

Copyist Care Quotient

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For some time I have been of the opinion that the question of the mentality that a copyist brought to his task deserves far more attention than it has so far received. If we can agree that the job of a copyist is to reproduce the exemplar that he is copying, then it should be possible to evaluate his failures in so doing. Of course such evaluation depends on the known existence of his exemplar, or of the archetype of the family to which the copy belongs (as determined by its mosaic or profile). Where there is a line of transmission descending from an archetype, a given variant could have been in the exemplar, of course, but I see no way of controlling for that possibility, at the moment. A 'variant' is defined by its departure from the archetypal form, as empirically determined by the consensus of the family representatives.¹ The variant can be evaluated, whenever it was introduced.

However, thought needs to be given to the exact definition of a 'variant'. I am of the opinion that ultimately the term 'variant' should be reserved for readings that make a difference in the meaning, and even so, only if they were made deliberately. Of course, since an unintentional change can also alter meaning, we must proceed slowly, which is why I used the term 'ultimately'. In the meantime, in the chart below I have omitted alternate spellings of the same word, but they are duly recorded in my full **f³⁵** apparatus for Mark.

I invite attention to the following evidence from the Gospel of Mark. I will use E.C. Colwell's analysis of thirteen 'Alexandrian' MSS in the first chapter, and my own collation of fifty-one Family 35 MSS throughout the entire book.² Here is Colwell's own statement.

After a careful study of all alleged Beta Text-type witnesses in the first chapter of Mark, six Greek manuscripts emerged as primary witnesses: \aleph B L 33 892 2427. Therefore, the weaker Beta manuscripts C Δ 157 517 579 1241 and 1342 were set aside. Then on the basis of the six primary witnesses an 'average' or mean text was reconstructed including all the readings supported by the majority of the primary witnesses.³ Even on this restricted basis the amount of variation recorded in the apparatus was dismaying. In this first chapter, each of the six witnesses differed from the 'average' Beta Text-type as follows: L, nineteen times (Westcott and Hort, twenty-one times); Aleph, twenty-six times; 2427, thirty-two times; 33, thirty-three times; B, thirty-four times; and 892, forty-one times. These results show

¹ I have determined the archetypal form of **f³⁵** for Mark on the basis of complete collations of the 51 family representatives plotted on the chart below. The results are recorded in my full **f³⁵** apparatus for Mark. There are seven splits that hover around 20%, four of them being alternate spellings of the same word. There are two splits that hover around 25%. None of the nine is a serious candidate for the archetypal form. There is but one serious split, hovering around 40%, it is in 13:31. Is the verb that goes with "the heaven and the earth" singular, or plural? In English the translation for either is "will pass away", so they are two ways of saying the same thing. Although the plural has a considerable geographic distribution, the singular has far more. There are good representatives on both sides, but the five best copies have the singular. Of the five XI MSS, four have the singular. Adding it all up, the singular gets the nod.

² To someone who has never collated a Greek manuscript, I may say that it is slave labor, plain drudgery. To collate one copy of a book the size of Mark takes several days. So why do I do it? The underlying consideration is the belief that the NT books are divinely inspired, a written revelation from the Sovereign Creator. Such a revelation has objective authority, and it becomes important to have the precise original wording. If Mark were just a bit of ordinary ancient literature, the precise original wording would be of little interest. So what? What difference would it make?

³ Note that his 'mean' text would not include a reading where the internal division was such that there was no majority; and since he only used six MSS, what did he do when they were evenly divided?

convincingly that any attempt to reconstruct an archetype of the Beta Text-type on a quantitative basis is doomed to failure. The text thus reconstructed is not reconstructed but constructed; it is an artificial entity that never existed.¹ [A text-type with no archetype cannot represent the Original.]

Let us consider carefully what Colwell did, recalling that he was a partisan of the 'Alexandrian' text-type (his 'Beta Text-type'). He attempted to arrive at the archetypal form of that text-type, for one chapter, by a majority vote of its known representatives, that he presumed to be the thirteen listed.² The result was so impossibly bad that he discarded the seven 'weaker' representatives and tried again, using only the six 'primary' witnesses. In his own words: "Even on this restricted basis the amount of variation recorded in the apparatus was dismaying." The great Codex Vaticanus differed from its archetypal form no less than thirty-four times, in one chapter. Come now, can a MS that differs from its archetype 34 times in one chapter be called a good copy? What objective basis could anyone have for so doing? By way of comparison, or contrast, I invite attention to the following evidence from Family 35, covering all sixteen chapters of Mark, including the last twelve verses.

