The Dating of $K'$ (alias $f^{35}$, nee $f^{18}$) Revisited

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When Hermann von Soden identified $K'$ and proclaimed it to be a revision of $K^*$ 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 paper 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 have been using $f^{18}$ instead of $K'$ (equals $M^7$ in the PA and $M^*$ in Revelation). I have decided to switch to $f^{35}$ for the following reasons: 1) although cursive 18 is generally a purer representative of the texttype than is cursive 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 $K'$ 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 $K'$ ($M^7$) 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 cursive 35, Robinson’s collations demonstrate that cursive 1166 and lectionary 139, both of the X century, reflect $K'$. 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 $K'$ 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 $K'$ 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—

1 $K'$ $\&$ $A$ (21 B) [both $K'$ and $K^*$ are IV century]

2 $\text{τις ην}$ $K'$ $\&$ $A$ (21 B) [both $K'$ and $K^*$ are IV century]

3 $\text{τις υπηρχεν}$ $K^*$ $P^D$

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' or M7 articles that you make it clear that I do not concur with your assessment of K' 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' text to be early. This would be quite erroneous, since I hold with virtually all others that K'/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—he language there is certainly plain enough.]

2 Ibid., p. 13.
Acts 15:7—

en υµιν  K' K x ABC, it  [both K' and K x are ancient]
en ηµιν  K x (D) lat

Acts 19:3—

ειπεν τε  K' B(D)  [both K' and K x are ancient]
o de ειπεν  K x A(P 38) bo
eιπεν τε προς αυτους  K x sy, sa

Acts 21:8—

ηλθοµεν  K' K x ABC(lat, syr, cop)  [K' is older than K x, very ancient]
oi peri ton pauolon heleov  K x

Acts 23:20—

µελλοντες  [33.1%] K' lat, syr, sa  [K' is independent and very ancient]
µελλοντα  [26.9%] {HF,RP}
µελλοντων  [17.6%]
µελλον  [9.3%] AB, bo
µελλον  [7.5%] {NU} K
µελλοντας  [5.4%]

Rom. 5:1—

εχωµεν  [43%] K' K x(1/3) ABC lat, bo  [did part of K x assimilate to K' ?]
εχοµεν  [57%] K x(2/3)

Rom. 16:6—

eις υµας  K' P 46 ABC  [K' is independent and very ancient, II/III century]
eις ηµας  K x
en υµιν  D

2 Cor. 1:15—

προς υµας ελθειν το προτερον  K'  [K' is independent ! ]
προς υµας ελθειν  K
προτερον προς υµας ελθειν  ABC
προτερον ελθειν προς υµας  D, lat
eλθειν προς υµας το προτερον  K x

2 Cor. 2:17—

λοιποι  K' K x( pt) P 46 D, syr  [K' is very ancient, II/III century]
πολλοι  K x( pt) ABC lat, cop

James 1:23—

νοµου  K'  [K' is independent ]

logou  K x ABC

James 2:3—

tην λαµπραν εσθητα  K'  [K' is independent]
tην εσθητα την λαµπραν  K x ABC

James 2:4—

ou  K' ABC  [K' is independent and ancient]
και ou  K x

James 2:8—

σαυτουν  K' ABC  [K' is independent and ancient]

James 2:14—

εχει  K'  [K' is independent]

εχη  K x ABC

James 3:2—

δυναµενος  K' ABC  [K' is independent and ancient]

δυνατος  K x AB

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1 For the examples from James I also consulted Editio Critica Maior.
James 3:4— ἰθυνοντος $\text{K}^\prime$ [K$'$ is independent; a rare classical spelling]
   εὐθυνοντος $\text{K}^\times$ $\text{ABC}$

James 4:11— ὁ γὰρ $\text{K}^\prime$ [K$'$ is independent]
   ὁ $\text{K}^\times$ $\text{AB}$

James 4:14— ἐπεὶ τὰ $\text{K}^\prime$ [K$'$ is independent]
   ἐπεὶ τὰ καὶ $\text{K}^\times$ $\text{AB}$
   ἐπεὶ τὰ δὲ καὶ $\text{K}^\times$

1 Pet. 3:16— καταλαλοῦσιν $\text{K}^\prime$ AC, sy, bo [K$'$ is independent and ancient]
   καταλαλῶσιν $\text{K}^\times$
   καταλαλείσθε $\text{P}^\text{72B,sa}$

1 Pet. 4:3— ὑμῖν $\text{K}^\prime$ bo [K$'$ is independent and ancient]
   ὑμῖν $\text{K}^\times$ C
   (omit) $\text{P}^\text{72AB, lat, syr, sa}$

2 Pet. 2:17— εἰς αἰῶνας $\text{K}^\prime$ [K$'$ is independent]
   εἰς αἰῶνα $\text{K}^\times$ AC
   (omit) $\text{P}^\text{72AB, lat, syr, cop}$

3 John 12— οἶδαμεν $\text{K}^\prime$ [K$'$ is independent]
   οἶδατε $\text{K}^\times$
   οἶδας $\text{K}^\times$ $\text{ABC}$

So what conclusions may we draw from this evidence? K$'$ is independent of K$^\times$ and both are ancient, dating at least to the IV century. A few of the examples could be interpreted to mean that K$'$ is older than K$^\times$, dating to the III and even the II century, but let's 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— εῶς αἰῶνος $\text{K}^\prime$ C [K$'$ is independent and V century]
   εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα $\text{K}^\times$ $\text{AB}$

