

GOD HAS PRESERVED HIS TEXT!

The Divine Preservation of the New Testament

Wilbur N. Pickering, ThM PhD

©

CONTENTS

PART I: A Review of the Premises	Page
Introduction	5
The Autographs	6
Early Recognition	8
The apostolic period	9
The second century	10
Were Early Christians Careful?	13
The apostles	14
The early fathers	14
Irenaeus	15
Tertullian	15
Who Was Best Qualified?	16
Access to the Autographs	16
Proficiency in the source language	17
The strength of the Church	18
Attitude toward the Text	20
Was the Transmission Normal?	21
The normal transmission	22
The abnormal transmission	23
Most damage done by 200 A.D.	24
The aberrant text forms	25
The Stream of Transmission	25
What Is the Actual Evidence?	30
The uncials	30
The cursives	36
Concluding Remarks	37
 PART II: The Best Line of Transmission	
Introduction	40
Family 35 Profile for the Whole New Testament	43
Copyist Care Quotient	63
f ³⁵ in Mark—raw data	65
A representative case	68
Incredibly careful transmission	69
Incredibly Careful Transmission	71
Performance of f ³⁵ MSS in the Thessalonian epistles	71
Performance of f ³⁵ MSS in 2 & 3 John and Jude	75

The Best Complete New Testament	77
Concerning the Text of the <i>Pericope Adulterae</i>	83
M ⁷ profile	83
M ⁶ profile	84
M ⁵ profile	85
Unambiguous M ⁷ (f ³⁵) representatives = 245 MSS	86
The Divine Preservation of the Original Wording of the General Epistles	88
Performance of f ³⁵ MSS in individual books for the General Epistles	89
Interpretation	91
But Is the Archetypal Text of Family 35 the Autograph?	93
PART III: Some Residual Questions	
Is Family 35 Ancient?	95
The Dating of K ^r Revisited	96
Early Uncial Support for Family 35 in the General Epistles	102
When Is a Recension?	104
An Alexandrian recension?	105
A Byzantine recension?	106
Mt. Athos	107
Mt. Sinai	108
Megistis Lavras	109
An f ³⁵ (K ^r) recension?	111
Down with Canards!	112
Archetype in the General Epistles—f ³⁵ yes, K ^x no	119
James	119
1 Peter	120
2 Peter	122
1 John	122
2 & 3 John and Jude	123
‘ <i>Concordia Discors</i> ’ and f ³⁵ Minority Readings in the General Epistles	124
James	124
1 Peter	128
2 Peter	132
1 John	135
APPENDIX	
“Accumulated Errors of Fourteen Centuries”	139
f ³⁵ Subgroups in the General Epistles	148
Group 1	149
Group 2	150

Down with Forgery!	153
K. Aland on Egypt	154
Eusebius (Caesarea)	154
Jerome (Bethlehem)	155
Addendum	155
Is NT Textual Criticism a Science?	155
A bit of relevant history	156
The nature of a scientific exercise	159
The transmission of the Text	162
The 'crux' of a 'lost' Original	164
The Root Cause for the Continuous Defection from Biblical Infallibility and Consequent Objective Authority	167
A bit of relevant history	167
Why the defection is continuous	171
Is there a way to stop the defection?	174
Vehicles for promoting the truth	174
A convincing presentation	175
Neutralizing the interference	178
The 'crux' of a 'lost' Original	183

PART I: A Review of the Premises

Introduction

If the Sovereign Creator exists, and if He has addressed a written revelation to our race, then nothing is more important for us than to know what He said (with a view to obeying it, if we are smart). This because such a revelation will have objective authority over us (although the Creator gives us the option of rejecting that authority [but due regard should be given to the consequences]). The enemy has always understood this better than most of us, and began his attacks early on—“Yea, hath God said, . . .?” (Genesis 3:1). Of course many books have been written, pro and con, and I will here content myself with declaring these as presuppositions that I bring to my task: the Sovereign Creator exists, and He has addressed a written revelation to our race.

The discipline of textual criticism (of whatever text) is predicated on the assumption/allegation/declaration that there is a legitimate doubt about the precise original wording of a text. No one does textual criticism on the 1611 King James Bible since copies of the original printing still exist. With reference to New Testament textual criticism, the crucial point at issue is the preservation of its Text. For any text to have objective authority, we have to know what it is.

It is often assumed by the ignorant and uninformed—even on a university campus—that textual criticism of the New Testament is supported by a superstitious faith in the Bible as a book dictated in miraculous fashion by God. That is not true. Textual criticism has never existed for those whose New Testament is one of miracle, mystery, and authority. A New Testament created under those auspices would have been handed down under them and would have no need of textual criticism.¹

Thus wrote Colwell in 1952. In 1948 he was even more antagonistic.² In simple terms his argument went like this: If God had inspired the New Testament text, He would have preserved it; He did not preserve it, so therefore He did not inspire it. I tend to agree with his logical inference [if his facts were correct], only I propose to turn the tables: It is demonstrable that God preserved the New Testament Text, so therefore He must have inspired it! I consider that the preservation of the NT Text is a strong argument for its inspiration, and since it is inspiration that gives it its authority, the two doctrines go hand in hand.³ Of course my use of the term ‘demonstrable’ is the red flag here; anyone who has not read my recent work could argue that I am begging the question.

Objective authority depends on verifiable meaning; if a reader/hearer can give any meaning he chooses to a message, any authority it ends up having for him will be relative and subjective (the ‘neo-orthodox’ approach). As a linguist (PhD) I affirm that the fundamental principle of communication is this: both the speaker/writer and the hearer/reader must respect the norms of language, in particular those of the specific code being used. If the encoder violates the rules, he will be deceiving the decoder (deliberately, if he knows what he is doing). If the decoder violates the rules, he will misrepresent the encoder (deliberately,

¹ E.C. Colwell, *What is the Best New Testament?* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 8.

² Colwell, “Biblical Criticism: Lower and Higher”, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXVII (1948), 10-11.

³ I consider also that the preservation of the NT Text is a strong argument for its canonicity. Why did God preserve only the 27 books that form that canon, no more, no less, no others?

if he knows what he is doing). In either event communication is damaged; the extent of the damage will depend on the circumstances.

Several times the Lord Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of the Truth”, and Titus 1:2 affirms that God cannot lie—it is one thing He cannot do, being contrary to His essence; “He cannot deny Himself” (2 Timothy 2:13). It should be obvious to one and all that the Sovereign will not take kindly to being called a liar. To interpret the Sacred Text in a way that is not faithful to the rules of Hebrew and Greek, respectively, is to ascribe to the Author the intention of deceiving us, is to call Him a liar—not smart. But to interpret the Text, we must have it, so I return to the subject of preservation. I invite attention to the following evidence, in relief of the term ‘demonstrable’.

The Autographs

When I speak of the divine preservation of the New Testament Text, I am referring to the precise wording of the original documents, the Autographs. When I speak of preservation, I am presuming divine inspiration; they are logically interdependent. Why would God inspire a written revelation if He was not going to preserve it? Why would God preserve writings that He had not inspired? I consider that the preservation of the NT Text is perhaps the strongest argument in favor of its inspired nature. The same holds true for the precise selection of books that make up the NT Canon. Since I consider that Matthew’s Gospel was the first NT book to be released to the public (‘published’), I will begin with it.

By the time that Matthew 'published' his Gospel in AD 38,¹ the production of books in the Roman Empire was widespread, but there was no 'copyright'. As soon as a book was turned loose it became 'public domain', anyone could use it and change it. Now then, if the Holy Spirit gave thought to protecting the works that He was inspiring, protecting against free editing, what could He do? I suggest that the most obvious way would be to have those works 'published' in the form of multiple copies. Today the first run of a book will usually be thousands of copies, but in those days each copy had to be handwritten (manuscript).

A book the size of Matthew's Gospel would represent a considerable investment of time and effort, as well as papyrus and ink. I believe the NT writings were prepared in book form from the first (not scroll), and the material used was probably papyrus.² However, papyrus cannot stand a lot of handling, and by the year 38 there were many Christian congregations just in the Jewish territory, not to mention elsewhere. If the Holy Spirit intended that the NT writings should have a wide circulation, which would seem to be obvious, it would be necessary to start out with multiple copies. A single copy of Matthew would be falling apart before it got to the twentieth congregation (if on papyrus).

But why do I insist on papyrus instead of parchment? Well, a single copy of Matthew would represent around fifteen sheep or goats; on that basis, who could afford multiple copies? That said, however, the master copy may indeed have been done on parchment, for two reasons: if a master copy was to be kept, for quality control, it should be on durable material; if multiple copies of the master copy were to be made before turning it loose to the public, a master copy on papyrus could not last.

¹ The colophones in 50% of the MSS, including Family 35, say that Matthew was 'published' eight years after the ascension of the Christ. Since Jesus ascended in 30 AD, Matthew was released in 38. The colophones say that Mark was published two years later (40), and Luke another five years later (45), and John in 62.

² "Bring the books, especially the parchments" (2 timothy 4:13). We may gather from this that parchment was already in use, but the 'books' were presumably on papyrus; otherwise, why the contrast?

The idea of publishing a book in the form of multiple copies may be inferred from the Epistles. 2 Corinthians was written to “the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia” (verse 1). How many congregations would there have been “in all Achaia”? Was Paul thinking of multiple copies? 1 Corinthians was addressed to “all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (verse 2). Now how many copies would **that** take? Galatians was written to “the churches of Galatia” (verse 2). Could a single copy get to all of them?

Consider the case of Peter’s first letter: it is addressed to believers in “Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia” (verse 1). Well now, what basis could Peter (apostle to the circumcised, Galatians 2:8) have for writing to people in those places? Probably a good number of the older leaders had been with Peter at Pentecost, and had sat under his ministry until the persecution under Saul sent them packing back home, presumably (Acts 8:4). Notice that the list of places in Acts 2:9-11 includes the following places in Asia Minor: Asia, Cappadocia, Pamphylia, Phrygia and Pontus. Three of the five are in Peter’s list, and we need not assume that his list was exhaustive; for that matter, the list in Acts 2:9-11 is probably not exhaustive.

Have you ever looked at a map to see the location of Peter’s five provinces? They basically represent the whole of Asia Minor (today’s Turkey)! ‘Asia’ seems to have been used in different ways. Acts 27:2 has Asia including Cilicia and Pamphylia (verse 5). The glorified Christ put the seven churches in Asia (Revelation 1:4). In Acts 16:6 the term seems to refer to a more limited area, which, however, presumably included Ephesus, to which Paul returned later. Proconsular Asia included Mysia and Phrygia. Now how many congregations would there have been in all of Asia Minor? And how could a single copy get around to all of them? If the letter was written on papyrus (as seems likely—cheaper, more abundant) it would be falling apart by the time it got to the twentieth congregation, if not before (papyrus cannot stand all that much handling).

Now let us just suppose, for the sake of the argument, that Peter sent five copies of his letter, one to each province. What would the implications be for the transmission of its Text? It means that you multiply the process and progress of transmission by five! It means that you have the beginnings of a ‘majority text’ very early on. It means that the basic integrity of the text would be guaranteed (the more so if God was superintending the process). If Peter sent out more than five copies, so much the more. And what about James; how many copies would it take to reach “the twelve tribes that are in the dispersion” (verse 1)? (Does not the very term ‘dispersion’ suggest that they were widely scattered? And what if the ‘twelve tribes’ is literal?) Peter’s second letter does not list the five provinces, but 3:1 would appear to indicate that he was targeting the same area.

To see that I did not pull the idea of multiple copies out of thin air, let’s consider 2 Peter 1:12-15. Verses 12 & 13 refer to repeated reminders while he is still in his ‘tent’, which would be his own ongoing activity; so why the ‘moreover’ in verse 15? In the NKJV verse 15 reads: “Moreover, I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease”. Well, how can you ‘ensure’ that someone will ‘always have a reminder’ of something? It seems clear to me that the something has to be written down; a reminder has to be in writing, to be guaranteed. So what is Peter’s intention? He specifies “a reminder of these things”, so what are the ‘these things’? They are evidently the things he will discuss in

this letter. But he must be referring to something more than the initial draft of the letter (or the verse becomes meaningless)—hence, multiple copies.¹

If Peter wrote his second letter under divine inspiration, then 1:15 is inspired, and in that event the idea of multiple copies came from God. It would be an efficient means of preserving the Text and guaranteeing its integrity down through the years of transmission. The churches in Asia Minor could always cross check with one another whenever a doubt arose or need required. If it was God's idea that a small letter be 'published' in the form of multiple copies, then how much more the larger books. Obviously God knew what He was doing, so the practice would have begun with the very first NT book, Matthew.²

The idea is so good that it became the norm, the more so if it was a divine order. I believe all the NT books were released in the form of multiple copies, with the exception of the letters addressed to individuals. (Since Luke and Acts are addressed to an individual, they also may have started out as a single copy, unless Theophilus was a 'benefactor' who was financing the multiple copies. Luke and Acts are the two longest books of the NT, and multiple copies of them would represent a significant financial investment.) Again I say, the idea is so good, I would not be surprised if once they got it the churches would set about making multiple copies of other writings they considered to be inspired, such as letters to individuals. A 'majority text' would be well established throughout the Aegean area (Greece and Asia Minor) already in the first century. The 'heartland of the Church' (to use K. Aland's phrase) simply kept on using and copying that form of text—hence the mass of Byzantine MSS that have come down to us.

Early Recognition³

Naturalistic critics like to assume that the New Testament writings were not recognized as Scripture when they first appeared and thus, through the consequent carelessness in transcription, the text was confused and the original wording 'lost' (in the sense that no one knew for sure what it was) at the very start. Thus Colwell said: "Most of the manuals and

¹ It was Mike Loehrer, a pastor in California, www.michaelcannonloehrer.com, who called 2 Peter 1:12-15 to my attention and got me started thinking about it. With reference to verse 15 he wrote me the following: "Could choosing to use *mneme* with *poieo* in the middle voice mean to ensure a way of always being able to validate a memory? In those days most people could not afford their own copy of a writing, and the church would no doubt become the repository of an autograph anyway. The usual way of getting the Scripture back then was by committing it to memory when hearing it during the public reading. Having multiple autographs in multiple locations would definitely ensure a way of validating a memory. Even if the leaders of a church or synagogue were imprisoned and their autograph was seized or destroyed, they could rest assured that they could locate another autograph to validate their memory of the way a verse or passage was actually written."

The idea of validating a memory is as interesting as it is suggestive. Peter's use of *μνημη*, basically reflexive, with *ποiew* in the middle voice, makes Mike's suggestion a reasonable one, as it seems to me. It goes along with the multiple copies. Irenaeus puzzled over verse 15 and came up with the suggestion that Peter intended to get copies of Mark's Gospel to those regions. Evidently the idea of multiple copies was not strange to him. And how about other books?

² Quite apart from the idea of 'publishing' via multiple copies, consider what would happen when a congregation received a copy of 1 Peter, James, or any of Paul's Epistles, accompanied by the instruction that they had to pass it on. If you were one of the elders of that congregation, what would you do? I would most certainly make a copy for us to keep. Wouldn't you? The point is, as soon as an inspired book began to circulate, the proliferation of copies began at once. And that means that a 'majority text' also began at once!

³ From this point on, this Part I is basically a reproduction (with a few embellishments) of Chapter 5 in my book, *The Identity of the New Testament Text IV*, available from Amazon.com, as well as from my site, www.prunch.org.

handbooks now in print (including mine!) will tell you that these variations were the fruit of careless treatment which was possible because the books of the New Testament had not yet attained a strong position as 'Bible'.¹ And Hort had said:

Textual purity, as far as can be judged from the extant literature, attracted hardly any interest. There is no evidence to show that care was generally taken to choose out for transcription the exemplars having the highest claims to be regarded as authentic, if indeed the requisite knowledge and skill were forthcoming.²

Rather than take Hort's word for it, prudence calls for a review of the premises. The place to start is at the beginning, when the apostles were still penning the Autographs.

The apostolic period

It is clear that the apostle Paul, at least, considered his writings to be authoritative—see Romans 16:26,³ 1 Corinthians 2:13 and 14:37, Galatians 1:6-**12**, Ephesians 3:4-6, Colossians 1:25-26, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Thessalonians 2:15 and 3:6-**14**. And it is reasonable to infer from Colossians 4:16 and 1 Thessalonians 5:27 that he expected his writings to have a wider audience than just the particular church addressed. In fact, in Galatians 1:2 he addresses "the churches of Galatia"; not to mention 2 Corinthians 1:1, "all the saints in Achaia", and 1 Corinthians 1:2, "all who in every place"! John also is plain enough—Revelation 1:1-3 and 21:5. And so is Peter—1 Peter 1:12, 22-25 and 2 Peter 3:2. Both Paul (Romans 16:25-6, Ephesians 3:4-5) and Peter (1 Peter 1:12, 25; 2 Peter 3:2) declare that a number of people are writing Scripture in their day, presumably including themselves. I take it that in 1:3 Luke claims divine authority—"having faithfully followed all things from Above".⁴

In 1 Timothy 5:18 Paul puts the Gospel of Luke (10:7) on the same level as Deuteronomy (25:4), calling them both "Scripture". Taking the traditional and conservative point of view, 1 Timothy is generally thought to have been written some fifteen years after Luke. Luke was recognized and declared by apostolic authority to be Scripture not very long after it came off the press, so to speak. For a man who was once a strict Pharisee to put Luke (still alive) on a level with Moses is astounding; it would have required the direction of the Holy Spirit.

In 2 Peter 3:15-16, Peter puts the Epistles of Paul on the same level as "the other Scriptures". Although some had been out for perhaps fifteen years, the ink was scarcely dry on others, and perhaps 2 Timothy had not yet been penned when Peter wrote. Paul's writings were recognized and declared by apostolic authority to be Scripture as soon as they appeared. In 1 Corinthians 15:4, "the Scriptures" presumably refers to the Gospels. In John 2:22 I would translate, "so they believed the Scripture, even the word that Jesus had spoken"—what Jesus said in John 2:19 was already circulating as 'Scripture' in Matthew 26:61 and 27:40 (when John wrote).

¹ Colwell, *What is the Best New Testament?*, p. 53. [He subsequently changed his mind.]

² B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (2 vols.; London: Macmillan and Co., 1881), II, "Introduction", p. 9. Cf. p. 7. It is clear that Hort regarded the "extant literature" as representative of the textual picture in the early centuries. This gratuitous and misleading idea continues to be an important factor in the thinking of some scholars today.

³ According to 95% of the Greek manuscripts, the correct position for 16:24-26 is 14:24-26, while the wording remains the same.

⁴ The normal, basic meaning of *ἀνωθεν* is "from up/above"; since that meaning fits here perfectly well, I see no reason to appeal to a secondary meaning.

Clement of Rome, whose first letter to the Corinthians is usually dated about A.D. 96, made liberal use of Scripture, appealing to its authority, and used New Testament material right alongside Old Testament material. Clement quoted Psalm 118:18 and Hebrews 12:6 side by side as "the holy word" (56:3-4).¹ He ascribes 1 Corinthians to "the blessed Paul the apostle" and says of it, "with true inspiration he wrote to you" (47:1-3). He clearly quotes from Hebrews, 1 Corinthians and Romans and possibly from Matthew, Acts, Titus, James and 1 Peter. Here is the bishop of Rome, before the close of the first century, writing an official letter to the church at Corinth wherein a selection of New Testament books are recognized and declared by episcopal authority to be Scripture, including Hebrews (and involving at least five different authors).

The Epistle of Barnabas, variously dated from A.D. 70 to 135, says in 4:14, "let us be careful lest, as it is written, it should be found with us that 'many are called but few chosen'." The reference seems to be to Matthew 22:14 (or 20:16) and the phrase "as it is written" may fairly be taken as a technical expression referring to Scripture. In 5:9 there is a quote from Matthew 9:13 (or Mark 2:17 or Luke 5:32). In 13:7 there is a loose quote from Romans 4:11-12, which words are put in God's mouth. Similarly, in 15:4 we find: "Note, children, what 'he ended in six days' means. It means this: that the Lord will make an end of everything in six thousand years, for a day with Him means a thousand years. And He Himself is my witness, saying: 'Behold, the day of the Lord shall be as a thousand years'."²

The author, whoever he was, is clearly claiming divine authorship for this quote which appears to be from 2 Peter 3:8.³ In other words, 2 Peter is here regarded to be Scripture, as well as Matthew and Romans. Barnabas also has possible allusions to 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, and 1 Peter.

The second century

The seven letters of Ignatius (c. A.D. 110) contain probable allusions to Matthew, John, Romans, 1 Corinthians and Ephesians (in his own letter to the Ephesians Ignatius says they are mentioned in "all the epistles of Paul"—a bit of hyperbole, but he was clearly aware of a Pauline corpus), and possible allusions to Luke, Acts, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, but very few are clear quotations and even they are not identified as such.

Polycarp, writing to the Philippian church (c. 115 A.D.?), weaves an almost continuous string of clear quotations and allusions to New Testament writings. His heavy use of Scripture is reminiscent of Clement of Rome; however, Clement used mostly the Old Testament while Polycarp usually used the New. There are perhaps fifty clear quotations taken from Matthew,

¹ I am aware that it could be Proverbs 3:12 (LXX) rather than Hebrews 12:6. Clement quotes from both books repeatedly throughout the letter, so they are equal candidates on that score. But, Clement agrees verbatim with Hebrews while Proverbs (LXX) differs in one important word. Further, the main point of Clement's chapter 56 is that correction is to be received graciously and as from the Lord, which is also the point of Hebrews 12:3-11. Since Clement evidently had both books in front of him (in the next chapter he quotes nine consecutive verses, Proverbs 1:23-31) the verbatim agreement with Hebrews is significant. If he deliberately chose the wording of Hebrews over that of Proverbs, what might that imply about their rank?

² I have used the translation done by Francis Glimm in *The Apostolic Fathers* (New York: Cima Publishing Co., Inc., 1947), belonging to the set, *The Fathers of the Church*, ed. Ludwig Schopp.

³ J.V. Bartlett says of the formulae of citation used in Barnabas to introduce quotations from Scripture, "the general result is an absolute doctrine of inspiration", but he is unwilling to consider that 2 Peter is being used. Oxford Society of Historical Research, *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), pp. 2, 15.

Luke, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, 1 and 2 Peter, and 1 John, and many allusions including to Mark, Hebrews, James, and 2 and 3 John. (The only NT writer not included is Jude! But remember that the above refers to only one letter—if Polycarp wrote other letters he may well have quoted Jude.) **Please note that the idea of NT 'canon' evidently already existed in 115 A.D., and Polycarp's 'canon' was quite similar to ours.**

His attitude toward the New Testament writings is clear from 12:1: "I am sure that you are well trained in the sacred Scriptures, . . . Now, as it is said in these Scriptures: 'Be angry and sin not,' and 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.' Blessed is he who remembers this."¹ Both parts of the quotation could come from Ephesians 4:26 but since Polycarp split it up he may have been referring to Psalm 4:5 (LXX) in the first half. In either case he is declaring Ephesians to be "sacred Scripture". A further insight into his attitude is found in 3:1-2.

Brethren, I write you this concerning righteousness, not on my own initiative, but because you first invited me. For neither I, nor anyone like me, is able to rival the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who, when living among you, carefully and steadfastly taught the word of truth face to face with his contemporaries and, when he was absent, wrote you letters. By the careful perusal of his letters you will be able to strengthen yourselves in the faith given to you, "which is the mother of us all", . . .²

(This from one who was perhaps the most respected bishop in Asia Minor, in his day. He was martyred in A.D. 156.)

The so-called second letter of Clement of Rome is usually dated before A.D. 150 and seems clearly to quote from Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, Hebrews, James, and 1 Peter, with possible allusions to 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation. After quoting and discussing a passage from the Old Testament, the author goes on to say in 2:4, "Another Scripture says: 'I came not to call the just, but sinners'" (Matthew 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32). Here is another author who recognized the New Testament writings to be Scripture.

Two other early works, the *Didache* and the letter to Diognetus, employ New Testament writings as being authoritative but without expressly calling them Scripture. The *Didache* apparently quotes from Matthew, Luke, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, and 1 Peter and has possible allusions to Acts, Romans, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians and Revelation. The letter to Diognetus quotes from Acts, 1 and 2 Corinthians while alluding to Mark, John, Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 Timothy, Titus, 1 Peter and 1 John.

Another early work—the Shepherd of Hermas—widely used in the second and third centuries, has fairly clear allusions to Matthew, Mark, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Hebrews, and especially James.

From around the middle of the second century fairly extensive works by Justin Martyr (martyred in 165) have come down to us. His "Dialogue with Trypho" shows a masterful knowledge of the Old Testament to which he assigns the highest possible authority, evidently holding to a dictation view of inspiration—in *Trypho* 34 he says, "to persuade you that you have not understood anything of the Scriptures, I will remind you of another psalm, dictated

¹ Francis Glimm, again.

² *Ibid.*

to David by the Holy Spirit."¹ The whole point of *Trypho* is to prove that Jesus is Christ and God and therefore what He said and commanded was of highest authority.

In *Apol.* i.66 Justin says, "For the apostles in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, thus handed down what was commanded them. . . ."² And in *Trypho* 119 he says that just as Abraham believed the voice of God, "in like manner we, having believed God's voice spoken by the apostles of Christ. . . ."

It also seems clear from *Trypho* 120 that Justin considered New Testament writings to be Scripture. Of considerable interest is an unequivocal reference to the book of Revelation in *Trypho* 81. "And further, there was a certain man with us whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believe in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem."³

Justin goes right on to say, "Just as our Lord also said", and quotes Luke 20:35, so evidently he considered Revelation to be authoritative. (While on the subject of Revelation, in 165 Melito, Bishop of Sardis, wrote a commentary on the book.)

A most instructive passage occurs in *Apol.* i.67.

And on the day called Sunday there is a meeting in one place of those who live in cities or the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has finished, the president in a discourse urges and invites us to the imitation of these noble things.⁴

Whether or not the order suggests that the Gospels were preferred to the Prophets, it is clear that they both were considered to be authoritative and equally enjoined upon the hearers. Notice further that each assembly must have had its own copy of the apostles' writings to read from, and that such reading took place every week.

Athenagorus, in his "Plea", written in early 177, quotes Matthew 5:28 as Scripture: ". . . we are not even allowed to indulge in a lustful glance. For, says the Scripture, 'He who looks at a woman lustfully, has already committed adultery in his heart'" (32).⁵ He similarly treats Matthew 19:9, or Mark 10:11, in 33.

Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, in his treatise to Autolytus, quotes 1 Timothy 2:1 and Romans 13:7 as "the Divine Word" (iii.14); quotes from the fourth Gospel, saying that John was "inspired by the Spirit" (ii.22); Isaiah and "the Gospel" are mentioned in one paragraph as Scripture (iii.14), and he insists in several passages that the writers never contradicted each

¹ I have used the translation in Vol. I of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed., A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956).

² I have used the translation by E.R. Hardy in *Early Christian Fathers*, ed., C.C. Richardson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953).

³ Roberts and Donaldson, again.

⁴ E.R. Hardy, again. His careful study of the early Christian literary papyri has led C.H. Roberts to conclude: "This points to the careful and regular use of the scriptures by the local communities" (*Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* [London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979], p. 25). He also infers from P. Oxy. iii. 405 that a copy of Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*, written in Lyons, was brought to Oxyrhynchus within a very few years after it was written (*Ibid.*, pp. 23, 53), eloquent testimony to the extent of the traffic among the early churches.

⁵ I have used the translation by C.C. Richardson in *Early Christian Fathers*.

other: "The statements of the Prophets and of the Gospels are found to be consistent, because all were inspired by the one Spirit of God" (ii.9; ii.35; iii.17).¹

The surviving writings of Irenaeus (died in 202), his major work *Against Heretics* being written about 185, are about equal in volume to those of all the preceding Fathers put together.

His testimony to the authority and inspiration of Holy Scripture is clear and unequivocal. It pervades the whole of his writings; and this testimony is more than ordinarily valuable because it must be regarded as directly representing three churches at least, those of Lyons, Asia Minor, and Rome. The authoritative use of both Testaments is clearly laid down.²

Irenaeus stated that the apostles taught that God is the Author of both Testaments (*Against Heretics* IV. 32.2) and evidently considered the New Testament writings to form a second Canon. He quoted from every chapter of Matthew, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians, from all but one or two chapters of Luke, John, Romans, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, from most chapters of Mark (including the last twelve verses), Acts, 2 Corinthians, and Revelation, and from every other book except Philemon and 3 John. These two books are so short that Irenaeus may not have had occasion to refer to them in his extant works—it does not necessarily follow that he was ignorant of them or rejected them. **Evidently the dimensions of the New Testament Canon recognized by Irenaeus are very close to what we hold today.**

From the time of Irenaeus on there can be no doubt concerning the attitude of the Church toward the New Testament writings—they are Scripture. Tertullian (in 208) said of the church at Rome, "the law and the prophets she unites in one volume with the writings of evangelists and apostles" (*Prescription against Heretics*, 36).

Were Early Christians Careful?

It has been widely affirmed that the early Christians were either unconcerned or unable to watch over the purity of the text. (Recall Hort's words given above.) Again a review of the premises is called for. Many of the first believers had been devout Jews who had an ingrained reverence and care for the Old Testament Scriptures which extended to the very jots and tittles. This reverence and care would naturally be extended to the New Testament Scriptures.

Why should modern critics assume that the early Christians, in particular the spiritual leaders among them, were inferior in integrity or intelligence? A Father's quoting from memory, or tailoring a passage to suit his purpose in sermon or letter, by no means implies that he would take similar liberties when transcribing a book or corpus. Ordinary honesty would require him to produce a faithful copy. Are we to assume that everyone who made copies of New Testament books in those early years was a knave, or a fool? Paul was certainly as intelligent a man as any of us. If Hebrews was written by someone else, here was another man of high spiritual insight and intellectual power. There was Barnabas and Apollos and Clement and Polycarp, etc., etc. The Church has had men of reason and intelligence all down through the years. Starting out with what they **knew** to be the pure text, the earliest Fathers did not need

¹ Taken from G.D. Barry, *The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture* (New York: The McMillan Company, 1919), p. 52.

² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

to be textual critics. They had only to be reasonably honest and careful. But is there not good reason to believe they would be **especially** watchful and careful?

The apostles

Not only did the apostles themselves declare the New Testament writings to be Scripture, which would elicit reverence and care in their treatment, they expressly warned the believers to be on their guard against false teachers—see Acts 20:27-32, Galatians 1:6-12, 2 Timothy 3:1-4:4, 2 Peter 2:1-2, 1 John 2:18-19, 2 John 7-11, Jude 3-4 and 16-19. Peter's statement concerning the "twisting" Paul's words were receiving (2 Peter 3:16) suggests there was awareness and concern as to the text and the way it was being handled. I recognize that the Apostles were focusing on the interpretation rather than the copying of the text, and yet, since any alteration of the text may result in a different interpretation we may reasonably infer that their concern for the truth would include the faithful transmission of the text. Indeed, we could scarcely ask for a clearer expression of this concern than that given in Revelation 22:18-19; since it is the glorified Christ who is speaking, would not any true follower of His pay careful attention? Sovereign Jesus clearly expressed this protective concern early in His earthly ministry. In Matthew 5:19 we read: "whoever annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so . . ." Note, "one of the least"; the Lord's concern extends down to "the least". 2 Thessalonians 2:2 is evidently concerned with authenticity.

The early Fathers

The early Fathers furnish a few helpful clues as to the state of affairs in their day. The letters of Ignatius contain several references to a considerable traffic between the churches (of Asia Minor, Greece and Rome) by way of messengers (often official), which seems to indicate a deep sense of solidarity binding them together, and a wide circulation of news and attitudes—a problem with a heretic in one place would soon be known all over, etc. That there was strong feeling about the integrity of the Scriptures is made clear by Polycarp (7:1), "Whoever perverts the sayings of the Lord . . . that one is the firstborn of Satan". Present-day critics may not like Polycarp's terminology, but for him to use such strong language makes clear that he was not merely aware and concerned; he was exercised.

Similarly, Justin Martyr says (*Apol.* i.58), "the wicked demons have also put forward Marcion of Pontus". Again, such strong language makes clear that he was aware and concerned. And in *Trypho* xxxv he says of heretics teaching doctrines of the spirits of error, that fact "causes us who are disciples of the true and pure doctrine of Jesus Christ to be more faithful and steadfast in the hope announced by Him."

It seems obvious that heretical activity would have precisely the effect of putting the faithful on their guard and forcing them to define in their own minds what they were going to defend. Thus Marcion's truncated canon evidently stirred the faithful to define the true canon. But Marcion also altered the wording of Luke and Paul's Epistles, and by their bitter complaints it is clear that the faithful were both aware and concerned. We may note in passing that the heretical activity also furnishes backhanded evidence that the New Testament writings were regarded as Scripture—why bother falsifying them if they had no authority?

Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth (168-176), complained that his own letters had been tampered with, and worse yet the Holy Scriptures also.

And they insisted that they had received a pure tradition. Thus Irenaeus said that the doctrine of the apostles had been handed down by the succession of bishops, being guarded and preserved, without any forging of the Scriptures, allowing neither addition nor curtailment, involving public reading without falsification (*Against Heretics* IV. 32:8).

Tertullian, also, says of his right to the New Testament Scriptures, "I hold sure title-deeds from the original owners themselves . . . I am the heir of the apostles. Just as they carefully prepared their will and testament, and committed it to a trust . . . even so I hold it."¹

Irenaeus

In order to ensure accuracy in transcription, authors would sometimes add at the close of their literary works an adjuration directed to future copyists. So, for example, Irenaeus attached to the close of his treatise *On the Ogdoad* the following note: "I adjure you who shall copy out this book, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by his glorious advent when he comes to judge the living and the dead, that you compare what you transcribe, and correct it carefully against this manuscript from which you copy; and also that you transcribe this adjuration and insert it in the copy."²

If Irenaeus took such extreme precautions for the accurate transmission of his own work, how much more would he be concerned for the accurate copying of the Word of God? In fact, he demonstrates his concern for the accuracy of the text by defending the traditional reading of a **single letter**. The question is whether John the Apostle wrote $\chi\xi\xi'$ (666) or $\chi\iota\xi'$ (616) in Revelation 13:18. Irenaeus asserts that 666 is found "in all the most approved and ancient copies" and that "those men who saw John face to face" bear witness to it. And he warns those who made the change (of a single letter) that "there shall be no light punishment upon him who either adds or subtracts anything from the Scripture" (xxx.1). Presumably Irenaeus is applying Revelation 22:18-19.

Considering Polycarp's intimacy with John, his personal copy of Revelation would most probably have been taken from the Autograph. And considering Irenaeus' veneration for Polycarp his personal copy of Revelation was probably taken from Polycarp's. Although Irenaeus evidently was no longer able to refer to the Autograph (not ninety years after it was written!) he was clearly in a position to identify a faithful copy and to declare with certainty the original reading—this in 186 A.D. Which brings us to Tertullian.

Tertullian

Around the year 208 he urged the heretics to

run over the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones of the apostles are still pre-eminent in their places, in which their own authentic writings (*authenticae*) are read, uttering the voice and representing the face of each of them severally. Achaia is very near you, (in which) you find Corinth. Since you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi; (and there too) you have the Thessalonians. Since you are able to cross to Asia, you get Ephesus. Since, moreover, you are close upon Italy, you have

¹ *Prescription against Heretics*, 37. I have used the translation done by Peter Holmes in Vol. III of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*.

² B.M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 21.

Rome, from which there comes even into our own hands the very authority (of the apostles themselves).¹

Some have thought that Tertullian was claiming that Paul's Autographs were still being read in his day (208), but at the very least he must mean they were using faithful copies. Was anything else to be expected? For example, when the Ephesian Christians saw the Autograph of Paul's letter to them getting tattered, would they not carefully execute an identical copy for their continued use, and which would have a declaration that it had been authenticated? Would they let the Autograph perish without making such a copy? (There must have been a constant stream of people coming either to make copies of their letter or to verify the correct reading.) I believe we are obliged to conclude that in the year 200 the Ephesian Church was still in a position to attest the original wording of her letter (and so for the others)—but this is coeval with P⁴⁶, P⁶⁶ and P⁷⁵!

Both Justin Martyr and Irenaeus claimed that the Church was spread throughout the whole earth, in their day—remember that Irenaeus, in 177, became bishop of Lyons, in **Gaul**, and he was not the first bishop in that area. Coupling this information with Justin's statement that the memoirs of the apostles were read each Sunday in the assemblies, it becomes clear that there must have been thousands of copies of the New Testament writings in use by 200 A.D. Each assembly would need at least one copy to read from, and there must have been private copies among those who could afford them.

We have objective historical evidence in support of the following propositions:

- The true text was never 'lost'.
- In A.D. 200 the exact original wording of the several books could still be verified and attested.
- There was therefore no need to practice textual criticism and any such effort would be spurious.

However, presumably some areas would be in a better position to protect and transmit the true text than others.

Who Was Best Qualified?

What factors would be important for guaranteeing, or at least facilitating, a faithful transmission of the text of the N.T. writings? I submit that there are four controlling factors: access to the Autographs, proficiency in the source language, the strength of the Church and an appropriate attitude toward the Text.

Access to the Autographs

This criterion probably applied for well less than a hundred years (the Autographs were presumably worn to a frazzle in that space of time) but it is highly significant to a proper understanding of the history of the transmission of the Text. Already by the year 100 there must have been many copies of the various books (some more than others) while it was certainly still possible to check a copy against the original, or a guaranteed copy, should a question arise.² The point is that there was a swelling stream of faithfully executed copies

¹ *Prescription against Heretics*, 36, using Holmes' translation.

² But see the Introduction to Part II below, where I suggest the possibility that the Autographs started out as multiple copies.

emanating from the holders of the Autographs to the rest of the Christian world. In those early years the producers of copies would know that the true wording could be verified, which would discourage them from taking liberties with the text.

However, distance would presumably be a factor—for someone in north Africa to consult the Autograph of Ephesians would be an expensive proposition, in both time and money. I believe we may reasonably conclude that in general the quality of copies would be highest in the area surrounding the Autograph and would gradually deteriorate as the distance increased. Important geographical barriers would accentuate the tendency.

So who held the Autographs? Speaking in terms of regions, Asia Minor may be safely said to have had twelve (John, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Philemon, 1 Peter, 1 and 2 and 3 John, and Revelation), Greece may be safely said to have had six (1 and 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Titus in Crete), Rome may be safely said to have had two (Mark and Romans)—as to the rest, Luke, Acts, and 2 Peter were probably held by either Asia Minor or Rome; Matthew and James by either Asia Minor or Palestine; Hebrews by Rome or Palestine; while it is hard to state even a probability for Jude it was quite possibly held by Asia Minor. Taking Asia Minor and Greece together, the Aegean area held the Autographs of at least eighteen (two-thirds of the total) and possibly as many as twenty-four of the twenty-seven New Testament books; Rome held at least two and possibly up to seven; Palestine may have held up to three (but in A.D. 70 they would have been sent away for safe keeping, quite possibly to Antioch); Alexandria (Egypt) held **none**. The Aegean region clearly had the best start, and Alexandria the worst—the text in Egypt could only be second hand, at best. On the face of it, we may reasonably assume that in the earliest period of the transmission of the NT Text the most reliable copies would be circulating in the region that held the Autographs. Recalling the discussion of Tertullian above, I believe we may reasonably extend this conclusion to A.D. 200 and beyond. So, in the year 200 someone looking for the best text of the NT would presumably go to the Aegean area; certainly not to Egypt.¹

Proficiency in the source language

As a linguist (PhD) and one who has dabbled in the Bible translation process for some years, I affirm that a 'perfect' translation is impossible. (Indeed, a tolerably reasonable approximation is often difficult enough to achieve—the semantic areas of the words simply do not match, or only in part.) It follows that any divine solicitude for the precise form of the NT Text would have to be mediated through the language of the Autographs—Koine Greek. Evidently ancient Versions (Syriac, Latin, Coptic) may cast a clear vote with reference to major variants, but precision is possible only in Greek (in the case of the NT). That by way of background, but our main concern here is with the copyists.

To copy a text by hand in a language you do not understand is a tedious exercise—it is almost impossible to produce a perfect copy (try it and see!). You virtually have to copy letter by letter and constantly check your place. (It is even more difficult if there is no space between words and no punctuation, as was the case with the NT Text in the early centuries.) But if you

¹ Aland states: "Egypt was distinguished from other provinces of the Church, so far as we can judge, by the early dominance of gnosticism". He further informs us that "at the close of the 2nd century" the Egyptian church was "dominantly gnostic" and then goes on to say: "The copies existing in the gnostic communities could not be used, because they were under suspicion of being corrupt". Now this is all very instructive—what Aland is telling us, in other words, is that up to A.D. 200 the textual tradition in Egypt **could not be trusted**. (K. and B. Aland, p. 59 and K. Aland, "The Text of the Church?", *Trinity Journal*, 1987, 8NS:138.)

cannot understand the text it is very difficult to remain alert. Consider the case of P⁶⁶. This papyrus manuscript is perhaps the oldest (c. 200) extant NT manuscript of any size (it contains most of John). It is one of the worst copies we have. It has an average of roughly two mistakes per verse—many being obvious mistakes, stupid mistakes, nonsensical mistakes. From the pattern of mistakes it is clear that the scribe copied syllable by syllable. I have no qualms in affirming that the person who produced P⁶⁶ did not know Greek. Had he understood the text he would not have made the number and sort of mistakes that he did.

Now consider the problem from God's point of view. To whom should He entrust the primary responsibility for the faithful transmission of the NT Text (recall 1 Chronicles 16:15)? If the Holy Spirit was going to take an active part in the process, where should He concentrate His efforts? Presumably fluent speakers of Greek would have the inside track, and areas where Greek would continue in active use would be preferred. For a faithful transmission to occur the copyists had to be proficient in Greek, and over the long haul. So where was Greek predominant? Evidently in Greece and Asia Minor; Greek is the mother tongue of Greece to this day (having changed considerably during the intervening centuries, as any living language must). The dominance of Greek in the Aegean area was guaranteed by the Byzantine Empire for many centuries; in fact, until the invention of printing. Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453; the Gutenberg Bible (Latin) was printed just three years later, while the first printed Greek New Testament appeared in 1516. (For those who believe in Providence, I would suggest that here we have a powerful case in point.)

How about Egypt? The use of Greek in Egypt was already declining by the beginning of the Christian era. Bruce Metzger observes that the Hellenized section of the population in Egypt "was only a fraction in comparison with the number of native inhabitants who used only the Egyptian languages".¹ By the third century the decline was evidently well advanced. I have already argued that the copyist who did P⁶⁶ (c. 200) did not know Greek. Now consider the case of P⁷⁵ (c. 220). E.C. Colwell analyzed P⁷⁵ and found about 145 itacisms plus 257 other singular readings, 25% of which are nonsensical. From the pattern of mistakes it is clear that the copyist who did P⁷⁵ copied letter by letter!² This means that he did not know Greek—when transcribing in a language you know you copy phrase by phrase, or at least word by word. K. Aland argues that before 200 the tide had begun to turn against the use of Greek in the areas that spoke Latin, Syriac or Coptic, and fifty years later the changeover to the local languages was well advanced.³

Again the Aegean Area is far and away the best qualified to transmit the Text with confidence and integrity. Note that even if Egypt had started out with a good text, already by the end of the 2nd century its competence to transmit the text was steadily deteriorating. In fact the early papyri (they come from Egypt) are demonstrably inferior in quality, taken individually, as well as exhibiting rather different types of text (they disagree among themselves).

The strength of the Church

This question is relevant to our discussion for two reasons. First, the law of supply and demand operates in the Church as well as elsewhere. Where there are many congregations and believers there will be an increased demand for copies of the Scriptures. Second, a

¹ B.M. Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 104.

² E.C. Colwell, "Scribal Habits in Early Papyri: A Study in the Corruption of the text", *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, ed. J.P. Hyatt (New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), pp. 374-76, 380.

³ K. and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), pp. 52-53.

strong, well established church will normally have a confident, experienced leadership—just the sort that would take an interest in the quality of their Scriptures and also be able to do something about it. So in what areas was the early Church strongest?

Although the Church evidently began in Jerusalem, the early persecutions and apostolic activity caused it to spread. The main line of advance seems to have been north into Asia Minor and west into Europe. If the selection of churches to receive the glorified Christ's "letters" (Revelation 2 and 3) is any guide, the center of gravity of the Church seems to have shifted from Palestine to Asia Minor by the end of the first century. (The destruction of Jerusalem by Rome's armies in A.D. 70 would presumably have been a contributing factor.) Kurt Aland agrees with Adolf Harnack that "about 180 the greatest concentration of churches was in Asia Minor and along the Aegean coast of Greece". He continues: "The overall impression is that the concentration of Christianity was in the East. . . . Even around A.D. 325 the scene was still largely unchanged. Asia Minor continued to be the heartland of the Church."¹ "The heartland of the Church"—so who else would be in a better position to certify the correct text of the New Testament?

What about Egypt? C.H. Roberts, in a scholarly treatment of the Christian literary papyri of the first three centuries, seems to favor the conclusion that the Alexandrian church was weak and insignificant to the Greek Christian world in the second century.² Aland states: "Egypt was distinguished from other provinces of the Church, so far as we can judge, by the early dominance of gnosticism."³ He further informs us that "at the close of the 2nd century" the Egyptian church was "dominantly gnostic" and then goes on to say: "The copies existing in the gnostic communities could not be used, because they were under suspicion of being corrupt".⁴ Now this is all very instructive—what Aland is telling us, in other words, is that up to A.D. 200 the textual tradition in Egypt **could not be trusted**. Aland's assessment here is most probably correct. Notice what Bruce Metzger says about the early church in Egypt:

Among the Christian documents which during the second century either originated in Egypt or circulated there among both the orthodox and the Gnostics are numerous apocryphal gospels, acts, epistles, and apocalypses. . . . There are also fragments of exegetical and dogmatic works composed by Alexandrian Christians, chiefly Gnostics, during the second century. . . . In fact, to judge by the comments made by Clement of Alexandria, almost every deviant Christian sect was represented in Egypt during the second century; Clement mentions the Valentinians, the Basilidians, the Marcionites, the Peratae, the Encratites, the Docetists, the Haimetites, the Cainites, the Ophites, the Simonians, and the Eutychites. What proportion of Christians in Egypt during the second century were orthodox is not known.⁵

It is almost enough to make one wonder whether Isaiah 30:1-3 might not be a prophecy about NT textual criticism!

But we need to pause to reflect on the implications of Aland's statements. He was a champion of the Egyptian ('Alexandrian') text-type, and yet he himself informs us that up to

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

² C.H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 42-43, 54-58.

³ K. and B. Aland, p. 59.

⁴ K. Aland, "The Text of the Church?", *Trinity Journal*, 1987, 8NS:138.

⁵ Metzger, *Early Versions*, p. 101.

A.D. 200 the textual tradition in Egypt could not be trusted and that by 200 the use of Greek had virtually died out there. So on what basis can he argue that the Egyptian text subsequently became the best? Aland also states that in the 2nd century, 3rd century, and into the 4th century Asia Minor continued to be "the heartland of the Church". This means that the superior qualifications of the Aegean area to protect, transmit and attest the N.T. Text carry over into the 4th century! It happens that Hort, Metzger and Aland (along with many others) have linked the "Byzantine" text-type to Lucian of Antioch, who died in 311. Now really, wouldn't a text produced by a leader in "the heartland of the Church" be better than whatever evolved in Egypt? Of course I ask the above question only to point out their inconsistency. The 'Byzantine' text-type existed long before Lucian.

Attitude toward the Text

Where careful work is required, the attitude of those to whom the task is entrusted is of the essence. Are they aware? Do they agree? If they do not understand the nature of the task, the quality will probably do down. If they understand but do not agree, they might even resort to sabotage—a damaging eventuality. In the case of the NT books we may begin with the question: Why would copies be made?

We have seen that the faithful recognized the authority of the NT writings from the start, so the making of copies would have begun at once. The authors clearly intended their writings to be circulated, and the quality of the writings was so obvious that the word would get around and each assembly would want a copy. That Clement and Barnabas quote and allude to a variety of NT books by the turn of the 1st century makes clear that copies were in circulation. A Pauline corpus was known to Peter before A.D. 70. Polycarp (XIII) c. 115, in answer to a request from the Philippian church, sent a collection of Ignatius' letters to them, possibly within five years after Ignatius wrote them. Evidently it was normal procedure to make copies and collections (of worthy writings) so each assembly could have a set. Ignatius referred to the free travel and exchange between the churches and Justin to the weekly practice of reading the Scriptures in the assemblies (they had to have copies).

A second question would be: What was the attitude of the copyists toward their work? We already have the essence of the answer. Being followers of Christ, and believing that they were dealing with Scripture, to a basic honesty would be added reverence in their handling of the Text, from the start. And to these would be added vigilance, since the Apostles had repeatedly and emphatically warned them against false teachers. As the years went by, assuming that the faithful were persons of at least average integrity and intelligence, they would produce careful copies of the manuscripts they had received from the previous generation, persons whom they trusted, being assured that they were transmitting the true text. There would be accidental copying mistakes in their work, but no deliberate changes. It is important to note that the earliest Christians did not need to be textual critics. Starting out with what they knew to be the pure text, they had only to be reasonably honest and careful. I submit that we have good reason for understanding that they were especially watchful and careful—this especially in the early decades.¹

¹ Having myself collated at least one book in some 70 MSS belonging to the line of transmission that I call Family 35, I have a perfect copy of at least 22 of the 27 NT books, copies made in the 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. For a copy to be perfect in the 14th century, all of its 'ancestors' had to be perfect, all the way back to the family archetype. I believe that the archetype of Family 35 is the Autograph, but if not, it must date back to the 3rd century, at least.

As time went on regional attitudes developed, not to mention regional politics. The rise of the so-called 'school of Antioch' is a relevant consideration. Beginning with Theophilus, a bishop of Antioch who died around 185, the Antiochians began insisting upon the literal interpretation of Scripture. The point is that a literalist is obliged to be concerned about the precise wording of the text since his interpretation or exegesis hinges upon it.

It is reasonable to assume that this 'literalist' mentality would have influenced the churches of Asia Minor and Greece and encouraged them in the careful and faithful transmission of the pure text that they had received. For example, the extant MSS of the Syriac Peshitta are unparalleled for their consistency. (By way of contrast, the 8,000+ MSS of the Latin Vulgate are remarkable for their extensive discrepancies, and in this they follow the example of the Old Latin MSS.) It is not unreasonable to suppose that the Antiochian antipathy toward the Alexandrian allegorical interpretation of Scripture would rather indispose them to view with favor any competing forms of the text coming out of Egypt. Similarly the Quarto-deciman controversy with Rome would scarcely enhance the appeal of any innovations coming from the West.

To the extent that the roots of the allegorical approach that flourished in Alexandria during the third century were already present, they would also be a negative factor. Since Philo of Alexandria was at the height of his influence when the first Christians arrived there, it may be that his allegorical interpretation of the O.T. began to rub off on the young church already in the first century. Since an allegorist is going to impose his own ideas on the text anyway, he would presumably have fewer inhibitions about altering it—precise wording would not be a high priority.

The school of literary criticism that existed at Alexandria would also be a negative factor, if it influenced the Church at all, and W.R. Farmer argues that it did. "But there is ample evidence that by the time of Eusebius the Alexandrian text-critical practices were being followed in at least some of the scriptoria where New Testament manuscripts were being produced. Exactly when Alexandrian text-critical principles were first used . . . is not known."¹ He goes on to suggest that the Christian school founded in Alexandria by Pantaenus, around 180, was bound to be influenced by the scholars of the great library of that city. The point is, the principles used in attempting to 'restore' the works of Homer would not be appropriate for the NT writings when appeal to the Autographs, or exact copies made from them, was still possible.

Conclusion

What answer do the "four controlling factors" give to our question? The four speak with united voice: "The Aegean area was the best qualified to protect, transmit and attest the true text of the NT writings." This was true in the 2nd century; it was true in the 3rd century; it continued to be true in the 4th century. And now we are ready to answer the question, "Was the transmission normal?", and to attempt to trace the history of the text.

Was the Transmission Normal?

Was the transmission normal? Yes and no. Assuming the faithful were persons of at least average integrity and intelligence they would produce reasonable copies of the manuscripts they had received from the previous generation, persons whom they trusted, being assured that they were transmitting the true text. There would be accidental copying mistakes in

¹ W.R. Farmer, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* (Cambridge: University Press, 1974), pp. 14-15. He cites B.H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1924), pp. 111, 122-23.

their work, but no deliberate changes. But there were others who expressed an interest in the New Testament writings, persons lacking in integrity, who made their own copies with malicious intent. There would be accidental mistakes in their work too, but also deliberate alteration of the text. I will trace first the normal transmission.

The normal transmission

We have seen that the faithful recognized the authority of the New Testament writings from the start—had they not they would have been rejecting the authority of the Apostles, and hence not been among the faithful. To a basic honesty would be added reverence in their handling of the text, from the start. And to these would be added vigilance, since the Apostles had repeatedly and emphatically warned them against false teachers.

With an ever-increasing demand and consequent proliferation of copies throughout the Graeco-Roman world and with the potential for verifying copies by having recourse to the centers still possessing the Autographs, the early textual situation was presumably highly favorable to the wide dissemination of MSS in close agreement with the original text. By the early years of the second century the dissemination of such copies can reasonably be expected to have been very widespread, with the logical consequence that the form of text they embodied would early become entrenched throughout the area of their influence.

The considerations just cited are crucial to an adequate understanding of the history of the transmission of the text because they indicate that a basic trend was established at the very beginning—a trend that would continue inexorably until the advent of a printed N.T. text. I say "inexorably" because, given a normal process of transmission, the science of statistical probability demonstrates that a text form in such circumstances could scarcely be dislodged from its dominant position—the probabilities against a competing text form ever achieving a majority attestation would be prohibitive no matter how many generations of MSS there might be.¹ It would take an extraordinary upheaval in the transmissional history to give currency to an aberrant text form. We know of no place in history that will accommodate such an upheaval.

The argument from probability would apply to secular writings as well as the New Testament and does not take into account any unusual concern for purity of text. I have argued, however, that the early Christians did have a special concern for their Scriptures and that this concern accompanied the spread of Christianity. Thus Irenaeus clearly took his concern for textual purity (which extended to a single letter) to Gaul and undoubtedly influenced the Christians in that area. The point is that the text form of the NT Autographs had a big advantage over that of any secular literature, so that its commanding position would become even greater than the argument from probability would suggest, and all the more so if the Autographs were 'published' as multiple copies. The rapid multiplication and spread of good copies would raise to absolutely prohibitive levels the chances against an opportunity for aberrant text forms to gain any kind of widespread acceptance or use.²

¹ The demonstration vindicating my assertion is in Appendix C of my book, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, available from Amazon.com as well as from my site, www.prunch.org.

² I have avoided introducing any argument based on the providence of God, up to this point, because not all accept such argumentation and because the superiority of the Byzantine Text can be demonstrated without recourse to it. Thus, I believe the argument from statistical probability given above is valid as it stands. However, while I have not argued on the basis of Providence, I wish the reader to understand that I personally do not think that the preservation of the true text was so mechanistic as the discussion above might suggest. From the evidence previously adduced, it seems clear that a great many variant readings (perhaps most of the

It follows that within a relatively few years after the writing of the NT books there came rapidly into existence a 'Majority' text whose form was essentially that of the Autographs themselves. This text form would, in the natural course of things, continue to multiply itself and in each succeeding generation of copying would continue to be exhibited in the mass of extant manuscripts. In short, it would have a 'normal' transmission. The law of supply and demand operates within the Church, as well as elsewhere. True believers would be far more interested in obtaining copies of the NT writings than people who were not. Opponents of Christianity, who might attempt to confuse the issue by producing altered copies, would have a much smaller 'market' for their work.

The use of such designations as "Syrian", "Antiochian", and "Byzantine" for the Majority Text reflects its general association with that region. I know of no reason to doubt that the "Byzantine" text is in fact the form of the text that was known and transmitted in the Aegean area from the beginning.

In sum, I believe that the evidence clearly favors that interpretation of the history of the text which sees the normal transmission of the text as centered in the Aegean region, the area that was best qualified, from every point of view, to transmit the text, from the very first. The result of that normal transmission is the "Byzantine" text-type. In every age, including the second and third centuries, it has been the traditional text.¹

So then, I claim that the NT text had a normal transmission, namely the fully predictable spread and reproduction of reliable copies of the Autographs from the earliest period down through the history of transmission until the availability of printed texts brought copying by hand to an end.

The abnormal transmission²

Turning now to the abnormal transmission, it no doubt commenced right along with the normal. The apostolic writings themselves contain strong complaints and warning against heretical and malicious activity. As Christianity spread and began to make an impact on the world, not everyone accepted it as 'good news'. Opposition of various sorts arose. Also, there came to be divisions within the larger Christian community—in the NT itself notice is taken of the beginnings of some of these tangents. In some cases faithfulness to an ideological (theological) position evidently became more important than faithfulness to the NT Text. Certain it is that Church Fathers who wrote during the second century complained bitterly

malicious ones) that existed in the second century simply have not survived—we have no extant witness to them. We may reasonably conclude that the early Christians were concerned and able watchdogs of the true text. I would like to believe that they were aided and abetted by the Holy Spirit. In that event, the security of the text is considerably greater than that suggested by probability alone, including the proposition that none of the original wording has been lost.

¹ Within the broad Byzantine stream there are dozens of rivulets (recall that F. Wisse isolated 36 groups, which included 70 subgroups), but the largest distinct line of transmission is Family 35, the main stream, and it was specifically this family that God used to preserve the precise original wording. For more on this please see Part II.

² I have been accused of inconsistency in that I criticize W-H for treating the NT like any other book and yet myself claim a "normal transmission" for the Majority Text. Not at all; I am referring to a normal transmission of an inspired Text, which W-H denied. I refer to believers copying a text that **they** believed to be inspired. Further, I also recognize an 'abnormal transmission', whereas W-H did not. Fee seriously distorts my position by ignoring my discussion of the abnormal transmission (G.D. Fee, "A Critique of W.N. Pickering's *The Identity of the New Testament Text: A Review Article*", *The Westminster Theological Journal*, XLI [Spring, 1979], pp. 404-08) and misstating my view of the normal transmission (*Ibid.*, p. 399). I hold that 95% of the variants, the obvious transcriptional errors, belong (for the most part) to the normal transmission, whereas most of the remaining 5%, the 'significant' variants, belong to the abnormal transmission.

about the deliberate alterations to the Text perpetrated by 'heretics'. Large sections of the extant writings of the early Fathers are precisely and exclusively concerned with combating the heretics. It is clear that during the second century, and possibly already in the first, such persons produced many copies of NT writings incorporating their alterations.¹ Some apparently were quite widely circulated, for a time. The result was a welter of variant readings, to confuse the uninformed and mislead the unwary. Such a scenario was totally predictable. If the NT is in fact God's Word then both God and Satan must have a lively interest in its fortunes. To approach the textual criticism of the NT without taking due account of that interest is to act irresponsibly.

1) *Most damage done by 200 A.D.*

It is generally agreed that most significant variants existed by the end of the second century. "The overwhelming majority of readings were created before the year 200", affirmed Colwell.² "It is no less true to fact than paradoxical in sound that the worst corruptions to which the New Testament has ever been subjected, originated within a hundred years after it was composed", said Scrivener decades before.³ Kilpatrick commented on the evidence of the earliest Papyri.

Let us take our two manuscripts of about this date [A.D. 200] which contain parts of John, the Chester Beatty Papyrus and the Bodmer Papyrus. They are together extant for about seventy verses. Over these seventy verses they differ some seventy-three times apart from mistakes.

Further in the Bodmer Papyrus the original scribe has frequently corrected what he first wrote. At some places he is correcting his own mistakes but at others he substitutes one form of phrasing for another. At about seventy-five of these substitutions both alternatives are known from other manuscripts independently. The scribe is in fact replacing one variant reading by another at some seventy places so that we may conclude that already in his day there was variation at these points.⁴

G. Zuntz also recognized all of this. "Modern criticism stops before the barrier of the second century; the age, so it seems, of unbounded liberties with the text".⁵

Kilpatrick goes on to argue that the creation of new variants ceased by about 200 A.D. because it became impossible to 'sell' them. He discusses some of Origen's attempts at introducing a change into the text, and proceeds:

Origen's treatment of Matthew 19:19 is significant in two other ways. First he was probably the most influential commentator of the Ancient Church and yet his conjecture at this point seems to have influenced only one manuscript of a local version of the New Testament. The Greek tradition is apparently quite unaffected

¹ J.W. Burgon, *The Revision Revised* (London: John Murray, 1883), pp. 323-24.

² E.C. Colwell, "The Origin of Texttypes of New Testament Manuscripts", *Early Christian Origins*, ed. Allen Wikgren (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961), p. 138.

³ F.H.A. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, fourth edition edited by E. Miller (2 Vols.; London: George Bell and Sons, 1894), II, 264.

⁴ G.D. Kilpatrick, "The Transmission of the New Testament and its Reliability", *The Bible Translator*, IX (July, 1958), 128-29.

⁵ G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 11.

by it. From the third century onward even an Origen could not effectively alter the text.

This brings us to the second significant point—his date. From the early third century onward the freedom to alter the text which had obtained earlier can no longer be practiced. Tatian is the last author to make deliberate changes in the text of whom we have explicit information. Between Tatian and Origen Christian opinion had so changed that it was no longer possible to make changes in the text whether they were harmless or not.¹

He feels this attitude was a reaction against the re-handling of the text by the second-century heretics. Certainly there had been a great hue and cry, and whatever the reason it does appear that little further damage was done after A.D. 200.²

2) *The aberrant text forms*

The extent of the textual difficulties of the 2nd century can easily be exaggerated. Nevertheless, the evidence cited does prove that aberrant forms of the NT text were produced. Naturally, some of those text forms may have acquired a local and temporary currency, but they could scarcely become more than eddies along the edge of the 'majority' river. Recall that the possibility of checking against the Autographs, or guaranteed copies, must have served to inhibit the spread of such text forms.

For example, Gaius, an orthodox Father who wrote near the end of the second century, named four heretics who not only altered the text but had disciples who multiplied copies of their efforts. Of special interest here is his charge that they could not deny their guilt because they could not produce the originals from which they made their copies.³ This would be a hollow accusation from Gaius if he could not produce the Originals either. I have already argued that the churches in Asia Minor, for instance, did still have either the Autographs or exact copies that they themselves had made—thus they **knew**, absolutely, what the true wording was and could repel the aberrant forms with confidence. A man like Polycarp would still be able to affirm in 150 A.D., letter by letter if need be, the original wording of the text for most of the New Testament books. And presumably his MSS were not burned when he was.

Not only would there have been pressure from the Autographs, but also the pressure exerted by the already-established momentum of transmission enjoyed by the majority text form. As already discussed, the statistical probabilities militating against any aberrant text forms would be overwhelming. In short, although a bewildering array of variants came into existence, judging from extant witnesses, and they were indeed a perturbing influence in the stream of transmission, they would not succeed in thwarting the progress of the normal transmission.

The Stream of Transmission

Now then, what sort of a picture may we expect to find in the surviving witnesses on the assumption that the history of the transmission of the New Testament Text was predominantly normal? We may expect a broad spectrum of copies, showing minor

¹ Kilpatrick, "Atticism and the Text of the Greek New Testament", *Neutestamentliche Aufsätze* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1963), pp. 129-30.

