RULE 9, ISOLATED VARIANTS, AND THE “TEST-TUBE” NATURE OF THE NA\textsuperscript{27}/UBS\textsuperscript{4} TEXT:
A BYZANTINE-PRIORITY PERSPECTIVE

Vouloir proposer des corrections qui n’ont pour elles le témoignage d’aucun document, manuscrit, version ou écrivain ecclésiastique, c’est faire œuvre d’imagination et non de critique.\textsuperscript{1}

It is beyond question that the text presented in the current Nestle-Aland 27th (NA\textsuperscript{27}) and United Bible Societies’ 4th (UBS\textsuperscript{4}) editions\textsuperscript{2} is regarded by many throughout the world as the closest possible approximation to the New Testament autographs or at least the best text that can be constructed by modern methods of New Testament textual criticism.\textsuperscript{3} Such assumptions are drawn without regard for the clear statement presented in the introduction to NA\textsuperscript{27}:

It should naturally be understood that this text is a working text . . . ; it is not to be considered as definitive, but as a stimulus to further efforts toward defining and verifying the text of the New Testament.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{3} Wim Weren, “Textual Criticism: Mother of all Exegesis,” in Wim Weren and Dietrich-Alex Koch, eds., Recent Developments in Textual Criticism, New Testament, Other Early Christian and Jewish Literature: Papers read at a NOSTER Conference in Münster, January 4-6, 2001, Studies in Theology and Religion, 8 (Assen, NL: Royal Van Gorcum, 2003), 3-16, states: “Nowadays, exegetes from various Christian denominations worldwide make use of the Nestle-Aland text . . . . Because of its broad acceptance, the NA\textsuperscript{26} has been referred to as the new “standard text” . . . . Faith in the reconstruction of the original text of the Greek New Testament that has so far been achieved is so great that some researchers conceive the Nestle-Aland text as the Ausgangstext, . . . which in its turn can be compared to the texts of actually existing manuscripts . . . . This Ausgangstext . . . is seen as the potential predecessor of all actually existing textual witnesses” (5, 8).
\textsuperscript{4} NA\textsuperscript{27}, 45*. In a similar manner, the UBS\textsuperscript{4} preface declares (viii), “The text of the edition has remained unchanged. This should not be misunderstood to mean that the editors now consider the text as established. Work on the text of the Holy Scriptures continues to be a task of concern for each of the editors who will offer the results of their research in future editions.”
Despite this caution, the de facto conclusion of most students, instructors, and scholars – including members of the Münster Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung⁵ – appears to be that this NA²⁷ / UBS⁴ text does represent the epitome of New Testament text-critical scholarship: it indeed should be used and regarded as a quasi-“original” text unless specific (and mostly minor) alterations be suggested and accepted (such as those noted in the fascicles of the Editio Critica Maior [ECM]).⁶ In the general consensus, there exists little room for scholarly doubt regarding this matter,⁷ and thus the deeper issues of theology and exegesis can proceed apace, with little regard given to any variation from the base

⁵ See, for example Kurt Aland, “The Significance of the Papyri for Progress in New Testament Research,” in J. Philip Hyatt, ed., The Bible in Modern Scholarship: Papers read at the 100th Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, December 28-30, 1964 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1965), 325-346: “The aim which we want to achieve . . . can be so defined: to establish the original text of the NT, that is, the text-form in which the NT writings were officially put into circulation” (341); Klaus Junack, “The Reliability of the New Testament Text from the Perspective of Textual Criticism, BT 29 (1978) 128-140, “The purpose of textual research is to . . . to achieve a reconstruction of the original wording of the text, or at least the form of the text used by the scribes of the oldest surviving copies of the text” (129); Barbara Aland, “New Testament Textual Research, its Method and its Goals,” in Tai-il Wang, ed., Tell Me the Word Easy to Understand. Textual Criticism and Bible Translation: In Honor of Young Jin Min, 2 vols. (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 2000), 1:63-77: “The ultimate goal of New Testament textual research . . . is to discover the original text of the New Testament or, to put it more modestly, to come as close as possible to the lost autographs of the authors” (1:63); “Do we know the original text of the New Testament? . . . I believe we are very close to it although we do not have it in all its details” (1:72); Gerd Mink, “Editing and Genealogical Studies: The New Testament,” Literary and Linguistic Computing 15 (2000) 51-56: “The initial text [NA²⁷], called A [= Ausgangstext] . . . is not necessarily identical to the original text . . . [but] may be hypothesized as representing the starting point of the tradition at each passage” (52); Klaus Wachtel, “Colwell Revisited: Grouping New Testament Manuscripts,” in Christian-B. Amphoux and J. Keith Elliott, eds., The New Testament Text in Early Christianity: Proceedings of the Lille Colloquium, July 2000, HTB 6 (Lausanne: Éditions du Zèbre, 2003), 31-43, states that one must “reduce the material to those documents which are needed for the reconstruction of a text as close as possible to the original” (39) [emphasis added throughout].

⁶ Barbara Aland et al., eds., Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior, IV, Die Katholischen Briefe: 1, Der Jakobusbrief; 2, Die Petrusbriefe; 3, Der Erste Johannesbrief (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997-2004). The ECM volumes so far published have suggested that the NA²⁷ base text be changed in Jas 1:22; 2:3, 4; 1Pet 1:6, 16 (2x); 2:25; 4:16; 5:9; 5:10; 2Pet 2:6, 11, 15; 3:6, 10, 16 (2x), 18; 1John 1:7; 5:10, 18. Otherwise, NA²⁷ = ECM = the Ausgangstext. Thus NA²⁷ in general is considered to represent the source text from which all other readings in each variant unit have derived (“a reconstruction which we believe to be the best hypothetical initial text that has been reached up to now without the knowledge of the extensive material being offered in the ECM,” 1John ECM, 28*).

⁷ Chrysostom C. Caragounis, The Development of Greek and the New Testament: Morphology, Syntax, Phonology, and Textual Transmission, WUNT 167 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), states, “Commentators as a rule follow the text of the GNT [= UBS⁵] or NA²⁷ without further ado. Where they do take up a variation unit for discussion, they normally accept the verdict of the editors and the explanation supplied by Metzger’s commentary, which they express in their own words” (518).
NA27/UBS4 or ECM text, except here and there as minor exercises in eclectic ingenuity considered worthy of publication in various journals.8

To be sure, various issues can and have been raised regarding inadequacies when using UBS4 and NA27 as hand editions (Handausgaben), particularly in regard to the limited number of variant units cited (the same editorial team’s UBS4 cites far fewer than NA27; NA27 cites fewer than the Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum;9 and these cite far fewer than the comprehensive apparatuses of Tischendorf, Tregelles, or von Soden). The NA27 preface specifically states (following the previously quoted portion) that

It intends to provide the user with a well-founded working text together with the means of verifying it or alternatively of correcting it. The edition contains all the variants necessary for this purpose in as complete a form as possible within its limitations. The variants included are important either for their content or for their historical significance. The user can also gain an accurate impression of the amount of variation in the New Testament textual tradition, as well as of the general character of these variants, and of the motives and origins they reflect.10

Yet the claims so made raise valid questions, since the NA27 edition is highly limited in its selection of variant units. When contrasted with the various editions of the Byzantine Textform,11 for example, one finds that a large number of variant units – many of them significant for text-

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8 Frederik Wisse, “The Nature and Purpose of Redactional Changes in Early Christian Texts: The Canonical Gospels,” in William L. Petersen, ed., Gospel Traditions in the Second Century: Origins, Recensions, Text, and Transmission, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity, 3 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1989), 39-53, suggests that, in many cases, “we are dealing with nothing more than educated guesses which lead nowhere and needlessly clutter the scholarly literature” (40). See also Mark Goodacre, The Case Against Q: Studies in Markan Priority and the Synoptic Problem (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002), 8-9, where he draws a close parallel between the Q hypothesis and New Testament textual criticism: “[Most scholars] will accept its broad finding and debate just a point here or a point there. The impression given is that the argument concerns merely the finer details of a text, the existence and overall character of which is unshakeable. In this important aspect, Q scholarship is aligning itself with the discipline of textual criticism; the broad consensus is established in the near unanimous use by scholars of the latest version of Nestle-Aland’s critical text, but individual scholars will debate about one reading or another.”

9 Kurt Aland, ed. Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum, 15th rev. and exp. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2001), hereafter SQE. Allowing that the SQE contains a larger number of variant units than does NA27, had the SQE been used for the Gospels section of the present paper, additional whole verses with zero support likely may have appeared.

10 NA27, 46*.

critical purposes – are not cited in the NA\textsuperscript{27} apparatus. To illustrate, in Mark 11, NA\textsuperscript{27} in 31 instances fails to cite differences between its text and the Byzantine Textform;\textsuperscript{12} in Luke 7, NA\textsuperscript{27} fails in 23 such instances;\textsuperscript{13} in John 7, NA\textsuperscript{27} fails in 18 such instances.\textsuperscript{14} The same situation prevails in almost every chapter throughout the New Testament.\textsuperscript{15}

A more basic question exists, however: just how reliable and secure for text-critical, exegetical, and hermeneutical purposes – even as a “working text” – is the main text of NA\textsuperscript{27}/UBS\textsuperscript{4}/ECM as currently printed? Statistical comparison against a contrasting text such as the Byzantine Textform demonstrates that all texts share an approximate 90\% (or greater) identity of wording.\textsuperscript{16} However, such a large amount of common agreement does not reflect the central area of concern for those involved in New Testament textual criticism. The primary issue involves the resultant base text and the means by which that text – whether NA\textsuperscript{27}, the Byzantine Textform, or any other – has been established, including the underlying theory, methodology, and applied praxis, since all these have coalesced to produce a text that is regarded either as “original,” “closest to the original,” a “base” or Ausgangstext, or simply a reasonably reliable “working text.” The present essay addresses one aspect of the NA\textsuperscript{27} text, since its text as published apparently stands in opposition to the text-critical rules established by Kurt and Barbara Aland in their The Text of the New Testament.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{12} Seven of these differences are merely orthographic; the remaining 24 cases reflect more significant changes involving word order, substitution, and matters of inclusion or omission.