Key: s = singular reading (until all MSS have been collated, this is just an assumption; also, easy transcriptional errors could be made by more than one copyist, independently);
c = corrected variant (variation of any kind corrected to the presumed archetype);
x = uncorrected variant ('variant' here means that it is attested by MSS outside the family, but by no other family members; this could indicate mixture);
y = family is divided, but the variant is also attested by MSS outside the family (this could be mixture on the part of whoever introduced the variant);
/ = family is divided, and the variant has no outside attestation (a splinter group);
h = an obvious case of homoioteleuton (or -arcton) [I do not consider this to be a proper 'variant', but it is included below];
i = sheer inattention (often repeating a syllable from one line to the next);
--- = no departures from the presumed profile.

It will be observed that I attribute a smaller number of variants to the presumed exemplar than to the copy—I discount 'c', 's', 'h' and 'i', ascribing them to the copyist; 'c' could have been done by someone else, but the result is correct. Of course, any of them might have been in the exemplar, and the exemplar might have had an error that the copyist corrected,

¹ Colwell, "The Significance of Grouping of New Testament Manuscripts", *New Testament Studies*, IV (1957-1958), 86-87. Cf. also Colwell, "Genealogical Method", pp. 119-123. Colwell follows Kenyon and uses "Beta text-type" to refer to today's "Alexandrian" text, whereas Hort used "β group" to refer to his "Western" text.

² Notice that the total representation of the text-type is just thirteen MSS (in the Gospels), and that number has not increased significantly since Colwell's day (sixty years ago)—but recall that it has no demonstrable archetype. In contrast, the fifty-one f^{35} MSS I have collated represent only some 20% of the extant family representatives, in the Gospels (around 250 MSS). It remains to be seen how many further families, within the Byzantine bulk, can be identified that have a single demonstrable archetypal form, based on a complete collation of all its representatives (or at least a sufficient proportion to establish the archetype). For the *TuT* volumes covering the first ten chapters of John, the INTF collated some 1875 MSS for 153 variant sets. Pages 54-90 in the first volume contain a list of 'groupings' of MSS; aside from their **K**, the largest group has 53 MSS, headed by MS 2103. The number of groups is bewildering. Further, with few exceptions, the groups or families identified by von Soden and others are limited to the Gospels; they do not exist throughout the 27 books that form our NT Canon. But if God inspired all 27 books, then He must have preserved all 27 books (or else why bother inspiring). Since the Autograph is the quintessential archetype, any candidate for that preservation should have an archetype, an empirically determined archetype, and for all 27 books—as of this writing, there is only one: Family 35.

so the numbers under ‘exemplar’ are only an approximation (but probably not far off). It is also true that a variant classed under ‘x’, ‘y’ or ‘/’ could be an independent mistake by the copyist, not in the exemplar. For all that, I consider that the general contour of the evidence given below is valid and relevant.

f³⁵ in Mark—raw data

MS	STATS	TOTAL	EXEMPLAR	DATE	LOCATION ¹	CONTENT
18	5y, 1/, 7s, 2i	15	6	1364	Constantinople	eapr
35	5c	5	---	XI	Aegean	eapr
128	1y, 1/, 2s, 1h, 2i	7	2	XIII	Vatican	e
141	2x, 2y, 4/, 3c, 9s, 2h	22	8	XIII	Vatican	eapr
204	3y, 2/, 3s, 1i	9	5	XIII	Bologna	eap
510	1x, 1y, 9s, 3i	14	2	XII	Oxford-cc	e
547	10y, 1/, 4s	15	11	XI	Karakallu	eap
553	2x, 9y, 2/, 1c, 4s, 3i	21	13	XIII	Jerusalem	e
586	1i	1	---	XIV	Modena	e
645	2x, 8y, 4/, 3c, 16s, 2h, 13i	48	14	1304	Cyprus	e
689	5x, 5y, 1/, 1c, 7s, 3i	22	11	XIII	London	e
789	1y, 2s	3	1	XIV	Athens	e
824	2x, 3y, 3s, 2i	10	5	XIV	Grottaferrata	eapr
928	3y, 1/, 1c, 1s	6	4	1304	Dionysiu	eap
1023	1x, 4y, 2/, 1c, 1s, 1i	10	7	1338	Ivion	e
1040	2x, 3y, 1/, 2s, 1h	9	6	XIV	Karakallu	eap
1072	1y, 2i	3	1	XIII	M Lavras	eapr
1075	4y, 2/, 1s, 2i	9	6	XIV	M Lavras	eapr
1111	4y, 3/, 1c, 1s	9	7	XIV	Stavronikita	e
1117	1x, 3y, 7s, 1i	12	4	XIV	Philotheu	e
1133	10y, 12/, 1c, 10s, 1h	34	22	XIV	Philotheu	e
1145	1x, 9y, 3/, 5c, 2s, 2i	22	13	XII	Constantinople	e
1147	1y, 3/, 1c, 5s, 2h, 3i	15	4	1370	Constantinople	e
1199	8x, 12y, 10/, 24s, 19i	73	30	XII	Sinai	e