² I believe we may reasonably understand that significant variants that first appear at a later date, within extant MSS, had actually been created much earlier.

³ Cf. Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 323.

differences due to copying mistakes but all reflecting one common tradition. The simultaneous existence of abnormal transmission in the earliest centuries would result in a sprinkling of copies, helter-skelter, outside of that main stream. The picture would look something like *Figure C*.

The MSS within the cones represent the "normal" transmission. To the left I have plotted some possible representatives of what we might style the "irresponsible" transmission of the text—the copyists produced poor copies through incompetence or carelessness but did not make deliberate changes. To the right I have plotted some possible representatives of what we might style the "fabricated" transmission of the text—the scribes made deliberate changes in the text (for whatever reasons), producing fabricated copies, not true copies. I am well aware that the MSS plotted on the figure above contain both careless and deliberate errors, in different proportions (7Q5,4,8 and P^{52,64,67} are too fragmentary to permit the classification of their errors as deliberate rather than careless), so that any classification such as I attempt here must be relative and gives a distorted picture. Still, I venture to insist that ignorance, carelessness, officiousness and malice all left their mark upon the transmission of the New Testament text, and we must take account of them in any attempt to reconstruct the history of that transmission.

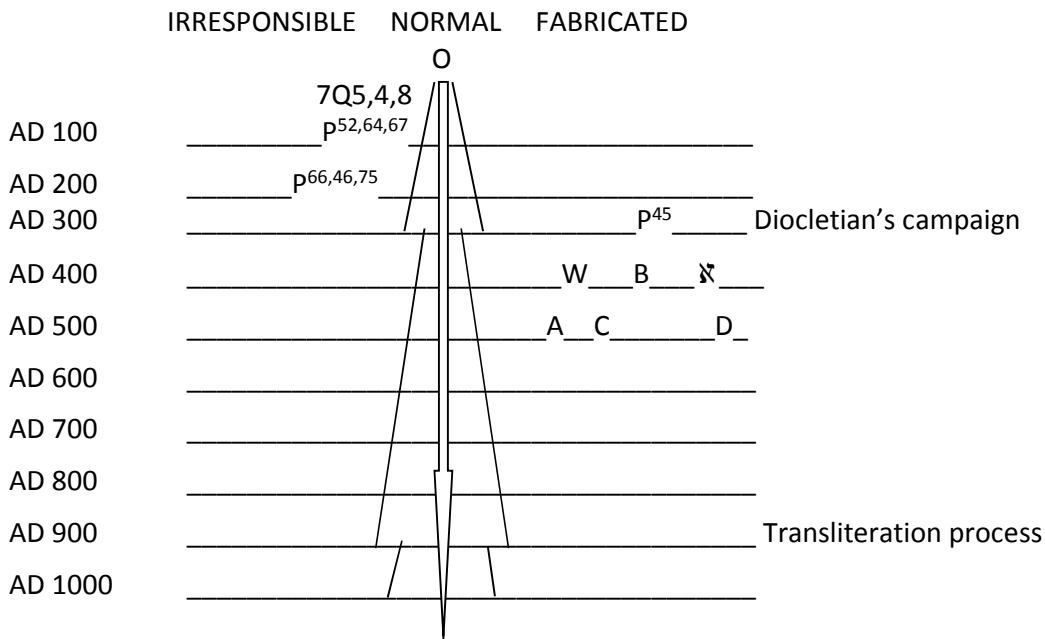


Figure C

As the figure suggests, I argue that Diocletian's campaign had a purifying effect upon the stream of transmission. In order to withstand torture rather than give up your MS(S), you would have to be a truly committed believer, the sort of person who would want good copies of the Scriptures. Thus it was probably the more contaminated MSS that were destroyed, in the main, leaving the purer MSS to replenish the earth.¹ The arrow within the cones represents Family 35 (see Part II below).

¹ For a fuller discussion of this point please see the section "Imperial repression of the N.T." in Chapter 6 of my book, *The Identity of the New Testament Text IV.*, available from Amazon.com as well as from my site, www.prunch.org.

Another consideration suggests itself—if, as reported, the Diocletian campaign was most fierce and effective in the Byzantine area, the numerical advantage of the ‘Byzantine’ text-type over the ‘Western’ and ‘Alexandrian’ would have been reduced, giving the latter a chance to forge ahead. But it did not happen. The Church, in the main, refused to propagate those forms of the Greek text.

What we find upon consulting the witnesses is just such a picture. We have the Majority Text (Aland), or the Traditional Text (Burgon), dominating the stream of transmission with a few individual witnesses going their idiosyncratic ways. In Chapter 4 of my *Identity IV* I demonstrate that the notion of ‘text-types’ and recensions, as defined and used by Hort and his followers, is gratuitous. Epp's notion of ‘streams’ fares no better. There is just one stream, with a number of small eddies along the edges.¹ When I say the Majority Text dominates the stream, I mean it is represented in about 95% of the MSS.²

Actually, such a statement is not altogether satisfactory because it does not allow for the mixture or shifting affinities encountered within individual MSS. A better, though more cumbersome, way to describe the situation would be something like this: 100% of the MSS agree as to, say, 50% of the Text; 99% agree as to another 40%; over 95% agree as to another 4%; over 90% agree as to another 2%; over 80% agree as to another 2%; only for 2% or so of the Text do less than 80% of the MSS agree, and a disproportionate number of those cases occur in Revelation.³ And the membership of the dissenting group varies from reading to reading.⁴ Still, with the above reservation, one may reasonably speak of up to 95% of the extant MSS belonging to the Majority textual tradition.

I see no way of accounting for a 95% (or 90%) domination unless that text goes back to the Autographs. Hort saw the problem and invented a revision. Sturz seems not to have seen the problem. He demonstrates that the "Byzantine text-type" is early and independent of the "Western" and "Alexandrian text-types", and like von Soden, wishes to treat them as three equal witnesses.⁵ But if the three "text-types" were equal, how could the so-called "Byzantine" ever gain a 90-95% preponderance?

¹ One might speak of a P⁴⁵,W eddy or a P⁷⁵,B eddy, for example.

² Although I used, of necessity, the term ‘text-type’ in some of my writings, I view the Majority Text as being much broader. It is a textual tradition which might be said to include a number of related ‘text-types’, such as von Soden's K^a, Kⁱ, and K^l. I wish to emphasize again that it is only agreement in error that determines genealogical relationships. It follows that the concepts of ‘genealogy’ and ‘text-type’ are irrelevant with reference to original readings—they are only useful (when employed properly) for identifying spurious readings. Well, if there is a family that very nearly reflects the original its ‘profile’ or mosaic of readings will distinguish it from other families, but most of those readings will not be errors (the competing variants distinctive of other families **will** be errors).

³ I am not prepared to defend the precise figures used, they are **guesses**, but I believe they represent a reasonable approximation to reality. I heartily agree with Colwell when he insists that we must "rigorously eliminate the singular reading" ("External Evidence and New Testament Criticism", *Studies in the History of the Text of the New Testament*, ed. B.L. Daniels and M.J. Suggs [Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1967], p. 8) on the altogether reasonable assumption (it seems to me) that a solitary witness against the world cannot possibly be right.

⁴ I will of course be reminded that witnesses are to be weighed, not counted; for my discussion of that point please see the section "Should not witnesses be weighed, rather than counted?" in Chapter 6 of my *Identity IV*.

⁵ Sturz, *Op. Cit.* A text produced by taking two ‘text-types’ against one would move the UBS text about 80% of the distance toward the Majority text.

The argument from statistical probability enters here with a vengeance. Not only do the extant MSS present us with one text form enjoying a 95% majority, but the remaining 5% do not represent a single competing text form. The minority MSS disagree as much (or more) among themselves as they do with the majority. For any two of them to agree so closely as do P⁷⁵ and B is an oddity. We are not judging, therefore, between two text forms, one representing 95% of the MSS and the other 5%. Rather, we have to judge between 95% and a fraction of 1% (comparing the Majority Text with the P⁷⁵,B text form for example). Or to take a specific case, in 1 Timothy 3:16 some 600 Greek MSS (besides the Lectionaries) read "God" while only nine read something else. Of those nine, three have private readings and six agree in reading "who".¹ So we have to judge between 98.5% and 1%, "God" versus "who". It is

¹ The readings, with their supporting MSS, are as follows:

ο - D

ω - 061

οϛ ΘΕΟϛ - one cursive, 256 (and one Lectionary)

οϛ - Ɱ, 33, 365, 442, 1175, 2127 (plus three Lectionaries)

ΘΕΟϛ - A, C^{vid}, F/G^{vid}, K, L, P, Ψ, some 600 cursives (besides Lectionaries) (including four cursives that read ο ΘΕΟϛ and one Lectionary that reads ΘΕΟϛ).

It will be observed that my statement differs from that of the UBS text, for example. I offer the following explanation.

Young, Huish, Pearson, Fell, and Mill in the seventeenth century, Creyk, Bentley, Wotton, Wetstein, Bengel, Berriman, and Woide in the eighteenth, and Scrivener as late as 1881 all affirmed, upon careful inspection, that Codex A reads "God". For a thorough discussion please see Burgon, who says concerning Woide, "The learned and conscientious editor of the Codex declares that so late as 1765 he had seen traces of the Θ which twenty years later (viz. in 1785) were visible to him no longer" (*The Revision Revised*, p. 434. Cf. pp. 431-36). It was only after 1765 that scholars started to question the reading of A (through fading and wear the middle line of the *theta* is no longer discernible).

H.C. Hoskier devotes Appendix J of *A Full Account and Collation of the Greek Codex Evangelium 604* (London: David Nutt, 1890) (the appendix being a reprint of part of an article that appeared in the *Clergyman's Magazine* for February 1887) to a careful discussion of the reading of Codex C. He spent three hours examining the passage in question in this MS (the MS itself) and adduces evidence that shows clearly, I believe, that the original reading of C is "God". He examined the surrounding context and observes, "The **contracting-bar** has often vanished completely (I believe, from a cursory examination, more often than not), but at other times it is plain and imposed in the same way as at 1 Timothy iii.16" (Appendix J, p. 2). See also Burgon, *Ibid.*, pp. 437-38.

Codices F/G read OC wherein the contracting-bar is a slanting stroke. It has been argued that the stroke represents the aspirate of οϛ, but Burgon demonstrates that the stroke in question never represents breathing but is invariably the sign of contraction and affirms that "οϛ is **nowhere** else written OC [with a cross-bar] in either codex" (*Ibid.*, p. 442. Cf. pp. 438-42). Presumably the cross-line in the common parent had become too faint to see. As for cursive 365, Burgon conducted an exhaustive search for it. He not only failed to find it but could find no evidence that it had ever existed (*Ibid.*, pp. 444-45) [I have recently been informed that it was later rediscovered by Gregory].

(I took up the case of 1 Timothy 3:16, in the first edition of my book, *Identity*, solely to illustrate the argument from probability, not as an example of "how to do textual criticism" [cf. Fee, "A Critique", p. 423]. Since the question has been raised, I will add a few words on that subject.)

The three significant variants involved are represented in the ancient uncial MSS as follows: O, OC, and ΘC (with a contracting-bar above the two letters), meaning "which", "who", and "God" respectively. In writing "God" a scribe's omitting of the two lines (through haste or momentary distraction) would result in "who". Codices A, C, F, and G have numerous instances where either the cross-line or the contracting-bar is no longer discernible (either the original line has faded to the point of being invisible or the scribe may have failed to write it in the first place). For both lines to fade away, as in Codex A here, is presumably an infrequent event. For a scribe to inadvertently omit both lines would presumably also be an infrequent event, but it must have happened at least once, probably early in the second century and in circumstances that produced a wide ranging effect.

hard to imagine any possible set of circumstances in the transmissional history sufficient to produce the cataclysmic overthrow in statistical probability required by the claim that "who" is the original reading.

It really does seem that those scholars who reject the Majority Text are faced with a serious problem. How is it to be explained if it does not reflect the Original? Hort's notion of a Lucianic revision has been abandoned by most scholars because of the total lack of historical evidence. The eclecticists are not even trying. The "process" view has not been articulated in sufficient detail to permit refutation, but on the face of it that view is flatly contradicted by the argument from statistical probability.¹ How could any amount of 'process' bridge the gap between B or Aleph and the TR?

But there is a more basic problem with the process view. Hort saw clearly, and correctly, that the Majority Text must have a common archetype. Recall that Hort's genealogical method was based on community of **error**. On the hypothesis that the Majority Text is a late and inferior text form, the large mass of common readings which distinguish it from the so-called 'Western' or 'Alexandrian text-types' must be **errors** (which was precisely Hort's contention)

The collocation "the mystery . . . who" is even more pathologic in Greek than it is in English. It was thus inevitable, once such a reading came into existence and became known, that remedial action would be attempted. Accordingly, the first reading above, "the mystery . . . which", is generally regarded as an attempt to make the difficult reading intelligible. But it must have been an early development, for it completely dominates the Latin tradition, both version and Fathers, as well as being the probable reading of the Syr^p and Coptic versions. It is found in only one Greek MS, Codex D, and in no Greek Father before the fifth century.

Most modern scholars regard "God" as a separate therapeutic response to the difficult reading. Although it dominates the Greek MSS (over 98 percent), it is certainly attested by only two versions, the Georgian and Slavonic (both late). But it also dominates the Greek Fathers. Around A.D. 100 there are possible allusions in Barnabas, "*Ἰησοῦς . . . ο υἱος του Θεου τυπω και εν σαρκι φανερωθεις*" (Cap. xii), and in Ignatius, "*Θεου ανθρωπινως φανερομενου*" (*Ad Ephes.* c. 19) and "*εν σαρκι γενομενος Θεος*" (*Ibid.*, c. 7). In the third century there seem to be clear references in Hippolytus, "*Θεος εν σωματι εφανερωθη*" (*Contra Haeresim Noeti*, c. xvii), Dionysius, "*Θεος γαρ εφανερωθη εν σαρκι*" (*Concilia*, i. 853a) and Gregory Thaumaturgus, "*και εστιν Θεος αληθινος ο ασαρκος εν σαρκι φανερωθεις*" (quoted by Photius). In the 4th century there are clear quotes or references in Gregory of Nyssa (22 times), Gregory of Nazianzus, Didymus of Alexandria, Diodorus, the Apostolic Constitutions, and Chrysostom, followed by Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, and Euthalius in the fifth century, and so on (Burgon, *Ibid.*, pp. 456-76, 486-90).

As for the grammatically aberrant reading, "who", aside from the MSS already cited, the earliest version that clearly supports it is the gothic (fourth century). To get a clear Greek Patristic witness to this reading pretty well requires the sequence *μυστηριον ος εφανερωθη*, since after any reference to Christ, Savior, Son of God, etc. in the prior context the use of a relative clause is predictable. Burgon affirmed that he was aware of no such testimony (and his knowledge of the subject has probably never been equaled) (*Ibid.*, p. 483).

It thus appears that the "Western" and "Byzantine" readings have earlier attestation than does the "Alexandrian". Yet if "which" was caused by "who", then the latter must be older. The reading "who" is admittedly the most difficult, so much so that to apply the "harder reading" canon in the face of an easy transcriptional explanation [the accidental omission of the two strokes of the pen] for the difficult reading seems unreasonable. As Burgon so well put it:

I trust we are at least agreed that the maxim "*proclivi lectioni praestat ardua*," does not enunciate so foolish a proposition as that in choosing between two or more conflicting readings, we are to prefer **that** one which has the feeblest external attestation,—provided it be but in itself almost unintelligible? (*Ibid.*, p. 497).

Whatever the intention of those editors who choose 'who', their text emasculates this strong statement of the deity of Jesus Christ, besides being a stupidity—what is a 'mystery' about any human male being manifested in flesh? All human beings have bodies. In the Greek Text the relative pronoun has no antecedent, so it is a grammatical 'impossibility'.

¹ For further discussion see the final pages of Appendix C in my *Identity IV*.

and such an agreement in error would have to have a common source. The process view fails completely to account for such an agreement in error (on that hypothesis).

Hort saw the need for a common source and posited a Lucianic revision. Scholars now generally recognize that the 'Byzantine text-type' must date back at least into the second century. But what chance would the original 'Byzantine' document, the archetype, have of gaining currency when appeal to the Autographs was still possible?

Candidly, there is only one reasonable explanation for the Majority Text that has so far been advanced—it is the result of an essentially normal process of transmission and the common source for its consensus is the Autographs. Down through the centuries of copying, the original text has always been reflected with a high degree of accuracy in the manuscript tradition as a whole. The history of the text presented in this chapter not only accounts nicely for the Majority Text, it also accounts for the inconsistent minority of MSS. They are remnants of the abnormal transmission of the text, reflecting ancient aberrant forms. It is a dependence upon such aberrant forms that distinguishes contemporary critical/eclectic editions of the Greek New Testament, and the modern translations based upon them.

What Is the Actual Evidence?

For this discussion I will use statistics offered by Kurt Aland and his Institute for New Testament Textual Research. Since he despised the Byzantine Text and was a devoted champion of his Egyptian text, we can be absolutely certain that the evidence will not be presented so as to favor the Byzantine Text in any way.

The Uncials

In *The Text of the New Testament*¹ K. Aland offers a summary of the results of a "systematic test collation" for the more important uncials from centuries IV-IX. He uses four headings: "Byzantine", "original", "agreements" between the first two, and "independent or distinctive" readings. Since by "original" he seems to mean essentially "Egyptian" (or "Alexandrian") I will use the following headings: Egyptian, Majority ("Byzantine"), both ("agreements") and other ("independent"). I proceed to chart each MS from the IV through IX centuries for which Aland offers a summary:

By way of explanation: "cont." stands for content, **e** = Gospels (but Aland's figures cover only the Synoptics), **a** = Acts, **p** = Pauline Epistles (including Hebrews) and **c** = Catholic Epistles; "Cat." refers to Aland's five categories (*The Text*, pp. 105-6) and "class." stands for a classification devised by me wherein **E** = Egyptian, **M** = Majority and **O** = other. It has the following values, which are illustrated with M:

M+++++	=	100%		
M++++	=	over 95%	=	19:1 = very strong
M+++	=	over 90%	=	9:1 = strong
M++	=	over 80%	=	4:1 = good
M+	=	over 66%	=	2:1 = fair
M	=	over 50%	=	1:1 = weak
M-	=	plurality	=	= marginal
M/E	=	a tie		

¹ K. and B. Aland, *Ibid.*, pp. 106-125.

I assume that Aland will agree with me that E + M is certainly original, so the "both" column needs to be disregarded as we try to evaluate the tendencies of the several MSS. Accordingly I considered only the "Egyptian", "Majority" and "other" columns in calculating percentages.

Codex	Date	cont.	Egypt.	both	Major.	other	total	class.	Cat.
01	IV	e	170	80	23	95	368	E	I
		a	67	24	9	17	117	E+	I
		p	174	38	76	52	340	E	I
		c	73	5	21	16	115	E	I
03	IV	e	196	54	9	72	331	E+	I
		a	72	22	2	11	107	E++	I
		p	144	31	8	27	210	E++	I
		c	80	8	2	9	99	E++	I
032 ¹	IV	e	54	70	118	88	330	M-	III
-----400									
02	V	e	18	84	151	15	268	M++	III
		a	65	22	9	12	108	E+	I
		p	149	28	31	37	245	E+	I
		c	62	5	18	12	97	E+	I
04	V	e	66	66	87	50	269	M-	II
		a	37	12	12	11	72	E	II
		p	104	23	31	15	173	E+	II
		c	41	3	15	12	71	E	II
05	V	e	77	48	65	134	324	O-	IV
		a	16	7	21	33	77	O-	IV
016	V	p	15	1	2	6	24	E	II
026	V	e	0	5	5	2	12	M+	V
048	V	p*	26	7	3	4	40	E+	II
0274	V	e	19	6	0	2	27	E+++	II
-----500									
06	VI	p	112	29	137	83	361	M-	II
08	VI	a	23	21	36	22	102	M-	II
015	VI	p	11	0	5	1	17	E	III
022	VI	e	8	48	89	15	160	M+	V

¹ The history of the place where Codex W was found suggests that it must have been copied before AD 200, which would put the Byzantine Text in the second century.

023	VI	e	0	4	9	3	16	M+	V
024	VI	e	3	16	24	0	43	M++	V
027	VI	e	0	4	11	5	20	M+	V
035	VI	e	11	5	3	2	21	E+	III
040	VI	e	8	2	2	3	15	E	III
042	VI	e	15	83	140	25	263	M+	V
043	VI	e	11	83	131	18	243	M++	V
-----600									
0211	VII	e	10	101	189	23	323	M++	V
-----700									
07	VIII	e	1	107	209	9	326	M++++V	
019	VIII	e	125	75	52	64	316	E	II
044	VIII	e	52	21	40	19	132	E-	III
		a	22	25	43	15	105	M	III
		p	38	42	135	33	248	M	III
		c	54	8	21	14	97	E	II
047	VIII	e	6	96	175	21	298	M++	V
0233	VIII	e	3	23	47	5	78	M++	III
-----800									
09	IX	e	0	78	156	11	245	M+++	V
010	IX	p	91	12	41	69	213	E-	III
011	IX	e	4	87	176	21	288	M++	V
012	IX	p	91	12	43	66	212	E-	III
013	IX	e	2	82	174	7	265	M++++V	
014	IX	a	2	22	48	1	73	M+++	V
017	IX	e	8	107	197	15	327	M++	V
018	IX	p	8	32	154	8	202	M+++	V
		c	4	9	77	6	96	M++	V
020	IX	a	1	23	51	3	78	M+++	V
		p	5	44	188	4	241	M++++V	

		c	5	9	78	3	95	M+++	V
021	IX	e	7	106	202	12	327	M+++	V
025	IX	a	1	29	70	0	100	M++++V	
		p	87	31	87	31	236	E/M	III
		c	26	6	46	9	87	M	III
030	IX	e	1	38	105	11	155	M++	V
031	IX	e	8	101	192	17	318	M++	V
034	IX	e	4	95	192	6	297	M++++V	
037	IX	e	69	88	120	47	324	M	III
038	IX	e	75	59	89	95	318	O-	II
039	IX	e	0	10	41	2	53	M++++V	
041	IX	e	11	104	190	18	323	M++	V
045	IX	e	3	104	208	10	325	M+++	V
049	IX	a	3	29	69	3	104	M+++	V
		p	0	34	113	3	150	M++++V	
		c	1	9	82	4	96	M+++	V
063	IX	p	0	3	15	0	18	M+++++V	
0150	IX	p	65	34	101	23	223	M	III
0151	IX	p	9	44	174	7	234	M+++	V
33	IX	e	57	73	54	44	228	E-	II
		a	34	19	21	11	85	E	I
		p	129	35	47	36	247	E	I
		c	45	3	21	14	83	E	I
461	835	e	3	102	219	5	329	M++++V	

-----900

(*Aland shows **ap**, but gives no figures for **a**.)

So, what can we learn from this chart? Perhaps a good place to begin is with a correlation between "Cat." and "class." in terms of the values we have each given to specific MSS:

<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>
E++	E+++ M- O-	E+ M++	O-	M+++++
E+	E+	E M		M++++
E	E	E- M-		M+++
	E-	E/M		M++
				M+

Categories I, IV and V are reasonably consistent, but how are we to interpret II and III? This is bothersome because in Aland's book (pp. 156-59) a very great many MSS are listed under III and not a few under II. It might be helpful to see how many MSS, or content segments, fall at the intersections of the two parameters:

	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>total</u>
E+++		1				1
E++	3					3
E+	5	2	1			8
E	6	5	2			13
E-		1	3			4
O-		1		2		3
E/M			1			1
M-		3	1			4
M			5			5
M+					5	5
M++			2		10	12
M+++					10	10
M++++					8	8
M+++++					1	1

0274 and 063 are fragmentary, which presumably accounts for their exceptional scores, E+++ and M+++++ respectively; if they were more complete they would probably each come down a level. Out of 45 M segments 31 score above 80%, while 9 are over 95% 'pure'. It should be possible to reconstruct the greater part of a 'Byzantine' archetype with tolerable confidence. But one has to wonder how Aland arrived at the 'Egyptian' norm in the Gospels since the best Egyptian witness (except for the fragmentary 0274, which has less than 10% of the text but scores 90%), Codex B, barely passes 70%. (In *The Text*, p. 95, Aland gives a summary for P⁷⁵ in Luke—it scores 77%.) Further, besides B and 0274, P⁷⁵ and Z (both also fragmentary) are the only Greek MSS that score so much as an E+ in the Gospels. One is reminded of E.C. Colwell's conclusion after attempting to reconstruct an 'average' or mean Alexandrian text for the first chapter of Mark. "These results show convincingly that any attempt to reconstruct an archetype of the Beta [Alexandrian] 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

For the other content areas the situation is not much better. Only P⁷⁴ (86%), B (85%) and 81 (80%) rate an E++ in **a**; apart from them only A and Aleph manage even an E+. Codex B is the

¹ "The Significance of Grouping of New Testament Manuscripts", *New Testament Studies*, IV (1957-1958), 86-87.

only E++ (80%) in **p**, and only P⁴⁶, A, C, 048 and 1739 manage an E+. Aside from B's 88% in **c**, only P⁷⁴, A and 1739 manage even an E+. How did Aland arrive at his "Egyptian" norm in these areas? Might that "norm" be a fiction, as Colwell affirmed?

Codex A^e is 82% Byzantine and must have been based on a Byzantine exemplar, which presumably would belong to the IV century. Codex W in Matthew is also clearly Byzantine and must have had a Byzantine exemplar. The sprinkling of Byzantine readings in B is sufficiently slight that it could be ascribed to chance, I suppose, but that explanation will hardly serve for Aleph. At least in **p**, if not throughout, Aleph's copyist must have had access to a Byzantine exemplar, which could have belonged to the III century. But Asterius offers much stronger evidence: he died in 341, so presumably did his writing somewhat earlier; it seems likely that his MSS would be from the III century—since he shows a 90% preference for Byzantine readings those MSS must have been **Byzantine**. (Using my classification, Asterius would be M++, the Byzantine preference being 83%. On a percentage basis Asterius is as strongly Byzantine as B is Egyptian.) Adamantius died in 300, so he did his writing earlier. Might his MSS have been from the first half of the III century? Since he shows a 52% preference for Byzantine readings (or 39%, using my classification) at least some of his MSS were presumably Byzantine. For that matter P⁶⁶ has so many Byzantine readings that **its** copyist must have had access to a Byzantine exemplar, which would necessarily belong to the **II** century! The circumstance that some Byzantine readings in P^{66*} were corrected to Egyptian readings, while some Egyptian readings in P^{66*} were corrected to Byzantine readings, really seems to require that we posit exemplars of the two types—between them the two hands furnish clear evidence that the Byzantine text, as such, existed in their day.¹

Returning to the chart of the uncials above, in the IV century E leads in all four areas, although in Aleph E is weak and M is gaining. If W is IV century,² M has gained even more. I remind the reader that I am referring only to the information in the chart given above. In reality, I assume that the IV century, like all others, was dominated by Byzantine MSS. Being good copies they were used and worn out, thereby perishing. Copies like B and Aleph survived because they were 'different', and therefore not used. By "used" I mean for ordinary purposes—I am well aware that Aleph exercised the ingenuity of a number of correctors over the centuries, but it left no descendants. In the V century M takes over the lead in **e** while E retains **apc** (it may come as a surprise to some that C^e is more M than anything else). In the VI century M strengthens its hold on **e** and moves in on **a** (it may come as a surprise to some that D^p is more M than anything else). After the V century, with the sole exception of the fragmentary Z, all the "Egyptian" witnesses are weak—even the "queen of the cursives", 33, does not get up to an E+. Of X century uncials for which Aland offers a summary, all are clearly Byzantine (028, 033, 036, 056, 075 and 0124) except for 0243, which scores an E.³

¹ For evidence from the early Fathers, Papyri and Versions please see the section, "But There Is No Evidence of the Byzantine Text in the Early Centuries", in Chapter six of my *Identity IV*.

² There is reason to believe that it is II century, because of the circumstances surrounding the place where it was discovered.

³ In February, 1990, I debated Daniel Wallace at the Dallas Theological Seminary, where he was teaching. He used a graph purporting to show the distribution of the Greek MSS from the III to the IX centuries according to the three main 'text-types' (a graph that he was using in the classroom). He has since used the same graph in a paper presented to the Evangelical Theological Society. The graph is very seriously misleading. I challenge Wallace to identify the MSS that the graph is supposed to represent and to demonstrate that each one belongs to the 'text-type' that he alleged. It was stated that the extant MSS do not show the Byzantine text in the majority until the IX century, but according to Aland's statistics the Byzantine text took the lead in the Gospels in the V century, and kept it.

The Cursives

When we turn to the cursives, Aland offers summaries for 150, chosen on the basis of their "independence" from the Byzantine norm. He lists 900 MSS only by number because "these minuscules exhibit a purely or predominantly Byzantine text", and therefore he considers that "they are all irrelevant for textual criticism" (*The Text*, p. 155). To do for the 150 "independent" cursives what I did for the uncials would take too much space, so I will summarize Aland's statistics in chart form, using my classification:

cont.	M+++++	M++++	M+++	M++	M+	M	M-	M/E	E-	E	E+	E++
e		10	23	12	6	16	1		2	1		
a		12	15	23	21	14	12	1	4	2		1
p	1	25	17	17	28	19	4		2	3	1	
c	1	9	18	6	30	21	10	1	5	10	1	
total	2	56	73	58	85	70	27	2	13	16	2	1

Even among these "independent" cursives there are two content segments that actually score 100% Byzantine! (Just imagine how many more there must be among the 900 that are so Byzantine that Aland ignored them.) The best Egyptian representative is 81 in Acts, with an even 80%. 1739 scores 70% (E+) in **c** and 68% (E+) in **p**. These are the only three segments that I would call "clearly Egyptian". There are sixteen segments that score between 50 and 66% (E). Pitting M through M+++++ against E through E++ we get 344 to 19, and this from the "independent" minuscules. If we add the 900 "predominantly Byzantine" MSS, which will average over two content segments each, the actual ratio is well over 100 to one. I assume that almost all of these 900 will score at least M++, and most will doubtless score M+++ or higher. If we were to compute only segments that score at least 80%, the Byzantine:Egyptian ratio would be more like **1,000** to one—the MSS that have been classified by Aland's "test collation", as reported in his book, represent perhaps 40% of the total (excluding Lectionaries), but we may reasonably assume that most of the "independent" ones have already been identified and presented. It follows that the remaining MSS, at least 1,500, can only increase the Byzantine side of the ratio. If the Byzantine text is the "worst", then down through the centuries of manuscript copying the Church was massively mistaken!

The MSS discussed in Aland's book (first edition) reflect the collating done at his Institute as of 1981. Many more have doubtless been collated since, but the general proportions will probably not change significantly. Consider the study done by Frederik Wisse. He collated and compared **1,386** MSS in Luke 1, 10 and 20, and found only four uncials (out of 34) and

But let us consider the MSS from the IX century. Out of 27 Byzantine MSS or content segments (Gospels, Pauline corpus, etc.), eight are over 95% 'pure', ten are over 90% pure, and another six are over 80% pure. Where did these 24 MSS or segments get their Byzantine content? Since they are all distinct in content they were presumably copied from as many separate exemplars, exemplars of necessity earlier in date and also Byzantine. And what were those exemplars copied from? Evidently from still earlier Byzantine MSS, etc. Hopefully Wallace will not attempt to argue that all those IX century MSS were not copied from anything, but were independently created from nothing by each scribe! It follows that a massive majority in the IX century presupposes a massive majority in the VIII, and so on. Which is why scholars from Hort to Aland have recognized that the Byzantine text dominated the transmission from the IV century on.

Textual scholars of all persuasions, down through the years, have recognized that the extant witnesses from the early centuries are not necessarily representative of the actual state of affairs in their day. To insist that the extant witnesses are the whole story is unreasonable and begs the question.

four cursives (out of 1,352) that displayed the Egyptian text-type, plus another two of each that were Egyptian in one of the three chapters.¹

Concluding Remarks

In his book Aland's discussion of the transmission of the NT text is permeated with the assumption that the Byzantine text was a secondary development that progressively contaminated the pure Egyptian ("Alexandrian") text.² But the chief "Alexandrian" witnesses, B, A (except e) and Ⲛ (*The Text*, p. 107), are in constant and significant disagreement among themselves; so much so that there is no objective way of reconstructing an archetype. 150 years earlier the picture is the same; P⁴⁵, P⁶⁶ and P⁷⁵ are quite dissimilar and do not reflect a single tradition. In A.D. 200 'there was no king in [Egypt]; everyone did what was right in his own eyes', or so it would seem. But what if we were to entertain the hypothesis that the Byzantine tradition is the oldest and that the 'Western' and 'Alexandrian' MSS represent varying perturbations on the fringes of the main transmissional stream? Would this not make better sense of the surviving evidence? Then there would have been no 'Western' or 'Egyptian' archetypes, just various sources of contamination that acted in such a random fashion that each extant 'Western' or 'Egyptian' MS has a different 'mosaic'. In contrast, there would indeed be a 'Byzantine' archetype, which would reflect the original. The mean text of the extant MSS improves century by century, the XIV being the best, because the worst MSS were not copied or worn out by use; whereas the good ones were used and copied, and when worn out, discarded.

Those who catalog NT MSS inform us that the 12th and 13th centuries lead the pack, in terms of extant MSS, followed by the 14th, 11th, 15th, 16th and 10th, in that order. There are over four times as many MSS from the 13th as from the 10th, but obviously Koiné Greek would have been more of a living language in the 10th than the 13th, and so there would have been more demand and therefore more supply. In other words, many hundreds of really pure MSS from the 10th perished. A higher percentage of the really good MSS produced in the 14th century survived than those produced in the 11th; and so on. That is why there is a progressive level of agreement among the Byzantine MSS, there being a higher percentage of agreement in the 14th than in the 10th. But had we lived in the 10th, and done a wide survey of the MSS, we would have found very nearly the same level of agreement (perhaps 98%). The same obtains if we had lived in the 8th, 6th, 4th or 2nd century. In other words, THE SURVIVING MSS FROM THE FIRST TEN CENTURIES ARE NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE TRUE

¹ *The Profile Method for the Classification and Evaluation of Manuscript Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).

² The progressive 'purification' of the stream of transmission through the centuries, based on the extant MSS (from a Byzantine priority perspective), has been recognized by all and sundry, their attempts at explaining the phenomenon generally reflecting their presuppositions. From my point of view the evident explanation is this: All camps recognize that the heaviest attacks against the purity of the Text took place during the second century. But "the heartland of the Church", the Aegean area, by far the best qualified in every way to watch over the faithful transmission, simply refused to copy the aberrant forms. MSS containing such forms were not used (nor copied), so many survived physically for over a millennium. Less bad forms were used but progressively were not copied. Thus the surviving IX century uncials are fair, over 80% Byzantine, but not good enough to be copied and recycled (when the better MSS were put into cursive form). Until the advent of a printed text, MSS were made to be used. Progressively only the best were used, and thus worn out, and copied. This process culminated in the XIV century, when the Ottoman shadow was advancing over Asia Minor, but the Byzantine empire still stood.

STATE OF AFFAIRS AT THE TIME.¹

Aland seems to grant that down through the centuries of church history the Byzantine text was regarded as "the text of the church", and he traces the beginning of this state of affairs to Lucian.² He makes repeated mention of a "school of/at Antioch" and of Asia Minor. All of this is very interesting, because in his book he agrees with Adolf Harnack that "about 180 the greatest concentration of churches was in Asia Minor and along the Aegean coast of Greece".³ This is the area where Greek was the mother tongue and where Greek continued to be used. It is also the area that started out with most of the Autographs. But Aland continues: "Even around A.D. 325 the scene was still largely unchanged. Asia Minor continued to be the heartland of the Church". "The heartland of the Church"—so who else would be in a better position to identify the correct text of the New Testament? Who could 'sell' a fabricated text in Asia Minor in the early fourth century? I submit that the Byzantine text dominated the transmissional history because the churches in Asia Minor vouched for it. And they did so, from the very beginning, because they knew it was the true text, having

¹ Consider what Maurice Robinson concluded as a result of doing a complete collation of 1,389 MSS that contain the Pericope, John 7:53 – 8:11:

However, contrary to this writer's earlier speculations, the extensive collation of the PA MSS has conclusively demonstrated that cross-comparison and correction of MSS occurred only *rarely* and *sporadically*, with little or no perpetuation of the corrective changes across the diversity of types represented [italics his, also below].

If cross-correction did not occur frequently or extensively in that portion of text which has more variation than any other location in the NT, and if such corrections as were made did not tend to perpetuate, it is not likely that such a process occurred in those portions of the NT which had less textual variety. . . . the lack of systematic and thorough correction within the PA as well as the lack of perpetuation of correction patterns appears to demonstrate this clearly. Cross-comparison and correction *should* have been rampant and extensive with this portion of text due to the wide variety of textual patterns and readings existing therein; instead, correction occurred sporadically, and rarely in a thoroughgoing manner.

Since this is the case, the phenomenon of the relatively unified Byzantine Textform *cannot* be explained by a "process" methodology, whether "modified" or not. . . .

Based upon the collated data, the present writer is forced to reverse his previous assumptions regarding the development and restoration/preservation of the Byzantine Textform in this sense: although textual transmission itself is a process, it appears that, for the most part, the lines of transmission remained separate, with relatively little mixture occurring or becoming perpetuated. . . .

Certainly, all the types of PA text are distinct, and reflect a long line of transmission and preservation in their separate integrities. . . .

It thus appears that the Byzantine minuscule MSS preserve lines of transmission which are not only independent but which of necessity had their origin at a time well before the 9th century. The extant uncial MSS do not and cannot account for the diversity and stability of PA textual forms found among even the earliest minuscules of the 9th century, let alone the diversity and stability of forms which appear throughout all centuries of the minuscule-era. The lack of extensive cross-comparison and correction demonstrated in the extant MSS containing the PA precludes the easy development of any existing form of the PA text from any other form of the PA text during at least the vellum era. The early uncials which contain the PA demonstrate widely-differing lines of transmission, but not all of the known lines. Nor do the uncials or minuscules show any indication of any known line deriving from a parallel known line. The 10 or so "texttype" lines of transmission remain independent and must necessarily extend back to a point long before their separate stabilizations occurred—a point which seems buried (as Colwell and Scrivener suggested) deep within the second century. ("Preliminary Observations regarding the *Pericope Adulterae* based upon Fresh Collations of nearly all Continuous-Text Manuscripts and over One Hundred Lectionaries", presented to the Evangelical Theological Society, Nov. 1998, pp. 11-13.)

² K. Aland, "The Text of the Church?", *Trinity Journal*, 1987, 8NS:131-144 [actually published in 1989], pp. 142-43.

³ *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 53.

received it from the Apostles. The Majority Text is what it is just because it has always been **the Text of the Church**.

Up to this point I have dealt with the broad river of the normal transmission of the NT Text. This broad river is commonly referred to as the 'Byzantine' text or text-type. But this broad river is made up of many distinct lines of transmission within it—recall that F. Wisse posited 36 such lines, based on his study of Luke, chapters 1, 10 and 20. Among those 36 lines, one is by far the largest, in terms of the number of representative MSS, and I will argue that it is also clearly the best. My discussion of that 'family' occupies Part II, to which I now turn.¹

¹ This Part I is basically a reproduction (with a few embellishments) of Chapter 5 in my book, *The Identity of the New Testament Text IV*, available from Amazon.com, as well as from my site, www.prunch.org. My refutation of eclecticism, whether 'reasoned' or 'rigorous', occupies Chapter 2 of that book. My refutation of the Westcott-Hort critical theory occupies Chapters 3 & 4. Chapter 6 takes up four "possible objections": 1) Are not the oldest MSS the best?; 2) Why are there no early "Byzantine" MSS?; 3) "But there is no evidence of the Byzantine Text in the early centuries"; 4) Should not witnesses be weighed rather than counted? I direct the interested reader to those discussions.

PART II: The Best Line of Transmission

Introduction

In my work done before 2003 I still approached the manuscript evidence using Burgon's "Notes of Truth". Burgon was a product of his time, as we all are. He defended the Traditional Text against challenges based on a few early MSS. Then the work of H. von Soden, H.C. Hoskier, and more recently F. Wisse, showed that it is possible to group the MSS empirically, on the basis of a shared mosaic of readings. In the Apocalypse Hoskier identified nine groups or families. Wisse's study in Luke reduced 1,386 MSS to 37 groups (plus 89 "mavericks"). Such groups must be evaluated for independence and credibility.

I am sure that if Burgon were alive today he would agree that the discoveries and research of the last hundred and some years make possible, even necessary, some refinements on his theory. I proceed to outline what I used as a steppingstone to my present approach to NT textual criticism. (I ventured to call it Original Text Theory.)¹

- 1) First, OTT is concerned to identify the precise original wording of the NT writings.²
- 2) Second, the criteria must be biblical, objective and reasonable.³
- 3) Third, a 90% attestation will be considered unassailable, and 80% virtually so.⁴
- 4) Fourth, Burgon's "notes of truth" will come into play, especially where the attestation falls below 80%.⁵
- 5) Fifth, where collations exist, making possible an empirical grouping of the MSS on the basis of shared mosaics of readings, this must be done. Such groups must be evaluated on the basis of their performance and be assigned a credibility quotient. A putative history of the transmission of the Text needs to be developed on the basis of the interrelationships of such groups. **Demonstrated groupings and relationships supersede the counting of MSS.**⁶
- 6) Sixth, it presupposes that the Creator exists and that He has spoken to our race. It accepts the implied divine purpose to preserve His revelation for the use of subsequent generations, including ours. It understands that both God and Satan have an ongoing active interest in the fate of the NT Text—to approach NT textual criticism without taking

¹ I had thought of resurrecting the term 'traditional', but since Burgon and Miller were not here to protest, I hesitated; besides, that term is no longer descriptive. Terms like 'antiochian' or 'byzantine' carry an extraneous burden of antipathy, or have been preempted (besides not being precisely descriptive). So here's to **Original Text Theory**. Since I really do believe that God has preserved the original wording to our day, and that we can know what it is on the basis of a defensible procedure, I do not fear the charge of arrogance, or presumption, or whatever because I use the term 'original'. All textual criticism worthy the name is in search of original wording.

² Here I reject the allegation that the original wording is lost and gone.

³ Here I reject the dependence on subjective criteria and a purely rationalistic approach.

⁴ This is now superseded by advances in point 5, although a 90% attestation remains difficult to assail.

⁵ This is also basically superseded by point 5, although his 'notes' remain valid, in general.

⁶ Please note that I am not referring to any attempt at reconstructing a genealogy of MSS—I agree with those scholars who have declared such an enterprise to be virtually impossible (there are altogether too many missing links). I am indeed referring to the reconstruction of a genealogy of **readings**, and thus of the history of the transmission of the Text. The last sentence has always been emphasized. Once all MSS have been collated and empirically grouped, we can dispense with counting them.

due account of that interest is to act irresponsibly.¹

7) Seventh, it insists that presuppositions and motives must always be addressed and evaluated.²

I use the term ‘steppingstone’ because I was still thinking in terms of a large majority, and that was because Family 35 had not yet come to my attention (I was still limited to generalities). However, the fifth point above shows the direction in which I was heading; note especially the last sentence, that has always been in bold type, and most especially the term ‘demonstrated’.³ For example, my critical apparatus for Revelation gives the evidence in terms of Hoskier’s nine groups, rather than percentages of MSS.

It was the H-F Majority Text’s representation of the evidence for the *Pericope Adulterae* that caught my attention, being based on von Soden’s supposed collation of over 900 MSS.⁴ As stated in their apparatus, there were three main streams: **M⁵**, **M⁶** and **M⁷**. **7** was always in the majority [except for one five-way split where there is no majority] because it was always accompanied by either **5** or **6** [5 + 6 never go against 7]. This looked to me like three independent streams, where seldom would more than one go astray at any given point. Being the common denominator, **7** was clearly the best of the three.

Then I went to Revelation (in H-F) and noticed three main streams again: **M^{a-b}**, **M^c** and **M^{d-e}**. The picture was analogous to that of the *PA*. Revelation represents a very much larger corpus than does the *PA*, but even so, there are only 8 cases where **a-b** and **d-e** join against **c** (+ 6 others where one of the four is split), compared to over 100 each for **a-b** and **c** against **d-e** and for **c** and **d-e** against **a-b**. Again, being the common denominator, **c** was clearly the best of the three (see the apparatus of my Greek Text of the Apocalypse).

Now then, it so happens that **M⁷** in the *PA* and **M^c** in Revelation equal Soden’s **K^r**, so I began to smell a rat.⁵ Then the *Text und Textwert* series proved that **K^r** is independent of **K^x** throughout the NT. It follows that **K^r** cannot be a revision of **K^x**. Then there are hundreds of places where **K^r** has overt early attestation, against **K^x**, but there is no pattern to that early attestation. There being no pattern then **K^r** must be early, as the picture in the *PA* and in Revelation has already implied. **If **K^r** is early and independent, then it must be rehabilitated in the practice of NT textual criticism. If it is the best line of transmission in the *PA* and Revelation, it just might be the best elsewhere as well.**

But there is an ingrained disdain/antipathy toward the symbol **K^r**, so I have proposed a new name for the text-type. We should substitute **f³⁵** for **K^r**—it is more objective and will get away from the prejudice that attaches to the latter. Minuscule 35 contains the whole NT and reflects **K^r** throughout, and it is the MS with the smallest number that meets those

¹ Those who exclude the supernatural from their model are condemning themselves to never arrive at the Truth—God and Satan exist, and both have been involved in the transmission of the NT Text.

² In any scientific inquiry a rigorous distinction must be made between evidence, presupposition and interpretation. Since one’s presuppositions heavily influence, even control, his interpretation of the evidence (that should be the same for everyone), any honest scholar needs to state his presuppositions openly. It is doubtless too much to expect sinners to expose their motives to the light of day (John 3:20).

³ Hort did the discipline a considerable disservice by positing theoretical text-types, devoid of evidence, and then treating them as established fact.

⁴ Robinson’s collations show that Soden ‘regularized’ the data.

⁵ Why ‘smelled a rat’? Because **M⁷** is clearly older than **M⁵** and **M⁶** in the *PA*, and **M^c** than **M^{a-b}** and **M^{d-e}** in Revelation, but von Soden claimed **K^r** was a revision of **K^x** (how could it be a revision if it was older?).

qualifications¹ (just as cursives 1 and 13 are the smallest number in their families; and like them, 35 is not always the best representative [it is generally excellent]—but it is 11th century [and it is a copy of an older exemplar, not a new creation], so the text-type could not have been created in the 12th, Q.E.D.).

Given my presuppositions, I consider that I have good reason for declaring the divine preservation of the precise original wording of the complete New Testament Text, to this day. That wording is reproduced in my edition of the Greek NT, *The Greek New Testament According to Family 35*. The book may be ordered from Amazon.com, and it may be downloaded from my site, www.prunch.org. I begin by listing my conclusions, promising the reader that I will then give the evidence that leads to those conclusions (besides that already given in Part I).

On the basis of the evidence so far available I affirm the following:

- 1) The original wording was never 'lost', and its transmission down through the years was basically normal, being recognized as inspired material from the beginning.
- 2) That normal process resulted in lines of transmission.
- 3) To delineate such lines, MSS must be grouped empirically on the basis of a shared mosaic of readings.
- 4) Such groups or families must be evaluated for independence and credibility.
- 5) The largest clearly defined group is Family 35.
- 6) Family 35 is demonstrably independent of all other lines of transmission throughout the NT.
- 7) Family 35 is demonstrably ancient, dating to the 3rd century, at least.
- 8) Family 35 representatives come from all over the Mediterranean area; the geographical distribution is all but total.
- 9) Family 35 is not a recension, was not created at some point subsequent to the Autographs.
- 10) Family 35 is an objectively/empirically defined entity throughout the NT; it has a demonstrable, diagnostic profile from Matthew 1:1 to Revelation 22:21.
- 11) The archetypal form of Family 35 is demonstrable—it has been demonstrated (see below).
- 12) The Original Text is the ultimate archetype; any candidate must also be an archetype—a real, honest to goodness, objectively verifiable archetype; there is only one—Family 35.
- 13) God's concern for the preservation of the Biblical Text is evident: I take it that passages such as 1 Chronicles 16:15, Psalm 119:89, Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 5:18, Luke 16:17 and 21:33, John 10:35 and 16:12-13, 1 Peter 1:23-25 and Luke 4:4 may reasonably be taken to imply a promise that the Scriptures (to the tittle) will be preserved for man's use (we are to live "by every word of God"), and to the end of the world ("for a thousand generations"), but no intimation is given as to just how God proposed to do it. We must deduce the answer from what He has indeed done—we discover that He **did!**
- 14) This concern is reflected in Family 35; it is characterized by incredibly careful transmission

¹ Minuscule 18 has a smaller number and also contains the whole NT, but it defects from the text-type in Revelation.

(in contrast to other lines). [I have a perfect copy of the Family 35 archetypal text for most NT books (22); I have copies made from a perfect exemplar (presumed) for another four (4); as I continue to collate MSS I hope to add the last one (Acts), but even for it the archetypal form is demonstrable.]

15) If God was preserving the original wording in some line of transmission other than Family 35, would that line be any less careful? I think not. So any line of transmission characterized by internal confusion is disqualified—this includes **all** the other lines of transmission that I have seen so far.

16) I affirm that God used Family 35 to preserve the precise original wording of the New Testament Text; it is reproduced in my edition of the Greek Text.¹

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

The Original Text is the ultimate archetype; any candidate must also be an archetype—a real, honest to goodness, objectively verifiable archetype; there is only one—Family 35. I now give the profile or mosaic that distinguishes and defines that archetype, for the whole New Testament.

Family 35 profile for the whole New Testament²

Key:

- +++ around 20% = **f³⁵** virtually alone = diagnostic
- ++- around 25% = quite good
- ++ around 30% = not bad
- +-- around 35%
- + around 40%

I have arbitrarily set the cutoff point at 40% (of the total of extant MSS), being sufficient for my present purpose, but of course higher percentages can also contribute to the family mosaic/profile. (Were I to include 45% and 50% the numbers would go up visibly, especially for some books. In some of Paul's epistles the other lines of transmission within the Byzantine bulk did not depart very much from the Family 35 norm.) Where the percentages do not add up to 100%, there are further variants; the interested reader may find them in the apparatus of my Greek Text. The reading of Family 35 is given first.

Matthew

- ++- 1:10 **μανασσην** [25%] || **μανασση** [73%]
- ++ 5:31 **ερρεθη** [30%] || **1 δε** [70%]
- ++ 6:6 **ταμειον** [30%] || **ταμειον** [70%]
- +++ 6:25^a **ενδυσεσθε** [20%] || **ενδυσησθε** [80%]
- +++ 6:25^b **πλειων** [20%] || **πλειον** [80%]

¹ And God used mainly the Eastern Orthodox Churches to preserve the NT Text down through the centuries—they have always used a Text that was an adequate representation of the Original, for all practical purposes. Also, among the families of Lectionary MSS, in terms of the number of representatives, Family 35 is the second largest, and it was used in the very first printed edition, the da Sabbio edition of 1539.

² This information was taken from my Greek Text and apparatus.

+++	7:19	ουν [25%] --- [75%]
+++	8:4	προσευεγκαι [25%] προσευεγκε [75%]
++	8:13	εκατονταρχω [30%] εκατονταρχη [70%]
+++	8:20	λεγει [20%] και 1 [80%]
+++	8:21	μαθητων [20%] 1 αυτου [80%]
+-	9:4	ειδως (33.3%) ιδων (65.7%)
++	9:11	και πινει [30%] --- [70%]
+++	9:15	χρονον [20%] --- [80%]
	9:17	απολλυνται f ^{35pt} [20%] απολουνται [80%] ¹
++	9:18	τις [30%] εις [62%]
+++	9:28	αυτοις [20%] 1 ο ιησους [80%]
+++	9:33	οτι [25%] --- [75%]
++	10:2	εισιν [30%] εστιν [70%]
++	10:19	λαλησετε (1 st) [30%] λαλησητε [70%]
++	10:25	απεκαλεσαν [30%] εκαλεσαν [49%] επεκαλεσαν [20%]
+++	10:31	πολλω [20%] πολλων [80%]
+-	11:20	ο ιησους [35%] --- [65%]
+++	11:21	χωραζιν [20%] χοραζιν [65%]
+-	11:23 ^a	η [35%] η̄ [64%]
+-	11:23 ^b	υψωθης [35%] υψωθεισα [63%]
+++	12:15	απαντας [20%] παντας [80%]
+++	12:22	κωφον [25%] 1 και [75%]
+++	12:23	ο χριστος [20%] --- [80%]
+++	12:24	εν [25%] 1 τω [75%]
++	12:28	εγω εν πνευματι θεου [28%] ~ 2341 [70%]
+	12:29	διαρπαση [40%] διαρπασει [60%]
++	13:2	εις [30%] 1 το [70%]
+++	13:3	εν παραβολαις πολλα [25%] ~ 312 [75%]
++	13:24	σπειραντι [30%] σπειροντι [70%]
++	13:32	παντων [30%] --- [70%]
++	13:44	εν αγρω [30%] 1 τω 2 [70%]
+++	14:5	εφοβειτο [20%] εφοβηθη [80%]
++	14:22	αυτου [30%] --- [70%]
+++	14:28	δε [25%] 1 αυτω [73%]
+++	14:31	και ευθεως [20%] ~ 2 δε [80%]
++	14:34	γεινησαρετ [30%] γεινησαρετ [55%]
+-	14:36	καν [35%] --- [65%]

¹ This is one of a very few places where the family is so seriously divided that there is a legitimate doubt as to which reading should be chosen. Usually a single letter is involved, and the meaning is not affected.

+++	15:6	μητερα [25%] 1 αυτου [75%]
++	15:14	εμπεσουνται [30%] πεσουνται [70%]
++	15:31	εδοξαζον [30%] εδοξασαν [70%]
++	15:32 ^a	ημερας [30%] ημεραι [70%]
+++	15:32 ^b	νηστις [25%] νηστεις [75%]
++	15:39	ενεβη [30%] ανεβη [70%]
+--	16:20	εστιν [35%] 1 ιησους [65%]
+	17:2	εγενετο [40%] εγεινοντο [60%]
+++	17:18	ιαθη [20%] εθεραπευθη [80%]
+++	17:25	εισηλθον [25%] εισηλθεν [72%]
+	17:27	αναβαντα [40%] αναβαινοντο [60%]
+++	18:15 ^a	αμαρτη [25%] αμαρτηση [74%]
++	18:15 ^b	υπαγε [30%] 1 και [70%]
+++	19:5	προς την γυναικα [20%] τη γυναικι [68%]
+++	19:16	τις [25%] --- [75%]
	19:29	οικιαν ^{f^{35pt}} [30%] οικιας [68%]
+++	20:26	εσται [20%] 1 εν [80%]
+--	20:27	εσται [35%] εστω [65%]
++	21:8	αυτων [30%] εαυτων [70%]
+++	21:35	εδηραν [25%] εδειραν [75%]
+	22:37	τη [40%] --- [60%]
++	22:46	αποκριθηναι αυτω [30%] ~ 21 [69%]
++	23:8	διδασκαλος [30%] καθηγητης [70%]
++	23:10	εστιν υμων [30%] ~ 21 [65%]
+++	23:11	εστω [25%] εσται [75%]
+++	24:1	αυτω [25%] --- [75%]
+++	24:6	μελησετε [25%] μελλησετε [72%]
++	24:18	το ιματιον [30%] τα ιματια [70%]
+++	24:32	γινωσκεται [25%] γινωσκετε [75%]
++	24:49	τε [30%] δε [70%]
++	25:29	δοκει εχειν [30%] εχει [70%]
+++	25:32	συναχθησονται [25%] συναχθησεται ^{f^{35pt}} [75%]
+++	26:1	ιησους [25%] 1 παντας [75%]
+	26:9	τοις [40%] --- [60%]
+	26:11	παντοτε γαρ τους πτωχους [40%] ~ 3421 [60%]
+	26:15	και εγω [40%] καγω [60%]
++	26:26	ευλογησας [30%] ευχαριστησας [70%]
++	26:29	γενηματος [30%] γεννηματος ^{f^{35pt}} [70%]
++	26:33 ^a	και [30%] --- [70%]
+	26:33 ^b	εγω [40%] 1 δε [60%]

+-	26:39	προελθων [35%] προσελθων [65%]
++	26:43	ευρεν [30%] ευρισκει [66%]
+++	26:46	ιδου [20%] 1 ηγγικεν [80%]
+	26:48	εαν [40%] αν [60%]
++	26:55	εν τω ιερω διδασκων [30%] ~ 4123 [69%]
+-	26:75	ρηματος [35%] 1 του [65%]
+++	27:1	πρεσβυτεροι [20%] 1 του λαου [80%]
++	27:12	και [30%] 1 των [70%]
++	27:33	λεγομενον [30%] λεγομενος [67%]
+++	27:35	βαλοντες [25%] βαλλοντες f ^{35ot} [75%]
+-	27:55	και [35%] --- [65%]
+++	27:64	οτι [25%] --- [75%]

Key:

+++	around 20% = f ³⁵ virtually alone = diagnostic (17)
+++	around 25% = quite good (22)
++	around 30% = not bad (34)
+-	around 35% (10)
+	around 40% (9)

Total: 92 (This does not include the two serious divisions.)

A single diagnostic reading could be happenstance, but several presumably indicate that the MS is at least a fringe member of the family. Probably no two scholars would prepare identical lists—changing rank, adding or subtracting—but there is sufficient evidence here to establish that f³⁵ is a distinct family. The statements here apply to the remaining books as well.

