος just *eight* times!)

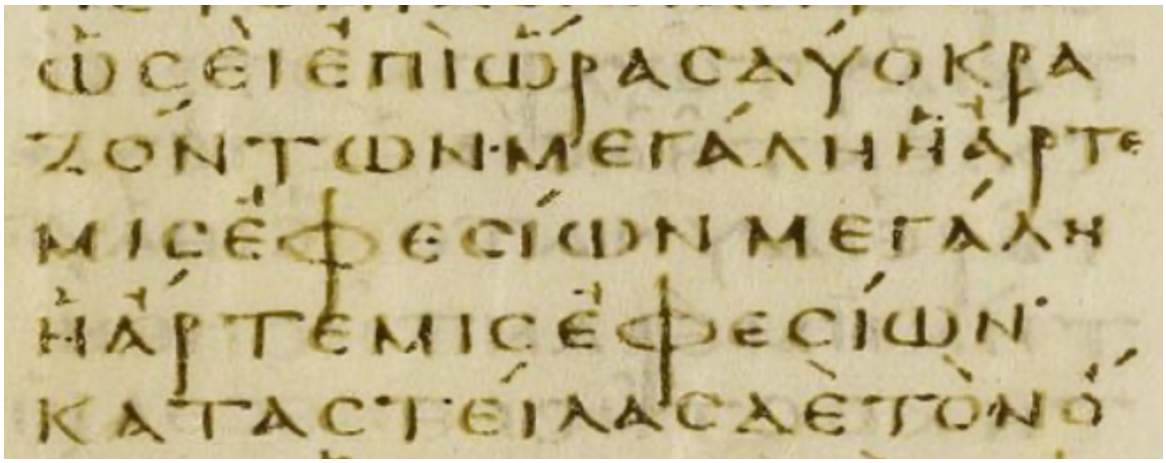
[34] Although a further eighteen small dittographs (some are a single word) occur in the Latin text which did not demand a gap in the Greek column (folio 52v, 65r, 120r, 131r, 133v, 145v,160v, 166v, 177v, 183r, 191v, 214v, 216v, 217r, 220r, 235v, 251r, 260r), some small Latin dittographies can still reveal their influence on the Greek columns—as in folio 120r, where the Latin dittography *hoc scientes hoc sciențes* caused the Greek τουτο γινω for τουτο γινωσκοντες to stretch out to the end of the line (line 16).

[35] There is only one ἔπεσεν in ℵ^{2} C 046. 1854. 2053 𝔐^{K} bo^{pt}.

Perhaps we have a similar situation for P47's doubled ὁ θεός in **Rev 11:17**. Though most regard it as a backwards leap, Lagrange suggests that this singular reading was intentional.[36] Our definition of dittography allows for either.

In **Rom 8**, the apostle takes pains to emphasize key points. In **v. 17** he brings out double implications of God's paternal claims on believers: "Now if children, then heirs; on the one hand, heirs of God; on the other hand, fellow-heirs with Christ." **L895** takes this one step further by emphasizing our status as God's offspring: ει δε τεκνα *τεκνα* και κληρονομοι ("now if children, *children* and heirs..."). This seems to be an intentional dittography, done in the spirit of 8:30, where Paul doubles verbs and pronouns in his *ordo salutis* for emphasis.[37]

In **Acts 19:28**, the rabble cries out, μεγάλη ἡ Ἄρτεμις Ἐφεσίων. This is introduced with the imperfect ἔκραζον suggesting an iterative force. Six verses later **(v. 34)**, the crowd is screaming (present participle κραζόντων) once again, but with the *added* temporal note, "for about two hours" (ὡ[σει] ἐπὶ ὥρας δύο). **Vaticanus** alone doubles the exclamation, perhaps to emphasize this lengthy tirade.[38] Furthermore, the text was reinked by the later scribe, unlike the treatment of accidental dittographs, possibly as a conscious affirmation of the dittography. This provides an excellent illustration of the problematic view of treating all dittographies as mistakes. This may be accidental, or it may be intentional. In our view, it is a dittography regardless of the underlying reason.