¹ I give the location where a MS was acquired, when this differs from where it is presently held, on the basis of available information.

MS	STATS	TOTAL	EXEMPLAR	DATE	LOCATION	CONTENT
1251	1x, 9y, 4/, 7s, 1h, 7i	29	14	XIII	Sinai	eap
1339	2x, 1y, 1/, 1s, 1i	6	4	XIII	Jerusalem	e
1384	1x, 8y, 1/, 1c, 7s, 1h, 4i	23	10	XI	Andros	eapr
1435	4y, 1/, 10s	15	5	XI	Vatopedi	e
1461	1y, 3s	4	1	XIII	M Lavras	e
1496	1y, 2s, 1i	4	1	XIII	M Lavras	e
1503	2/, 1c, 2s, 1i	6	2	1317	M Lavras	eapr
1572	3y, 1/, 3s	7	4	1304	Vatopedi	e
1628	1y, 5s, 1h, 2i	9	1	1400	M Lavras	eap
1637	2y, 2s, 2i	6	2	1328	M Lavras	eapr
1652	1y, 1s, 2i	4	1	XVI	M Lavras	eapr
1667	5y, 2/, 1c, 8s	16	7	1309	Panteleimonos	e
1705	1x, 15y, 4/, 13s, 1h, 4i	38	20	XIV	Tirana	e
1713	1y, 2c, 2s	5	1	XV	Lesbos	e
2122	5y, 5s	10	5	XII	Athens	e
2221	6x, 15y, 1/, 2s, 1h	25	22	1432	Sparta	eap
2253	1y, 1s, 1i	3	1	XI	Tirana	e
2261	10y, 9/, 3c, 1s, 3i	26	19	XIV	Kalavryta	eap
2323	10y, 2/, 4c, 4s	20	12	XIII	Athens	er
2352	2y, 2/, 4c, 4i	12	4	XIV	Meteora	eapr
2382	1s	1	---	XII	Constantinople	e
2466	3y, 1/, 3c, 12s, 4i	23	4	1329	Patmos	eap
2503	3y, 1/, 5s, 1i	10	4	XIV	Sinai	e
2554	1/, 1c	2	1	1434	Bucharest	eapr
2765	4y, 1/, 1i	6	5	XIV	Corinth?(Oxford)	e
I.2110	2y, 2/, 2c, 1s, 1i	8	4	1322	Ivion	e
L.65	2x, 3y, 2/, 2c, 9s, 2i	20	7	XIV	Leukosia	e

How did I choose which MSS to collate? I used the *TuT* volumes for Mark. The INTF collated some 1,700 MSS for 196 variant sets (not all MSS are extant for all sets). The distinctive f^{35} profile is made up of just four of those 196 sets, but it is enough to identify any f^{35} MS that they collated. Within the list of MSS presumed to belong to f^{35} , I first chose those that

would give me the widest geographical distribution. I next concentrated on MSS with a ‘perfect’ profile. Of course, I was limited by the availability of MSS in pdf. With my family profile for the whole NT, I can quickly identify any **f³⁵** MS that has yet to be studied. That is how Iviron 2110 and Leukosia 65 got in.