Mark

+	1:12	ευθεως [40%] ευθυς [60%]
++	1:30	του [30%] --- [70%]
++	1:34	χριστον ειναι (28%) --- (58.9%) τον 12 (11.6%)
+	1:38	εληλυθα [40%] εξεληλυθα [59%]
+++	1:44	προσενεγκαι [25%] προσενεγκε [75%]
+	2:9	τον κραββατον σου [40%] ~ 312 [59%]
++	3:20	μηδε [30%] μητε [70%]
+-	3:35	μου [35%] --- [65%]
++	4:24	αντιμετρηθησεται [30%] μετρηθησεται [69%]
++	5:3a	οικησιν [30%] κατοικησιν [70%]
+	5:3b	ηδυνατο [40%] εδυνατο [60%]
+++	5:4	ισχυσεν [26%] ισχυεν [74%]
+	5:5	μνημασιν και εν τοις ορεσιν [40%] ~ 52341 [57%]
+++	6:20	ακουων [20%] ακουσας [80%]
+	6:45	απολυσει [40%] απολυση [59%]
++	6:53	γειησαρετ [30%] γεινησαρετ [53%]

++	7:4	χαλκειων [30%] χαλκιων [70%]
++	8:3	νηστις [30%] νηστεις [70%]
+	8:6	και [40%] --- [60%]
+-	8:14	οι μαθηται αυτου [35%] --- [64%]
+	8:21	ουπω [41%] ου [59%]
+++	9:3	κναφευς [25%] γναφευς [75%]
++	9:20	ιδον [30%] ιδων [70%]
++	9:48	σκωληξ [30%] 1 αυτων [70%]
+-	10:8	σαρξ μια [35%] ~ 21 [65%]
+++	10:17	τις [20%] εις [70%] --- [10%]
+++	10:25	γαρ [20%] --- [80%]
+	10:30	πατερα και μητερα [40%] μητερας [55%]
+	10:33	τοις [40%] --- [60%]
+-	10:40	μου [35%] --- [65%]
+-	10:51	ραβουνι [35%] ραββουνι [59%]
++	10:52	ηκολουθησεν [30%] ηκολουθει [69%]
++	11:5	εστωτων [30%] εστηκοτων [70%]
+-	11:14	φαγη [35%] φαγοι [65%]
+-	11:18	απολεσουσιν [35%] απολεσωσιν [65%]
+++	11:30	ανθρωπων [20%] 1 αποκριθητε μοι [80%]
++	12:3	εδηραν [30%] εδειραν [70%]
++	12:5	δαιροντες [30%] δεροντες [70%]
+++	12:26	μωυσεος [20%] μωσεως [50%] μωυσεως [30%]
+++	12:28	πασων [25%] παντων [72%]
+++	12:29a	πασων [25%] παντων [72%]
+++	12:29b	υμων [25%] ημων [74%]
+-	12:41	εβαλον [35%] εβαλλον [65%]
++	13:2a	αποκριθεις ο ιησους [30%] ~ 231 [68%]
+++	13:2b	ωδε (21.1%) --- (78.9%)
++	13:9	αχθησεσθε [30%] σταθησεσθε [70%]
+-	13:11a	αγωσιν [35%] αγαγωσιν [65%]
+-	13:11b	λαλησητε [35%] λαλησητε [65%]
++	13:21a	τοτε [30%] και 1 [70%]
+	13:21b	χριστος [40%] 1 η [60%]
++	13:28a	ηδη ο κλαδος αυτης (29%) ~ 4123 (50.2%)
+++	13:28b	γινωσκεται [25%] γινωσκετε [75%]
+++	13:33	προσευχεσθε [20%] και 1 [77%]
+	14:11	αγρυρια [40%] αγρυριον [60%]
++	14:15	ανωγειων [30%] ανωγειον [39%] ανωγαιον [25%]
+++	14:22	και [25%] --- [75%]

- +++ 14:28 μετα δε [20%] || αλλα 1 [79%]
- +-- 14:32 προσευξομαι [35%] || προσευξωμαι [65%]
- ++ 14:36 παρενεγκαι [30%] || παρενεγκε [70%]
- +-- 14:40 καταβαρυνομενοι [35%] || βεβαρημενοι [64%]
- ++ 15:18 και λεγειν [30%] || --- [68%]
- +++ 15:42 παρασκευη ην [25%] || ~ 21 [75%]
- +-- 15:43 ελθων [35%] || ηλθεν [65%]
- ++ 16:1 τον ιησουν [30%] || αυτον [70%]
- ++ 16:9 ο ιησους [30%] || --- [70%]

Key:

- +++ around 20% = f³⁵ virtually alone = diagnostic (8)
- +++ around 25% = quite good (9)
- ++ around 30% = not bad (23)
- +-- around 35% (13)
- + around 40% (12)

Total: 65

Luke

- +-- 1:55 εως αιωνος [35%] || εις τον αιωνα [64%]
- +++ 1:63 εσται [26%] || εστιν [74%]
- + 2:40 αυτω [41%] || αυτο [58%]
- + 3:12 υπ αυτου [40%] || --- [60%]
- ++++ 3:18 τω λαω [15%] || τον λαον [85%]
- +++ 3:30 ιωναμ [25%] || ιωναν [48%]
- + 3:34 θαρρα [40%] || θαρα [60%]
- +++ 3:35 ραγαβ [25%] || ραγαυ [70%]
- +-- 4:7 σοι [25%] || σου [75%]
- + 4:42 εζητουν [40%] || επεζητουν [60%]
- ++++ 5:1^a περι [18%] || παρα [82%]
- ++ 5:1^b γενησαρετ [29%] || γεννησαρετ [60%]
- ++ 5:14 προσενεγκαι [30%] || προσενεγκε [70%]
- +-- 5:19 πως [35%] || ποιας [57%]
- +++ 5:35 ημεραι [25%] || 1 και [75%]
- +-- 6:7 ει [25%] || 1 εν [75%]
- + 6:10 ουτως [42%] || --- [54.5%]
- +++ 6:26^a καλως ειπωσιν υμας (22%) || ~ 132 (76.1%)
- + 6:26^b παντες (38.9%) || --- (60.5%)
- ++ 6:49 την [30%] || --- [70%]
- +-- 8:3 σωσαννα [35%] || σουσαννα [65%]
- ++ 8:24 και προσελθοντες [32%] || ~ 2 δε [68%]
- +-- 8:26 αντιπεραν [33%] || αντιπερα [60%]
- ++++ 9:4 ην [15%] || 1 αν [85%]

++	9:13	αγορασομεν [30%] αγορασωμεν [70%]
+	9:33	ο [40%] --- [60%]
+++	9:48	υμων [20%] υμιν [79%]
+	9:52	εαυτου [40%] αυτου [60%]
+++	10:4	μη [26%] μηδε [74%]
+++	10:6	μεν [25%] --- [75%]
+-	10:13	χωραζιν [35%] χοραζιν [29%] χοραζειν [20%]
+-	10:39	των λογων [37%] τον λογον [63%]
+	10:41	ο ιησους ειπεν αυτη [40%] ~ 3412 [59%]
++++	11:19	αυτοι υμων [18%] ~ 21 [52%]
++	11:32	νινευι [32%] νινευιται [35%]
+-	11:34	η [35%] 1 και [65%]
+++	11:53	συνεχειν [26%] ευεχειν [70%]
++++	12:7	πολλω [15%] πολλων [85%]
+-	12:11	απλογησεσθε [35%] απλογησησθε [63%]
++	12:22 ^a	λεγω υμιν [28%] ~ 21 [72%]
+++	12:22 ^b	ενδυσεσθε [25%] ενδυσησθε [74%]
+++	12:23	πλειων [23%] πλειον [77]
+++	12:27	λεγω [20%] 1 δε [80%]
+	12:56	του ουρανου και της γης [40%] ~ 45312 [60%]
+++	12:58	βαλη σε [24%] ~ 21 [76%]
+++	13:28	οψησθε [27%] οψησθε [73%]
+++	14:9	συ [20%] σοι [80%]
+	14:21	τυφλους και χωλους [42%] ~ 321 [57%]
+-	14:26	μου ειναι μαθητης [36%] ~ 132 [60%]
+	15:20	εαυτου [42%] αυτου [58%]
+++	16:22	του [26%] --- [74%]
++	16:25	οδε [30%] ωδε [70%]
++	17:37	και [29%] --- [68%]
+-	19:15	βασιλειαν [37%] 1 και [63%]
+++	19:23	την [23%] --- [77%]
+++	20:10	δηραντες [20%] δειραντες [80%]
+++	20:11	δηραντες [20%] δειραντες [80%]
+++	20:15	εκβαλοντες [24%] 1 αυτον [76%]
+++	20:28	ο αδελφος αυτου λαβη [20%] ~ 4123 [80%]
++	21:6	λιθον (32.2%) λιθω (65.1%)
+-	21:12	απαντων [34%] παντων [66%]
++	21:15	η [30%] ουδε [68%]
++	21:30	προβαλλωσιν [28%] προβαλωσιν [66%]
++	21:33	παρελευσεται [32%] παρελευσονται [68%]

+-- 22:27 ουχ [33%] || ουχι [67%]
 +-- 22:52 προς [33%] || επ [67%]
 +-- 22:54 εισηγαγον [37%] || 1 αυτον [55%]
 +-- 22:63 δαιροντες [35%] || δερουντες [65%]
 +++ 22:66 απηγαγον [24%] || ανηγαγον [75%]
 ++ 23:51 ος [32%] || 1 και [67%]
 ++ 24:19 ως [32%] || ος [68%]
 ++ 24:36 και [32%] || --- [68%]
 ++ 24:42 μελισσειου [30%] || μελισσιου [70%]

Key:

+++ around 20% = f³⁵ virtually alone = diagnostic (12)
 +++ around 25% = quite good (17)
 ++ around 30% = not bad (17)
 +-- around 35% (15)
 + around 40% (12)

Total: 73

John

+++ 1:28 βιθαβαρα [25%] || βηθανια [65%] ||
 + 1:45 υιον [40%] || 1 του [60%]
 + 3:4 αυτον [40%] || 1 ο [60%]
 +++ 4:1 ιησους (21.7%) || κυριος (76.9%)
 + 4:5 ου [40%] || ο [60%]
 +-- 4:35 οτι [35%] || 1 ετι [65%]
 +++ 5:44 ανθρωπων (22.6%) || αλληλων (77.2%)
 +++ 5:46 εμου γαρ [25%] || ~ 21 [75%]
 +++ 6:12 των κλασματων [25%] || κλασματα [75%]
 ++ 6:58 μου [30%] || --- [70%]
 ++ 7:3 εργα [30%] || 1 σου [63.5%] ||
 + 7:31 σημεια [40%] || 1 τουτων [55%]
 ++ 7:39 ο [30%] || ου [70%]
 + 8:4 αυτοφωρω [40%] || αυτοφορω [60%]
 +++ 8:7 τον λιθον επ αυτη βαλετω [18%] || || || || || (5-way split)
 + 8:14 η [40%] || και [50%] ||
 ++ 8:33 και ειπον [30%] || --- [70%]
 ++ 9:17 ουν [30%] || --- [70%]
 ++ 9:26 ανεωξεν [30%] || ηνοιξεν [63%]
 +++ 9:34 ολωσ [25%] || ολος [75%]
 +++ 10:39 ουν παλιν πιασαι αυτον (18.9%) || ~ 1243 (32.8%) || ~ 243 (30.3%) || ||
 + 11:2 εαυτης [40%] || αυτης [60%]
 ++ 11:46 οσα [29%] || α [70%]
 +-- 11:51 ο [35%] || --- [65%]

+++	11:56	υμιν δοκει [20%] ~ 21 [80%]
+	12:6	εμελεν [40%] εμελλεν [60%]
+	12:12	ο [40%] --- [60%]
+	12:13	απαντησιν [38%] υπαντησιν [60%]
++	12:14	αυτω [30%] αυτο [70%]
+-	13:15 ^a	δεδωκα [35%] εδωκα [65%]
++-	13:15 ^b	καθως [25%] 1 εγω [75%]
+++	13:22 ^a	δε [20%] ουν [79.5%]
++-	13:22 ^b	προς [25%] εις [75%]
+	18:11	μαχαιραν [40%] 1 σου [60%]
++	18:23	δαιρεις [30%] δερεις [70%]
++	18:28	πρωι [30%] πρωια [70%]
+++	18:39	ημιν [20%] υμιν [80%]
+	18:40	ουν [40%] 1 παλιν [60%]
+	19:14	ην [40%] δε [60%]
+	19:23	αρραφος [40%] αραφος [60%]
++	19:28	ηδη παντα [30%] ~ 21 [60%]
++	19:35	η μαρτυρια αυτου [30%] ~ 312 [65%]
+++	21:1 ^a	εαυτον [20%] 1 παλιν [80%]
+	21:1 ^b	αυτου [40%] --- [60%]
++-	21:1 ^c	εγερθεις εκ νεκρων [25%] --- [75%]

Key:

+++	around 20% = f ³⁵ virtually alone = diagnostic (8)
++-	around 25% = quite good (7)
++	around 30% = not bad (12)
+-	around 35% (3)
+	around 40% (15)

Total: 45 (The transmission of John was more conservative than that of the other Gospels.)

Acts

++-	1:8	και [25%] 1 εν [75%]
++	1:11	ουτος [30%] 1 ο [70%]
++-	1:13	ιακωβος [25%] 1 και [73%]
+	1:18	ελακισεν [40%] ελακησεν [60%]
++-	2:13	διαχλευαζοντες [25%] χλευαζοντες [75%]
++-	2:14	επεφθεγξατο [25%] απεφθεγξατο [75%]
+++	2:38	ειπεν δε πετρος [20%] ~ 32 εφη [72%]
+-	3:23	αν [35%] εαν [65%]
++-	3:24	προκατηγγειλαν [25%] κατηγγειλαν [75%]
++	4:5	εν [30%] εις [70%]
++	4:12 ^a	ουδε [30%] ουτε [70%]
+++	4:12 ^b	ετερον εστιν [20%] ~ 21 [80%]

+	4:12 ^c	υπο του ουρανου [40%] --- [60%]
+++	4:14	εστωτα [20%] 1 τον [80%]
+-	4:17	ανθρωπω [35%] ανθρωπων [65%]
+++	4:20	α [20%] --- [80%]
+++	4:23	ανηγγειλαν [25%] απηγγειλαν [75%]
+++	4:33 ^a	δυναμει μεγαλη [20%] ~ 21 [80%]
++	4:33 ^b	οι αποστολοι το μαρτυριον [30%] ~ 3412 [70%]
+++	4:34	ην (24.5%) υπηρχεν (74.8%)
+	5:1	σαπφειρα [40%] σαπφειρη [56%]
++	5:15	του [30%] --- [70%]
+++	5:16	και [20%] οιτινες [80%]
+++	5:22	παραγενομενοι υπηρεται [20%] ~ 21 [80%]
++	5:33	ακουοντες [32%] ακουσαντες [68%]
++	5:36 ^a	προσεκληθη [30%] προσεκληθη [54%]
+++	5:36 ^b	ως [20%] ωσει [80%]
++	5:39	δυνησεσθε [30%] δυνασθε [58%]
+	5:40	δηραντες [40%] δειραντες [60%]
+++	5:41	κατηξιωθησαν υπερ του ονοματος του χριστου [20%] ~ 234561 [15%] ~ 234 αυτου 1 [15%]
+++	5:42	τον χριστον ιησουν [25%] ~ 312 [67%]
+	6:5	πληρη [40%] πληρης [45%]
+++	7:5	δουнай αυτην εις κατασχεσιν αυτω [25%] ~ 15342 [65%]
+++	7:14 ^a	ιακωβ τον πατερα αυτου [20%] ~ 2341 [80%]
++	7:14 ^b	αυτου [30%] --- [70%]
++	7:14 ^c	εβδομηκοντα πεντε ψυχαις [30%] ~ 312 [63%]
+-	7:16	εμμωρ [33%] εμμορ [60%]
+++	7:21	ανειλετο [25%] 1 αυτον [60%]
+++	7:27	τουτον [20%] αυτον [80%]
+	7:31 ^a	μωσης [38%] μωσης [62%]
+++	7:31 ^b	εθαυμασεν [25%] εθαυμαζειν [75%]
+++	7:35	αρχηγον [23%] αρχοντα [77%]
+	7:37	ημων [40%] υμων [55%]
+++	7:42	εν τη ερημω ετη τεσσαρακοντα [20%] ~ 45123 [80%]
++	8:6	δε [30%] τε [70%]
+++	8:21	εναντιον [20%] ενωπιον [78%]
+	8:28	και [40%] --- [60%]
+++	9:12	ανανιαν ονοματι [20%] ~ 21 [80%]
++	9:18	παραχρημα [30%] --- [70%]
+-	9:19	των [35%] 1 οντων [65%]
+++	9:20	ιησουν [20%] χριστον [80%]

+++	9:28 ^a	και εκπορευομενος [20%] --- [80%]
++	9:28 ^b	εν [30%] εις [70%]
++-	9:29 ^a	ιησου [24%] κυριου 1 [67%]
+++	9:29 ^b	ανελειν αυτον [20%] ~ 21 [80%]
+++	9:30	εξαπεστειλαν [20%] 1 αυτον [80%]
+++	9:37	τω [20%] --- [80%]
+++	9:43	αυτον ημερας ικανας μειναι [20%] ~ 2341 [79%]
+++	10:5	ος επικαλειται πετρος [20%] τον επικαλουμενον πετρον [80%]
++	10:17	υπο [30%] απο [70%]
+++	10:22	αγγελου [20%] 1 αγιου [80%]
++-	10:26	ηγειρεν αυτον [25%] ~ 21 [75%]
++-	10:47	ως [25%] καθως [75%]
+--	10:48	ιησου [35%] --- [57%]
+++	11:3	εισηλθεις προς ανδρας ακροβυστιαν εχοντας και συνεφαγες [20%] ~ 2345167 [71%]
+++	11:9	εκ δευτερου φωνη [20%] ~ 312 [80%]
++	11:13 ^a	δε [30%] τε [70%]
+++	11:13 ^b	ιοππην [20%] 1 ανδρας [80%]
+	11:16 ^a	του [40%] --- [60%]
++-	11:16 ^b	οτι [25%] --- [75%]
++-	11:17 ^a	ιησουν [25%] 1 χριστον [75%]
+++	11:17 ^b	εγω [20%] 1 δε [80%]
++-	11:26 ^a	ευρων [25%] 1 αυτον [75%]
+	11:26 ^b	ηγαγεν [40%] 1 αυτον [60%]
++-	12:6	προαγειν αυτον [25%] ~ 21 [58%]
+++	12:20	τε [20%] δε [70%]
+++	12:22	θεου φωνη [20%] ~ 21 [78%]
+++++	12:25	εις αντιοχειαν (5.1%)+{19.5%} 1 ιερουσαλημ [60%] ¹
+++	13:4 ^a	μεν [20%] 1 ουν [80%]
++-	13:4 ^b	τε [27%] δε [72%]
+--	13:12	εκπληττομενος [35%] εκπλησσομενος [65%]
+++	13:15	προς αυτους οι αρχισυναγωγοι [20%] ~ 3412 [80%]
++	13:26	εξαπεσταλη [30%] απεσταλη [70%]
++	13:27	κατοικουντες [30%] 1 εν [70%]
+++	13:39 ^a	εν [20%] 1 τω [80%]
++-	13:39 ^b	μωυσεος [25%] μωυσεως [35%] μωσεως [40%]
++-	13:41	ω [25%] ο [75%]

¹ This is the only place in the whole NT where Family 35 splinters, there being five significant variants (plus two minor ones). Usually there are only two variants, where the family is divided. For a detailed discussion of this variant set please see my article, "Where to place a comma—Acts 12:25", available from my site: www.prunch.org.

+++ 13:43 επιμενειν αυτους [20%] || ~ 21 [64%] ||
 ++ 14:10 ηλλατο [30%] || ηλλετο [35%] || ||
 +++ 14:15 υμιν εσμεν [20%] || ~ 21 [60%] ||
 +++ 14:20 των μαθητων αυτον [22%] || ~ 312 [55%] ||
 +++ 14:21 εις [20%] || 1 την [80%]
 ++ 15:1 μωυσεος [28%] || μωυσεως [55%] ||
 +- 15:5 μωσεως [35%] || μωυσεως [60%] ||
 ++ 15:7 υμιν [30%] || ημιν [55%] || ||
 + 15:9 ουδεν [40%] || ουθεν [60%]
 +- 15:21 μωσης [35%] || μωυσης [65%]
 +++ 15:24 κατα [20%] || 1 την [80%]
 +- 15:25 εκλεξαμενοις [35%] || εκλεξαμενους [65%]
 + 15:37 και [39%] || τον [50%] ||
 +++ 15:39 χωρισθηναι [20%] || αποχωρισθηναι [75%] ||
 +++ 16:3 ηδεσαν [22%] || ηδειςαν [65%] ||
 +++ 16:9 την [20%] || --- [80%]
 +++ 16:11 την [20%] || --- [80%]
 +++ 16:15 αυτη [20%] || --- [80%]
 + 16:17 τω σιλα [40%] || ημιν [60%]
 ++ 16:26 δε [30%] || τε [70%]
 ++ 16:37 δηραντες [32%] || δειραντες [67%]
 +++ 16:38 δε [20%] || και [80%]
 +++ 16:40 απο [20%] || εκ [80%]
 +++ 17:3 ιησους ο χριστος [20%] || ~ 231 [75%] ||
 +++ 17:4 πληθος πολυ [20%] || ~ 21 [80%]
 +++ 17:5 ανδρας τινας [20%] || ~ 21 [75%] ||
 ++ 17:7 ετερον λεγοντες [30%] || ~ 21 [70%]
 ++ 17:10 βερροιαν [30%] || βεριοιαν [70%]
 +- 17:11 προθυμιας [25%] || 1 το [75%]
 ++ 17:13 βερροια [30%] || βεροια [70%]
 +++ 18:6 τας κεφαλας [20%] || την κεφαλην [80%]
 +- 18:13 αναπειθει ουτος [25%] || ~ 21 [65%] ||
 ++ 18:19 κακεινους [29%] || και εκεινους [70%]
 +- 18:25 ιησου [35%] || κυριου [65%]
 +++ 19:3 τε (18.3%)+{6.2%} || 1 προς αυτους (61.6%)+{6.2%} || ||
 +++ 19:11 δε [22%] || τε [78%]
 +- 19:13 ο [35%] || --- [65%]
 +++ 19:17 εγενετο πασιν γνωστον [20%] || ~ 132 [75%] ||
 +++ 19:19 συνεψηφισαντο [20%] || συνεψηφισαν [67%] ||
 +- 19:27^a αρτεμιδος ιερων [25%] || ~ 21 [75%]

- + 19:27^b ουδεν [40%] || ουθεν [60%]
- +++ 19:40 αποδουναι [20%] || δουναι [80%]
- +++ 20:3 επιβουλης αυτω [20%] || ~ 21 [80%]
- +++ 20:4 βερροιαιος [25%] || βεροιαιος [35%] || ||
- +++ 20:15 τρωγυλιω [20%] || τρωγυλλιω [30%] || || ||
- +++ 20:18 ημερας [20%] || 1 αφ [80%]
- +++ 20:35 του λογου [22%] || τον λογον [55%] || των λογων [23%]
- +++ 20:36 κλαυθμος εγενετο [20%] || ~ 21 [80%]
- + 21:8 ηλθομεν (38.8%) || οι περι τον παυλον ηλθον (46.4%) || ||
- +++ 21:21 μωυσεος [25%] || μωυσεως [45%] || μωσεως [30%]
- +- 21:27 ημελλον [33%] || εμελλον [60%] ||
- ++ 21:31 σπειρας [30%] || σπειρης [70%]
- + 21:37^a δε [40%] || τε [58%]
- +++ 21:37^b εις την παρεμβολην εισαγεσθαι [20%] || ~ 4123 [80%]
- + 21:40 προσεφωνει [40%] || προσεφωνησεν [60%]
- +++ 22:19^a δαιρων [25%] || δερων [75%]
- +++ 22:19^b εις [20%] || επι [80%]
- +++ 22:20 και [25%] || --- [75%]
- +++ 22:24 ο χιλιαρχος αγεσθαι αυτον [20%] || ~ 4123 [74%] ||
- ++ 22:25 προετειναν [30%] || προετεινεν [30%] || ||
- +++ 22:26 τω χιλιαρχω απηγειλεν [20%] || ~ 312 [73%] ||
- ++ 22:30^a υπο [30%] || παρα [70%]
- +++ 22:30^b παν [20%] || ολον [80%]
- +++ 23:6 φαρισαιων το δε ετερον σαδδουκαιων [20%] || ~ 52341 [80%]
- +++ 23:8 μητε [25%] || μηδε [75%]
- +++ 23:12^a εαυτους [25%] || 1 λεγοντες [75%]
- +++ 23:12^b ανελωσιν [20%] || αποκτεινωσιν [80%]
- +- 23:15 καταγαγη αυτον [35%] || ~ 21 [65%]
- +- 23:20 μελλοντες (33.1%) || μελλοντα (27.2%) || || ||
- +- 23:24 φηλικα [35%] || φιληκα [25%] || φιλικα [40%]
- + 23:26 φηλικι [40%] || φιληκι [30%] || φιλικι [17%] ||
- +++ 23:35 του [20%] || --- [79%]
- +++ 24:4 πλεον [20%] || πλειον [79%]
- +++ 24:10 δικαιον [25%] || --- [75%]
- + 24:13 παραστησαι [40%] || 1 με νυν [60%]
- ++ 24:19 εδει [30%] || δει [70%]
- +++ 24:26 πυκνοτερον [20%] || 1 αυτον [75%] ||
- + 25:2 οι αρχιερεις [40%] || ο αρχιερευς [55%]
- +- 25:9 υπ [35%] || επ [63%]
- + 25:13 ασπασομενοι [40%] || ασπασαμενοι [60%]

+++	25:20 ^a	περι την [22%] ~ 21 [76%]
+--	25:20 ^b	τουτων [35%] τουτου [65%]
++	26:12	εις [32%] 1 την [68%]
++	26:18	επιστρεψαι [30%] υποστρεψαι [35%] αποστρεψαι [35%]
	26:29	ευξαμην ^{f³⁵} [40%] ευξαμην [60%]
+--	27:1	σπειρας [35%] σπειρης [65%]
+++	27:2	ατραμυτινω [21%] αδραμυττηνω [25%]
++--	27:5	κατηχθημεν [23%] κατηλθομεν [71%]
++	27:6	εις [30%] 1 την [70%]
++	27:10	φορτου [30%] φορτιου [70%]
+++	27:31	εν τω πλοιω μεινωσιν [20%] ~ 4123 [75%]
++	27:34	μεταλαβειν [30%] προσλαβειν [70%]
++	27:38	δε [30%] 1 της [70%]
++--	27:41	εμενεν [25%] εμεινεν [75%]
+--	28:3 ^a	εξελθουσα [35%] διεξελθουσα [65%]
++--	28:3 ^b	καθηψατο [25%] καθηψεν [72%]
+++	28:21	πονηρον περι σου [20%] ~ 231 [80%]
++--	28:23	μωυσεος [25%] μωσεως [35%] μωυσεως [40%]
+	28:27	ιασωμαι [40%] ιασομαι [60%]

Key:

+++	around 20% = ^{f³⁵} virtually alone = diagnostic (72)
++--	around 25% = quite good (36)
++	around 30% = not bad (36)
+--	around 35% (19)
+	around 40% (22)

Total: 185 (This does not include the serious division at 26:29.)

Of all the books, ^{f³⁵} has the most distinct profile in Acts, with far and away the most diagnostic variants.

Pauline Corpus

++--	Rom. 1:23	ηλλαξαντο [26%] ηλλαξαν [74%]
++--	Rom. 1:27 ^a	ομοιως [23%] 1 τε [70%]
+++	Rom. 1:27 ^b	εξεκαυθησαν [20%] 1 εν [80%]
+++	Rom. 4:16	εκ [20%] 1 του [80%]
+	Rom. 5:1	εχωμεν (43%) εχομεν (57%)
+	Rom. 5:11	καυχωμεθα [38%] καυχωμενοι [52%]
++	Rom. 5:14	μωυσεος [30%] μωυσεως [50%] μωυσεως [20%]
++--	Rom. 9:13	ήσαυ [25%] ήσαυ [75%]
++	Rom. 10:5	μωσης [30%] μωυσης [70%]
+++	Rom. 10:19	μωσης [20%] μωυσης [80%]
++	Rom. 11:7	τουτου [32%] τουτο [68%]
++--	Rom. 15:9	κυριε [27%] --- [73%]

+++	Rom. 16:6	υμας (22.8%) ημας (76.4%)
++++	Rom. 16:24	ημων [18%] υμων [82%]
+++	1Cor. 1:2	υμων [25%] ημων [75%]
+	1Cor. 4:11	γυμνιτευομεν [40%] γυμνητευομεν [60%]
+++	1Cor. 5:8	είλικρινειας [20%] είλικρινειας [55%]
	1Cor. 6:5	ανακριναι f ^{35pt} [20%] διακριναι [80%]
+-	1Cor. 6:8	αλλ [35%] αλλα [65%]
+-	1Cor. 6:11	αλλ [35%] αλλα [65%]
++	1Cor. 9:9	άλωωντα [30%] άλωωντα [70%]
++	1Cor. 9:10	άλων [30%] άλων [70%]
+-	1Cor. 9:26	δαιρων [35%] δερων [65%]
++	1Cor. 10:13	δυνατος [30%] πιστος [70%]
++	1Cor. 11:6	κειρεσθαι [32%] κειρασθαι [64%]
+	1Cor. 12:26 ^a	συμπασχη [40%] συμπασχει [60%]
+	1Cor. 12:26 ^b	συγχειρη [40%] συγχειρει [60%]
+++	1Cor. 14:26	οντως ο θεος εν υμιν εστιν [23%] ~ 231456 [75%]
++	1Cor. 16:2	ευοδουται [30%] ευοδωται [61%]
+++	2Cor. 1:12	είλικρινεια [25%] είλικρινεια [60%] (also at 2:17)
+++	2Cor. 1:15	προς υμας ελθειν το προτερον (21.6%) ~ 31245 (61.1%)
	2Cor. 1:20	τω f ^{35pt} [10%] το [90%] (twice)
+-	2Cor. 3:7	μουσεος [35%] μουσεως [55%]
+	2Cor. 3:10	εινεκεν [43%] ενεκεν [57%]
+	2Cor. 3:15	μωσης [40%] μουσης [60%]
+-	2Cor. 5:15	παντων [35%] αυτων [55%]
+++	2Cor. 7:11	αλλ [27%] αλλα [73%]
++	2Cor. 8:4	δεξασθαι ημας [30%] --- [70%]
+	2Cor. 8:9	ημας [40%] υμας [60%]
++	2Cor. 8:12	καθò εαν [30%] καθ ò εαν [58%]
+++	2Cor. 11:7	εαυτον [22%] εμαυτον [78%]
+	2Cor. 11:20	δαιρει [40%] δερει [60%]
++	2Cor. 13:11	της [30%] --- [70%]
+	2Cor. 13:13	ημων [40%] --- [60%]
++	Gal. 1:12	αποκαλυψεως [30%] 1 ιησου [70%]
+	Gal. 3:6,etc.	άβρααμ [40%] άβρααμ [60%]
+	Gal. 3:16	ερρεθησαν [40%] ερρηθησαν [55%]
+	Gal. 4:2	αλλ [40%] αλλα [60%]

++	Eph. 1:12	της [30%] --- [70%]
+	Eph. 2:17	ημιν [40%] υμιν [60%]
+-	Eph. 4:32	υμιν [35%] ημιν [65%]
++	Eph. 5:5	ιστε [30%] εστε [70%]
+	Eph. 6:6	οφθαλμοδουλιαν [40%] οφθαλμοδουλειαν [60%]
++	Phip. 1:10	είλικρινεις [30%] είλικρινεις [70%]
++-	Phip. 1:19	καραδοκιαν [25%] αποκαραδοκιαν [74%]
+-	Phip. 2:1	τι [35%] τις [60%]
+	Phip. 2:4	το [40%] τα [45%] των [15%]
+	Phip. 2:30	πληρωση [40%] αναπληρωση [55%]
+	Phip. 3:1	το [40%] --- [60%]
+	Phip. 3:13	ουπω [40%] ου [60%]
+	Col. 1:22	αυτου [40%] --- [60%]
+	Col. 1:27	τις ο [40%] τι το [60%]
+	Col. 1:28	χριστω [40%] 1 ιησου [60%]
+	Col. 3:22	οφθαλμοδουλιαις [40%] οφθαλμοδουλειαις [43%]
+	1Th. 1:7	και [40%] 1 τη [30%] 1 εν τη [30%]
+	1Th. 1:9	υμων [40%] ημων [60%]
+	1Th. 3:8	στηκητε [40%] στηκετε [60%]
++	1Th. 4:9	γαρ [30%] 1 υμεις [70%]
None for 2 Thessalonians. (f ³⁵ is always accompanied by at least 40% of the Byzantine bulk.)		
+	1Tm. 3:2	νηφαλιον [40%] νηφαλεον [50%]
+	1Tm. 3:11	νηφαλιους [40%] νηφαλεους [50%]
++	1Tm. 5:18	άλωοντα [30%] άλωοντα [70%]
++-	1Tm. 5:21	προσκλισιν [25%] προσκλησιν f ^{35pt} [75%]
+	1Tm. 6:12	και [40%] --- [60%]
+++	2Tm. 3:6	ενδυνουτες [20%] ενδυνουτες [77%]
+++	2Tm. 3:14	οις [20%] --- [80%]
+	Titus 2:1	νηφαλιους [40%] νηφαλεους [40%] νηφαλαιους [20%]
+++	Titus 3:9	ερις [20%] ερεις [75%]
+	Phin. 1	ιησου χριστου [40%] ~ 21 [60%]
+++	Phin. 25	ιησου [20%] 1 χριστου [80%]
+-	Heb. 2:4	σημειοις [35%] 1 τε [65%]

+	Heb. 2:16,etc.	ἄβρααμ [40%] ἄβρααμ [60%]
+	Heb. 3:16	μωυσεος [40%] μωυσεως [45%] μωσεως [15%]
+	Heb. 3:19	δια [40%] δι [60%]
+	Heb. 6:3	ποιησομεν [40%] ποιησωμεν [59%]
+++	Heb. 8:3	προσευεγκοι [20%] προσευεγκη [80%]
+	Heb. 8:6	τετευχεν [40%] τετυχεν [50%]
+--	Heb. 8:11	πλησιον [35%] πολιτην [65%]
+++	Heb. 9:12	ευρομενος [20%] ευραμενος [80%]
++	Heb. 9:14	αγιου [29%] αιωνιου [70%]
+--	Heb. 9:19	μωυσεος [35%] μωυσεως [45%] μωσεως [20%]
+	Heb. 10:1	δυναται [40%] δυνανται [59%]
++	Heb. 10:28	μωυσεος [30%] μωυσεως [55%] μωσεως [15%]
++	Heb. 11:20	ἦσαυ [30%] ἦσαυ [70%] (also 12:16)
+--	Heb. 12:7	ει [35%] εις [65%]
++	Heb. 12:24	το [30%] τον [70%]
+	Heb. 12:25	ουρανου [40%] ουρανωων [60%]

Key:

+++	around 20% = f ³⁵ virtually alone = diagnostic (14)
+++--	around 25% = quite good (10)
++	around 30% = not bad (21)
+--	around 35% = (11)
+	around 40% = (38)

Total: 94 (This does not include the two serious divisions.)

General Epistles

++	James 1:23	νομου [30%] λογου [69%]
+--	James 1:26	αλλ [35%] αλλα [65%]
++	James 2:3	λαμπραν εσθητα [30%] ~ 2 την 1 [70%]
+++--	James 2:4	ου (26.8%) και 1 (72.2%)
+++	James 2:13	ανηλεος [20%] ανελεος [30%] ανιλεως [50%]
+++--	James 3:2	δυναμενος [23%] δυνατος [76.5%]
+++	James 3:4	ιθυνοντος [21%] ευθυνοντος [79%]
+++--	James 4:11	γαρ [26%] --- [74%]
+++--	James 4:14 ^a	ημων [26%] υμων [74%]
++	James 4:14 ^b	επειτα [29.5%] 1 δε και [46%] 1 δε [15%] 1 και [9.5%]
+--	James 5:10 ^a	αδελφοι [35%] 1 μου [62%]
+	James 5:10 ^b	εν τω [40%] 2 [58%]
+	1Peter 1:3	ελεος αυτου [38%] ~ 21 [60%]
+--	1Peter 1:7	δοξαν και τιμην [35%] ~ 321 [28%] ~ 32 εις 1 [37%]
+	1Peter 1:23	αλλ [40%] αλλα [60%]
+--	1Peter 2:6	ἡ [35%] εν τη [59%]

+++	1Peter 2:21	και [23%] --- [77%]
+++	1Peter 3:10	ημερας ιδειν [26%] ~ 21 [74%]
+++	1Peter 3:16	τη αγαθη εν χριστω αναστροφη [20%] την αγαθην 34 αναστροφην [50%] ~ την 34 αγαθην αναστροφην [24%]
+++	1Peter 4:2	του [22%] --- [78%]
+	1Peter 4:3 ^a	υμιν (41.7%) ημιν (47.1%) --- (11.2%)
+++	1Peter 4:3 ^b	χρονος [26%] 1 του βιου [74%]
+++	1Peter 4:11 ^a	δοξαζεται θεος [20%] 1 ο 2 [73%]
+++	1Peter 4:11 ^b	αιωνας [27%] 1 των αιωνων [73%]
+	1Peter 4:14	αναπεπαυται [39%] αναπαυεται [52%]
+-	1Peter 5:7	υπερ [35%] περι [65%]
+++	1Peter 5:8	περιερχεται [24%] περιπατει [76%]
++	1Peter 5:10	στηριξαι...σθενωσαι...θεμελιωσαι [30%] στηριξει...σθενωσει...θεμελιωσει [66%]
+++	2Peter 2:2	ας [20%] ους [80%]
+-	2Peter 2:9	πειρασμων [33%] πειρασμου [67%]
+++	2Peter 2:12	γεγενημενα φυσικα [26%] ~ 21 [54%]
+++	2Peter 2:17	εις αιωνας (25.1%) 1 αιωνα (70.3%)
+	2Peter 2:18	ασελγειας [40%] ασελγειαις [60%]
+++	2Peter 3:1	ειλικρινη [20%] ειλικρινη [80%]
+++	2Peter 3:5	συνεστωτα [23%] συνεστωσα [76%]
+-	2Peter 3:16	εισιν [33%] εστιν [67%]
+++	2Peter 3:18	αυξανητε [27%] αυξανετε [60%]
++	1John 1:6	περιπατουμεν [29%] περιπατωμεν [71%]
+-	1John 2:24	πατρι και εν τω υιω [35%] ~ 52341 [65%]
+-	1John 2:29	ειδητε [37%] ιδητε [59%]
+-	1John 3:1	ημας [36%] υμας [63.5%]
+++	1John 3:6	και [20%] --- [80%]
++	1John 3:24	εν [30%] και 1 [70%]
+-	1John 4:16	αυτω [37%] 1 μιν [63%]
+++	1John 5:11	ο θεος ημιν [24%] ~ 312 [76%]
++	2John 5	εχομεν [32%] ειχομεν [68%]
+++	2John 9	δε [20%] --- [80%]
+++	3John 11	δε [25%] --- [75%]
+++	3John 12	οιδαμεν (23%) οιδατε (61.5%) οιδας (15.1%)

None for Jude. (f³⁵ is always accompanied by at least 40% of the Byzantine bulk.)

Key:

+++ around 20% = f³⁵ virtually alone = diagnostic (9)

- ++- around 25% = quite good (16)
- ++ around 30% = not bad (7)
- +-- around 35% (11)
- + around 40% (6)

Total: 49

Apocalypse

Due to Hoskier's collations, it is possible (and better) to state the evidence in terms of families, instead of percentages, as I have done in my apparatus—please consult it for the evidence.

- +++ 1:2 ἄ || ἄτινα || ---
- + 1:5 εκ || ---
- ++ 1:13 μαζοις || μαστοις || μασθοις
- +-- 2:2 κοπον || 1 σου
- ++- 2:7 δωσω || 1 αυτω
- ++- 2:24 βαλω || βαλλω
- +++ 3:2 εμελλες αποβαλειν || 1 αποβαλλειν || ημελλες αποβαλλειν || etc.
- +-- 3:5 ουτως || ουτος
- ++ 3:18^a κολλουριον || κουλουριον || κολλυριον
- +++ 3:18^b εγχρισον επι || 1 || ινα εγχριση || ινα εγχρισαι || εγχρισαι || etc.
- + 4:3 ομοια || ομοιος || ομοιως
- +++ 4:4 ειδον || ---
- + 4:6 κρυσταλω || κρυσταλλω
- +++ 4:8 λεγοντα || λεγοντες
- + 5:2 αξιος || 1 εστιν
- ++- 6:8 θανατος || ο 1 || ο αθανατος
- + 6:9 των ανθρωπων || ---
- + 6:12 και || ---
- + 8:9 διεφθαρησαν || διεφθαρη
- + 8:13 τρις || ---
- +++ 9:4 μονους || ---
- +++ 9:5 πληξη || παιση || πεση
- +-- 9:6 ζητουσιν || ζητησουσιν
- +++ 9:11 αββαδδων || αββαδων || αββααδων || αββααδδων || αβαδδων
- +-- 9:15 και την ημεραν || 1 εις 23 || 13 || ---
- ++ 10:7^a τελεσθη || και 1 || και ετελεσθη
- + 10:7^b ο || ως
- ++ 10:7^c ευηγγελισατο || ευηγγελισεν || ευηγγελησε
- ++ 11:1 και ειστηκει ο αγγελος λεγων || 1 φωνη λεγουσα || 5 || λεγει
- + 11:11 επ αυτους || εις 2 || εν αυτοις || αυτοις
- + 11:17 και ο ερχομενος || ---
- +-- 12:3 μεγας πυρρος || 1 πυρος || ~ 21 || ~ πυρος 1

+++ 12:4 τικτειν || τεκειν
 +++ 12:5 ηρπαγη || ηρπασθη
 +++ 12:7 του πολεμησαι || 2 || επολεμησαν
 + 13:7 φυλην || 1 και λαον
 + 13:15 ινα || ---
 + 14:6 αλλον αγγελον || 2 || ~ 21
 +++ 14:12 του ιησου || 2 || 2 χριστου
 + 15:3 μωυσεος || μωυσεως || μωσεως
 +++ 15:4 αγιος ει || 1 || 2 || οσιος
 +++ 15:6 εκ του ουρανου || 12 ναου || ---
 + 16:9 την || ---
 + 17:8 βλεποντες || βλεποντων
 +- 18:2 εν ισχυρα φωνη || 123 μεγαλη || 123 και μεγαλη || 23 || 23 μεγαλη || etc.
 + 18:3 πεπωκεν || πεπωκασιν || πεπωτικεν || πεπτωκασιν || πεπτωκαν || πεπωκαν
 + 18:7 βασανισμον || 1 και πειθος
 + 18:14^a απωλοντο || απωλετο || απηλθεν
 + 18:14^b ου μη ευρησεις αυτα || 12 ευρησης 4 || 12 ευρης 4 || 12 ευρησουσιν 4 || etc.
 +++ 18:17 ο επι των πλοιων πλεων || 2345 || 234 ομιλος || 234 ο ομιλος || etc.
 +++ 18:21 λεγων || 1 ουτως
 +++ 19:1 φωνην οχλου πολλου μεγαλην || ~ 1423 || 123 || φωνης 23
 + 20:4 το μετωπον αυτου || 12 || των μετωπων 3 ||
 +++ 20:11 ο ουρανος και η γη || ~ 45312
 +++ 20:12^a ανεωχθησαν || ηνεωχθησαν || ηνοιχθησαν || ηνοιξαν
 +++ 20:12^b ανεωχθη || ηνεωχθη || ηνοιχθη
 +++ 20:14 εστιν ο θανατος ο δευτερος || ~ 1453 || ~ 23451 || ~ 2351 || --- || ~ 4531
 + 21:5 καινα ποιω παντα || ~ 312 || ||
 + 21:6 αρχη και τελος || η 12 το 3 || και η 12 το 3
 +++ 21:10 την μεγαλην την αγιαν || 12 και 4 || 34
 + 21:24 την δοξαν και την τιμην αυτων εις αυτην || 12678 || αυτω 235 των εθνων 78 ||
 +- 22:2 εκαστον αποδιδους || 1 αποδιδον || 1 αποδιδουν || ~ 21 || ~ 2 εκαστος

Key:

+++ f³⁵ is alone, or virtually so (15)
 +++ f³⁵ is joined by part of another family (small) (10)
 ++ f³⁵ is joined by a whole small family (not a or e) (5)
 +- f³⁵ is joined by a whole small family (not a or e) plus (7)
 + f³⁵ is joined by less than either of the other two main lines of transmission (25)

Total: 62

Here are the totals for the whole New Testament.

Key:

+++ around 20% = f³⁵ virtually alone = diagnostic (155)
 +++ around 25% = quite good (127)

- ++ around 30% = not bad (155)
- +-- around 35% (89)
- + around 40% (139)

Total: 665 (This does not include the five serious divisions noted.)

The evidence is clear. **Family 35** is an objectively/empirically defined entity throughout the New Testament. It remains to be seen if the same can be said for any other family or line of transmission—attention please: that is for all 27 books (a number of lines are confined to the Gospels, such as f¹ and f¹³).

Family 35 is characterized by incredibly careful transmission (in contrast to other lines). I have a perfect copy of the Family 35 archetypal text for most NT books (22); I have copies made from a perfect exemplar (presumed) for another four (4); as I continue to collate MSS I hope to add the last one (Acts), but even for it the archetypal form is demonstrable. If God was preserving the original wording in some line of transmission other than Family 35, would that line be any less careful? I think not. So any line of transmission characterized by internal confusion is disqualified—this includes **all** the other lines of transmission that I have seen so far.

Copyist Care Quotient

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

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.

Family 35 MSS throughout the entire book.¹ 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: ⲗ B L 33 892 2427. Therefore, the weaker Beta manuscripts C D 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.² 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 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.³ [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.⁴ 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

¹ 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?

² 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?

³ 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 "b group" to refer to his 'Western' text.

⁴ 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.

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, 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

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 ¹	CONTENT
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	Iviron	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
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

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
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 **f³⁵** profile is made up of just four of those 196 sets, but it is enough to identify any **f³⁵** MS that they collated. Within the list of MSS presumed to belong to **f³⁵**, 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 Ivion 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

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.

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 προσεινεγκαι || προσεινεγκε [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 || μετρεται 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 αναγειλον || αναγκειλον 1384 [an alternate spelling]
- 5:27 ακουσσα || ακουσα 1384 [from one line to the next]
- 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]

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.]

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 almost all **f³⁵** MSS. Down through the centuries of transmission, anyone with access to a **f³⁵** representative could know the intended meaning of the Autograph.¹ 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,

¹ Since **f³⁵** MSS are scattered all over, or all around, the Mediterranean world, such access would have been feasible for most people.

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 || αυτουν 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, under “Copyist Care Quotient”. 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—ορχησαμενης || ωρχησαμενης 1072; 7:37—εξεπλησσυτο || 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 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 does not affect the meaning either. The third omission, presumably independent, does not 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—παραγιγεται || 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—αρτυσετε || 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,¹ eight were corrected, which leaves twenty-seven. At least six are not a proper variant, which leaves twenty-one. Five are repetitions of a variant in common, which leaves sixteen.² 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.

Incredibly Careful Transmission

This section focuses on the Thessalonian epistles, generally thought to have been the first of the apostle Paul's canonical writings (at least in conservative circles). If so, his prestige and authority as an apostle would not yet have reached its full stature, and in consequence such early writings might not have been accorded as much respect as later ones. As I continue collating more and more **f³⁵** MSS I have been surprised by a different picture. I have collated the following thirty-four representatives of the family and invite attention to the results.

Performance of **f³⁵ MSS in the Thessalonian Epistles**

¹ 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!

² 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.

MS	1 Thess.	2 Thess.	Location	Date ¹	Exemplar
18	---	---	Constantinople ²	1364	---
35	2c	---	Aegean ³	XI	---
201	2y,2/	2x	London	1357	2x,2y,2/
204	1/	---	Bologna	XIII	1/
328	1/,1s	2s	Leiden	XIII	1/
386	1y,1/,1s	1s	Vatican	XIV	1y,1/
394	1s	---	Rome	1330	---
444	1s	2s	London	XV	---
604	1x,1y	1s	Paris	XIV	1x,1y
757	1s	1y,1c	Athens	XIII	1y
824	---	1i	Grottaferrata	XIV	---
928	---	---	Dionysiu (Athos)	1304	---
986	1s	1s	Esphigmenu (Athos)	XIV	---
1072	1i	---	M. Lavras (Athos)	XIII	---
1075	1x,1/	---	M. Lavras	XIV	1x,1/
1100	1y,1s	1y	Dionysiu	1376	2y
1248	3x,1/,4s	2s,2i	Sinai	XIV	3x,1/
1249	1y	---	Sinai	1324	1y
1503	2s	---	M. Lavras	1317	---
1548	2x,1s	1s	Vatopediu (Athos)	1359	2x
1637	1/	---	M. Lavras	1328	1/

¹ I give the location and date as in the *Kurzgefasste Liste* (1994), although I must admit to an occasional doubt as to the accuracy of the dating.

² Although presently in Paris, 18 was produced in Constantinople.

³ Although presently in Paris, 35 was acquired in the Aegean area.

MS	1 Thess.	2 Thess.	Location	Date ¹	Exemplar
1725	2/	1/	Vatopediu	1367	3/
1732	1y,2s	1/	M. Lavras	1384	1y,1/
1761	2x,2y,1s	1s,1i	Athens	XIV	2x,2y
1855	---	1s	Ivion (Athos)	XIII	---
1864	---	---	Stavronikita (Athos)	XIII	---
1865	1c	---	Philotheu (Athos)	XIII	---
1876	4y,1/	1y,1/	Sinai	XV	5y,2/
1892	10s	3s	Jerusalem	XIV	---
1897	1/,1c	3s,1h	Jerusalem	XII	1/
2466	1x,2y,1s	1s	Patmos	1329	1x,2y
2554	1c	---	Bucharest	1434	---
2587	1s	1s	Vatican	XI	---
2723	---	---	Trikala	XI	---

Key:

- x = an uncorrected variant that it is attested by MSS outside the family;
- y = a split that is not limited to the family;
- / = a split within the family (no outside attestation);
- c = a variant of any kind that has been corrected to the presumed archetype;
- s = singular reading / private variant (until all MSS have been collated, this is just an assumption);
- h = an obvious case of homoioteleuton (or –arcton), often involving a line or more, but can be just three or four words;
- i = sheer inattention;
- = no departures from the presumed profile.

Implications

I begin with the last column in the chart, ‘Exemplar’. Except for 18, 928, 1864 and 2723 that are themselves perfect, most of the others have a different rating. All singular readings should be discounted (including homoioteleuton and inattention); if not introduced by the copyist it was done by the ‘father’ or ‘grandfather’—an ancestor was free of all ‘singulars’, so they contribute nothing to the history of the transmission, are not relevant to the tracing of

¹ I give the location and date as in the *Kurzgefasste Liste* (1994), although I must admit to an occasional doubt as to the accuracy of the dating.

that transmission. All variants that were corrected to the presumed family profile should also be discounted—whoever did the correcting, it was done on the basis of a correct exemplar (correct at that point). So I only attribute ‘x’, ‘y’ and ‘/’ to the exemplar—of course some of these could be the work of the copyist as well, which would make the exemplar even better, but I have no way of knowing when that occurred.

Notice that of thirty-four MSS, sixteen of their exemplars (almost half) were ‘perfect’, and another six were off by only one variant (the worst was only off by seven, for two books). If there were no splinters, we could be looking at thirty-four independent lines of transmission, within the family, which to me is simply fantastic.¹ But what about the splinters? There are a few very minor ones in 1 Thessalonians, and only a few pairs in 2 Thessalonians.

I conclude that all thirty-four MSS were independent in their generation, and I see no evidence to indicate a different conclusion for their exemplars. Please note that I am not claiming that all thirty-four lines remain distinct all the way back to the archetype. I cheerfully grant that there would be a number of convergences before getting back to the source. However all that may be, we are looking at very careful transmission.

I now invite attention to location. The MSS come from all over the Mediterranean world. The thirteen Mt. Athos MSS were certainly produced in their respective monasteries (seven). Ecclesiastical politics tending to be what it tends to be, there is little likelihood that there would be collusion between the monasteries on the transmission of the NT writings—I regard the thirteen as representing as many exemplars. MSS from Trikala, Patmos, Jerusalem and Sinai were presumably produced there; cursive 18 was certainly produced in Constantinople; cursive 35 was acquired in the Aegean area. The MSS at the Vatican and Grottaferrata may very well have been produced there.

I now invite special attention to minuscule 18, produced in Constantinople in **1364**! As it stands it is a perfect representative of the presumed family profile for the Thessalonian epistles (I say ‘presumed’ only out of deference to all the family representatives that I haven’t collated yet, but given the geographical distribution of the thirty-four above, I have no doubt that the profile as given in my Text is correct).² How many generations of copies would there have been between MS 18 and the family archetype? Might there have been fifteen, or more? I would imagine that there were at least ten. However many there actually were, please note that every last one of them was perfect! *The implications of finding a perfect representative of any archetypal text are rather powerful. All the ‘canons’ of textual criticism become irrelevant to any point subsequent to the creation of that text* (they could still come into play when studying the creation of the text, in the event). For MS 18 to be perfect, all the generations in between had to be perfect as well. Now I call this **incredibly careful transmission**. Nothing that I was taught in Seminary about New Testament textual criticism prepared me for this discovery! Nor anything that I had read, for that matter. But MS 18 is not an isolated case; all the thirty-four MSS in the chart above reflect an **incredibly careful transmission**—even the worst of the lot, minuscules 1761 and 1874, with their seven variants [the ‘singulars’ in 1893 and 1248 are careless mistakes {unhappy monks}], are really quite good, considering all the intervening generations.

¹ 18, 928, 1864 and 2723 were produced in Constantinople, Dionysiu, Stavronikita and Trikala, respectively—I consider it to be virtually impossible that they should have a common exemplar (of course they could join somewhere back down the line).

² Actually I have now collated 39 family representatives for 1 Thessalonians and 38 for 2 Thessalonians. They probably represent at least 40% of the total extant membership, so there can really be no doubt that they correctly represent the family archetype.

This point deserves some elaboration. A typical ‘Alexandrian’ MS will have over a dozen variants per page of printed Greek text. A typical ‘Byzantine’ MS will have 3-5 variants per page. MSS 1761 and 1876 have about one per page, and one of the better **f³⁵** MSS will go for pages without a variant. There is an obvious difference in the mentality that the monks brought to their task. A monk copying an ‘Alexandrian’ MS evidently did not consider that he was handling Scripture, in stark contrast to one copying an **f³⁵** MS. For those who do not exclude the supernatural from their model, I submit that the information above is highly significant: obviously God was not protecting any ‘Alexandrian’ type of MS, probably because it contained ‘tares’ (Matthew 13:28). A monk copying a ‘Byzantine’ bulk type MS did far better work than the Alexandrian, but still was not being sufficiently careful—he was probably just doing a religious duty, but without personal commitment to the Text. Since God respects our choices (John 4:23-24), the result was a typical ‘Byzantine’ MS. It is also true that not all **f³⁵** MSS were carefully done, but I conclude that the core representatives were done by copyists who believed they were handling God’s Word and wanted their work to be pleasing to Him¹—just the kind that the Holy Spirit would delight to aid and protect.

Performance of **f³⁵** MSS in 2 & 3 John and Jude

This section focuses on 2 & 3 John and Jude. I have collated forty-six representatives of Family 35, so far (for these three books), and invite attention to the results. I have so far identified 84 MSS as belonging to **f³⁵** in the General Epistles (plus another 10 or 12 on the fringes), so this sample is certainly representative, considering also the geographic distribution.

MS	2 John	3 John	Jude	Location	Date	Exemplar
18	---	1s	---	Constantinople	1364	---
35	---	---	2c	Aegean	XI	---
141	---	---	---	Vatican	XIII	---
149	---	1/	1/,1c	Vatican	XV	2/
201	---	1/	1/	London	1357	2/
204	---	---	---	Bologna	XIII	---
328	---	---	1x,1s	Leiden	XIII	1x
386	---	---	---	Vatican	XIV	---
394	---	1i	---	Rome	1330	---
432	2s	1/	3s	Vatican	XV	1/
444 ²	---	---	1s	London	XV	---
604	1x	1/	---	Paris	XIV	1x,1/
664	1x,1s	3s	3s	Zittau	XV	1x

¹ It is not at all uncommon to find a colophon at the end of a MS where the copyist calls on God for His mercy, and even for His recognition and blessing.

² 444 is a mixed MS. In James, 1&2 Peter it is not at all **f³⁵**, while in 1 John it is a very marginal member of the family.

MS	2 John	3 John	Jude	Location	Date	Exemplar
757	2s	---	---	Athens	XIII	---
824	---	---	---	Grottaferrata	XIV	---
928	---	---	---	Dionysiu (Athos)	1304	---
986	1s	---	1s,1i	Esphigmenu (Athos)	XIV	---
1072	---	---	---	M Lavras (Athos)	XIII	---
1075	---	---	---	M Lavras	XIV	---
1100	---	---	---	Dionysiu	1376	---
1247	1x,1/,1s	1/,1s	1x,1/,6s	Sinai	XV	2x,3/
1248	2/	1/,3s	4s	Sinai	XIV	3/
1249	1/,1c	---	1/	Sinai	1324	2/
1503	1s	---	---	M. Lavras	1317	---
1548	---	---	1s	Vatopediu (Athos)	1359	---
1628	---	---	1s	M. Lavras	1400	---
1637	---	---	---	M. Lavras	1328	---
1725	---	---	1s	Vatopediu	1367	---
1732	1/	---	1x,1s	M. Lavras	1384	1x,1/
1754	1s	1/,1s	2s	Panteleimonos (Athos)	XII	1/
1761	1s	2s	---	Athens	XIV	---
1768	---	1y	1s	Iviron (Athos)	1516	1y
1855	---	---	---	Iviron	XIII	---
1864	---	---	---	Stavronikita (Athos)	XIII	---
1865	---	1/	---	Philotheu (Athos)	XIII	1/
1876	2/,1s	1/	1/,2s	Sinai	XV	4/
1892	1x	---	---	Jerusalem	XIV	1x
1897	---	---	1s	Jerusalem	XII	---
2221	---	---	---	Sparta	1432	---
2352	1c,1i	---	---	Meteora	XIV	---
2431	---	---	1i	Kavsokalyvia (Athos)	1332	---
2466	---	1/	2s	Patmos	1329	1/
2554	---	---	---	Bucharest	1434	---
2587	---	---	1c	Vatican	XI	---
2626	1/	1/,1s	2/	Ochrida	XIV	4/
2723	---	---	---	Trikala	XI	---

Implications

In 2 John, 2/3 (thirty) of the MSS are perfect representatives of the family as they stand; in 3 John the percentage is also 2/3 (thirty, but a different selection); in Jude just under ½ (twenty-two); and for all three under 1/3 (fourteen). Over half (twenty-nine) of the exemplars were presumably perfect. Since I have the figures for all seven books of the General Epistles, I can assure the reader that all forty-six MSS are independent in their generation, as were their exemplars. Cursives 149 and 201 are clearly related, as are 432 and 604, and all four probably come from a common source short of the archetype. I see no evidence of collusion, of ‘stuffing the ballot box’—there was no organized effort to standardize the Text. We are looking at a normal transmission, except that it was **incredibly careful**. The fourteen MSS that are perfect in all three books had perfect ancestors all the way back to the archetype, and so for the twenty-nine perfect exemplars. I refer the reader to the prior section for the explanation of how I arrive at the classification of the exemplars.

As I keep on collating MSS I have observed a predictable pattern. For the first 2 or 3, even 4, pages the MSS tend to have few mistakes, or none. If the scribe is going to make mistakes, it tends to be after he has been at it long enough to start getting tired, or bored. Quite often most of the mistakes are on a single page, or in a single chapter; then the scribe took a break (I suppose) and returning to his task refreshed did better work. I would say that the high percentage of ‘perfect’ copies is largely due to the small size of our three books—the copyists didn’t have a chance to get tired. For all that, this observation does not change the fact that there was **incredibly careful transmission** down through the centuries.¹ Considering the size of my sample and the geographic distribution of the MSS, I am cheerfully certain that we have the precise original wording, to the letter, of the **f³⁵** archetype for 2 and 3 John and Jude. It is reproduced in my Greek Text.

Given my presuppositions, I consider that I have good reason for declaring the divine preservation of the precise original wording of the complete New Testament Text, to this day. That wording is reproduced in my edition of the Greek NT, *The Greek New Testament According to Family 35*, available from Amazon.com, as well as from my site, www.prunch.org. BUT PLEASE NOTE: whether or not the archetype of **f³⁵** is the Autograph (as I claim), the fact remains that the MSS collated for this study reflect an incredibly careful transmission of their source, and this throughout the middle ages. My presuppositions include: God exists; He inspired the Biblical Text; He promised to preserve it for a thousand generations (1 Chronicles 16:15); so He must have an active, ongoing interest in that preservation [there have been fewer than 300 generations since Adam, so He has a ways to go!]. **If He was preserving the original wording in some line of transmission other than **f³⁵**, would that transmission be any less careful than what I have demonstrated for **f³⁵**?** I think not. So any line of transmission characterized by internal confusion is disqualified—this includes all the other lines of transmission that I have seen so far!²

The best complete NT I have seen, so far!

GA 2554 is one of a number of complete NT manuscripts representing Family 35 that are

¹ I have already demonstrated this for the Thessalonian epistles, above, and am in a position to do the same for all the books of the NT. Of course, the longer the book the greater the likelihood that a copyist would make an inadvertent mistake or two. Even so, I have a perfect copy of Romans (fair size and complexity) and one of Matthew (a Gospel, no less!).

² Things like **M⁶** and **M⁵** in John 7:53-8:11 come to mind.

available to the academic community. It is dated at 1434 AD and is held by the Romanian Academy in Bucharest. I wish to register my sincere thanks to the Institute for New Testament Textual Research in Münster for making available a digital copy of their microfilm of this manuscript. Although from the fifteenth century, the hand is very neat. Of the eighteen complete NT manuscripts representing Family 35 of which I hold a copy (there are others), 2554 is easily the best—I have collated it from cover to cover. I will now list all the places where it deviates from the family archetype, including some doubtful cases, for the whole NT.¹ There are only 49,² not all of which are proper variants.

- 1) Mt. 11:8 βασιλειων || βασιλεων (36.4%)³ 2554^c [the first hand clearly had the *iota*, that was subsequently erased, so this is not a variant; in any case, within the context the two forms are synonymous]
- 2) Mt. 13:15 ιασωμαι || ιασομαι [50%] 2554^c [traces of the erased right side of the omega remain, so the first hand was correct, so this is not a variant; in any case, within the context the change in tense does not affect the meaning]
- 3) Mt. 25:32 συναχθησονται || συναχθησεται [75%] [I include this case only because, of the 31 family representatives I have collated for Matthew so far, a majority have the singular rather than the plural; because of the quality of the minority, including 2554, I have chosen it as the archetype; in any case, whether the mass noun is viewed as singular or plural, the meaning remains the same]
- 4) Mt. 26:29 γεννηματος || γενηματος [70%] 2554^c [the extra *nu* was added above the line, but the first hand was correct, so this is not a variant; in any case, within the context the two forms are synonymous]

Comment: I consider that the first hand gives us a perfect copy of the archetype for Matthew.

- 5) Mk. 2:23 ποιειν 2554^c || πειν 2554 [it looks like 2554's exemplar had πειν, and the copyist duly copied it, but then realized that it was a nonsensical mistake and corrected it; if the correction was made by the first hand, then we do not have a proper variant, but working from a microfilm it is difficult to tell if the ink is the same]
- 6) Mk. 5:41 κουμι || κουμ (17.4%) 2554 [this is a transliteration from another language, so a spelling difference does not affect the meaning, the more so since it is followed immediately with the translation; I do not consider this to be a proper variant]
- 7) Mk. 14:25 γεννηματος || γενηματος [25%] 2554^c [the extra *nu* was added above the line, but the first hand was correct, so this is not a variant; in any case, within the context the two forms are synonymous]
- 8) Mk. 15:46 επι την θυραν || 1τη θυρα [1%] 2554 [a significant minority of family representatives join 2554 here; the preposition works with three cases—genitive, dative, accusative—within this context the change in case does not affect the meaning]

Comment: I consider that the first hand has only one proper variant in Mark, the last one,

¹ For the Family 35 profile please see Appendix B in my *Identity IV*, freely available from my site, www.prunch.org, but it is also included as the second section in this Part II. The complete archetype is printed in my *The Greek New Testament according to Family 35*.

² To have no more than 49 for the whole NT is simply astonishing.

³ Percentages within parentheses are taken from *Text und Textwert*, while those within brackets are my own extrapolation.

and it does not affect the meaning.

- 9) Lk. 1:36 συγγεινης || συγγεινις [10%] 2554 [instead of the adjective functioning as a generic noun, 2554 uses the feminine noun; within the context the two forms are synonymous]
- 10) Lk. 1:55 εως αιωνος || εις τον αιωνα [64%] 2554 [the variant is by far the more common, and therefore expected, but within the context the two forms are virtually synonymous; any difference in nuance does not alter the basic meaning]
- 11) Lk. 3:1 αβιληνης || αβιλινης 2554 [perhaps an itacism that resulted in an alternate spelling for the place name; the two forms would receive the same pronunciation; I do not consider this to be a proper variant]
- 12) Lk. 3:18 τω λαω || τον λαον [85%] 2554 [since the direct object, 'good news', is implicit in the verb, 'the people' functions as the indirect object, and the dative case is correct; however, the accusative case does occur, and within the context there is no difference in meaning]
- 13) Lk. 12:18 γενηματα || γεννηματα [7%] 2554^c [the extra *nu* was added above the line, but the first hand was correct, so this is not a variant; in any case, within the context the two forms are synonymous]
- 14) Lk. 21:33 παρελευσεται || παρελευσονται [68%] 2554 [whether the compound subject of the verb is viewed as singular or plural, the meaning is the same; in English the translation is the same]
- 15) Lk. 22:18 γενηματος || γεννηματος [15%] 2554^c [the extra *nu* was added above the line, but the first hand was correct, so this is not a variant; in any case, within the context the two forms are synonymous]

Comment: I consider that the first hand has four proper variants in Luke, and they do not affect the meaning.

- 16) Jn. 6:55 αληθως || αληθης (24.5%) 2554^{2x} [whether an adverb or an adjective, within the context they have the same meaning; I treat the repetition as a single variant]
- 17) Jn. 12:6 εμελεν || εμελλεν [60%] [taking account of the corrections, the MSS I have collated are about evenly divided. Is the verb μελω or μελλω? μελει as an impersonal form is most common; however the verb is also used in a personal/active sense. μελλω ('to be about to') does not make sense here. μελλω is about ten times as frequent in the NT and some copyists may have put the more customary spelling without thinking. They had just written μελλων two lines above and may have repeated the form by attraction. However, since both forms have the same pronunciation, someone hearing the Text read aloud would understand it correctly, being guided by the context. Precisely for this reason, it may be that the semantic area of the longer form came to be regarded as including that of the shorter form; in which case we would have alternate spellings of the same verb. (It is not my custom to appeal to the early uncials, but all of them have the shorter form here, which would go along with my hypothesis above.) The first hand of 2554 left space for the second *lambda*, so he was aware of the variant, but he correctly did not copy it.]
- 18) Jn. 12:40 ιασωμαι || ιασομαι [20%] 2554 [the first hand of 2554 left space to complete the *omega*, so he was aware of the variant; within the context the change in tense does not affect the meaning]

Comment: I consider that the first hand has two proper variants in John, and they do not

affect the meaning. $2 + 4 + 1 = 7$; a manuscript with only seven variants for all four Gospels is surely a paragon of virtue. I call that extraordinarily careful transmission, since it would also be true of the preceding generations, of necessity.