\textsuperscript{13} Six of these differences are orthographic; the remaining 18 cases are more substantial.

\textsuperscript{14} Seven of these differences are orthographic; the remaining 11 cases are more substantial.

\textsuperscript{15} David Trobisch, “From New Testament Manuscripts to a Central Electronic Database,” in Johann Cook, Bible and Computer: The Stellenbosch AIBI-6 Conference. Proceedings of the Association Internationale Bible et Informatique “From Alpha to Byte”. University of Stellenbosch 17-21 July, 2000 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 427-433, notes: “The Nestle-Aland edition collates a selected number of witnesses at a selected number of places. If the editors decided not to document variants for a specific text, there is no way for the users to know whether this text is transmitted without variants or not” (429). Even while acknowledging that “editors have to choose where they want to note variants and where not” (429), when speaking of the much more extensive but chronologically restricted ECM apparatus, Trobisch declares, “Ideally scholars should be presented with the complete data. To a Byzantine scholar, for example, the restriction [in ECM] to the first nine hundred years of transmission may limit the usefulness of this edition considerably” (430).

\textsuperscript{16} For example, when compared against the Byzantine Textform, Matt 13 in NA\textsuperscript{27} has 94.8\% of its wording (including word order) in common; in Acts 13, the same comparison finds 92.1\% of the wording in common; Rom 13 finds 94.1\% in common; Heb 13 finds 96.8\% in common; and Rev 13 finds 91.6\% in common.

The Alands list "twelve basic rules for textual criticism" – many of which even Byzantine-priority advocates would accept. Yet, whether consciously or not, one rule in particular continually is violated within NA, Aland/Aland rule number nine:

Variants must never be treated in isolation, but always considered in the context of the tradition. Otherwise there is too great a danger of reconstructing a "test-tube text" which never existed at any time or place.

By neglecting this rule when constructing the NA text as an Ausgangstext, the NA text itself becomes the very "test-tube text" that two of its editors warned against. Why is this so?

Basically, the NA main text, taken sequentially, represents a connected series of variant units, in which the main text in each individual variant unit bears the reading that has been determined as that from which all remaining variants in that particular unit are derived. Little or no thought appears to have been given to the witnesses supporting one variant unit in conjunction with the witnesses supporting the surrounding variant units in the sequential connection of the overall text. This practice leads to contradictory levels of external support, whereby one variant unit’s external support effectively cancels that of another neighboring variant unit. This situation progressively worsens as additional variant units are added to the overall sequence. The resultant text – even within relatively short segments – becomes an entity that apparently never existed at any time or place.
The evidence by which to establish this repeated violation of Aland/Aland Rule 9 is the \( \text{NA}^\text{27} \) apparatus, in particular its attestation of “consistently cited witnesses.”\(^{23}\) Using the evidence presented in both the positive and negative apparatuses of the \( \text{NA}^\text{27} \) edition,\(^{24}\) it can be demonstrated with success that more than 100 whole verses as printed in \( \text{NA}^\text{27} \) have no apparent support within the Greek manuscript tradition; in most (if not all) cases, no support exists for such whole verses even within the versional or patristic traditions.

Such a statement might seem puzzling and peculiar, since supposedly the only “conjectural”\(^{25}\) reading in \( \text{NA}^\text{27}/\text{UBS}^4 \) appears in Acts 16:12.\(^{26}\) Yet the actual situation is not difficult to comprehend, since potential to mislead students by giving them the impression of an established document . . . the existence of which it would be foolish to question.” So also 161-162: “Nestle-Aland\(^{27}\) offers at best only an approximation to the original texts of the Gospels. The sophistication of the critical text can all too easily seduce scholars into imagining that they are dealing with something far more concrete and stable than is in fact possible.”

23 See \( \text{NA}^\text{27}, \) 50*: “The witness of these [consistently cited] manuscripts is always cited in the passages selected for the apparatus.” The two “orders” of consistently cited witnesses include (1) “the papyri and the uncials which are independent of the Byzantine Koine text type, and a small number of minuscules which preserve an early [by this is meant non-Byzantine] form of the text”; and (2) “the more important uncials of the Koine text type, and a group of minuscules . . . related to the Byzantine Koine text type” (\( \text{NA}^\text{27}, \) 51*). Normally the MSS under group (2) are subsumed under the Gothic \( \text{[]} \) symbol [which includes the Byzantine Textform] where they do not otherwise explicitly deviate (ibid., 51*).

24 The positive and negative apparatuses are described in \( \text{NA}^\text{27}, \) 51*. The \textit{positive} apparatus gives specific support for the \( \text{NA}^\text{27} \) main text reading (\( \text{txt} \)); the \textit{negative} apparatus gives specific support only for variants from the \( \text{NA}^\text{27} \) main text. The consistently cited witnesses for the \( \text{NA}^\text{27} \) main text generally can be calculated from the evidence of the positive and negative apparatuses, coupled with the list of manuscript lacunae appearing in \( \text{NA}^\text{27}, \) 684-713. A caution in this regard concerns the Gothic \( \text{[]} \) symbol and the negative apparatuses: due to various “flaws affecting the text of a manuscript, . . . the possibility should not be ruled out that on occasion a consistently cited witness is neither subsumed in the symbol \( \text{[]} \) nor in agreement with the text of this edition” (51*); this suggests that additional instances of zero support for whole verses may exist beyond those demonstrated in the present essay.

25 In 2Pet 3:10, ECM substitutes a conjecture for the \( \text{NA}^\text{27} \) main text, choosing to follow certain Philoxenian Syriac MSS and the Sahidic/Dialect-V Coptic reading \( \text{ουχ} \ \text{ευρεθησεται} \) instead of the \( \text{NA}^\text{27} \text{ευρεθησεται} \) (supported by \# B K P 0156\(^{\text{tid}} \) 323 1241 1739\(^{\text{tld}} \) \( \text{pc syhph, hmg} \), or the Byzantine \( \text{κατακαησεται} \).

26 The reading \( \text{πρωτη[ς] μεριδος της} \) is a conjecture made by Le Clerc (= Clericus) and later by others; at best this conjecture finds strained support in three late Vulgate manuscripts. \( \text{UBS}^4 \) provides a more comprehensive statement of the evidence regarding the various readings in this unit; text-critical issues and historical matters are discussed in Bruce M. Metzger, \textit{A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament}, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 393-395. A signed and strongly-worded dissent in that volume by K. Aland and B. Metzger opposes such “ill-advised” conjecture; such becomes peculiar and ironic when the end product of the \( \text{NA}^\text{27}/\text{UBS}^4 \)
it reflects an inherent problem within the various forms of eclectic methodology: because the system works primarily with individual variant units, the left hand has little or no regard for what the right hand may have done in a neighboring variant unit. The pattern is consistent: a decision regarding the “best” reading in one unit of variation normally is made on the basis of internal and external principles that pertain to that specific variant unit. These principles assign localized authority and “weight” only to the manuscripts whose general character and value happen to support the internal criteria favored within that particular variant unit. Once this has been accomplished, the procedure commences anew for the next sequential variant unit, with little or no regard for what just had been determined, on what principles, or what witnesses may have supported the previous decision. Thus, it often happens that all or nearly all supporting witnesses for the “best” reading in one variant unit vanish from the list of witnesses supporting the eclectically determined “best” reading of the next sequential variant unit. As a result, while the witnesses cited in support of isolated variant units might appear significant, the level of overall support rapidly diminishes or vanishes once neighboring variant units are added to the totals. To illustrate this point, consider John 9:4f:

John 9:4f (a) ηµας δει εργαζεσθαι τα εργα του πεµψαντος (b) με (c) εως ηµερα εστιν ερχεται νυξ οτε ουδεις δυναται εργαζεσθαι (d) οταν εν τω κοσµω ω φως ειµι του κοσµου

9:4f (a) txt: p^66 p^75 * B (~D) L W 070 pc sa pbo bo
(b) var: p^66 p^75 * L W pc pbo bo
(c) var: C* L W 070 33 pc b d sy hm pbo bo
(d) var: sy^9

editorial procedure creates what amounts to conjecture in the aggregate in more than 100 whole verses of their shared New Testament text.

27 These include “rigorous” or “thoroughgoing” eclecticism; “reasoned” eclecticism; and the “local-genealogical” or “Coherence-based genealogical” methods. Each of these leads to equally problematic results when the overall sequential context is considered.

28 Beyond the internal criterion of favoring the reading supposedly most likely to have given rise to all other readings within a particular variant unit, other internal criteria strongly influence such decisions. These include principles relating to the “more difficult,” the “harmonizing,” or the “shorter” reading, as well as other minor principles that in their subjective application remain subservient but highly necessary to the establishment of this initial overriding eclectic principle.