GA 03, page 1411, column B

[36] M.-J. Lagrange, "Les Papyrus Chester Beatty pour les épîtres de S. Paul et l'Apocalypse," *RB* 43 (1934): 489 (whole article, 481–93). Cited by Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 376n83. Lagrange offers three readings in P47, all of which look like routine errors, that may be intentional on the copyist's part. See Lagrange, "Les Papyrus," 489: "Les lapsus sont assez nombreux, le plus souvent fautes d'orthographe évidentes qu'il est aisé d'éliminer du texte, comme x, 4 [Rev 10:4] αυτας pour αυτα, etc. Dans d'autres case on se demande si l'erreur n'est pas voulue comme XI,17 [Rev 11:17] la répétition de ο θεος; XII,6 ρσξ pour ασξ (1260); XIII,18 ουν pour νουν; XIV,8 πεπτωκεν, aveç une apparence tolérable." He does not elaborate on these suggestions.

[37] Thanks to Denis Salgado for bringing this reading to our attention.

[38] Even though scribe B, who copied more than twice as much as scribe A and over three times as much as scribe C, makes 29 dittographic mistakes marked for deletion, this is spread out over 915 pages (see Jesse R. Grenz, "The Scribes and Correctors of Codex Vaticanus: A Study on the Codicology, Paleography, and Text of B(03)" [PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 2021], 139–40). In light of this, the likelihood of an accidental repetition due to a backward glance at v. 28, though possible, seems remote.

1.3.2 John 8:12 Twice

Perhaps the most significant illustrations of intentionality can be found in the repetition of John 8:12. This verse was written out twice, in whole or in part, in at least **15** (fifteen) continuous text MSS.[39] The first occurrence comes immediately after John 7:52—that is, it skips the *pericope adulterae*. This is followed by 7:53–8.11, with 8.12 then duplicated. Seven of these MSS repeat the verse *in toto*: 115. 286. 552. 1050. 1349. 2620. 2751.[40] Eight MSS have only 8:12a (παλιν… κοσμου) before the PA, but the whole verse after: 196. 240. 244. 305. 600. 730. 2101. 2646.[41]

> Πάλιν οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν λέγων, Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· ὁ ἀκολουθῶν ἐμοὶ οὐ μὴ περιπατήσῃ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἕξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς.
>
> John 8.12 in Robinson-Pierpont, *Byzantine Textform* (2018)

Maurice Robinson suggests that such duplications of 8:12 "are not accidental dittographies, but intentional, for lection-related purposes,"[42] a point that Knust and Wasserman apparently regard as probable.[43] Robinson also notes that "The same MSS which generally contain a Byzantine consensus text throughout the gospels nevertheless divide significantly within the text of the PA."[44] This can also be said of John 8:12. Among all 1600 or so continuous-text MSS, the *five-word sequence* αὐτοῖς ἐλάλησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων is one of at least *thirteen* variations[45]:

[39] This does not include Sangallensis (037), which lacks the PA yet duplicates part of 8:12 (see Jennifer Knust and Tommy Wasserman, *To Cast the First Stone: The Transmission of a Gospel Story* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019], 230).

[40] GA 286 has John 8:12–13 both before and after the PA.

[41] Thanks to Maurice Robinson for providing this list (email to Wallace, 25 Sep 2023).

[42] Robinson, email to Wallace.

[43] Knust and Wasserman, *To Cast*, 5–6.

[44] Maurice A. Robinson, "Preliminary Observations Regarding the *Pericope Adulterae* Based upon Fresh Collations of Nearly All Continuous-Text Manuscripts and All Lectionary Passages Containing the Passage," *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 13 (2000): 49 (whole article, 35–59).

[45] Not counted is the reading of 022*: αυτοις ο Ιησους ελαλησεν αυτοις λεγων (732 is similar). The first hand of Codex N (022) has αυτοις twice. The *first* instance, however, is erased. Thus, *the dittograph is preferred over the initial writing* (by the corrector? original scribe?). (The initial writing, ironically, gives testimony to both reading 1 and 8.) This preference for the dittographed wording does happen on occasion, with the potential implication that *dittographies that differ from the previous writing should not always be set aside as automatically inferior*.

1	αυτοις ο Ιησους ελαλησεν λεγων	07 09 011 013 017 021 036 037 039 21 124 157 229 286 461 489 597 1050 1349 2751 *et plu*
2	αυτοις ελαλησεν ο Ιησους λεγων	P66 01 019 028 029 030 032^{c} 033 038 045 f^{13} 28 69 286^{ditt} 346 788 1005 2372
3	αυτοις ελαλησεν Ιησους λεγων	P75^{vid} 03
4	αυτοις ελαλησεν ο Ιησους και ειπεν	032*
5	ελαλησεν αυτοις ο Ιησους λεγων	05 044 f^{1} 33 127 196 209 240 244 305 565 600 700 730 1006 1071 1217 1582 2101 2646^{ditt}
6	ελαλησεν ο Ιησους λεγων αυτοις	2646
7	ο Ιησους αυτοις ελαλησεν λεγων	2 TR
8	ο Ιησους ελαλησεν αυτοις λεγων	022^{c} 115 118
9	ο Ιησους ελαλησε λεγων	1355
10	ελαλησεν ο Ιησους λεγων	115^{ditt}
11	τοις οχλοις ελαλησεν ο Ιησους λεγων	892
12	τοις οχλοις ο Ιησους ελαλησε λεγων	1195
13	ο Ιησους εξελθων προς τον οχλον ειπεν	552^{ditt}