Looking at the chart, eleven MSS have an average of only one variant per three chapters or more—exceptional! (MS 586 is all but perfect as it stands.) Another nine MSS have only one variant per two chapters—excellent. Virtually 40% are excellent or better. Another sixteen have only one variant per chapter—good. Another eleven have two variants per chapter—fair. Another three have three variants per chapter—poor. One MS has five variants per chapter—marginal. Note that the very worst of the fifty-one **f³⁵** representatives (1199, e, XII, Sinai) is four times ‘better’ than Colwell’s very best Alexandrian representative, Codex L. Stop for a moment and think about the implications. How can any sane person defend the proposition that the Alexandrian text-type represents the best line of transmission?¹

A representative case

In the opening paragraph I stated that variants can be evaluated. I will now take one of the merely ‘fair’ **f³⁵** representatives—MS 1384, eapr, XI, Andros—list its variants and evaluate them.

1:17 γενεσθαι || --- 1384 [the verb must be understood in any case; the meaning is not altered]

1:44 προσενεγκαι || προσενεγκε [75%] 1384 + five [these forms were used interchangeably, so they are virtually alternate spellings of the same word]

2:17 εχοντες || 1 και 1384 [he merely supplied an implied conjunction; there is no change in the basic meaning]

3:12 πολλα || --- 1384 [this does not change the basic meaning]

3:28 υιοις των ανθρωπων || ανθρωποις 1384 [this is a synonym, it does not change the basic meaning]

4:24 μετρειτε || μετρειται 1384 [an itacism resulting in a misspelling]

5:4 αλυσεσιν || αλισεσιν 1384^{1x} [a misspelling; he got it right elsewhere]

5:13 τα ακαθαρτα || --- [1%] 1384 + one [an easy case of homoioteleuton and –arcton]

5:19 αναγγειλον || αναγκειλον 1384 [an alternate spelling]

5:27 ακουσασα || ακουσα 1384 [from one line to the next]

¹ I here repeat a sentence from Colwell’s paragraph: “These results show convincingly that any attempt to reconstruct an archetype of the Beta Text-type on a quantitative basis is doomed to failure.” “These results show convincingly” something else: those copyists were not encumbered with any special respect or consideration for what they were copying. Obviously, they did not believe that they were copying a sacred text, which makes one wonder why they would expend time and material in so doing. I see one explanation that makes sense: they were deliberately perverting the text, presumably under Satanic or demonic influence. By way of contrast, the care with which most **f³⁵** copyists did their work implies a high degree of respect for the text being copied. If God were concerned to preserve His Text, what sort of copyist would He use? What sort of copyist would the Holy Spirit protect and bless? [Since both God and Satan exist, someone who excludes the supernatural from his model is being naïve in the extreme.]

6:13 εξεβαλλον || εξεβαλον [10%] 1384 + three [imperfect, or 2nd aorist? one 'l' could have been dropped accidentally, but there is little difference in meaning, in any case]

6:20 ακουων 1384^{alt} || ακουσας [80%] 1384 + nine [present, or aorist? the first hand placed the present above the aorist as an alternate; there is little difference in meaning]

(1384 is missing 6:20-45)

6:53 γενησαρετ || γεννησαρετ [53%] 1384 + three [an alternate spelling]

7:4 χαλκειων || χαλκιων [70%] 1384 + one [an itacism, or an alternate spelling]

7:26 εκβαλη || εκβαλλη [30%] 1384 + two [2nd aorist, or present? in the context it makes little difference]

8:7 παραθειναι || παραθηναι [15%] 1384 + one [an itacism resulting in a misspelling]

8:35 απολεση || απολεσει [5%] 1384 [aorist subjunctive, or future indicative? in the context it makes little difference]

8:38 μοιχαλιδι || μοιχαλιδη 1384 [an itacism resulting in a misspelling]

9:19 φερετε || 1 μοι 1384 [an unnecessary repetition of the pronoun that does not alter the meaning]

9:20 ιδον || ιδων [70%] 1384 + eight [is the subject of the verb the demon, or the boy? in the context it makes little difference]

9:40 υμων || ημων [12%] 1384 + three [the variant is inferior, but in the context it makes little difference]

(1384 is missing 10:23-46, 12:16-41)

12:43 βαλλοντων || βαλοντων [39%] 1384 + six [present, or 2nd aorist? in the context it makes little difference]

13:28 γινωσκεται || γινωσκετε [75%] 1384^{alt} + two [see 1:44, only here it is the alternate]

14:36 παρενεγκαι || παρενεγκε [70%] 1384 + three [see 1:44]

(1384 is missing 15:29-16:7)