29 The NA^27 apparatus treats John 9:4 and John 9:5 as a single entity. This study considers such cases extended forms of single-verse support, following the decision of the NA^27 editors. In the present instance, the only variant unit occurring within John 9:5 is (d), and that unit does not affect the discussion regarding diminishing support in John 9:4.
In John 9:4, the NA²⁷ “best” sequence of variants (the Ausgangstext) reads (a) ηµας δει followed by (b) πεµψαντος µε (the intervening common text, εργαζεσθαι τα εργα του, has no variant units cited). In variant unit (a), the NA²⁷ apparatus shows the main text reading ηµας to be supported by Ι66 Ι75 Ιυ/ ςφτει ι δει Ι66 Ι75 Ιυ/ ςφτει ι δει Ι66 Ι75 Ιυ/ ςφτει ι δει and thus differs from the NA²⁷ text as printed. In the second variant unit (b), the NA²⁷ apparatus shows the NA²⁷ main text reading µε to have the support of the majority text (Ι66, including the Byzantine Textform). Yet the alternate (b) reading, ηµας, is supported by Ι66 Ι75 Ιυ/ ςφτει ι δει Ι66 Ι75 Ιυ/ ςφτει ι δει Ι66 Ι75 Ιυ/ ςφτει ι δει. That group is almost the same as that which supported variant unit (a); the only defection is by B (D) 070 and the Sahidic version. When the NA²⁷ external support for both variant units is combined, the apparent greater degree of support for each unit taken separately is reduced in the aggregate only to that of B (D) and 070. The larger combination of witnesses Ι66 Ι75 Ιυ/ ςφτει ι δει Ι66 Ι75 Ιυ/ ςφτει ι δει actually read the pattern (a) ηµας and (b) ηµας. Yet one cannot readily observe from the NA²⁷ apparatus the actual degree of support for the NA²⁷ main text combined reading, nor the combined support for the significant Alexandrian alternate, due to the manner in which the apparatus presents the data on a per-variant-unit basis.

Further, the support of B (D) 070 pc for the NA²⁷ main text reading µε for the combined variant units is reduced by the word order disagreement of D to only B 070. Then, if the third sequential variant unit (c) of John 9:4 is included (involving the NA²⁷ main text εως versus the alternate ως),

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30 The Byzantine Textform at the same location reads the sequence (a) εµε δει and (b) πεµψαντος µε. The Byzantine reading εµε in variant unit (a) is supported by Ι66 Ι75 Ιυ/ ςφτει ι δει Ι66 Ι75 Ιυ/ ςφτει ι δει Ι66 Ι75 Ιυ/ ςφτει ι δει Ι66 Ι75 Ιυ/ ςφτει ι δει. Variant unit (b) is read in common by both the Byzantine Textform and NA²⁷, and shares the same supporting witnesses in that unit.

31 NA²⁷ Appendix 2, Variae Lectiones Minores, 735, provides a full delineation of the readings of Greek manuscript witnesses enclosed in parentheses. As for the “pc” (= pauci) that indicates additional minor or insignificant minuscule support for this variant reading, the forthcoming Text und Textwert volume for John shows the NA²⁷ text reading in John 9:4, variant (a), to be supported additionally by only MS 849. Thanks are extended to Klaus Wachtel and the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung for graciously providing this pre-publication information.

32 The forthcoming Text und Textwert volume for John shows the pc in the alternate reading of NA²⁷ John 9:4, variant unit (b), to be supported once more only by the additional MS 849 (which again represents the whole of the “pc” for this unit).

33 The UBS⁵ apparatus is more precise in addressing this sequence of variants, since it treats as one variant unit what NA²⁷ (and Text und Textwert for John) cites as two. UBS⁵ clearly shows that the main text reading (a) ηµας δει followed by (b) πεµψαντος µε is supported by “B (D δει ηµας) 070 (ιτι) syr ναυτι geo” and no other witnesses. However, due to its limited citation of variant units, the UBS⁵ apparatus does not include the variant unit immediately following εως versus ως, and thus cannot show that the verse as printed is supported only by Codex Vaticanus.
even the support of 070 is lost, since 070 in variant unit (c) joins C* L W 33 pc b d syлиng pbo bo in reading ως.

Thus, in the space of three sequential variant units within the single verse John 9:4, the NA27 text as printed is apparently supported by only Codex Vaticanus. It thus is not surprising to find hundreds of similar cases of single-manuscript support for whole verses of NA27 throughout the New Testament.

An even greater problem occurs when the tabulation of all variant units in sequence results in whole single verses that lack support from any existing Greek manuscript. In such cases, no commonalty of support exists for that verse. Yet such a puzzling scenario is clearly demonstrated in the NA27 main text in more than 100 whole verses, deriving the results directly from the positive and negative apparatuses of NA27. Further, in most of these cases no support is forthcoming even from the various versional or patristic traditions.

The methodological requirements for establishing this evaluation are simple:

(1) A given New Testament verse must have at least two variant units cited within the NA27 apparatus.

(2) At least one of the variant units within the verse must be supplied in the apparatus with a statement of support for the NA27 main text reading (i.e., the last entry of at least one variant unit must be "txt,"

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34 This result is determined solely from the NA27 apparatus concerning the three variant units involved; comparison against the actual text of Vaticanus might show additional deviation from the NA27 main text as printed. Such, however, transcends the purpose of the present essay.

35 The present writer’s tabulations show more than 180 (current count 190) whole verses in NA27 that have their aggregate support apparently in only one Greek manuscript. These single-support witnesses range from the papyri and old uncials (e.g., Ë133, Ë278, B, C, D) to later uncials and minuscules such as L, W, Θ, Ψ, 0161, 0274, 0281, 33, 892, 2427, the archetype of f1 or f13, and other witnesses. Such instances of single-manuscript support for an entire verse occur primarily in the longer NT books: Matt has 35 such verses; Mark has 13; Luke has 27; John has 24, Acts has 15, and Rev has 38. In many of these cases, as soon as one or more variant units from the verses immediately preceding or following are included in the sequential tabulation, the amount of support drops from that single Greek MS to zero Greek MSS. In such cases, the result for the sequential variant units involved once more becomes a de facto conjectural text set forth as the supposed source (Ausgangstext) from which all other readings have derived. Such a scenario does not appear to reflect a proper view of historical textual transmission.

36 Except for the acknowledged conjecture at Acts 16:12, the NA27 main text does not present (a) an entire NT verse containing (b) but a single variant unit in which (c) the reading of the NA27 main text lacks the support of all known Greek manuscripts. All remaining instances necessarily occur in verses containing more than one variant unit.
followed by the witnesses supporting the \textit{NA}^{27} main text reading for that variant unit).\footnote{A verse without an explicit \textit{"txt"} statement in at least one variant unit \textit{may} have zero support, but such would have to be determined by careful calculation. Wherever the \textit{txt} reading – with or without other witnesses – is supported by \textit{"rell"} (= \textit{reliqui}, the remainder of the manuscript tradition), the support of the consistently cited witnesses must be determined by calculation.}

(3) The remaining variant unit(s) within the verse must contain either

(a) a \textit{positive} apparatus (showing \textit{NA}^{27} \textit{txt} support) for direct comparison with the other variant unit(s) containing \textit{txt} support; or,

(b) a sufficient number of consistently cited witnesses in a \textit{negative} apparatus (one without the citation of \textit{txt} support) so as to permit the elimination of witnesses otherwise cited as \textit{txt} in the other variant units within the same verse.\footnote{Any main text support by the collective symbol \textit{Mr} somehow must be eliminated (either in the positive or negative apparatus) in a competing variant unit within the same verse in order to establish zero-support. One also must calculate whether any consistently cited witnesses of the second order are subsumed in \textit{Mr} (not always an easy task). If so, such might preclude zero support.}

Once all these conditions are present, it becomes a matter of comparison and reduction by elimination to determine the resultant support within any verse. The case of John 9:4 cited above showed how the process of elimination functions, even though its end result was single-manuscript support for a whole verse (Codex Vaticanus).\footnote{This method assumes only the accuracy of results determined on the basis of the \textit{NA}^{27} apparatus. Many other whole verses may have single- or zero-manuscript support that cannot be determined solely from that apparatus. Further examination of other text-critical resources would be necessary in order to determine additional cases.}

The simplest demonstration of zero support for the \textit{NA}^{27} main text wording of an entire verse occurs when a verse contains two variant units, where the witnesses supporting one unit mutually exclude the witnesses supporting the other unit.\footnote{The \textit{NA}^{27} apparatus presents 9 cases in which (a) the \textit{NA}^{27} main text displays only two variant units in a single verse, and in which (b) none of the witnesses supporting the first unit are identical to those supporting the second unit (i. e., they mutually negate each other). These 9 verses of \textit{"mutual exclusion"} are the following: Mark 11:3; Luke 17:23; 24:50; John 5:2; 16:23; 18:1; Acts 27:8; 2Cor 5:3; Rev 20:11. Some of the variant readings in these units indeed are minor, reflecting orthographic issues (such as \textit{αν} versus \textit{εαν}) or the presence or absence of an article before proper names (this type of variant seems overly-emphasized in the \textit{NA}^{27} apparatus). The essential point remains: the \textit{NA}^{27} main text of these whole verses \textit{as printed} finds zero Greek manuscript support for its purported archetypal or \textit{Ausgangstext} reading. This not only demonstrates wide-ranging (even if unconscious) conjecture, but calls into question the historical and transmissional likelihood of the \textit{NA}^{27} main text as published.} As an example, the \textit{NA}^{27} main text of Mark 11:3 contains only two variant units (indicated here by English
Letters), and the external support for each is mutually exclusive of the other. The portion of text involved in each variant unit is underlined for ease of reference:

Mark 11:3 καὶ εὰν τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ τι ποιεῖτε τοῦτο (a) εἴπατε οἱ κύριοι αὐτοῦ χρείαν εχει καὶ εὐθὺς (b) αὐτὸν αποστελλέι πάλιν οὐδὲ

11:3 (a)* txt: Β Δ 2427 pc it
(b)* txt: Ν Δ L 579 892 1241 pc UBS⁴ = {B}

The support for the NA²⁷ text reading (txt) in the first (a) variant unit is B Δ 2427 pc it. The NA²⁷ text reading in the second (b) variant unit (rated [B] in UBS⁴) is specifically stated to be Ν Δ L 579 892 1241 pc (the support for alternate readings is not relevant to the discussion, and is not presented). Obviously, the NA²⁷ text support for each variant unit is mutually exclusive, and thus – unless by sheer chance the relatively few and insignificant “pc” (pauci) minuscules that support variant unit (a) coincide with the limited “pc” minuscules that support variant unit (b) – a very unlikely scenario – the verse as printed in NA²⁷ has apparently zero support from any known Greek manuscript, version, or father. On a de facto basis, the NA²⁷ main text as printed for this verse becomes a matter of conjecture, differing in its own manner very little from the acknowledged conjecture at Acts 16:12. The only real difference here is that the conjecture is spread among more than one variant unit.

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41 By text-critical convention, the Greek New Testament text is presented without capitalization, punctuation, or diacritical marks, following the pattern demonstrated in the early papyrus and uncial manuscripts.

42 The second NA²⁷ variant unit in Mark 11:3 also appears in the more limited apparatus of UBS⁴, and the main text reading is given a [B] rating as an indication of the editors’ relative certainty regarding such. Further, any NA²⁷ variant unit paralleled by a UBS⁴ reading is discussed in Metzger’s Textual Commentary in loc. The present essay cites the UBS⁴ evaluations where they occur, although their significance is debatable. See Kent D. Clarke, Textual Optimism: A Critique of the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament, JSNTSup 138 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

43 Many NA²⁷ variant units with UBS⁴ parallels in the present study are rated highly by those editors: 12 units have ratings of {A}; 32 units have ratings of {B}. The lower rated UBS⁴ variant units with {C} are strongly represented (35 units), but only 1 unit of the present study (Jude 5) has a rating of [D]. Most NA²⁷ variant units cited in this study have no UBS⁴ parallel. Given Clarke’s questioning of the entire UBS⁴ rating system, such ratings likely remain irrelevant.

44 In the same verse, the Byzantine reading (a) εἴπατε ὅτι ο plus (b) αὐτὸν αποστελλεῖ (without πάλιν) is solidly supported within that Textform.

45 In the same verse SQE presents four variant units rather than the two of NA²⁷; this includes the remaining difference in the Byzantine text of this verse (εὐθείᾳ instead of εὐθὺς). The mutual exclusion of support in the two major variants remains unaffected by the additional material in SQE. It remains possible that many additional verses might be shown to have zero support if tabulation were made in the Gospels using the SQE apparatus instead of that of NA²⁷.
One should not presume that the NA²⁷/UBS⁴ editors are unconcerned about extended portions of text that lack Greek manuscript support. The NA²⁷ apparatus and the “Editionum Differentiae” appendix to that edition note two specific locations where the earlier NA²⁵ had zero support (sine test.) for its printed text – two oversights corrected in NA²⁷:

1) At John 7:46, the NA²⁵ main text read ελαλησεν ουτως ανθρωπος ας ουτως λαλει ο ανθρωπος.⁴⁶ Both the NA²⁷ apparatus and the Editionum Differentiae appendix suggest that this wording had zero support.⁴⁷

2) Likewise, in the NA²⁷ Editionum Differentiae appendix (but surprisingly not in the NA²⁷ main apparatus), the NA²⁵ reading of 1Pet 3:18 (περι αµαρτιων απεθανεν) also is cited as apparently having zero support.⁴⁸ Yet the NA²⁷ main apparatus presents the NA²⁵ reading with support only from vg, ww, Cyp and no Greek manuscripts. It thus appears that this NA²⁵ reading likewise should have had “sine test.” appended.

Since NA²⁷ expresses such concern regarding zero-support readings found in NA²⁵ and other editions⁴⁹ – as well as noting in its apparatus the ca. 200 conjectural readings made by various commentators – it seems peculiar that the NA²⁷ editors end up with printing a sequential text of single NT verses that have zero support when considered in their overall sequence – yet their own series of eclectic decisions claim to have determined the archetypal form or Ausgangtext for each variant unit within such a verse! That such a text when considered sequentially lacks a demonstrable existence among the Greek manuscript base throughout transmissional history seems not to have been a concern.⁵⁰

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⁴⁶ When the text of NA²⁵ differs from that of NA²⁷, the NA²⁷ apparatus indicates such by a dagger symbol (†) preceding the NA²⁵ reading (which always appears first within a given variant unit). See NA²⁷, 57*, for further explanation.

⁴⁷ The NA²⁷ apparatus has “sine test?” with the question mark suggesting some uncertainty. However, “Editionum Differentiae,” in loc. (p. 758), has “T M N (sine test),” without the question mark. The other letters indicate the various editions in which this identical zero-support reading (wrongly) appeared as the main text: Tischendorf (T) and Merk (M), as well as NA²⁵ (N).

⁴⁸ “T (H) M B N (sine test?),” NA²⁷, Editionum Differentiae, 767. Once more other editions shared the same erroneous reading in their main text: NA²⁵ (N) here is joined by Tischendorf (T), Westcott and Hort (H), Merk (M), and Bover (B).

⁴⁹ Additional “sine test.” notes appear in the Editionum Differentiae appendix, but these relate to editions other than NA²⁵ and do not pertain to the current study.

⁵⁰ This assessment does not affect the ca. 90% of the NT text that remains basically free of significant variants. Nor does it affect the words in any zero-support verse that sequentially remain well supported apart from the anomalous situation created when the cited sequential variant units clash due to contradictory editorial decisions. Thus, in Mark 11:3, the remainder of the NA²⁷ main text is unaffected. This assessment does not involve to the Byzantine Textform in comparison with NA²⁷: SQE
Luke 17:23 demonstrates the same point. Once more, only two NA²⁷ variant units exist in this verse, and each mutually excludes the other. Thus the overall NA²⁷ main text as published for this verse presents what amounts to another conjectural reading:

Luke 17:23 καὶ εροσιν ὑμιν ἵδον (a) εκεί [η] ἱδον ὦδε (b) μη απελθήτε μηδε διώξητε

17:23  (a) txt: Ὑ 75 B 579  
(b) var: Ὑ 75 B 579 f13 f1 sy hm  / L Δ al

Here the situation differs slightly from the first example, since only the first variant unit has txt support for the NA²⁷ main text reading (the “positive apparatus”); the second variant unit shows only the support for two separate variant readings that differ from the NA²⁷ main text (the “negative apparatus”), but does not give the supporting evidence for the NA²⁷ main text reading. However, it is clear that the three MSS supporting the (b) variant reading are the same ones that supported the NA²⁷ main text in variant unit (a). This therefore leaves the NA²⁷ main text as printed for this verse once more with zero support.

As one more example of a verse affected by only two variant units, John 5:2 as printed in NA²⁷ reads as follows:

John 5:2 εστιν δε εν τοις ἱεροσολυμοις (a) ἐπι τη προβατικη κολυμβηθρα ἡ επιλεγοµενη εβραιστι (b) βηθζαθα πεντε στοας εχουσα

5:2  (a) txt: Ὑ 66c ὕ 75 B C T Ψ 078 f13 γ sy h

correctly (and fully) shows that the Byzantine Textform differs from NA²⁷ in reading ευθεως for ευθυς and – in variant unit (b) – in excluding παλιν. But Byzantine support or lack of such remains irrelevant to the internal consistency issues affecting the NA²⁷ main text.

The Byzantine Textform in variant unit (a) reads ἵδον ὦδε ἱδον εκεί and in variant unit (b) is identical with the NA²⁷ main text (μη απελθήτε μηδε διώξητε).

The NA²⁷ Introduction, 50*-51*, explains its use of positive and negative apparatuses. The positive apparatus explicitly states the main text support by consistently cited witnesses of the first and second order. The negative apparatus requires calculation, leaving one to deduce main text support by subtracting the variant support of the consistently cited witnesses of both the first and second order, while taking account of any lacunae or illegibility in the text of those witnesses (lacunae are listed in NA²⁷ Appendix 1, “Codices Graeci et Latini,” 684-720).