Variants in John 8:12a

There are several patterns and groupings seen in these variations, as well as five or six singular readings. The major variants involve transpositions, though there are also substitutions, omissions, and additions. Importantly, *all varieties* are coherent and textually significant.

If John 8:12 had been intentionally written both before and after the PA, would we not expect the two texts to be *identical*? Of the seven codices with a fully duplicated verse, however, three of them—115, 286, and 552—have significant differences for the doubled verse.[46] The differences between the initial and the second writing for each of these witnesses are listed below, followed by a brief summary.

GA 115 (BL Harley MS 5559 [X])

115: ο Ιησους ελαλησεν αυτοις
115^{ditt}: ελαλησεν ο Ιησους

Summary and implications: The three-word transposition (3-1-2 in 115^{ditt}) seems to indicate that the copyist used a different MS after writing the verse initially. The omission of αυτοις may be an oversight, though it aligns with GA 1355.

GA 286 (BnF Gr. 96 [1432 CE])

286: ο Ιησους ελαλησε
286^{ditt}: ελαλησεν ο Ιησους[47]

[46] Substantive variation is even found in 2646 in spite of having only the *partial* verse written before the PA.

[47] In the last clause of the verse, 286^{ditt} has αλ, an accidental dropping of the second *lambda* in the conjunction.

Summary and implications: Like 115, the dittograph transposes ο Ιησους ελαλησε to the 3-1-2 order. However, unlike 115, 286 and 286^{ditt} place the pronoun αυτοις before the nucleus of the clause.

GA 552 (BL Add. 39595 [XII])
This 12th century codex has the most extensive changes. The major differences include: the (a) transposition of ο Ιησους from positions 4–5 in the verse to 3–4, immediately after παλιν ουν, (b) addition of the participle εξελθων, (c) substitution of προς τον οχλον for αυτοις, (d) omission of λεγων, and (e) substitution of ειπεν for ελαλησε(ν). Taking them as a unit, we have:

552: αυτοις ο Ιησους ελαλησε λεγων
552^{ditt}: ο Ιησους εξελθων προς τον οχλον ειπεν

This dittograph clearly involves significant changes that would be impossible to explain as accidental.

Summary and implications: Robinson suggests that after 8:11, a "transition statement" is added to the text of 552 before the scribe wrote the second part of v. 12 (beginning with εγω ειμι).[48] He considers the second mention to be incomplete. This is not correct. The verse begins with παλιν ουν ο Ιησους. The dittography rewrites a portion of the verse, but it is not missing anything. Furthermore, it is not the only MS to change the indirect object from "them" to "the crowd(s)"; 892 and 1195 also say, "Jesus spoke to the crowds."

To sum up on John 8.12: Although it has been claimed that the repetition of this verse is intentional on each occasion, the evidence does not seem to bear this out. **First**, less than one percent of all Gospel MSS with the *pericope adulterae* have John 8:12 before 7:53–8:11. If the first writing of this verse were a marker for the reader to skip the PA, why are there not more MSS—in fact, a *lot* more—that display this pattern? Why do almost all the MSS with the pericope have 8:12 *only* after the PA? Can 15 examples out of 1600 speak definitively of a supposed pattern related to lectionaries?

Second, three-sevenths (42.9%) of the MSS with 8:12 doubled *in toto* show *meaningful* variation between the two sentences. It can hardly be assumed that the second writing is simply careless.

Third, the evidence points to a situation in which a scribe *absent-mindedly* wrote John 8:12 immediately after John 7:52. Then, realizing that the exemplar did not have the PA, the copyist replaced that exemplar with a different one—one that had the pericope. The scribe then continued using the second exemplar after the pericope. Thus, in this scenario, the first writing of 8:12 was unintentional, while the dittograph was intentional. And at least for Gregory-Aland 115, 286, and 552, it is likely that these MSS indirectly witness to an exemplar that *lacked* the *pericope adulterae.*

[48] Robinson, email to Wallace.