19) Acts 1:11 ουτος || 1 ο [70%] 2554 [a demonstrative pronoun defines, even more than a definite article, so the article is redundant here; in any case, the meaning is not affected]

20) Acts 11:26 συναχθηναι || 1 εν [15%] 2554 [the family is divided here, a majority of the 35 MSS that I have collated add the preposition, that is a 'natural' but is redundant; in any case, the meaning is not affected]

21) Acts 12:25 εις αντιοχειαν || απο ιερουσαλημ 2554 [this is the only place in the whole NT where Family 35 splinters, there being a six-way split (usually there are only two main contenders); for a detailed discussion please see my article, "Where to place a comma—Acts 12:25", available from my site, www.prunch.org; within the context, the two readings given here have the same effect]

22) Acts 16:9 την 2554^c || --- [80%] 2554 [Family 35 is virtually unanimous for the article, so the first hand may have omitted it on his own, to be corrected by someone else; in any case, the meaning is not affected]

23) Acts 18:17 εμελλεν || εμελεν [14%] 2554^c [Family 35 is divided here; 2554 has a single *lambda* in a space that is too large for it, so I assume the first hand had the double but was erased. Is the verb μελλω or μελω? If the former, the meaning is not common and could easily give rise to the latter. Render: 'None of this was a delay to Gallio'; Gallio is in the dative. Gallio presumably considered himself to be a busy man and did not appreciate the interruption; he was not about to allow himself to be further delayed. In 22:16 the same verb has the sense of 'delay'. Although there is some difference in meaning, the point of the narrative is not altered.]

24) Acts 25:7 καταβεβηκοτες || 1 οι 2554 [this appears to be a careless mistake on the part of the copyist, but which still makes sense; the meaning is not affected]

25) Acts 28:27 ιασωμαι || ιασομαι [60%] 2554 [the first hand of 2554 left space to complete the *omega*, so he was aware of the variant; within the context the change in tense does not affect the meaning]

Comment: I consider that the first hand has six proper variants in Acts, one of which was corrected, leaving five. Of the five, four do not affect the meaning. In Acts 12:25, within the context, the two variants are virtually two ways of saying the same thing, the point of the narrative is not affected.]

26) Rom. 7:13 αλλα || αλλ [30%] 2554 [these are alternate spellings of the same word, so this is not a proper variant]

27) Rom. 16:24 ημων || υμων [82%] 2554^c [if verse 24 was not dictated by Paul, the first person is especially appropriate, coming from Tertius; within the context, the meaning is scarcely affected]

Comment: I consider that the first hand gives us a perfect copy of the archetype for Romans, there being no proper variants. 1 Corinthians also gives us a perfect copy of the archetype.

28) 2 Cor. 8:9 ημας || υμας [60%] [Family 35 is divided here, but the better representatives, including 2554, are with the first person, that is more inclusive; within the context there is no real difference in meaning]

29) 2 Cor. 9:10 γενηματα || γεννηματα [6%] 2554^c [the extra *nu* was added above the line, but the first hand was correct, so this is not a variant; in any case, within the context the two forms are synonymous]

30) 2 Cor. 11:7 εαυτον || εμαυτον [78%] 2554^c [the *mu* was added above the line by a later hand, so this is not a variant; in any case, within the context the two forms are synonymous]

Comment: I consider that the first hand gives us a perfect copy of the archetype for 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians also give us a perfect copy of the archetype.

31) 1 Thes. 2:8 μειρομενοι || ομειρομενοι [30%] 2554^c [it appears that an *omicron* was written around an *iota*, but it is difficult to tell from a microfilm; in any case, since these appear to be alternate spellings of the same word, this is not a proper variant]

Comment: I consider that the first hand gives us a perfect copy of the archetype for 1 Thessalonians. 2 Thessalonians also gives us a perfect copy of the archetype.

32) 1 Tim. 1:9a πατραλοιας || πατρολωαις [34%] [Family 35 is divided here, but a majority, including 2554, have the first reading. Liddell & Scott give it and the feminine counterpart as the basic forms, their meaning being ‘striker’, rather than ‘killer’, which makes better sense]

33) 1 Tim. 1:9b μητραλοιας || μητρολωαις [40%] [same as above]

34) 1 Tim. 5:21 προσκλισην || προσκλησην [75%] [Family 35 is divided here, but a majority, including 2554, have the first reading; the two forms were pronounced the same way; within the context the meaning is not affected.]

Comment: I consider that the first hand gives us a perfect copy of the archetype for 1 Timothy.

35) 2 Tim. 3:14 επιστωθης || επιστευθης [10%] 2554 [the two forms represent different verbs, but within the context they act as synonyms; the meaning is not affected]

36) Titus 2:7 αδιαφοριαν || αδιαφοριαν (8%) 2554 [this is just an alternate spelling of the same word, and therefore not a proper variant]

Comment: I consider that the first hand has only one proper variant in 2 Timothy, and it does not affect the meaning. Titus and Philemon give us a perfect copy of the archetype.

37) Heb. 3:13 καλειται || καληται 2554^c [an itacism produced by a later hand, resulting in nonsense]

38) Heb. 9:1 πρωτη || 1 σκηνη [30%] [Family 35 is divided here, but with corrections a majority, including 2554, have the first reading; in any case, within the context the meaning is not affected]

Comment: I consider that the first hand gives us a perfect copy of the archetype for Hebrews, James and 1 and 2 Peter also give us a perfect copy of the archetype. A manuscript with only one proper variant for the whole Pauline corpus is surely a paragon of virtue. I call that extraordinarily careful transmission, since it would also be true of the preceding generations, of necessity.

39) 1 Jn. 1:6 περιπατουμεν || περιπατωμεν [71%] [Family 35 is divided here; I follow a minority, made up of the better MSS, including 2554. The verb ‘say’ is properly

Subjunctive, being controlled by *εαν*, but the verbs ‘have’ and ‘walk’ are part of a statement and are properly Indicative—only if we are in fact walking in darkness do we become liars for claiming to be in fellowship. So *περιπατούμεν* is correct. In any case, within the context the meaning is not affected.]

40) 1 Jn. 3:23 *πιστευσωμεν* || *πιστευωμεν* (26.5%) 2554^c [traces of the *sigma* are visible; in any case, within the context the change in tense does not affect the meaning]

Comment: I consider that the first hand gives us a perfect copy of the archetype for 1 John. 2 and 3 John and Jude also give us a perfect copy of the archetype. A manuscript with not a single variant for all seven General Epistles is surely a paragon of virtue. I call that extraordinarily careful transmission, since it would also be true of the preceding generations, of necessity. Up to here there have only been thirteen proper variants, but let us see what happens in Revelation.

41) Rev. 1:17 *επεσα* || *επεσον* 2554 [these appear to be alternate forms of the same word, so this is not a proper variant]¹

42) Rev. 4:8 *λεγοντα* || *λεγοντες* 2554^{alt} [Is the subject of the verb just the living creatures, or are the elders included? On the basis of verses 9-11, it would be just the living creatures. In any case, a translation into English will be the same for the two forms.]

43) Rev. 7:17a *ποιμαινει* 2554^{alt} || *ποιμαινει* 2554 [well over half of the family representatives that have the future tense have the present form as an alternate above the line, as does 2554; this appears to have been standard procedure in Revelation, when there was doubt between two forms, so the archetype is always represented; within the context the meaning is not affected]

44) Rev. 7:17b *οδηγει* 2554^{alt} || *οδηγησει* 2554 [same as above]

45) Rev. 9:5 *πληξη* 2554^{alt} || *παιση* 2554 [same as above, except that here it is the verb that is changed; within the context the meaning is not affected]

46) Rev. 14:14 *καθημενος ομοιος* 2554^{alt} || *καθημενον ομοιον* 2554 [same as above, except that here it is just the case that is changed; within the context the meaning is not affected]

47) Rev. 14:19 *τον μεγαυ* || *την μεγαλην* 2554 [Is the phrase modifying ‘wrath’ or ‘wine-press’? Within the context, they are two ways of saying the same thing.]

48) Rev. 16:12 *μεγαυ* || *1 τον* 2554 [the variant does not affect the meaning]

49) Rev. 19:18 *και⁷* || *---* 2554 [this appears to be a singular reading; it does not affect the meaning]

Comment: I consider that the first hand has seven variations from the archetype, four of which are corrected with the alternate; that leaves three proper variants, none of which affects the meaning. None of the alternates affects the meaning either. For all practical purposes, 2554 is a perfect representative of the archetype in Revelation.

Conclusion:

Out of the 49 cases listed above, only sixteen may be classed as a ‘proper variant’, and only one of them may be said to affect the meaning: Acts 12:25.² Even here, within the context,

¹ In Revelation I do not give percentages because I state the evidence in terms of families; the interested reader should consult my Greek Text for the evidence.

² This holds true for all the 49 cases above. A reader would not be misled as to the intended meaning at any

the two readings listed have the same effect. Manuscript GA 2554 is a virtually perfect representative of its archetype for the whole New Testament, and this in the fifteenth century! This means that all the preceding generations also had to be virtually perfect. Now I call that extraordinarily careful transmission. **God has preserved His Text!**

Concerning the Text of the *Pericope Adulterae*

The information offered below is based on Maurice A. Robinson's complete collation of 1,389 MSS that contain the Pericope, John 7:53 - 8:11.¹ I attempted to establish a profile of readings for each of the three main groups of MSS, **M^{5,6,7}** (as in the apparatus of the H-F Majority Text). I take it that the smaller groups are all mixtures based on the big three. This section presents the results, along with my interpretation of their significance.

M⁷ Profile

7:53	01	απηλθεν
8:1	02	Ιησους δε
8:2	03	(βαθειας) = omit
8:2	04	παρεγενετο
8:2	05	προς αυτον
8:3	06	προς αυτον
8:3	07	επι
8:3	08	κατειλημμενην
8:3	09	εν μεσω
8:4	10	λεγουσιν
8:4	11	(πειραζοντες)
8:4	12	ταυτην ευρομεν
8:4	13	επαυτοφωρω
8:4	14	μοιχευομενην
8:5	15	ημων Μωσης
8:5	16	λιθοβολεισθαι
8:5	17	(περι αυτης)
8:6	18	κατηγοριαν κατ
8:6	19	μη προσποιουμενος
8:7	20	ερωτωντες
8:7	21	ανακυψας
8:7	22	προς αυτους
8:7	23	τον λιθον επ αυτη βαλετω

point, for the whole NT!

¹ 240 MSS omit the PA, 64 of which are based on Theophylact's commentary. Fourteen others have lacunae, but are not witnesses for total omission. A few others certainly contain the passage but the microfilm is illegible. So, 1389 + 240 + 14 + 7(?) = about 1650 MSS checked by Robinson. (These are microfilms held by the *Institut* in Münster. We now know that there are many more extant MSS, and probably even more that are not yet 'extant'.)

8:9	24	και υπο της συνειδησεως ελεγχομενοι
8:9	25	εως των εσχατων
8:9	26	μονος ο Ιησους
8:10	27	και μηδενα θεασαμενος πλην της γυναικος
8:10	28	αυτη
8:10	29	εκεινοι οι κατηγοροι σου
8:11	30	ειπεν δε αυτη ο Ιησους
8:11	31	κατακρινω
8:11	32	και απο του νυν

Comment: This is a single, clear-cut, unambiguous profile/mosaic, as defined by 127 MSS—there is no internal variation among them. This contrasts dramatically with **M⁶** and **M⁵**, and I suppose with the lesser groups (though I haven't checked them). As given below, it is possible to come up with a profile for both **5** and **6**, for purposes of distinguishing them from each other and from **7**, but they have so much internal variation that I see no way to come up with an archetype that is objectively defined; both will have to be subdivided. The profile above defines the archetypal text of **M⁷**.

M⁶ Profile

7:53	01	απηλθεν / απηλθον
8:1	02	**και ο Ιησους δε / και ο Ιησους
8:2	03	**βαθεως / βαθεος
8:2	04	**ηλθεν ο Ιησους
8:2	05	προς αυτον
8:3	06	(προς αυτον) / προς αυτον
8:3	07	επι
8:3	08	κατειλημμενην
8:3	09	εν τω μεσω / εν μεσω
8:4	10	**ειπον
8:4	11	(πειραζοντες) = omit
8:4	12	ταυτην ευρομεν
8:4	13	επαυτοφωρω / -φορω / -φορας
8:4	14	μοιχευομενην / -νη
8:5	15	ημων Μωσης / υμων Μωσης / M. ενετ. ημιν / Μωσης
8:5	16	**λιθαζειν
8:5	17	(περι αυτης) / περι αυτης
8:6	18	κατηγοριαν κατ
8:6	19	(μη προσποιουμενος) / μη προσποιουμενος
8:7	20	ερωτωντες / επερωτωντες
8:7	21	αναβλεψας / ανακυψας
8:7	22	**αυτοις

8:7	23	**λιθον βαλετω επ αυτην
8:9	24	(και υπο της συνειδησεως ελεγχομενοι) / και υπο της συνειδησεως ελεγχομενοι
8:9	25	εως των εσχατων
8:9	26	ο Ιησους μονος / μονος
8:10	27	** (και μηδενα θεασαμενος πλην της γυναικος)
8:10	28	**ειδεν αυτην και ειπεν
8:10	29	** (αυτη) γυναι
8:10	30	(εκεινοι) / (εκεινοι οι κατηγοροι σου) / (που εκεινοι οι κατηγοροι σου)
8:11	31	ειπεν δε αυτη ο Ιησους
8:11	32	κατακρινω
8:11	33	πορευου και απο του νυν / πορευου απο του νυν και

Comment: I checked the **M**⁶ MSS from the **XI** century (over 80) and to my surprise no two of them had an identical mosaic of variants. No matter what contrastive set one uses as a basis (e.g. βαθεω_ς X βαθεο_ς), as soon as you look down the roster of other variants the MSS wander back and forth, producing a bewildering array of variation, shifting alliances, or whatever. If all the centuries are checked, there will presumably be a few small groups wherein the member MSS share identical mosaics, but no single definitive profile for **M**⁶ will emerge (in contrast to **M**⁷). If there is no single profile, then there is no objective way to define / establish / reconstruct an archetype for **M**⁶. Without a definable archetype, **M**⁶ is not a viable candidate for the original form of the Text. However, the ten variants marked by ** do distinguish **M**⁶ from both **M**⁵ and **M**⁷, forming its 'backbone'. But two of the ten, plus another fourteen, have internal variation (besides a variety of further variation not recorded in this list). The individual MSS meander around the plethora of internal (within the group) variation in a bewildering manner, all of which diminishes the credibility of the group. I take it that **M**⁶ reflects Alexandrian influence.

M⁵ Profile

7:53	01	**επορευθη / επορευθησαν
8:1	02	Ιησους δε
8:2	03	(βαθεω _ς) = omit
8:2	04	παρεγενετο
8:2	05	** (προς αυτον)
8:3	06	προς αυτον
8:3	07	**εν
8:3	08	**καταληφθεισαν
8:3	09	εν μεσω
8:4	10	λεγουσιν
8:4	11	**πειραζοντες
8:4	12	**αυτη η γυνη
8:4	13	**κατεληφθη / ειληπται / κατειληπται
8:4	14	επαυτοφωρω / -φορω

8:4	15	**μοιχευομενη
8:5	16	**Μωσης ημιν
8:5	17	λιθοβολεισθαι
8:5	18	(περι αυτης)
8:6	19	**κατηγορειν
8:6	20	μη προσποιουμενος
8:7	21	ερωτωντες
8:7	22	ανακυψας
8:7	23	προς αυτους
8:7	24	**επ αυτην τον λιθον βαλετω
8:9	25	και υπο της συνειδησεως ελεγχομενοι
8:9	26	** (εως των εσχατων)
8:9	27	μονος ο Ιησους
8:10	28	και μηδενα θεασαμενος πλην της γυναικος
8:10	29	αυτη / αυτη γυναι
8:10	30	εκεινοι οι κατηγοροι σου
8:11	31	**ειπεν δε ο Ιησους
8:11	32	**κρινω / κατακρινω
8:11	33	και

Comment: Setting aside the splits in #1,13,14,29,32 there is a group of MSS with this profile. There is an equally large group that changes *εγραφεν* to *κατεγραφεν* in verse 6 and changes *πρωτος* to *πρωτον* in verse 7. Both of these groups have a core of MSS that have a ‘perfect’ profile, except that both groups split on *-φωρω/-φορω*. Both groups have ‘fuzzy’ edges with numerous MSS showing various degrees of variation. There is a large number of mixed MSS, clustering around several roughly defined mosaics. Also there is a three-way split in variant #24, plus a fourth lesser variant (205 MSS x 191 x 104 x 21). However, the variants with ** do distinguish **M**⁵ from both **M**⁶ and **M**⁷, forming its ‘backbone’, although there is internal variation in three of them, besides #24. There is further internal variation not recorded in this list. **M**⁵ is not as ‘squishy’ as **M**⁶, but not as solid as **M**⁷. I take it that **M**⁵ reflects Latin influence. In any event, it looks to be scarcely possible to establish a single archetype for **M**⁵, which it must have to be a viable candidate for the original form of the Text. Evidently the original form is the ultimate archetype.

Unambiguous M⁷ (f³⁵) representatives = 245 MSS

a) Perfect match (core representatives)—**XI**: 35,83,547,1435; **XII**: 510,768,1046,1323,1329, 1489,1490,2296,2367,2382; **XIII**: 128,141,147,154,167,170,204,361,553,676,685,696, 757,825,897,1072,1251,1339,1400,1461,1496,1499,1550,1551,1576,1694,2284,2479, 2510; **XIV**: 18,55,66,201,246,363,386,402,415,480,586,645,758,763,769,781,789,797, 824,845,867,928,932,938,960,986,1023,1075,1092,1111,1117,1119,1133,1146,1189, 1236,1328,1390,1482,1488,1492,1493,1548,1560,1572,1584,1600,1619,1620,1628, 1633,1637,1650,1659,1667,1688,1698,1703,2261,2355,2407,2454,2503,2765,2767; **XV**: 955,958,962,1003,1180,1250,1508,1625,1636,1648,1686,1713,2131,2554; **XVI**: 1596, 1652,2496,2636,2806 = 127 MSS

- b) Major subgroup: in 8:4 it has *επαυτοφορω* (only change)—**XII**: 660,1145,1224; **XIII**: 479,689, 691,940,1334,1487,1501,1601,2584,2598; **XIV**: 189,290,394,521,890,959,1025,1165, 1234,1445,1462,1476,1543,1559,1614,1618,1622,1634,1657,1658,2309,2399,2466, 2621,2689; **XV**: 285,961,1017,1059,1132,1158,1247,1649,1656,2204,2221,2352,2692; **XVI**: 1680,1702,2255; **XVII**: 1700 = 55 MSS
- c) Minor subgroup: in 8:9 it has *κατεληφθη* (only change)—**XIII**: 155,2520; **XIV**: 588,1185; **XV**: 1617; **XVI**: 1088 = 6 MSS
- d) Minor subgroup: in 8:7 it has *τον λιθον βαλετω επ αυτην* (only change)—**XII**: 1199; **XIV**: 953,1020,1147; **XV**: 1389 = 5 MSS
- e) Other MSS with a single change—**XII**: 520,1401,2122,2322; **XIII**: 2647; **XIV**: 1095,1503, 2273,2508; **XV**: 575,2673; **XVI**: 1030; **XVII**: 2136,2137,2497 = 15 MSS
- +2) MSS with two changes: b) + c)—**XII**: 1453,2559; **XV**: 1131; **XVIII**: 1325
 b) + d)—**XII**: 387,1813; **XIII**: 1552
 b) + e)—**XII**: 2260; **XIV**: 1599,1638,1544
 b) + odd—**X**: 1166; **XIV**: 952,978,1062; **XVI**: 1591,2714
 d) + e)—**XIII**: 1477,1497; **XIV**: 1181,1248; **XVI**: 2635
 2 odd—**XI**: 1314,1384; **XIV**: 2265; **XV**: 1116,1348
- +3) MSS with three changes: b) + c) + odd—**XII**: 105; **XVI**: 2715
 b) + d) + e)—**XIV**: 806
 b) + d) + odd—**XII**: 353; **XIII**: 966
 b) + e) + odd—**XV**: 664
 b) + 2 odd—**XII**: 2632; **XV**: 56; **XVI**: 61
 + 3 odd—**XV**: 58

Comment: b) and c) differ from a) only in a similar sounding vowel, while variants 8 and 14 involve a single letter. There is a small sub-group (with fuzzy edges) based on variants 17,20,29. There is a larger, fuzzier group that has variants 1,16,17,28,29 as sort of a basis, with 9,19 on the fringes, and then further variation. There are 40-50 MSS with varying amounts of mixture added to an **M**⁷ base (adding these to the unambiguous ones and dividing by 1650 we come out with about 18%). Actually, I believe that **M**⁷ was the base from which the creators of **M**⁵ and **M**⁶ (and all other groups) departed.

Interpretative comment: The progressive ‘purification’ of the stream of transmission through the centuries (from a Byzantine priority perspective) has been recognized by all and sundry, their attempts at explaining the phenomenon generally reflecting their presuppositions. From my point of view the evident explanation is this: All camps recognize that the heaviest attacks against the purity of the Text took place during the second century. But ‘the heartland of the Church’, the Aegean area, by far the best qualified in every way to watch over the faithful transmission, simply refused to copy the aberrant forms. MSS containing such forms were not used (nor copied), so many survived physically for over a millennium. Less bad forms were used (copies were hard to come by) but progressively were not copied. Thus the surviving IX century uncials are fair, over 80% Byzantine, but not good enough to be copied and recycled (when the better MSS were put into minuscule form). Until the advent of a printed text, MSS were made to be used. Progressively only the best were used, and thus worn out, and copied. This process culminated in the XIV century, when the Ottoman shadow was advancing over Asia Minor, but the Byzantine empire still stood.

Please note the ‘from a Byzantine priority perspective’. **Family 35 was copied faithfully from beginning to end.** For seventeen books I myself have a single perfect copy done in the 15th

century (besides a variety of copies that are perfect for one or more books, from the 14th, 13th, 12th and 11th). For a copy done in the 15th to be perfect, all of its 'ancestors' had to be perfect as well. Please note that a perfect copy makes all the 'canons' of textual criticism irrelevant to any point subsequent to the creation of the archetype. But how can we know that a given copy is 'perfect'? The archetypal profile can be empirically established by comparing all the extant family representatives (I am referring to f³⁵ only). A copy that matches the archetype perfectly is a perfect copy, of necessity. But perfect copies tell us something important about the attitude of the copyists. That they should do their work with such care presumably indicates at least respect, if not reverence toward what they were copying—they believed they were copying God's Word. **Since MSS from all other lines of transmission were copied with less care, presumably the copyists made a distinction in their minds, evidently considering f³⁵ to be the best line.**

The Divine Preservation of the Original Wording of the General Epistles

As a point of departure for this discussion I will use a definition of 'preservation' written by Bart D. Ehrman:

Any claim that God preserved the text of the New Testament intact, giving His church actual, not theoretical, possession of it, must [emphasis added] mean one of three things—either 1) God preserved it in all the extant manuscripts so that none of them contain any textual corruptions, or 2) He preserved it in a group of manuscripts, none of which contain any corruptions, or 3) He preserved it in a solitary manuscript which alone contains no corruptions.¹

He limits the concept of preservation in a way that verges on the creation of a straw man, but his definition serves my present purpose very nicely. It is obvious that option 1) cannot stand, but what of 2) and 3)? As the title indicates, this section is limited to the General Epistles; this group of seven books is one of the sections into which scribes divided the New Testament for the purpose of making copies.² Since of Ehrman's three options the third would appear to be the easiest to meet, if we can, I will begin with it.³

We must first define the scope—are we looking for a manuscript that is perfect for a whole book,⁴ a whole section, or the whole New Testament? I think it is reasonably clear that the correct answer is a whole book; after all, that is how the New Testament was written; it follows that the very first copies were made book by book (and all subsequent copies are dependent upon them). So far as I know, no one claims divine inspiration for the division into sections—over the centuries of copying this became an accepted response to the constraints of materials and time. However, since most of the extant copies reflect that division, it will be interesting to see if we can find a manuscript that is perfect for a whole section. The formal

¹ "New Testament Textual Criticism: Search for Method", M.Div. thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1981, p. 40—from a copy he sent to me personally.

² There are comparatively few MSS (about 60) of the complete New Testament (and about 150 more that have all but Revelation); because of the bulk (and the physical and financial difficulty of gathering enough leather) the four Gospels were copied as a unit, and so for the letters of Paul (including Hebrews) and the General Epistles. Acts was usually joined to the Generals, but not always, and there are many MSS (over 300) that join Acts, Paul and the Generals. Revelation was added here and there.

³ At first glance, but when properly redefined the second may be easier.

⁴ Since the Autographs did not contain chapter or verse divisions, or even division between words, anything less than a whole book will not be convincing.

recognition of the complete canon of the New Testament did not take place until the end of the fourth century, although informally it was known in the second (and many hundreds, if not thousands, of copies were in existence by that time—in fact, the main lines of transmission had been established long since), but the question there was the precise roster of books to be included, not the precise wording of the several books. Although many of us believe that God certainly superintended that choice of books, the wording was not at issue. So, we are looking for manuscripts that are perfect for a whole book.

We must next define the text—precisely what profile are we looking for; how can we know if a MS is ‘perfect’? This question lands us squarely in the snake pit of NT textual criticism [and most of the snakes are poisonous]. What I think on that subject began to appear in print in 1977¹ and I will not repeat here what is available elsewhere. As a tactical withdrawal I will retreat to an easier question (but I will return to the main one): How can we know if a MS is a perfect representative of its text-type, that is, of its family archetype? To gain time I will illustrate the theory with a concrete example. I invite attention to the chart that follows:

Performance of f³⁵ MSS in Individual Books for the General Epistles²

Key: s = singular reading (until all MSS have been collated, this is just an assumption);
 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);
 / = family is divided (a splinter group);
 h = an obvious case of homoioteleuton (or –arcton), involving a line or more;
 i = sheer inattention (usually repeating a syllable from one line to the next);
 --- = no departures from the presumed profile.

MS	James	1 Peter	2 Peter	1 John	2 John	3 John	Jude	DATE	LOCATION	Corpus exemplar
18	---	1x,2/	1s	1x,2/	---	1s	---	1364	Constantinople	2x,4/
35	2c	2c	---	2c	---	---	2c	XI	Aegean	---
141	1/,2s	1x,4/,2s	1c,1s	1/,3s,2h	---	---	---	XIII	Vatican	1x,6/
149	1x,5/,1c,7s	1x,8/,3s	5/,2s	4/,1c,3s	---	1/	1/,1c	XV	Vatican	2x,24/
201	5/,1s	7/	3/	2/	---	1/	1/	1357	London	19/
204	1x	1/	2/,2s	---	---	---	---	XIII	Bologna	1x,3/
328	1x,5/,2s	5/,4s	1x,2/,1s	2x,4/,1c,1s	---	---	1x,1s	XIII	Leiden	5x,16/
386	2/	1/,1s	1/,2s	3/,3s,1h	---	---	---	XIV	Vatican	7/
394	2/	4/,1c,1i	4/	4/,1s	---	1i	---	1330	Rome	14/
432	5/,3s,1h	10/,6s	1x,2/,1c,1s	1x5/1c1s1h	2s	1/	3s	XV	Vatican	2x,23/
604	6/,1s	1x,11/,1s	4/,1c,1s	7/,1s	1x	1/	---	XIV	Paris	2x,29/

¹ *The Identity of the New Testament Text* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers, 1977)—but now please see the present edition, *The Identity of the New Testament Text IV*.

² I collated all forty-three of these manuscripts myself.

MS	James	1 Peter	2 Peter	1 John	2 John	3 John	Jude	DATE	LOCATION	Corpus exemplar
664 ¹	4x,5/,21s	5x9/1c25s	4/,1c,14s	6x6/14s1h	1x,1s	3s	3s	XV	Zittau	16x,24/
757	1x	3/,1c,1s	1x,1s	1/	2s	---	---	XIII	Athens	2x,4/
824	1x,2s	1s	1s	---	---	---	---	XIV	Grottaferrata	1x
928	2/	3/	3/	1/,1c	---	---	---	1304	Dionysiu	9/
986 ²	4/,2s,1i	6/,4s	1/,1s	3/,3s	1s	---	1s,1i	XIV	Esphigmenu	14/
1072	2/,1h,1i	3/,2c,1s	1s	1/,1c	---	---	---	XIII	M Lavras	6/
1075	1/,1s	7/,2s	1s	1/	---	---	---	XIV	M Lavras	9/
1100	2x,1s	1/,1i	1/	---	---	---	---	1376	Dionysiu	2x,2/
1248	1x2/2c2s2h	1x5/2c3s1h	2x,1/,7s	4s,2h	2/	1/,2s,1h	2s,2h	XIV	Sinai	4x,11/
1249	3/	1x,5/,2s	4/	1x,3/	1/,1c	---	1/	1324	Sinai	2x,17/
1503	1s	3/,1c	1s	1s	1s	---	---	1317	M Lavras	3/
1548	2/,2s	1x,6/,1c,2s	1/,2s	1/,1s	---	---	1s	1359	Vatopediu	1x,10/
1637	1/,1s	4/,1c,1s	1/	1c	---	---	---	1328	M Lavras	6/
1725	2/	1/,1c	---	1s,1i	---	---	1s	1367	Vatopediu	3/
1732	2s	1/,2s	1/,1i	2s	1h	---	1s,1i	1384	M Lavras	2/
1754 ³	2/,16s	3/,8s	2/,9s	2x1/13s3h	1s	1/,1s	2s	XII	Panteleimonos	2x,9/
1761	2x,2s	2x,4/,3s	1/	1/,1s,1h	1s	2s	---	XIV	Athens	4x,6/
1768	7/,2c,1s	12/,1i	6/,2i	2c	---	1/	1s	1516	Iviron	26/
1855	1/,1s	1x,2/	2/	1/,1c	---	---	---	XIII	Iviron	1x,6/
1864	---	3/,2c	---	1c,2s	---	---	---	XIII	Stavronikita	3/
1865	1s	---	2s	1c	---	1/	---	XIII	Philotheu	1/
1876	1x,4/,3s	2x,4/,3s,1h	4/,1s	1x,3/,1c,2s	2/,1s	1/	1/,2s	XV	Sinai	4x,19/
1892	1x,4/,2c,1s	3x,4/,4s	1x,2/,1c	1/,1c,2s	1x	---	1c,1s	XIV	Jerusalem	6x,11/
1897	2/,3s	1/,3s	2s	2s	---	---	1/	XII	Jerusalem	4/
2221	1s	2x	1x,3/,1s	1x,1/	---	---	---	1432	Sparta	4x,4/

¹ For all its wildness, 664 has all the diagnostic f³⁵ readings, and thus is clearly a family member (albeit sloppy and promiscuous).

² 986 is lacking 1 Peter 1:23 - 2:15.

³ MS 1754 is second only to 664 in sloppiness, but is clearly a family member.

MS	James	1 Peter	2 Peter	1 John	2 John	3 John	Jude	DATE	LOCATION	Corpus exemplar
2352	1/,1c,1i	6/,1c,1s,1i	3/,1c	2/,1c	1c,1i	---	---	XIV	Meteora	12/
2431	4/,4s,1i	11/,2s,2i	2/,1c,2s,2i	2/,2s,2i	---	---	1i	1332	Kavsokalyvia	19/
2466	1/,1s	1x,1/,1c,4s	1x,2s	3/,1s	---	1/	2s	1329	Patmos	2x,6/
2554	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1434	Bucharest	---
2587	2/	3/	3/	1/	---	---	1c	XI	Vatican	9/
2626	1/,1s	1x,5/	1/,1s	2/	1/	1/,1s	2/	XIV	Ochrida	1x,13/
2723	---	---	---	1h	---	---	---	XI	Trikala	---

Interpretation

Now then, the text-type that I call Family 35 (f³⁵) is represented by some 84 MSS (extant) in the General Epistles. This sample of forty-three family members is certainly representative of the whole text-type, being fully half of its representatives, and taking into consideration the geographic distribution as well. The question immediately before us is: How can we know if a MS is a perfect representative of its text-type? The answer must obtain for a whole book.

The first book in the section is James. Looking at the chart we observe that cursives 18, 1864, 2554 and 2723 are presumed to be perfect representatives, as they stand—they have no deviations from the presumed archetypal profile.¹ Since 35 has been systematically corrected, its exemplar was also perfect. If we ascribe singular readings to the copyist, then the exemplars of 1503, 1732, 1865 and 2221 were perfect as well. If 18, 1864, 2554 and 2723 are copies, not original creations, then their exemplars were also perfect; and the exemplars of the exemplars were also perfect, and so on. The implications of finding a perfect representative of any archetypal text are rather powerful. All the ‘canons’ of textual criticism become irrelevant to any point subsequent to the creation of that text (they could still come into play when studying the creation of the text, in the event). Of the other MSS, 204 and 757 have only one deviation; 386, 394, 928, 1075, 1637, 1725, 1732, 1855, 2466 and 2587 have only two; and so on. (MS 664 has thirty, most of them being careless mistakes; 664 attests the basic profile [the diagnostic variants that distinguish it from all other profiles] and is thus clearly a member of the family, albeit sloppy.)

I have referred to ‘the presumed archetypal profile’. So how did I identify it? I did so on the basis of a fundamental principle. If we have a family made up of 50 MSS, wherever they are all in agreement there can be no question as to the family reading. Where a single MS goes astray against all the rest, there still can be no question—which is what I argue for James above. Wherever so many as two agree (against the rest) then we have a splinter group—off hand I would say that anything up to 20% of the family total would remain a splinter group, with virtually no chance of representing the archetypal reading (if the other 80% are unanimous). Where the attestation falls below 80%, the more so if there are several competing variants, other considerations must come into play.

¹ Before I collated cursive 18 for myself, I was limited to the collation reflected in *TuT (Text und Textwert der Griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments* [Ed. Kurt Aland, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987], volumes 9 and 11), which evidently assigns two errors to the copyist; I am satisfied that there are none.

Returning to James, I claim that we have reasonable certainty as to the precise family profile for that book.¹ That being so, we can now evaluate the individual MSS. That is why I affirm that the exemplars of 18, 35, 1503, 1732, 1864, 1865, 2221, 2554 and 2723 are perfect representatives of the family. To have nine perfect exemplars out of forty-three is probably more than most of us would expect! So in James we have several MSS that meet Ehrman's option 3), with reference to the archetypal text.

But what about Ehrman's second option? When he speaks of a 'group' of MSS, as distinct from a 'solitary' MS (option 3), he presumably is thinking of a family, since they would all have the same profile, of necessity. But if he is thinking of a family, then I submit that option 2) needs to be restated. I suggest: "He preserved it in a family of manuscripts whose archetypal text contains no corruptions — provided that its precise profile can be affirmed beyond reasonable doubt." (Recall that we are speaking of actual possession of the profile.) The obvious mistakes in individual representatives can cheerfully be factored out, leaving the witness of the family unscathed. As restated, Ehrman's second option is met by f^{35} in James, with reference to the archetypal text. Let's move on to 1 Peter.

Looking at the chart, cursives 1865, 2554 and 2723 are perfect representatives of the presumed archetypal profile, but since 35 has been systematically corrected, its exemplar was also perfect.² If we ascribe singular readings to the copyist, then the exemplar of 824 was perfect as well. Of the other MSS, 204 has only one deviation; 386, 1100, 1725 and 2221 have only two; and so on. Arguing as I did for James, in 1 Peter we have five exemplars that meet Ehrman's option 3) and again f^{35} meets his option 2), with reference to the archetypal text. Let's move on to 2 Peter.

Looking at the chart, cursives 35, 1725, 1864, 2554 and 2723 are perfect representatives of the presumed archetypal profile.³ If we ascribe singular readings to the copyist, then the exemplars of 18, 824, 1072, 1075, 1503, 1865 and 1897 were perfect as well. Of the other MSS, 1100, 1637 and 1761 have only one deviation; 141, 757, 986, 1732, 1855 and 2626 have only two; and so on. Arguing as I did for James, in 2 Peter we have twelve exemplars that meet Ehrman's option 3) and again f^{35} meets his option 2), with reference to the archetypal text. Let's move on to 1 John.

Looking at the chart, cursives 204, 824, 1100 and 2554 are perfect representatives of the presumed archetypal profile, but since 35, 1637, 1768 and 1865 have been systematically corrected, their exemplars were also perfect.⁴ The single variation in 2723 is the omission of a whole line in an obvious case of homoioteleuton, which to my mind does not constitute a proper variant reading. In any case its exemplar would be perfect. If we ascribe singular readings to the copyist, then the exemplars of 1503, 1725, 1732 and 1897 were perfect as well. Of the other MSS, 757, 1075 and 2587 have only one deviation; 201, 928, 1072, 1548, 1855, 2221 and 2626 have only two; and so on. Arguing as I did for James, in 1 John we have thirteen exemplars that meet Ehrman's option 3) and again f^{35} meets his option 2), with reference to the archetypal text. Let's move on to 2 John.

Looking at the chart, most of the cursives are perfect representatives of the presumed archetypal profile. Arguing as I did for James, in 2 John we have thirty-six exemplars that

¹ There are only two significant family splits in James, that I discuss in " f^{35} sub-groups in the General Epistles", to be found in the Appendix..

² There are eight significant family splits in 1 Peter, that I discuss in " f^{35} sub-groups in the General Epistles".

³ There are two significant family splits in 2 Peter, that I discuss in " f^{35} sub-groups in the General Epistles".

⁴ There are two significant family splits in 1 John, that I discuss in " f^{35} sub-groups in the General Epistles".

meet Ehrman's option 3) and again f^{35} meets his option 2), with reference to the archetypal text. Let's move on to 3 John.

Looking at the chart, most of the cursives are perfect representatives of the presumed archetypal profile. Arguing as I did for James, in 3 John we have thirty-two exemplars that meet Ehrman's option 3) and again f^{35} meets his option 2), with reference to the archetypal text. Let's move on to Jude.

Looking at the chart, half of the cursives are perfect representatives of the presumed archetypal profile. Arguing as I did for James, in Jude we have thirty-six exemplars that meet Ehrman's option 3) and again f^{35} meets his option 2), with reference to the archetypal text.

But is the archetypal text of f^{35} the Autograph?

As they used to say in another world, long departed, "That's the \$64 question". In Part III I present objective evidence in support of the claim that the text of f^{35} is ancient and independent of all other lines of transmission. If f^{35} is independent of all other lines of transmission then it must hark back to the Autographs. What other reasonable explanation is there? If anyone has a different explanation that accounts for the evidence better than (or as well as) mine does, I would like to see it.¹

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 f^{35} 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 f^{35} 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!

So then, if the archetypal text of f^{35} is the Autograph then we have met two of Ehrman's three options for each of the seven General Epistles. I maintain that in this year of our Lord we have actual (not theoretical) possession of the precise original wording of James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John and Jude!! Furthermore, I am prepared to offer the same sort of demonstration for each of the 27 books that make up our NT. In consequence thereof, I maintain that in this year of our Lord we have actual (not theoretical) possession of the precise original wording of the whole New Testament!!! It is reproduced in my published Greek Text, *The Greek New Testament According to Family 35*.

I have argued above that preservation is to be demonstrated book by book, but wouldn't it be interesting if we could do the same for a whole section? But of course we have—Ehrman's option 2), as restated, obtains for the whole section of seven books. Not just interesting but astonishing it would be to find a single MS that is perfect throughout a section of seven

¹ Should anyone wish to claim that f^{35} is a recension, I request (and insist) that he specify who did it, when and where, and furnish evidence in support of the claim. Without evidence any such claim is frivolous and irresponsible—Hort's claim that his 'Syrian' text was the result of a 'Lucianic' recension is a classic example (Burgon protested at the complete lack of evidence, at the time, and no one has come up with any since). I remind the reader that evidence must be rigorously distinguished from presupposition and interpretation.

books!¹ And again we have!! 2554 fills the bill, as do the exemplars of 35 and 2723, and as does 2723 itself, virtually. So recently as twelve years ago I would not have dreamed of such a thing.

If God demonstrably preserved the precise wording of a text throughout two millennia, this implies rather strongly that He inspired it in the first place—otherwise, why bother with it? And if He went to such pains, I rather suspect that He expects us to pay strict attention to it. When we stand before the Just Judge—who is also Creator, Savior and Inspirer—He will require an accounting based on the objective authority of that Text.

¹ This would be true for the archetypal text of any group of 70-80 MSS, or even fewer. If the archetype is the Autograph, all the more so.

PART III: Some Residual Questions

Is f³⁵ Ancient?

I have received feedback that goes something like this: “ok, the evidence you have presented indicates that f³⁵ is independent, but it doesn’t prove that it’s ancient” [I affirm both]. I consider that the point deserves a bit of ‘chewing’. For instance: minuscules 35, 2587 and 2723 are generally dated to the 11th century; although minuscule 1897 is generally dated to the 12th, I have collated it and must say that it looks older to me, just as old as the other three, so I claim it for the 11th as well. What about their provenance? 35 is presently in Paris, but was acquired in the Aegean area [18, also in Paris, was done in Constantinople]; 1897 is in Jerusalem and presumably was produced there; 2587 is in the Vatican and may well have been produced there; 2723 is in Trikala and was doubtless produced there.

I now consider their performance in the seven General Epistles (a corpus of sufficient size and diversity to preclude reasonable challenge—I have done a complete collation of all four MSS throughout that corpus). As best I can tell, the exemplars of 35 and 2723 were perfect representatives of the presumed family archetype—not one variant in all seven books. The exemplar of 1897 participates in a splinter group (within the family) at three points, with no further variants. The exemplar of 2587 participates in a splinter group at six points, with no further variants. So the four monks who produced our four 11th century copies were each looking at a perfect (virtually) representative of the family’s (f³⁵) archetypal text. But how old were the exemplars?

If a MS was not in constant or regular use it would easily last for a century or more, even several. Would Greek MSS in Rome be likely to be much in use at that time? Probably not, so the exemplar of 2587 could easily have been an uncial. How about Jerusalem? The chances of greater use there were probably little better than in Rome. In Constantinople (35?) and Trikala Greek was certainly still in use. But do we know to what extent Christians were actually reading Scripture in those years? I think we may reasonably assume that the exemplars were at least a century older than their copies. But 1897 and 2587 join splinter groups, so we are looking at some transmissional history—there must be the parent of the splinter between our exemplar and the archetype.

So, the exemplars were presumably no later than 10th century. If we allow one generation for the creation of splinters, that generation would be no later than the 9th and the archetype no later than the 8th. (I have given an absolute minimum, but obviously there could have been any number of further intervening generations, which would place the archetype much earlier.) But what are the implications of perfect representatives of a family in the tenth century in four diverse locations? How could there be **perfect** copies of *anything* in the 10th century?? That there were four perfect (virtually) representatives of the f³⁵ archetype in diverse locations in the 10th century is a fact. That they were separated from that archetype by at least one intervening generation is also a fact. So how can we explain them?

Did someone concoct the f³⁵ archetype in the 8th century? Who? Why? And how could it spread around the Mediterranean world? There are f³⁵ MSS all over the place—Jerusalem, Sinai, Athens, Constantinople, Trikala, Kalavryta, Ochrida, Patmos, Karditsa, Rome, Sparta, Meteora, Venedig, Lesbos, and most monasteries on Mt. Athos (that represented different ‘denominations’), etc. [If there were six monasteries on Cyprus—one Anglican, one Assembly

of God, one Baptist, one Church of Christ, one Methodist and one Presbyterian—to what extent would they compare notes? Has human nature changed?] But the Byzantine bulk (**K^x**) controlled at least 60% of the transmissional stream (**f³⁵** = about 18%); how could something concocted in the 8th century spread so far, so fast, and in such purity? How did it inspire such loyalty? Everything that we know about the history of the transmission of the Text answers that it could not and did not. It is simply impossible that **f³⁵** could have been ‘concocted’ at any point subsequent to the 4th century. The loyalty with which **f³⁵** was copied, the level of loyalty for **f³⁵** being much higher than that for any other line of transmission, indicates that it was never ‘concocted’—it goes back to the Original.

However, although **f³⁵** has been demonstrated to be independent of **K^x** (Byzantine bulk), they are really very close and must have a common source. (I would say that **K^x** represents a departure from **f³⁵**, that **f³⁵** is therefore older.) In the General Epistles **f³⁵** does not differ from the H-F Majority Text all that much. For instance, in James **f³⁵** differs from H-F nineteen times, only two of which affect the meaning (not seriously). If **f³⁵** and **K^x** have a common source, but **f³⁵** is independent of **K^x**, then **f³⁵** must be at least as old as **K^x**—Q.E.D. [*quod erat demonstrandum*, for those who read Latin; “which was to be proved”, for the rest of us; and in yet plainer English, “the point to be proved has been proved”].

Further, if **f³⁵** is independent of all other known lines of transmission, then it must hark back to the Autographs. If it was created out of existing materials at some point down the line, then it is dependent on those materials and it should be possible to demonstrate that dependence. So far as I know, no such dependence has been demonstrated, and to the extent that I have analyzed the evidence, it cannot be demonstrated.

The Dating of **K^r** (alias **f³⁵**, nee **f¹⁸**) Revisited

When Hermann von Soden identified **K^r** and proclaimed it to be a revision of **K^x** made in the **XII** century, he rendered a considerable disservice to the Truth and to those with an interest in identifying the original wording of the NT Text. This section argues that if von Soden had really paid attention to the evidence available in his day, he could not have perpetrated such an injustice.

Those familiar with my work know that I began by using **f¹⁸** instead of **K^r**, because minuscule 18 is the family member with the smallest number. I then switched to **f³⁵** for the following reasons: 1) although 18 is sometimes a purer representative of the texttype than is minuscule 35, in the Apocalypse 18 defects to another type, while 35 remains true [both MSS contain the whole NT]; 2) while 18 is dated to the **XIV** century, 35 is dated to the **XI**, thus giving the lie, all by itself, to von Soden’s dictum that **K^r** was created in the **XII** century. Further, if 35 is a copy, not a new creation, then its exemplar had to be older, and so on.

After doing a complete collation of 1,389 MSS that contain the whole *Pericope Adulterae* (there were a few others that certainly contain the pericope but could not be collated because the microfilm was illegible), Maurice Robinson concluded:

Based upon the collated data, the present writer is forced to reverse his previous assumptions regarding the development and restoration/preservation of the Byzantine Textform in this sense: although textual transmission itself is a process, it appears that, for the most part, the lines of transmission remained separate, with relatively little mixture occurring or becoming perpetuated. . . .

Certainly, all the types of PA text are distinct, and reflect a long line of transmission and preservation in their separate integrities. . . .

.....

It thus appears that the Byzantine minuscule MSS preserve lines of transmission which are not only independent but which of necessity had their origin at a time well before the 9th century.¹

Fair enough. If **K^r** (**M⁷**) was preserved in its ‘separate integrity’ during ‘a long line of transmission’ then it would have to have its origin ‘at a time well before the 9th century’. Besides the witness of 35, Robinson’s collations demonstrate that minuscule 1166 and lectionary 139, both of the **X** century, reflect **K^r**. If they are copies, not new creations, then their exemplars had to be older, and so on. Without adducing any further evidence, it seems fair to say that **K^r** must have existed already in the **IX** century, if not the **VIII**.

For years, based on the *Text und Textwert* series, I have insisted that **K^r** is both ancient and independent. Robinson would seem to agree. “The lack of extensive cross-comparison and correction demonstrated in the extant MSS containing the PA precludes the easy development of any existing form of the PA text from any other form of the PA text during at least the vellum era.”² “The vellum era”—doesn’t that take us back to the **IV** century, at least? As a matter of fact, yes. Consider:

Acts 4:34— τις ην **K^r** $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ (~21 B) [**K^r** is independent, and both **K^r** and **K^x** are **IV** century]
τις υπηρχεν **K^x** P⁸D

Acts 15:7— εν υμιν **K^r** $\text{\textcircled{ABC}}$, it^{pt} [**K^r** is independent, and both **K^r** and **K^x** are ancient]
εν ημιν **K^x** (D)lat

Acts 19:3— ειπεν τε **K^r** B(D) [**K^r** is independent, and both **K^r** and **K^x** are ancient]
ο δε ειπεν $\text{\textcircled{A}}$ (P³⁸)bo
ειπεν τε προς αυτους **K^x** sy^p,sa

Acts 21:8— ηλθομεν **K^r** $\text{\textcircled{AC(B)}}$ lat,syr,cop [**K^r** is older than **K^x**, very ancient]
οι περι τον παυλον ηλθον **K^x**

Acts 23:20— μελλοντες (33.1%) **K^r** lat,syr,sa [**K^r** is independent and very ancient; there is no **K^x**]
μελλοντα (27.2%) {HF,RP}
μελλοντων (17.4%)
μελλων (9.2%) AB,bo
μελλον (7.5%) {NU} $\text{\textcircled{A}}$
μελλοντας (5.4%)

Rom. 5:1— εχωμεν (43%) **K^r** **K^{x(1/3)}** $\text{\textcircled{ABCD}}$,lat,bo [did part of **K^x** assimilate to **K^r**?]
εχομεν (57%) **K^{x(2/3)}**

¹ “Preliminary Observations regarding the *Pericope Adulterae* based upon Fresh Collations of nearly all Continuous-Text Manuscripts and over One Hundred Lectionaries”, presented to the Evangelical Theological Society, Nov., 1998, pp. 12-13. However, I have received the following clarification from Maurice Robinson: “I would request that if my name gets cited in regard to your various **K^r** or **M⁷** articles that you make it clear that I do not concur with your assessment of **K^r** or **M⁷**. This is particularly the case with the “Preliminary Considerations regarding the *Pericope Adulterae*” article; it should not be used to suggest that I consider the **M⁷** line or **K^r** text to be early. This would be quite erroneous, since I hold with virtually all others that **K^r**/**M⁷** are indeed late texts that reflect recensional activity beginning generally in the 12th century (perhaps with 11th century base exemplars, but nothing earlier).” [Assuming that he was sincere when he wrote that article, I wonder what new evidence came his way that caused him to change his mind—his language there is certainly plain enough. Further, I had a copy of his collations in my hand for two months, spending much of that time poring over them, and saw no reason to question his conclusions in the Nov., 1998 article.]

² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Rom. 16:6—εις υμας εις ημας εν υμιν	K ^r P ⁴⁶ Ɀ ABC K ^x D	[K ^r is independent and very ancient, II/III century]
2 Cor. 1:15— προς υμας ελθειν το προτερον προς υμας ελθειν προτερον προς υμας ελθειν προτερον ελθειν προς υμας ελθειν προς υμας το προτερον	K ^r Ɀ ABC D, lat K ^x	[K ^r is independent!]
2 Cor. 2:17—λοιποι πολλοι	K ^r K ^x (^{pt}) P ⁴⁶ D, syr K ^x (^{pt}) Ɀ ABC, lat, cop	[K ^r is very ancient, II/III century]
James 1:23— νομου λογου	K ^r K ^x Ɀ ABC	[K ^r is independent] ¹
James 2:3— την λαμπραν εσθητα την εσθητα την λαμπραν	K ^r K ^x Ɀ ABC	[K ^r is independent]
James 2:4— — ου και ου	K ^r Ɀ ABC K ^x	[K ^r is independent and ancient]
James 2:8— σεαυτον εαυτον	K ^r Ɀ ABC K ^x	[K ^r is independent and ancient]
James 2:14— εχει εχη	K ^r K ^x Ɀ ABC	[K ^r is independent]
James 3:2— δυναμενος δυνατος	K ^r Ɀ K ^x AB	[K ^r is independent and ancient]
James 3:4— ιθυνοντος ευθυνοντος	K ^r K ^x Ɀ ABC	[K ^r is independent; a rare classical spelling]
James 4:11— ο γαρ ο —	K ^r K ^x Ɀ AB	[K ^r is independent]
James 4:14— ημων υμων	K ^r K ^x Ɀ A(P ¹⁰⁰ B)	[K ^r is independent]
James 4:14—επειτα επειτα και επειτα δε και	K ^r Ɀ AB K ^x	[K ^r is independent]
1 Pet. 3:16— καταλαουσιν καταλαωσιν καταλαλεισθε	K ^r Ɀ AC, sy ^p , bo K ^x P ⁷² B, sa	[K ^r is independent and ancient]
1 Pet. 4:3—υμιν ημιν (omit)	K ^r Ɀ bo K ^x C P ⁷² AB, lat, syr, sa	[K ^r is independent and ancient]
2 Pet. 2:17—εις αιωνας εις αιωνα (omit)	K ^r K ^x AC P ⁷² Ɀ B, lat, syr, cop	[K ^r is independent]
3 John 12—οιδαμεν οιδατε οιδας	K ^r K ^x Ɀ ABC	[K ^r is independent]

So what conclusions may we draw from this evidence? **K**^r is independent of **K**^x and both are ancient, dating at least to the **IV** century.² A few of the examples could be interpreted to

¹ For the examples from James I also consulted *Editio Critica Maior*.

² Someone may object that it is the readings that are ancient, not the text-types; but if a text-type is clearly independent, with constantly shifting alignments among the early witnesses, then it has ancient readings

mean that **K^r** is older than **K^x**, dating to the **III** and even the **II** century, but I will leave that possibility on the back burner and look at some further evidence. The following examples are based on *Text und Textwert* and the IGNTP *Luke*.

Luke 1:55—εως αιωνος εις τον αιωνα	K^r C K^x ⚭ AB	[K^r is independent and V century]
Luke 1:63—εσται εστιν	K^r C K^x ⚭ AB	[K^r is independent and V century]
Luke 3:12—υπ αυτου και — — και	K^r C K^x ⚭ ABD	[K^r is independent and V century]
Luke 4:7—σοι σου	K^r K^x ⚭ AB	[K^r is independent]
Luke 4:42—εζητουν επεζητουν	K^r K^x ⚭ ABCD	[K^r is independent]
Luke 5:1—περι παρα	K^r K^x P ⁷⁵ ⚭ ABC	[K^r is independent]
Luke 5:19—ευροντες δια ευροντες —	K^r K^x ⚭ ABCD	[K^r is independent]
Luke 5:19—πως ποιας	K^r K^x ⚭ ABC	[K^r is independent]
Luke 6:7— — τω εν τω	K^r D K^x ⚭ AB	[K^r is independent and V century]
Luke 6:10—ουτως και — — και	K^r K^x ⚭ ABD	[K^r is independent]
Luke 6:26—καλως ειπωσιν υμας καλως υμας ειπωσιν υμας καλως ειπωσιν	K^r ⚭ A K^x D P ⁷⁵ B	[K^r is independent and IV century]
Luke 6:26—παντες οι — — οι	K^r P ⁷⁵ AB(⚭) K^x D,syr	[K^r is independent and early III century]
Luke 6:49—την οικιαν — οικιαν	K^r P ⁷⁵ K^x ⚭ ABC	[K^r is independent and early III century]
Luke 8:15—ταυτα λεγων εφωνει ο εχων ωτα ακουειν ακουετω (omit)	K^r K^x ⚭ ABD	[K^r is independent]
Luke 8:24—και προσελθοντες προσελθοντες και	K^r K^x ⚭ ABD	[K^r is independent]
Luke 9:27—εστηκοτων εσωτων	K^r ⚭ B K^x ACD	[K^r is independent and IV century]

because it itself is ancient. And in the case of **K^r** there are many hundreds of variant sets where its reading has overt early attestation. (Recall that Aland's **M** and Soden's **K** include **K^r**—the poor text-type itself should not be held responsible for the way modern scholars treat it.) If it can be demonstrated objectively that a text-type has hundreds of early readings, but it cannot be demonstrated objectively to have any late ones, on what basis can it be declared to be late?

Luke 9:56—(have verse) (omit verse)	K^r K^x lat,syr,Diat,Marcion P ^{45,75} Ɀ ABCDW,cop	[K^r and K^x are II century]
Luke 10:4—πηραν μη πηραν μηδε	K^r P ⁷⁵ Ɀ BD K^x AC	[K^r is independent and early III century]
Luke 10:6—εαν μεν εαν —	K^r K^x P ⁷⁵ Ɀ ABCD	[K^r is independent]
Luke 10:39—των λογων τον λογον	K^r K^x P ^{45,75} Ɀ ABC	[K^r is independent]
Luke 10:41—ο Ιησους ειπεν αυτη ο Κυριος ειπεν αυτη ειπεν αυτη ο Ιησους ειπεν αυτη ο Κυριος	K^r D P ⁴⁵ K^x ACW,syr,bo P ⁷⁵ Ɀ B,lat,sa	[K^r is independent and V century] [the word order is III century]
Luke 11:34— — ολον και ολον	K^r CD K^x P ^{45,75} Ɀ AB	[K^r is independent and V century]
Luke 11:53—συνεχειν ενεχειν εχειν επεχειν	K^r K^x P ⁷⁵ Ɀ AB P ⁴⁵ D C	[K^r is independent!]
Luke 12:22—λεγω υμιν υμιν λεγω	K^r P ⁷⁵ Ɀ BD,lat K^x AW	[K^r is independent and II century]
Luke 12:56—του ουρανου και της γης της γης και του ουρανου	K^r P ^{45,75} D K^x Ɀ AB	[K^r is independent and early III century]
Luke 12:58—βαλη σε σε βαλη	K^r (D) K^x A(P ⁷⁵ Ɀ B)	[K^r is independent]
Luke 13:28—οψεσθε οψησθε ιδητε	K^r BD K^x P ⁷⁵ AW Ɀ	[K^r is independent and IV century]
Luke 19:23—επι την επι —	K^r K^x Ɀ ABD	[K^r is independent]
Luke 21:6—επι λιθον επι λιθω	K^r K^x Ɀ AB	[K^r is independent]
Luke 21:15—αντειπειν η αντιστηναι αντειπειν ουδε αντιστηναι — — αντιστηναι αντιστηναι η αντειπειν	K^r A K^x W D,it,syr Ɀ B,cop	[K^r is independent and V century]
Luke 22:12—αναγαιον αναγειον ανωγειον	K^r Ɀ ABD CW K^x	[K^r is independent and IV century]
Luke 22:66—απηγαγον ανηγαγον	K^r P ⁷⁵ Ɀ BD K^x AW	[K^r is independent and early III century]
Luke 23:51—ος — ος και	K^r P ⁷⁵ Ɀ BCD,lat K^x AW	[K^r is independent and II century]

There are a number of further examples where **K'** is alone against the world, showing its independence, but I 'grew weary in well doing', deciding I had included enough to make the point. Note that N-A²⁷ mentions only a third of these examples from Luke—to be despised is to be ignored. This added evidence confirms that **K'** is independent of **K^x** and both are ancient, only now they both must date to the III century, at least.

It will be observed that I have furnished examples from the Gospels (Luke, John), Acts, Paul (Romans, 2 Corinthians), and the General Epistles (James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 3 John), with emphasis on Luke, Acts and James.¹ Throughout the New Testament **K'** is independent and ancient. Dating to the III century, it is just as old as any other text-type. Therefore, **it should be treated with the respect that it deserves!!**

I have cited Maurice Robinson twice and shown that the evidence vindicates his claims. Both **K'** and **K^x** date to the beginning of the velum era. But he makes a further claim that is even bolder:

Nor do the uncials or minuscules show any indication of any known line deriving from a parallel known line. The 10 or so "texttype" lines of transmission remain independent and must necessarily extend back to a point long before their separate stabilizations occurred—a point which seems buried (as Colwell and Scrivener suggested) deep within the second century.²

Well, well, well, we are getting pretty close to the Autographs! Objective evidence from the II century is a little hard to come by. For all that, the examples above taken from Acts 21:8, Acts 23:20, Romans 5:1, Luke 9:56, Luke 12:22 and Luke 23:51 might place **K'** (and **K^x**) in the II century. However, it is not the purpose of this section to defend that thesis. For the moment I content myself with insisting that **K'** must date to the III century and therefore must be rehabilitated in the practice of NT textual criticism.

In conclusion, I claim to have demonstrated that **K'** is independent and ancient, dating to the III century (at least). But there is an ingrained disdain/antipathy toward that symbol, so I have proposed a new name for the text-type. We should substitute **f³⁵** for **K'**—it is more objective and will get away from the prejudice that attaches to the latter.

Having criticized von Soden's dating of **K'**, I now ask: what led him to that conclusion and why has his conclusion been almost universally accepted by the scholarly community? I answer: the number of **K'** type MSS first becomes noticeable precisely in the 12th century, although there are a number from the 11th. That number grows in the 13th and grows some more in the 14th, calling attention to itself. Those who had already bought into Hort's doctrine of a late 'Syrian' text would see no reason to question von Soden's statement, and would have no inclination or motivation to 'waste' time checking it out. If von Soden himself had bought into Hort's doctrine, then he was blinded to the evidence.

Those who catalog NT MSS inform us that the 12th and 13th centuries lead the pack, in terms of extant MSS, followed by the 14th, 11th, 15th, 16th and 10th, in that order. There are over four times as many MSS from the 13th as from the 10th, but obviously Koine Greek would

¹ I also have a page or more of examples from Revelation that confirm that **K'** (**M^c**) is independent and III century in that book as well.

² *Ibid.*

have been more of a living language in the 10th than the 13th, and so there would have been more demand and therefore more supply. In other words, many hundreds of really pure MSS from the 10th perished. A higher percentage of the really good MSS produced in the 14th century survived than those produced in the 11th; and so on. That is why there is a progressive level of agreement among the Byzantine MSS, there being a higher percentage of agreement in the 14th than in the 10th. But had we lived in the 10th, and done a wide survey of the MSS, we would have found very nearly the same level of agreement (perhaps 98%). The same obtains if we had lived in the 8th, 6th, 4th or 2nd century. In other words, THE SURVIVING MSS FROM THE FIRST TEN CENTURIES ARE NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE TRUE STATE OF AFFAIRS AT THE TIME.

Early Uncial Support for f³⁵ in the General Epistles

I take it that Klaus Wachtel, in his *Der Byzantinische Text der Katholischen Briefe*, recognizes that the Byzantine text is early (though often deciding against it on internal grounds), thereby bidding adieu to the prevailing canard. I believe that the evidence presented below demonstrates the same for the text of f³⁵.

I proceed to tabulate the performance of the early uncials (5th century and earlier) as they appear in the apparatus of my Greek text of the seven General Epistles. I do not include any variant set where *rell* appears. I use f³⁵ as the point of reference, but only tabulate variant sets where at least one of the extant early uncials (extant at that point) goes against f³⁵ (since most words have unanimous attestation).

Thirteen early uncials appear in my apparatus: P^{20,23,72,78,81,100}, ⳨, A, B, C, 048, 0173, 0232. Only P⁷², ⳨, A, B, C are not fragments (048 is a variety of pieces, here and there). Codex C is missing basically chapters 4 and 5 of James, 1 Peter and 1 John [curiously, the same two chapters for all three books], as well as all of 2 John. Of course, P⁷² has only 1 & 2 Peter and Jude. Four of them never side with f³⁵: P⁷⁸ appears once, P²³ twice, 0173 thrice and 0232 five times. Of the other fragments, P²⁰ shows 1 for, 3 against [25%]; P⁸¹ shows 3 for, 11 against [21.4%]; P¹⁰⁰ shows 7 for, 10 against [41%]; 048 shows 10 for, 25 against [28.6%]. Not allowing for lacunae, P⁷² would come in with 23.9%, ⳨ with 28.7%, A with 27.7%, B with 21.1%. If we divide C's 117 by 473 (the total of variant sets involved) we get 24.7%, but of course C is missing seven chapters (out of 21), so if we divide 117 by, say, 320, we get 36%—of the four main codices, C is clearly the closest to f³⁵. Out of the total of 473 variant sets, f³⁵ receives overt early attestation 60% of the time (284 ÷ 473).