The bracketed [η] in the main NA²⁷ text of variant unit (a) does not affect the mutual exclusion issue, if the NA²⁷ main text is accepted as printed. With the bracketed word removed, the reading reverts to that of Π L pc as originally printed in NA²⁵. This then would leave Π alone in support of the entire verse (M5 L in the second variant unit spells διώξητε differently than the NA²⁷ main text). SQE cites the same evidence for the NA²⁷ reading in (a), and adds to (b) only the minor witness of 205 and 1506.
Again, it is obvious that the $\textit{NA}^{27}$ editors’ choice of readings for this verse results in mutual exclusion among the two variant units. As a result, the text of the verse as printed in $\textit{NA}^{27}$ does not appear in any known manuscript, nor in any apparent ancient version or patristic writer.\footnote{So also \textit{SQE}, which similarly cites no version or patristic writer in support of the combined $\textit{NA}^{27}$ reading for this verse. \textit{SQE} does add to variant unit (a) the support of $\textit{f}^{13}$ 892 1006 and 1342 (in $\textit{NA}^{27}$ the constant witness 892 is subsumed in $\Pi$), and to variant unit (b) the support of MS 1; these do not, however, alter the overall mutual exclusion. The Byzantine Textform in the same verse reads with $\textit{NA}^{27}$ in variant unit (a), but reads $\textit{Βηθεσδα}$ in variant unit (b).}

As additional variant units are included in a given verse, the level of mutual exclusion tends to increase, and calculation of overall support becomes more complex. Although one might presume the likelihood of zero manuscript support within a given verse continually to increase as the number of variant units multiply, such tends not to be the case (at least as evidenced by the $\textit{NA}^{27}$ apparatus). Most frequently, zero support verses contain 3, 4, or 5 variant units. After that, one finds diminishing results as the number of variant units within a verse increases.\footnote{The totals for $\textit{NA}^{27}$ are as follows: the number of “zero support” verses containing two variant units = 9; three variant units = 26; four variant units = 25; five variant units = 26; six variant units = 11; seven variant units = 5; eight variant units = 1; and nine variant units = 2. These represent all the cases that can be clearly and easily derived from the $\textit{NA}^{27}$ apparatus.}

A sample of each of the more typical situations is instructive, and illustrates the various types of variant unit support that may be encountered:

\textit{Three variant units within a single verse.}\footnote{Of the 26 zero-support verses containing three variant units, Matt has 5, Mark has 4, Luke has 6, John has 2, Acts has 2, Paul has 3, the General Epistles have 2, and Rev has 2.}

Matthew 19:29 καὶ πας οστὶς αφήκεν (a) οἰκίας ἡ αδελφος ἡ αδελφας ἡ μητέρα ἡ μιτηρά ἡ τεκνα ἡ αγρους ενεκεν του (b) ὅνωνετος μου (c) εκατοττάλεισσα ελημυσα και ζησην αιωνιον κληρονομεσει

19:29  

(a)* txt:  
B (D) pc a n (sy\textsuperscript{a})  

(b)* txt:  
C D L W $\textit{f}^{1}$ $\textit{f}^{13}$ 33 $\Pi$

(c) txt:  
$\mathbb{K}$ C D\textsuperscript{(a)} W $\Theta$ $\textit{f}^{1}$ $\textit{f}^{13}$ 33 $\Pi$ latt sy bo  

\textit{UBS}^{4} = \{C\}

Even though this verse contains three variant units, it requires only units (a)+(b) to establish zero support for the precise wording of the
The support for the various combinations of two variant units within this verse fluctuates: (a)+(b) clearly has zero support; (a)+(c) has zero support among Greek manuscript witnesses, (the primary thrust of the current study; at most the combination may be supported by it', it" and sy'); and (b)+(c) has the support of C W τ 33 Ῥ (D[6] reads ἐκατονταπλασίασιν). In any case, the overall NA^27 main text once more clearly is shown to have zero support among the extant Greek manuscript base.

Four variant units within a single verse.

Acts 2:7 εξίσταντο (a) δὲ καὶ εθαυµαζον (b) λέγοντες (c) οὐχ ἰδοὺ (d) ἀπάντες οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ λαλοῦντες γαλιλαίοι

2:7 (a)* txt: B D 096 614 1241 pm gig r mae Eus
(b)* txt: Ψ74 N A B C* 81 1175 pc r w vg Eus
(c)* txt: Ν D E 81 1175 1891 al
(d) txt: Ψ74 N A B2 C D 096 323 945 1739 al

In each case, the NA^27 main text support is precisely stated, and one can readily calculate the degree of support for any combination of witnesses. The appended asterisks show that only the three variant units (a)+(b)+(c) are necessary to establish the zero-support nature of the NA^27 main text in this verse.

57 The appended tables mark the key variant units that establish zero support with an asterisk. In many verses, the evidence of only two variant units suffices to render the NA^27 main text as zero-support, even if many more variant units exist within that verse. For example, a verse with six variant units may be established as zero-support by only two out of the six (Jas 4:14 is one such case).

58 Had the spelling variation in D* not been included, the combination (b)+(c) would have added support from D, but that manuscript still would have been eliminated from whole-verse support by its irregular reading in variant unit (a) (omission of η πατερα; see NA^27 Variae Lectiones Minores, 720).

59 Versional support when all three variants are combined appears to be nil, since variant unit (b) shows no such support. Likewise, patristic evidence appears to be wholly lacking. The evidence in SQE does not alter the overall situation, but at best adds only minor Greek manuscript support.

60 Throughout the NT, 25 such cases appear: Matt has 1, Mark has 2, Luke has 5, John has 4, Acts has 3, Paul has 4, the General Epistles have 4, and Rev has 2.

61 Variant units (a)+(b) are supported by B r Eus; (a)+(c) by D; (a)+(d) by D 096; (b)+(c) by # 81 1175; (b)+(d) by Ψ74 # A C*; and (c)+(d) by # D. Note that correctors of a given MS are treated as distinct witnesses. For example, the combination of B and B* in readings (b) and (d) do not demonstrate common support of B for those two variant units. On the other hand, a manuscript cited as * (first hand) is considered identical with the same MS otherwise unmarked. Thus, in the present example, C and C* are identical witnesses, while B and B* are not.

62 The combination (a)+(b)+(c) also demonstrates zero-support for this verse, but additional combinatory possibilities need not be marked or noted once zero-support has been established.
Five variant units within a single verse:\textsuperscript{63}

Rom 2:16

(a) \textit{ev} (b) \textit{ηνερα οτε} (c) \textit{κρινει} ο \textit{θεος τα κρυπτα των ανθρωπων κατα το ευαγγελιον} (d) \textit{μου δια} (e) \textit{χριστου ησου}

2:16

(a) var: conjecture (Pohlenz)

(b)* txt: Ν D G Ψ 33 1739 1881 \textit{εν} lat sy \textit{η} Spec

(c)* txt: Β² Ψ 6 1241 \textit{κρινει} \textit{ο θεος τα κρυπτα των ανθρωπων κατα το ευαγγελιον} \textit{µου δια} \textit{χριστου ιησου} sine acc.

(d) var: 69 δ* sa

(e)* txt: (\textit{Κ*} \textit{vid}) B \textit{δια} \textit{χριστου ιησου} \textit{ησου} \textit{κατα το ευαγγελιον} \textit{µου δια}

\textit{UBS}^4 = \{C\}

This verse in fact has only four actual variant units, since (a) is an acknowledged conjecture, unsupported by any MS, version, or father. Such acknowledged non-main-text conjectures are not counted in the tabulation of zero-support within the present study.\textsuperscript{65} This verse remains instructive for two reasons:

1. The usual practice and preference of the \textit{NA}^{27}/\textit{UBS}^4 editors is to reject conjectures throughout the NT (except in the case of Acts 16:12), even though numerous conjectures are mentioned in the apparatus.

2. A variant unit may concern only the accentuation of a word (here \textit{κρινει} versus \textit{κρινει}). In this situation, the earlier uncials are ambiguous, since they lack accentuation. Thus, those uncials should be considered as supporting either reading, so long as they retain the same orthography of the word(s) in question.

Even so, the verse as a whole still lacks support from any Greek MS, as determined by calculation of the various combinations of witnesses.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{63} Throughout the NT, 26 such cases appear: Matt has 2, Mark has 2, Luke has 4, John has 5, Acts has 1, Paul has 2, the General Epistles have 3, and Rev has 7.

\textsuperscript{64} Witnesses surrounded by parentheses in the \textit{NA}^{27} apparatus differ in some manner from the wording of the reading for which they are cited. These therefore are not considered to support the \textit{NA}^{27} main text or variant reading in an identical manner with that of the other supporting witnesses cited for such. See \textit{NA}^{27}, Introduction, 54*.

\textsuperscript{65} Approximately 200 such conjectures are cited in the \textit{NA}^{27} apparatus; these “are identified either by their author . . . or by a more general reference” (\textit{NA}^{27} Introduction, 54*). Since none of these conjectures appear in the \textit{NA}^{27} main text, they are excluded from all tabulation of zero-support.