Luke 1:63— ἐστιν $\text{K}^\prime$ C [K$'$ is independent and V century]
   ἐστίν $\text{K}^\times$ $\text{AB}$

Luke 3:12— ὑπ αὐτοῦ καὶ $\text{K}^\prime$ C [K$'$ is independent and V century]
   ὑπ — — καὶ $\text{K}^\times$ $\text{ABD}$

Luke 4:7— σοι $\text{K}^\prime$ [K$'$ is independent]
   σου $\text{K}^\times$ $\text{AB}$

Luke 4:42— εξητοῦν $\text{K}^\prime$ [K$'$ is independent]

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4 Someone may object that it is the readings that are ancient, not the texttypes; but if a texttype is clearly independent, with constantly shifting alignments among the early witnesses, then it has ancient readings because it itself is ancient. And in the case of K$'$ there are many hundreds, if not thousands (I haven't counted them, yet), of variant sets where its reading has overt early attestation. (Recall that Aland's M and Soden's K include K$'$—the poor texttype itself should not be held responsible for the way modern scholars treat it.) If it can be demonstrated objectively that a texttype has thousands 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 5:1—

κατα

[K' is independent]

περί

[K' is independent]

παρα

[K' is independent]

παρά

[ABCD]

Luke 5:19—

ευροντες δια

[K' is independent]

ευροντες

[ABCD]

Luke 6:7—

−− τω

[AB]

Luke 6:10—

οὐτως και

[ABD]

Luke 6:26—

καλώς ειπωσιν υµας

[AB(ABC)] [K' is independent and early III century]

καλως ειπωσιν υµας

[ABCD]

ποιας

[ABCD]

Luke 6:26—

(omit)

K' P75AB

Luke 8:15—

ταυτα λεγων εφωνει ο εχων ωτα ακουειν ακουετω

(K' is independent)

(omit)

K' P75AB

Luke 8:24—

και προσελθοντες

[K' is independent]

προσελθοντες και

[K' is independent]

Luke 9:27—

εστηκοτων

[K' is independent and IV century]

εστωτων

[ABCD]

Luke 9:56—

(omit verse)

P45,75

Luke 10:4—

πηραν µη

[K' is independent]

πηραν µηδε

[ABCD]

Luke 10:6—

εαν µεν

[K' is independent]

εαν

[K' is independent]

Luke 10:39—

τον λογον

[K' is independent]

τον λογον

[K' is independent]

Luke 10:41—

ο Ιησους ειπεν αυτη

[K' is independent and V century]

ο Κυριος ειπεν αυτη

(omit)

P45

Luke 11:34—

ολον

[K' is independent]

ολον

[ABCD]

Luke 10:39—

τον λογον

[K' is independent]

τον λογον

[K' is independent]

K'  P45,75

Luke 10:4—

πηραν µη

[K' is independent]

πηραν µηδε

[ABCD]

Luke 10:6—

εαν µεν

[K' is independent]

εαν

[K' is independent]

Luke 10:39—

τον λογον

[K' is independent]

τον λογον

[K' is independent]

K'  P45,75

Luke 10:41—

ο Ιησους ειπεν αυτη

[K' is independent and V century]

ο Κυριος ειπεν αυτη

(omit)

P45

Luke 11:34—

ολον

[K' is independent]

ολον

[ABCD]
Luke 11:53— συνεχεῖν  
ενεχεῖν  
εχεῖν  
επεχεῖν  

[K' is independent!]  

Luke 12:22— λεγω ὑμῖν  
ὑμῖν λεγω  

[K' is independent and II century]  

Luke 12:56— του οὐρανου και της γης  
της γης και του οὐρανου  

[K' is independent and early III century]  

Luke 12:58— βαλὴ σε  
σε βαλῆ  

[K' is independent]  


[K' is independent and IV century]  

Luke 19:23— επι την  

[K' is independent]  

επι λιθω  

[K' is independent]  

Luke 21:15— αντειπειν η αντιστηναι  
αντειπειν ου δε αντιστηναι  

[K' is independent and V century]  

Luke 22:12— αναγαιον  
αναγεον  
ανωγεον  

[K' is independent and IV century]  


[K' is independent and early III century]  

Luke 23:51— ως  

[K' 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-A\textsuperscript{27} 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\textsuperscript{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 Generals (James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 3 John), with emphasis on Luke, Acts and James.\textsuperscript{5} Throughout the New Testament K' is independent and ancient. Dating to the III century, it is just as old as any other texttype. Therefore, it should be treated with the respect that it deserves!!

\textsuperscript{5} I also have a page or more of examples from Revelation that confirm that K' (M') is independent and III century in that book as well, but this paper is already too long and that further evidence would not take us beyond where we already are.
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 uncialss 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.6

Well, well, well, we’re 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 paper 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 am proposing a new name for the texttype. Let’s substitute $f^{35}$ for $K'$—it is more objective and will get away from the prejudice that attaches to the latter.

Appendix:

Having criticized von Soden’s dating of $K'$, I hasten to add that I don’t think he was perverse—he really thought that. So 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 few from the 11th and a lesser few from the 10th. That number grows in the 13th and grows some more in the 14th, calling attention to itself.7

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. 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’s 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.

6 Ibid.
7 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.