Before drawing conclusions, I present the evidence (only combinations with at least one instance are tabulated).¹

	James	1Peter	2Peter	1John	2&3John	Jude	TOTAL
f ³⁵ alone	56	49	18	32	19	15	189
f ³⁵ P ⁷²		7				1	8
f ³⁵ P ¹⁰⁰	2						2
f ³⁵ ⳨	7	9	7	9	5		37
f ³⁵ A	9	8	3	9	2	1	32

¹ Having neither secretary nor proof-reader, I do not guarantee complete accuracy, but a slip here or there will not alter the big picture, nor invalidate our conclusions.

f ³⁵ B	1	2	1	4	2		10
f ³⁵ C	5	8	3	4	1	2	23
f ³⁵ 048	1						1
f ³⁵ P ²⁰ x	1						1
f ³⁵ P ⁷² A		2					2
f ³⁵ P ⁷² B		2	1				3
f ³⁵ P ⁷² C		3	1				4
f ³⁵ P ¹⁰⁰ A	1						1
f ³⁵ xA	7	2	7	5			21
f ³⁵ xB	2	3		8		1	14
f ³⁵ xC		1	2	5		2	10
f ³⁵ x048			1				1
f ³⁵ AB	2	1	1	6	2	1	13
f ³⁵ AC	6	4	2	1			13
f ³⁵ BC			2				2
f ³⁵ P ⁷² xA		4					4
f ³⁵ P ⁷² xB		3					3
f ³⁵ P ⁷² xC		2					2
f ³⁵ P ⁷² AB		3					3
f ³⁵ P ⁷² AC		3				1	4
f ³⁵ P ⁷² BC		1	9			1	11
f ³⁵ P ⁸¹ BC		1					1
f ³⁵ P ¹⁰⁰ xA	1						1
f ³⁵ P ¹⁰⁰ AB	1						1
f ³⁵ P ¹⁰⁰ AC	1						1
f ³⁵ xAB			1	2			3
f ³⁵ xAC	2	4	1	2		1	10
f ³⁵ xA048			1				1
f ³⁵ xBC	2		1	6			9
f ³⁵ ABC	2	1		2		1	6
f ³⁵ AB048	1						1
f ³⁵ AC048			2				2
f ³⁵ BC048			1				1
f ³⁵ P ⁷² xAB		1	1				2
f ³⁵ P ⁷² xAC		2	1				3
f ³⁵ P ⁷² xBC		1	3				4
f ³⁵ P ⁷² ABC		1					1
f ³⁵ P ⁸¹ xAB		1					1
f ³⁵ P ¹⁰⁰ xBC	1						1
f ³⁵ xABC		4	1			1	6
f ³⁵ P ⁷² xAB048			1				1
f ³⁵ P ⁷² ABC048			1				1
f ³⁵ P ⁸¹ xABC		1					1
f ³⁵ xABC048			1				1
Total w/ uncial	55	85	54	65	12	13	284

% of variants with uncial support | 49.5% | 63.7% | 75% | 67% | 38.7% | 46.4% | **60%**¹

involving P²⁰ -- **1**
involving P⁷² -- **56**
involving P⁸¹ -- **3**

¹ 2 & 3 John have the lowest percentage (if C had 2 John it would likely come up a bit) and 2 Peter the highest—a whopping 75%! Given all the ‘bad press’ 2 Peter has received, I find this datum to be interesting.

involving P¹⁰⁰ -- 7
 involving Ⲛ -- 136
 involving A -- 131
 involving B -- 100
 involving C -- 117
 involving 048 -- 10

Each of these nine uncials is plainly independent of all the others. The total lack of pattern in the attestation that these early uncials give to **f³⁵** shows just as plainly that **f³⁵** is independent of them all as well, quite apart from the 40% without them. But that 60% of the units receive early uncial support, without pattern or dependency, shows that the **f³⁵ text** is early.

I invite special attention to the first block, where a single uncial sides with **f³⁵**; each of the seven uncials is independent of the rest (and of **f³⁵**) at this point, of necessity, yet together they attest 23.9% of the total (113 ÷ 473). Since there is no pattern or dependency for this 24%, how shall we account for these 113 early readings in **f³⁵**?¹ Will anyone argue that whoever ‘concocted’ the first **f³⁵** MS had all these uncials in front of him, arbitrarily taking 8 readings from P⁷², 2 from P¹⁰⁰, 37 from Ⲛ, etc., etc., etc.? Really now, how shall we account for these 113 early readings in **f³⁵**?

Going on to the next block, we have another 85 readings where there is no pattern or dependency; 113 + 85 = 198 = 41.9%. Really now, how shall we account for these 198 early readings in **f³⁵**? Going on to the next block, we have another 63 readings where there is no pattern or dependency; 198 + 63 = 261 = 55.2%. Really now, how shall we account for these 261 early readings in **f³⁵**? And so on.

To allege a dependency in the face of this EVIDENCE I consider to be dishonest. **f³⁵** is clearly independent of all these lines of transmission, themselves independent. If **f³⁵** is independent then it is early, of necessity. **f³⁵** has all those early readings for the sufficient reason that its **text** is early, dating to the 3rd century, at least. But if **f³⁵** is independent of all other lines of transmission (it is demonstrably independent of **K^x**, etc.) then it must hark back to the Autographs. What other reasonable explanation is there?²

When is a ‘Recension’?

“The Syrian text must in fact be the result of a ‘recension’ in the proper sense of the word, a work of attempted criticism, performed deliberately by editors and not merely by scribes.”³ It is not my wont to appeal to Fenton John Anthony Hort, but his understanding of ‘recension’ is presumably correct. A recension is produced by a certain somebody (or group) at a certain time in a certain place. If someone wishes to posit or allege a recension, and do so responsibly, he needs to indicate the source and supply some evidence.⁴

¹ Should anyone demure that the 5th century MSS included really are not all that early, I inquire: are they copies, or original creations? If they are copies their exemplars were obviously earlier—all of these 113 readings doubtless existed in the 3rd century.

² Should anyone wish to claim that **f³⁵** is a recension, I request (and insist) that he specify who did it, when and where, and furnish evidence in support of the claim. Without evidence any such claim is frivolous and irresponsible.

³ B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (2 vols.; London: Macmillan and Co., 1881), *Introduction*, p. 133.

⁴ Hort did suggest Lucian of Antioch as the prime mover—a suggestion both gratuitous and frivolous, since he had not really looked at the evidence available at that time. (Were he to repeat the suggestion today, it would be patently ridiculous.)

Are there any recensions among the MSS that contain the Catholic Epistles? I will base my response on the collations presented in *Text und Textwert (TuT)*.¹ They collated about 555 MSS, some 30 of which are fragmentary; this represents around 85% of the total of extant MSS. I will use Colwell's requirement of 70% agreement in order for MSS to be classified in the same text-type (although for myself I require at least 80%). Since *TuT* presents 98 variant sets, spread over the seven epistles, we have a corpus that presumably is reasonably representative. Although the *Institut* has never divulged the criteria by which they chose the sets, so far as I know, the chosen sets are significant (not trivial).

An Alexandrian Recension?

Is there an Egyptian or Alexandrian recension, or text-type? *TuT* follows the 'standard' text, which it calls LESART 2. No single MS has this profile. The closest is Codex B, that diverges from it 13 times out of 98, three being sub-variants and four being singulars (including two of the sub-variants)—the agreement is 86.7% [ignoring the sub-variants it is 89.8%]. Next is cursive 1739 that diverges 29 times out of 98, four being sub-variants and no singulars—the agreement is 70.4% [ignoring the sub-variants it is 74.5%]. Next is P⁷⁴ [7th century] that diverges 3 times out of 10, one being a sub-variant and one being a singular—the agreement is 70% [ignoring the sub-variant it is 80%]. Next is Codex A that diverges 34 times out of 98, four being sub-variants and no singulars—the agreement is 65.3% [ignoring the sub-variants it is 69.4%]. Next is Codex C that diverges 24 times out of 66, one being a sub-variant and four being singulars—the agreement is 63.6% [ignoring the sub-variant it is 65.2%]. Next is cursive 1852 that diverges 36 times out of 95, two being sub-variants and no singulars—the agreement is 62.1% [ignoring the sub-variants it is 64.2%]. Next is Codex \aleph that diverges 40 times out of 98, seven being sub-variants and nine being singulars (including four of the sub-variants)—the agreement is 59.2% [ignoring the sub-variants it is 66.3%]. Next is Codex 044 [a. 800] that diverges 40 times out of 97, four being sub-variants and seven being singulars (including three of the sub-variants)—the agreement is 59% [ignoring the sub-variants it is 62.9%]. Next is Codex 048 [5th century] that diverges 8 times out of 18, one being a sub-variant and no singulars—the agreement is 55.6% [ignoring the sub-variant it is 61.1%]. Not next is P⁷² that diverges 18 times out of 38, six being sub-variants and nine being singulars (including three of the sub-variants)—the agreement is 52.6% [ignoring the sub-variants it is 68.4%]. Codex B is clearly the most important MS in Aland's scheme of things; and the 'standard' text is a composite.

But is there an Egyptian text-type here? Well, **B** and \aleph disagree in 44 out of 98 sets, so their agreement is 55.1%. **B** and **A** disagree in 43 out of 98 sets, so their agreement is 56.1%. **B** and **P⁷²** disagree in 19 out of 38 sets, so their agreement is 50%. **B** and **C** disagree in 27 out of 66 sets, so their agreement is 59.1%. **B** and **P⁷⁴** disagree in 5 out of 10 sets, so their agreement is 50%. **B** and **1739** disagree in 37 out of 98 sets, so their agreement is 62.2%. **A** and \aleph disagree in 35 out of 98 sets, so their agreement is 64.3%. **A** and **P⁷²** disagree in 24 out of 38 sets, so their agreement is 36.8%. **A** and **C** disagree in 26 out of 66 sets, so their agreement is 60.6%. **A** and **P⁷⁴** disagree in 4 out of 10 sets, so their agreement is 60%. **A** and **1739** disagree in 36 out of 98 sets, so their agreement is 63.3%. \aleph and **P⁷²** disagree in 26 out of 38 sets, so their agreement is 31.6%. \aleph and **C** disagree in 30 out of 66 sets, so their agreement is 54.5%. \aleph and **P⁷⁴** disagree in 5 out of 10 sets, so their agreement is 50%. \aleph and **1739** disagree in 46 out of 98 sets, so their agreement is 53.1%. **C** and **P⁷²** disagree in 18 out of 31 sets, so their

¹ *Text und Textwert der Griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments* (Ed. Kurt Aland, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), volumes 9 and 11.

agreement is 41.9%. **C** and **P**⁷⁴ disagree in 3 out of 7 sets, so their agreement is 57.1%. **C** and **1739** disagree in 23 out of 66 sets, so their agreement is 65.2%. **1739** and **P**⁷² disagree in 22 out of 38 sets, so their agreement is 42.1%. **1739** and **P**⁷⁴ disagree in 3 out of 7 sets, so their agreement is 57.1%. Based on this evidence Colwell would not allow us to claim a text-type. The early MSS evidently suffered a common influence, but each wandered off on a private path. No two sets have the same roster of disagreements. They each are certainly independent in their own generation. The common influence observable in the early MSS must have had a source, but that source is really too shadowy to qualify as a recension.

A Byzantine Recension?

LESART 1 is a majority text in the strictest sense. Aland followed the majority reading in every case, except for two variant sets where there is no majority variant and there he followed the plurality (set 32, 1 Peter 3:16—καταλαλωσιν has 49.8%, against καταλαλουσιν with 44.6%) (set 34, 1 Peter 4:3—ημιν has 47.1%, against υμιν with 41.7%). As a byproduct of that procedure no single MS has that precise profile—I found four MSS that come within two variants (607, 639, 1730, 2423) and five that miss by three. The basic **f**³⁵ profile diverges by five.

Having analyzed the profiles for the ± 555 MSS, apart from **f**³⁵ I found precisely one cluster of four MSS (82, 699, 1668, 2484), with a few hangers-on, and one cluster of three MSS (390, 912, 1594), also with a few hangers-on, and nine pairs—all the rest have private profiles (including the ‘hangers-on’).

Within **f**³⁵ 31 MSS have the basic profile; there is a sub-group of 6 MSS, another of 4, another of 3, plus two pairs—these 17 MSS, plus another 10, differ from the basic profile in only one variant. There are 15 MSS that differ by two and 7 by three, making a total of 80 MSS (32 of which have private profiles), plus a few others on the fringes.

Setting aside all the MSS with a shared profile, plus about 30 that have less than 11% of the total, we are left with around 450 MSS that have a private profile (based on the 98 variant sets), the heavy majority of which are Byzantine. We are looking at a normal transmission; no mass production of a single exemplar.

Setting aside the fragmentary MSS, there are about 40 that fall below Colwell’s 70% threshold; all the rest (± 485) would qualify as members of one text-type, which we may call Byzantine. Using my 80% threshold we lose another 17 MSS, leaving ± 470. But I would really rather have 90%, and with that threshold we lose another 46—call it ± 420 MSS. Setting aside the 30 fragmentaries, dividing 420 by 525 we have 80% of the MSS that are strongly Byzantine¹ (using the 80% threshold gives almost 90%) [using the 70% threshold gives 92%]. 345 of the 420 have private profiles—with the possible exception of **f**³⁵ there was no ‘stuffing the ballot box’.

Although **f**³⁵ obviously falls within the Byzantine stream, I will factor it out and treat it separately. 420 less 80 equals 340 strongly Byzantine MSS, only 25 of which share a profile. We obviously have a text-type, but is it a recension? To posit a recension we need a source—who did it, when and where? And using what? Did he merely edit existing materials or did he invent some of the variants? If he invented, is there an observable pattern to explain his attitude?

¹ For a 95% threshold we lose another 35 MSS; 385 ÷ 525 gives 73%. 75% of the MSS reflect a very strong consensus, and yet most have private profiles.

We have 315 strongly Byzantine MSS (without \mathfrak{f}^{35}) with private profiles—they are independent in their own generation, presumably representing as many exemplars, also presumably independent in their own generation, etc. Which is at least partly why scholars from Hort to Aland have recognized that any Byzantine ‘recension’ could not have been created later than the 4th century.

As a preliminary to taking up the question of \mathfrak{f}^{35} (\mathbf{K}') as possibly a recension, I wish to consider other aspects of the general evidence presented in *TuT*. Of the MSS that were collated, 78 are dated. There are nine pairs of MSS with the same date (but no more than two MSS to a year—so 60 have a private year); in eight of them the two MSS are quite different in profile; in the ninth pair both MSS are \mathfrak{f}^{35} but differ in one variant. Both are at Mt. Athos, but in different monasteries—it is highly improbable that they had the same exemplar. There is no evidence here of mass production. But why would a monk on Mt. Athos produce a copy in 1280 AD? If the copy is still there, it was not to fill an order from the city. So why did he do it, as a religious exercise or duty? But what would he copy? It seems to me most likely that he would copy an aged exemplar that was showing signs of wear, to preserve its text. I will demonstrate below that the MSS produced in a single monastery were based on distinct exemplars (as Lake, Blake and New indicated some 85 years ago).¹

Mt. Athos

I have heard it said that the MSS at Mt. Athos are under suspicion of having been mass produced, and of being made to conform to an arbitrary standard. I suspect that the speaker was not aware that there are a number of distinct monasteries in that area. *TuT* lists a mere twenty.² Recall that these monasteries represented different patriarchates, orders, countries and even languages. An average small city in the U.S. will likely have an Assembly of God, a Baptist church, a Bible church, a Congregational church, an Episcopal church, a Methodist church, a Presbyterian church, some kind of neo-pentecostal church, among others. How do they relate to each other? To what extent do they join forces? Even a citywide evangelistic campaign will not get them all together. Were monks in the Byzantine empire any different than pastors in the U.S.? Has human nature changed? The point I am making is that there was probably very little comparing of notes between monasteries on a subject like copying MSS.

Consider: Grigoriu, Pavlu and Protatu are listed with one MS each (for the Catholic Epistles),³ none of which are \mathfrak{f}^{35} . Karakallu and Kavsokalyvion are listed with one each that is \mathfrak{f}^{35} . Konstamonitu, Philotheu and Stavronikita are listed with two MSS, one \mathfrak{f}^{35} and one not. Xiropotamu has two MSS, neither being \mathfrak{f}^{35} . Pantokratoros has three, one of which is \mathfrak{f}^{35} . Dochiariu has five MSS, none being \mathfrak{f}^{35} . Esphigmenu also has five, one being \mathfrak{f}^{35} . Panteleimonos is listed with seven MSS, two being \mathfrak{f}^{35} . Dionysiu is listed with nine MSS, three being \mathfrak{f}^{35} . Kutlumusiu is listed with ten MSS, two being \mathfrak{f}^{35} . Iviron is listed with twelve MSS, five being \mathfrak{f}^{35} . Vatopediu is listed with 28 MSS, five being \mathfrak{f}^{35} . M Lavras is listed with 52 MSS, 22 being \mathfrak{f}^{35} . With the possible exception of M Lavras, there was evidently no \mathfrak{f}^{35} ‘steamroller’ at work.

¹ K. Lake, R.P. Blake and Silva New, “The Caesarean Text of the Gospel of Mark”, *Harvard Theological Review*, XXI (1928), 348-49.

² I personally visited the Mt. Athos peninsula in 2014, and can guarantee that there are twenty independent monasteries, plus a number of subordinate ones.

³ *TuT* lists a MS each for Andreas and Dimitriu, but did not collate them. Esphigmenu has an added three MSS that were not collated.

But what about within a single monastery? Although MSS presently located at places like London or Paris were presumably produced elsewhere, those located at places like Mt. Athos, Patmos, Jerusalem and Sinai were probably produced right there. The monastery at Mt. Sinai is sufficiently isolated that we might expect that a good deal of ‘inbreeding’ took place. So let’s take a look at the Sinai MSS listed by *TuT*.

Mt. Sinai

I will list the MSS in a descending order of ‘Alexandrishness’,¹ with the proviso that such an ordering is only relevant for the first seven or eight:²

1. \aleph ,01³– IV, eapr (2 = 57 [2 subs],⁴ 1/2 = 5 [1 sub], 1 = 19 [3 subs], sing = 9, odd = 8) = 98 variants;
2. 1243 – XI, eap (2 = 51, 1/2 = 6, 1 = 22 [5 subs], sing = 2, odd = 16) = 97;
3. 1241 – XII, eap (2 = 47 [5 subs], 1/2 = 4, 1 = 17 [2 subs], sing = 5, odd = 18) = 91;
4. 1881 – XIV, ap (2 = 42 [3 subs], 1/2 = 3 [1 sub], 1 = 16 [1 sub], sing = 1, odd = 11) = 73;
5. 2495 – XIV, eapr (2 = 37 [2 subs], 1/2 = 4, 1 = 37 [4 subs], sing = 2, odd = 17) = 97;
6. 2492 – XIII, eap (2 = 17 [2 subs], 1/2 = 8, 1 = 58 [2 subs], sing = 1, odd = 9) = 93;
7. 2494 – 1316, eapr (2 = 11, 1/2 = 4, 1 = 73 [2 subs], odd = 10) = 98;

From here on down all the MSS fall within the Byzantine stream.

8. 1874 – X, ap (2 = 4, 1/2 = 9, 1 = 78 [2 subs], sing = 1, odd = 6) = 98;
9. 1877 – XIV, ap (2 = 2, 1/2 = 9, 1 = 81 [5 subs], sing = 2, odd = 4) = 98;
10. 2086 – XIV, ap (2 = 2, 1/2 = 8, 1 = 82 [2 subs], sing = 1, odd = 5) = 98;
11. 1251 – XIII, eap (2 = 2, 1/2 = 9, 1 = 82 [3 subs], odd = 4) = 97;
12. 1245 – XII, ap (2 = 3, 1/2 = 10 [1 sub], 1 = 83 [6 subs], odd = 2) = 98;
13. 1240 – XII, eap (2 = 1, 1/2 = 7, 1 = 82 [7 subs], odd = 4) = 94;
14. 2356 – XIV, eap (2 = 1, 1/2 = 9, 1 = 76 [2 subs], odd = 4) = 90;
15. 1880 – X, ap (2 = 2, 1/2 = 10, 1 = 84 [5 subs], odd = 2) = 98;
16. 2502 – 1242, eap (2 = 1, 1/2 = 9, 1 = 73 [6 subs], odd = 2) = 85;
17. 1242 – XIII, eap (2 = 1, 1/2 = 9, 1 = 86 [4 subs], odd = 2) = 98;
18. 1250 – XV, eap (2 = 1, 1/2 = 10, 1 = 77 [3 subs], odd = 3) = 91; [f³⁵ ± 2]
19. 1247 – XV, eap (2 = 1, 1/2 = 10, 1 = 81 [3 subs], odd = 3) = 95; [f³⁵ ± 2]
20. 1876 – XV, apr (2 = 1, 1/2 = 11, 1 = 83 [3 subs], odd = 3) = 98; [f³⁵ ± 2]
21. 1249 – 1324, ap (2 = 1, 1/2 = 10, 1 = 84 [3 subs], odd = 2) = 97; [f³⁵ ± 1]
22. 1248 – XIV, eap (2 = 1, 1/2 = 11, 1 = 84 [3 subs], sing = 1, odd = 1) = 98; [f³⁵ ± 1]
23. 2501 – XVI, ap (2 = 1, 1/2 = 11, 1 = 83 [5 subs], odd = 1) = 96; [f³⁵ ± 4]
24. 2085 – 1308, ap (2 = 0, 1/2 = 11, 1 = 84 [3 subs], sing = 1, odd = 2) = 98;
25. 1244 – XI, ap (2 = 0, 1/2 = 10, 1 = 85 [3 subs], odd = 2) = 97;

¹ I consider a high ‘erraticity’ quotient to be a defining feature of ‘Alexandrishness’.

² *TuT* includes two 6th century uncial fragments: 0285 has one reading (of the 98) and 0296 has two. Such a scant basis only allows us to guess that they are not Byzantine.

³ Of course Aleph is presently located in London, but it became extant in Sinai; to this day the monks at St. Catharine’s refer to Tischendorf as ‘the thief’.

⁴ ‘subs’ stands for sub-variants, which are included in the larger number. Where a ‘sub’ is also a singular I list it only as a singular—each variant is counted only once.

26. 2799 – XIV, ap (2 = 0, 1/2 = 3, 1 = 28 [2 subs], sing = 1, odd = 1) = 33.¹

Absolutely no two MSS are identical; even the six **f³⁵** MSS all differ by at least one variant. The rest of the Byzantine MSS are all distinct, some really so,² yet all clearly fall within the Byzantine tradition.³ These 26 MSS represent as many exemplars; there was no ‘inbreeding’, no stuffing the ballot box; each copyist tried to reproduce what was in front of him, regardless of the type of text. Since the MSS were still there in 1800, they were not made to fill an order from elsewhere. Given its isolation, some of the ancestors of the 26 extant MSS may well have been brought to the monastery before the Islamic conquest.

The profiles of the first five MSS in the above list are **very** different, distinct from each other; none is a copy of **℣**, which I find to be curious. Evidently **℣** was not copied—why?⁴

Megistis Lavras

Well, ok, but what about M Lavras? Isn’t the disproportionate percentage of **f³⁵** MSS suspicious? To find out we must do for M Lavras what we did for Sinai, which will be twice as much work (52 X 26). Again, I will list the MSS in a descending order of ‘Alexandrishness’, with the proviso that such an ordering is only relevant for the first nine or ten:

1. 1739 – X, ap (2 = 66 [4 subs], 1/2 = 7, 1 = 12 [2 subs], odd = 13) = 98;
2. 044 – VIII, ap (2 = 52 [1 sub], 1/2 = 7, 1 = 20, sing = 7, odd = 11) = 97;
3. 1735 – XI, ap (2 = 43 [2 subs], 1/2 = 7 [1 sub], 1 = 35 [2 subs], sing = 1, odd = 12) = 98;
4. 1505 – XII, eap (2 = 41 [3 subs], 1/2 = 4, 1 = 35 [3 subs], odd = 18) = 98;
5. 1448 – XI, eap (2 = 23, 1/2 = 7 [1 sub], 1 = 58 [2 subs], sing = 1, odd = 8) = 97;
6. 1490 – XII, eap (2 = 13, 1/2 = 7 [1 sub], 1 = 69 [4 subs], odd = 9) = 98;
7. 1751 – 1479, ap (2 = 7 [1 sub], 1/2 = 11 [1 sub], 1 = 69 [3 subs], sing = 5, odd = 6) = 98;
8. 1501 – XIII, eap (2 = 8 [1 sub], 1/2 = 8, 1 = 73 [1 sub], sing = 1, odd = 8) = 98;
9. 1661 – XV, eap (2 = 6, 1/2 = 9 [1 sub], 1 = 73 [5 subs], sing = 3, odd = 7) = 98;

From here on down all the MSS fall within the Byzantine stream.

10. 1609 – XIV, eap (2 = 9 [1 sub], 1/2 = 9, 1 = 76 [4 subs], odd = 3) = 97;
11. 1646 – 1172, eap (2 = 3, 1/2 = 10, 1 = 77 [6 subs], sing = 5, odd = 3) = 98;
12. 1509 – XIII, eap (2 = 3, 1/2 = 9, 1 = 77 [5 subs], sing = 3, odd = 5) = 97;
13. 1744 – XIV, ap (2 = 2, 1/2 = 8, 1 = 81 [2 subs], sing = 2, odd = 5) = 98;
14. 1643 – XIV, eap (2 = 3, 1/2 = 7, 1 = 82 [3 subs], odd = 6) = 98;

¹ The last three MSS have very different profiles.

² Notice that no MS scores a perfect 87 for LESART 1, and only four score a perfect 11 for LESART 1/2.

³ Remember that we are only looking at 98 variant sets—if we had complete collations for the seven books it is almost certain that no two MSS would be identical (from all sources); perhaps for a single book, the smaller the better, a few might be found. [I wrote the above in 2004, when I was just beginning to really pay attention to **f³⁵**—in fact, within that family, considering only the MSS that I myself have collated, we can say the following: I have in my possession copies of thirty identical MSS for both 2 and 3 John (not identical lists), twenty-nine for Philemon, twenty-two for Jude, fifteen for 2 Thessalonians, nine for Titus, six each for Galatians, Colossians and 1 Thessalonians, five each for Philippians and 2 Peter, four each for Ephesians, James and 1 John, three each for 2 Timothy and 1 Peter, and two each for Romans and 1 Timothy. It is not the same selection of MSS in each case, and they come from all over.] Apart from **f³⁵** I would still be surprised to find identical copies of any book with over 3 chapters.

⁴ But over ten people did try to correct it, down through the centuries, so they knew it was there. 1243 and 1241 are almost as bad, and they were produced in the 11th and 12th centuries, respectively.

15. 1626 – XV, eapr ($2 = 2$, $1/2 = 9$, $1 = 81$ [6 subs], sing = 1, odd = 5) = 98;
16. 1743 – XII, ap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 7$ [1 sub], $1 = 83$ [2 subs], odd = 7) = 98;
17. 1622 – XIV, eap ($2 = 4$, $1/2 = 10$, $1 = 81$ [4 subs], odd = 3) = 98;
18. 2194 – 1118, ap ($2 = 2$, $1/2 = 8$, $1 = 83$ [2 subs], odd = 5) = 98;
19. 1495 – XIV, eap ($2 = 4$, $1/2 = 10$, $1 = 82$ [5 subs], odd = 2) = 98;
20. 1642 – 1278, eap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 10$, $1 = 82$ [6 subs], sing = 1, odd = 3) = 97;
21. 1738 – XI, ap ($2 = 2$, $1/2 = 10$, $1 = 82$ [8 subs], odd = 3) = 97;
22. 1649 – XV, eap ($2 = 2$, $1/2 = 9$, $1 = 84$ [5 subs], odd = 3) = 98;
23. 1734 – 1015, apr ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 9$, $1 = 82$ [1 sub], odd = 4) = 96;
24. 049 – IX, ap ($2 = 1$ [1 sub], $1/2 = 9$, $1 = 84$ [4 subs], odd = 3) = 97;
25. 1741 – XIV, ap ($2 = 0$, $1/2 = 7$ [1 sub], $1 = 87$ [4 subs], odd = 4) = 98;
26. 1456 – XIII, eap ($2 = 0$, $1/2 = 8$ [1 sub], $1 = 69$ [2 subs], odd = 4) = 81;
27. 1747 – XIV, ap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 9$, $1 = 84$ [6 subs], odd = 2) = 96;
28. 1736 – XIII, ap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 10$, $1 = 83$ [4 subs], odd = 2) = 96;
29. 2511 – XIV, eap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 10$ [1 sub], $1 = 76$ [1 sub], odd = 2) = 89;
30. 1750 – XV, ap ($2 = 0$, $1/2 = 9$, $1 = 87$ [3 subs], odd = 2) = 98;
31. 1733 – XIV, apr ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 83$ [3 subs], odd = 3) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 2]$ (16, 91)
32. 1732 – 1384, apr ($2 = 2$, $1/2 = 11$ [1 sub], $1 = 83$ [3 subs], odd = 1) = 97; $[f^{35} \pm 2]$ (1, 72)
33. 1508 – XV, eap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 10$, $1 = 85$ [4 subs], odd = 2) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 2]$ (21, 65)
34. 1482 – 1304, eap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 10$, $1 = 85$ [2 subs], odd = 2) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 2]$ (45, 65)
35. 1656 – XV, eap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 84$ [2 subs], odd = 2) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 2]$ (8, 45)
36. 1748 – 1662, ap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [4 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 2]$ (32, 62)
37. 1737 – XII, ap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [3 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 2]$ (32, 77)
38. 1749 – XVI, ap ($2 = 2$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 78$ [3 subs], odd = 1) = 92; $[f^{35} \pm 1]$ (29)
39. 1637 – 1328, eapr ($2 = 2$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 84$ [3 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 1]$ (17)
40. 1740 – XIII, apr ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [4 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 1]$ (39)
41. 1617 – XV, eapr ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [4 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 1]$ (21)
42. 1618 – 1568, eap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [2 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 1]$ (32)
43. 1072 – XIII, eapr ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [3 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 0]$
44. 1075 – XIV, eapr ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [3 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 0]$
45. 1503 – 1317, eapr ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [3 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 0]$
46. 1619 – XIV, ea(p) ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [3 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 0]$
47. 1628 – 1400, eap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [3 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 0]$
48. 1636 – XV, eap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [3 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 0]$
49. 1745 – XV, apr ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [3 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 0]$
50. 1746 – XIV, apr ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [3 subs], odd = 1) = 98; $[f^{35} \pm 0]$
51. 1652 – XVI, eap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 3$, $1 = 21$) = 25; $[f^{35} \text{ frag}]$
52. 1742 – XIII, ap ($2 = 1$, $1/2 = 11$, $1 = 85$ [3 subs]) = 97; $[f^{35} \pm 5]$

Again, setting aside the f^{35} MSS for the moment, absolutely no two MSS are identical. The rest of the Byzantine MSS are all distinct, some really so, yet all clearly fall within the

Byzantine tradition. These 30 MSS represent as many exemplars; there was no ‘inbreeding’, no stuffing the ballot box; each copyist tried to reproduce what was in front of him, regardless of the quality of text. Since the MSS were still there in 1800, they were not made to fill an order from elsewhere.

Also, where did the monasteries get the parchment for their ongoing production of MSS? Did they have money to go out and buy from tanneries? It seems to me more probable that they made their own from the skins of the sheep and goats that they ate. In such an event it could easily take several years to get enough for a single New Testament. The problem of finding enough parchment mitigates against the mass production of copies at any time in the vellum era. Three of the dated MSS at Sinai are eight years apart (1308, 1316, 1324)—might it have taken that long to gather enough vellum?

Now let’s consider the f^{35} group. Seven are $f^{35} \pm 2$, but no two of them have an identical profile—I have put the deviant variants within () at the end of the line, so the reader can check that at a glance. Five are $f^{35} \pm 1$, but no two of them have an identical profile either, as the reader can see at a glance. So these twelve MSS must also have been copied from as many exemplars—we now have 44 MSS that were copied from distinct exemplars. Ah, but there are eight MSS with a perfect f^{35} profile; what of them? Well, let’s start with the contents: three contain **eapr**, three contain **eap**, two contain **apr**—at the very least, these three groups must represent distinct exemplars. So now we are down to a maximum of five MSS that might not represent a distinct exemplar. Setting aside preconceived ideas, what objective basis could anyone have for affirming that these five were not copied on the same principle as the rest, namely to preserve the text of the exemplar? It seems to me only fair to understand that the 52 extant MSS at M Lavras represent as many distinct exemplars.¹

An f^{35} (K^r) Recension?

Since f^{35} is the only group of consequence, with a significant number of MSS, with an empirically defined profile, we can determine its archetypal text with certainty—we have the most cohesive of all text-types. But is it a ‘recension’? Von Soden claimed that it was, assigning it to the 12th century; I am not aware that he named a source, but if he did he was wrong. Minuscule 35, along with other 11th century MSS, belongs to this group—their exemplars were presumably 10th century or earlier. I have demonstrated elsewhere² that f^{35} (K^r) is independent of K^x , throughout the NT—if it is independent it cannot have been based upon K^x . Repeatedly f^{35} has overt early attestation, against K^x , but there is no pattern to the alignments, they are haphazard. It is supported (against K^x) by $P^{45,46,47,66,75}$, \aleph A,B,C,D,W, lat,syr,cop—sometimes just by one, sometimes by two, three, four or more of them, but in constantly shifting patterns. If there is no pattern then there is no dependency; f^{35} has ancient readings because it itself is ancient.

Returning to *TuT* and the Catholic Epistles, I will list the present location of f^{35} MSS by century:

¹ I remind the reader again that we are only looking at 98 variant sets—if we had complete collations for the seven books it is almost certain that no two MSS would be identical (for the seven books; I have identical copies for a single book). With full collations these five will doubtless prove to be distinct as well. [Having now collated 43 Family 35 MSS for the seven general epistles, I have two that are perfect for all seven books, and four of the exemplars may have been so—they come from different locales.]

² See “The Dating of K^r (alias f^{35} , nee f^{18}) Revisited”, above. (See also “Concerning the Text of the *Pericope Adulterae*” in Part II.)

- XI—Paris, Trikala, Vatican;
 XII—Athos (Kutlumusiu, M Lavras, Panteleimonos, Stavronikita, Vatopediu), Jerusalem;
 XIII—Athens, Athos (Ivion, Konstamonitu, M Lavras, Pantokratoros, Philotheu), Bologna, Kalavryta, Leiden, Vatican;
 XIV—Athens, Athos (Dionysiu, Esphigmenu, Ivion, Karakally, Kavsokalyvion, M Lavras, Vatopediu), Grottaferrata, Jerusalem, Karditsa, London, Ochrida, Paris, Patmos, Rome, Sinai, Vatican;
 XV—Athens, Athos (Ivion, M Lavras), Bucharest, London, Meteora, Sinai, Sparta, Vatican, Venedig, Zittau;
 XVI—Athens, Athos (Ivion, Kuthumusiu, M Lavras), Lesbos, Sinai;
 XVII—Athos (Dionysiu, M Lavras).

Manuscripts at Vatican, Grottaferrata, Jerusalem, Patmos, Sinai, Athos, Trikala, Meteora, Lesbos, at least, are most probably based on a line of ancestors held locally; any importing of exemplars probably took place in the early centuries. If there are \mathfrak{f}^{35} MSS in those places today, it is presumably because there have been \mathfrak{f}^{35} MSS there from the beginning.

I reject as totally unfounded the allegation that \mathfrak{f}^{35} is a recension. If anyone wishes to claim that it is, I request that they state who did it, when and where, and that they furnish evidence in support of the claim. Without evidence any such claim is frivolous and irresponsible.

Down with Canards!¹

Once upon a time, a certain senior professor of Greek, at a certain Theological Seminary, sent me a personal communication affirming: "I hold with virtually all others that K^r/M^7 are indeed late texts that reflect recensional activity beginning generally in the 12th century (perhaps with 11th century base exemplars, but nothing earlier)." And rather recently (April, 2013) a different Greek professor sent me another personal communication: "all of this based upon the K^r strand, of all things? TC's who worked on this strand before all said it was the oldest [*sic*, presumably he meant 'latest'], but now you say it represents the autograph perfectly? Are there K^r MSS which pre-date the 10-11th century?" (Both the men quoted above hold a PhD in New Testament textual criticism, and one would like to think that they had checked the evidence.)

Consider the following statement by Kirsopp Lake:

Writers on the text of the New Testament usually copy from one another the statement that Chrysostom used the Byzantine, or Antiochian, text. But directly any investigation is made it appears evident, even from the printed text of his works, that there are many important variations in the text he quotes, which was evidently not identical with that found in the MSS of the Byzantine text.²

Having myself spent an occasional year in the arcane halls of academia, I have observed that the uncritical repetition of things that 'everyone knows' is really rather common, in almost

¹ Dictionaries offer a variety of definitions for 'canard', but they all agree that it is false information, and imply that it was created with malicious intent. Of course those who repeat the canard may do so without malice, albeit they do so without checking the evidence.

² Kirsopp Lake, *The Text of the New Testament*, sixth edition revised by Silva New (London: Rivingtons, 1959), p. 53.

any discipline. New Testament textual criticism is no exception, as Lake observed above.

I take it that Hermann von Soden was the first to formally identify his **K^r** as a distinct text-type, the 'r' standing for 'revision', since he considered it to be a revision based on his **K^x**. Well now, by definition a 'revision' is perpetrated by a specific someone, at a specific time and in a specific place. Within our discipline I gather that 'revision' and 'recension' are synonyms. Consider: "The Syrian text must in fact be the result of a 'recension' in the proper sense of the word, a work of attempted criticism, performed deliberately by editors and not merely by scribes."¹ It is not my wont to appeal to Fenton John Anthony Hort, but his understanding of 'recension' is presumably correct. A recension is produced by a certain somebody (or group) at a certain time in a certain place. If someone wishes to posit or allege a recension/revision, and do so responsibly, he needs to indicate the source and supply some evidence.²

So, upon what basis did von Soden claim that his **K^r** (that I call Family 35) was a revision of his **K^x**, and created in the 12th century? Had he really paid attention to the evidence available in his own *magnum opus*, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments* (4 vols.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1911-1913), he could not have done so, at least not honestly. But was he honest? At least with reference to John 7:53 - 8:11 (the P.A.), I think not. He claimed to have collated some 900 MSS for that pericope, and on that basis posited seven families, or lines of transmission, and even reproduced an alleged archetypal form for each one. Hodges and Farstad took his word for it and reflected his statement of the evidence in their critical apparatus; and I reflect the H-F apparatus in mine (for that pericope) for lack of anything better (except that I guarantee the witness of **M⁷** [my Family 35], based on my personal examination of Robinson's collations; see below). However, some years ago now, Maurice Robinson did a complete collation of 1,389 MSS that contain the P.A.,³ and I had William Pierpont's photocopy of those collations in my possession for two months, spending most of that time studying those collations. As I did so, it became obvious to me that von Soden 'regularized' the data, arbitrarily 'creating' the alleged archetypal form for his first four families, **M^{1,2,3,4}**—if they exist at all, they are rather fluid. His **M^{5&6}** do exist, having distinct profiles, but they are a bit 'squishy', with enough internal confusion to make the choice of the archetypal form to be arbitrary. In contrast to the above, his **M⁷** (that I call Family 35) has a solid, unambiguous profile—the archetypal form is demonstrable, empirically determined.

Once upon a time I was led to believe that von Soden's work was reasonably reliable. This was important because his work is basic to both the Hodges-Farstad and Robinson-Pierpont editions of the Majority Text. However, the *Text und Textwert (TuT)*⁴ collations demonstrate

¹ B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (2 vols.; London: Macmillan and Co., 1881), *Introduction*, p. 133.

² Hort did suggest Lucian of Antioch as the prime mover—a suggestion both gratuitous and frivolous, since he had not really looked at the evidence available at that time. (Were he to repeat the suggestion today, it would be patently ridiculous.)

³ 240 MSS omit the PA, 64 of which are based on Theophylact's commentary. Fourteen others have lacunae, but are not witnesses for total omission. A few others certainly contain the passage but the microfilm is illegible. So, 1389 + 240 + 14 + 7(?) = about 1650 MSS checked by Robinson. That does not include Lectionaries, of which he also checked a fair number. (These are microfilms held by the *Institut* in Münster. We now know that there are many more extant MSS, and probably even more that are not yet 'extant'.) Unfortunately, so far as I know, Robinson has yet to publish his collations, thus making them available to the public at large.

⁴ *Text und Textwert der Griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments* (Ed. Kurt Aland, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter).

objectively that not infrequently von Soden is seriously off the mark. With reference to von Soden's treatment of codex 223 K.W. Clark wrote, "Furthermore, our collation has revealed sixty-two errors in 229 readings treated by von Soden".¹ 27% in error (62 ÷ 229) is altogether too much, and what is true of MS 223 may be true of other MSS as well. Please stop and think about that for a minute. 27% in error cannot be attributed to mere carelessness, or even sloppiness; mere carelessness should not exceed 5%. It really does look like the reader is being misled, deliberately, and that is dishonest. H.C. Hoskier was not entirely mistaken in his evaluation.

Furthermore, how could **K^r** be a revision of **K^x** if **K^x** does not even exist? Soden himself was perfectly well aware that there is no **K^x** in the P.A. H.C. Hoskier's collations prove that there certainly is no **K^x** in the Apocalypse. We are indebted to the *Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung* for their *Text und Textwert* series. A careful look at their collations indicates that there probably is no **K^x**, anywhere. Take, for example, the *TuT* volumes on John's Gospel, chapters 1-10. They examined a total of 1,763 MSS (for 153 variant sets) and included the results in the two volumes. Pages 54 - 90 (volume 1) contain "Groupings according to degrees of agreement" "agreeing more often with each other than with the majority text". Only one group symbol is used, precisely **K^r**—the first representative of the family, MS 18, heads a group of about 120 MSS, but all subsequent representatives have only a **K^r**. Of the 120, the last six show 98%, all the rest are 99% (74) or 100% (40). I would say that Family 35 in the Gospels has over 250 representatives; the ranking here is based on only 153 variant sets (but see what happens below).

The group headed by MS 18 numbers 120, and is the only one that receives a group symbol, being by far the largest. But are there any other groups of significant size? I will now list them in descending order, starting with those that have 40 or more:

<u>group</u>	<u>size</u>	<u>coherence</u>
2103	52	95% (15); 97% (20); 98% (13); 100% (4)
318	44	96% (1); 97% (24); 98% (6); 99% (10); 100% (4)
961	42	97% (1); 98% (4); 99% (34); 100% (3)
1576	42	97% (1); 98% (4); 99% (34); 100% (3)
1247	41	97% (1); 98% (4); 99% (33); 100% (3)
2692	41	97% (1); 98% (4); 99% (33); 100% (3)
1058	40	97% (1); 98% (17); 99% (15); 100% (7)
1328	40	98% (6); 99% (33); 100% (1)
1618	40	100% (all)
2714	40	98% (6); 99% (33); 100% (1)

Now then, 961, 1576, 1247, 2692, 1328, 1618 and 2714 all belong to Family 35 (**K^r**), which leaves only 2103, 318 and 1058. As we look at the 'coherence' column we note that 961, 1576, 1247 and 2692 are the same, and upon inspection we verify that the lists of MSS are virtually identical—so we may add 40 MSS to the 120 already designated **K^r**. 1618 and 2714 have heavy overlap, and 1328 partial overlap, so we may add at least another 20. Now let's look at the three that remain: 2103, 318 and 1058. Remembering that the threshold for **K^r**

¹ *Eight American Praxapostoloi* (Kenneth W. Clark, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1941), p. 12.

was 98%, we note that over half of the 2103 and 318 groups fall below it, so those groups are not solid. 1058 fares better, but almost half fall below 99% (all the **f³⁵** groups are heavily 99% or 100%). It may be relevant to observe that MS 1058 is probably fringe **f³⁵**. So where is **K^x**?

I will now list the groups between 25 and 39, in descending order:

<u>group</u>	<u>size</u>	<u>coherence</u>
1638	37	97% (2); 98% (2); 99% (29); 100% (4)
710	34	94% (18); 95% (1); 96% (13); 98% (2)
763	34	97% (1); 99% (33)
1621	32	98% (1); 99% (24); 100% (7)
1224	29	97% (1); 99% (28)
66	28	98% (1); 99% (26); 100% (1)
394	27	99% (all)
1551	26	99% (all)
1657	26	99% (all)
2249	26	99% (all)
685	25	99% (all)
1158	25	99% (all)

Guess what: they are all Family 35 except for 710; a glance at the coherence gives the clue. If 710 is really a group at all, it is rather 'squishy'. The last six lists are all but identical, and there is considerable overlap among the others. Even so, a few more MSS can probably be added to the Family 35 list, and an examination of the remaining 300+/- groups (depending on where the cutoff point is placed) will doubtless add even more. And so on. So where is **K^x**? Gentle reader, allow me to whisper in your ear: There is no **K^x**, it only existed in von Soden's imagination. Obviously **K^r** cannot be a revision of something that never existed.¹

And then there is the matter of demonstrated independence. By definition a revision/recension is dependent upon its source. If there is no demonstrable source anywhere in the extant/available materials (which for the NT are really rather considerable), then it is dishonest, irresponsible and reprehensible to allege a revision/recension. I will here reproduce three relevant paragraphs from Part II.

It will be observed that I have furnished examples from the Gospels (Luke, John), Acts, Paul (Romans, 2 Corinthians), and the General Epistles (James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 3 John), with emphasis on Luke, Acts and James.² Throughout the New Testament **K^r** is independent and ancient. Dating to the III century, it is just as old as any other text-type.

However, although **f³⁵** has been demonstrated to be independent of **K^x** (Byzantine bulk), they are really very close and must have a common source. (I would say that **K^x** represents a departure from **f³⁵**, that **f³⁵** is therefore older.) In the General Epistles **f³⁵** does not differ from the H-F Majority Text all that much. For instance, in James **f³⁵** differs

¹ See also the next section, "Archetype in the General Epistles—**f³⁵** yes, **K^x** no".

² I also have a page or more of examples from Revelation that confirm that **f³⁵** (**M^s/K^r**) is independent and III century in that book as well.

from H-F nineteen times, only two of which affect the meaning (not seriously). If **f³⁵** and **K^x** have a common source, but **f³⁵** is independent of **K^x**, then **f³⁵** must be at least as old as **K^x**—Q.E.D. [*quod erat demonstrandum*, for those who read Latin; “which was to be proved”, for the rest of us; and in yet plainer English, “the point to be proved has been proved”].

Further, if **f³⁵** is independent of all other known lines of transmission, then it must hark back to the Autographs. If it was created out of existing materials at some point down the line, then it is dependent on those materials and it should be possible to demonstrate that dependence. So far as I know, no such dependence has been demonstrated, and to the extent that I have analyzed the evidence, it cannot be demonstrated.

And then there is the matter of demonstrated antiquity. The crucial point here is the lack of pattern; without pattern there is no dependency. I invite attention to the following four paragraphs, that make up a single quote, also reproduced from Part II.

Each of these nine uncials is plainly independent of all the others. The total lack of pattern in the attestation that these early uncials give to **f³⁵** shows just as plainly that **f³⁵** is independent of them all as well, quite apart from the 40% without them. But that 60% of the units receive early uncial support, without pattern or dependency, shows that the **f³⁵ text** is early.

I invite special attention to the first block, where a single uncial sides with **f³⁵**; each of the seven uncials is independent of the rest (and of **f³⁵**) at this point, of necessity, yet together they attest 23.9% of the total (113 ÷ 473). Since there is no pattern or dependency for this 24%, how shall we account for these 113 early readings in **f³⁵**?¹ Will anyone argue that whoever ‘concocted’ the first **f³⁵** MS had all these uncials in front of him, arbitrarily taking 8 readings from P⁷², 2 from P¹⁰⁰, 37 from **ⲗ**, etc., etc., etc.? Really now, how shall we account for these 113 early readings in **f³⁵**? [I invite the reader to stop and think about this: the imagined ‘argument’ is manifestly impossible, stupidly impossible—**f³⁵** could not have been ‘concocted’.]

Going on to the next block, we have another 85 readings where there is no pattern or dependency; 113 + 85 = 198 = 41.9%. Really now, how shall we account for these 198 early readings in **f³⁵**? Going on to the next block, we have another 63 readings where there is no pattern or dependency; 198 + 63 = 261 = 55.2%. Really now, how shall we account for these 261 early readings in **f³⁵**? And so on.

To allege a dependency in the face of this EVIDENCE I consider to be dishonest. **f³⁵** is clearly independent of all these lines of transmission, themselves independent. If **f³⁵** is independent then it is early, of necessity. **f³⁵** has all those early readings for the sufficient reason that its **text** is early, dating to the 3rd century, at least. But if **f³⁵** is independent of all other lines of transmission (it is demonstrably independent of **K^x**, etc.) then it must hark back to the Autographs. What other reasonable explanation is there?

So why don't we have **f³⁵** MSS from before the 11th century? Well, why do you suppose that with few exceptions only **f³⁵** MSS have the Lections marked in the margin? Could it be because the Greek speaking communities used them in their worship services and for reading

¹ Should anyone demure that the 5th century MSS included really are not all that early, I inquire: are they copies, or original creations? If they are copies their exemplars were obviously earlier—all of these 113 readings doubtless existed in the 3rd century.

at communal meals? And what effect does constant use have on any book? I suggest, for the calm, cool and collected consideration of all concerned, that any worthy MSS would be in constant use, and therefore could not survive for centuries. Copies that were considered to be of unacceptably poor quality would be left on the shelf to collect dust, and they are the ones that survived.

However that may be, I invite attention to the following list of **f³⁵** MSS from the 11th century:

<u>MS</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Content</u>	
35	Aegean	eapr	
83	Munich	e	
(125)	Wien	e	
(476)	London	e	(f³⁵ in John)
(516)	Oxford	e	
547	Karakallu	eap	
(585)	Modena	e	
746	Paris	e	
(1164)	Patmos	e	
1384	Andros	eapr	
1435	Vatopediu	e	
(1483)	M Lavras	e	
(1841)	Lesbos	apr	(IX/X—may be f³⁵ in Paul)
1897	Jerusalem	ap	(I have done a complete collation, and it looks just as old)
2253	Tirana	e	(Introductory material indicates an 11 th century date)
2587	Vatican	ap	
2723	Trikala	apr	
(2817)	Basel	p	

The MSS within () appear to be marginal members of the family, or are mixed. To begin, we note that there are 18 MSS listed, and each in a distinct location (of course, some of those presently in western Europe may have been acquired from the same monastery). Further, since they are internally distinct, they represent as many exemplars. Since exemplars must exist before any copies made from them, of necessity, and since many/most/(all?) of those exemplars must also have been based on distinct exemplars in their turn, even if someone were to allege a recension, it could not have been perpetrated later than the 8th century—simply impossible. Surely, because one must account for the geographical distribution.

Did someone concoct the **f³⁵** archetype in the 8th century? Who? Why? And how could it spread around the Mediterranean world? There are **f³⁵** MSS all over the place—Jerusalem, Sinai, Athens, Constantinople, Trikala, Kalavryta, Ochrida, Patmos, Karditsa, Rome, Sparta, Meteora, Venedig, Lesbos, and most monasteries on Mt. Athos (that represented different ‘denominations’), etc. [If there were six monasteries on Cyprus—one Anglican, one Assembly

of God, one Baptist, one Church of Christ, one Methodist and one Presbyterian—to what extent would they compare notes? Has human nature changed?] But the Byzantine bulk (K^x) controlled at least 60% of the transmissional stream (f³⁵ = a. 18%); how could something concocted in the 8th century spread so far, so fast, and in such purity? How did it inspire such loyalty? Everything that we know about the history of the transmission of the Text answers that it couldn't and didn't. It is simply impossible that f³⁵ could have been 'concocted' at any point subsequent to the 4th century. The loyalty with which f³⁵ was copied, the level of loyalty for f³⁵ being much higher than that for any other line of transmission, indicates that it was never 'concocted'—it goes back to the Original.¹

And then there is the silence of history. Although I have already touched on this, it deserves specific attention. Allow me to borrow from my treatment of the 'Lucianic Recension'.² John William Burgon gave the sufficient answer to that invention.

Apart however from the gross intrinsic improbability of the supposed Recension,—the utter absence of one particle of evidence, traditional or otherwise, that it ever did take place, must be held to be fatal to the hypothesis that it *did*. It is simply incredible that an incident of such magnitude and interest would leave no trace of itself in history.³

It will not do for someone to say that the argument from silence proves nothing. In a matter of this 'magnitude and interest' it is conclusive. Sir Frederick G. Kenyon, also, found this part of Hort's theory to be gratuitous.

The absence of evidence points the other way; for it would be very strange, if Lucian had really edited both Testaments, that only his work on the Old Testament should be mentioned in after times. **The same argument tells against any theory of a deliberate revision at any definite moment** [emphasis added]. We know the names of several revisers of the Septuagint and the Vulgate, and it would be strange if historians and Church writers had all omitted to record or mention such an event as the deliberate revision of the New Testament in its original Greek.⁴

Come now, is there anything mysterious about what Burgon and Kenyon stated? Is it not obvious? Please stop and think about it for a minute. The silence of history 'must be held to be fatal to the hypothesis'. Selah.

And then there is the matter of 'supply and demand'. Those who catalog NT MSS inform us that the 12th and 13th centuries lead the pack, in terms of extant MSS, followed by the 14th, 11th, 15th, 16th and 10th, in that order. There are over four times as many MSS from the 13th as from the 10th, but obviously Koine Greek would have been more of a living language in the 10th than the 13th, and so there would have been more demand and therefore more supply.

¹ I have in mind an article that will take up the question of 'level of loyalty' and the 'quality quotient', comparing various lines of transmission on that basis. For example, why is it that an average f³⁵ MS will have only one variant for every two pages of printed Greek text, while an average Byzantine bulk MS will have at least three variants per page, and an average Alexandrian MS will have over fifteen per page? Does that suggest anything about attitude, about taking one's work seriously? By 'attitude' I mean specifically toward the exemplar being copied—was it an object of respect or reverence?

² *The Identity of the New Testament Text IV*, p. 84.

³ J.W. Burgon, *The Revision Revised* (London: John Murray, 1883), p. 293.

⁴ F.G. Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), pp. 324-25. Whereas Burgon was a staunch defender of the Traditional Text of the NT, Kenyon most certainly was not, being an advocate of the so-called 'critical text'.

In other words, many hundreds of really pure MSS from the 10th perished. A higher percentage of the really good MSS produced in the 14th century survived than those produced in the 11th; and so on. That is why there is a progressive level of agreement among the Byzantine MSS, there being a higher percentage of agreement in the 14th than in the 10th. But had we lived in the 10th, and done a wide survey of the MSS, we would have found very nearly the same level of agreement (perhaps 98%). The same obtains if we had lived in the 8th, 6th, 4th or 2nd century. In other words, THE SURVIVING MSS FROM THE FIRST TEN CENTURIES ARE NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE TRUE STATE OF AFFAIRS AT THE TIME.

To conclude, I trust that the reader will not consider me to be unreasonable if I request that henceforth all informed persons cease and desist from calling Family 35 (**K'**) a revision at any time. Enough is enough! **Down with canards!**

Archetype in the General Epistles—**f³⁵** yes, **K^x** no

If you want to be a candidate for the best plumber in town, you need to be a plumber; the best lawyer, you need to be a lawyer; the best oncologist, you need to be an oncologist; and so on. Similarly, if you want to be a candidate for Autograph archetype, you need to be an archetype; a real, honest to goodness, objectively verifiable archetype. This section addresses the following question: are there any objectively identifiable archetypes in the General Epistles?

I invite attention to the following evidence taken from my critical apparatus of those books. I will take the books one at a time. The reading of **f³⁵** will always be the first one, and the complete roster defines that family's archetype.¹

James:

1:05 ουκ f³⁵ (70.3%) μη κ A,B,C (29.7%);	[no K^x] ²
1:23 νομου f³⁵ [30%] λογου κ A,B,C [69%] λογων [1%];	
1:26 αλλ f³⁵ [35%] αλλα κ A,B,C,0173 [65%];	
2:03 λαμπραν εσθητα f³⁵ [30%] εσθητα την λαμπραν κ A,B,C [70%];	
2:04 ου f³⁵ κ A,C (26.8%) και ου (72.2%) και (0.6%) --- B (0.4%);	
2:08 σεαυτον f³⁵ κ A(B)C [50%] εαυτον [50%];	[no K^x]
2:13 ανηλεος f³⁵ [20%] ανελος κ A,B,C [30%] ανιλεως [50%];	[no K^x]
2:14 λεγη τις f³⁵ κ B [70%] ~ 21 A,C [1%] λεγει τις [28%];	[no K^x]
2:14 εχει f³⁵ [46%] εχη κ A,B,C [47%] εχειν [4.5%] σχη [2.5%];	[no K^x]
3:02 δυναμενος f³⁵ κ [23%] δυνατος A,B [76.5%];	
3:03 ιδε f³⁵ [60%] ει δε [38.5%] ιδου [0.5%]; ³	[no K^x]

¹ Setting aside singular readings, over 50% of the words in the Text will have 100% attestation; 80% of the words will have over 95% attestation; 90% of the words will have over 90% attestation; only for some 2% of the words will the attestation fall below 80%. I regard **f³⁵** as the base from which all other streams of transmission departed, to one extent or another, so in general the Byzantine bulk will have stayed with **f³⁵**. It follows that the roster only includes cases where there is a serious split in the Byzantine bulk, or where **f³⁵** is alone (or almost so) against that bulk.

² For the purposes of this section I use **K^x** to represent the Byzantine bulk.

³ Since **f³⁵** (**K'**) is distinct from **K^x**, its 20% must be subtracted from the 60%, leaving an even split in **K^x**.

3:04 ανεμων σκληρων f ³⁵ κB,C [44%] ~ 21 A [56%];	[no K ^x]
3:04 ιθυνοντος f ³⁵ [21%] ευθυνοντος κA,B,C [79%];	
3:18 δε f ³⁵ A,B,C [56.6%] δε της [42%] δε ο κ [0.4%] --- [1%];	[no K ^x]
4:02 ουκ εχετε f ³⁵ P ¹⁰⁰ A,B [64%] και 12 κ [35%] 12 δε [1%];	[no K ^x]
4:04 ουν f ³⁵ κA,B [58%] --- [42%];	[no K ^x]
4:07 αντιστητε f ³⁵ [47.5%] 1 δε κA,B [50%] 1 ουν [2.5%];	[no K ^x]
4:11 γαρ f ³⁵ [26%] --- κA,B [74%];	
4:12 και κριτης f ³⁵ κA,B [62%] --- [38%];	[no K ^x]
4:14 ημων f ³⁵ [26%] υμων (P ¹⁰⁰)κA(B) [74%];	
4:14 εστιν f ³⁵ [52%] εσται (A) [41%] εστε B [7%] --- κ;	[no K ^x]
4:14 επειτα f ³⁵ [29.5%] 1 δε και [46%] 1 δε [15%] 1 και κA,B [9.5%];	[no K ^x]
5:07 αν f ³⁵ κ [53%] --- A,B,048 [45.5%] ου [1.5%];	[no K ^x]
5:10 αδελφοι f ³⁵ (A)B [35%] αδελφοι μου (κ) [62%] --- [3%];	
5:10 εν τω f ³⁵ B [40%] τω A [58%] εν κ [0.6%] επι τω [1.4%];	
5:11 ειδετε f ³⁵ κB [53%] ιδετε A [45%];	[no K ^x]
5:11 πολυσπλαγγχος f ³⁵ κA,B [65%] πολυεσπλαγγχος [35%];	[no K ^x]
5:19 αδελφοι f ³⁵ [72%] αδελφοι μου κA,B,048 [28%].	[no K ^x]

The archetypal profile of f³⁵ in James is defined by the 28 readings above. It is clear and unambiguous, so we have at least one objectively defined archetype in James. In contrast, there are 14 + ?4 variant sets where K^x is seriously divided, placing an objectively defined archetype beyond our present reach.¹ (I did not include a number of lesser splits—25%, 20%, 15%—that conceivably could complicate any attempt to come up with an archetype for K^x.) As Colwell observed for Mark’s Gospel, there is no objectively definable ‘Alexandrian’ archetype;² the same applies to any ‘Western’ archetype, unless we follow the Alands and take a single MS as such, their “D text” (which only includes the Gospels and Acts, however, so there would be no ‘D text’ for Romans - Revelation).³ Let’s go on to 1 Peter.

1 Peter:

1:03 ελεος αυτου f ³⁵ P ⁷² [38%] ~ 21 κA,B,C [60%] 1 [2%];	[no K ^x]
1:07 δοξαν και τιμην f ³⁵ P ⁷² κA,B,C [35%] ~ 321 [28%] ~ 32 εις 1 [37%];	[no K ^x]
1:16 γινεσθε f ³⁵ [52%] γινεσθε [36%] εσεσθε P ⁷² κA,B,C [12%];	[no K ^x]
1:23 αλλ f ³⁵ C [40%] αλλα P ⁷² κA,B [60%];	
2:02 εις σωτηριαν f ³⁵ (P ⁷²) κA,B,C [65%] --- [35%];	[no K ^x]

¹ If all the MSS are ever collated, some smaller groups (in the 5% - 10% range) with an objectively defined archetype may emerge, but I very much doubt that there will be a majority of the MSS with a single archetype; as in the Apocalypse, where there simply is no K^x (but there is indeed an objectively defined f³⁵ [K^x]).

² E.C. Colwell, “The Significance of Grouping of New testament Manuscripts”, *New Testament studies*, IV (1957-1958), 86-87. What he actually said was: “These results show convincingly that any attempt to reconstruct an archetype of the Beta Text-type [Alexandrian] 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.” [Amen!]

³ K. and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), pp. 55, 64. They speak of “the phantom ‘Western text’”.