16:9a μαγδαληνη || μαγδαλινη 1384 [an itacism resulting in a misspelling]

16:9b εκβεβληκει || εκβεβληκη 1384 [an itacism resulting in a misspelling]

16:14 ωνειδισεν || ωνειδησε 1384 [an itacism resulting in a misspelling]

With four exceptions, only a single letter or syllable is involved, and nowhere is the meaning seriously affected. If the missing pages were available and collated, a number of variants would presumably be added, but they would not differ in kind from the rest. **Someone reading MS 1384 would not be misled as to the intended meaning at any point in the book.** I say this is noteworthy, and it is typical of all f³⁵ MSS. Down through the centuries of transmission, anyone with access to a f³⁵ representative could know the

intended meaning of the Autograph.² Not only that, most lines of transmission within the Byzantine bulk would be reasonably close, good enough for most practical purposes. This is also true of the much maligned *Textus Receptus*; it is certainly good enough for most practical purposes. Down through the centuries of Church history, most people could have had reasonable access to God’s written revelation.

Incredibly careful transmission

I will now evaluate the variants in the eleven ‘exceptional’ representatives.

MS 586 has one: 10:35—ημιν || υμιν 510,586. Since MS 510 has fourteen variants, and 586 never joins it elsewhere, there is evidently no dependency, so these are independent variants. But there is a curious aspect to this variant: it is nonsense! The sons of Zebedee say, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we may ask”. So the variant, ‘to do for you (pl)’, is manifest nonsense. Was it a mere case of itacism? If so, it is the only one in the whole book (for 586). On several occasions, with different copyists in different books, I have observed a similar situation: the copyist has done perfect work to that point and then introduces an impossible variant, where the reader will almost automatically make the necessary correction, as here. It makes me wonder if the copyist felt unworthy to produce a perfect copy, and introduced an obvious error on purpose.

MS 2382 has one: 13:1—εις || 1 εκ 510,1117,2382. As with the example above, there is evidently no dependency, so these are independent variants. (MS 1117 has twelve variants.) “One of His disciples said to Him”—the preposition is implicit, and making it overt does not alter the meaning; the translation remains the same.

MS 2554 has two: 2:23—ποιειν 2554^c || πειν 1251,2554,2765; 15:46—επι την θυραν || 1 τη θυρα 2554 + eleven family representatives. The first one is manifest nonsense, independent instances of itacism. The copyist of 2554 caught his mistake and corrected it himself, so this is not a proper variant. The second one represents a split in the family. The preposition takes three cases—genitive, dative, accusative—so there is little difference in meaning.

MSS 789, 1072 and 2253 have three, to be discussed in that order. MS 789: 1:20—αυτων || αυτον 789,1199; 13:31—παρελευσεται || παρελευσονται [40%] 789 + twenty-one family representatives; 16:9—πρωτη || πρωτον 789. The first one is an independent itacism, resulting in nonsense. (MS 1199 has 73 variants.) The second one has already been explained in the first footnote. The third one is a silly mistake, where apparently the copyist became confused and assimilated the suffix to that of the following noun, only then it doesn’t make sense—perhaps he was hurrying to finish, being so near the end of the book. In any case, it is not a valid variant.

MS 1072: 6:22—ορχησμενης || ωρχησμενης 1072; 7:37—εξεπλησσοτο || εξεπληστο 1072; 9:20—ιδον || ιδων [70%] 1072 + seven family representatives. The first one is presumably an itacism, resulting in an alternate spelling for the same word. The second one

² Since ^{f35} MSS are scattered all over, or all around, the Mediterranean world, such access would have been feasible for most people.

is a mistake, going from one line to the next, and is not a proper variant. As for the third one, is the subject of the verb the demon, or the boy? In the context, it makes little difference.

MS 2253: 5:36—ευθεως ακουσας || ~ 21 [1%] 547,2253; 8:24—περιπατουντες || περιπαπατουντες 2253; 15:46—επι την θυραν || 1 τη θυρα 2253 + eleven family representatives. The first one is presumably an independent mistake, that does not affect the meaning. (MS 547 has fifteen variants.) The second one is an accidental repetition of a syllable, going from one line to the next, and is not a proper variant. The third one is discussed above.