\textsuperscript{66} Variant unit (a) is automatically excluded from calculation due to its conjectural nature. Variant unit (d) shows minor and insignificant support for the reading in question. Variant unit (c) is supported by \textit{Β² Ψ 6 1241 \textit{κρινει} ο \textit{θεος τα κρυπτα των ανθρωπων κατα το ευαγγελιον} \textit{µου δια} \textit{χριστου ιησου}} and (b)+(c) shows support from \textit{δια \textit{χριστου ιησου}}. Only the combinations involving (b), (c), and (e) are relevant, with the following combinatory results: (b)+(c) has support from \textit{δια \textit{χριστου ιησου}} and \textit{κατα το ευαγγελιον} \textit{µου δια}. Even though the
Many more $\text{NA}^{27}$ zero-support examples could be given in detail, but space does not permit such. Instead, the complete list of whole-verse references and the variant units supporting such appears as an appendix. One last “worst-case” illustration still should be cited: 8 variant units in a lengthy 45-word verse$^{68}$ that includes bracketed text:

Rev 6:8  (a) και ειδον και ιδου ιππος χλωρος και (b) ο καθημενος (c) επανω αυτου ονομα αυτω (d) [ο] (e) θανατος και ο αδης (f) ηκολουθει (g) μετ αυτου και εδοθη (h) αυτους εξουσια επι το τεταρτον της γης αποκτεινα εν ροµφαια και εν λιµω και εν θανατω και υπο των θηριων της γης  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Variants</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:8</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>1854 2329 2351 $	ext{M}^k$ gig vg$^{3}$ Bea</td>
<td>$\text{UBS}^{4} = {B}$</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(c)*</td>
<td>C 1611 2053 $	ext{M}^A$ vg$^{4t}$ / 1854 pc</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(d) txt</td>
<td>$\text{M}$</td>
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<td>(e)*</td>
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<td>(f) var</td>
<td>$	ext{M}^A$ sy cop Vic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(g)* txt</td>
<td>A C 1611 $\text{M}^A$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(h) var</td>
<td>1611 1854 2329 2351 $\text{M}^K$ lat sy cop</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The appended asterisks show that the positive apparatus witnesses in variant unit (g) – that is, those supporting the $\text{NA}^{27}$ main text, A C 1611 $\text{M}^A$ – are negated within that verse when these same witnesses depart from the $\text{NA}^{27}$ main text in variant units (c) and (e). MS A departs in variant unit (e) and C 1611 and $\text{M}^A$ depart in variant unit (c). The remainder of $\text{M}$ (i. e., $\text{M}^K$) that appears in variant unit (d) becomes a non-issue in view of the departure of $\text{M}^A$ in variant unit (c)$^{69}$.

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$^{67}$ As noted earlier, within the New Testament 11 zero-support variant units contain 6 readings; 5 zero-support units contain 7 readings; 1 such unit contains 8 readings, and 2 units contain 9 readings.

$^{68}$ The $\text{NA}^{27}$ main text has 37 zero-support verses containing bracketed text (these marked in the appended tables). Although the overall level of support for some of the zero-support verses would be affected were the bracketed words excluded, in the present instance (cf. Luke 17:23 above) the whole-verse zero-support is not affected by the presence or absence of the bracketed [o] in variant unit (d). In the remaining zero-support cases, 68 verses have no brackets present; these instances unambiguously demonstrate zero-support.

$^{69}$ In Revelation three distinct forms of the “$\text{M}$” symbol exist: $\text{M}^A$ (the “Andreas” text), $\text{M}^k$ (the “Koine” text), and $\text{M}$ (the Byzantine/Mehrheitstext, where $\text{M}^A$ and $\text{M}^k$ coincide). Zero-support calculation in Revelation must ensure that the various $\text{M}$-groups are wholly negated within a verse, in addition to tabulation of the constant witnesses. Since $\text{M}^A$ and $\text{M}^k$ are collective entities, each comprising some 80 or so MSS,
Although Revelation might be considered a special case since its manuscript support is limited (slightly more than 300 Greek MSS and no lectionaries) and since the Byzantine Textform often is divided in that book, the principle remains stable. As the above example demonstrates, even if a zero-support verse contains 8 (or even 9) variant units, usually only 2 or 3 units suffice to demonstrate the lack of external support. In fact, far more zero-support verses occur in the remainder of the New Testament (88 instances) than appear in Revelation (22 instances). Even in Jude, 2 whole verses (5, 15) have zero support in the NA\textsuperscript{27} text as printed.\textsuperscript{70}

The Editio Critica Maior volumes on James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and 1 John do not address the zero-support issue,\textsuperscript{71} even though ECM provides an extremely comprehensive apparatus regarding the six NA\textsuperscript{27} zero-support verses within these epistles (Jas 2:3; 4:14; 1Pet 2:5; 5:9; and 1John 3:1; 3:19). Since the Ausgangstext was determined in an eclectic method it cannot be assumed that every MS assigned to \textsuperscript{MN\textsuperscript{A}} or \textsuperscript{MN\textsuperscript{B}} necessarily differs from the reading for which the collective symbol is cited. For that, one would have to consult the detailed collations of Herman C. Hoskier, Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse, 2 vols. (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1929), and manually make the appropriate calculations (a time-consuming task). For the limited purpose of the present study, \textsuperscript{MN\textsuperscript{A}} and \textsuperscript{MN\textsuperscript{B}} are treated as unified witnesses.

\textsuperscript{70} Even though the textual situation in Jude is complex (see the relevant literature), it is somewhat surprising to find that the eclectic (or “local-genealogical”) method creates a zero-support Ausgangstext for each of these two verses. Even in the textually complicated verses Jude 22-23 (with 4 variant units) the NA\textsuperscript{27} main text appears to be supported by \textsuperscript{\Psi} (and, except for the spelling error \textit{αρπαζοτες} for \textit{αρπαζοντες} by \textsuperscript{8}). Thus, even in a difficult passage, an eclectic method could base its text on at least one extant manuscript throughout an entire verse, with no need to create a de facto conjectural text for that whole verse. Each problematic verse in Jude has at least one variant unit fully collated in Kurt Aland, ed., Text und Textwert der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments. 1. Die Katholischen Briefe. Band 1: Das Material, ANTF 9 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987): Jude 5 (205-209, involving 2 of the 5 variant units in that verse); Jude 15 (210-212, involving 1 of the 4 variant units in that verse). Cf. in the same volume Jude 23 (215-220, involving 2 of the 4 variant units in that verse). Text und Textwert does not present the data regarding the remaining variant units in the given verses that would confirm (except for Jude 22-23) zero-support. Note that in Text und Textwert the NA\textsuperscript{27} main text reading is always cited as group 2 (the Byzantine Textform as group 1). Jude 18 also would be zero support except for inclusion of the second order constant witnesses 630 and 1505 within \textsuperscript{\Psi} in one variant unit within that verse. However, the films of those two MSS reveal that even they differ from the NA\textsuperscript{27} main text in a non-cited variant unit (reading \textit{επιθυµιας αυτων} instead of the NA\textsuperscript{27} \textit{εαυτων επιθυµιας}); thus Jude 18 is likewise without support, although not considered so within the present study.

\textsuperscript{71} Although ECM offers a far more extensive apparatus than that of NA\textsuperscript{27}, the determination of zero support would be more time-consuming due to the ECM inclusion of many more variant units and manuscript witnesses.

\textsuperscript{72} In regard to zero-support readings, the ECM base text differs from that of NA\textsuperscript{27} in Jas 2:3 and 1Pet 5:9. While the zero-support nature of the NA\textsuperscript{27} main text
manner on a per-variant-unit basis (the “local-genealogical” method), the “best” reading has been established within any variant unit (on the primary ground of variant-based “genealogy”), the methodological task proceeds to the next sequential variant unit without regard for decisions made in the previous unit. Yet the resultant sequential Ausgangstext, once established as an entity, then is considered to be the overall hypothetical source text from which the entire transmissional tradition is derived. At this point, the situation reverses itself: those witnesses that support any given variant unit are considered to represent only derivative and thus less accurate representations of the hypothetically determined Ausgangstext. No longer are these extant manuscript witnesses regarded (as they should be) as the basis by which the Ausgangstext is established – the manuscripts themselves now are transformed into imperfect reflections of the “more correct” but essentially conjectural Ausgangstext. The circularity of this methodology is no coincidence, and yet this flaw propels the system.

remains unaffected by these changes, the ECM main text in each instance regains minimal support from Greek manuscript witnesses (Jas 2:3 = B; 1Pet 5:9 = P Ψ 1739).

The “local-genealogical” method is now termed the “Coherence-Based Genealogical Method” (ECM 1John, “Preface,” 22* and also 29*); in general, the same methodology and application is retained. “Coherence” earlier was discussed in ECM 1-2Pet (23*-24*), but the terms “local-genealogical” and “Coherence-Based Genealogical Method” did not appear in that volume. The 1997 ECM James volume does not mention either term, nor does the word “coherence” appear therein.