2. Dittographies in Codex Sinaiticus

2.1. Introduction

While this paper sought to include dittographs from other MSS, much of its research has been devoted to Codex Sinaiticus. The initial work on Aleph was done a few years ago by Vicki Clear. After carefully documenting dittographies of three or more lines throughout the entire codex, Vicki tragically succumbed to cancer. I (Sean) picked up where she left off, double-checked her work, and went through the pandect three times, documenting *every* clear, observable dittography of at least *one word*. The decision was made at the time to label as long dittographies those involving six or more words.

2.2. Short Dittographs

A total of **219 single-word** dittographs were observed in Codex Sinaiticus. Most are insignificant, involving an exact copy of the preceding word. However, 17 (7.8%) are imperfect copies, primarily involving orthography. Nevertheless, some single dittographs can still be significant, as in **Jdt 16:15**. There, scribe D writes σαλευθησεται, a dittography of εσαλευθησαν. Both readings are sensical: "The mountains, with the waters, *were shaken* (εσαλευθησαν) or *will be shaken* (σαλευθησεται) from the foundations." The differences between the text and dittograph differ are changes in the tense and number of σαλεύω: aorist plural to future singular. These changes raise questions of intentionality. Is the dittography syntactically or exegetically motivated? Were both readings present in the exemplar?

A total of **76** dittographs, ranging from **two to five words**, were observed. Most of these are exact copies. However, as the length increased, the copyist's likelihood of producing an imperfect dittography also increased. Thus, out of 18 three-word dittographs, seven (38.9%) are textually different from the initial text. Out of 16 four-word dittographs, eight (50%) are textually different. Finally, out of nine five-word dittographs, five (55.5%) are textually different. Some of these differences are orthographic or nonsense readings, but some are important and require careful examination.[49]

2.3 Long Dittographs

There are **31** (thirty-one) long dittographs identified in Sinaiticus. Of those, 13 (41.9%) are exact copies of the initial text with no deviation (Judg 5:20; 1 Chr 9:44 (duplicate); 2 Esd 17:73; Isa 66:2; Jer 28:41b–42a; 36:10b–11a; Ps 104:20; 111:8; Sir 44:13; Luke 17:16; 1 Cor 1:8; Eph 6:3; Herm. *Vis*. 3.8.9 [16.9]). Nine dittographs (29%) are textually different from the initial text but are primarily orthographic or otherwise insignificant (Judg 5:7; Esth 9:31; 2 Esd 19:1–2; Jdt 9:9–10; Isa 22:23b–24; 24:20a; Obad 13b–14; Wis 3:17–18; 1 Thess 2:13b–14a). This leaves nine long dittographs (29%), all from the OT, that involve textually different *and significant* variants from their initial text (2 Esd 22:46b–47a; 1 Macc 8:32; Isa 24:20b; Jer 4:7–8; 17:13b; Lam 1:6b; Zech 8:20b–21a; Ps 138:23; Wis 10:19b). Due to time constraints, we will address one example to serve as an illustration of the rest.

[49] This paper will be expanded to include discussion of some of these examples prior to publication.

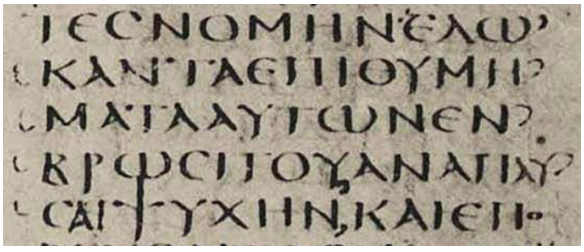
In **Lam 1:6b**, scribe B1 created a five-line, nine-word dittography (quire 49, folio 7v, column 3) of **Lam 1:11b** (quire 49, folio 8r, column 1)**.** Later, ca and cb1 marked the dittography for deletion, only for cb3 to add it back into the text.[50]

What makes this dittography unusual is that the scribe apparently looked *forward* five verses in his exemplar, but instead of producing a haplography he created a dittography by adding text from 1:11 to 1:6. Thus, paradoxically, the addition at Lam 1:6b is an example of a dittograph that occurs *before* the initial text. As unusual as this is, Sinaiticus has four other examples of long dittographs that occur before the text (scribe A: 1 Macc 8:32; Ps 138:23; scribe B1: Isa 66:2; Jer 17:13b). And scribe B1's examples exhibit a peculiar phenomenon in which the dittographs appear *several lines* before the text.