2:03	χρηστος f ³⁵ xA,B,C [48%] χρυστος P ⁷² [52%];	[no K ^x]
2:06	η f ³⁵ C [35%] εν τη [59%] εν P ⁷² xA,B [6%];	?[no K ^x]
2:11	απεχεσθαι f ³⁵ xB [65%] απεχεσθε P ⁷² A,C [35%];	[no K ^x]
2:12	καταλαλουσιν f ³⁵ P ⁷² xA,B,C [52%] καταλαλωσιν [48%];	[no K ^x]
2:14	μειν f ³⁵ C [52%] --- P ⁷² xA,B [48%];	[no K ^x]
2:17	αγαπησατε f ³⁵ [71%] αγαπατε P ⁷² xA,B,C [24%] --- [5%];	?[no K ^x]
2:20	τω f ³⁵ A [47%] --- P ^{72,81v} xB,C [53%];	[no K ^x]
2:21	και f ³⁵ P ⁷² [23%] --- xA,B,C [77%];	
2:24	αυτου f ³⁵ x [71%] --- P ^{72,81v} A,B,C [29%];	[no K ^x]
2:25	ημων f ³⁵ [50%] υμων P ⁷² xA,B,C [50%];	[no K ^x]
3:06	εγεννηθητε f ³⁵ P ^{81v} xA,B,C [63%] εγεννηθητε P ⁷² [35%] εγεννηθη [2%];	[no K ^x]
3:07	χαριτος ζωης f ³⁵ P ^{81v} B,C [58%] 1 ζωσης [35%] ποικιλης 12 xA [7%] 12 αιωνιου P ⁷² ;	[no K ^x]
3:07	εγκοπτεσθαι f ³⁵ P ⁸¹ (x)A,B [70%] εκκοπτεσθαι P ⁷² C [30%];	?[no K ^x]
3:10	ημερας ιδειν f ³⁵ C [26%] ~ 21 P ^{72,81v} xA,B [74%];	
3:16	καταλαλουσιν f ³⁵ xA,C (44.4%) καταλαλωσιν (50%) καταλαλεισθε P ⁷² B (5%);	[no K ^x]
3:16	τη αγαθη εν χριστω αναστροφη f ³⁵ [20%] την αγαθην 34 αναστροφην (x)A,B [50%] την 34 αγαθην αναστροφην P ⁷² [24%] την 34 αγνην αναστροφην C [1%] την καλην 34 αναστροφην [4%] --- [1%];	[no K ^x]
3:18	ημας f ³⁵ A,C [64%] υμας P ⁷² B [36%] --- x;	[no K ^x]
4:02	του f ³⁵ [22%] --- P ⁷² xA,B,C [78%];	
4:03	υμιν f ³⁵ x (41.7%) ημιν C (47.1%) --- P ⁷² A,B (11.2%);	[no K ^x]
4:03	χρονος f ³⁵ P ⁷² xA,B,C [26%] χρονος του βιου [74%];	
4:03	ειδωλοατριαις f ³⁵ xA,C [70%] ειδωλοατριαις B [30%];	?[no K ^x]
4:07	τας f ³⁵ [70%] --- P ⁷² xA,B [30%];	?[no K ^x]
4:08	η f ³⁵ [49%] --- P ⁷² xA,B [51%];	[no K ^x]
4:08	καλυπτει f ³⁵ A,B [60%] καλυψει P ⁷² x [40%];	[no K ^x]
4:11	ως f ³⁵ [69%] ης P ⁷² xA,B,201 [28%] --- [3%];	[no K ^x]
4:11	δοξαζηται Θεος f ³⁵ [20%] 1 ο 2 P ⁷² xA,B [73%] ~ο 21 [6%];	
4:11	αιωνας f ³⁵ P ⁷² [27%] αιωνας των αιωνων xA,B [73%];	
4:14	αναπεπαυται f ³⁵ [39%] επαναπαυεται A [6%] επαναπεπαυται P ⁷² [2%] αναπαυεται xB [52%] αναπεμπεται [1%];	?[no K ^x]
5:03	μηδε f ³⁵ P ⁷² [49%] μηδ xA [50%];	[no K ^x]
5:07	υπερ f ³⁵ [35%] περι P ⁷² xA,B [65%];	
5:08	οτι f ³⁵ P ⁷² [50%] --- xA,B [50%];	[no K ^x]
5:08	περιερχεται f ³⁵ [24%] περιπατει P ⁷² xA,B [76%];	
5:08	καταπιειν f ³⁵ (x)B [53%] καταπιει [25%] καταπιη P ⁷² A [22%];	[no K ^x]
5:10	στηριξαι f ³⁵ [33%] στηριξει P ⁷² xA,B [66%] στηριξοι [1%];	
5:10	σθενωσαι f ³⁵ [30%] σθενωσει xA,B [66%] σθενωσοι [1%] --- P ⁷² [3%];	

5:10 θεμελιωσαι f³⁵ [30%] || θεμελιωσει P⁷²κ [66%] || θεμελιωσοι [1%] || --- A,B [3%];

5:11 η δοξα και το κρατος f³⁵ κ (59.6%) || 125 (31.3%) || ~ 45312 (7%) || 4 (-το P⁷²) 5
P⁷²A,B (0.8%). [no K^x]

The archetypal profile of f³⁵ in 1 Peter is defined by the 42 readings above. It is clear and unambiguous, so we have at least one objectively defined archetype in 1 Peter. In contrast, there are 24 + ?6 variant sets where K^x is seriously divided, placing an objectively defined archetype beyond our present reach. (I did not include a number of lesser splits—25%, 20%, 15%—that conceivably could complicate any attempt to come up with an archetype for K^x. Please go back to James for other comments.) Let's go on to 2 Peter.

2 Peter:

1:02 ιησου του κυριου ημων f³⁵ (P⁷²)B,C [68%] [234 1.4%] || 1 χριστου 234 κA [15%] || χριστου
1234 [8%] || σωτηρος 1 χριστου 234 [1.2%] || ~ 2341 χριστου [6%]; [no K^x]

1:05 δε τουτο f³⁵ κ [66%] || ~ 21 P⁷²B,C [32%] || 1 A [1%] || 2 [0.8%]; [no K^x]

2:02 ας f³⁵ [20%] || ους P⁷²κA,B,C [80%];

2:09 πειρασμων f³⁵ κ [33%] || πειρασμου (P⁷²)A,B,C [67%];

2:12 γεγεννημενα φυσικα f³⁵ κ [26%] || ~ 21 [54%] || γεγεννημενα 2 A,B,C [3%] || ~ 2
γεγεννημενα [12%] || 1 [4.2%] || 2 P⁷² [0.4%]; [no K^x]

2:17 εις αιωνας f³⁵ (25.1%) || 1 αιωνα A,C (70.3%) || 1 τον αιωνα (2.4%) || --- P⁷²κB (2.2%);

2:18 ασελγειας f³⁵ [40%] || ασελγειαις P⁷²κA,B,C [60%];

3:02 υμων f³⁵ P⁷²κA,B,C [70%] || ημων [28.8%] || --- [1.2%]; [no K^x]

3:05 συνεστωτα f³⁵ κ [23%] || συνεστωσα P⁷²A,C(048) [76%];

3:10 η f³⁵ κ,048 [67%] || η οι P⁷²A,B,C [33%]; [no K^x]

3:15 αυτω δοθεισαν f³⁵ [60%] || ~ 21 P⁷²(κ)A,B,C,048 [40%]; [no K^x]

3:16 εισιν f³⁵ A [33%] || εστιν P⁷²κB,C [67%];

3:18 αυξανητε f³⁵ [27%] || αυξανετε κA,B [60%] || αυξανεσθε P⁷²C [5%] || αυξανησθε [3%] ||
αυξανοιτε [5%].

The archetypal profile of f³⁵ in 2 Peter is defined by the 13 readings above. It is clear and unambiguous, so we have at least one objectively defined archetype in 2 Peter. K^x is in unusually good shape here, so the diagnostic readings are comparatively fewer. The 4 + ?2 variant sets where K^x is seriously divided are sufficiently few in number that it might be possible to posit an archetype. (I did not include a number of lesser splits—25%, 20%, 15%—that conceivably could complicate any such attempt. Please go back to James for other comments.) Let's go on to 1 John.

1 John:

1:04 ημων f³⁵ κB [59%] || υμων A,C [41%]; [no K^x]

1:06 περιπατουμεν f³⁵ [29%] || περιπατωμεν f³⁵1/4 κA,B,C [71%];

2:16 αλαζονεια f³⁵ C [72%] || αλαζονια κA,B [28%]; [no K^x]

2:24 πατρι και εν τω υιω f³⁵ κ [35%] || ~ 52341 A(B)C [65%];

2:27 διδασκη f³⁵ κA,B [71%] || διδασκει C [28%]; [no K^x]

2:29 ειδητε f³⁵ κB,C [37%] || ιδητε A [59%] || οιδατε [4%];

2:29 γεγεννηται f³⁵ κA,B,C [70%] || γεγενηται [30%]; [no K^x]

3:01	ημας f ³⁵ A,B [36%] υμας κC [63.5%] --- [0.5%];	
3:06	και f ³⁵ [20%] --- κA,B,C [80%];	
3:15	εαυτω f ³⁵ κA,C [70%] αυτω B [30%];	[no K ^x]
3:17	θεωρη f ³⁵ κA,B,C [47%] θεωρει [53%];	?[no K ^x]
3:18	εν f ³⁵ κA,B,C [65%] --- [35%];	[no K ^x]
3:19	πεισωμεν f ³⁵ [43%] πεισομεν κA,B,C [56%];	
3:21	καταγινωσκη f ³⁵ κB,C [71%] καταγινωσκει A [29%];	?[no K ^x]
3:23	πιστευσωμεν f ³⁵ B (66.9%) πιστευωμεν κA,C (26.5%) πιστευομεν (5.4%) πιστευσομεν (1.2%);	[no K ^x]
3:24	εν f ³⁵ κ [30%] και εν A,B,C' [70%];	
4:02	γινωσκεται f ³⁵ [67%] γινωσκετε A,B,C [25%] γινωσκομεν κ [8%];	[no K ^x]
4:03	ομολογει f ³⁵ κ (73.5%) ομολογει τον A,B (24.2%);	?[no K ^x]
4:03	εκ f ³⁵ κA,B [70%] --- [30%];	[no K ^x]
4:16	αυτω f ³⁵ A [37%] αυτω μενει κB [63%];	
5:04	ημων f ³⁵ κA,B (56.4%) υμων (43.2%) --- (0.4%);	[no K ^x]
5:06	και f ³⁵ κ [70%] και εν (A)B [30%];	[no K ^x]
5:10	εαυτω f ³⁵ κ [48%] αυτω A,B [52%];	?[no K ^x]
5:11	ο θεος ημιν f ³⁵ B [24%] ~ 312 κA [76%];	
5:20	γινωσκωμεν f ³⁵ [66%] γινωσκομεν κA,B [34%];	[no K ^x]
5:20	η ζωη η f ³⁵ [60%] 2 κA,B [26%] 12 [6%] 23 [4%] --- [4%].	[no K ^x]

The archetypal profile of f³⁵ in 1 John is defined by the 26 readings above. It is clear and unambiguous, so we have at least one objectively defined archetype in 1 John. In contrast, there are 11 + ?6 variant sets where K^x is seriously divided, placing an objectively defined archetype beyond our present reach. (I did not include a number of lesser splits—25%, 20%, 15%—that conceivably could complicate any attempt to come up with an archetype for K^x. Please go back to James for other comments.) Let's go on to 2 & 3 John.

2 John:

02	εσται μεθ υμων f ³⁵ [58%] εσται μεθ ημων κB,0232 [40%] --- A [2%];	[no K ^x]
05	αλλ f ³⁵ A [35%] αλλα κB [65%];	
05	εχομεν f ³⁵ [30%] ειχομεν κA,B [70%];	
09	δε f ³⁵ [20%] --- κA,B [80%];	
12	αλλ f ³⁵ [30%] αλλα κA,B [70%].	

3 John:

11	δε f ³⁵ [25%] --- κA,B,C [75%];	
12	οιδαμεν f ³⁵ (23%) οιδατε (61.5%) οιδακ κA,B,C,048 (15.1%) οιδα (0.4%).	

The archetypal profile of f³⁵ in 2 & 3 John is defined by the 7 readings above. It is clear and unambiguous, so we have at least one objectively defined archetype in these books. K^x is in unusually good shape here, so the diagnostic readings are comparatively fewer. With only one variant set where K^x is seriously divided it may be possible to posit an archetype. Let's go on to Jude.

Jude:

06 ἀλλὰ f³⁵ C [30%] || ἀλλὰ P⁷² ⋈A,B [70%];

16 αὐτῶν f³⁵ C [35%] || αὐτῶν ⋈A,B [65%];

24 αὐτοῦς f³⁵ (68.8%) || ὑμᾶς ⋈B,C (29.2%) || ἡμᾶς A (1%). ?[no K^x]

The archetypal profile of f³⁵ in Jude is defined by the 3 readings above. It is clear and unambiguous, so we have at least one objectively defined archetype in this book. K^x is in unusually good shape here, so the diagnostic readings are comparatively fewer. With only one variant set where K^x is seriously divided it may be possible to posit an archetype.

Conclusion:

Taking the seven epistles as a block or group, the evidence presented furnishes an answer to the opening question: there is only one objectively identifiable archetype in the General Epistles—precisely f³⁵. Its distinctive profile is defined by the 119 readings listed above. In contrast, there are 54 + ?18 variant sets where K^x is seriously divided, making it highly doubtful that a single K^x archetype exists for these books. (I did not include a number of lesser splits—28 around 25%, 53 around 20%, 57 around 15%—that conceivably could complicate any attempt to establish an archetype for K^x, especially if the membership in the splits is not constant or predictable.) I am not aware of any other possible contenders. Granting the present state of our ignorance, in the General Epistles there is only one qualified candidate for Autograph archetype: f³⁵. (If there is only one candidate for mayor in your town, who gets elected?)

‘Concordia discors’ and f³⁵ minority readings in the General Epistles

Over a century ago, and throughout his works, John William Burgon repeatedly called attention to the *concordia discors*, the prevailing confusion and disagreement, which the early uncials (⋈ ABCD—he personally collated each) display between/among themselves. Luke 11:2-4 offers one example.

"The five Old Uncials" (⋈ ABCD) falsify the Lord's Prayer as given by St. Luke in no less than forty-five words. But so little do they agree among themselves, that they throw themselves into six different combinations in their departures from the Traditional Text; and yet they are never able to agree among themselves as to one single various reading: while only once are more than two of them observed to stand together, and their grand point of union is no less than an omission of the article. Such is their eccentric tendency, that in respect of thirty-two out of the whole forty-five words they bear in turn solitary evidence.¹

James

Concordia discors

Four of those uncials are extant in James (⋈ ABC), to which I add P^{20,100} and 048,² and what Burgon calls their ‘eccentric tendency’ is plainly visible. Their eccentricity, viewed from the

¹ Burgon, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established*, arranged, completed, and edited by Edward Miller (London: George Bell and Sons, 1986), p. 84.

² P²³, 0173 and 0246, all fragmentary, are also cited in my apparatus, but they never agree with f³⁵ against the rest.

perspective of the normal transmission, is sufficient to warm the cockles of the heart of the most obdurate iconoclast. However, their very eccentricity establishes their independence, which is of special interest in what follows. I proceed to tabulate their performance in the 120 relevant variant sets (excluding 5 with *rell*) included in the critical apparatus of my edition of the Greek Text of James. I do so using f^{35} as the point of reference.

f^{35} alone 53 [In these cases the uncials are usually together, but not always.]

f^{35} p^{100} 2
 f^{35} \aleph 6
 f^{35} A 9
 f^{35} B 1
 f^{35} C 5
 f^{35} 048 1

f^{35} p^{20} \aleph 1
 f^{35} p^{100} A 1
 f^{35} \aleph A 7
 f^{35} \aleph B 2
 f^{35} AB 2
 f^{35} AC 6

f^{35} p^{100} \aleph A 1
 f^{35} p^{100} AB 1
 f^{35} p^{100} AC 1
 f^{35} \aleph AB 6
 f^{35} \aleph AC 2
 f^{35} \aleph BC 2
 f^{35} ABC 2

f^{35} p^{100} \aleph AB 1

f^{35} \aleph ABC 6 [Since this combination attests over 90% of the words, it is irrelevant to my present purpose and will not be used in any computations below.]

involving p^{20} 1
involving p^{100} 7
involving \aleph 28
involving A 37
involving B 17
involving C 18
involving 048 1

For the 114 relevant variant sets (120 minus 6), f^{35} has overt attestation from these early uncials 52% of the time. Not only are these uncials obviously independent of each other, f^{35} is independent of them as well, but just as early. Here is a further demonstration that f^{35} is both early and independent. As we move to the next section, keep in mind that all by itself f^{35} proves that a variant is early.

*f*³⁵ minority readings

A look at the apparatus of my Greek Text of James will show that I have designated as genuine nine readings with an attestation of 30% or less. In each case the deciding factor is the presence of *f*³⁵. I will now analyze these nine readings, beginning with the smallest percentage.

ανηλεος 2:13 [20%]

The only *f*³⁵ MSS included in *ECM*, 18 and 35, are falsely attributed to a different variant, so that this reading is not even mentioned in *ECM*; nor is it mentioned by von Soden. Beyond any question this is the reading of *f*³⁵, but only as further MSS are collated will we know if it survived in other lines of transmission. That someone would have introduced an Attic form in the middle ages is scarcely credible, so *f*³⁵ is early, and in my opinion most probably original.

ιθυνοντος 3:4 [21%]

All eight non-*f*³⁵ MSS, as listed by *ECM*, have a distinct profile, some radically so. However, three of them (1270, 1297, 1598) are obviously related and presumably had a common ancestor not too far back. So we have six independent lines of transmission (outside of *f*³⁵) that probably go back to the early centuries. Oops, cursive 1595, though fairly different from the three, would likely join them by the fifth century, leaving five lines. Also, as the distance in time increases it becomes increasingly unlikely that an ancient classical spelling could, or would, be introduced. This reading is certainly ancient, and in my opinion most probably original.

δυναμενος 3:2 *ϛ* [23%]

To my surprise, there is absolutely **no** overlap between the eight non-*f*³⁵ MSS that *ECM* lists for *ιθυνοντος* and the 23 non-*f*³⁵ MSS listed for *δυναμενος*. To my further surprise, the 23 do not include a single Byzantine MS.¹ So *f*³⁵ is totally independent of *K*^x here, and yet is joined by *ϛ*, so we already know that the reading is early. But let's analyze the cursives.

Since no two have an identical profile, the 23 are presumably independent in their own generation. However, there are several pairs with a common ancestor not too far back, presumably—I put 206-429, 254-1524 and 630-2200 in this category. But the first two pairs are themselves related, with a common grand-ancestor. The ancestor of 630-2200 is joined by 2138 and their grand-ancestor by 2495. 621 and 2412 meet several generations back. So back in the fifth century, I would imagine, we have sixteen independent lines of transmission (outside of *f*³⁵). By the time we get back to the third century we should still have at least six independent lines that vouch for *δυναμενος* (much like *ιθυνοντος*), but the lines are **totally different** in each case!!! This means that *f*³⁵ is independent of all eleven of those lines (surely—with *ιθυνοντος* *f*³⁵ is independent of the six that support *δυναμενος*, and with *δυναμενος* it is independent of the five that support *ιθυνοντος*; so it is independent of all eleven).

This reading is certainly ancient, owes nothing whatsoever to *K*^x (the Byzantine bulk), and in my opinion is most probably original.

ημων 4:14 [26%]

This variant shares 206-429, 254-1524 and 630-2200 with *δυναμενος*, and they represent just two lines of transmission; it also shares 1490 and 1831, that are independent. That leaves 10

¹ *ECM* does list two as Byzantine (254, 1827) but comparing them with *TuT* they do not get above the 80% threshold in James.

further non- **f³⁵** MSS listed for this variant, six of which are Byzantine (but all quite different). Of the ten only two would join by the fifth century, which leaves us with thirteen independent lines of transmission (outside of **f³⁵**) back in the fifth century, or so I imagine. By the time we get back to the third century we should still, again, have at least six independent lines of transmission for *ημων*. The six Byzantine MSS obviously do not represent **K^x**, so again we have a reading that is certainly ancient while owing nothing to **K^x**. In my opinion it is most probably original.

γαρ 4:11 [26%]

The roster of MSS here is similar to that for *δυναμενος*—it shares 13 of the 16 independent lines and picks up seven new ones (one is shared with *ιθυνοντος*), which makes 20 (outside of **f³⁵**). So this reading is also certainly ancient, owing nothing to **K^x**, and in my opinion is most probably original.

ου 2:4 **Ⲱ**A,C (26.8%)

Since this reading is also supported by **Ⲱ**A,C there is no question about age. The roster of MSS here reproduces all but seven MSS in the *γαρ* roster, but has some twenty further MSS. Since this is one of the sets included in *TuT*, the percentage is precise. Here again, this reading is certainly ancient, owing nothing to **K^x**, and in my opinion is most probably original.

επειτα 4:14 [29.5%]

The roster of MSS here is quite similar to that of *gar*, but there are fewer. For all that, there are about 15 independent lines of transmission. Here again, this reading is certainly ancient, owing nothing to **K^x**, and in my opinion is most probably original.

νομου 1:23 [30%]

The roster here is a bit different. One independent line is shared with *ιθυνοντος*, three with *δυναμενος*, two with *ημων* and two with *γαρ*, which makes eight independent lines already. But there are six new lines of independent transmission added here that none of the others have. So in the fifth century, as I imagine, we have 14 independent lines (outside of **f³⁵**). By the time we get to the third century we should still, again, have at least six independent lines of transmission for *νομου*, not necessarily a perfect overlap with any of the others. There are some Byzantine MSS that obviously do not represent **K^x**, so again we have a reading that is certainly ancient while owing nothing to **K^x**. In my opinion it is most probably original.

λαμπραν εσθητα 2:3 [30%]

The roster here is quite similar to that of *γαρ*, etc., sharing one line with *ιθυνοντος* that none of the others have. It adds three new independent lines, so the evidence here is much like the others. Here again, this reading is certainly ancient, owing nothing to **K^x**, and in my opinion is most probably original.

Obviously the picture we have seen so far will be true for all other minority readings, as we move up to 35%, 40%, etc.

Conclusion: **f³⁵** is ancient, and owes nothing to **K^x**. Q.E.D. Well, of course, not quite. I wasn't alive in the fifth century, nor the third, so I can't prove that the picture I have painted, as to time, is correct. However, adding the evidence presented here to that presented in "When is a 'recension'?", I affirm with a clear conscience that most of the independent lines mentioned—*ιθυνοντος* 5, *δυναμενος* 16, *ημων* 9, *γαρ* 6, *νομου* 6, *λαμπραν εσθητα* 3, which equals **45**—most of them probably go back to the fifth century at least. It is highly unlikely

that the 45 would reduce to fewer than 15 in the third century. [And these 15 all support f^{35} against K^x , at one point or another—by the same token at other points they go with K^x against f^{35} , so K^x is also ancient.] I invite attention to a word from Kilpatrick.

Origen’s treatment of Matt. 19:19 is significant in two other ways. First he was probably the most influential commentator of the Ancient Church and yet his conjecture at this point seems to have influenced only one manuscript of a local version of the New Testament. The Greek tradition is apparently quite unaffected by it. From the third century onward even an Origen could not effectively alter the text.

This brings us to the second significant point—his date. From the early third century onward the freedom to alter the text which had obtained earlier can no longer be practiced. Tatian is the last author to make deliberate changes in the text of whom we have explicit information. Between Tatian and Origen Christian opinion had so changed that it was no longer possible to make changes in the text whether they were harmless or not.¹

The point made by Kilpatrick seems to me to be obvious. Evidently there would be occasional exceptions, especially in remote areas like Egypt where Greek was no longer spoken. After Diocletian’s campaign [303] most monks simply copied what was in front of them. Most of the 45 lines of transmission mentioned above probably already existed in the year 300.)

1 Peter

As I did with James, I take note of what John William Burgon called the *concordia discors*, the prevailing confusion and disagreement, which the early uncials (\aleph ABCD—he personally collated each) display between/among themselves.

Concordia discors

Four of those uncials are extant in 1 Peter (\aleph ABC), to which I add P^{72} (which wasn’t extant in Burgon’s day), and what Burgon calls their ‘eccentric tendency’ is plainly visible. That eccentricity establishes their independence, which is of special interest in what follows. I proceed to tabulate their performance in the 141 relevant variant sets (disregarding the 13 with *rell*) included in the critical apparatus of my edition of the Greek Text of 1 Peter. I do so using f^{35} as the point of reference:

f^{35} alone 46 [In these cases the uncials are usually together, but not always.]

f^{35} P^{72} 7

f^{35} \aleph 9

f^{35} A 8

f^{35} B 2

f^{35} C 8

f^{35} P^{72} A 2

f^{35} P^{72} B 2

f^{35} P^{72} C 3

f^{35} \aleph A 2

f^{35} \aleph B 3

¹ G.D. Kilpatrick, “Atticism and the Text of the Greek New Testament,” *Neutestamentliche Aufsätze* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1963), pp. 129-30.

f³⁵ ⵛ C 1
 f³⁵ AB 2
 f³⁵ AC 4
 f³⁵ BC 1

f³⁵ p⁷² ⵛ A 3
 f³⁵ p⁷² ⵛ B 1
 f³⁵ p⁷² ⵛ C 2
 f³⁵ p⁷² AB 2
 f³⁵ p⁷² AC 2
 f³⁵ ⵛ AB 1
 f³⁵ ⵛ AC 4
 f³⁵ ABC 1

f³⁵ p⁷² ⵛ AB 4
 f³⁵ p⁷² ⵛ AC 2
 f³⁵ p⁷² ⵛ BC 1
 f³⁵ p⁷² ABC 1
 f³⁵ ⵛ ABC 4

f³⁵ p⁷² ⵛ ABC 13 [Since this combination attests over 90% of the words, it is irrelevant to my present purpose and will not be used in any computations below.]

involving p⁷² 32
 involving ⵛ 37
 involving A 42
 involving B 25
 involving C 34 [C is missing from 4:6 to the end; were it extant several of the figures above would change.]

For the 128 variant sets that are left (141 minus 13), f³⁵ has overt attestation from these early uncials 64% of the time. Not only are these uncials obviously independent of each other, f³⁵ is independent of them as well, but just as early. Here is a further demonstration that f³⁵ is both early and independent. As we move to the next section, keep in mind that all by itself f³⁵ proves that a variant is early.

f³⁵ minority readings

A look at my apparatus will show that I have designated as genuine nine readings with an attestation of 30% or less. In each case the deciding factor is the presence of f³⁵. I will now analyze these nine readings, beginning with the smallest percentage.

τη αγαθη εν Χριστω αναστροφη 3:16 [20%]

ECM lists only cursives 18 and 35 for the dative. To my disappointment, von Soden doesn't mention it, but Tischendorf does, citing his cursives 38 and 93 (Gregory 328 and 205), confirming that the dative is the reading of f³⁵. Tischendorf also cites his 137 (Gregory 614) for the dative, which has an 'independent' profile. So we know that the dative did not survive only in f³⁵. The dative is correct for the object of *επηρεαζω*, but copyists who were not familiar

with this peculiarity would naturally ‘correct’ to the accusative. *ECM* lists 15 variations for the 6-word phrase. One of my presuppositions is that the NT books were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and I assume that He knew how to write correct Koine Greek.

During the last 150 years the ‘harder reading’ canon has been widely used to impute to John, Peter, etc. a variety of linguistic barbarities; after all, they were ignorant fishermen, Galilean rustics, or whatever. But let’s stop and think for a minute. After Pentecost, as the Church exploded and it became obvious that the Apostles were going to have to travel widely, to have an ‘international’ ministry, wouldn’t they bone up on Greek (and even Latin)? If I were in Peter’s shoes I would certainly have done so. In other words, I maintain that Peter and John and James were perfectly competent to write good or correct Greek. To me it is significant that **f³⁵** habitually sides with the grammatically correct reading, as it does in this case.

δοξαζηται *Θεος* 4:11 [20%]

Again, *ECM* lists only cursives 18 and 35 for this variant. To my disappointment, neither von Soden nor Tischendorf mention it. However, as illustrated by Tischendorf for the variant above, there will almost certainly be MSS not collated by *ECM* that side with **f³⁵** here (unfortunately *TuT* doesn’t include this set). The lack of the article emphasizes the inherent quality of the noun, which is in accord with the context. Joining context to ‘batting average’, or credibility quotient, I stick with **f³⁵** here.

του 4:2 [22%]

Most of the fourteen non-**f³⁵** MSS listed by *ECM* for this variant are shared with *δυναμενος* in James 3:2. The fourteen will reduce to eight independent lines of transmission in the 5th century, or so I imagine, some of which will go back to the 3rd. The choice between the presence or absence of the article here makes little difference in the sense, so because of its credibility quotient I stick with **f³⁵**.

και 2:21 P⁷² [23%]

This variant also is attested by fourteen non-**f³⁵** MSS (listed by *ECM*), but only four are shared. There is more diversity this time, with only two pairs, so in the 5th century we still have twelve lines, most of which will go back to the 3rd, as I imagine. P⁷² gives overt 3rd century attestation. The reading of the majority is perfectly normal and makes excellent sense, so if it were original there would be no felt need to change it. On the other hand, the *και* next to the *γαρ* could easily appear to be unnecessary, motivating copyists to delete it. In the context the emphatic use fits nicely. This reading is certainly early and independent, and in my opinion most probably original.

περιερχεται 5:8 [24%]

The twenty-one non-**f³⁵** MSS listed by *ECM* for this variant include all but one of those listed for *του* above, plus eight different ones. There are several groups, but there would be at least ten independent lines in the 5th century, at least half of which should go back to the 3rd, as I imagine. The lion is not out for an afternoon stroll, he is circling the prey, looking for an opening. *Περιερχεται* is early, independent and correct, and in my opinion almost certainly

original.

ημερας ιδειν 3:10 C [26%]

The twenty-six non-**f**³⁵ MSS listed by *ECM* for this variant form several groups, but there would be at least fifteen independent lines in the 5th century—codex C gives overt 5th century attestation—at least half of which should go back to the 3rd, as I imagine. Since this is part of a quote from the Psalms, the LXX could be a factor, but how? Codex B has the same word order in its LXX of Psalms and here in Peter, while codex C agrees with the printed LXX. So who assimilated to whom? The word order attested by **f**³⁵ seems less smooth than that of the majority and may have given rise to it. In any event, *ημερας ιδειν* is early, independent and in my opinion probably original.

χρονος 4:3 P⁷² ⲗ ABC [26%]

The thirty-eight non-**f**³⁵ MSS listed by *ECM* for this variant include all five early uncials, so there is no question about age. (Just two words later the same five early uncials read *βουλημα* instead of *θελημα*, showing that **f**³⁵ is independent of them.) There will be over twenty independent lines in the 5th century, at least half of which should go back to the 3rd, or so I imagine. I would render verses 2-3^a like this: “. . . so as not to live your remaining time in flesh for human lusts any longer, but for the will of God. Because the time that has passed is plenty for you to have performed the will of the Gentiles . . .” The phrase ‘of life’ gets in the way. **f**³⁵ is early and independent; I consider that its reading here is most probably original.

αιωνας 4:11 P⁷² [27%]

The thirty-one non-**f**³⁵ MSS listed by *ECM* for this variant include P⁷², so there is no question about age. They will reduce to about twenty independent lines in the 5th century, at least half of which should go back to the 3rd, or so I imagine. That the familiar *των αιωνων* should be added, if the original lacked it, is predictable; that it should be omitted is harder to explain. I would render, “throughout the ages”. **f**³⁵ is early and independent; I consider that its reading here is most probably original.

σθενωσαι θεμελιωσαι 5:10 [30%]

The twenty-four non-**f**³⁵ MSS listed by *ECM* for this variant will reduce to no less than twelve independent lines of transmission in the fifth century, aside from **f**³⁵, at least half of which should go back to the 3rd, or so I imagine. Is Peter affirming that God will, future indicative, or asking that God may, aorist optative? How does “after you have suffered a while” affect the equation? Again I will stick with **f**³⁵. This reading is certainly ancient and in my opinion is most probably original.

Conclusion

Obviously the picture we have seen so far will be true for all other **f**³⁵ minority readings, as we move up to 35%, 40%, etc. As in James, **f**³⁵ is clearly early and independent of **K**^x. If it is independent of all other lines of transmission as well, as I believe, then it harks back to the Original—what other reasonable explanation is there?

2 Peter

As I did with James and 1 Peter, I take note of what John William Burgon called the *concordia discors*, the prevailing confusion and disagreement, which the early uncials (Ⲡ ABCD—he personally collated each) display between/among themselves.

Concordia discors

Four of those uncials are extant in 2 Peter (Ⲡ ABC), to which I add P⁷² and 048, and what Burgon calls their ‘eccentric tendency’ is plainly visible. That eccentricity establishes their independence, which is of special interest in what follows. I proceed to tabulate their performance in the 67 relevant variant sets included in the critical apparatus of my edition of the Greek Text of 2 Peter (excluding 17 where I use *rell*). I do so using f³⁵ as the point of reference:

f³⁵ alone 19 [In these cases the uncials are usually together, but not always.]

f³⁵ Ⲡ 7
f³⁵ A 3
f³⁵ B 1
f³⁵ C 3

f³⁵ p⁷²B 1
f³⁵ p⁷²C 1
f³⁵ Ⲡ A 7
f³⁵ Ⲡ C 2
f³⁵ Ⲡ 048 1
f³⁵ AC 2

f³⁵ p⁷²BC 3
f³⁵ Ⲡ AB 1
f³⁵ Ⲡ AC 1
f³⁵ Ⲡ A048 1
f³⁵ Ⲡ BC 1
f³⁵ AC048 2
f³⁵ BC048 1

f³⁵ p⁷²Ⲡ AB 1
f³⁵ p⁷²Ⲡ AC 1
f³⁵ p⁷²Ⲡ BC 1

f³⁵ p⁷²Ⲡ AB048 1

f³⁵ p⁷²Ⲡ ABC 6 [Since this combination attests over 90% of the words, it is irrelevant to my present purpose and will not be used in any computations below.]

involving P⁷² 9

involving \aleph	25
involving A	20
involving B	11
involving C	18
involving 048	6

For the 61 variant sets that are left (67 minus 6), f^{35} has overt attestation from these early uncials 69% of the time. Not only are these uncials obviously independent of each other, f^{35} is independent of them as well, but just as early. Here is a further demonstration that f^{35} is both early and independent. As we move to the next section, keep in mind that all by itself f^{35} proves that a variant is early.

f^{35} minority readings

A look at my apparatus will show that I have designated as genuine seven readings with an attestation of 33% or less. In each case the deciding factor is the presence of f^{35} . I will now analyze these seven readings, beginning with the smallest percentage.

$\acute{\alpha}\zeta$ 2:2 [20%]

ECM lists only cursive 18 for this reading, but my own collation of 35 convinces me that it agrees with 18; as do 201, 204 and 328. So the family is solid. Von Soden cites one other MS for this reading, while Tischendorf is silent. So the reading survived outside the family, if not very widely. Is the antecedent of the pronoun the debaucheries, or the people involved in them? Either makes sense, but it is really the bad conduct that sullies the reputation of the Way. I take it that f^{35} probably preserves the Original reading here.

$\sigma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\tau\omega\tau\alpha$ 3:5 \aleph [23%]

Peter's syntax here is a bit complex, giving rise to eleven variations for the six-word phrase. As I see it, "out of water and through water" is parenthetical, modifying 'land', so the participle works with $\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$ as a periphrastic construction whose subject includes both 'heaven' [m] and 'earth' [f]—thus the nominative plural neuter perfect active participle. f^{35} is precisely correct here, even if most copyists got lost in Peter's syntax. \aleph gives overt 4th century attestation, but this reading is also attested by another four independent lines of transmission (as cited by *ECM*), besides f^{35} , all of which probably go back at least to the 4th century. f^{35} probably preserves the Original here.

$\epsilon\iota\zeta$ $\alpha\lambda\omega\nu\alpha\zeta$ 2:17 (25.1%)

Here we can rely on the complete collations reflected in *TuT*. There must be well over twenty independent lines of transmission going back to the 5th century, half of which should go back to the 3rd, besides f^{35} . The choice is between singular and plural, one 'age' or many. The absence of the article helped to confuse the picture. If the plural is stronger than the singular, then it fits the context better, since Peter is using violent language. I consider that the plural is probably original.

$\gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\mu\eta\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha$ $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\alpha$ 2:12 \aleph [26%]

Again, besides the overt testimony of \aleph , there must be well over twenty independent lines of transmission going back to the 5th century, half of which should go back to the 3rd, besides f^{35} . The rest of the early uncials (P^{72} omits the participle) attest this order, while around 85% of the MSS attest the verb. The majority variant, by putting the adjective next to the noun, seems to make a more natural construction, but I take it that $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\alpha$ is acting like a noun in apposition to $\zeta\omega\alpha$, and to help us see this Peter places it after the participle: render, “as unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct made to be caught and destroyed”. I do not doubt that f^{35} preserves the Original here.

αυξανητε 3:18 [27%]

Imperative or Subjunctive? I take it that Peter is offering a gentler alternative to falling from their steadfastness; render “rather, may you grow in grace . . .” 5% of the MSS actually move to the Optative; Subjunctive and Optative make up 35%. This reading is attested by at least ten independent lines of transmission, some of which should go back to the 3rd, besides f^{35} . I take it that the Subjunctive is probably original.

εισιν 3:16 A [33%]

The plural is obviously correct. Besides the overt testimony of A, there must be well over twenty independent lines of transmission going back to the 5th century, half of which should go back to the 3rd, besides f^{35} . Let me repeat a statement in the section for 1 Peter.

During the last 150 years the ‘harder reading’ canon has been widely used to impute to John, Peter, etc. a variety of linguistic barbarities; after all, they were ignorant fishermen, Galilean rustics, or whatever. But let’s stop and think for a minute. After Pentecost, as the Church exploded and it became obvious that the Apostles were going to have to travel widely, to have an ‘international’ ministry, wouldn’t they bone up on Greek (and even Latin)? If I were in Peter’s shoes I would certainly have done so. In other words, I maintain that Peter and John and James were perfectly competent to write good or correct Greek. To me it is significant that f^{35} habitually sides with the grammatically correct reading, as it does in this case.

πειρασμων 2:9 \aleph [33%]

Singular or plural? I take the plural to be clearly superior in the context. Again, besides the overt testimony of \aleph , there must be well over twenty independent lines of transmission going back to the 5th century, half of which should go back to the 3rd, besides f^{35} . Again I will stick with f^{35} . This reading is certainly ancient and in my opinion is most probably original.

Conclusion

Obviously the picture we have seen so far will be true for all other f^{35} minority readings, as we move up to 40%, etc. As in James, 1 Peter and 1 John, f^{35} is clearly early and independent of K^x . If it is independent of all other lines of transmission as well, as I believe, then it harks back to the Original—what other reasonable explanation is there?

1 John

As I did with James and 1 & 2 Peter, I take note of what John William Burgon called the *concordia discors*, the prevailing confusion and disagreement, which the early uncials (ⲗ ABCD—he personally collated each) display between/among themselves.

Concordia discors

Four of those uncials are extant in 1 John (ⲗ ABC), to which I have added 048, and what Burgon calls their ‘eccentric tendency’ is plainly visible. That eccentricity establishes their independence, which is of special interest in what follows. I proceed to tabulate their performance in the 87 relevant variant sets (excluding 31 with *rell*) included in the critical apparatus of my edition of the Greek Text of 1 John. I do so using **f³⁵** as the point of reference.

f³⁵ alone 32 [In these cases the uncials are usually together, but not always.]

f³⁵ ⲗ 10

f³⁵ A 7

f³⁵ B 4

f³⁵ C 3

f³⁵ ⲗ A 4

f³⁵ ⲗ B 1

f³⁵ ⲗ C 5

f³⁵ AB 4

f³⁵ AC 1

f³⁵ A048 2

f³⁵ BC 1

f³⁵ ⲗ AB 4

f³⁵ ⲗ AC 1

f³⁵ ⲗ A048 1

f³⁵ ⲗ BC 2

f³⁵ ABC 2

f³⁵ ⲗ ABC 3 [Since this combination attests over 90% of the words, it is irrelevant to my present purpose and will not be used in any computations below.]

involving ⲗ 28

involving A 24

involving B 18

involving C 15 [C is missing from 4:3 to the end.]

involving 048 3

For the 84 variant sets that are left (87 minus 3), **f³⁵** has overt attestation from these early uncials 62% of the time. Not only are these uncials obviously independent of each other, **f³⁵** is

independent of them as well, but just as early. Here is a further demonstration that f^{35} is both early and independent. As we move to the next section, keep in mind that all by itself f^{35} proves that a variant is early.

f^{35} minority readings

A look at my apparatus will show that I have designated as genuine four readings with an attestation of 30% or less. In each case the deciding factor is the presence of f^{35} . I will now analyze these four readings, beginning with the smallest percentage. First, here is a roster of the non- f^{35} MSS (as per *ECM*) that attest each variant.

3:6 [20%] καὶ	5:11 [24%] ο θεος ημιν	1:6 [29%] περιπατουμεν	3:24 [30%] --- εν
---	---	---	01
---	03	---	---
---	---	0142	---
---	0296	---	---
---	---	33	---
---	---	61	---
---	69	---	---
---	---	---	94
---	---	180	180
254	---	---	---
---	323	---	---
---	---	378	---
---	---	607	607
---	614	---	614
---	630	---	---
915	---	---	---
---	1292	---	---
---	---	1501	---
---	1505	1505	---
1523	---	---	---
1524	---	---	---
---	1611	---	---
---	1739	---	---
1827	---	---	---
---	---	---	1836
---	---	1842	---
1844	---	---	---
1852	---	---	---
---	1881	---	---
---	---	1890	1890
---	2138	---	---
---	---	2147	---
---	2200	---	---
---	2298	---	---
2374	---	---	---

---	2412	---	2412
---	---	---	2423
---	2492	---	---
---	---	2544	---
---	---	2652	---
---	---	---	2805

As with James, there is no overlap between the first two columns, and only one MS in common between the 2nd and 3rd! It follows that **f³⁵** is independent of all the lines of transmission represented by the MSS in those columns. There are no Byzantine MSS in the 1st column and only one (not very strong—69) in the 2nd. In contrast, the 3rd column has one very strong Byzantine MS (607), one strong one (180), two fair ones (0142, 1890), and two weak ones (1501, 1842); for all that, they obviously do not represent the bulk of the Byzantine tradition. As in James, **f³⁵** is clearly early and independent of **K^x**. If it is independent of all other lines of transmission as well, as I believe, then it harks back to the Original—what other reasonable explanation is there?

καὶ 3:6 [20%]

Of the eight non-**f³⁵** MSS listed by *ECM* for this variant, none is Byzantine. Cursives 1523 and 1524 probably join one generation back; they are joined by 1844 perhaps two generations back; they are joined by 254 perhaps three generations back; so these four MSS reduce to one line of transmission. In the fifth century, or so I imagine, *καὶ* is attested by five independent lines of transmission besides **f³⁵**. Since their mosaics/profiles are very different, most of them probably go back to the third. This variant is certainly ancient and owes nothing at all to **K^x**. I take the conjunction to be emphatic, and probably original. Comparing this with *ιθυυοντος* in James (3:4 [21%]), there is no overlap with the eight non-**f³⁵** MSS listed by *ECM* there; so between the two we have ten independent lines of transmission in the fifth century, besides **f³⁵**.

ο Θεος ημιν 5:11 B [24%]

Of the sixteen non-**f³⁵** MSS listed by *ECM* for this variant, only one is Byzantine (69, fair). There is no overlap with the eight above. Codex B gives overt 4th century attestation. 0296 is a 6th century fragment too small to classify. Cursives 630, 1292, 1611, 2138 and 2200 will meet by the 5th century and thus represent one line of transmission. Cursives 614 and 2412 form a pair. In the fifth century, as I imagine, this variant is attested by eleven independent lines of transmission, besides **f³⁵**. Their profiles are sufficiently distinct that I wouldn't be surprised to find eight of them in the 3rd century. This reading is certainly ancient, owes nothing whatsoever to **K^x**, and in my opinion is most probably original. Comparing this with *δυναμενος* in James (3:2 [23%]), they share three lines of transmission but that leaves thirteen to add to the eleven here—11 + 13 = 24! The surviving MSS from the first five centuries absolutely do not represent the true state of affairs at the time.

περιπατουμεν 1:6 [29%]

Of the thirteen non-**f³⁵** MSS listed by *ECM* for this variant, cursives 2147 and 2652 are very close and will be joined by 378 by the 5th century. The six Byzantine MSS all have rather

distinct profiles, sufficiently so that in the 5th century they would still represent six lines.¹ So in the fifth century this variant has eleven independent lines of transmission, besides **f**³⁵, only one of which is shared with the second column. So for these first three readings **f**³⁵ finds support from 26 independent lines of transmission (5 + 11 + 10) back in the 5th century, as I suppose, being itself independent of all of them. In the apparatus I have already argued from the grammar and the context that περιπατούμεν is correct and therefore original—it is certainly ancient. If every word in an independent text-type is ancient it follows necessarily that the text-type itself is ancient.

--- εϛ 3:24 ⲗ [30%]

Of the ten non-**f**³⁵ MSS listed by *ECM*, cursives 614 and 2412 represent one line. Cursive 1836 has only a third of the total, so I discount it. Codex ⲗ gives overt 4th century attestation. Of the five Byzantine MSS, 607 and 2423 represent one line. So we are left with seven independent lines of transmission in the fifth century, aside from **f**³⁵, three of which are shared with column three and another with column two. This reading is certainly ancient and in my opinion is most probably original.

Conclusion

Obviously the picture we have seen so far will be true for all other **f**³⁵ minority readings, as we move up to 35%, 40%, etc. Allow me to repeat some salient points:

- 1) **f**³⁵ is early and independent—independent of all other known lines of transmission;
- 2) if it is independent of all other lines of transmission it must hark back to the Autographs, of necessity;
- 3) if every word in an independent text-type is ancient it follows necessarily that the text-type itself is ancient;
- 4) the surviving MSS from the first five centuries absolutely do not represent the true state of affairs at the time.

¹ I remind the reader that I determine the Byzantine MSS book by book, comparing *ECM* with *TuT*, but I take the profile from all seven general epistles, based on *TuT*.

APPENDIX

“Accumulated Errors of Fourteen Centuries”

The Gospel manuscript GA 1700 is the most recent dated manuscript representing Family 35 that has come to my attention. It is dated at 1623 AD and is held by the National Library of Greece. I wish to register my sincere thanks to the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts for making available a digital copy of this manuscript. Although from the seventeenth century, the hand is very legible. I have done a complete collation of this manuscript for John’s Gospel, and invite attention to the result. However, I wish to analyze that result using the following quote as a backdrop, taken from the preface to the Revised Standard Version, p. ix.

The King James Version of the New Testament was based upon a Greek text that was marred by mistakes, containing the accumulated errors of fourteen centuries of manuscript copying. . . . We now possess many more ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, and are far better equipped to seek to recover the original wording of the Greek text.

The first thing that interests me here is the allegation that the TR contains “the accumulated errors of fourteen centuries of manuscript copying”. If that is true, then a seventeenth century MS should be a veritable wastebasket of ‘accumulated errors’. So let us see how GA 1700 fares.

To begin, it has no fewer than 136 deviations from the family archetype (in John), making it by far the worst of the 54 family representatives that I have collated for that book; the second worst has ‘only’ 41 deviations. Although due to carelessness and mixture 1700 is a marginal member of Family 35 in John, it is nonetheless clearly a member. Of the 12 readings that I rank as +++, it misses one; of the 17 readings I rank as ++-, it misses one; of the 17 readings I rank as ++, it misses one; of the 15 readings I rank as +--, it misses none; of the 12 readings I rank as +, it misses three; for a total of six out of 44. Although by no means a thing of pristine beauty, it belongs to the family.¹

I will now list the 136 deviations, showing selected further attestation that the 1700 variant has; any **f**³⁵ MSS that I have collated are listed first, followed after the [] by anything else. My lists of evidence are selective, being sufficient for my purpose. The first reading is that of the family archetype; the second is that of GA 1700;² if no further MSS are listed, I treat the variant as a singular reading—of the 136 total, at least 54 are singulars, indicating that the copyist was rather careless (it should be obvious that a singular reading cannot be an ‘accumulated error’; it is a private error). But the remaining 82 furnish food for thought. Here is the list, that I have numbered to facilitate subsequent discussion (numbers in bold are singulars):

- 1) 1:5 σκοτια || σκοτεια [2%] P⁷⁵C,579 [this is simply an alternate spelling, and therefore not a proper variant; it recurs at 12:35 and 20:1]
- 2) 1:18 εις τον κολπον || εν τοις κολποις [] 565 [this one is strange; the two phrases were evidently regarded as synonymous; if a dependency cannot be established, the change was made independently by the two copyists]
- 3) 1:19 οτε || οταν [a singular, that does not affect the meaning]

¹ For the Family 35 profile and the key, please see Part II above.

² For the single example where I list three readings, it is the third one.

- 4) 1:28 βιθαβαρα || βηθανια [65%] P^{66,75} ⋈ AB,C,W,Θ,28,579,1424 [this is one of the places where 1700 departs from the family; a place name sticks out like a sore thumb, and the variant is the reading of the predominant lectionary type; the monk being used to hearing the variant would naturally change the text]
- 5) 1:38 λεγεται || λεγετε 553,1617,2352 [] W [the forms are virtual synonyms, and the change was presumably made independently; that W also has the change is merely a curiosity]
- 6) 1:40a ην || 1 δε [2%] A,W,Λ,f¹³,579,1424 [the addition is a ‘natural’, and could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected; 1700 agrees with 1424 quite frequently]
- 7) 1:40b των δυο των ακουσαντων || ~ 3412 [a singular, that does not affect the meaning]
- 8) 1:42 εμβλεψας || 1 δε 1384,1667 [20%] P⁷⁵Θ,Λ, f¹³,1071,1424 [the addition is a ‘natural’, and could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 9) 1:45 ευρηκαμεν || 1 τον [a singular, that does not affect the meaning]
- 10) 1:50 μειζω || μειζονα [] P⁶⁶ ⋈ [presumably the copyist did not have access to either of the early MSS, so this is an independent change; it is a change in gender dictated by the imagined referent; the meaning is not affected]
- 11) 2:5 λεγη || λεγει 1559,1667 [30%] Θ,Λ,f¹³,579,1071,1424 [the Subjunctive is expected, but the Indicative is possible—this is probably not an itacism; the meaning is not affected]
- 12) 2:10 ου || 1 δε [2%] ⋈,Λ,f¹³,1071,1346 [the addition is a ‘natural’, and could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 13) 2:15 φραγγελιον || φραγγελιον 141,685,1694,2466 [this is simply an alternate spelling, and therefore not a proper variant]
- 14) 2:17 καταφαγεται || κατεφαγε [5%] 69,1071 [this is a difference in tense, that does not affect the meaning]
- 15) 3:15 εχη || εχει 824,1713,2322 [40%] Θ,Λ,f¹³,579,1071,1346,1424 [the Subjunctive is expected, but the Indicative is possible—this is probably not an itacism; the meaning is not affected]
- 16) 3:16 εχη || εχει 824,1686,1559,2322 [30%] Λ,f¹³,579,1071,1424 [the Subjunctive is expected, but the Indicative is possible—this is probably not an itacism; the meaning is not affected]
- 17) 3:22 μετ αυτων || μετα των μαθητων αυτου [] 28 [in the context the phrases are synonymous; the meaning is not affected; the change is probably independent, which would make this a ‘singular’ reading]
- 18) 3:24 την || --- [] Θ,f¹,565 [this change could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 19) 3:28 μοι μαρτυρειτε || ~ 21 928,1334,1572,1667 [a mere reversal of word order, that does not affect the meaning; this may well have happened independently]
- 20) 3:36 οψεται || οψετε [the forms are virtual synonyms; the meaning is not affected]

- 21) 4:14 διψηση || διψησει [10%] P⁷⁵ ⚭A,B,Θ,f¹³,28,1071 [the Subjunctive is expected, but the Indicative is possible—this is probably not an itacism; the meaning is not affected]
- 22) 4:17 οτι || --- [direct or indirect quote; the meaning is not affected]
- 23) 4:20 εστιν ο τοπος οπου δει προσκυνειν || ~ 56 εκει 123 [two ways of saying the same thing]
- 24) 4:36 χαρη || χαρει [30%] Θ,Λ,f¹³,28,579,1071,1424 [the Subjunctive is expected, but the Indicative is possible—this is probably not an itacism; the meaning is not affected]
- 25) 4:43 τας || --- [] 1424 [this could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 26) 4:48 ουν || --- [] P^{66*} [this presumably happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 27) 5:2 εβραιστι || εβραιστη 1339,2466 [2%] f¹³,28,579,1071,1424 [this is simply an alternate spelling, and therefore not a proper variant]
- 28) 5:31 εαν || 1 γαρ 2352 [] 28 [the addition is a ‘natural’, and could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 29) 5:34 την || --- [a singular, that does not affect the meaning]
- 30) 5:36 με απεσταλκεν || ~ 21 [a mere reversal of word order, that does not affect the meaning]
- 31) 5:39a ερευνατε || ερευναται [a corrected singular]
- 32) 5:39b αυταις || αυτοις [] 1071 [this is an obvious spelling error that a reader would correct automatically; given the copyist’s carelessness, he may have repeated the error from his exemplar]
- 33) 6:2 αυτου τα σημεια || ~ 231 [a mere reversal of word order, that does not affect the meaning]
- 34) 6:19a ως || ωσει [1%] A,D,f¹,565 [the change is an ‘easy’, and could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 35) 6:19b γινομενον || γενομενον 128,685 [] G,1424 [a change in tense, that does not affect the meaning; in the cursives *epsilon* and *iota* are often easily confused]
- 36) 6:21 λαβειν αυτον || ~ 21 [] D [a mere reversal of word order, presumably independent, that does not affect the meaning]
- 37) 6:22 ευεβησαν || ανεβησαν (12.9%) [although the verbs are different, in the context they act as synonyms; the meaning is not affected]
- 38) 6:27 την βρωσιν² || --- [2%] ⚭,28,1071 [this could have happened independently; since the phrase is a repetition, the meaning is not affected by its omission; it is a possible case of homoioarcton]
- 39) 6:30 συ || --- 201 [10%] W,f¹³,579 [this could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 40) 6:32a υμιν² || ημιν [an itacism resulting in nonsense; not a proper variant]

- 41) 6:32b αρτων² || 1 τον [] P^{75v} [this could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 42) 6:37 εκβαλω || εκβαλλω 18,1617,2466 [1%] G [a change in tense, that does not affect the meaning, but since the forms received the same pronunciation, the change could have been made independently, without thinking]
- 43) 6:40 εχη || εχει [8%] P^{66c,Λc,f13,28,579,1071,1424} [the Subjunctive is expected, but the Indicative is possible—this is probably not an itacism; the meaning is not affected]
- 44)** 6:45 ερχεται || ερχετε [a corrected singular]
- 45)** 6:50 καταβαινων || καταβαινον [an itacistic misspelling that changes the gender incorrectly]
- 46) 6:54 αυτον || 1 εν 1339,1496,1617,1637 [25%] C,Λ,f^{13,28,1071} [the addition is a ‘natural’, and could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 47)** 6:63 ωφελει || ωφελη [an itacism]
- 48) 6:65 αυτω || --- [] ξ* [this could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 49) 6:67 τοις || τους [] H,Y [a spelling error that presumably happened independently]
- 50)** 6:68 απελευσομεθα || πορευσομεθα [a singular; perhaps his exemplar was smudged; the verbs are synonymous in this context; the meaning is not affected]
- 51)** 7:1 ο ιησους μετα ταυτα || ~ 3412 [a mere reversal of word order, that does not affect the meaning]
- 52) 7:28 αληθινος || αληθης [] P⁶⁶ξ [this could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 53) 7:30 την χειρα || τας χειρας [1%] W,f^{1,1071} [singular or plural in this context does not affect the meaning]
- 54)** 7:31 ων || ωνπερ [a singular; the forms are synonymous in this context; the meaning is not affected]
- 55) 7:39 ο || ου 201,480,547,1384 [70%] P⁶⁶ξ,D,W,Θ,f^{1,13,28,579,1424} [this is one of the places where 1700 departs from the family; the genitive follows the case of the referent, but the accusative correctly gives the direct object of the verb; the meaning is not affected]
- 56) 7:46 ουτως || --- 897 [] 28 [this could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 57) 7:50 ων || --- [] L [this could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 58) 8:4 αυτοφωρω || αυτοφορω 1145,1334,1559,2352,2466,l.2110 [60%] 124,1346 [this is one of the places where 1700 departs from the family; they are different spellings of the same word; the meaning is not affected]
- 59) 8:33 στι || --- [] W,f^{1,565} [this could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 60)** 8:36 ο υιος υμας || ~ 312 [a mere reversal of word order, that does not affect the meaning]

- 61) 8:48 σαμαρειτης || σαμαρειτις 1559,1617 [1%] 28,1424 [they are different spellings of the same word; the meaning is not affected]
- 62) 8:52 εγνωκαμεν || εγνωμεν [a singular; probably a careless mistake that happens to change the tense; the meaning is not affected]
- 63) 8:57 ουν || --- [a singular; the copyist omits this conjunction a number of times, and one wonders why; the meaning is not affected]
- 64) 9:20 αυτοις || --- [5%] P^{66,75} x,B,W,f¹³ [this could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 65) 9:21a ηνοιξεν || ανωξεν [] Θ,579 [alternate spellings of the same form; the meaning is not affected]
- 66) 9:21b ημεις || --- [a singular; the meaning is not affected]
- 67) 9:24 ουν || --- [] 579 [this could have happened independently; the meaning is not affected]
- 68) 9:35 ο ιησους || --- [a singular; a possible case of homoioarcton; the meaning is not affected]
- 69) 10:1 αναβαινων || αναβαινον [an itacistic misspelling that changes the gender incorrectly]
- 70) 10:5 ακολουθησωσιν || ακουσωσιν [a singular; perhaps his exemplar was smudged; the verbs are virtually synonymous in this context; the meaning is not affected]
- 71) 10:13 μελει || μελλει 83 [30%] 1424 [the verbs are different, but they were pronounced the same way, and in the context only one of the meanings will work, so someone hearing the text read would naturally make the right choice; so much so that I wonder if the longer form did not come to be regarded as an alternate spelling for the shorter]
- 72) 10:16 ακουσουσιν || ακουσωσιν (38.1%) P⁶⁶ x,A,W,Θ,Λ,f¹³,28,579,1071,1424 [future indicative or aorist subjunctive; in this context they have the same function]
- 73) 10:18 αλλ εγω τιθημι αυτην απ εμαυτου || --- [] D [presumably these are independent instances of homoioteleuton; I do not consider homoioteleuton to be a proper variant, it is just an unintentional error]
- 74) 10:20 μαινεται || μενεται [] P⁶⁶A,Θ,f¹³ [presumably an itacistic misspelling that changes the verb incorrectly, resulting in nonsense]
- 75) 10:24 ουν || --- [a singular; the copyist omits this conjunction a number of times, and one wonders why; the meaning is not affected]
- 76) 10:40 οπου || ου [] P⁶⁶ [this could have happened independently; a careless error resulting in nonsense]
- 77) 11:2 εαυτης || αυτης 547,789,1461 [60%] P^{45,66,75} x,A,B,D,W,Θ,Λ,f¹,28,579,1071,1424 [this is one of the places where 1700 departs from the family; they are two ways of saying the same thing; the meaning is not affected]
- 78) 11:5 την¹ || --- [a singular; the meaning is not affected]
- 79) 11:9 οτι το φως του κοσμου τουτου βλεπει || --- [a singular; presumably an instance of homoioteleuton; I do not consider homoioteleuton to be a proper variant, it is just an

unintentional error]

- 80)** 11:12 κυριε || --- [a singular; the meaning is not affected]
- 81) 11:19 παραμυθησονται || παραμυθησονται 1686 [15%] 579,1071 [future indicative or aorist subjunctive; in this context they have the same function]
- 82)** 11:28 εφωησεν || ελαλησε [a singular involving a synonym; the meaning is not affected]
- 83)** 11:38 εμβριμωμενος || 1 τω πνευματι [a singular; the meaning is not affected]
- 84)** 11:39 ηδη || ηδει [an itacistic misspelling that results in nonsense]
- 85)** 11:53 ινα αποκτεινωσιν || ιναποκτεινωσιν [a careless error resulting in nonsense; a reader would automatically supply the missing vowel]
- 86)** 12:2 ανακειμενων συν || συνανακειμενων [10%] W,28,1071 || συνανακειμενων συν [a singular, but built on a dependency; the meaning is not affected]
- 87) 12:6 εμελεν || εμελλεν ^{f^{35pt}} [60%] f¹³,28,1424 [this is one of the places where 1700 departs from the family; the verbs are different, but they were pronounced the same way, and in the context only one of the meanings will work, so someone hearing the text read would naturally make the right choice; so much so that I wonder if the longer form did not come to be regarded as an alternate spelling for the shorter]
- 88)** 12:7 αυτο || αυαυτο [the copyist repeated a syllable going from one line to the next]
- 89) 12:26a διακονη || διακονει [] 28,1071,1424 [the subjunctive is expected, but the indicative is possible; in the context the meaning is not affected]
- 90)** 12:26b διακονη || διακονει [a singular; see above]
- 91) 12:37 αυτου σημεια || ~ 21 [] Λ,f¹³,579 [a mere reversal of word order, that does not affect the meaning]
- 92)** 12:42 ωμολογουν || ομολογουν [a singular; an itacism resulting in an alternate spelling; the meaning is not affected]
- 93) 13:26 ω || ο [] 579,1071,1424 [an itacism that changes the gender incorrectly]
- 94)** 13:27 συν || --- [a singular; the copyist omits this conjunction a number of times, and one wonders why; the meaning is not affected]
- 95) 13:29 εχομεν || εχωμεν [] 579 [the change in mode does not affect the meaning]
- 96) 13:30-31 ην δε νυξ οτε εξηλθεν || --- [] G [a clear case of homoioteleuton, that happened independently]
- 97) 14:13 αιτησητε || αιτησηται 1145 [] P⁶⁶D,W [the copyist corrected himself]
- 98) 14:23 ποιησομεν || ποιησωμεν 1667,1686 [5%] Λ,28,1424 [future indicative or aorist subjunctive; in this context they have the same function]
- 99) 15:2 φερη || φερει 553 [] 124,788,1346 [the subjunctive is expected, but the indicative is possible; in the context the meaning is not affected]
- 100) 15:7 αιτησεσθε || αιτησησθε [] 1424 [future indicative or aorist subjunctive; in this context they have the same function]
- 101)** 15:8 φερητε || φερηται [a corrected singular]

- 102)** 15:11 η χαρα¹ || --- [a singular resulting from both homoioarcton and homoioteleuton; not a proper variant]
- 103) 15:15 υμας λεγω || ~ 21 [1%] P⁶⁶ Ɑ,A,B,579,1071,1424 [a mere reversal of word order, that does not affect the meaning]
- 104)** 15:18 γινωσκετε || --- [a careless singular resulting in nonsense]
- 105)** 15:20 ουκ εστιν δουλος μειζων του κυριου αυτου || --- [a careless singular, perhaps omitting a whole line in his exemplar, but the resulting text makes good sense]
- 106)** 15:25 οτι εμισησαν με δωρεαν || --- [another careless singular, possibly due to homoioarcton; the resulting text makes sense, but is a little incomplete]
- 107)** 16:7a αλλ εγω την αληθειαν λεγω υμιν || --- [another careless singular; the resulting text makes sense; notice that the copyist was evidently having a bad day]
- 108)** 16:7b υμας¹ || 1 και [a singular; the meaning is not affected]
- 109) 16:21a τικτη || τικτει 553 [10%] Λ,28,1346,1424 [the Subjunctive is expected, but the Indicative is possible—this is probably not an itacism; the meaning is not affected]
- 110)** 16:21b γεννηση || γεννησει [a singular; future indicative or aorist subjunctive; in this context they have the same function]
- 111) 16:33 εχητε || εχετε [1%] Λ,28,1071 [the Subjunctive is expected, but the Indicative is possible—this is probably not an itacism; the meaning is not affected]
- 112) 17:10 δεδοσασμαι || δεδοσασμε [2%] P^{66c} Ɑ,Θ,1346,1424 [an itacism resulting in nonsense; a reader would automatically make the correction]
- 113) 17:23 γινωσκη || γινωσκει 553,1686 [2%] Λ,^{f13},28,579,1071 [the Subjunctive is expected, but the Indicative is possible—this is probably not an itacism; the meaning is not affected]
- 114) 18:13 αυτου || --- [2%] P⁶⁶ Ɑ,B,C,D,W,579,1071 [the repetition of the pronoun is not necessary to the sense; the meaning is not affected]
- 115)** 18:15 τω ιησου¹ || αυτω [a singular; the meaning is not affected]
- 116)** 18:17 συ || --- [a singular; the meaning is not affected]
- 117) 18:25 σιμων || --- 1435 [] 1424 [the meaning is not affected]
- 118)** 18:36a ηγωνιζοντο || ηγονιζοντο [a singular; an itacism resulting in a misspelling; the meaning is not affected]
- 119)** 18:36b ουκ εστιν || --- [a singular; the omission creates a contradiction within the verse; just why the copyist did it is impossible to say, unless it is an unintentional error, of which there are not a few]
- 120) 18:37 αυτω || --- 201,2322 [the omission does not affect the meaning]
- 121)** 18:39a συνηθεια || συνηθει [a singular; a careless misspelling]
- 122) 18:39b ημιν || υμιν 928,1334,1572,1667 [80%] Ɑ,A,B,W,Θ,Λ,^{f1,13},28,579,1071, 1346,1424 [this is one of the places where 1700 departs from the family; the original change was probably deliberate, introducing an improbability; it is scarcely credible that imperial Rome would release a prisoner based on a Jewish demand; however, the change makes little difference in the total meaning of the account]

- 123) 18:39c υμιν² || 1 ινα [a singular; the meaning is not affected]
- 124) 19:1 ελαβεν || --- [a singular; a possible homoioteleuton; the omission of the verb leaves the clause incomplete]
- 125) 19:13 εβραιστι || εβραιστη [] f¹³,28^s,579,1346,1424 [this is simply an alternate spelling, and therefore not a proper variant]
- 126) 19:15 εχομεν || εχωμεν 1686 [] Λ,579,1346 [the indicative is clearly correct, so this may be an itacism]
- 127) 19:17 εβραιστι || εβραιστη [] 579,1071,1424 [this is simply an alternate spelling, and therefore not a proper variant]
- 128) 19:24 ματισμον || ματις [a singular; a careless error; a reader would make the correction automatically]
- 129) 19:25a ειστηκεισαν || ειστηκει [a singular; the change makes the subject of the verb to be singular, rather than plural, resulting from a partial reading of the verse; a reader would make the necessary correction]
- 130) 19:25b μαγδαληνη || μαγδαλινη 1384 [] 1071 [this is simply an alternate spelling, and therefore not a proper variant]
- 131) 19:28 τουτο || ταυτα [] U [an independent error that does not affect the meaning]
- 132) 20:5 κειμενα || --- [] Λ [the omission does not alter the meaning]
- 133) 20:11 τω μνημειω || το μνημειον [50%] Θ,Λ,f¹³,579,1071,1346,1424 [the preposition works with both dative and accusative; in the context the meaning is not affected]
- 134) 20:19 αυτοις || --- [] & [an independent omission that does not alter the meaning]
- 135) 21:13 ουν || --- [2%] P¹²²&,B,C,D,W,f¹ [an independent error, presumably, given the copyist's penchant for omitting this conjunction; the meaning is not affected]
- 136) 21:15 ο ιησους || --- [] 1424 [an error that does not affect the meaning]

As Family 35 representatives go, this is a disappointing manuscript, but let us analyze the variations in detail. Of the 136 deviations from the family archetype, 54 are singular readings: with few exceptions, these do not affect the meaning, including a number that are not proper variants—what I have called a “careless singular” (above) I consider to be an unintentional error, and therefore not a proper variant. If no other known MS has a given change, then something created in the 17th century is not a variant. 136 – 54 = 82, so let us turn our attention to the 82. Of these, nine are mere alternate spellings, and therefore not proper variants (they are: 1, 13, 27, 58, 61, 65, 125, 127, 130). 82 – 9 = 73; of these, 16 are deviations shared by early codices, where it is scarcely credible that there could be a dependency, making them singular readings as far as the copyist of 1700 is concerned (10, 26, 36, 41, 48, 49, 52, 57, 73, 76, 96, 97, 131, 132, 134, 135). I would say that the correct deduction to be made from the evidence before us is that the copyists who produced those early MSS were also careless, marring their work with stupid errors. 73 – 16 = 57 (well under half of the total).