MSS 1461, 1496 and 1652 have four, to be discussed in that order. (Curiously, they all three come from M. Lavras, but have different sets of variants.) MS 1461: 5:13—αυτοις || --- 1461; 6:15—δε || --- 1461; 12:6—οτι || --- 824,1461; 13:31—παρελευσεται || παρελευσονται [40%] 1461 + twenty-one family representatives. The first one is an accidental omission, presumably, that does not change the meaning. The second omission doesn't affect the meaning either. The third omission, presumably independent, doesn't affect the meaning either. (MS 824 has ten variants.) The fourth variant has been discussed above.

MS 1496: 10:43—εν || --- 1496,2323; 11:10—υψιστοις || υψιστοις 1496; 13:31—(see above); 14:43—παραγινηται || 1 ο 1496. The first one is an independent omission, making the preposition implicit. (MS 2323 has twenty variants.) The second one is an accidental repetition of the vowel , going from one line to the next, and is not a proper variant. The third variant has been discussed above. The fourth one is a 'natural' addition of the article, that does not affect the meaning.

MS 1652: 8:32—προσλαβομενος || προσλαβομενον 1652; 11:13—αυτην || αυτη 1652; 13:6—πολλοι || πολοι 1652; 13:31—(see above). The first one is an obvious error that any reader would correct in his mind. For the second one, the preposition takes both cases, with no change in meaning, in this context. The third one is an obvious misspelling. The fourth one has been discussed above.

MSS 35 and 1713 have five, to be discussed in that order. MS 35: all five of them were corrected to the archetype.

MS 1713: the first two were corrected to the archetype; 9:5—ηλια || ηλιαν 1705,1713, 2503; 9:50—αρτυσατε || αρτυσητε 1713; 13:31—(see above). The third one appears to be an independent change, from dative to accusative, although the dative is clearly correct. The meaning is not altered. (MS 1705 has 38 variants; MS 2503 has ten.) The fourth one could be an itacism, although it changes the mood. The meaning is not altered. The fifth one has been discussed above.

Out of a total of thirty-five variants, for eleven MSS, for the whole book of Mark,³ eight were corrected, which leaves twenty-seven. At least six are not a proper variant, which

³ 11 MSS x 16 chapters = 171 chapters; it took these eleven MSS together no less than 171 chapters to introduce as many variants as Codex B managed to do in one! That means that Codex B is 171 times worse than the eleven f³⁵ representatives taken together. And yet there are those who have stated that B is our 'best' MS!

leaves twenty-one. Five are repetitions of a variant in common, which leaves sixteen.¹ Most of these involve a single letter or syllable, as is typical of f³⁵ variants. None of them changes the meaning. Now I call that **incredibly careful transmission**.

I venture to predict, if all extant MSS are ever collated, that no other line of transmission will come anywhere close to this level of precision, or copyist care quotient.

Observations

- 1) Two-thirds of the collated MSS above have no extra-family variants = no mixture. The monks faithfully reproduced what was in front of them.
- 2) The sloppiest MS, 1199, also has the most extra-family variants = the copyist was comparatively careless and not concerned for purity. (But if it represented any other line of transmission within the Byzantine bulk it would probably be a good copy.)
- 3) The five XI MSS evidently reflect distinct exemplars (which themselves probably had distinct exemplars), so the archetype certainly existed in the uncial period.
- 4) Although the precise profile of the archetype is clear, it is also clear that the extant MSS reflect a number of separate lines of transmission within the family.
- 5) Any attempt at reconstructing a family tree will require the positing of a fair number of intervening nodes, nodes that could well be separated by centuries.
- 6) It follows that any claim that the f³⁵ archetype was created after the beginning of the minuscule period is either uninformed or perverse.

Postscript

Family 35 readings are attested by early witnesses, but without pattern, and therefore without dependency. But there are many hundreds of such readings. So how did the f³⁵ archetype come by all those early readings? Did its creator travel around and collect a few readings from Aleph, a few from B, a few from P^{45,66,75}, a few from W and D, etc.? Is not such a suggestion patently ridiculous? The only reasonable conclusion is that the f³⁵ text is ancient (also independent).

I claim to have demonstrated the superiority of Family 35 based on size (number of representatives), independence, age, geographical distribution, profile (empirically determined), care (see above) and range (all 27 books). I challenge any and all to do the same for any other line of transmission!

¹ That is to say, between them the eleven MSS have sixteen variants for the whole book, or an average of 1.5 variants each, for the whole book.