The dittograph contains three textually different readings from the codex's wording: Lam 1:11b reads: "they gave her (αυτης) desired objects for food (εις βρωσιν) to return (επιστρεψε[51]) the life," while the dittography located in Lam 1:6b reads: "they gave their (αυτων) desired objects for food (εν βρωσι) to give rest to (αναπαυσε[52]) the life."

Lam 1:6b: εδωκαν τα επιθυμηματα αυτων εν βρωσι του αναπαυσε ψυχην
Lam 1:11b: εδωκαν τα επιθυμηματα αυτης εισ βρωσιν· του επιστρεψε ψυχην

In the dittography in Lam 1:6b, B1 leaps forward from νομην (v. 6b) to εδωκαν (v. 11b). In this scenario, B1 was likely confused by the similar endings between ευρισσκοντες[53] (v. 6a) and ζητουντες (v. 11a).


Lamentations 1:6b (v. 11 dittograph)


Lamentations 1:11b (v. 11 text)

According to the Göttingen LXX apparatus for In Lam 1:11b,[54] different MSS and versions attest all three variant readings: αυτων is attested in the Masoretic text, Arm, and Aeth^{p}.[55] Vaticanus[56] attests εν βρωσι.[57] αναπαυσε (cb3: αναπαυσαι) appears as αναπαυσαι in a variant reading attested by Aquila, as noted in the Syro-Hexaplaric version.

[50] See the online transcription via the Codex Sinaiticus Project. See also David Parker et al., "Transcription" (https://codexsinaiticus.org/en/project/transcription.aspx [accessed 10 June 2024]).
[51] Cb3: επιστρεψαι.
[52] Cb3: αναπαυσαι.
[53] B1 spells ευρισκοντες as ευρισσκοντες.
[54] Thanks to Nelson Hsieh for help on the Göttingen LXX.
[55] Codex Marchalianus (Q) attributes αυτων to Symmachus.
[56] See Vat. gr. 1209, p. 1134, column 1, line 27.
[57] εις βρωσιν is attested by V, Rahlfs 233 (*in escam*), Aeth, and Ambrose.

Including Lam 1:6b, there are five significant long dittographs containing variant readings that are attested by other MSS (2 Esd 22:46b–47a; Isa 24:20b; Jer 17:13b; Lam 1:6b; Wis 10:19b). This multifaceted textual tradition hints at the necessity for further probing. How should we define dittographs in light of these examples? Were these variant readings produced unintentionally or intentionally? Was there a mistake in the initial writing so that the dittography actually represents the exemplar more accurately?

3. Summary and Recommendation

We have argued that dittographies should not *a priori* be treated as mental lapses. And even when they are due to inattentiveness, they may provide valuable information on the text and transmission of the NT. The dittograph of a fragmentary leaf may be our only access to what had presumably been written earlier. A duplication done by a later copyist could give us clues about the creation and revision of a MS, even revealing the text of a previously unrecorded witness. Dittographs in one language of a diglot can illuminate the sources and direction of influences. Paradoxically, dittographies in some MSS might be fully intentional while the initial writing would have been written absent-mindedly. And some dittographies with variants—especially those that are attested in other witnesses—should be given priority over the initial writing as better representing the exemplar.

Then there are the more than three hundred dittographies in Aleph that supply more information about the scribal habits involved in its making. To be sure, the vast majority of these dittographies are clearly accidental, yet as such they tell us much about the scribes' abilities. Further, the inexact copying of most of the larger dittographs reveals the depths of the scribal blunders beyond what we already knew. This puts in bold relief that many of Aleph's readings may be occasioned by homoioteleuton—both dittography and haplography. Dittographies are easier to spot, but when a shorter reading in this codex could be due to homoioteleuton, regard for its testimony should be reduced (e.g., in Rev 4:8 and Mark 1.1).

Finally, a recommendation. In light of our findings, we propose that future apparatuses, both of hand editions of the NT and more comprehensive works, add a category for these readings, viz., superscript the MS identification with "ditt" (e.g., P66^{ditt}). It cannot be called a corrector since the great majority are mistakes and almost always written by the original hand. The "ditt" superscript addresses these issues adequately. Further, in hand editions, the dittographs do not normally need to be listed except when the wording differs from the original reading. But for the *ECM*, every "ditt" should be recorded, for they give a more comprehensive view of a scribal habit.

Dittographies are only one piece of the puzzle, but they make a small contribution toward answering the call of Hort's dictum that "knowledge of documents should precede final judgement upon readings." Since they have hardly been explored, dittographies are an open field for further investigation.