Even while Kurt Aland and Beate Köster affirm that “Internal criteria . . . alone cannot substantiate a text-critical decision,”77 Barbara Aland declares, “Considerations of the textual value of manuscripts are always dependent on internal criteria . . . . So a high degree of circular reasoning is involved.”78 Gerd Mink discusses the matter more explicitly, addressing the matter of “circular reasoning which cannot be entirely avoided in textual criticism”.79

There is a circular argument typical of textual criticism: witnesses are important for reconstructing the initial text, and they are important because of the high number of agreements with the reconstructed initial text. In other words, witnesses are good because of their good variants, variants are good because of their good witnesses. This circle cannot be avoided [?], but it has to be controlled. We need a method, therefore, which can provide an overall view of the consequences of all the decisions we take, so that also the overall plausibility of what we are doing can be examined.80

In practice, this so-called “local-genealogical” or “Coherence-based Genealogical” method fails – not only does it present the Westcott-Hort circular methodology cloaked in statistical garb, but also because as another form of eclecticism it continues to consider variant units in isolation, ignoring their sequential connection. The method thus abandons any semblance of real “coherence” in relation to sequential external support when producing its resultant critical text, choosing to place all its trust in statistical alignments. Although Mink repeatedly emphasizes “coherence,”81 his use of the term relates primarily to a high percentage of agreement among manuscripts, by which the “local genealogies” presumably established for individual variant units are statistically but not essentially linked with those MSS that support sequential variant units. Yet Mink acknowledges,

A global stemma can only be true if the relationships it shows between the witnesses are compatible with the relationships the witnesses have in every single place of variation according to the relationships between their variants, as represented in the local stemmata.82

Such at best remains a statistical and not an essential relationship in terms of intra-manuscript agreement. This then calls Mink’s further claim into question, namely, that

79 Mink, “Problems,” 46.
80 Ibid., 25.
81 Ibid., 29, 32, 46, 70.
82 Ibid., 29-30 [emphasis added].
The general textual flow corresponds to the development of the text (i.e. the variants) throughout its history. This development can be demonstrated at every passage of the text in local stemmata of variants.\textsuperscript{83}

Yet when the internally determined Ausgangstext or initial reading of an individual variant unit is established as “best” apart from the external testimony that sequentially links one variant unit with another, the result becomes that stated by Jacquier in the opening epigram of this essay: “c’est faire oeuvre d’imagination et non de critique.”\textsuperscript{84}

The ECM editors (including Mink) specifically declare that “Internal criteria were often evaluated in a way similar to that used in NA/GNT,” but “External criteria, however, have changed, drawing on much more information and also the perspective of genealogical coherence.”\textsuperscript{85} A most puzzling comment then follows:

One central external criterion is now whether a plausible textual flow can be assumed in a passage, i.e., transmission of the text by witnesses of high genealogical coherence.\textsuperscript{86}

Given the thrust of the present essay and the multiplicity of zero-support verses in both NA\textsuperscript{27} and ECM, a pertinent question arises: can “a plausible textual flow . . . be assumed” when the (re)constructed text of a verse in terms of its sequential variants does not appear in any known manuscript, version, or father, and apparently has never existed within the entirety of transmissinal history? A negative answer obviously should be expected – but such is not the case with NA\textsuperscript{27}/UBS\textsuperscript{4}/ECM. Rather, one finds a purported Ausgangstext that not only contains conjectures in specific single variant units (NA\textsuperscript{27} Acts 16:12; ECM 2Pet 3:10), but a text that in sequence has created numerous de facto whole-verse conjectures in its connected pattern of variant readings. Yet such a pattern of readings can neither be demonstrated ever to have had any real existence within the transmissinal history of the New Testament text, nor the hypothetical existence of such an Ausgangstext seriously


\textsuperscript{84} Jacquier, Text, 314.

\textsuperscript{85} ECM, 1John, 30.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
be asserted when compared with the hard data of actual transmission. \(^{87}\)

A text that purports to be the genealogical source of all other variant readings theoretically should reflect in its archetype a sequence generally maintained among the extant witnesses; otherwise, Calvin L. Porter’s description of the eclectic method in general remains apt:

> It seems to assume that very early the original text was rent piecemeal and so carried to the ends of the earth where the textual critic, like lamenting Isis, must seek it by his skill. \(^{88}\)

At the very least, this suggests something of a wrong methodological approach, and forces the reconsideration of Aland/Aland Rule 9 (here with added emphasis):

> Variants must never be treated in isolation, but always considered in the context of the [transmissional] tradition. Otherwise there is too great a danger of reconstructing a “test tube text” which never existed at any time or place. \(^{89}\)

Yet such remains the situation within modern eclecticism, regardless of methodological approach (reasoned, thoroughgoing, “local-genealogical” or “coherence-based genealogical”). The resultant text – pieced together from disparate variant units – ultimately reflects a series of readings that lacks genuine historical existence, as well as even a plausible transmissional existence. This remains the case whether that text is considered to be the purported autograph, the transmissional archetype, a “working text,” or the variant-based Ausgangstext. The results obtained within NA\(^{27}\)/UBS\(^4\)/ECM continue to display what Epp termed a “symptom” and not a “solution.” \(^{90}\)

An alternative hypothesis
In commenting upon the continuing research regarding “singular readings,” Barbara Aland has suggested that the paucity of New Testament transmissional information prior to the fourth century permits a wide range of possible scenarios. As she critiques the various studies that have evaluated scribal habits on the basis of a manuscript’s singular readings (i.e., the studies of Colwell, Royse, and Head), she states the following:

The method is still useful, although it should be underscored that there are no singular readings in the strictest sense. There is no way of knowing that what we regard as singular readings were not also to be found in the great mass of manuscripts that have been lost.92

By saying “no way of knowing,” Aland’s argument transcends the typical inferences made ex silentio and appeals ad ignorantiam to multivalent transmissional possibilities, particularly during the pre-fourth century era. But such an appeal makes it impossible to rule out any transmissional hypothesis, and alternate possibilities equally can be postulated.93 In particular, Aland suggests a bizarre sort of a “majority


93 Such a line of argument allows anything and everything to be possible; thus, any proffered text could be accorded autograph status. In contrast, Wisse, “Nature and Purpose,” 43, correctly suggests that one cannot “set this undocumented period apart from the documented history of the transmission of early Christian texts. There would have to be compelling reasons to make such an assumption.” Wisse likewise strongly rejects the further Aland/Münster contention that the post-fourth century “emerging orthodoxy” somehow ended “redactional freedom by deciding on a
text” hypothesis: a “great mass of manuscripts . . . have been lost,” and that “great mass” may (per ignorantiam!) have contained any or all of what are known today only as “singular readings.” By extension of the same argument, any or all of today’s “singular readings” once may have existed in the numerical majority of MSS. If such an appeal to current ignorance were valid, text-critical decisions no longer could be made, since even internal criteria would offer little confidence regarding the plausibility of results. Yet a “best guess” scenario need not be postulated.

Allowing that Aland makes a valid point (even if imperfectly stated), an opposing hypothesis can be presented on a more secure basis. The lack of any thoroughly Byzantine MSS prior to the fourth century often has been urged against the Byzantine-priority

'standard’ text and by suppressing all manuscripts which deviated” (Cf. Kurt Aland [rev. Beate Köster], “Textual Criticism, New Testament,” 546: “From the time of Constantine on, . . . the bishops were able to guide the text . . . in a certain direction. They could choose a model text for the official scriptoria . . . and this text served as the basis for the [Byzantine] copies of the NT . . . . The medieval Byzantine church’s attempt . . . to create a uniform NT text resulted in the oppressive (?) plurality of preserved NT manuscripts . . . containing the standard Byzantine text”). As Wisse correctly notes (45), “The church was in no position to establish and control the biblical text, let alone eliminate rival forms of the text . . . . Only beginning with the twelfth century, do we have evidence for a large scale effort. This is von Soden’s group K’ which shows evidence of careful control . . . . There is no evidence for the Byzantine period or for an earlier date of efforts to eliminate divergent copies of New Testament manuscripts.” Cf. also Wisse’s further remarks (52-53): “This lack of evidence cannot be explained away by speculations about an extensively interpolated “standard” text which was imposed by the orthodox leadership . . . . The Church certainly lacked the means and apparently also the will to do this . . . . The transmission process could not be effectively controlled even during the Byzantine period . . . . [Were the case otherwise,] the unanimous attestation of a relatively stable and uniform text during the following centuries in both Greek and the versions would have to be considered nothing short of a miracle.”

The same line of argument provides the theoretical basis for conjectural readings: any or all conjectural readings once may have existed and even at some point have held “majority” status during the obscure transmissional era prior to the fourth century. By such logic, the number of existing conjectures should be increased, lest a potential “original” reading otherwise be missed! Although such sounds absurd, a similar form of “conjectural originality” not only is permitted by Aland’s line of argument, but for all practical purposes already exists in the current NA27/UBS3/ECM text.

Certainly, various fathers make comment regarding readings known to them that today are found in few, one, or no extant manuscripts. Some of these readings are claimed by individual fathers to have been in “many” or even “most” copies known to them in their day. Yet one must allow that such statements may reflect only that which prevailed within a father’s localized region, and not necessarily the true proportion of evidence that existed at that time on an Empire-wide basis. Nor do such statements establish that the majority or even a large minority of what are today known as singular readings have not in fact been singular since the time they appeared in the manuscript that presently contains them.
hypothesis. But, by applying Barbara Aland’s argument regarding singular readings, the Byzantine Textform itself well may have existed in the pre-fourth century era; it even may have been widespread among a now-lost majority of MSS. Such theoretical speculation differs from that of Aland, however, in the sense that the Byzantine-priority hypothesis represents a reasonable inference based upon the actual state of the existing post-fourth century textual evidence, and not upon a hypothetical assertion regarding what one cannot know due to historical ignorance. It is certain, for example, that now-lost Byzantine parent uncialss had to have existed for the “orphaned” Byzantine minuscules of (at least) the 9th-11th centuries. Equally, the parent uncialss (or papyri) that once existed for the otherwise unrelated Byzantine uncialss of the fourth through the ninth centuries are now lost. An inference thus based upon a sufficient quantity of existing evidence provides a historically more reasonable scenario than an assertion ad ignorantiam suggesting what the “great mass” of MSS no longer extant might have read in quantity in relation to the “singular readings” of today’s documents.

