

# ABS Takes the Lead in Creating a Visual Database of New Testament Manuscripts

**ABS-0914-2: AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY (ABS)**

## OBJECTIVE

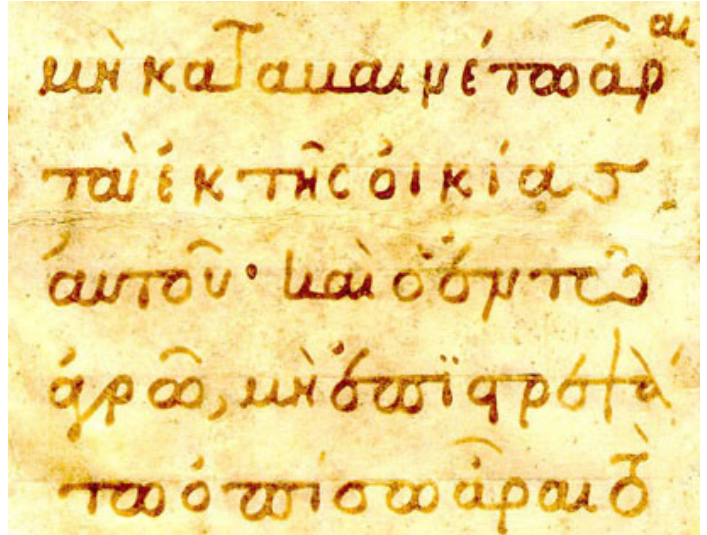
This project creates, organizes and preserves a Visual Database of New Testament manuscripts, which would provide Bible translators and scholars global access to digital photographs of every page of every manuscript of the New Testament in existence.

## FUNDING NEEDED: \$300,000

Funds would cover a consultant's fee, equipment, supplies and the cost of actually digitizing microfilm of manuscripts held at least three international libraries. (A breakdown of the budget is provided on the next page of this report.)

## CONTEXT

The integrity of any Bible translation depends on access to the best biblical sources to back up a translation and all publications ensuing from the translation. When American Bible Society (ABS) created the Contemporary English Version of the Bible, ABS translators used the Greek text held by the United Bible Societies (UBS). That text has long been the gold standard for translations. But increasingly, the translation community is recognizing the limits of the Greek text and sees the benefit of having access to all New Testament manuscripts. The most efficient way of compiling and accessing such a collection would be to house digital photographs of all available New Testament manuscripts online.



*This New Testament manuscript is an 11th century Lectionary, housed in American Bible Society's library in New York City.*

## SUMMARY

To make this online Visual Database of New Testament manuscripts a reality, ABS Library and Archives and the Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship will develop strategic partnerships with institutions holding other manuscripts.

These partnering institutions include, but are not limited to, the Institute for New Testament Textual Research in Münster in Westphalia, Germany, which is where the UBS Greek text was developed; the Vatican Library in Rome; the British Library in London; and the Green Collection in Oklahoma City, Okla.

**PROJECT PLANS**

- Formalize a strategic partnership between ABS Library and Archives and the Nida Institute
- Develop a strategic relationship with the Institute for New Testament Textual Research
- Conduct additional site visits to other holding institutions (including Paris and Greece) to develop partnerships and formalize agreements
- Begin collecting images and permissions
- Digitize the microfilms that are not yet available
- Develop the first web-based electronic user interface
- Explore funding opportunities

**TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET**

ITEM	AMOUNT
Consultant’s fee	\$100,000
International consultant <sup>1</sup>	\$50,000
Travel	\$25,000
Temporary employees <sup>2</sup>	\$25,000
Equipment, supplies	\$10,000
Digitization of microfilm <sup>3</sup>	
Institute in Germany	\$50,000
Vatican Film Library	\$15,000
University of Athens	\$15,000
Others	\$10,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> reflects release time for a specialist in Germany  
<sup>2</sup> includes a personal assistant and a research assistant  
<sup>3</sup> reflects one-time expenses

**LEADERSHIP PROFILE**

As the lead for this project, Dr. David Trobisch, an ABS Trustee and now director of the Green Collection, has already conducted more than 50 interviews with relevant institutional leaders, scholars who would



benefit from such a database, and potential financial partners. According to Trobisch, everyone interviewed responded “enthusiastically” to the proposal. “All heartily encourage ABS to take the lead in facilitating this project,” he said. They understand the need for the project and expressed a desire to be part of it. Many said that an organization like ABS was best positioned to partner with other institutions.

Born and raised in Cameroon, West Africa, Trobisch studied Protestant Theology at the Universities of Tübingen and Heidelberg in Germany. He holds dual citizenship (U.S. and German), speaks English, German, French and studied Latin, Hebrew and Ancient Greek. His scholarly work concentrates on the Letters of Paul, the formation of the Christian Bible, performance of texts in antiquity and New Testament manuscripts.

**If you’re interested in more information to help fund this project, call 800-549-3328**

Evaluation by:



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