

## GA 35 in Acts

Minuscule 35 is curiously different in Acts, compared to the Epistles, whether Pauline or General. In the Epistles GA 35 has an occasional correction (21 for the whole Pauline Corpus), but in Acts there are at least 158! I say 'at least' because I only have a paper copy of a black and white microfilm and a well done correction can be hard to catch (with a digital photo in color any difference in shade of ink can be seen, as well as vestiges of ink left by an erasure).

Now then, the monk was clearly copying an  $f^{35}$  exemplar, because he reproduced all but perhaps 20 of the 187 diagnostic readings normally, without correction. Most of the many variants are based on a strange little group of MSS (of which GA 1891 is a representative) that do not have the diagnostic  $f^{35}$  readings. It follows that the monk deliberately deviated from his exemplar at those points (and he did so in 'chunks', by fits and starts)—why? Further, **all** the deviations are corrected to the  $f^{35}$  profile. Presumably all will agree that this is a curious situation, but how to account for it?

I should also mention that GA 35 is a complete New Testament wherein Acts follows John, to be followed in turn by James, etc. In John GA 35 has only five variations from the presumed archetype, for the whole book, and two of them are corrected. It has two variations each in James, 1 Peter, 1 John and Jude, all of which are corrected to the presumed archetype (2 Peter, 2 and 3 John are 'perfect' as they stand). So the situation in Acts is completely out of character for the manuscript. Something strange was going on.

You understand, of course, that I was not there, but I seriously offer the following hypothesis: I suspect that a candidate for proofreader was being tested—the 'professor' deliberately prepared a strange mixture that would genuinely test the candidate's ability. Since he missed zero out of 158 [at least] errors, I imagine he was given a passing grade! (Well, any that he missed could have been corrected later, so the manuscript could be used.)

I have no way of proving (or disproving) my hypothesis, but it is the best sense I can make of the facts in the case. If correct, it indicates that in some places, at least (and in the 11<sup>th</sup> century), proofreading copies was a serious business; not surprising if they really believed they were copying Scripture.