Looking at the evidence, it seems clear that GA 1700 contains some mixture. Of the 66 non-singulars (136 – 54 – 16 = 66), 1700 shares a variant with 1424 thirty times, with 1071 twenty-eight times, with 28 twenty-four times, with f¹³ twenty-two times, with 579 twenty-one times, with Λ nineteen times. **However**, an analysis of the 66 variants, and for that

matter of the whole 136, reveals the following datum, both astonishing and significant: only two proper variants could be said to make any difference in the meaning—4 and 122! But before looking at them more closely, I should mention that 1700 shares a variant with \aleph seventeen times, with P⁶⁶ and W each fifteen times, with A nine times, with B and D each eight times; but as I have already argued, we can scarcely claim a dependency—the errors were simply made independently (with the exception of the few places where there is massive agreement).

Now I will analyze items 4 and 122. Was the place where John was baptizing Bithabara or Bethany? Whichever name we choose, we do not know the exact location, except that it was on the eastern side of the Jordan River. (Those maps that place it on the western side mislead their readers.) From the very beginning, who in Asia Minor or Europe would know the exact location, whatever its name? It follows that the choice of name makes no difference to the point of the narrative; the important thing is what happened, not where it happened.

Did Pilate say, “We have a custom” or “You have a custom” (122)? The MSS attestation in favor of ‘you’ is 80%. But really now, how could the Jews have a custom that placed an obligation on their conquerors? It is scarcely credible that imperial Rome would release a prisoner based on a Jewish demand, so the reading of Family 35 is doubtless correct. However that may be, the choice of pronoun makes little difference to the point of the narrative, which is that the Jews chose Barabbas rather than Jesus.

Although as representatives of Family 35 go GA 1700 is rather pitiful, for all that, someone reading 1700 for devotional purposes would not be misled as to the intended meaning at any point! I submit that this conclusion is highly significant. In spite of its 136 deviations, 1700 is an adequate copy of John’s Gospel for all practical purposes. So what about all those nasty ‘accumulated errors’ alleged in the RSV preface? I recognize the possibility that 1700 may have up to 57 inherited errors, errors taken from an exemplar, but since they would make little or no difference to a translation into English, they do not agree with RSV’s purpose in mentioning ‘accumulated errors’.

Going back to the RSV preface, I now invite attention to the final sentence: “We now possess many more ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, and are far better equipped to seek to recover the original wording of the Greek text.” The use of the verb ‘recover’ indicates that they considered the original wording to have been lost. The linking of “far better equipped” to “more ancient manuscripts” indicates that they considered the older to be better. In fact, the committee that produced the RSV used a Greek text that leaned heavily on Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. But decades before, Herman C. Hoskier had published his *Codex B and its Allies, a Study and an Indictment* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 2 volumes, 1914). He demonstrated objectively that the named codices are not good copies. The RSV committee obviously ignored Hoskier’s work. I would say that whoever wrote the RSV preface was lacking in integrity. The alleged ‘accumulated errors’ were merely a smokescreen to deceive the reader and to defend their use of a radically different Greek text, a text that incorporates errors of fact and plain contradictions, as well as hundreds of serious changes. I would say that anyone who still believes the allegations contained in the quote from the RSV preface is in fact embracing **canards**.

f³⁵ subgroups in the General Epistles¹

There are fourteen significant splits in the Family in the four larger books (there being none in the three shorter ones), as follows:

James 2:13 ελεον 432^{alt},1766^c

ελεος 328,394{432,604}²634,664,928,986,1247,1249,1482,1548,1619^c,1636,
1725,1732^{alt},1749,1752,1766,1897,2080,2221,2289,2587,2704

James 2:14 εχει

εχη 141,328,386,394,604,634,664,801,928,986,1075,1247,1249,1250,1482,
1508,1548,1656,1704,1737,1746,1748,1749,1752,1766,1855,1876,1899,
2218,2221,2289,2431,2501,2587,2626,2704

1 Peter 1:23 αλλ

αλλα {149,201}{432,604}757,824,1072,1075,1248,1250,1503,1548,1617,
1618,1619,1628,1636,1637,1656,1740,1745,1746,1748,1754,1763,
1768,1864,1892,2352,2431,2777

1 Peter 2:11 απεχεσθαι 1072^{alt}

απεχεσθε {149,201}204,604^c,757^{alt},824,1072,1248,1503^c,1548,1617,1618,
1619^{alt},1628^{alt},1637^c,1745^{alt},1746,1748,1864^{alt},1899,2352,2431,
2704,2777

1 Peter 2:24 απογενομενοι

απογεννωμενοι (328)³394{432(604)}664,928,986,1247,1249,1482,1508,1548,
1752,1763,1766,1768,1855,2289,2587(2704)

1 Peter 3:6 εγεννηθητε 1766^v

εγεννηθητε 604,664,801,1247,1250,1618,1637,1732,1748,1752,1763,1876,
1899,2289,2431,2587,2626,2704,2777

1 Peter 4:2 του 2261^c

--- {149,201}{432,604}757,824,1072,1075,1101,1248,1503,1508^c,1548,1617,
1618,1619,1628,1636,1637,1656,1737,1740,1745,1746,1748,1754,1761,
1766,1768,1864,1892,1899,2218,2261,2352,2431,2501,2777

1 Peter 4:11 ως 1748[?]

ης 141^c{149,201}{432,604}757,824,1072,1075,1248,1503,1508,1617,1618,
1619,1628,1636,1637,1656,1737,1740,1745,1746,1754,1864,1892,2218,
2352,2431,2777

1 Peter 5:7 μελει 824^c,1726^c

μελλει 141{432,604}801,824,986,1247,1248,1249,1250,1508,1617,1726,1748,
1752,1763,1768,1876,1892,1899,2261,2352,2431,2501,2626

1 Peter 5:8 καταπιειν 394^c

καταπιη 328,394,604,664,928,986,1075,1247,1249,1482^v,1508,1737,1748,

¹ This study uses 77 out of 84 known family members; the seven that are missing would probably make little, if any, difference to our conclusions. Out of the 77 MSS, all of those not listed with the alternate go with the main form. Thus in James 2:14, the 36 MSS that have the alternate should be subtracted from 77, which leaves 41 for the main form.

² MSS within braces, {}, have a common exemplar and may be treated as a single vote.

³ A MS within () has a slight variation on the given form.

1749,1752,1761,1763,1766,1855,1892^c,1899,2218,2221^c,2255^v,
2289,2431,2587^c,2704

2 Peter 2:14 πλεονεξιας

πλεονεξιαν 394,664,801,928,1249,1250,1482,1508,1726,1749,1763,1855,
1876,2261,2289, 2378,2587,2626,2704^v

2 Peter 3:3 γινωσκοντες

γινωσκοτας 328,394,664,928,1247,1249,1482,1508,1749,1752,1855,2255,
2289,2587,2704

1 John 1:6 περιπατουμεν

18,35,141,204,386,801,824,1100,1101,1250,1636,1704,1725,
1726,1732,1733,1754,1761,1858,1865,1876,1897,2080,2221,
2261[2378]2466,2554,2626,2723¹

περιπατωμεν

{149,201}328,394{432,604}634(664)757,928,986,1072,1075,
1247,1248,1249,1482,1503,1508,1548,1617,1618,1619,1628,
1637,1656,1737,1740,1745,1748,1749,1752,1763,1766,1768,
1855,1864,1892,2218,2255,2289,2352,2431,2501,2587,2704, 2777

1 John 4:20 μισει

μιση 328,386,394,604,634,928,1247,1249,1482,1508,1548,1704,1749,1752,
1763,1766,1855,2255, 2289,2587,2704

They divide into two significant sub-groups as follows:

Group 1:

Js2:13	Js2:14	1P2:24	1P3:6	1P5:8	2P2:14	2P3:3	1J4:20	place	date
2289	2289	2289	2289	2289	2289	2289	2289	Vatopediu	XII
2704	2704	2704	2704	2704	2704	2704	2704	Meteora	XV
394	394	394	---	394	394	394	394	Vallicelliana	1330
664	664	664	664	664	664	664	---	Zittau	XV
928	928	928	---	928	928	928	928	Dionysiu	1304
1247	1247	1247	1247	1247	---	1247	1247	Sinai	XV
1249	1249	1249	---	1249	1249	1249	1249	Sinai	1324
1482	1482	1482	---	1482	1482	1482	1482	M Lavras	1304
1752	1752	1752	1752	1752	---	1752	1752	Panteleimonos	XII
2587	2587	2587	2587	---	2587	2587	2587	Vatican	XI
328	328	(328)	---	328	---	328	328	Leiden	XIII
604	604	604	604	604	---	---	604	Paris	XIV
---	1508	1508	---	1508	1508	1508	1508	M Lavras	XV
1749	1749	---	---	1749	1749	1749	1749	M Lavras	XVI
---	1855	1855	---	1855	1855	1855	1855	Iviron	XIII
---	---	1763	1763	1763	1763	---	1763	Athens	XV
1766	1766	1766	---	1766	---	---	1766	Sofia	1344

¹ Here I list the MSS for both forms, since I followed a minority. See the discussion below.

I consider that these seventeen MSS represent a significant sub-group that is distributed throughout the four larger books. Observe that the geographical distribution is limited; Constantinople, Jerusalem, Patmos, Trikala and seven of the ten (that I checked) Mt. Athos monasteries are missing (of the twenty M Lavras MSS only three are here). The probability that this group could represent the archetype is negligible. I now add the 'stragglers', to complete the picture for each variant.

986	986	986	---	986	---	---	---	Esphigmenu	XIV
1548	1548	1548	---	---	---	---	1548	Vatopediu	1359

634	634	---	---	---	---	---	634	Vatican	1394
---	801	---	801	---	801	---	---	Athens	XV
---	1250	---	1250	---	1250	---	---	Sinai	XV
---	1748	---	1748	1748	---	---	---	M Lavras	1662
---	1876	---	1876	---	1876	---	---	Sinai	XV
---	1899	---	1899	1899	---	---	---	Patmos	XIV
---	---	---	---	2255	---	2255	2255	Ivion	XVI
---	2431	---	2431	2431	---	---	---	Kavsokalyvia	1332
---	2626	---	2626	---	2626	---	---	Ochrida	XIV

801, 1250, 1876 and 2626 may well have shared a common influence.

---	386	---	---	---	---	---	386	Vatican	XIV
432	---	432	---	---	---	---	---	Vatican	XV
---	1075	---	---	1075	---	---	---	M Lavras	XIV
---	1704	---	---	---	---	---	1704	Kutlumusiu	1541
---	1737	---	---	1737	---	---	---	M Lavras	XII
---	2218	---	---	2218	---	---	---	Lesbos	XVI
2221	2221	---	---	---	---	---	---	Sparta	1432

To these the following 'solitaries' should be added: for James 2:13 add 1636, 1725, 1897, 2080; for James 2:14 add 141, 1656, 1746, 2501; for 1 Peter 2:24 add 1768; for 1 Peter 3:6 add 1618, 1637, 1732, 2777; for 1 Peter 5:8 add 1761; for 2 Peter 2:14 add 1726, 2261, 2378; for 2 Peter 3:3 and 1 John 4:20 there are none.

Comment: $\epsilon\chi\eta$ in James 2:14 is attested by 36 MSS, over 40% of the Family. Besides dittography being an easy possibility, the pressure of $\mu\eta$ may have caused some copyists to put the Subjunctive, perhaps without thinking—the reverse change would presumably be deliberate. In the context the Indicative is correct: James is stating a fact, the person does not have works.

Group 2:

1P1:23	1P2:11	[1P3:6]	1P4:2	1P4:11	1P5:7	place	date
824	824	---	824	824	824	Grottaferrata	XIV
1248	1248	---	1248	1248	1248	Sinai	XIV
1617	1617	---	1617	1617	1617	M Lavras	XV
2352	2352	---	2352	2352	2352	Meteora	XV
2431	2431	2431	2431	2431	2431	Kavsokalyvia	1332
149-201	149-201	---	149-201	149-201	---	Vatican/London	XV/1357
432-604	---	604	432-604	432-604	432-604	Vatican/Paris	XV/XIV
1072	1072	---	1072	1072	---	M Lavras	XIII
1618	1618	1618	1618	1618	---	M Lavras	XIV
1746	1746	---	1746	1746	---	M Lavras	XIV
1748	1748	1748	1748	---	1748	M Lavras	1662
1892	---	---	1892	1892	1892	Jerusalem	XIV
2777	2777	2777	2777	2777	---	Karditsa	XIV

I consider that these thirteen MSS represent a significant sub-group, preceded by another twelve, below, that left the 'tree' at a node higher up.

757	---	---	757	757	---	Athens	XIII
1075	---	---	1075	1075	---	M Lavras	XIV
1503	---	---	1503	1503	---	M Lavras	1317
1548	1548	---	1548	---	---	Vatopediu	1359
1619	---	---	1619	1619	---	M Lavras	XIV
1628	---	---	1628	1628	---	M Lavras	1400
1636	---	---	1636	1636	---	M Lavras	XV
1637	---	1637	1637	1637	---	M Lavras	1328
1656	---	---	1656	1656	---	M Lavras	XV
1740	---	---	1740	1740	---	M Lavras	XII
1745	---	---	1745	1745	---	M Lavras	XV
1754	---	---	1754	1754	---	Panteleimonos	XII
1768	---	---	1768	---	1768	Iviron	1519
1864	---	---	1864	1864	---	Stavronikita	XIII
---	1899	1899	1899	---	1899	Patmos	XIV

I now add the 'stragglers', to complete the picture for each variant. The observant reader will have noticed that 1 Peter 3:6 is in [] above; I did this because this variant is already in group 1. This particular variant has a strange 'mixture' of both groups—because of the nature of the variant I suspect that the roster is fortuitous and therefore this variant does not really belong to either group.

1250	---	1250	---	---	1250	Sinai	XV
---	---	---	---	1508	1508	M Lavras	XV
---	---	---	1737	1737	---	M Lavras	XII
1763	---	1763	---	---	1763	Athens	XV
---	---	---	2218	2218	---	Lesbos	XVI
---	---	---	2261	---	2261	Kalavryta	XIV
---	---	---	2501	---	2501	Sinai	XVI

To these the following 'solitaries' should be added: for 1 Peter 2:11 add 204, 2704; for 1

Peter 4:2 add 1101, 1761, 1766; for 1 Peter 5:7 add 141, 801, 986, 1247, 1249, 1726, 1752, 1876, 2626 (this picture is probably due to the nature of the variant and does not reflect a dependency); for 1 Peter 1:23 and 4:11 there are none.

Comment: the glaring feature of this second group is that it is limited to one book. Another ‘glare’ is the dominance of M Lavras—almost half of the total (but there are some M Lavras MSS that are in neither group). The probability that this second group could represent the archetype is also negligible.

As with $\epsilon\chi\eta$ in James 2:14, the omission of $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ in 1 Peter 4:2 is attested by 36 MSS, over 40% of the family. Since there is little doubt that the archetype read the article, how to account for the high attestation for the omission? I suppose it was pressure from the Byzantine bulk, almost 80% here. In the context one would expect the article, that I consider to be correct.

We now come to the only real ‘problem’ for determining the archetypal form of the family in the General Epistles—1 John 1:6 (at the outset I mentioned fourteen splits, of which I have only dealt with thirteen). This is the only place in the General Epistles where the archetypal form is preserved in a minority of the extant representatives, at least as I see it. The grand point at issue could be a case of dittography. The verb ‘say’ is properly Subjunctive, being controlled by $\epsilon\alpha\nu$, but the verbs ‘have’ and ‘walk’ are part of a statement and are properly Indicative—only if we are in fact walking in darkness do we become liars for claiming to be in fellowship. So $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\pi\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\nu$ is correct. But to return to the MSS, we observe a curious circumstance: the roster that reads the Subjunctive is made up of precisely the two sub-groups, 2255 being the only outsider (a probable dittography); all the other MSS that do not participate in either sub-group read the Indicative, and they have a very good geographical distribution. Consider:

18	Constantinople	1364	35	Paris	XI
141	Vatican	XIII	204	Bologna	XIII
386	Vatican	XIV	801	Athens	XV
824	Grottaferrata	XIV	1100	Dionysiu	1376
1101	Dionysiu	1660	1250	Sinai	XV
1636	M Lavras	XV	1704	Kutlumusiu	1541
1725	Vatopediu	1367	1726	Vatopediu	XIV
1732	M Lavras	1384	1733	M Lavras	XIV
1754	Panteleimonos	XII	1761	Athens	XIV
1858	Konstamonitu	XIII	1865	Philotheu	XIII
1876	Sinai	XV	1897	Jerusalem	XII
2080	Patmos	XIV	2221	Sparta	1432
2261	Kalavryta	XIV	[2378]	Athens	1511 ¹
2466	Patmos	1329	2554	Bukarest	1434
2626	Ochrida	XIV	2723	Trikala	XI

A chart will help to visualize the distribution for the two variants, using ‘Mt. Athos’ and ‘elsewhere’:

¹ 2378 is missing the first sheet of 1 John, and hence the verse in question, but since it eschews both sub-groups throughout, it almost certainly read the Indicative here.

1) Mt. Athos: <u>Indicative</u>	<u>Subjunctive</u>	<u>both</u>
Konstamonitu	Esphigmenu	Dionysiu
Kutlumusiu	Ivion	M Lavras
Philotheu	Kavsokalyvia	Panteleimonos
	Stavronikita	Vatopediu

2) elsewhere:

Bologna	Karditsa	Athens
Bukarest	Leiden	Jerusalem
Constantinople	Lesbos	Paris
Grottaferrata	London	Sinai
Kalavryta	Meteora	Vatican
Ochrida	Sofia	
Patmos	Vallicelliana (Rome)	
Sparta	Zittau	
Trikala		

Sinai, Jerusalem, Mt. Athos and Vatican are on both sides, but the Indicative has the better distribution elsewhere, significantly better.

In “Adjudicating Family Splits”,¹ based on 24 MSS, the Subjunctive was attested by 59% of that selection, but my weighting instrument reduced the value to 43%. This paper is based on 77 MSS (out of 84 known family members) and the Subjunctive is now attested by 61% of the 77—the picture has not changed. I am cheerfully satisfied that the archetype read the Indicative.

Returning to the list of fourteen splits on the first page, it will be observed that almost all of them involve a single letter, or similar sounding diphthong. Most of them represent scarcely any difference in meaning. There simply is no significant variation anywhere in Family 35 throughout the seven General Epistles. God has preserved His Text.

Down with forgery!

Every now and again I am handed a question that starts out by irritating me, but after I calm down I perceive that God is nudging me to clarify a point that needs it. This happened a while ago with the ‘jewel’ attributed to Jerome that in his day ‘most’ or ‘almost all’ of the Greek manuscripts did not have the last twelve verses of Mark. Since of the 1700 or so Greek MSS known to us that contain the last chapter of Mark only three do not have them (one of them being a falsification at this point), how could a vast majority in the 5th century be reduced to a small fraction of one percent later on? In terms of the science of statistical probability, such an inversion is simply impossible. Only a worldwide campaign that was virtually 100% successful could bring about such a switch, and there is not a shred of evidence for such a campaign. Recall that Diocletian’s campaign to destroy NT MSS (applied unevenly in different areas) was past history by a century (not to mention Constantine’s ‘conversion’ and the consequences thereof).

Kenneth Scott Latourette (*A History of Christianity* [New York: Harper, 1953], p. 231) describes Eusebius Hieronimus Sophronius (alias Jerome) as “a gifted and diligent scholar, enormously erudite, a master of languages, a lover of books, wielding a facile, vigorous, and often vitriolic pen” who “was an eloquent advocate of the monastic life”. He doubtless had

¹ This article is available from my site, www.prunch.org.

his defects [don't we all], but he was not ridiculously stupid, as he would have had to be to make the statement attributed to him. Our knowledge of the 'jewel' comes from the tenth century [the interval of five centuries does not inspire confidence]; it is almost certainly a forgery (someone 'borrowing' a famous name to give credence to some statement). Since 'sacred cows' do not like to die, a review of some relevant history is in order.

K. Aland on Egypt

Even that great champion of an Egyptian text, Kurt Aland, recognized that during the early centuries, including the 4th, Asia Minor (especially the Aegean area) was "the heartland of the Church". (It also became the heartland of the Byzantine Empire and the Orthodox Churches.) The demand for copies of the NT would have a direct bearing on the supply, and on the areas where copies would be concentrated. But on the subject of Egypt, Aland had this to say:

Our knowledge of the church in Egypt begins at the close of the 2nd century with bishop Demetrius who reorganized the dominantly Gnostic Egyptian church by founding new communities, consecrating bishops, and above all by establishing relationships with the other provinces of the church fellowship. Every church needed manuscripts of the New Testament—how was Demetrius to provide them? Even if there were a scriptorium in his own see, he would have to procure "orthodox" exemplars for the scribes. The copies existing in the Gnostic communities could not be used, because they were under suspicion of being corrupt. There is no way of knowing where the bishop turned for scribal exemplars, or for the large number of papyrus manuscripts he could give directly to his communities. ("The Text of the Church?" Kurt Aland, *Trinity Journal*, Vol. 8, N^o 2, Fall, 1987, p. 138 [actually sent out in the Spring, 1989].)

But just a minute, please. In the year of our Lord 200, who in Egypt was still speaking Greek? (For that matter, who among the ordinary people had ever spoken Greek there?) What Greek speaking communities could the worthy Demetrius have been serving? Would the scholars linked to the library in Alexandria be likely to bow to Demetrius? So far as we know, no apostle ever ministered in Egypt, and no Autograph of a New Testament book was held there. The Gnostic dominance probably should not surprise us. But the situation in Alexandria is relevant to the question in hand because of Clement, and especially Origen, who was mentor to Pamphilus, who was mentor to Eusebius of Caesarea.

Eusebius (Caesarea)

One suspects that the forger who 'borrowed' Jerome actually started out by 'borrowing' Eusebius (Caesarea). He has Eusebius answering a certain 'Marinus' with, "One might say that the passage is not contained in all the copies of Mark's Gospel . . ." The 'not all' became 'some' or even 'many', here and there. If Eusebius actually wrote such a thing, of which we are not sure [the interval of six centuries does not inspire confidence here either], how was he qualified to do so? After the Roman destruction in 70 AD, Palestine became a backwater in the flow of the Christian river. The transmission of the true NT Text owes nothing to Caesarea. By the 4th century there would have been thousands, literally, of NT MSS in use around the world, of which Eusebius (d. 339, b. about 265) probably would not have seen more than a dozen (most from Alexandria, not Asia Minor). If Codex B was produced in Alexandria in time for Eusebius to see it, it would indeed permit him to say 'not all' copies; but why would he do so? And why should we pay any attention to him if he did? Here again, who in Palestine was still speaking Greek in the 4th century? What use would Eusebius have for Greek manuscripts? One other point: had Eusebius written such a thing, it would have been after Diocletian's campaign, presumably, but it would still be fresh in his memory and

he should have mentioned it. Emboldened by success, as I suppose, the forger decided to ‘up the ante’ attributing the same exchange to Jerome, answering a certain ‘Hebidia’, except that now it is ‘most’ or ‘almost all’.

Jerome (Bethlehem)

Jerome was born around 342 and died in 420 (or so). During 382-384 he was secretary to Pope Damasus, in Rome, and began work on the Latin Vulgate. Not long after the death of Damasus (384) he moved to Bethlehem, followed a few months later by the wealthy Paula, who helped him build a monastery, and so on. Jerome spent the last 30+ years of his life in Bethlehem, even more of a ‘backwater’ than Caesarea, and a century after Eusebius. All the negative observations made about Caesarea apply here with added force. Further, who in the Pope’s entourage in Rome was speaking Greek in 380 AD? From Rome Jerome moved to Bethlehem. How many actual Greek MSS of the NT would Jerome have seen? Certainly fewer than 1% of the total in use (at that time there would be few Greek MSS in Italy and Palestine—who would use them?). In lists of early Church ‘fathers’ Jerome is usually listed with those who wrote in Latin, not Greek. The statement attributed to him is patently false, scientifically impossible; and he would have been ridiculously unqualified to make it. Not being stupid or dishonest, he didn’t!

Addendum

After I circulated the above as my ‘mailing 75’, my Canadian friend, Charles Holm, called my attention to historical research done by Timothy David Barnes that is relevant to the credibility of Jerome (*Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). In an appendix dealing specifically with Jerome, there is a section called “Jerome and Eusebius” wherein Barnes offers the following observations (pages 236-238).

First, Jerome never questions the reliability of Eusebius. Thus he accepts Eusebius’ interpretation of what a writer says without asking whether it is correct.

.....

Secondly, Jerome far surpasses Eusebius in credulity. What was in Eusebius presented as surmise or mere rumour is for Jerome established and indubitable fact.

.....

Thirdly, Jerome mistranslates and misunderstands.

.....

Fourthly, Jerome dishonestly conceals both his ignorance and his debt to Eusebius.

Well, well, well, it appears that one should read Jerome with a full salt shaker to hand. Perhaps my closing sentence above should have been: Not being stupid, he didn’t! However, I continue to insist that Jerome could not have been so grossly stupid and/or dishonest as to make the ridiculous statement attributed to him. Down with **forgery!**¹

Is NT Textual Criticism a Science?

Have you ever heard or read (or said) the phrase, ‘the science of NT textual criticism’? How about the phrase, ‘textual critic’? So what does a critic do? He criticizes. What does he criticize? In this case it is the text of the NT in Greek. But just what is he criticizing? A literary

¹ For detailed documentation and an exhaustive discussion of other aspects of this question, see Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses according to S. Mark*, pp. 19-31, 38-69, 265-90.

critic looks at things like style and choice of vocabulary; a commentator tries to decide what was the meaning intended by the author of the text. So what does a textual critic do? He attempts to reconstruct the original wording of a text—notice that he is assuming that the original wording is 'lost', in the sense that no one knows for sure what it is, or was. (Notice also that this places the critic above the text, to which I will return.) Textual criticism only exists for texts whose original wording is deemed to be 'lost'. No one does textual criticism on today's newspaper, or last week's news magazine. No one even does textual criticism on the 1611 King James Version, since we still have printed copies thereof. Any and all arguments surrounding the KJV come under other headings; they are not textual criticism.

Anyone familiar with the terrain knows that for the last 150 years (at least) the academic world has been dominated by the notion that the original wording of the NT text is in fact 'lost'. Just to illustrate, some 65 years ago Robert M. Grant wrote, "it is generally recognized that the original text of the Bible cannot be recovered".¹ For a number of further references echoing that sentiment please see pages 3-4 of my *Identity IV*. Before attempting to rebut that fiction [canard?], as I believe, I will sketch a bit of relevant history.

A Bit of Relevant History

The discipline as we know it is basically a 'child' of Western Europe and its colonies; the Eastern Orthodox Churches have generally not been involved. (They have always known that the true Text lies within the Byzantine tradition.) In the year 1500 the Christianity of Western Europe was dominated by the Roman Catholic Church, whose pope claimed the exclusive right to interpret Scripture. That Scripture was the Latin Vulgate, which the laity was not allowed to read. Martin Luther's 95 theses were posted in 1517. Was it mere chance that the first printed Greek Text of the NT was published the year before? As the Protestant Reformation advanced, it was declared that the authority of Scripture exceeded that of the pope, and that every believer had the right to read and interpret the Scriptures. The authority of the Latin Vulgate was also challenged, since the NT was written in Greek. Of course the Vatican library held many Greek MSS, no two of which were identical (at least in the Gospels), so the Roman Church challenged the authenticity of the Greek Text. In short, the Roman Church forced the Reformation to come to grips with textual variation among the Greek MSS. But they did not know how to go about it, because this was a new field of study and they simply were not in possession of a sufficient proportion of the relevant evidence.² (They probably did not even know that the Mt. Athos peninsula with its twenty monasteries existed.)

In 1500 the Roman Catholic Establishment was corrupt, morally bankrupt, and discredited among thinking people. The Age of Reason and humanism were coming to the fore. More and more people were deciding that they could do better without the god of the Roman Establishment. The new imagined freedom from supernatural supervision was intoxicating, and many had no interest in accepting the authority of Scripture (*'sola Scriptura'*). Further, it would be naive in the extreme to exclude the supernatural from consideration, and not allow for satanic activity behind the scenes—Ephesians 2:2.³ 'Sons of the disobedience' joined the

¹ R.M. Grant, "The Bible of Theophilus of Antioch", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXVI (1947), 173. Notice the pessimism, it 'cannot be recovered'. In that event, the critics are wasting their time, and ours. Surely, because we would have no way of knowing whether or not they have found it.

² Family 35, being by far the largest and most cohesive group of MSS, was poorly represented in the libraries of Western Europe. For that matter, very few MSS of whatever text-type had been sufficiently collated to allow for any tracing of the transmissional history.

³ Strictly speaking the Text has "according to the Aeon of this world, according to the ruler of the domain of the

attack against Scripture. The so-called 'higher criticism' denied divine inspiration altogether. Others used the textual variation to argue that in any case the original wording was 'lost', there being no objective way to determine what it may have been (that is, they could not perceive such a way at that time).

The uncritical assumption that 'oldest equals best' was an important factor and became increasingly so as earlier uncials came to light. Both Codex Vaticanus and Codex Bezae were available early on, and they have thousands of disagreements, just in the Gospels (in Acts, Bezae is wild almost beyond belief). If 'oldest equals best', and the oldest MSS are in constant and massive disagreement between/among themselves, then the recovery of a lost text becomes hopeless. Did you get that? **Hopeless, totally hopeless!** However, I have argued that 'oldest equals worst', and that changes the picture, radically.¹

Since everyone is influenced (not necessarily controlled) by his milieu, this was true of the Reformers. In part (at least) the Reformation was a 'child' of the Renaissance, with its emphasis on reason. Recall that on trial Luther said he could only recant if convinced by Scripture and reason. So far so good, but many did not want Scripture, and that left only reason. Further, since reason cannot explain or deal with the supernatural, those who emphasize reason are generally unfriendly toward the supernatural. [To this day the so-called historic or traditional Protestant denominations have trouble dealing with the supernatural.]

Before Adolf Deissmann published his *Light from the Ancient East* (1910), (being a translation of *Licht vom Osten*, 1908), wherein he demonstrated that Koiné Greek was the *lingua franca*

air"—the phrases are parallel, so 'Aeon' and 'ruler' have the same referent, a specific person or being. This spirit is presently at work (present tense) in 'the sons of the disobedience'. 'Sons' of something are characterized by that something, and the something in this case is 'the' disobedience (the Text has the definite article)—a continuation of the original rebellion against the Sovereign of the universe. Anyone in rebellion against the Creator is under satanic influence, direct or indirect (in most cases a demon acts as Satan's agent, when something more than the influence of the surrounding culture is required—almost all human cultures have ingredients of satanic provenance; this includes the academic culture [the academic requirement that one demonstrate 'acquaintance with the literature' obliges one to waste time on all that Satan's servants have written—consider 1 Corinthians 3:18-20]). Anyone in rebellion against the Creator will also have strongholds of Satan in his mind. Since Satan is the 'father' of lies (John 8:44), anytime you embrace a lie you invite him into your mind—this applies to any of his sophistries (2 Corinthians 10:5) currently in vogue, such as materialism, humanism, relativism, Marxism, Freudianism, Hortianism, etc.

¹ The benchmark work on this subject is Herman C. Hoskier's *Codex B and its Allies, a Study and an Indictment* (2 vols.; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1914). The first volume (some 500 pages) contains a detailed and careful discussion of hundreds of obvious errors in Codex B; the second (some 400 pages) contains the same for Codex Aleph. He affirms that in the Gospels alone these two MSS differ well over 3,000 times, which number does not include minor errors such as spelling (II, 1). Well now, simple logic demands that one or the other has to be wrong those 3,000+ times; they cannot both be right, quite apart from the times when they are both wrong. **No amount of subjective preference can obscure the fact that they are poor copies, objectively so.**

John William Burgon personally collated what in his day were 'the five old uncials' (Ⲙ, A, B, C, D). Throughout his works he repeatedly calls attention to the *concordia discors*, the prevailing confusion and disagreement, which the early uncials display between themselves. Luke 11:2-4 offers one example.

"The five Old Uncials" (Ⲙ ABCD) falsify the Lord's Prayer as given by St. Luke in no less than forty-five words. But so little do they agree among themselves, that they throw themselves into six different combinations in their departures from the Traditional Text; and yet they are never able to agree among themselves as to one single various reading: while only once are more than two of them observed to stand together, and their grand point of union is no less than an omission of the article. Such is their eccentric tendency, that in respect of thirty-two out of the whole forty-five words they bear in turn solitary evidence. (*The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established*. Arranged, completed, and edited by Edward Miller. London: George Bell and Sons, 1896, p. 84.)

Yes indeed, oldest equals worst. For more on this subject, please see pages 130-36 in my *Identity IV*.

in Jesus' day, there even being a published grammar explaining its rules, only classical Greek was taught in the universities. But the NT is written in Koiné. Before Deissmann's benchmark work, there were two positions on the NT Greek: 1) it was a debased form of classical Greek, or 2) it was a 'Holy Ghost' Greek, invented for the NT. The second option was held mainly by pietists; the academic world preferred the first, which raised the natural question: if God were going to inspire a NT, why wouldn't He do it in 'decent' Greek?

All of this placed the defenders of an inspired Greek Bible on the defensive, with the very real problem of deciding where best to set up their defense perimeter. Given the prevailing ignorance concerning the relevant evidence, their best choice appeared to be an appeal to Divine Providence. God providentially chose the TR, so that was the text to be used (the 'traditional' text).¹

To all appearances Satan was winning the day, but he still had a problem: the main Protestant versions (in German, English, Spanish, etc.) were all based on the *Textus Receptus*, as were doctrinal statements and 'prayer books'. Enter F.J.A. Hort, a quintessential 'son of the disobedience'. Hort did not believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, nor in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Since he embraced the Darwinian theory as soon as it appeared, he presumably did not believe in God.² His theory of NT textual criticism, published in 1881,³ was based squarely on the presuppositions that the NT was not inspired, that no special care was afforded it in the early decades, and that in consequence the original wording was lost—lost beyond recovery, at least by objective means. His theory swept the academic world and continues to dominate the discipline to this day.⁴

Moreover, Hort claimed that as a result of his work only a thousandth part of the NT text could be considered to be in doubt, and this was joyfully received by the rank and file, since it seemed to provide assurance about the reliability of that text—however, of course, that claim applied only to the W-H text (probably the worst published NT in existence, to this day).⁵

¹ Please note that I am not criticizing Burgon and others; they did what they could, given the information available to them. They knew that the Hortian theory and resultant Greek text could not be right.

² For documentation of all this, and a good deal more besides, in Hort's own words, please see the biography written by his son. A.F. Hort, *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort* (2 vols.; London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1896). The son made heavy use of the father's plentiful correspondence, whom he admired. (In those days a two volume 'Life', as opposed to a one volume 'Biography', was a posthumous status symbol.) Many of my readers were taught, as was I, that one must not question/judge someone else's motives. But wait just a minute; where did such an idea come from? It certainly did not come from God, who expects the spiritual person to evaluate everything (1 Corinthians 2:15). Since there are only two spiritual kingdoms in this world (Matthew 12:30, Luke 11:23), then the idea comes from the other side. By eliminating motive, one also eliminates presupposition, which is something that God would never do, since presupposition governs interpretation (Matthew 22:29, Mark 12:24). Which is why we should always expect a true scholar to state his presuppositions. I have repeatedly stated mine, but here they are again: 1) The Sovereign Creator of the universe exists; 2) He delivered a written revelation to the human race; 3) He has preserved that revelation intact to this day.

³ B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (2 Vols.; London: Macmillan and Co., 1881). The second volume explains the theory, and is generally understood to be Hort's work.

⁴ For a thorough discussion of that theory, please see chapters 3 and 4 in my *Identity IV*.

⁵ I would say that their text is mistaken with reference to 10% of the words—the Greek NT has roughly 140,000 words, so the W-H text is mistaken with reference to 14,000 of them. I would say that the so-called 'critical' text currently in vogue is 'only' off with reference to some 12,000, an improvement (small though it be). And just by the way, how wise is it to use a NT prepared by a servant of Satan?

The Nature of a Scientific Exercise

So much for my sketch of history. I will now return to the question in the title. To begin, I observe and insist that in any scientific exercise a rigorous distinction must be made between evidence, interpretation, and presupposition. It is dishonest to represent one's presuppositions as being part of the evidence (opinion is not evidence). So, if NT textual criticism is to be a 'science', presuppositions must be excluded. But if we exclude the presupposition that the original wording is 'lost', then textual criticism ceases to exist; and how can you have a 'science' of something that doesn't exist? Science is one thing; theory is another. A theory is based on presupposition, of necessity, so it is legitimate to speak of a Hortian theory of textual criticism, since he considered the original wording to be lost. My own theory does not include textual criticism, since I consider that the original wording is not lost. I defend a theory of the divine preservation of the NT Text.¹

By now it should be evident to the reader that the question of a 'lost' original is the crux, the central issue in any attempt to identify the original wording of the NT. So to that issue I now turn. To be fair, I need to recognize two definitions of 'lost': 1) lost beyond recovery, at least by objective means; 2) lost from view, in the sense that the available evidence has not been sufficiently studied to permit an empirical choice between/among competing variants. I consider that my *Identity IV* provides more than enough evidence to demonstrate that the first definition is false. The Hortian theory and all derivatives thereof, such as eclecticism (of whatever type), is not science, and may not honestly be called science. The second definition allows for scientific procedure. I suggest and recommend that we start using the term 'manuscriptology', rather than 'textual criticism'—manuscriptology refers to the study of the MSS, and is neutral as to presupposition. Any scientific exercise should begin with the evidence; so what is the evidence?

The primary evidence is furnished by the continuous text manuscripts (Greek) of the NT. The evidence furnished by the lectionaries is secondary. The evidence furnished by ancient versions and patristic citations is tertiary. Genuine historical evidence (to the extent that this can be determined) is ancillary. Where the primary evidence is unequivocal, the remaining types should not come into play. For example, at any given point in the four Gospels there will be around 1,700 extant continuous text MSS, representing all lines of transmission and all locales.² Where they all agree, there can be no legitimate doubt as to the original wording. But what if an early Papyrus comes to light with a variant, does that change the picture? The very fact of being early suggests that it is bad; why wasn't it used and worn out?

We have probably all heard/read the canard, 'manuscripts are to be weighed, not counted'. The basic meaning of the verb 'to weigh' refers to an objective procedure; it is done with physically verifiable weights. But do the followers of Hort (who are the main ones who keep repeating it) 'weigh' manuscripts using objective criteria? They do not, which is why I call it a 'canard'. That said, however, I submit for the consideration of all concerned that it is indeed possible to weigh MSS using objective criteria.

Just how are MSS to be weighed? And who might be competent to do the weighing? As the reader is by now well aware, Hort and most subsequent scholars have done their 'weighing'

¹ I consider myself to be a textual scholar, not critic. The Text is above me, not the opposite. In eclecticism the critic is above the text, is above the evidence; instead of faithfully following the evidence, he makes the evidence follow him. The MSS are reduced to the role of 'supplier of readings'.

² Of course we know that there are many MSS not yet 'extant', not yet identified and catalogued, so the number can only go up.

on the basis of so-called 'internal evidence'—the two standard criteria are, 'choose the reading which fits the context' and 'choose the reading which explains the origin of the other reading'.

One problem with this has been well stated by E.C. Colwell. "As a matter of fact these two standard criteria for the appraisal of the internal evidence of readings can easily cancel each other out and leave the scholar free to choose in terms of his own prejudgments."¹ Further, "the more lore the scholar knows, the easier it is for him to produce a reasonable defense of both readings. . . ."² The whole process is so subjective that it makes a mockery of the word 'weigh'. The basic meaning of the term involves an evaluation made by an objective instrument. If we wish our weighing of MSS to have objective validity, we must find an objective procedure.

How do we evaluate the credibility of a witness in real life? We watch how he acts, listen to what he says and how he says it, and listen to the opinion of his neighbors and associates. If we can demonstrate that a witness is a habitual liar or that his critical faculties are impaired then we receive his testimony with skepticism. It is quite possible to evaluate MSS in a similar way, to a considerable extent, and it is hard to understand why scholars have generally neglected to do so.

Can we objectively 'weigh' P⁶⁶ as a witness? (It is the oldest one of any size.) Well, in the space of John's Gospel (not complete) it has over 900 clear, indubitable errors—as a witness to the identity of the text of John it has misled us over 900 times. Is P⁶⁶ a credible witness? I would argue that neither of the scribes of P⁶⁶ and P⁷⁵ knew Greek; should we not say that as witnesses they were impaired?³

P⁷⁵ is placed close to P⁶⁶ in date. Though not as bad as P⁶⁶, it is scarcely a good copy. Colwell found P⁷⁵ to have about 145 itacisms plus 257 other singular readings, 25 percent of which are nonsensical.⁴ Although Colwell gives the scribe of P⁷⁵ credit for having tried to produce a good copy, P⁷⁵ looks good only by comparison with P⁶⁶. (If you were asked to write out the Gospel of John by hand, would you make over 400 mistakes? Try it and see!) It should be kept in mind that the figures offered by Colwell deal only with errors which are the exclusive property of the respective MSS. They doubtless contain many other errors which happen to be found in some other witness(es) as well. In other words, they are actually worse even than Colwell's figures indicate.

P⁴⁵, though a little later in date, will be considered next because it is the third member in Colwell's study. He found P⁴⁵ to have approximately 90 itacisms plus 275 other singular readings, 10 percent of which are nonsensical (*Ibid.*). However P⁴⁵ is shorter than P⁶⁶ (P⁷⁵ is longer) and so is not comparatively so much better as the figures might suggest at first glance. Colwell comments upon P⁴⁵ as follows:

¹ Colwell, "External Evidence and New Testament Criticism", *Studies in the History and Text of the New Testament*, eds. B.L. Daniels and M.J. Suggs (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1967), p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³ The fact that the transcriber of P⁷⁵ copied letter by letter and that of P⁶⁶ syllable by syllable (Colwell, "Scribal Habits", p. 380) suggests strongly that neither one knew Greek. When transcribing in a language you know you copy phrase by phrase, or at the very least word by word. P⁶⁶ has so many nonsensical readings that the transcriber could not have known the meaning of the text. Anyone who has ever tried to transcribe a text of any length by hand (not typewriter) in a language he does not understand will know that it is a taxing and dreary task. Purity of transmission is not to be expected under such circumstances.

⁴ E.C. Colwell, "Scribal Habits in Early Papyri: A Study in the Corruption of the Text", *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, ed. J.P. Hyatt [New York: Abingdon Press, 1965], pp. 374-76.

Another way of saying this is that when the scribe of P⁴⁵ creates a singular reading, it almost always makes sense; when the scribes of P⁶⁶ and P⁷⁵ create singular readings, they frequently do not make sense and are obvious errors. Thus P⁴⁵ must be given credit for a much greater density of intentional changes than the other two (*Ibid.*, p. 376).

As an editor the scribe of P⁴⁵ wielded a sharp axe. The most striking aspect of his style is its conciseness. The dispensable word is dispensed with. He omits adverbs, adjectives, nouns, participles, verbs, personal pronouns—without any compensating habit of addition. He frequently omits phrases and clauses. He prefers the simple to the compound word. In short, he favors brevity. He shortens the text in at least fifty places in **singular readings alone**. But he does **not** drop syllables or letters. His shortened text is readable (*Ibid.*, p. 383).

P⁴⁶ is thought by some to be as early as P⁶⁶. Zuntz's study of this manuscript is wellknown. "In spite of its neat appearance (it was written by a professional scribe and corrected—but very imperfectly—by an expert), P⁴⁶ is by no means a good manuscript. The scribe committed very many blunders . . . My impression is that he was liable to fits of exhaustion."¹

It should be remarked in passing that Codex B is noted for its 'neat appearance' also, but it should not be assumed that therefore it must be a good copy. Even Hort conceded that the scribe of B "reached by no means a high standard of accuracy" (Westcott and Hort, p. 233). Aleph is acknowledged on every side to be worse than B in every way. Zuntz says further: "P⁴⁶ abounds with scribal blunders, omissions, and also additions" (*Op.Cit.*, p. 212).

. . . the scribe who wrote the papyrus did his work very badly. Of his innumerable faults, only a fraction (less than one in ten) have been corrected and even that fraction—as often happens in manuscripts—grows smaller and smaller towards the end of the book. Whole pages have been left without any correction, however greatly they were in need of it (*Ibid.*, p. 252).

Recall from Colwell's study that the scribe of P⁴⁵ evidently made numerous **deliberate** changes in the text—should we not say that he was morally impaired? In any case, he has repeatedly misinformed us. Shall we still trust him? Similarly, it has been demonstrated that Aleph and B have over 3,000 mistakes between them, just in the Gospels. Aleph is clearly worse than B, but probably not twice as bad—at least 1,000 of those mistakes are B's. Do Aleph and B fit your notion of a good witness?² Again I say: oldest equals worst!

We really need to understand that age guarantees nothing about quality. Each witness must be evaluated on its own, quite apart from age. Further, and perhaps more to the point, we need to know how a given MS relates to others. Once a MS has been empirically identified as belonging to a family (line of transmission), then it is no longer an independent witness to the original—it is a witness to the family archetype. As Colwell so well put it, "the crucial question for early as for late witnesses is still, 'WHERE DO THEY FIT INTO A PLAUSIBLE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE HISTORY OF THE MANUSCRIPT TRADITION?'"³

¹ Gunther Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p.18.

² If you copied the four Gospels by hand, do you think you could manage to make a thousand mistakes? Try it and see!

³ Colwell, "Hort Redivivus: A Plea and a Program", *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, E.C. Colwell (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969), p. 157. [Emphasis in the original.]

Lamentably, the Hortian theory, allied to the fiction that 'oldest equals best', has had a soporific effect upon the discipline such that comparatively few MSS have been fully collated, and in consequence few families have been empirically defined. A rough idea based on spot checking is not adequate; there is too much mixture.

The Transmission of the Text

Going back to the 1,700 extant MSS for any given point in the Gospels, it should be evident that a variant in a single MS, of whatever age, is irrelevant—it is a false witness to its family archetype, at that point, nothing more. If a number of MSS share a variant, but do not belong to the same family, then they made the mistake independently and are false witnesses to their respective family archetypes—there is no dependency. Where a group of MSS evidently reflect correctly the archetypal form of their family, then we are dealing with a family (not the individual MSS). Families need to be evaluated just as we evaluate individual MSS. It is possible to assign a credibility quotient to a family, based on objective criteria. But of course any and all families must first be empirically identified and defined, and such identification depends upon the full collation of MSS.

Although the discipline has (so far) neglected to do its homework (collating MSS), still a massive majority of MSS should be convincing. For example, if a variant enjoys 99% attestation from the primary witnesses, this means that it totally dominates any genealogical 'tree', because it dominated the global transmission of the text. The *INTF Text und Textwert* series, practitioners of the Claremont profile method, H.C. Hoskier, von Soden, Burgon, Scrivener—in short, anyone who has collated any number of MSS—have all demonstrated that the Byzantine bulk of MSS is by no means monolithic. There are any number of streams and rivulets. (Recall that Wisse posited 34 groups within the Byzantine bulk, with 70 subgroups.) It is clear that there was no 'stuffing the ballot box'; there was no 'papal' decree; there was no recension imposed by ecclesiastical authority. In short, the transmission was predominantly normal.

Under normal circumstances the older a text is than its rivals, the greater are its chances to survive in a plurality or a majority of the texts extant at any subsequent period. But the **oldest** text of all is the autograph. Thus it ought to be taken for granted that, barring some radical dislocation in the history of transmission, a majority of texts will be far more likely to represent correctly the character of the original than a small minority of texts. This is especially true when the ratio is an overwhelming 8:2. Under any reasonably normal transmissional conditions, it would be . . . quite impossible for a later text-form to secure so one-sided a preponderance of extant witnesses.¹

I insist that the transmission of the NT Text was in fact predominantly normal, based on historical evidence. Part I above lists and discusses that evidence, but here is a thumbnail sketch:

- 1) The authors of the NT books believed they were writing Scripture;
- 2) The Apostles recognized that their colleagues were writing Scripture;
- 3) The 'Church Fathers' of the I and II centuries regarded the NT writings as Scripture;
- 4) The NT writings were used along with the OT by the Christian congregations from very

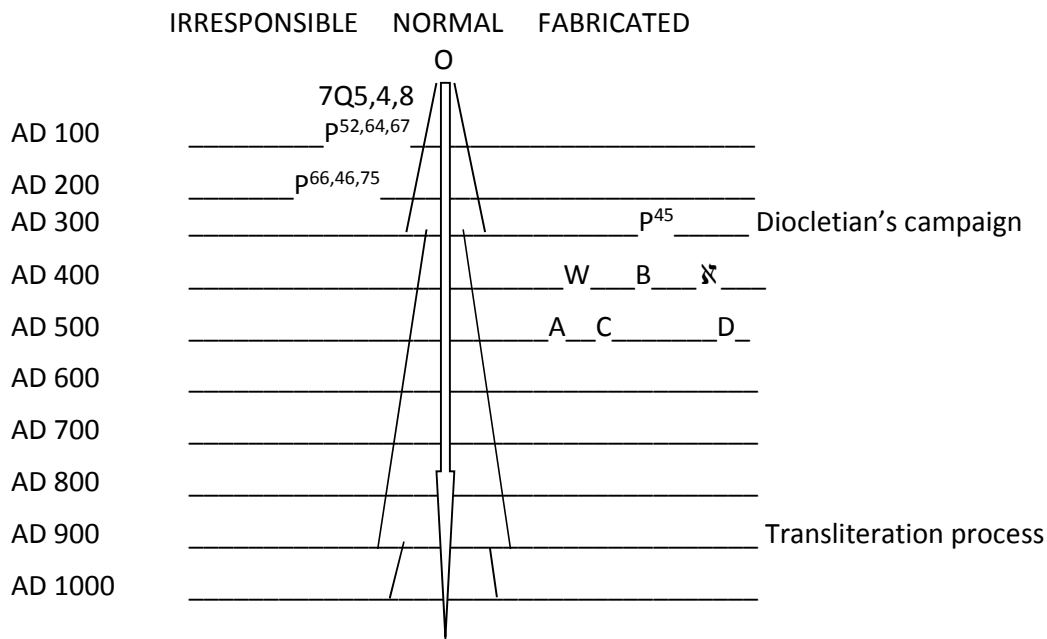
¹ Z.C. Hodges, "A Defense of the Majority Text" (unpublished course notes, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1975), p. 4. Appendix C in my *Identity IV* shows that the mathematical science of statistical probability gives ample support to Hodges' statement. It is statistically impossible for a late comer to dominate the transmission.

early on;

- 5) The early Christians were concerned about the purity of the NT Text.
- 6) What regions started out with the Autographs? Aegean area (18-24), Rome (2-7), Palestine (0-3), Egypt (0).
- 7) Where was the Church strongest during the II and III centuries? Asia Minor and the Aegean area.
- 8) Where was Greek used most and longest? Aegean area and Asia Minor.
- 9) What are the implications of Diocletian's campaign and the Donatist movement?

I submit that the evidence is clear to the effect that the transmission was in fact predominantly normal.

So what sort of a picture may we expect to find in the surviving witnesses, given the understanding that the history of the transmission of the New Testament Text was predominantly normal? We may expect a broad spectrum of copies, showing minor differences due to copying mistakes but all reflecting one common tradition. The simultaneous existence of abnormal transmission in the earliest centuries would result in a sprinkling of copies, helter-skelter, outside of that main stream. The picture would look something like the following figure.



The MSS within the cones represent the 'normal' transmission. To the left I have plotted some possible representatives of what we might style the 'irresponsible' transmission of the text—the copyists produced poor copies through incompetence or carelessness but did not make deliberate changes. To the right I have plotted some possible representatives of what we might style the 'fabricated' transmission of the text—the scribes made deliberate changes in the text (for whatever reasons), producing fabricated copies, not true copies. I am well aware that the MSS plotted on the figure above contain both careless and deliberate errors, in different proportions (7Q5,4,8 and P^{52,64,67} are too fragmentary to permit the classification of their errors as deliberate rather than careless), so that any classification such as I attempt here must be relative and gives a distorted picture. Still, I venture to insist that ignorance,

carelessness, officiousness and malice all left their mark upon the transmission of the New Testament text, and we must take account of them in any attempt to reconstruct the history of that transmission.

As the figure suggests, I argue that Diocletian's campaign had a purifying effect upon the stream of transmission. In order to withstand torture rather than give up your MS(S), you would have to be a truly committed believer, the sort of person who would want good copies of the Scriptures. Thus it was probably the more contaminated MSS that were destroyed, in the main, leaving the purer MSS to replenish the earth (please see the section "Imperial repression of the N.T." in Chapter 6 of my *Identity IV*). The arrow within the cones represents Family 35 (see Part II).

Another consideration suggests itself—if, as reported, the Diocletian campaign was most fierce and effective in the Byzantine area, the numerical advantage of the 'Byzantine' text-type over the 'Western' and 'Alexandrian' would have been reduced, giving the latter a chance to forge ahead. But it did not happen. The Church, in the main, refused to propagate those forms of the Greek text. Codices B, \aleph , D, etc., have no 'children'. Since it is impossible to produce an archetypal form for either the 'Western' or the 'Alexandrian' text-types, so-called, based on manuscript evidence, do they even exist?

The 'Crux' of a 'Lost' Original

Returning to the 'crux', is/was the original wording lost? I answer with an emphatic, "**No**". It certainly exists within the Byzantine bulk, but what do we do if there is confusion within that bulk? (To insist that it must be one of the existing variants is better than nothing, I suppose, but I, at least, want to identify the original wording.) To my mind, any time at least 90% of the primary witnesses agree, there can be no reasonable question; it is statistically impossible that a non-original reading could score that high.¹ Any time a reading garners an attestation of at least 80%, its probability is very high. But for perhaps 2% of the words in the NT the attestation falls below 80% (a disproportionate number being in the Apocalypse), and at this point we need to shift our attention from MSS to families.² I have already mentioned assigning a credibility quotient to each family, based on objective criteria, and this needs to be done. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of 'homework' waiting to be done in this area (so far as I know, only Family 35 has an empirically defined profile),³ but enough work has been done to allow for some rough ideas.

We are indebted to the *Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung* for their *Text und Textwert* series. A careful look at their collations indicates that there probably is no **K^x**, anywhere (and remember Wisse). Take, for example, the *TuT* volumes on John's Gospel, chapters 1-10. They examined a total of 1,763 MSS (for 153 variant sets) and included the

¹ See Appendix C in my *Identity IV*.

² Once all MSS have been collated and have been empirically assigned to families, then we can confine our attention to those families, from the start (as I have done in the Apocalypse).

³ So far as I know, neither f^1 nor f^{13} exists outside of the Gospels, but even there, has anyone ever produced an empirically defined profile for either one? Consider the following statement by Metzger:

It should be observed that, in accord with the theory that members of f^1 and f^{13} were subject to progressive accommodation to the later Byzantine text, scholars have established the text of these families by adopting readings of family witnesses that differ from the Textus Receptus. Therefore the citation of the siglum f^1 and f^{13} may, in any given instance, signify a minority of manuscripts (or even only one) that belong to the family. (*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [companion to UBS³], p. xii.)

Would it be unreasonable to say that such a proceeding is unfair to the reader? Does it not mislead the user of the apparatus? At least as used by the UBS editions, those sigla do not represent empirically defined profiles.

results in the two volumes. Pages 54 - 90 (volume 1) contain "Groupings according to degrees of agreement" "agreeing more often with each other than with the majority text". Only one group symbol is used, **K'**—the first representative of the family, MS 18, heads a group of about 120 MSS, but all subsequent representatives have only a **K'** (that I call **f³⁵**). Following **K'**, there are 22 groups with between 52 and 25 MSS, and all but four of them are really **K' / f³⁵**, and the same holds for a number of smaller groups, so their **K'** should probably be over 200 (I would say that Family 35 in the Gospels has over 250 representatives, but their ranking here is based on only 153 variant sets, in half of John).

Consider the largest group apart from **K'**: 2103. Of its 52 members, 15 show only a 95% agreement with MS 2103. If those 52 MSS are ever collated throughout the Gospels, it is entirely predictable that the 'group' will shrink considerably; it may even disappear.

Some years ago now, Maurice Robinson did a complete collation of 1,389 MSS that contain the P.A.,¹ and I had William Pierpont's photocopy of those collations in my possession for two months, spending most of that time studying those collations. As I did so, it became obvious to me that von Soden 'regularized' his data, arbitrarily 'creating' the alleged archetypal form for his first four families, **M^{1,2,3,4}**—if they exist at all, they are rather fluid. His **M^{5&6}** do exist, having distinct profiles for the purpose of showing that they are different, but they are a bit 'squishy', with enough internal confusion to make the choice of the archetypal form to be arbitrary. In fact, I suspect that they will have to be subdivided. In contrast to the above, his **M⁷** (that I call Family 35) has a solid, unambiguous profile—the archetypal form is demonstrable, empirically determined.

As for the Apocalypse, of the nine groups that Hoskier identified, only his Complutensian (that I call Family 35) is homogenous. Of the others, the main ones all have sub-divisions, that will require their own profile.

Given my presuppositions, I consider that I have good reason for declaring the divine preservation of the precise original wording of the complete New Testament Text, to this day. That wording is reproduced in my edition of the Greek NT, available from www.prunch.org. BUT PLEASE NOTE: whether or not the archetype of **f³⁵** is the Autograph (as I claim), the fact remains that the MSS collated for this study reflect an incredibly careful transmission of their source, and this throughout the middle ages. My presuppositions include: God exists; He inspired the Biblical Text; He promised to preserve it for a thousand generations (1 Chronicles 16:15); so He must have an active, ongoing interest in that preservation [there have been fewer than 300 generations since Adam, so He has a ways to go!]. **If He was preserving the original wording in some line of transmission other than **f³⁵**, would that transmission be any less careful than what I have demonstrated for **f³⁵**?** I think not. So any line of transmission characterized by internal confusion is disqualified—this includes all the other lines of transmission that I have seen so far!²

On the basis of the evidence so far available I affirm the following:

¹ 240 MSS omit the PA, 64 of which are based on Theophylact's commentary. Fourteen others have lacunae, but are not witnesses for total omission. A few others certainly contain the passage but the microfilm is illegible. So, 1389 + 240 + 14 + 7(?) = about 1650 MSS checked by Robinson. That does not include Lectionaries, of which he also checked a fair number. (These are microfilms held by the *Institut* in Münster. We now know that there are many more extant MSS, and probably even more that are not yet 'extant'.) Unfortunately, so far as I know, Robinson has yet to publish his collations, thus making them available to the public at large.

² Things like **M⁶** and **M⁵** in John 7:53-8:11 come to mind.