96 Just as some previously assumed “singular” readings now are known from recent discovery not to be singular, so also many Byzantine readings thought (particularly by Westcott and Hort) not to exist prior to the fourth century have been found in the early papyri; cf. Harry A. Sturz, The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984); Günter Zuntz, The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum, The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1946 (London: The British Academy, 1953). Yet, while the specific Byzantine pattern of readings is not found in any extant MS, version, or father prior to the barrier of the fourth-century, it becomes a more serious matter that the NA27/UBS4/ECM pattern of readings cannot be shown to exist – nor plausibly ever to have existed – at any point in transmissional history, whether before or after the fourth century.

97 Jean-François Racine, The Text of Matthew in the Writings of Basil of Caesarea, NTGF 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), has demonstrated that the earliest thoroughly Byzantine father is Basil of Caesarea (ca. 330-379). It is also plain that Greek fathers after this period (e.g., Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, etc.) generally utilize a form of text that is more Byzantine than anything else. Since no evidence exists to support the notion that any of these fourth-century fathers created the Byzantine Textform, it must rather be presumed that they simply used an earlier form of text already current and readily obtainable in that specific region in which Greek was the primary language (from which region versional evidence necessarily did not exist and from which region all definitive pre-fourth century patristic textual evidence is lacking).

98 Kirsopp Lake, “The Ecclesiastical Text,” Excursus 1 in Kirsopp Lake, Robert P. Blake, and Silva New, “The Caesarean Text of the Gospel of Mark,” HTR 21 (1928) 338-357, speaks with regard to the minuscules examined at Sinai, Patmos, and Jerusalem: “The amount of direct genealogy which has been detected . . . is almost negligible . . . . The manuscripts . . . are almost all orphan children without brothers or sisters” (348-349).

99 Dabs1 and Dabs2 of the ninth and tenth centuries respectively, as direct copies of the sixth century D/06 (Claromontanus) of Paul, appear to represent the only uncial exceptions to the “orphan” situation described by Lake, Blake, and New.

100 Royse, “Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri,” 34-36, anticipated Barbara Aland on this point: “The alternative possibility . . . is that a singular reading was really part of a tradition, a tradition including at least the
Since more than 100 whole verses as printed in NA$^{27}$/UBS$^4$ lack extant manuscript support in the aggregate, to at least that extent the NA$^{27}$/UBS$^4$ text is based on conjecture and speculation, and not upon a logical inference from the actual data.\footnote{101} In contrast, within the Byzantine Textform, nearly every verse of the NT steadfastly retains well over 90% general agreement among its component MSS regarding its text.\footnote{102} When contrasted with the situation obtained in regard to the NA$^{27}$ text, one has to wonder how, under any putative theory of historical transmission, the presumed Ausgangstext (NA$^{27}$/UBS$^4$/ECM) ever could have existed in actuality, let alone have given rise to all other forms of text while totally losing its own original identity among the extant manuscript base. Lack of perpetuation in this regard strongly suggests a lack of prior existence. It is certain that the NA$^{27}$ pattern of readings cannot be demonstrated ever to have existed within the whole of transmissional history, even within some shorter portions of text comprising but a single verse.\footnote{103}

In contrast to the de facto conjectural nature of the (re)constructed NA\textsuperscript{27} / UBS\textsuperscript{4} / ECM text, the Byzantine Textform has a demonstrable historical existence: its line of transmission extends from (at least) the post-fourth century era to the invention of printing.\textsuperscript{104} Thus, in theory, the Byzantine Textform should retain a greater potential for preserving a preexisting archetype – a non-conjectural Ausgangstext that is historically and transmissionally superior to that presented in modern critical editions.\textsuperscript{105} Such at least remains more plausible than a hypothetical archetype ultimately derived from sequential conjecture that has no demonstrable existence within the whole of transmissional history.

Those who maintain the status quo might reject such a claim as exceptional; yet it is the modern critical text that reflects de facto conjecture, transmissional abnormality, and historical implausibility.

\textsuperscript{104} Parker, “Through a Screen Darkly,” 403, seems to concede this point: “Texts are not inherently good or bad. The Byzantine text is [in Parker’s view] certainly late, and certainly contains features lacking in the oldest copies, but it also happens to have been extremely successful, and to have existed as the honoured text of the orthodox for well over a thousand years.” Cf. Günther Zuntz, “The Byzantine Text in New Testament Criticism,” JTS 43 (1942), 25-30: “The Byzantine Text must be reconstructed . . . . [It is] the only universal Greek text of the New Testament that ever existed. This, after all, was the book of books to medieval Eastern Christianity” (26-27).

\textsuperscript{105} Even Barbara Aland, “New Testament Textual Research,” 69-72, testifies from her own perspective to this point: (1) The Byzantine Textform is not recensional: “If the Koine [= Byzantine] text were actually a recension, then one would expect it to have been edited systematically. But that is by no means the case” (71). (2) Various “atypical” and “difficult” readings persisted without correction within the Byzantine Textform: “[This] atypical Byzantine reading [ex in Jas 2:18] . . . . was copied throughout centuries by scribes with meticulous care” (71). (3) The text of the Byzantine tradition remained highly stable: “No scribe, no corrector dared to alter the sacred text” (71). (4) Internal criteria utilized to establish the modern critical Ausgangstext are subjective and involve a methodological circularity: “Considerations of the textual value of manuscripts are always dependent on internal criteria . . . . A high degree of circular reasoning is involved . . . . Considerations based on internal criteria are often ambiguous” (69-70). (5) Most of the Byzantine Textform represents a good and valid form of the NT text: “The Byzantine is not always a poor text. Only a relatively small number of variants, where the Byzantine tradition testifies to a reading as a consistent group against all other manuscripts, are secondary . . . . Apart from these passages the Koine text offers a good early textform” (71-72). The Byzantine Textform thus should not be seen as a recensional attempt (systematic or sporadic) to remove perceived difficulties, but instead as a good and stable text that persisted doggedly through the centuries with numerous difficulties left intact. While Byzantine-priority advocates obviously differ regarding Aland’s claim as to its “secondary” status, they would welcome a reconsideration of the Byzantine Textform from such a basic perspective.
Ultimately, the question becomes whether confidence should be placed in a text that in the aggregate reflects conjectural speculation and lacks transmissional viability, or in a text with clear historical roots and a potential transmissional plausibility in its favor. Should one be willing to reexamine long-standing scholarly opinion, the Byzantine-priority hypothesis becomes at least reasonably plausible, particularly in view of its actual historical existence when contrasted with the conjectural claims underlying the NA\textsuperscript{27}/UBS\textsuperscript{4} text. Zero-support conjecture and a pattern of readings found in no extant manuscript, version, or patristic writer indeed creates the very “test-tube text” warned against by two of its own editors. If such an Ausgangstext lacks historical plausibility, and results in conjecture-based whole verses, a problem exists; and the resultant text raises serious questions regarding whatever underlying transmissional history might be presupposed under the various eclectic theories. In contrast, the overall pattern of readings that underlie the Byzantine Textform is not merely “a ‘test tube text’ which never existed at any time or place,” but a text with a demonstrable historical existence and a potential transmissional originality.

106 As Herbert C. Youtie, The Textual Criticism of Documentary Papyri, Special University Lectures in Palaeography; University of London Institute of Classical Studies, Bulletin Supplement, 6, ed. E. G. Turner (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1958), 37, states, “Anything that goes beyond the minimum hypothesis is in danger of distorting the evidence.” Youtie further suggests (37) that “A hypothesis should embrace the data which it is meant to explain as closely as a well-fitting glove embraces the hand”; and (in a different context, but applicable mutatis mutandis), “If readings are to be correct, they must proceed from a correct intelligence of the text as a whole” (54).

107 The questionable historical and transmissional nature of the modern critical Ausgangstext finds a parallel in Streeter’s comments regarding Fourth Gospel source criticism: “If the sources have undergone anything like the amount of amplification, excision, rearrangement and adaptation which the theory postulates, then the critic’s pretence that he can unravel the process is grotesque. As well hope to start with a string of sausages and reconstruct the pig . . . . Even the more sober seeming of these . . . theories appear to me to be based on a method essentially unscientific”; Burnett Hillman Streeter, The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship, and Dates, rev. ed. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1930, rep. ed. 1956), 377.

108 Parvis, “The Goals,” 405, states: “The textus receptus [meaning the Byzantine Textform in general] may have a longer and more complicated line of descent than we have been accustomed to think. Beyond this, however, the textus receptus is an historical text. It is a text which was used by the Church.” Ironically, as the printed TR editions displayed a less accurate form of their base Byzantine text, so also the NA\textsuperscript{27}/UBS\textsuperscript{4} ECM “New Standard-Text” editions display a less accurate form of their predominant base Alexandrian text – and the chance that “autograph” status is present in either set of editions remains minimal.

Origins, Recensions, Text, and Transmission, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity, 3. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1989), 55-70, correctly asks: "... zur letzten Frage: Welcher neutestamentliche Text kann überhaupt rekonstruiert werden?" (68). Yet she notes that "Wir in so sehr vielen Fällen... so nahe an den ursprünglichen Text herenkommeln!" (69). In response, one perhaps should consider the century-old remark of J. Rendel Harris, Codex Bezae: A Study of the So-Called Western Text of the New Testament, TS 2 (Cambridge: University Press, 1891), 235: "In the field of New Testament Criticism, the unexpected is always happening: hypotheses which have been reckoned outworn reappear, and popular and attractive modern theories have frequently to be discarded." Perhaps the time for such reconsideration once more has come around, with Byzantine-priority at the vanguard.