- 1) The original wording was never 'lost', and its transmission down through the years was basically normal, being recognized as inspired material from the beginning.
- 2) That normal process resulted in lines of transmission.
- 3) To delineate such lines, MSS must be grouped empirically on the basis of a shared mosaic of readings.
- 4) Such groups or families must be evaluated for independence and credibility.
- 5) The largest clearly defined group is Family 35.
- 6) Family 35 is demonstrably independent of all other lines of transmission throughout the NT.
- 7) Family 35 is demonstrably ancient, dating to the 3rd century, at least.
- 8) Family 35 representatives come from all over the Mediterranean area; the geographical distribution is all but total.
- 9) Family 35 is not a recension, was not created at some point subsequent to the Autographs.
- 10) Family 35 is an objectively/empirically defined entity throughout the NT; it has a demonstrable, diagnostic profile from Matthew 1:1 to Revelation 22:21.
- 11) The archetypal form of Family 35 is demonstrable—it has been demonstrated (see Part II).
- 12) The Original Text is the ultimate archetype; any candidate must also be an archetype—a real, honest to goodness, objectively verifiable archetype; there is only one—Family 35.¹
- 13) God's concern for the preservation of the Biblical Text is evident: I take it that passages such as 1 Chronicles 16:15, Psalm 119:89, Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 5:18, Luke 16:17 and 21:33, John 10:35 and 16:12-13, 1 Peter 1:23-25 and Luke 4:4 may reasonably be taken to imply a promise that the Scriptures (to the tittle) will be preserved for man's use (we are to live "by every word of God"), and to the end of the world ("for a thousand generations"), but no intimation is given as to just how God proposed to do it. We must deduce the answer from what He has indeed done—we discover that He **did!**
- 14) This concern is reflected in Family 35; it is characterized by incredibly careful transmission (in contrast to other lines). [I have a perfect copy of the Family 35 archetypal text for most NT books (22); I have copies made from a perfect exemplar (presumed) for another four (4); as I continue to collate MSS I hope to add the last one (Acts), but even for it the archetypal form is demonstrable.]
- 15) If God was preserving the original wording in some line of transmission other than Family 35, would that line be any less careful? I think not. So any line of transmission characterized by internal confusion is disqualified—this includes **all** the other lines of transmission that I have seen so far.
- 16) I affirm that God used Family 35 to preserve the precise original wording of the New Testament Text; it is reproduced in my edition of the Greek Text.²

¹ If you want to be a candidate for the best lawyer in your city, you must be a lawyer, or the best carpenter, or oncologist, or whatever. If there is only one candidate for mayor in your town, who gets elected?

² And God used mainly the Eastern Orthodox Churches to preserve the NT Text down through the centuries—they have always used a Text that was an adequate representation of the Original, for all practical purposes.

Honesty used to be part of the definition of a true scholar. Anyone who wishes to be one should absolutely stop representing his presuppositions as being part of the evidence. Since the original was never lost, there is no legitimate textual criticism of the NT, and therefore no science of such. Since NT textual criticism (as practiced by the academic community during the past 130 years) depends on a false presupposition, it cannot be a science. Those who reject the primary evidence can, and probably will, continue to propound a theory of textual criticism. I suppose they have a right to their theory, but I cannot wish them well.

The Root Cause of the Continuous Defection from Biblical Infallibility and Consequent Objective Authority

That part of the academic world that deals with the biblical Text, including those who call themselves 'evangelical', is dominated by the notion that the original wording is lost, in the sense that no one knows for sure what it is, or was (if indeed it ever existed as an Autograph).¹ That notion is basic to all that is taught in the area of New Testament (NT) textual criticism in most schools. In an attempt to understand where that notion came from, I will sketch a bit of relevant history.

A Bit of Relevant History

The discipline of NT textual criticism, as we know it, is basically a 'child' of Western Europe and its colonies; the Eastern Orthodox Churches have generally not been involved. (They have always known that the true NT Text lies within the Byzantine tradition.) In the year 1500 the Christianity of Western Europe was dominated by the Roman Catholic Church, whose pope claimed the exclusive right to interpret Scripture. That Scripture was the Latin Vulgate, which the laity was not allowed to read. Martin Luther's ninety-five theses were posted in 1517. Was it mere chance that the first printed Greek Text of the NT was published the year before? As the Protestant Reformation advanced, it was declared that the authority of Scripture exceeded that of the pope, and that every believer had the right to read and interpret the Scriptures for himself. The authority of the Latin Vulgate was also challenged, since the NT was written in Greek. Of course the Vatican library held many Greek MSS, no two of which were identical (at least in the Gospels), so the Roman Church challenged the authenticity of the Greek Text.² In short, the Roman Church forced the Reformation to come to grips with textual variation among the Greek MSS. But they did not know how to go about it, because this was a new field of study and they simply were not in possession of a sufficient proportion of the relevant evidence.³ (They probably didn't even know that the Mt. Athos peninsula, with its twenty monasteries, existed.)

In 1500 the Roman Catholic Establishment was corrupt, morally bankrupt, and discredited among thinking people. The Age of Reason and humanism were coming to the fore. More

¹ There are those who like to argue that none of the books was written by its stated author, that they are forgeries, the result of editorial activity spread over decades (if not centuries) of time. Of course they were not there, and do not know what actually happened, but that does not deter them from pontificating.

² Probably no two MSS of the Latin Vulgate are identical either, but that was not the issue. Indeed, so far as I know, there is no way to establish what may have been the original wording of the Latin Vulgate, in every detail.

³ Family 35 (for an introduction to this family please see chapter seven of my *Identity IV*), being by far the largest and most cohesive group of MSS with a demonstrable archetype, was poorly represented in the libraries of Western Europe. For that matter, very few MSS of whatever text-type had been sufficiently collated to allow for any tracing of the transmissional history. Worse, the lack of complete collations made it impossible to refute an erroneous hypothesis within a reasonable time frame.

and more people were deciding that they could do better without the god of the Roman Establishment. The new imagined freedom from supernatural supervision was intoxicating, and many had no interest in accepting the authority of Scripture (*sola Scriptura*). Further, it would be naive in the extreme to exclude the supernatural from consideration, and not allow for satanic activity behind the scenes. Consider Ephesians 2:2—“in which you once walked, according to the Aeon of this world, the ruler of the domain of the air, the spirit who is now at work in the sons of the disobedience.” Strictly speaking, the Text has “according to the Aeon of this world, according to the ruler of the domain of the air”—the phrases are parallel, so ‘Aeon’ and ‘ruler’ have the same referent, a specific person or being. This spirit is presently at work (present tense) in ‘the sons of the disobedience’. ‘Sons’ of something are those characterized by that something, and the something in this case is ‘the’ disobedience (the Text has the definite article)—a continuation of the original rebellion against the Sovereign of the universe.¹ ‘Sons of the disobedience’ joined the attack against Scripture. The so-called ‘higher criticism’ denied divine inspiration altogether.² Others used the textual variation to argue that in any case the original wording was ‘lost’, there being no objective way to determine what it may have been (unfortunately, no one was able to perceive such a way at that time).

The uncritical assumption that ‘oldest equals best’ was an important factor, and became increasingly so as earlier uncials came to light.³ Both Codex Vaticanus and Codex Bezae were available early on, and they have thousands of disagreements between themselves, just in the Gospels (in Acts, Bezae is wild almost beyond belief). **If** ‘oldest equals best’, and the oldest MSS are in constant and massive disagreement between/among themselves, then the recovery of a lost text becomes hopeless. Did you get that? **Hopeless, totally hopeless!** However, I have argued (and continue to do so) that ‘oldest equals worst’, and that changes the picture radically. The benchmark work on this subject is Herman C. Hoskier’s *Codex B and its Allies: A Study and an Indictment* (2 vols.; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1914). The first volume (some 500 pages) contains a detailed and careful discussion of hundreds of obvious errors in Codex B; the second (some 400 pages) contains the same for Codex Aleph. He affirms that in the Gospels alone these two MSS differ well over 3,000 times, which number does not include minor errors such as spelling (II, 1). [Had he tabulated all differences, the total would doubtless increase by several hundreds.] Well now, simple logic demands that one or the other has to be wrong those 3,000+ times; they cannot both be right, quite apart from the times when they are both wrong. **No amount of subjective preference can obscure the fact that they are poor copies, objectively so.**⁴ They were so bad that no one could stand

¹ Anyone in rebellion against the Creator is under satanic influence, direct or indirect (in most cases a demon acts as Satan’s agent, when something more than the influence of the surrounding culture is required—almost all human cultures have ingredients of satanic provenance; this includes the academic culture). Anyone in rebellion against the Creator will also have strongholds of Satan in his mind. Since Satan is the ‘father’ of lies (John 8:44), anytime you embrace a lie you invite him into your mind—this applies to any of his sophistries (2 Corinthians 10:5) currently in vogue, such as materialism, humanism, relativism, Marxism, Freudianism, Hortianism, etc.

² The Darwinian theory appeared to be made to order for those who wished to get rid of a Creator, or any superior Authority, who might require an accounting. The ‘higher criticism’ served the purpose of getting rid of an authoritative Revelation, that might be used to require an accounting. Rebels don’t like to be held accountable.

³ Appeal was made to the analogy of a stream, where the purest water would presumably be that closest to the source. But with reference to NT manuscripts the analogy is fallacious, and becomes a sophistry.

⁴ John William Burgon personally collated what in his day were ‘the five old uncials’ (Ⲙ, A, B, C, D). Throughout his works he repeatedly calls attention to the *concordia discors*, the prevailing confusion and disagreement, that

to use them, and so they survived physically (but had no 'children', since no one wanted to copy them).

Since everyone is influenced (not necessarily controlled) by his milieu, this was also true of the Reformers. In part (at least) the Reformation was a 'child' of the Renaissance, with its emphasis on reason. Recall that on trial Luther said he could only recant if convinced by Scripture and reason. So far so good, but many did not want Scripture, and that left only reason. Further, since reason cannot explain or deal with the supernatural, those who emphasize reason are generally unfriendly toward the supernatural. [To this day the so-called historic or traditional Protestant denominations have trouble dealing with the supernatural.]

Before Adolf Deissmann published his *Light from the Ancient East* (1910), (being a translation of *Licht vom Osten*, 1908), wherein he demonstrated that Koine Greek was the *lingua franca* in Jesus' day, there even being a published grammar explaining its rules, only classical Greek was taught in the universities. But the NT was written in Koine. Before Deissmann's benchmark work, there were two positions on the NT Greek: 1) it was a debased form of classical Greek, or 2) it was a 'Holy Ghost' Greek, invented for the NT. The second option was held mainly by pietists; the academic world preferred the first, which raised the natural question: if God were going to inspire a NT, why would He not do it in 'decent' Greek? The prevailing idea that Koine was bad Greek predisposed many against the NT.

All of this placed the defenders of an inspired Greek Bible on the defensive, with the very real problem of deciding where best to set up a perimeter they could defend. Given the prevailing ignorance concerning the relevant evidence, their best choice appeared to be an appeal to Divine Providence. God providentially chose the TR, so that was the text to be used (the 'traditional' text).¹ I would say that Divine Providence was indeed at work, because the TR is a good Text, far better than the eclectic one currently in vogue.

To all appearances Satan was winning the day, but he still had a problem: the main Protestant versions (in German, English, Spanish, etc.) were all based on the *Textus Receptus*, as were doctrinal statements and 'prayer books'. Enter F.J.A. Hort, a quintessential 'son of the disobedience'. Hort did not believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, nor in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Since he embraced the Darwinian theory as soon as it appeared, he

the early uncials display among themselves. Luke 11:2-4 offers one example.

"The five Old Uncials" (אBCD) falsify the Lord's Prayer as given by St. Luke in no less than forty-five words. But so little do they agree among themselves, that they throw themselves into six different combinations in their departures from the Traditional Text; and yet they are never able to agree among themselves as to one single various reading: while only once are more than two of them observed to stand together, and their grand point of union is no less than an omission of the article. Such is their eccentric tendency, that in respect of thirty-two out of the whole forty-five words they bear in turn solitary evidence. (*The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established*. Arranged, completed, and edited by Edward Miller. London: George Bell and Sons, 1896, p. 84.)

Yes indeed, oldest equals worst. For more on this subject, please see pages 130-36 in *The Identity of the New Testament Text IV*.

¹ Please note that I am not criticizing Burgon and others; they did what they could, given the information available to them. They knew that the Hortian theory and resultant Greek text could not be right.

presumably did not believe in God.¹ His theory of NT textual criticism, published in 1881,² was based squarely on the presuppositions that the NT was not inspired, that no special care was afforded it in the early decades, and that in consequence the original wording was lost—lost beyond recovery, at least by objective means. His theory swept the academic world and continues to dominate the discipline to this day.³

But just how was it that the Hortian theory was able to take over the Greek departments of the conservative schools in North America? The answer begins with the onslaught of liberal theology upon the Protestant churches of that continent at the beginning of the twentieth century. The great champion of the divine inspiration of Scripture was Benjamin B. Warfield, a Presbyterian. His defense of inspiration is so good that it is difficult to improve it. Somewhere along the line, however, he decided to go to Germany to study; I believe it was at Tubingen. When he returned, he was thanking God for having raised up Westcott and Hort to restore the text of the New Testament (think about the implication of ‘restore’). One of his students, Archibald T. Robertson, a Baptist, followed Warfield’s lead. The prestige of those two men was so great that their view swept the theological schools of the continent. I solicit the patience of the reader while I try to diagnose what happened to Warfield in Tubingen.

At Tubingen Warfield found himself among enemies of an inspired Bible. Now he was a champion of divine inspiration, but for an inspired text to have objective authority today, it must have been preserved.⁴ Given the prevailing ignorance concerning the relevant evidence at that time, Warfield was simply not able to defend preservation in objective terms (and neither was anyone else—this is crucial to understanding what happened). He was faced with the fact of widespread variation between and among the extant Greek manuscripts. Even worse—far worse—was the presupposition that ‘oldest equals best’, because the oldest manuscripts are hopelessly at odds among themselves. For example: the two great early

¹ For documentation of all this, and a good deal more besides, in Hort’s own words, please see the biography written by his son. A.F. Hort, *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort* (2 vols.; London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1896). The son made heavy use of the father’s plentiful correspondence, whom he admired. (In those days a two-volume ‘Life’, as opposed to a one-volume ‘Biography’, was a posthumous status symbol, albeit of little consequence to the departed.) Many of my readers were taught, as was I, that one must not question/judge someone else’s motives. But wait just a minute; where did such an idea come from? It certainly did not come from God, who expects the spiritual person to evaluate everything (1 Corinthians 2:15). Since there are only two spiritual kingdoms in this world (Matthew 6:24, 12:30; Luke 11:23, 16:13), then the idea comes from the other side. By eliminating motive, one also eliminates presupposition, which is something that God would never do, since presupposition governs interpretation (Matthew 22:29, Mark 12:24). Which is why we should always expect a true scholar to state his presuppositions. I have repeatedly stated mine, but here they are again: 1) The Sovereign Creator of the universe exists; 2) He delivered a written revelation to the human race; 3) He has preserved that revelation intact to this day.

² B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (2 Vols.; London: Macmillan and Co., 1881). The second volume explains the theory, and is generally understood to be Hort’s work.

³ For a thorough discussion of that theory, please see chapters 3 and 4 in *Identity IV*. Chapters 3 and 4 in *Identity IV* are little different from what they were in 1977. It has been over thirty-five years, and so far as I know no one has refuted my dismantling of Hort’s theory. It has not been for lack of desire. Nowadays one frequently hears the argument that to criticize Hort is to flay a dead horse, since now the ruling paradigm is eclecticism (whether ‘reasoned’ or ‘rigorous’). But eclecticism is based squarely on the same false presuppositions, and is therefore equally wrong.

⁴ This has always been a favorite argument with enemies of inspiration; it goes like this: “If God had inspired a text, He would have preserved it (or else why bother inspiring). He did not preserve the NT; therefore He did not inspire it.” I confess that I am inclined to agree with that logical connection, except that I am prepared to turn the tables. I believe I can demonstrate that God did in fact preserve the NT Text; therefore He must have inspired it!

codices, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, differ between themselves well over 3,000 times just in the four Gospels. Well now, they cannot both be right; one or the other **has** to be wrong, quite apart from the places where they are both wrong. So what was poor Warfield to do? Enter Westcott and Hort. Hort claimed that as a result of their work only a thousandth part of the NT text could be considered to be in doubt, and this was joyfully received by the rank and file, since it seemed to provide assurance about the reliability of that text—however, of course, that claim applied only to the W-H text (probably the worst published NT in existence to this day, so the claim was false).¹ Warfield grasped at this like a drowning man grasps at a straw, thereby doing serious damage to North American Evangelicalism.²

Why the Defection Is Continuous

To understand the full impact of the onslaught of liberal theology, one must take account of the milieu. Reason has always been important to the historic or traditional Protestant denominations. In consequence, academic respectability has always been important to their graduate schools of theology. The difficulty resides in the following circumstance: for at least two centuries academia has been dominated by Satan, and so the terms of ‘respectability’ are dictated by him. Those terms include ‘publish or perish’, but of course he controls the technical journals. Since he is the father of lies (John 8:44), anyone who wished to tell the whole truth has always had a hard time getting an article published, no matter how good it was. To get an article published one had to toe the party line. ‘Taking account of the existing literature’ obliges one to waste a great deal of time reading the nonsense produced by Satan’s servants, all of which was designed to keep the reader away from the truth.

The TRUTH—aye, there’s the rub. Consider 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12: “The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (NKJV). Although verse ten is in the context of the activity of the Antichrist, who will find an easy target in ‘those who are wasting themselves’ (my translation), it does not follow that no one will be wasting himself before that activity. Obviously, people have been wasting themselves all down through history, and the underlying cause for that ‘wasting’ has never changed—“they did not receive the love of the truth”. (It began in the Garden.)

¹ I would say that their text is mistaken with reference to 10% of the words—the Greek NT has roughly 140,000 words, so the W-H text is mistaken with reference to 14,000 of them. I would say that the so-called ‘critical’ (read ‘eclectic’) text currently in vogue is ‘only’ off with reference to some 12,000, an improvement (small though it be). And just by the way, how wise is it to use a NT prepared by a servant (or servants) of Satan? (On the other hand, I claim that God has preserved the original wording to such an extent that we can, and do, know what it is.)

² However, I should not be unduly harsh in my criticism of Warfield; no one else knew what to do either. The cruel fact was that the relevant evidence did not exist in usable form at that time. (It follows that any defense of divine preservation at that time had to be based upon faith, faith that God would produce the evidence in His time.) Part of the damage produced by Hort’s theory was its disdain for the vast bulk of later manuscripts—they were not worth the bother to collate and study. Since it is precisely those disdained MSS that furnish the necessary evidence, that soporific effect of Hort’s theory delayed the availability of the relevant evidence for a century. I remember one day in class (in 1957), the professor filled his lungs and proclaimed with gusto, “Gentlemen, where B and Aleph agree, you have the original.” The poor man had obviously never read Herman C. Hoskier’s *Codex B and its Allies: A Study and an Indictment* (published in 1914).

Please notice carefully what is said here: it is God Himself who sends the strong delusion! And upon whom does He send it? Upon those who do not receive the love of the truth.¹ And what is the purpose of the strong delusion?—the condemnation of those who do not believe the truth. Dear me, this is heavy. Notice that the truth is **central** to anyone’s salvation. This raises the necessary question: just what is meant by ‘the truth’? In John 14:6 Sovereign Jesus declared Himself to be ‘the truth’. Praying to the Father in John 17:17 He said, “Thy Word is truth”. Once each in John chapters 14, 15 and 16 He referred to the third person of the Trinity as “the Spirit of the truth”. Since the Son is back in Heaven at the Father’s right hand, and the Spirit is not very perceptible to most of us, most of the time, and since the Word is the Spirit’s sword (Ephesians 6:17), our main access to ‘the truth’ is through God’s Word, the Bible. The Bible offers propositional truth, but we need the Holy Spirit to illumine that truth, and to have the Holy Spirit we must be adequately related to Sovereign Jesus.

Now then, for something to be received, it must be offered; one cannot believe in something he has never heard about (Romans 10:14). The use of the verb ‘receive’ clearly implies an act of volition on the part of those not receiving the truth; that love was offered or made available to them but they did not want it; they wanted to be able to lie and to entertain lies told by others. But the consequences of such a choice are terrible; they turned their back on salvation. I suspect that not many Christians in the so-called ‘first world’ really believe what Sovereign Jesus said in Matthew 7:14: those who find the way of Life are **few**! And do not forget Revelation 22:15; “whoever loves and practices a lie” is excluded from the heavenly City [any lie, including Hort’s].² I will here consider the implications for a student entering a graduate school of theology, because of what happens if he becomes a professor, or NT scholar, in his turn.³

Most such students presumably come from an evangelical environment, and were doubtless taught that the Bible is God’s Word, and therefore inspired. Some may even have been taught verbal, plenary inspiration. However, in most theological schools you cannot get a job as a teacher if you do not agree to use the eclectic Greek text, with all that implies. (Just as you cannot get a teaching job in most universities unless you at least pretend to believe in evolution.) If the school is at least nominally conservative, they will still say that the Bible is inspired. But if a student brings up the question of the preservation of the text in class, there will be an uncomfortable silence. If it was preserved, no one knows what or where it is. The brainwashing has been so complete that many (most?) seminary graduates do not even know that there is any question about what they were taught. They were taught an eclecticism based on Hort’s theory, and for them that is all there is.

But to go back to our student, he finds himself surrounded by professors whose job it is to destroy his faith in an inspired Bible with objective authority. Of course, presumably, very few such professors have ever thought in those terms (so they would object to my statement). They would say that they are just doing their job, doing what they are paid to do,

¹ Please note that it is not enough to merely ‘accept’ the truth; it is required that we love the truth. Satan tantalizes us with fame and fortune (on his terms, of course), so to love the truth requires determination.

² Help! “A lie” is rather general, open-ended. What happens if I accepted a lie without realizing that it was one? But the text does not say ‘accepts’; it says ‘loves’ and ‘practices’. The implication is that the contrary evidence, to the lie, is available, but has been rejected, or deliberately ignored—the person sold himself to the lie.

³ At the graduate level, a student has the responsibility to evaluate what is being taught—if it goes contrary to the Text, it should not be accepted. I remember one day in chapel, a visiting scholar was expounding Romans 10:9. He stated that the Greek Text plainly means “Jesus as Lord”, but then went on to try to explain why the school didn’t believe that. His effort was rather lame; so much so that I determined to delve into the question for myself.

without troubling themselves with the whys and wherefores.¹ But of course the student is not expecting that; he believes that his professors must be men of God, and so he is predisposed to believe them. Besides that predisposition (and it is powerful), what are the tools at their disposal for doing their job? Well, they have ridicule, sarcasm, brainwashing, peer pressure, the ‘emperor’s new clothes’ gambit, and satanic assistance, for starters. (There may also be threats, failing grades, disciplinary actions, foul play, and so on—I write from experience.) Most of the terms above are self-explanatory, but some readers may not be familiar with the ancient myth about the emperor—it boils down to this: you don’t want to admit that you can’t ‘see’ it, when everyone else claims to be doing so. But by far the most serious is ‘satanic assistance’, and here I must needs go into detail.

Returning to 2 Thessalonians 2:10 and the ‘love of the truth’, as explained above, our main access to ‘the truth’ is through God’s Word, the Bible. Our student may have gone to Sunday school, probably heard sermons with at least some biblical content, and certainly has his own copy of the Bible. In short, he has had, and continues to have, access to ‘the truth’. However, the Holy Spirit does ‘talk’ to us, if we will listen. For example: my father was born in 1906, and in due time went to Moody Bible Institute and Wheaton College. In those days the American Standard Version (ASV) was touted as the best thing since the Garden of Eden; it was ‘the rock of biblical integrity’, etc. etc. Now my father had the practice of reading through the entire Bible once a year, a practice that he maintained all his life. Due to the hype surrounding the ASV, he got a copy and began to read it. It was hard going from the start, and he soon had to stop—the Holy Spirit simply would not let him go on. He returned to his trusty AV.

I imagine that at least some of my readers will have a question at this point. Am I implying that anyone who embraced the ASV was not listening to the Holy Spirit when he made that decision? The answer is, “Yes”. Obviously, the same holds for the Hortian theory, etc. Unfortunately, few students of theology are in the habit of consulting the Holy Spirit, and those who do are marked for persecution. No Establishment can tolerate anyone who listens to the Holy Spirit. Surely, or have you forgotten John 3:8? “The wind blows where it wishes, and you (sg) hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who has been begotten by the Spirit.” Notice that the Lord is saying here that it is **we** who are to be unpredictable, like the wind, or the Spirit (“comes” and “goes” are in the present tense). If you are really under the control of the Spirit you will do unexpected things, just like He does.² An Establishment is defined by its ‘straightjacket’, and the Holy Spirit does not like straightjackets, and vice versa.

In John 8:44 Sovereign Jesus declared that “there is no truth” in Satan, and that he is the father of the lie. Since God cannot lie, Titus 1:2, it being contrary to His essence, any and all lies come from the enemy. So what happens if you embrace a lie? You invite Satan into your mind. And what does he do there? He sets up a stronghold that locks you into that lie; you become blind to the truth on that subject.³ It is a specific application of the truth expressed

¹ For older, established scholars there is also the matter of pride and vested interest; who wants to admit that he has been wrong all his professional life? Then there is the doctrine of professional ethics, one must respect his colleagues (respect for the colleague trumps respect for the truth). [One must not ask where that doctrine came from.] One other thing: where a school or institution depends on financial help from outside, it will be threatened with the loss of that help, if it does not toe the line, and its very existence may depend on that help.

² Since Satan is forever muddying the water with excesses and abuses, spiritual discernment is needed.

³ On that one subject—you will not necessarily be blinded on other subjects, or at least not at first.

in 2 Corinthians 4:4—Satan blinds minds. So what happens to our student? With very few exceptions, he succumbs to the pressure exerted by the tools already mentioned. He accepts the party line, and since it is a lie, Satan goes about blinding him to the truth. If he goes on to become an influential scholar, he will almost certainly come under demonic surveillance (since Satan is not omnipresent).

There is a common misapprehension that trips people up at this point. Since any genuinely regenerated person has the indwelling Holy Spirit, how can Satan or a demon be in that person's mind? There is a fundamental difference between presence and control. Very few Christians have consciously turned over every area of their lives to the control of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman, he will not take over an area against your will (see John 4:23-24). Any areas not under the Spirit's control are open to the enemy's interference, and most especially if you embrace a lie. By embracing a lie you grieve the Holy Spirit; not wise (Ephesians 4:30). You also resist Him; also not wise (Acts 7:51). So why does God not protect you? Because you rejected the love of the truth, and that turned God against you! When God turns against you, what are your chances? Without God's protection, you become Satan's prey (1 Peter 5:8).¹

Anyone in rebellion against the Creator is under satanic influence, direct or indirect (in most cases a demon acts as Satan's agent, when something more than the influence of the surrounding culture is required—almost all human cultures have ingredients of satanic provenance; this includes the academic culture). Anyone in rebellion against the Creator will also have strongholds of Satan in his mind. Since Satan is the 'father' of lies (John 8:44), anytime you embrace a lie you invite him into your mind—this applies to any of his sophistries (2 Corinthians 10:5) currently in vogue, such as materialism, humanism, relativism, Marxism, Freudianism, Hortianism, etc.

The selling of the lie is carried on from generation to generation, resulting in a continuous defection. Most professors are 'parrots', simply repeating what they were taught, without ever going back to check the facts. Some older scholars may have become aware of the facts, but because of vested interest they do not mention them to their students; they maintain the party line.

Is there a Way to Stop the Defection?

I believe there is, and it must begin with the TRUTH. To be more precise, it must begin with the love of the truth, which necessitates that the truth be made available. We must promote the love of the truth, and to do that we must also denounce the lie.² To promote something, we need vehicles for doing so. To succeed, we must be convincing. Most important, we must do something about the interference in people's minds.

1) Vehicles for promoting the truth:

It is modern technology that comes to our aid here. Blogs are being used to promote anything and everything. We can use them to promote the truth. I have done a fifteen-hour lecture series (in Portuguese) on the divine preservation of the NT Text. It was filmed and is available on the net via blog. Websites are being used. Most of my work is available from

¹ Please keep in mind the sequence of cause and effect—it begins with the rejection of the love of the truth. It is not enough to merely 'accept' the truth, one must love it. For those who have embraced a lie, the only 'medicine' is to return to the love of the truth, rejecting the lie. God may require a public renunciation of the lie.

² My own denunciation of the Hortian lie has been in print since 1977, and I continue to stand by every bit of it.

walkinhiscommandments.com, and even more is available from my own prunch.org. I wish to call special attention to The Center for Study and Preservation of the Majority Text. Their site, cspmt.org, is receiving literally thousands of visits a day, and from dozens of countries around the world. And then there is Twitter, Facebook and so on—the fact is that the technical journals no longer have a stranglehold on any discipline; there are other ways of ‘publishing’ your ideas. And there has always been word-of-mouth, people telling their friends and acquaintances. I suspect that we may soon see a groundswell of this sort of thing.

The advent of self-publishing represents a real boon to those of us who reject a party line, and do not have the financial means to use an established publishing house. For various reasons it has become increasingly difficult to use a publisher. The contracts place all the onus on the author (including the cost of lawsuits). One must cover the cost of several thousand copies up front, and even so, only if the publisher decides he can make a profit on the book, not to mention an ‘acceptable’ content (publishers are not charitable institutions). It is the advent of ‘print-on-demand’ that saves those of us who have no money—copies are produced only as they are ordered. Since a machine does it all, one can order a single copy at the going price, and receive it.

Permit me to cite my own experience. My first book, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, was published in 1977 by Thomas Nelson Publishers. Each time they wished to do another printing, they graciously allowed me to do some revising. Their final (4th?) printing came out in 1990, so they kept the book in print for at least fifteen years, for which I give them my sincere thanks.¹ It had been out of print for some years when Wipf and Stock Publishers asked for permission to publish it as an academic reprint. So a revised edition came out in 2003, as *The Identity of the New Testament Text II*. Wipf & Stock also did *Identity III*, in 2012. It was during that interval that I tuned in to Family 35, so *Identity III* was the first edition to present and defend that family. The current *Identity IV*, with further heavy revision, I self-published with Amazon. My other books are also available there—what established publisher would have accepted *The Greek New Testament According to Family 35*?

Self-publishing also permits one to make a book available in electronic form, as I have done with mine. This allows people to download into their notebooks, or whatever, so they don’t have to carry a book (or several). This is becoming increasingly important, as more and more people are joining the smart-phone culture. That said, however, we should not despise the good old hard copy; for serious study many still prefer a book (you can make notes in a book). In short, we should use both, electronic and printed.

Especially in cultures where ‘who you know’ is more important than ‘what you know’, but also in others, we should promote the ‘social’ vehicle, the sharing with friends and acquaintances. We can invite people over for a cup of coffee (or tea), spread the word wherever we have contacts.

2) A convincing presentation:

What is the best way to protect a caged lion? Just open the cage! What is the best way to promote the Truth? Just turn it loose! As Sovereign Jesus said in John 8:31-32, “If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall

¹ By then there were well over 10,000 copies in use around the world, quietly making a difference in people’s lives. Every now and again I hear from someone, thanking me for the book, including some Greek professors. Such professors are no longer destroying the faith of their students. There is a stirring at the grassroots level, that the Establishment is doing its best to ignore. When obliged to take notice, it is ‘pooh-pooh’; but the time is coming, indeed now is, when that will no longer work.

make you free” (NKJV). The truth will make us free from what? In the immediate context (verse 34), it is from sin, but with reference to the topic in hand, it is able to free us from Satan’s blinding and his lies. The Word is the Holy Spirit’s sword, and a sword cuts, whether someone believes it or not. That said, however, what can we do so that people will listen to us?

Bombast and ranting should be avoided. They may appeal to the emotions of those who are already on our side, but they will have a negative effect on those we are trying to reach. The truth is best served by the facts, the evidence. And the evidence should be presented in a straightforward fashion, without undue appeal to emotion. However, emotion must be distinguished from presupposition (as well as from principles of reasoned debate). It is impossible to work without presuppositions; everyone has them. It follows that if someone criticizes me for having presuppositions, while pretending that he has none, that someone is being dishonest and perverse (or perhaps just brainwashed and blinded).

Ever since Burgon, who stated his presuppositions honestly and openly (as any true scholar should), there has been a constant and insistent attack against those presuppositions, and even the stating of them. A psychosis has been created to the extent that even some modern defenders of the Majority Text have become paranoid on the subject; they have actually reached the point of excluding the supernatural from their model. However, in Luke 11:23 the Sovereign Creator, Jehovah the Son incarnate, declares: “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.” Here is a plain statement—there are only two teams in this world; there are only two sides, two kingdoms; there is no neutral ground; there is no true agnosticism.¹ If you are not with Jesus, you are automatically against Him; if you are not gathering with Him, you are automatically scattering. If you do not receive Jesus’ affirmations about Scripture, you have rejected them. Neutrality does not exist.

But how can we reach those who pretend that they have no presuppositions, who refuse, or in any case fail, to declare their presuppositions openly? If those same people criticize us for declaring ours, we may question their basic honesty; but how can we get them to listen? How can you get a blind person to see? How can you get a deaf person to hear? Something must be done about the cause of the condition. The ‘cause of the condition’ in the area we are discussing is the satanic interference in their thought processes that the Text, 2 Corinthians 4:4, calls ‘blinding’ (the brainwashing is a consequence of, and an accessory to, that blinding). Just how to address that cause will be treated in the next section. In the meantime, it is necessary to discuss the question of presupposition, but we should attempt to do so with a calm and irenic spirit.²

But to return to the matter of presenting the evidence in a convincing fashion, we must keep in mind that brainwashed people are generally ignorant of the evidence. Most professors are ‘parrots’, simply repeating what they were taught, without ever going back to check the facts. Some older scholars may have become aware of the facts, but because of vested interest they do not mention them to their students; they maintain the party line. For the truth to set people free, the truth must be presented. So I repeat: we must present the evidence in a straightforward manner.

The primary evidence is furnished by the continuous text manuscripts (Greek) of the NT. The evidence furnished by the lectionaries is secondary. The evidence furnished by ancient

¹ Agnosticism is a passive rejection; the agnostic is not accepting the claim.

² I am well aware that it is not easy, which is why I use ‘attempt’.

versions and patristic citations is tertiary. Genuine historical evidence (to the extent that this can be determined) is ancillary. Where the primary evidence is unequivocal, the remaining types should not come into play. For example, at any given point in the four Gospels there will be around 1,700 extant continuous text MSS, representing all lines of transmission and all locales.¹ Where they all agree, there can be no legitimate doubt as to the original wording.

It should also be evident that a variant in a single MS, of whatever age, is irrelevant—it is a false witness to its family archetype, at that point, nothing more. If a number of MSS share a variant, but do not belong to the same family, then they made the mistake independently and are false witnesses to their respective family archetypes—there is no dependency. Where a group of MSS evidently reflect correctly the archetypal form of their family, then we are dealing with a family (not the individual MSS). Families need to be evaluated just as we evaluate individual MSS. It is possible to assign a credibility quotient to a family, based on objective criteria. But of course, any and all families must first be empirically identified and defined, and such identification depends upon the full collation of MSS.

Although the discipline has (so far) neglected to do its homework (collating MSS), still a massive majority of MSS should be convincing. For example, if a variant enjoys 99% attestation from the primary witnesses, this means that it totally dominates any genealogical 'tree', because it dominated the global transmission of the text. The *INTF Text und Textwert* series, practitioners of the Claremont profile method, H.C. Hoskier, von Soden, Burgon, Scrivener—in short, anyone who has collated any number of MSS—have all demonstrated that the Byzantine bulk of MSS is by no means monolithic. There are any number of streams and rivulets. (Recall that F. Wisse posited thirty-four groups within the Byzantine bulk, with seventy subgroups.) It is clear that there was no 'stuffing the ballot box'; there was no 'papal' decree; there was no recension imposed by ecclesiastical authority. In short, the transmission was predominantly normal.²

But to get back to presenting the evidence, we should call attention to the evidence that has been presented down through the years: Herman C. Hoskier's *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse and Codex B and its Allies, a Study and an Indictment*; Hermann von Soden's *magnum opus*—in spite of its imperfections, it contains valuable information; S.C.E. Legg's editions of Matthew and Mark; the IGNTP's edition of Luke; Reuben J. Swanson's editions of Matthew through Galatians; Frederik Wisse on Luke; W.F. Wisselink's *Assimilation as a Criterion for the Establishment of the Text*; Tommy Wasserman on Jude; the *Text und Textwert* series from the *INTF*, and even better, their *Editio Critica Maior* series.

Last, but not least, is my own work. My Greek NT is the first to give the archetype of Family 35, and its critical apparatus is the first to offer percentages with the variants, besides including six published editions. The series on f^{35} variants, book by book, gives the detailed result of my collations of representative MSS, usually at least thirty per book. All of this is now freely available on the internet from my site, prunch.org (mostly in English, but also some in Portuguese). The Center for Study and Preservation of the Majority Text (CSPMT) is preparing a critical edition whose apparatus will contain new information about lines of transmission within the Byzantine bulk. We have ways of making evidence available, but how can we get people to look at it? The best, if not the only, way is to use the spiritual authority that Sovereign Jesus has given us.

¹ Of course we know that there are many MSS not yet 'extant', not yet identified and catalogued, so the number can only go up.

² For a fuller discussion, please see my *Identity IV*, pages 367-69.

3) Neutralizing the interference:

On what basis might we neutralize interference? The most fundamental question for human life on this planet is that of authority: who has it, to what degree, and on what terms? As the chief priests said to Jesus, “By what authority are you doing this?” (Luke 20:2). After His death and resurrection Sovereign Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). So He is perfectly within His rights, clearly competent, to delegate a piece of that authority to us. Consider Luke 10:19: “Take note, I am giving you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions,¹ and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing at all may harm you.” Instead of ‘am giving’, perhaps 2.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have ‘have given’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.)—a serious error. Jesus said this perhaps five months before His death and resurrection, addressing the seventy (not just the twelve). The Lord is talking about the future, not the past, a future that includes us!

Consider further John 20:21: Jesus said to them again: “Peace to you! Just as the Father sent me, I also send you.” “Just as . . . so also”—Jesus is sending us just like the Father sent Him. So how did They do it? The Father determined and the Son obeyed: “Behold, I have come to do your will, O God” (Hebrews 10:7). And what was that will? To destroy Satan (Hebrews 2:14) and undo his works (1 John 3:8). Since Jesus did indeed defeat Satan (Colossians 2:15, Ephesians 1:20-21, etc.), but then went back to Heaven, what is left for us is the undoing of his works.² It seems clear to me that to undo any work we must also undo its consequences (to the extent that that may be possible).

Consider also Ephesians 2:4-6: “But God—being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions—made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up together and seated us together in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.” This is tremendous! Here we have our authority. Christ is now seated at the Father’s right, ‘far above’ the enemy and his hosts. This verse affirms that we who are in Christ are there too! So in Christ we also are far above the enemy and his hosts.³ Surely, or is that not what is stated in Ephesians 1:16-21?

¹ The Lord gives us the authority to “trample snakes and scorpions”. Well now, to smash the literal insect, a scorpion, you don’t need power from on High, just a slipper (if you are fast, you can do it barefoot). To trample a snake I prefer a boot, but we can kill literal snakes without supernatural help. It becomes obvious that Jesus was referring to something other than reptiles and insects. I understand Mark 16:18 to be referring to the same reality—Jesus declares that certain signs will accompany the believers (the turn of phrase virtually has the effect of commands): they will expel demons, they will speak strange languages, they will remove ‘snakes’, they will place hands on the sick. (“If they drink . . .” is not a command; it refers to an eventuality.) But what did the Lord Jesus mean by ‘snakes’?

In a list of distinct activities Jesus has already referred to demons, so the ‘snakes’ must be something else. In Matthew 12:34 Jesus called the Pharisees a ‘brood of vipers’, and in 23:33, ‘snakes, brood of vipers’. In John 8:44, after they claimed God as their father, Jesus said, “You are of your father the devil”. And 1 John 3:10 makes clear that Satan has many other ‘sons’ (so also Matthew 13:38-39). In Revelation 20:2 we read: “He seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is a slanderer, even Satan, who deceives the whole inhabited earth, and bound him for a thousand years.” If Satan is a snake, then his children are also snakes. So then, I take it that our ‘snakes’ are human beings who have chosen to serve Satan, who have sold themselves to evil. I conclude that the ‘snakes’ in Luke 10:19 are the same as those in Mark 16:18, but what of the ‘scorpions’? Since they also are of the enemy, they may be demons, in which case the term may well include their offspring, the humanoids (for more on this see my article, “In the Days of Noah”, available from prunch.org). I am still working on the question of just how the removal is done.

² For more on this subject see my article, “Biblical Spiritual Warfare” (available from prunch.org).

³ We should be consciously operating on that basis, but since few churches teach this, most Christians live in

I really do not stop giving thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the real knowledge¹ of Himself, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His^[F] calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power into² us who are believing, according to the demonstration of the extent of His might which He exercised in the Christ when He raised Him^[S] from among the dead and seated Him at His^[F] right, in the heavenly realms, far above every ruler and authority and power and dominion—even every name that can be named, not only in this age but also in the next.

Now then, “far above every ruler and authority and power and dominion—even every name that can be named, not only in this age but also in the next” must include Satan and his angels. If Christ, seated at the Father’s right, is “**far** above” them, and we are in Him, seated at the Father’s right, then we too are above all the hosts of the enemy. That is our position and authority for neutralizing interference.

Well and good, but just how are we to go about doing it? Well, at what level should we ‘neutralize’? The candidates that suggest themselves are: institutions, teachers, students, church leaders, and lay people. How about working at all levels? Next, what procedures are at our disposal to do the neutralizing? I offer the following: a) forbid any further use of Satan’s power, in a specific case; b) claim the undoing of the consequences of the use of that power that there has been (to the extent it may be possible); c) destroy any strongholds of Satan in their minds (including blind spots); d) bind any demons involved and send them to the Abyss, forbidding any further demonic activity; e) take their thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. In my experience, to be efficient we need to be specific: name the institution; name the person.

But just a minute, I submit for consideration that faith is a basic prerequisite for making use of our position and authority. The theological training I myself received programmed me not to expect supernatural manifestations of power in and through my life and ministry. As a result, I personally find it to be difficult to exercise the kind of faith that the Lord Jesus demands. Consider:

spiritual defeat.

¹ I finally settled on ‘real knowledge’ as the best way to render *epignwsij*, the heightened form of *gnwsij*, ‘knowledge’. Real knowledge is more than mere intellectual knowledge, or even true theoretical knowledge—it involves experience. The Text goes on to say, “the eyes of your heart having been enlightened”. Real knowledge changes your ‘heart’, who you are.

² “Into us”—that is what the Text says. Note that ‘believing’ is in the present tense. Consider Ephesians 3:20. “Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to the power that is working in us.” Note that “is working” is also in the present tense; having believed yesterday won’t hack it, we must believe today. This tremendous power that God pours into us, as we believe, exceeds our powers of imagination. Well now, my personal horizon is limited and defined by my ability to imagine. Anything that I cannot imagine lies outside my horizon, and so obviously I won’t ask for it. I sadly confess that I have not yet arrived at a spiritual level where I can unleash this power—I have yet to make the truth in this verse work for me. But I understand that the truth affirmed here is literal, and I only hope that others will get there before I do (so I can learn from them), if I keep on delaying. The whole point of the exercise (verse 21) is for God to get glory, and to the extent that we do not put His power in us to work we are depriving Him of glory that He could and should have.

In Matthew 8:5-13 the centurion understood about authority—he gave orders and they were obeyed, promptly and without question.¹ But the Lord Jesus said he had unusually great faith—faith in what? Faith in the Lord’s spiritual authority; He could simply give an order and it would happen. Perhaps we should understand this sort of faith as an absolute confidence, without a taint of doubt or fear. In Matthew 21:21 the Lord said, “Assuredly . . . if you have faith and do not doubt” (see Mark 11:23, “does not doubt in his heart”) you can (actually “will”) shrivel a tree or send a mountain into the sea. See also Hebrews 10:22, “full assurance of faith”, 1 Timothy 2:8, “pray . . . without doubting”, James 1:6, “ask in faith with no doubting”. Mark 5:34 and Matthew 15:28 offer positive examples; while Peter blew it (Matthew 14:31, “why did you doubt?”).

If someone gives a commission, they will presumably back it up to the limit of their ability. Since Christ’s ability has no limit, His backing has no limit (on His end). In Matthew 28:18 He said, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.” Then comes the commission: “As you go, make disciples . . . teaching them to obey all things that I have commanded you”—the pronoun refers back to the eleven apostles (verse 16). So what commands had Jesus given the Eleven? Among other things, “heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons” (in Matthew 10:8 perhaps 94% of the Greek manuscripts do not have “raise the dead”). The Eleven also heard John 20:21. Knowing that we are being backed by the Sovereign of the universe, who has all authority and power, we can and should act with complete confidence.

A word of caution is necessary at this point. Consider James 4:7—“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Note the sequence: we need to verify that we are in submission to God before taking on the devil. Then we should claim our position in Christ at the Father’s right hand. Since few Christians have received any remotely adequate level of instruction in the area of biblical spiritual warfare (most have received none), I need to explain the procedures.

a) Forbid any further use of Satan’s power:

This procedure is based on Luke 10:19. Sovereign Jesus gives us ‘the’ authority over all the power of the enemy. Authority controls power, but since we have access to God’s limitless power (Ephesians 3:20), we should not give Satan the satisfaction of our using his (and he could easily deceive us into doing things we shouldn’t). We should use our authority to forbid the use of Satan’s power, with reference to specific situations—in my experience, we must be specific. (I have tried binding Satan once for all until the end of the world, but it doesn’t work; presumably because God’s plan calls for the enemy’s continued activity in this world. We can limit what the enemy does, but not put him completely out of business, or so I deem.) But just how should we go about it?

In the armor described in Ephesians 6 we find “the sword of the Spirit” (verse 17). A sword is a weapon for offense, although it is also used for defense. The Text tells us that this sword is “the $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$ of God”— $\rho\eta\mu\alpha$, not $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$. It is God’s Word spoken, or applied. Really, what good is a sword left in its sheath? However marvelous our Sword may be (Hebrews 4:12), to produce effect it must come out of the scabbard. The Word needs to be spoken, or written—applied in a specific way.

¹ The centurion did not say, “In the authority of Rome . . .”, he just said, “Do this; do that.” The Lord Jesus did not say, “In the authority of the Father . . .”, He just said, “Be clean! Go!” In Luke 10:19 He said, “I give you the authority over all the power of the enemy”—so we have the authority, so it is up to us to speak! Just like Jesus did.

In the Bible we have many examples where people brought the power of God into action by speaking. Our world began with a creative word from God—spoken (Genesis, 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; and see Hebrews 11:3). Moses did a lot of speaking. Elijah spoke (1 Kings 17:1, 18:36, 2 Kings 1:10). Elisha spoke (2 Kings 2:14, 21, 24; 4:16, 43; 6:19). Jesus did a great deal of speaking. Ananias spoke (Acts 9:17). Peter spoke (Acts 9:34, 40). Paul spoke (Acts 13:11; 14:3, 10; 16:18; 20:10; 28:8). In short, we need to speak!

b) Claim the undoing of the consequences of the use of that power that there has been:

This procedure is based on 1 John 3:8, allied to Luke 10:19. It should be possible for us to command Satan to use his own power to undo messes he has made, thereby obliging him to acknowledge his defeat (which will not sit well with his pride). The Son of God was manifested for the purpose of “undoing the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8), and it is incumbent upon us to continue His work here in this world (John 20:21). How can you undo a work without undoing its consequences as well? The Father sent the Son to undo Satan’s works, and the Lord Jesus Christ is sending us to undo Satan’s works. Again, I understand that we must be specific.

c) Destroy any strongholds of Satan in the person’s mind:

This procedure is based on 2 Corinthians 10:4 and 1 John 3:8. Since strongholds, and blind spots, in the mind are a work of Satan, and we are here to undo such works, this falls within the area of our competence. It is done by claiming such destruction in so many words, being specific.

d) Bind any demons involved and send them to the Abyss:

This procedure is based on Mark 3:27 and Luke 8:31. “No one can plunder the strong man’s goods, invading his house, unless he first binds the strong man—then he may plunder the house” (Mark 3:27). Since the definite article occurs with ‘strong man’ the first time the phrase occurs, the entity has already been introduced, so the reference is to Satan. Here is a biblical basis for binding Satan, which is now possible because of Christ’s victory. If we can bind Satan, evidently we can also bind any of his subordinates. “And he¹ kept imploring Him that He would not order them to go away into the Abyss” (Luke 8:31).² I take it that Jesus did not send them to the Abyss at that time because He had not yet won the victory, and the demons were ‘within their rights’, under Satan, who was still the god of this world. But the demons were obviously worried! (They knew very well who Jesus was, and what He could do.) I would say that this is one of the ‘greater things’ (John 14:12) that we may now do—rather, that we should do. As for forbidding any further demonic activity, we have the Lord’s example (Mark 9:25), and we are to do what He did (John 14:12).

e) Take their thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ:

This procedure is based on 2 Corinthians 10:5. In the context, the thoughts are of people who are serving Satan (even if unwittingly). (Of course we should always be checking to be sure that we ourselves are operating within ‘the mind of Christ’, 1 Corinthians 2:15-16.) Now this procedure moves away from simply neutralizing the enemy’s interference, since it introduces a positive ‘interference’, but it is relevant to the issue being discussed here, since it is protection against falling back into the former error. Again we must be specific.

¹ The boss demon does most of the talking, representing his cohort.

² The Text has ‘the Abyss’, presumably the same one mentioned in Revelation 20:3. The demons knew something that most of us do not.

f) Some further texts that may apply: Luke 4:18-21, Psalm 149:5-9, John 14:12.

In Luke 4:18-21 Jesus includes “to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Isaiah 58:6) as one of the things He was sent to do. Turning to Isaiah 58:6, we find Jehovah stating what kind of ‘fast’ He would like to see: “To loose the fetters of wickedness [a], to undo the yoke-ropes [b]; to let oppressed ones go free [a], and that you (pl.) break every yoke [b].” As is typical of Hebrew grammar, the two halves are parallel. “To loose the fetters of wickedness” and “to let oppressed ones go free” are parallel. Who placed the “fetters” and who is doing the oppressing? Well, although people can certainly forge their own bonds through their own wicked lifestyle, I take it that the point here is that wicked beings have placed the fetters on others. “To undo yoke-ropes” and “that ye break every yoke” go together. First we should untie the ropes that bind the yoke to the neck, then we should break the yokes themselves. I gain the clear impression that this text is talking about the activity of Satan’s servants, men and angels. Using culture, worldview, legal devices, threats, blackmail, lies, deception and just plain demonizing and witchcraft, they bind individuals, families, ethnic groups, etc., with a variety of fetters and instruments of oppression.

So what does this have to do with our subject? Well, fasting was an important and required component in their worship of God. So this kind of ‘fasting’ is something that Jehovah overtly wants to see; it is specifically His will. So when we see any work of Satan in someone’s life, it is God’s will that we undo it. If we know it is God’s will, we can proceed with complete confidence. And it is part of our commission (John 20:21).

Notice also Psalms 149:5-9. “Let the saints exult in glory; let them sing for joy in their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand—to execute vengeance upon the nations and punishments upon the peoples; to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the written judgment. This honor is for all His saints.” Note that the saints are in their beds, so the activity described in the subsequent verses must take place in the spiritual realm. I assume that the ‘kings’ and ‘nobles’ include both men and fallen angels. The activity described is the prerogative of “all His saints”—if you are one of those saints, it is up to you. There are a number of ‘written judgments’ in the Text: Zechariah 5:2-4, Proverbs 20:10, Isaiah 10:1-2, Romans 1:26-36 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, at least.

In John 14:12 the Lord Jesus said: “Most assuredly I say to you, the one believing into me, he too will do the works that I do; in fact he will do greater works than these, because I am going to my Father.” “Most assuredly” is actually “amen, amen”—rendered “verily, verily” in the AV. Only John registers the word as repeated, in the other Gospels it is just “amen”. In the contemporary literature we have no example of anyone else using the word in this way. It seems that Jesus coined His own use, and the point seems to be to call attention to an important pronouncement: “Stop and listen!” Often it precedes a formal statement of doctrine or policy, as here.

“The one believing into me, he too will do the works that I do.” This is a tremendous statement, and not a little disconcerting. Notice that the Lord said, “will do”; not ‘maybe’, ‘perhaps’, ‘if you feel like it’; and certainly not ‘if the doctrine of your church permits it’! If you believe, you **will do!** The verb ‘believe’ is in the present tense; if you are believing you will do; it follows that if you are not doing, it is because you are not believing. $2 + 2 = 4$. Doing what? “The works that I do.” Well, Jesus preached the Gospel, He taught, He cast out demons, He healed all sorts and sizes of sickness and disease, He raised an occasional dead person, and He performed a variety of miracles (water to wine, walk on water, stop a storm instantaneously, transport a boat several miles instantaneously, multiply food, shrivel a

tree—and He implied that the disciples should have stopped the storm and multiplied the food, and He stated that they could shrivel a tree [Peter actually took a few steps on water]). So how about us? The preaching and teaching we can handle, but what about the rest? I once heard the president of a certain Christian college affirm that this verse obviously could not mean what it says because it is not happening! Well, in his own experience and in that of his associates I guess it isn't. But many people today cast out demons and heal, and I personally know someone who has raised a dead person. Miracles are also happening. So how about me? And you?

“In fact he will do greater works than these.” Well now, if we cast out demons, heal and perform miracles, is that not enough? Jesus wants more, He wants “greater things” than those just mentioned [do not forget what He said in Matthew 7:22-23]. Notice again that He said “will do”, not maybe, perhaps, or if your church permits. But what could be ‘greater’ than miracles? This cannot refer to modern technology because in that event such ‘greater things’ would not have been available to the believers during the first 1900 years. Note that the key is in the Lord’s final statement (in verse 12), “because I am going to my Father”. Only if He won could He return to the Father, so He is here declaring His victory before the fact. It is on the basis of that victory that the ‘greater things’ can be performed. Just what are those ‘greater’ things? For my answer, see my outline, “Biblical Spiritual Warfare”.

In verse 12 the verb ‘will do’ is singular, both times, so it has to do with the individual. Observe that the Lord did **not** say, “you apostles”, “only during the apostolic age”, “only until the canon is complete”, or whatever. He said, “the one believing”, present tense, so this applies to any and all subsequent moments up to our time. To deny the truth contained in this verse is to make the Lord Jesus Christ out to be a liar. Somehow I do not think that is very smart.¹

The 'Crux' of a 'Lost' Original

Returning to the opening paragraph, is/was the original wording lost? I answer with an emphatic, “No”. It certainly exists within the Byzantine bulk. To my mind, any time at least 90% of the primary witnesses agree, there can be no reasonable question; it is statistically impossible that a non-original reading could score that high.² Any time a reading garners an attestation of at least 80% its probability is high. But for perhaps 2% of the words in the NT the attestation falls below 80% (a disproportionate number being in the Apocalypse), and at this point we need to shift our attention from MSS to families. Once all MSS have been collated and have been empirically assigned to families, then we can confine our attention to those families from the start (as I have done in the Apocalypse). I have mentioned elsewhere assigning a credibility quotient to each family, based on objective criteria, and this needs to be done. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of 'homework' waiting to be done in this area. So far as I know, only Family 35 has an empirically defined profile (defined by a complete collation of a representative number of the MSS that make up the family), at least to this date.³

¹ Also, to affirm that the miraculous gifts ceased when the last shovelful of dirt fell on the Apostle John’s grave is an historical falsehood. Christians who lived during the second, third and fourth centuries, whose writings have come down to us, affirm that the gifts were still in use in their day. No 20th or 21st century Christian, who was not there, is competent to contradict them. And please see the footnote at 1 Corinthians 13:12 in my translation, *The Sovereign Creator Has Spoken*. Any ‘cessationist’ will have a stronghold of Satan in his mind on that subject, because he has embraced a lie. Any doctrine that derives from reaction against excesses and abuses gives victory to Satan. Any argument designed to justify lack of spiritual power cannot be right.

² See Appendix C in my *Identity IV*.

³ So far as I know, neither **f¹** nor **f¹³** exists outside of the Gospels, but even there, has anyone ever produced an

About the 2% with attestation below 80%, in a heavy majority of the cases the difference can hardly be reflected in a translation. A reader will understand the intended meaning with either variant. But within Family 35 there is very little significant variation, and the archetypal form is demonstrable. For example, of the forty-three family members I have collated for the General Epistles, twenty-eight are identical (perfect) for 2 & 3 John (but not always the same MSS), twenty-two are identical for Jude, five for 2 Peter, four each for James and 1 John, and three for 1 Peter.

For my article, “Copyist Care Quotient” (see Part II above), I collated fifty-one (now 53) representatives of Family 35 for Mark. I analyzed the variants contained in MS 1384 (eapr, XI, Andros)—of the fifty-three MSS I collated, at least forty-four are better than 1384, so it is only a mediocre representative. However, with four exceptions, only a single letter or syllable is involved, and nowhere is the meaning seriously affected. **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 almost all f^{35} MSS. Down through the centuries of transmission, anyone with access to an f^{35} representative could know the intended meaning of the Autograph.¹ 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.

Some years ago now, Maurice Robinson did a complete collation of 1,389 MSS that contain the P.A. (John 7:53-8:11),² and I had William Pierpont's photocopy of those collations in my possession for two months, spending most of that time studying those collations. As I did so, it became obvious to me that von Soden 'regularized' his data, arbitrarily 'creating' the alleged archetypal form for his first four families, $M^{1,2,3,4}$ —if they exist at all, they are rather fluid. His $M^{5&6}$ do exist, having distinct profiles for the purpose of showing that they are different, but they are a bit 'squishy', with enough internal confusion to make the choice of the archetypal form to be arbitrary. In fact, I suspect that they will have to be subdivided. In contrast to the above, his M^7 (that I call Family 35) has a solid, unambiguous profile—the archetypal form is demonstrable, empirically determined.

As for the Apocalypse, of the nine groups that Hoskier identified, only his Complutensian (that I call Family 35) is homogenous. Of the others, the main ones all have subdivisions,

empirically defined profile for either one? Consider the following statement by Metzger:

It should be observed that, in accord with the theory that members of f^1 and f^{13} were subject to progressive accommodation to the later Byzantine text, scholars have established the text of these families by adopting readings of family witnesses that differ from the *Textus Receptus*. Therefore the citation of the siglum f^1 and f^{13} may, in any given instance, signify a minority of manuscripts (or even only one) that belong to the family. (*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [companion to UBS³], p. xii.)

Would it be unreasonable to say that such a proceeding is unfair to the reader? Does it not mislead the user of the apparatus? At least as used by the UBS editions, those sigla do not represent empirically defined profiles.

¹ Since f^{35} MSS are scattered all over, or all around, the Mediterranean world, such access would have been feasible for most people.

² 240 MSS omit the P.A., 64 of which are based on Theophylact’s commentary. Fourteen others have lacunae, but are not witnesses for total omission. A few others certainly contain the passage but the microfilm is illegible. So, $1389 + 240 + 14 + 7(?) =$ about 1650 MSS checked by Robinson. That does not include Lectionaries, of which he also checked a fair number. (These are microfilms held by the *INTF* in Münster. We now know that there are many more extant MSS, and probably even more that are not yet ‘extant’.) Unfortunately, so far as I know, Robinson has yet to publish his collations, thus making them available to the public at large.

which will require their own profile.

Given my presuppositions, I consider that I have good reason for declaring the divine preservation of the precise original wording of the complete New Testament Text to this day. That wording is reproduced in my edition of the Greek NT. My presuppositions include: the Sovereign Creator exists; He inspired the biblical Text; He promised to preserve it for a thousand generations (1 Chronicles 16:15); so He must have an active, ongoing interest in that preservation [there have been fewer than 300 generations since Adam, so He has a ways to go!]. If He was preserving the original wording in some line of transmission other than f^{35} , would that transmission be any less careful than what I have demonstrated for f^{35} ? I think not. So any line of transmission characterized by internal confusion is disqualified—this includes all the other lines of transmission that I have seen so far!¹

On the basis of the evidence so far available I affirm the following:

1. The original wording was never 'lost', and its transmission down through the years was basically normal, being recognized as inspired material from the beginning.
2. That normal process resulted in lines of transmission.
3. To delineate such lines, MSS must be grouped empirically on the basis of a shared mosaic of readings.
4. Such groups or families must be evaluated for independence and credibility.
5. The largest clearly defined group is Family 35.
6. Family 35 is demonstrably independent of all other lines of transmission throughout the NT.
7. Family 35 is demonstrably ancient, dating to the 3rd century, at least.²
8. Family 35 representatives come from all over the Mediterranean area; the geographical distribution is all but total.³
9. Family 35 is not a recension, was not created at some point subsequent to the Autographs.
10. Family 35 is an objectively/empirically defined entity throughout the NT; it has a demonstrable, diagnostic profile from Matthew 1:1 to Revelation 22:21.
11. The archetypal form of Family 35 is demonstrable—it has been demonstrated (see the "Profile" in Part II above).
12. The Original Text is the ultimate archetype; any candidate must also be an archetype—a real, honest to goodness, objectively verifiable archetype—there is only one (so far), Family 35.⁴
13. God's concern for the preservation of the biblical Text is evident: I take it that passages

¹ Things like **M**⁶ and **M**⁵ in John 7:53-8:11 come to mind.

² 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 f^{35} 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 f^{35} text is ancient (also independent).

³ And for some places in Greece, based on their surviving copies, it was all they used.

⁴ If you want to be a candidate for the best lawyer in your city, you must be a lawyer, or the best carpenter, or oncologist, or whatever. If there is only one candidate for mayor in your town, who gets elected?

such as 1 Chronicles 16:15, Psalm 119:89, Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 5:18, Luke 16:17 and 21:33, John 10:35, 1 Peter 1:23-25 and Luke 4:4 may reasonably be taken to imply a promise that the Scriptures (to the tittle) will be preserved for man's use (we are to live "by every word of God"), and to the end of the world ("for a thousand generations"), but no intimation is given as to just how God proposed to do it. We must deduce the answer from what He has indeed done—we discover that He **did!**

14. This concern is reflected in Family 35; it is characterized by incredibly careful transmission (in contrast to other lines). [I have a perfect copy of the Family 35 archetypal text for most NT books (22); I have copies made from a perfect exemplar (presumed) for another four (4); as I continue to collate MSS I hope to add the last one (Acts), but even for it the archetypal form is demonstrable.]

15. If God was preserving the original wording in some line of transmission other than Family 35, would that line be any less careful? I think not. So any line of transmission characterized by internal confusion is disqualified—this includes **all** the other lines of transmission that I have seen so far.

16. I affirm that God used Family 35 to preserve the precise original wording of the New Testament Text; it is reproduced in my edition of the Greek Text.¹

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 my "Copyist Care Quotient") and range (all 27 books). I challenge any and all to do the same for any other line of transmission!

¹ And God used mainly the Eastern Orthodox Churches to preserve the NT Text down through the centuries—they have always used a Text that was an adequate representation of the Original, for all practical purposes.